

# Housing Update



Identifying Community Housing Needs

The Community Housing Coalition of WA

Winter, 2009

## Foundation opens Broome office

Foundation Housing now has a new regional office in Cable Beach Road, Broome, in WA's north west.

The Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region, the Hon Ken Baston MLC, officially opened the new Department of Housing funded office.

"The opening of the Broome office is a milestone in a longer journey that could not have been reached without the support and drive of the Broome community," Mr Baston said.

At the opening, Foundation Housing Chief Executive Officer Kathleen Gregory presented a background on the organisation and the model which will be used to move forward.

She stressed the importance of building partnerships between the private and public sectors.

Department of Housing Director General Steve Parry spoke about the building program the Department of Housing will undertake in the region under the Government's economic stimulus package.

He too emphasised the value of building partnerships and the importance of engaging local people with local solutions.

About 30 local community members attended the opening including local agency representatives, councillors, Broome's Catholic Bishop Christopher Saunders and



*Foundation Housing Chief Executive Officer Kathleen Gregory and Department of Housing Deputy Director General Steve Parry at the opening.*

local Aboriginal elders who offered a 'welcome to the country.'

The establishment of Foundation's office followed the formation of a Residents Action Group in response to the escalating housing challenges in Broome.

Lorraine McElligott is Foundation's new Housing Development Worker in Broome.

She has a financial management and property investment background as well as an appreciation of the additional cost of living and doing business in regional and remote areas.

Lorraine is originally from the east coast but has spent more than 10 years in WA.

"I worked as a Regional Business Adviser for the Cape

York Peninsula Development Association and I understand the extra difficulties people face and the additional cost of doing business that comes with living and working in remote and regional areas.

"With housing, we have to allow an additional 60 per cent on Perth prices just to build the same house here".

"But wages generally are not that much higher than in Perth for the most part and a lot of people are being squeezed. Families are struggling and businesses are being crushed by the wages they have to pay to attract workers. In the end, the whole town suffers."

Lorraine believes Foundation Housing can be a key

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# Homelessness on the increase in WA

Every night in WA more than 14,000 people are homeless. Contrary to general community perception, homeless people do not just sleep rough in parks, under bridges or in cars.

Some 'couch surf' moving between the homes of relatives or friends. Others go to homeless shelters and some end up living in sheds, caravans or in boarding houses.

People do not choose to become homeless. They can be affected by homelessness in many different ways and for many different reasons. Many people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have experienced significant trauma in their lives.

Unemployment, financial pressure, mental illness, addictions, illiteracy, poverty, housing market pressure, intellectual disability, violence, abuse, family breakdown and sometimes just an inability to cope with life are all common triggers of homelessness.

The reality is that anyone could become homeless at some point in their life either directly or through family or friends as a result of changing circumstances.

Since the release of the Federal Government's White Paper on Homelessness in December, 2008, The Road Home, a new sense of expectation has been created among the various stakeholders who provide services for homeless people. Adding to the White Paper, the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), the Homelessness National Partnership (Homelessness NP), the Social Housing National Partnership (Social Housing NP) and the National Building and Jobs Plan (Stimulus Package) mean substantial changes ahead for the homelessness support system. States and territories have substantial

responsibilities under those instruments.

Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek recently announced a wide ranging inquiry into the future of national legislation on homelessness which adds to the existing initiatives. Practitioners dealing with homeless people may therefore be excused if they feel a bit left in the dark.

The responses by many Governments in the past year have been geared to inject huge amounts of money into capital programs and also community housing. All those initiatives have created a renewed introspection by most role-players to assess the current status quo of how we are collectively and individually dealing with the issue of homelessness.

The Final Report of the Social Housing Task Force has been presented to the Treasurer and Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon Troy Buswell, and will be made public in the next few weeks. The consultation process of drafting the report pointed out to the various role-players to again look at how business is conducted and several recommendations have been put forward suggesting improve-

ments.

Even before the economic downturn, many people were turned away from homelessness crisis services. The downturn has meant increased job losses leading to rental arrears, mortgage defaults and more evictions so more people are compelled to seek crisis accommodation.

Although the State has boomed financially in the past few years, the social services community has seen an increase in homelessness. According to figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare for 2007-2008, 59 per cent of people who sought crisis accommodation had to be turned away.

CHCWA found in a snapshot survey that some Community Housing Providers are experiencing an increase in referrals, which range from six to 10 a day. One service provider indicated there has been an increase of 20 per cent of referrals of homeless women. Another service provider for men said in 2008, 40 per cent of the persons accommodated by them had casual employment but that figure is now 10 per cent.

**Gerhard Rousseau  
Policy Officer**

## Foundation's new office in Broome

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player in resolving the housing crisis.

Foundation is currently undertaking a land audit in Central Broome to identify potential partnership and project opportunities.

"If a group owns land and wants to build a special facility on it, we can work with them to provide the funding, design and construction of the building, on say a 30-year-lease arrangement."

"We can look after the ongoing tenancy management

and building maintenance while another party can often provide specific support services to meet the special needs of the client.

"Partnerships can really work for the good of all. We are keen to identify partnership opportunities for providing short term accommodation, key worker accommodation, mixed use housing projects or more affordable housing for families.

"We are encouraging people to approach us with their projects," Loraine said.

From the Executive Officer...

## Focus on water wise and sustainable design

As I write my report, WA is experiencing the welcome arrival of late winter rains.

Though significant falls have been received recently, the Government has mandated sprinkler restrictions for the Perth, Mandurah and South Western regions starting July 1 through to end of August 2009.

Water wise designed gardens and sustainable housing design are now an important element of the housing construction industry which is of great interest to community housing as future utility costs will be a big burden for clients as we move forward.

### The Housing Ministers Taskforce

The Housing Minister's Taskforce has now completed its week with its chair, Ian Carter the Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare, having presented the report to the Hon Troy Buswell, MLA, on June 30, 2009.

As a taskforce member, I would to acknowledge the great work by the taskforce secretariat, headed by Felicity Horrocks, Julian Wright, Ian Hafekost and chair Ian Carter who ensured we moved along at a cracking pace.

I also want to thank the following CHCWA members who provided expert practitioner assistance to me, namely, Lynne Evans, the CEO of St Bartholomew's House, Kathleen Gregory, the CEO of Foundation Housing, Victor Crevatin, the Housing Manager of St Patrick's Community Support Centre, Louise Giolitto, the CEO of Joondalup Youth Group, Julie Christensen, the CEO of Narrogin

Cottage Homes, Kaz Sternberg, the CEO of Great Southern Housing and Jennie Vartan, the General Manager of Amana Living.

It is to be hoped that the work completed by the group will lead to a better outcome for the provision of affordable housing in the State of WA.

### The Lord Mayor's Affordable Housing Working Group

The Lord Mayor's Affordable Housing Working Group objective is *'To deliver an affordable housing demonstration project in the City. In the next 12 months, the Affordable Housing Working Group will facilitate the planning and financing of at least one affordable housing project with the intention to deliver a project on the ground by 2012.'*

The working group meets monthly and is making good progress

### The Housing Advisory Round Table (HART)

The Department of Housing Deputy Director General, Steve Parry, opened the inaugural meeting in April, 2009, welcoming all participants.

Members of the HART comprised senior Department of Housing officers and sector representative organisation leaders.

The purpose of the HART is to provide the Department of Housing with strategic policy solutions in line with the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reform agenda.

### Homeless Person's Week (HPW)

The preparations of the HPW for 2009 are well underway under the stewardship of our policy officer, Gerhard Rousseau.



Colin McClughan

The response from the sector this year has been very encouraging as we step up the activities in raising awareness of the invaluable work done by community housing providers in this State.

A more detailed report will be provided by Gerhard.

### Conclusion

I would like to conclude my report by acknowledging the board and the staff of CHCWA all of whom have been of great support to me during this period.

The challenges for our organisation and to those we serve are indeed significant as the financial problems impact on many families and individuals in particular those who become unemployed or simply cannot afford the cost of accommodation.

As a community, including all levels of Government, we must continue to strive to find ways to provide a safe, secure and suitable home for our fellow West Australians.

## New Homelessness Support Service opened

The Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon Troy Buswell MLA, officially opened the new UnitingCare West Homeless Support Service in Monger Street, Perth, on Saturday, June 20, 2009.

The new facility is part of UnitingCare West's Homelessness Support Services and is a joint venture between the Department of Housing and UnitingCare West.

Lotterywest provided funding for the furnishing of the units.

The program currently focuses on working with males older than 18 years of age.

In opening the facility, Mr Buswell said the Government had provided \$1.5million for the construction of the four two-bedroom units.

"This Government recognises that there is a shortage of supported accommodation across WA and we need to look at innovative solutions to the problem of homelessness," he said.

"One of my priorities is to strengthen our partnerships with community agencies to address this serious issue and this project is a great example of collaboration between the Department of Housing and UnitingCare West."

The Department of Housing has entered into a lease agreement with UnitingCare West which will provide tenancy management and support services to clients.

Mr Buswell said the Government was determined to address the issues of homelessness and the public housing waiting list.

"We established the Social Housing Taskforce within three months of being elected to Government to identify opportunities for significantly increasing the levels of social and affordable housing in WA and I anticipate they will



*Housing and Works Minister Troy Buswell hands over the keys of the Monger Street Units to Mr Chris Hall, the Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare West.*

present the Government with some innovative and exciting proposals."

Mr Chris Hall, the Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare West, said: "We see a range of clients who are facing issues such as homelessness, mental illness and alcohol and substance abuse many of whom have little or no family support."

The program aims to help homeless people make lifestyle changes through a holistic approach.

Homelessness support staff work with both internal services and external agencies to provide a service that is focused on meeting need and moving people from homelessness.

Securing long term accommodation in the community is also a priority, either through the Department of Housing or in the private rental market.

The new units mean UnitingCare West is now able to provide services for both men and women who have children in their care.

Residents can stay for up

to nine months while being helped to make critical changes in their lives.

The new premises will provide an additional eight beds to the 21 beds already filled in the UnitingCare West Homelessness Program.

"The central location means clients will have easy access to necessities for everyday life such as supermarkets, banks and public transport making it easier for them to move forward in their lives," Mr Hall said.

Monger Street is also within walking distance of the UnitingCare West Inner City centre where the tenants can access other services such as financial counselling and emergency relief.

UnitingCare West is committed to achieving justice, hope and opportunity for all and works to support and empower those most in need in the WA community.

It is a not-for-profit community services organisation and part of the mission of the Uniting Church of Australia and UnitingCare national network.

# Centrecare expands its operations

The new Centrecare Centre in Gosnells was officially opened by Child Protection Minister Robyn McSweeney.

The opening signifies a major expansion of Centrecare's services that will offer housing services and programs for children and young people.

"The new centre will greatly benefit people living in the south-eastern suburbs of Perth because they will now have easy access to Centrecare's excellent social services," Mrs McSweeney said.

The Minister said the centre had training facilities for Centrecare's diverse range of group workshops such as living skills workshops for newly-arrived refugees.

"People taking part in workshops at the centre will also be able to take advantage of the onsite creche run by qualified staff," she said.

Centrecare is opening its doors to fellow community organisations offering its office space for workshops and meetings.

"I commend Centrecare for



*The new Centrecare Centre.*

sharing its facilities with community organisations which will have far-reaching benefits for the sector," Mrs McSweeney said.

"The Client Service Centre marks a new chapter for Centrecare and I am sure it will continue to provide the same professional and caring service to the community."

More information on available services is available from Centrecare on 9325 6644.



*Child Protection Minister Robyn McSweeney.*

## Homeless Persons' Week starts August 2

In the next few weeks, CHCWA will participate in the National Homeless Persons' Week (HPW) from August 2 to 8. Events like these help to de-stigmatise homelessness and to counter community apathy.

The theme for this year's Homeless Persons' Week is **'Where do they go?'** The 'they' are men, women, young children, youth, the elderly, disabled, families, single parents, professionals, students, labourers, indigenous people, ethnic and disenfranchised members of our community



who have no place to go.

Homeless Persons' Week 2009 aims to:

- raise awareness of homelessness in the community
- celebrate and acknowledge current services being offered to homeless people
- foster collaboration of services working with homeless people
- attract more volunteers and financial support into the sector.

tor.

Messages on Hold is sponsoring a **Walk to Support the Homeless** in the Perth Central Business District on Saturday, August 8. The walk starts and finishes in Forrest Place and follows a route which includes William, Hay, Barrack and Murray Streets. The public is invited to join civic leaders and service providers to show homeless people they are valued and respected members of a community that supports finding

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# Manual a boon for policy writers

It has been a busy few months around the office with more and more organisations seeking assistance with Regulation applications and Compliance Reviews.

To greater assist time and resource strapped organisations update their policies and procedures, we recently launched our Housing Management Manual.

The manual, which is available on request, is a great starting point for policy writers seeking National Community Housing Standard compliant policies.

Organisations still need to critically analyse the document to make it suit their individual needs but the policies and many document templates included will help those organisations who don't want to 'reinvent the wheel.'

Please don't hesitate to contact me on [bpu@communityhousing.com.au](mailto:bpu@communityhousing.com.au) if you would like a copy.

On a more national policy front, in recent months two major developments have been taking shape.

The first is the review of the National Community Housing Standards.

The draft of the third edition of the standards has just been released and CHCWA will hold a consultation workshop on July 21 at the Boulevard Centre in Floreat.

Due to the large amount of material that needs to be covered on the day, it is envisaged that participants target sections of the standards that are of particular interest to them and come ready to constructively comment on the proposed changes.

The other national development of note is the work being done by ARTD consultants on behalf of the Policy Research Working Group

(PRWG) of the Housing Ministers' Advisory Committee.

The PRWG has agreed to undertake a re-scoping of the work carried out to date on the National Regulatory Framework.

As some of you would know, the State and Federal Governments through COAG are committed to removing the regulatory inconsistencies that exist across Australia.

An example of the work to date has been the broader introduction of mutual recognition of trade qualifications across jurisdictions.

The impetus for the re-scoping comes from many factors, not the least of which is that providers must register in each jurisdiction in which they wish to operate.

Consultation on the re-scoping of the National Regulatory Framework proposed several options for the introduction of nationally consistent regulation for Community Housing Providers.

The options varied from a Commonwealth based regulator for Growth Providers only to maintaining State based regulation but under a national framework and various options for retaining or replac-

ing existing systems in between.

Consultations were held in May with myself and several representatives of WA providers attending.

Given the variety of options presented a variety of opinions on those options were expressed.

In short, the process has a long way to go before nationally consistent regulation of Community Housing Providers can become a reality.

We are also planning to hold a series of forums in the second half of the year where guest speakers from member organisations will discuss their experiences on a range of topics.

In addition to this, we are also in discussions with the Water Corporation about holding a forum on Water Wise gardening and landscaping and conducting water usage audits on properties.

So the BPU has a busy and exciting few months ahead.

I will, however, be on leave from July 22 to August 14 but Alice and the rest of the CHCWA team will be on hand to assist with any enquiries.

**Daniel Guise**  
**BPU Manager**

## Homeless Persons' Week

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solutions to homelessness.

The official launch is on Monday, August 3, in Forrest Place and includes Community Housing Providers showcasing their day to day work, a photographic exhibition, recreation activities, entertainment and healthy eating.

More than 16 Community Housing Providers have indicated they will participate.

Reclink will organise recreational activities to promote its services and Peter Cullen, the National Development

Manager, will address the public and present his book on homelessness.

Foodbank will have displays to promote healthy eating.

The Spirit of the Streets and St Patrick's Starlight Hotel Choir have again been invited to bring music and colour to the event.

Based on the success of the inaugural event last year, the ABC again ran its 'Drop Your Jocks' campaign.

CHCWA is grateful for the level of support shown for HPW by service providers and the corporate sector.

# 2009 Training Calendar



## Training and Events Calendar for the BPU July 2009 – December 2009

Date	Event	Details
September 9	Rent Setting	A workshop detailing how to maximise rental income while still providing affordable rents.
Mid September - 2008	Regional training – North West WA	Training will be tailored to the region based on direct consultation with providers.
October 8	Developing Policies	A workshop on utilising a policy template to assist in policy development.
October 29	Risk Management	Risk Management for Community Housing Providers
November 11	Asset Management - Perth	Learn how to develop an asset management plan that outlines a strategy and budget for long term planned maintenance & upgrades.
November 26	Rent Setting	A workshop detailing how to maximise rental income while still providing affordable rents.
Mid December 2008	Networking Sundowner	

Please note this calendar is subject to change. CHCWA is currently developing new courses and these will be added to our schedule when they are finalised.

For more information on any of the events please contact Daniel Guise on (08) 9221 7933 or [bpu@communityhousing.com.au](mailto:bpu@communityhousing.com.au)

# Social Housing Taskforce Interim Report

## A Synopsis:

The Social Housing Taskforce believes that it is possible to grow social and affordable housing across WA by 20,000 units within 10 years.

This will require development of a robust housing policy by Government that clearly articulates an appropriate and defensible demand and supply framework, greater connectivity between social and affordable housing options to allow tenants to transition between tenures, development of flexible support packages for high need tenants and the establishment of a wide range of measures to attract suitable stakeholders to invest in affordable housing strategies.

In working towards a solution based framework, it is clear that the Department of Housing needs to redefine its role within the social and affordable housing continuum.

The Taskforce will examine the role of the department and provide recommenda-

The Social Housing Taskforce, chaired by Anglicare Chief Executive Ian Carter, was announced in December, 2008, by the Minister for Housing and Works Troy Buswell who expressed the hope that it would redefine WA's approach to social housing.

Taskforce members were chosen from a range of community, industry and Local Government bodies for their individual expertise and ability to be innovative in coming up with new strategies to address the social housing shortage in the State.

The Taskforce's interim report was given to the Minister on March 31, 2009, and the final report on June 30, 2009.

tions relating to how it can achieve an improved balance of housing options across the social and affordable housing continuum.

The Taskforce recognises that the department is beginning to challenge its own methods of operation to assist in being more responsive to supply conditions.

It is recognised that the stimulus packages, in conjunction with State and Commonwealth funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), will grow housing stock by a net value of more than 2700 units

between 2009/2010-2011/2012.

Whilst the Taskforce applauds this significant increase in social housing stock, it is still not enough to address the high level of housing need within WA and it is all directed at treating the symptom rather than the cause.

The Taskforce will work towards identifying whether some of the funds under the stimulus package should be quarantined to attack some of the systemic causes of demand for social housing.

The Taskforce also suggests that several measures need to be immediately considered within the department and more broadly which have the potential to increase the number of units to be produced through this significant allocation of funds and improve social and affordable housing outcomes.

It is not expected that this will jeopardise the need for the money to flow quickly through to industry, yet has the potential to significantly increase the multiplier effect on the WA economy.

This could be achieved by introducing the following:

- Ensuring that all State and Federal income streams are combined and maximised within any affordable housing development.
- The State Government assisting to provide a level of

## Taskforce Terms of Reference

The Taskforce will provide advice to the Minister for Housing and Works on how to expand the supply of social housing and consider as part of its deliberations:

1. National and international models of social housing, financing and provision which may be applicable to WA.
2. Strategies to increase the participation of the community housing sector, not for profit organisations, the private sector and Local Government in the provision of, and management of, social housing.
3. The long term role of the State within a modern social housing framework considering aspects including the provision of dwellings, management of tenants, management of waitlists, regulatory frameworks and provider of partnership based funding.
4. Strategies to improve the optimisation and utilisation of current public housing stock.
5. Funding models that identify new and innovative approaches to long term sustainable funding including the investment of private sector capital.
6. Methodologies to underpin demand modelling and the setting of appropriate long term targets for the level of social housing provision.
7. Observations regarding the capacity of the public, private and community sectors to support the new approaches identified by the Taskforce, and ways in which this capacity can be enhanced, if required.



*The Social Housing Taskforce (left to right) Sue Ash (WA Council Of Social Services), Ian Carter (Anglicare WA), Anne Arnold (Real Estate Institute of WA), Russell Gibbs (Hawaiian Group), Minister Troy Buswell, Department of Housing Director General Grahame Searle (representing taskforce member Shane Hamilton), Emma Benney (Housing Industry Association), Andrew Whitechurch (National Australia Bank), Colin McClughan (Community Housing Coalition of WA), Ian Hill (City of Mandurah) and Judith Harley (Urban Development Institute of Australia WA).*

flexibility to developers and builders within any given affordable housing development to work through funding options and investment opportunities comprised of various funding streams, mixed rental and housing purchase options.

- The department to consider the clients that currently occupy public and community housing and those on the waiting list to better understand what type of housing is required.

The Taskforce sees public education as a major step towards engaging private sector investment in social housing.

Social housing carries a stigma in many parts of the community that is based on inaccurate stereotypes which are reinforced by media and other public commentators focusing on the relatively few instances of bad behaviour.

While acknowledging that some social housing tenants have issues that require greater attention and support

than private rental tenancies, it is important to promote the reality, that is, the majority of social housing tenants are responsible people who abide by the conditions of their tenancy agreements and integrate into their community.

The Interim Report provides the key directions the Taskforce will pursue in developing the Final Report.

#### **Social Housing Policy Framework**

The Taskforce is working towards developing a housing continuum that identifies entry points into Government subsidised housing and pathways out of subsidised accommodation.

In working towards identifying entrance and exit points into the current social and affordable housing system, it becomes clear that:

- there is little flexibility in the current system
- there is not enough support to assist people into the right housing tenure at any stage of the process
- there is not enough support

to stabilise people within their current housing situation

- the social and affordable housing continuum is the direct responsibility of at least two State Government departments, the Department of Housing and Department of Child Protection

- public housing is perceived as tenure 'for life' and there has been no concerted effort to move people through the system.

There is significant work required to understand who the department's public and community housing client base consists of and which households have the capacity to be moved into alternative tenures.

The department has the capacity to facilitate movement in the public and community housing system by using a variety of instruments, inclusive of: 'National Rental Affordability Scheme'

# Interim report of Social Housing Taskforce

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housing, Private rental and Shared equity schemes.

In moving forward to an appropriate and robust social housing continuum framework, the Taskforce is giving consideration to:

- improved Waitlist Management
- transitions in the Public and Community Housing System
- maximising stock utilisation.

### **Demand**

Working towards providing additional social and affordable housing requires an understanding of who the Government and the private sector is trying to house and for how long.

1. Effective Management of the Waiting List
2. Broad Housing Demand

### **Supply**

The Taskforce has several concerns regarding the supply of social and affordable housing across WA.

There is a need to work in partnership with the private sector to grow housing stock across the housing continuum and increase density to cater for the needs of the growing population.

It is clear there is a role for Government, or a Government funded entity, to assist in brokering deals.

The Taskforce considers there is a need for a 'Housing Innovation Team' to facilitate, broker, promote and generally inspire and connect stakeholders in the public, private and not for profit sectors to explore new and innovative models for the provision of social and affordable housing.

### **Private Sector Finance Key Directions**

1. Levering private sector capital (debt and equity)
2. Not for Profit Housing Com-

pany

3. Community Housing Sector
4. Affordable Rental Scheme
5. Development Rental Scheme
6. Rentstart Scheme
7. Ancillary Housing Scheme

### **Government Land Development**

The Taskforce has identified the role of Government in land development as an area that requires greater consideration.

### **Planning**

The Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) is reforming the current planning system to more efficiently service the housing industry and has released the Building a Better Planning System Consultation Paper.

### **Local Government Planning Scheme/s**

The Taskforce suggests that Local Government, through prevention and reduction strategies, has a role in reducing homelessness.

### **Inclusionary Zoning**

The Taskforce is investigating the need for inclusionary zoning to be introduced into housing developments.

### **Density Bonuses**

The Taskforce believes that increasing density will assist in increasing affordable housing options, ensure greater proximity to transport, shopping centres, educational facilities and employment and mitigate against Perth's urban sprawl.

### **Property Asset Clearing House (PACH)**

The Taskforce will investigate the requirement for the PACH (through the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and Department of Treasury and Finance) to introduce social and affordable housing requirements on surplus Government land being sold to another Government agency or on the open mar-

ket. The requirement for a social or affordability quota to be introduced prior to sale will ensure the sale price can be adjusted accordingly, allowing purchasers (either government or private) to fulfil the requirements while maintaining profitability.

### **Redevelopment of Public Housing Stock**

The Taskforce will study current public housing stock (and land) to ascertain where there is an opportunity to redevelop existing assets to grow more social housing.

### **Innovative Designs for Social Housing**

The Taskforce welcomes the approach by the Department of Housing to encourage the market to develop and deliver new and innovative social housing designs.

### **Conclusion**

The Taskforce suggests that there are several pressing issues that require attention to increase the number and accessibility of social and affordable housing units across WA.

The stimulus packages provide a catalyst to increase the number of housing units being built to cater to the low-moderate income households across the spectrum.

However, by not using the current funding tools available to grow this housing number, and without working to a more accurate demand framework, there is a concern that the extra funding will not be optimised for either job creation nor for delivering the best housing options to those eligible for government subsidised housing.

The Taskforce suggests several ways the department can assist to get the demand and supply side housing mix right for the funding which can be concurrently undertaken while the Phase 2 tender process moves forward.

# Lord Mayor's Affordable Housing Working Group

The Perth City Council now has an Affordable Housing Policy aimed at achieving a more diverse mix of city residents.

Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi said the council had convened a high-level working party to look at ways of ensuring lower-cost housing becomes available.

Representatives of the State Government, community housing groups, adjacent local authorities and the property sector have joined the working party which is chaired by the Lord Mayor.

"It is no secret that housing prices in Perth City are among the highest in Australia," Ms Scaffidi said.

"This means that many low-income earners and their families simply cannot afford to live close to the city, even though they may work here. For a city to be a lively and interesting place, it is important that we have a broad cross-section of age and income groups involved and for them to spend their leisure time in the city.

## Planning policy review

"Although the council is not in the business of building houses itself, by reviewing its planning policies and possibly providing incentives it may encourage other players in the housing sector to offer a greater variety of accommodation.

"The council can also work collaboratively with other groups to deliver a range of housing options in some different locations, including adaptive re-use of existing buildings."

The City of Perth's Affordable Housing Policy has eight key commitments:

- to continue to develop and



City of Perth Lord Mayor,  
Lisa Scaffidi.

expand the stock of public and community housing

- to encourage partnerships between the public and private sector
- to pursue amendments to the planning system and develop planning policies to encourage affordable housing
- to ensure the planning and design of affordable housing provides for appropriate quality of design, cost, location, access to transport and services, sustainability, tenure choice and social mix
- to continue to undertake research to identify housing affordability trends and issues
- to continue to work with State Government departments and non-profit housing organisations to provide affordable housing and housing services
- as a member of the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM), to lobby the Feder-

al and State Governments to initiate incentives for developers, investors and landlords to provide affordable and accessible new housing for people on low incomes

- as a CCCLM partner, advocate for the implementation of a National Affordable Housing Agreement between the three tiers of government.

Ms Scaffidi said provision of affordable housing was an issue confronting all capital cities and that the CCCLM recognised that effective co-operation between all levels of government and the business sector was necessary to address the shortage.

The council's policy adopts the CCCLM's definition of affordable housing as 'reasonably adequate in standard, safe, secure and appropriate to household needs and well located in relation to services, employment and transport.'

The Working Party's terms of reference are:

*"To deliver an affordable housing demonstration project in the City. In the next 12 months, the Affordable Housing Working Group will facilitate the planning and financing of at least one affordable housing project with the intention to deliver a project on the ground by 2012."*

To date the Working Group has:

- looked at affordable housing models around Australia
- discussed target groups
- compared potential rental models
- discussed funding sources eg Government grants, private partnerships
- identified several potential development sites within the city
- chosen a site to undertake further investigations.

The Working Group will continue to meet monthly and the next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2009.

## Who we are and what we do

**The Community Housing Coalition of WA is the peak representative and service body for organisations delivering social housing in WA.**

### CHCWA's role is to

- Represents the interests of Government, Local Government and non-Government Community Housing Providers in WA.

CHCWA makes representations on behalf of the Community Housing Sector to State and Federal Governments as well as through its membership of relevant State and National committees including the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) and the Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA).

- Promotes Government, Local Government and non-Government community housing in WA.

CHCWA is involved in the ongoing promotion of community housing. This includes working with National, State and Local Government bodies to increase their commitment to community housing.

- Improves delivery of community housing.

CHCWA works at a grassroots level to improve the delivery of community housing through advice, resourcing and training.

- Identifies unmet community housing needs.

Since merging with the Council to Homeless persons in 1999, CHCWA is involved in homeless issues and now works to identify unmet community housing needs.

Community Housing Providers are a diverse group of organisations but there are issues which affect the whole sector and which require a united voice.

CHCWA ensures that individual providers can make a difference, shaping the political and social landscape in ways that best serve the needs of providers and tenants.

CHCWA speaks with a strong voice for the sector as well as providing a platform for discussing policy direction and best practice.

CHCWA offers a chance to improve the operating environment for Community Housing Providers by providing input into policies, positions and practices relating to community housing.

We take your suggestions and represent your views to politicians, Government departments, the media, special interest groups and other stakeholders, ensuring that your concerns are heard.

CHCWA also offers:

- training in Asset Management, Developing Policies, Risk Management and Rent Setting
- identifies gaps in sector training developing courses to meet those needs
- regular meetings, to enable providers to offer input into CHCWA policy
- social functions which afford an opportunity to meet other providers in a social setting
- workshops and forums to discuss technical, business and political issues
- realistic training fees
- access to research and statistical information

- opportunity for free advertising on the CHCWA website and in its publications
- free publications
- assistance with policy development
- to act as a referee for grant submissions
- a helpline to assist with tenancy management issues
- access to Best Practice Unit training resources
- offers advice on conflict resolution between providers' clients.

Full CHCWA membership is open to:

- incorporated non-Government, not-for-profit organisations that have the provision of community housing as their main objective
- incorporated organisations that manage or sponsor community housing projects as part of their operations
- unincorporated organisations that have the provision of community housing as their main objective.

Other organisations and individuals are welcome to join as Associate Members.

### Fees:

Membership fees are based on the number of dwellings managed by the member:

#### Full membership:

0 - 10 =	\$ 80
11 - 50 =	\$ 190
51 - 100 =	\$ 400
101 - 250 =	\$ 520
251 - 400 =	\$ 750
401 - 500	
and above =	\$1100

(GST included)

#### Associate Membership:

Individual	= \$45
Organisation	= \$95