



NATIONAL BULLETIN

An eBulletin from CHFA - your national community housing peak organisation

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AHURI report

A new AHURI report, authored by Julie Lawson and Vivienne Milligan, provides a review of housing policies across an array of countries that have a similar level of economic development to that of Australia but have addressed housing questions in different ways. It aims to increase local understanding of international policy in housing, with a focus on social policies that intend to assist lower-income households to obtain appropriate and affordable housing, and to promote good ideas for policy action for consideration by Australian policy makers.

The report is titled *International trends in housing and policy responses*, and can be downloaded at http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/download/60323_fr

ATO benchmarks released

The Australian Tax Office has updated the benchmark market values for long-term accommodation in Australia, effective from 1 January 2008.

ATO benchmark market values help providers work out what rents to charge while maintaining their GST-free charitable status. The GST tax law says that goods and services are GST-free when they are provided by a charity at a 'discount' or subsidised rate. The ATO defines discounted or 'nominal consideration' as 75% of the market value for the supply of supported accommodation and community housing.

The revised benchmarks are located at the ATO website, and can be found at:

http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/content/16250.htm&page=8#P943_103069

Scroll about half way down to Table 5 that provides the relevant information for long term accommodation. .

Addressing opposition to affordable housing initiatives

An excellent report from the United States, *Addressing Community Opposition to Affordable Housing Development: A Fair Housing*

Toolkit, aims to give developers a working knowledge of fair housing in a form they can use. It gives common sense, hands on tools to deal with public hearings, building community support, using the media, working with officials, and if need be moving to legal action. Although it has been produced for a US audience, many of the principles and tools outlined in the report have a universal application for people in the business of building or managing affordable housing developments. The report can be downloaded at <http://content.knowledgeplex.org/kp2/cache/documents/68549.pdf>

Knowledgeplex

We found the above report at an excellent US website called Knowledgeplex. The site is a resource centre for affordable housing and community development, and contains links to a wide variety of news items and research from the US. The URL is www.knowledgeplex.org.

First Federal Cabinet community cabinet meeting held in WA

The Rudd Government has begun a process of 'community cabinet meetings' that will be held once a month in different locations throughout the country. The first of these was held in Canning Vale in Western Australia. The Community Housing Council of WA's Executive Officer (and CHFA Board member), Denise O'Dowd, had the opportunity to participate in this meeting, as well as gain an audience with the Minister for Families, Housing, Communities, and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny

Macklin. As the photo below shows, she also got to pose with the PM himself.

This is an exciting new process that will allow members of communities to voice their concerns and outline ideas that they have about the future directly to members of the Federal Cabinet. CHFA will keep the sector up to date with the schedule of these meetings once they are announced.



Shelter WA Executive Officer, Bronwyn Kitching, PM Kevin Rudd, and CHCWA EO, Denise O'Dowd.

Living cooperatively symposium

A symposium will be held at the Petersham Town Hall in Sydney on 13-14 February 2008. The theme is *Developing a cooperative response to the affordable housing crisis*. The symposium will bring together urban planners, state and national housing politicians, and social thinkers to discuss policy options for local government, and alternative financing models for housing.

A variety of luminaries and legends will address the symposium, including Gun-Britt Martensson, a board member of the International Cooperative Alliance and Cecodhas,

the European organisation for housing. More information on speakers, the program, and registration can be found at www.mercury.org.au/lc.

National Housing Conference

The National Housing Conference will be held on 20-22 February 2008 in Sydney. The theme, *Housing as a Foundation: Building Successful Partnerships*, underpins the conference program which is aimed at creating and strengthening linkages between the policy, practice and research communities to deliver accessible and affordable housing solutions. The conference will be opened by Matthew Brown, the NSW Minister for Housing. The opening address will be delivered by Jenny Macklin, the Federal Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Tanya Plibersek, the Federal Minister for Housing, will close the conference.

Registrations for the conference close on 6 February 2008. More information can be found at www.nationalhousingconference.org.au.

National Homelessness Conference

It's conference mania! Homelessness Australia (nee AFHO) are hosting the Fifth National Homelessness Conference, which will be held in Adelaide from 22-23 May 2008.

The theme for the conference is *New Horizons: Practice, Research and Emerging Issues*, and aims to create a framework for ending

homelessness through increasing understanding of its social and economic impacts. The Conference will critically review homelessness policy, discuss current research and identify future directions, through a series of interactive presentations and participatory workshops.

More information about the conference and registration can be found at www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/site/conference.php.

Latest addition to the CHFA family

CHFA's administration officer, Chen, has recently given birth to baby Anja. Anja is seriously cute. Carol and Eddy made the pilgrimage to Canberra's outer suburbs to inspect the offering, and took these photos to prove it.



Chen and Anja

Sub-prime meltdown explained

Ever felt you'd be well served by an economics degree to aid in the understanding of housing matters? This video, from UK duo The Long

Johns, provides a cogent description of the ins and outs of the US sub-prime mortgage market and its collapse, that is both educational and amusing. We sent this link to an economics lecturer, whose only reply was, "It's scary how accurate this is."

The video can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ_qK4g6ntM.

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Contributions

If you have news or resources that you think would be interesting or helpful to others in your State/Territory or colleagues interstate, contact CHFA and we can plug your news into NB. Email your news to: chfa@chfa.com.au