

Karel Eringa

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To: Karel Eringa
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SWA Update: Shelter WA Housing News – 20 September 2005

In this issue:

1. Report: Good Neighbour Policy
2. Sea Change Housing Conference, Bunbury
3. Launch: State Housing Strategy
4. Reminder: Subsidies for National Housing Conference

1. Report: Good Neighbour Policy

In April this year, the Minister for Housing and Works announced the introduction of a Good Neighbour Policy for Homeswest tenants. The Minister referred the Policy to the Homeswest Operational Standing Committee (HOSC) to develop the policy detail. HOSC raised a number of concerns, including the proposed introduction of fixed term tenancies, the requirement for sitting tenants to sign a new contract, the lack of mediation services, as well as practical and legal issues. HOSC subsequently established a working party with a brief to review the policy with a view to make recommendations on how to address the above concerns.

The working party has now released its Final Report, which includes nine recommendations. Its key findings include:

- The report does not support the introduction of fixed term tenancies for households with a history of anti-social behaviour and recommends that households falling into this category are required to receive tenancy support.
- The report casts doubt on whether an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement could be legally enforced and recommends that until the DHW obtains its own legal advice, it considers refraining from executing any such agreement.
- The report makes a number of recommendations aimed at ensuring that Homeswest tenants are aware of the proposed new policy, including a pamphlet and policy worded in plain English.

The report can be downloaded at www.shelterwa.org.au/publications.htm.

2. Sea Change Housing Conference, Bunbury

A group of agencies in Bunbury are hosting a *Sea Change Housing Conference* in response to new or more pressing issues in housing. The conference aims to find a positive expression for how the region might work together towards better housing opportunities. In particular, the conference aims to:

- Articulate a shared and mutually understood vision of a better future in housing opportunities for low income and homeless people in the South West;
- Define a positive direction forward;
- Identify the networks and coalitions who will implement their parts within a wider vision.

The Conference will be held at the Building 6 of the Edith Cowan University campus in Bunbury, 8.45am - 4.00pm on Friday 7 October 2005. Registration is \$25 (\$20 unwaged / concession) before 4 October, or \$35

on the day. Contact Melissa Carter (08 9792 9820), Kieran Merritt (0408 945 771) or Heather Walford (08 9780 7777) for more information.

A program and registration form can be downloaded at www.shelterwa.org.au/housing_news.htm.

3. Launch: State Housing Strategy

Housing and Works Minister Fran Logan launched the draft of *Housing Strategy WA* on Tuesday 14 September. For the first time, the strategy provides a policy framework aimed at ensuring that housing is affordable, sustainable and accessible to all Western Australians over the next 20 years.

Shelter WA's Executive Officer, Karel Eringa, spoke at the launch. He said that this "is the first time we've had a coherent vision for housing at the State level and I can't overstate the importance of this occasion. However, at this stage the strategy is not perfect. In particular, the document lacks clear targets and commitments in terms of percentages and dollars."

In order to ensure that the document was as good as it could be, Karel then encouraged interested parties to "make the most of this opportunity to make your submissions and have your input to ensure that the strategy creates affordable, appropriate and secure housing for all West Australians."

The public consultation period will run until the end of February 2006, allowing time for the community to consider the document and respond. According to the Minister, briefings to local government and other agencies and peak bodies will run through October and November, with public workshops to be run in selected metropolitan and regional centres.

The Discussion Draft of *Housing Strategy WA* can be obtained from the Department of Housing and Works or from www.dhw.wa.gov.au/housingstrategywa/hswa.cfm. A transcript of Karel Eringa's speech at the launch is available at www.shelterwa.org.au/housing_news.htm.

4. Reminder: Subsidies for National Housing Conference

As reported in the previous edition of SWA Update, 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, including a draft program, is available at 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. 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.

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to become an associate member (currently free of charge).

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.

To remove yourself from this list, please send a blank email with Subject "UNSUBSCRIBE" to listserv@shelterwa.org.au

Please email karel@shelterwa.org.au with any other queries.

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