

## Karel Eringa

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**From:** Karel Eringa [karel@shelterwa.org.au]  
**Sent:** Friday, 2 September 2005 15:02  
**To:** Karel Eringa  
**Subject:** [SWA Update] Shelter WA Housing News: 2 September 2005  
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### SWA Update: Shelter WA Housing News – 2 September 2005

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2. Final Report: Homeswest Under-Occupancy

#### 1. Subsidies for National Housing Conference

Lotterywest has generously made funding of \$15,000 available to enable Shelter WA to offer Western Australian community organisations financial assistance towards the cost of attending the National Housing Conference. The Conference will be held in Perth from 26-28 October 2005; further information about the Conference is available at [www.dhw.wa.gov.au/NHC/](http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au/NHC/).

Subsidies are up to \$250 for applicants in the Perth metropolitan area, \$500 for regional applicants and \$750 for applicants from remote areas. The subsidies are intended to boost the community sector's involvement at the Conference. They are particularly designed to encourage participation from community organisations that either face high travel costs or that have limited resources. Organisations may apply for a subsidy for any person linked to the organisation, including for instance:

- staff
- management committee / board members
- volunteers

If you are interested in applying for the subsidy, please download the application form at [www.shelterwa.org.au/housing\\_news.htm](http://www.shelterwa.org.au/housing_news.htm). Applications close 4.30pm on Wednesday 12 October. Successful applicants will be notified prior to the Conference. However, unless agreed otherwise, subsidies will be paid after the Conference.

#### 2. Final Report: Homeswest Under-Occupancy

Under-occupancy is an issue that effects the entire Western Australian housing system. Nearly half of all dwellings in WA are being under-occupied and this increases to over half of all four bedroom dwellings and two thirds of five plus bedroom dwellings. Under-occupancy generally increases with distance from Perth, with Kununurra having the lowest rate. At the same time Kununurra is the only region with a higher rate of overcrowding than under-occupancy.

While Homeswest performs considerably better than the Western Australian housing system as a whole, about one quarter of its large family houses are under-occupied. Again, under-occupancy is not evenly spread throughout WA; the highest rate is in the Albany Region, followed by Broome and Fremantle.

While reducing under-occupancy could lower wait times for large family homes, the Final Report emphasises that Homeswest should be sensitive to the individual needs of tenants who are under-occupying. In particular, the Report notes that the "main group of households under occupying Homeswest large family homes are long term tenants whose bedroom requirements have changed over time. These are essentially good tenants that should be treated with sensitivity when negotiating for them to relocate to smaller dwellings. In addition,

many of these tenants have cultural obligations that will see them from time to time requiring space for visiting relatives and as such have an ongoing need to live in large family housing."

The Final Report makes 8 recommendations that are aimed at reducing underoccupancy in a sensitive manner. It can be downloaded from [www.shelterwa.org.au/publications.htm](http://www.shelterwa.org.au/publications.htm).

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Shelter WA also has an Urgent Response Network, which is restricted to financial members. If you are a financial member of Shelter WA and wish to join the Urgent Response Network, please email [karel@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:karel@shelterwa.org.au).

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Please email [karel@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:karel@shelterwa.org.au) with any other queries.

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