

Housing Update



Identifying Community
Housing Needs

The Community Housing Coalition of WA

Spring, 2009

Homeless Persons' Week a success

This year's Homeless Persons' Week from August 3 to 8 had the theme of 'Where do they go?' and the objective of:

- raising awareness of homelessness in the community
- celebrating and acknowledging current services being offered to homeless people
- fostering collaboration of services working with homeless people
- attracting more volunteers and financial support into the sector
- building partnerships between stake-

holders including Government, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector, the media and the general public.

CHCWA engaged the services of professional events organiser Marija Jelavic to coordinate the launch of the week on Monday, August 3. Marija was asked to develop and carry out a media campaign to raise awareness of homelessness during the week. To assist with the media objectives, Marija subcontracted media consultant Gina Church. It was also decided to organise a Walk through the streets of Perth in support

of homeless people.

Homeless Persons' Week sponsors included the Department of Child Protection, St Bartholomew's House, Lotterywest, the City of Perth, The Message Group and Community Sector Banking.

The launch of the week in Forrest Place, Perth, by the Director-General of the Department of Child Protection, Mr Terry Murphy, was designed to deliver the homelessness message to lunchtime crowds in the city.

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The inaugural Walk to Support the Homeless around the Perth CBD on Saturday, August 8, 2009, led by Perth's Grupo Muzenza Capoeira, was the highlight of Homeless Persons' Week 2009. **Picture by Peter Stone.**

From the Executive Officer...

Minister releases Social Housing Taskforce report

The Housing Minister's Taskforce

At a breakfast in the Hyatt Hotel on October 6, Housing Minister Troy Buswell launched the Social Housing Taskforce report titled 'More than a Roof and Four Walls.'

The minister's taskforce worked on the report for six months and it was presented to him on June 30 by Mr Ian Carter, the Chair of the Social Housing Taskforce and the Chief Executive Officer of Anglicare.

After thanking the task force, the minister released 'Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing' which provides the basis for a State Affordable Housing Strategy.

The strategy will be guided by four key principles of reform:

- more effective (limited-term) interventions for more people rather than a 'public house for life' welfare solution
- stronger long-term partnerships between the public, private and community sectors to finance and deliver housing solutions
- wider affordable land and housing options outside the public system
- active (improved) support and interventions to encourage transition to private accommodation.

The report is now available for public comment and CHCWA held a forum for Community Housing Providers on October 29, 2009, from which a sector response will be compiled and delivered to the Department of Housing.

New Training Courses

In conjunction with the Department of Housing, Consultant JPX and CHCWA, through its BPU Manager, Daniel Guise, have developed two new training courses, Strategic Planning and Financial Management and Planning which are being offered to Community Housing providers from the end of October this year.

Our thanks go to the Department of Housing for identifying the need and to JPX for developing the training programs.

Council Meeting

CHCWA held its Council meeting on September 4 with Daniel Guise, Best Practice Manager, deputising for me while I was on leave.

Homeless Persons' Week

The Homeless Persons' Week in 2009 was a successful initiative by our organisation but we do recognise the significant support that was provided by the sponsors, the Community Housing Providers who participated and those volunteers who so generously gave of the time.

The details of the week will be comprehensively covered by CHCWA Policy Officer Gerhard Rousseau.

Our consultant Marija Jelavic did a great job in ensuring the execution of the week went according to plan.

My thanks to Marija and Gerhard.

Homeless Connect

The City of Perth of Perth is again running the Homeless Connect event on November 26, 2009, on the concourse level of the Perth Train Station.

CHCWA will again support the initiative through the agencies that provide services to homeless people in the City of Perth.

Homeless Forum in Fremantle

CHCWA was invited to facilitate a forum at the Fremantle Cultural Arts centre on October 22, 2009, at 3pm.

The forum involved representatives of Community Housing Providers in the Fremantle area, business groups including the Bendigo Bank Fremantle Community Financial Services, representatives of the Fremantle City Council and other interested parties.

The group's goals are to understand the scale of the problem in Fremantle, support agencies to reduce homelessness by 2020 and to support initiatives to tackle street life issues caused by homelessness and displacement.

The Fremantle group says: "To us, partnerships with community groups and Government is the foundation of building stronger communities- in that



Colin McClughan

way, we all benefit."

Annual General Meeting

On October 22, before the Homeless Forum, CHCWA held its annual general meeting at 1pm.

Five seats were vacant for the board this year and leading up to the AGM, there was keen interest from providers to nominate for those seats which is seen as an important indicator of the importance of community housing at this time in our history.

In conclusion I would like to show my appreciation for the work done by our Chair Lynne Evan's, the Chief Executive Officer of St Bartholomew's.

Lynne stepped down after five years in the Chair during which time she has seen many changes in the sector.

Lynne has been particularly helpful to me during my time with the organisation.

I would also like to acknowledge the rest of the board who continue to guide and support me and the CHCWA staff whose expertise and commitment continues to surprise and delight me.

Don Tunncliffe elected Board chair

Long-standing CHCWA Board member Lynne Evans stood down as chair at this year's annual general meeting and Don Tunncliffe of the Swan Emergency Accommodation (SEA) in Midland was voted in as the new CHCWA Board Chair.

He was elected unopposed at the AGM which was held at the Fremantle Arts Centre on Thursday, October 22.

Michael King of the Agencies for South-West Accommodation (ASA-WA) based in Bunbury was elected Secretary and Mark Goerke of Anglicare WA Treasurer.

The five Board members elected for a two-year term are Lynne Evans of St Bartholomew's, Christina (Tina) Merry of Foundation Housing, Mark Goerke, Michael King and Ernie Hansen of 55 Central.

Committee representatives for the coming year are Daniel Guise CHCWA representative and Pauline Farrell member representative on the Community Housing Federation of Australia, Lynne Evans on the Council to Homeless Persons Australia, Christina Merry on the Housing and Urban Research Institute of WA, Colin McClughan on the WACOSS Peaks Forum, Colin McClughan on the Community Sector Services, and Gerhard Rous-



New CHCWA chair, Don Tunncliffe (right) and Michael King, the new secretary.

seau on the SAAP/NAHA Protocols Committee.

Following the AGM, the guest speaker, Ian Carter who is the chair of the minister's Social Housing Task Force spoke about his role as chair and the Task Force's report and its recommendations.

Mr Carter, who is the Chief execu-

tive Officer of Anglicare, is also a member of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's independent council established to advise the Government on homelessness.

Mr Carter said the eight member council provides independent strategic advice critical to the early years of implementing the Government's white paper on homelessness.

CHL a growth provider

Community Housing Limited has been registered as a Growth Provider, one of five in WA and the first organisation outside the State to achieve registration.

CHL has also set up an offices in WA and appointed a State Housing Manager to manage operations.

"It is a privilege for our organisation to be entrusted with the confidence of the State Government and we are committed to making a constructive contribution to growing the stock of affordable housing in the State," CHL's managing director Steve Bevington said.

"With 15 years experience and demonstrated capabilities in the affordable housing sector, CHL aims to minimise the housing shortage in WA,"

Mr Bevington said CHL was currently assessing the locations for the initial projects to start and the first projects will

follow engagement with local organisations to ensure that the housing is developed to meet community needs.

CHL is a vertically-integrated provider of affordable housing, that is, the organisation sources funding, locates land, develops projects, designs and constructs housing and then manages the housing and its tenants for the long term.

As part of the process, Mr Bevington said there would be numerous opportunities for local subcontractors.

"In addition to providing housing to those with high needs, we are looking to develop affordable housing for low wage earners that have been excluded from the private rental market," Mr Bevington said. "Wherever there are groups of people that need housing, including housing for indigenous communities, CHL will be examining how we can provide a housing solution."



CHL's managing director Steve Bevington.

Community Housing Limited is a national and international provider of affordable housing that was founded in 1994 with a \$63,000 grant. Its mission is 'to provide affordable and sustainable housing for all.'

GIHO expanding its horizons

The Goldfields Indigenous Housing Organisation was founded in 2002 after it was initially formed as a managing agent for 20 properties under the Community Housing umbrella.

Since its humble beginning, GIHO has increased its management of housing throughout the Goldfields to in excess of 200 tenancies, encompassing communities in the Northern Goldfields, including Wongatha Wonganarra, Mt Margaret, Mulga Queen, Nambi Village and Leonora.

Also included in its vast management task are houses in Kalgoorlie/Boulder, Tjuntjuntjarra, Coonana and Coolgardie.

GIHO's key objective is to provide and manage housing for Aboriginal people in the urban and remote areas of the Goldfields Region to relieve poverty and to strive for adequate care of the sick, aged and needy.

A Board of Directors oversees the business and affairs of GIHO in accordance with the constitution and as a group, provide the governance of the organisation with delegated authority being granted to the Chief Executive Officer who manages the day to day operational objectives.



GIHO is now headed by Chief Executive Officer Julia Shallow-Bath. Julia has taken over from the former CEO, Tony Robinson, who guided the organisation from its humble beginnings through to the present time of having expanded to take in all the urban and remote communities.

It is significant that the appointment of a Manager Area North was recently made to ensure a staff member is on the ground at Laverton to provide on the spot assistance to Wongatha Wonganarra Village, Mt Margaret, Nambi Village and Mulga Queen.

There are several facets to GIHO's management ranging from actual tenancy management issues, financial management, operational planning for cyclical maintenance and capital refurbishments, legal recovery of debts, homemaker advice, periodic reporting and budgeting to ensure appropriate acquisitions of housing stock.

Such a wide ranging and diverse operation requires dedication by staff to ensure that all aspects are carried out effectively and efficiently on behalf of the Board of Directors and the client base of tenants.

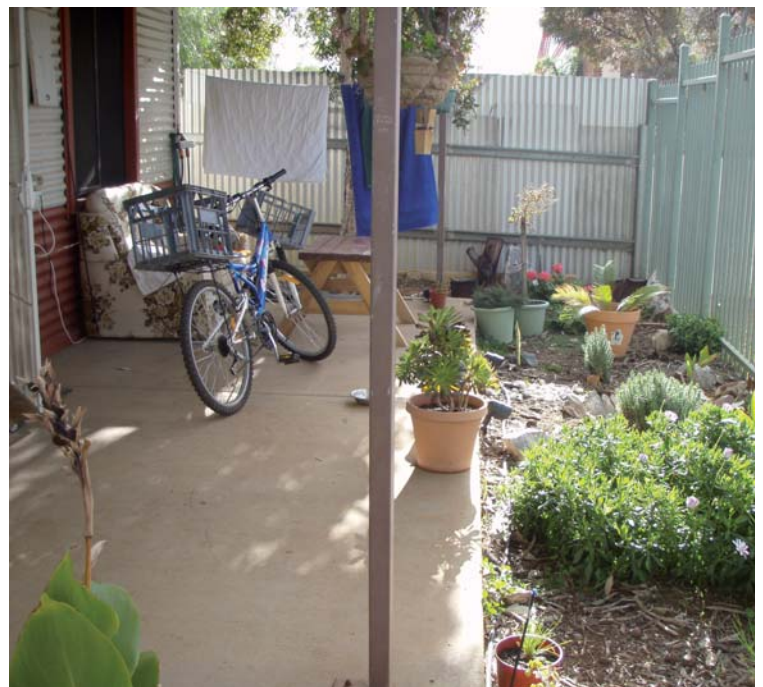


As a bona fide business entity in its own right, GIHO is managed astutely as an enterprise and as such, all tenants have an obligation to pay their rent each fortnight. Controls are now in place to strictly monitor arrears and to ensure that mechanisms are in place to legally recover overdue rent and the cost of any damages.

Such non-compliance not only includes rental and damage arrears but anti-social behaviour, poor standards and abandonment of property by tenants. GIHO now has the capacity to address such issues legally, given that Lease Agreements are based on the Residential Tenancies Act.

GIHO prides itself on the provision of quality services to members of all communities who benefit from its operational efficiency which gives indigenous people of the Goldfields access to affordable housing to acceptable standards with the ultimate longer term vision of home ownership.

John Mason



Forum looks at homelessness issue

After hearing about Homeless Persons' Week 2009 on radio advertisements, Directors of the Fremantle Community (Bendigo) Bank and Fremantle City Councillors invited CHCWA to facilitate a Fremantle Homelessness Forum to discuss homelessness in Fremantle at the Fremantle Arts Centre on Thursday, October 22, 2009.

The forum included representatives of Community Housing Providers in the Fremantle area, business groups including the Fremantle Community Financial Services (Bendigo Bank), representatives of the Fremantle City Council and other interested parties.

The aim of the forum was to initiate a coordinated approach to addressing the problems of street life and homelessness issues.

The goals of the Fremantle group are to understand the scale of the problem in Fremantle, to support agencies like Fremantle's St Pat's Community Support Centre to reduce homelessness by 2020 and to support initiatives to tackle street life issues caused by homelessness and displacement.

"To us, partnerships with community groups and Government is the foundation of building stronger communities-in that way, we all benefit," the group says.

The Chairman of the Fremantle Community Bank, Bart Houwen, said as the Bendigo Bank moves into profit after its establishment about four years ago, the institution is looking for projects to support that are enterprising and good for Fremantle.

He said the bank will support the Homeless Persons' Week in 2010 and support any initiatives that can sort out Fremantle's Homelessness problems.

Bart said he had spoken to Fremantle business people and to the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce and all were keen to understand the issues and look for solutions to the problems.

Newly elected Fremantle Mayor Brad Pettit told the forum there was a strong push by the Fremantle City Council for social and affordable housing in the Fremantle area.

Maureen Flynn, the Department for Child Protection's Manager Non-Government Funding Homelessness, spoke about the Federal Government's white



The Department for Child Protection's Manager Non-Government Funding Homelessness, Maureen Flynn, addresses the forum.

paper on homelessness titled *The Road Home*.

Two headline goals of *The Road Home* are to halve overall homelessness by 2020 and to offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who seek it by 2020. Interim targets to 2013 have also been included to contribute to those long-term goals.

In December, 2008, the Council of Australian Governments established a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness under which the Australian Government will provide additional funding to the states and territories to reduce homelessness and the states have pledged to match that funding. WA has developed an Implementation Plan introducing new initiatives and additional services to help toward the achievement of the 2013 interim targets to reduce homelessness.

The plan includes: 'A Place to Call Home,' a project to build 33 new social housing dwellings in the metropolitan area with targeted support services for those on the social housing waiting list, assistance for rough sleepers by the provision of inner-city long-term, stable accommodation and private and public rental support services.

Other inclusions are alcohol and drug housing support workers, support for children who are homeless, assertive outreach programs and outreach teams, specialist homelessness accommodation workers, support for people leaving child protection, corrective services and mental health facilities, support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and a better connected service system. Maureen said the Government alone could not solve the problems and the community has to become involved through private rentals etc. In response to a question about whether the Fremantle City Council could establish a committee to examine the issues, Councillor Doug Thompson said a meeting of stakeholders needed to be arranged to get the full picture of what the real situation was and he said he was sure the council would be interested in doing that.

Several community housing providers and service groups in the Fremantle area then outlined what the functions of their organisations are.

Since the forum, the Bentley Branch of the Bendigo Bank has indicated an interest in holding a similar forum in the Bentley area in the future.

'Where Do They Go' theme for

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Performances by the Spirit of the Streets Choir and St Pat's Starlight Hotel Choir added a special touch to the event. Another focus of the launch was the promotion of healthy eating and recreation presented by Foodbank and Reclink. Bernadette Young of the ABC was the MC at the launch. This year, 26 service providers showcased their organisations.

The inaugural Walk to support the Homeless on Saturday, August 8, was well supported by the public with more than 120 people taking part. The event started and finished in Forrest Place and went around the main shopping area in the Perth CBD. The Hon Robyn McSweeney, Minister of Child Protection, opened the Walk. Participation by the ABC's Verity James and Father Brian Morrison as well as the release of 100 homing pigeons at the Walk added to the event. The Walk was led by a Capoeira percussion group which brought the crowd in the shopping area to a standstill.

A professionally designed logo, flyers, posters, banners, t-shirts and placards with slogans all helped raise awareness of homelessness during the week.

The media campaign targeted the promotion of Homeless Persons' Week activities to create awareness of homelessness in the community.

The campaign also focused on creating a 'call to action'



The Hon Robyn McSweeney, Minister of Child Protection, joined the Walk. Picture by Peter Stone.



The release of a flock of homing pigeons was a highlight of the walk. Picture by Peter Stone.

by encouraging people to make a difference by donating specific goods to be distributed to those who needed them through service providers.

Five media releases were issued as part of the promotional strategy and CHCWA staff and Community Housing Providers were interviewed by media representatives during the week.

The media campaign and strong follow up resulted in 86 confirmed media 'hits.' The campaign was extensive and attracted the attention of a broad section of the media including some who would not generally support such a campaign.

ABC Radio again supported Homeless Persons' Week with its 'Drop Your Jocks' promotional campaign in the metropolitan and regional areas. The campaign invited ABC listeners to deliver new underwear and toiletries to ABC studios and shops around the State for distribution to homeless service providers. A massive amount of new underwear and toiletries was donated.

The ABC also ran a live outside broadcast at the HPW launch in Forrest Place on Monday, August 3.

Sonshine FM was the radio sponsor for the 'Walk for the Homeless' and the station encouraged listeners to donate sleeping bags for distributions to homeless service providers. Listeners donated 275 sleeping bags (mostly new) to HPW. The campaign included specific promotion of HPW as well as a live outside broadcast from the walk start and finish in Forrest Place

Radio 6PR ran 15 pre-recorded Community Service Announcements in support of HPW.

Radio Fremantle ran a Community Service Announcement which started on July 27 to support HPW.

6EBA FM World Radio ran a Community Service Announcement including asking all producers to record the spot in their own language to be run on their program.

The West Australian newspaper published two advertisements on the HPW and the Sunday Times newspaper pub-

Homeless Persons' Week 2009



The Spirits of the Street Choir performs at the Homeless Persons' Week 2009 launch. Picture by Louise Good.

lished three advertisements and two articles about homeless people. Several articles about HPW were published in local newspapers around WA.

Channel 9 covered the HPW launch and Channel 9 and 10 covered the Walk for the Homeless. ABC television's Stateline ran a story about the Midland housing collaboration on August 7.

It is hoped that people will now start to look at homelessness differently and bring the community one step closer to

dispelling the myth that most homeless people choose to be that way.

Ten events ran during Homeless Persons' Week including awareness raising functions at 55Central and St Bartholomew's House.

CHCWA thanks the CHCWA Board, members of the Homeless Persons' Week Working Group, Marija Jelavic, Gina Church and Community Housing Providers who supported the week.



Father Brian Morrison. Picture by Peter Stone.



Members of Perth's Grupo Muzenza Capoeira perform at St Bartholomew's House in East Perth as part of Homeless Persons' Week. St Bart's Chief Executive Officer Lynne Evans gets involved in the performance by playing the tambourine.

The Minister's Social Housing

In December, 2008, the Minister for Housing and Works announced the establishment of the Social Housing Taskforce to review the acute shortage of public housing in WA and to suggest innovative strategies for addressing the problem.

The taskforce report titled *More than a Roof and Four Walls* is a carefully considered and integrated response to a long-term complex problem. The Taskforce believes there is no simple solution or 'silver bullet' but rather the need for a total integrated system response which will encompass supply and demand side initiatives and the ongoing goodwill and investment by all levels of Government, the private sector, the community sector and by the wider community.

Taskforce members commend the report to the WA community with the hope that all of the stakeholders in this important work can move forward together to implement the findings and recommendations they have crafted together.

The Taskforce chair, Mr Ian Carter, says in the six months the group was together it had done a great deal of work but much more needs to be done and the current momentum in social and affordable housing cannot be lost. The future economic and social prosperity of all Western Australians will be diminished if the challenges are not responded to.

Following six months of constructive debate, wide-ranging consultation with relevant organisations and people and intensive research, the taskforce believes an additional 20,000 social and affordable housing units can be created around WA by 2020.

To achieve such a significant increase in housing units, the following initiatives must be implemented:

1. Implementation of a whole of Government approach to the provision of social and affordable housing through development of a State Affordable Housing Strategy. The Strategy will clearly outline the roles, responsibilities, key initiatives, funding and performance measures that will underpin the development and delivery of affordable housing around WA in the next 10 years.
2. Local Governments to develop local housing strategies that identify the future affordable housing needs of their communities.
3. The establishment of a Housing Innovations Team to focus on promoting and facilitating new and innovative housing solutions, brokering complex deals for large-scale housing projects and developing the methodology and practical application of attracting institutional investment from the private sector.
4. The introduction of significant reforms to the planning system that allow the subdivision of all residential lots above 700 square metres.
5. All State Government land development agencies to provide a minimum of 15 per cent of their housing lots for affordable housing.
6. The Department of Housing to immediately concentrate on building one and two bedroom housing units to cater for the current and future demand of smaller households.
7. Development and implementation of the Affordable Rental Brokerage Scheme.
8. Introduction of changes to the Residential Design Codes and Local Government planning policies to allow the use of ancillary accommodation for non-family members.
9. Introduction of the One Affordable Housing System which includes a Housing Needs Register which provides a detailed assessment of an applicant's immediate and longer term housing requirements, inclusive of support service needs, and facilitates the applicant into an appropriate housing solution along the continuum.
10. Developing, funding and implementing Housing Plans for current and future public housing tenants, focusing on stabilising their tenancies and plans for their transition through the affordable housing continuum.

The movement to significant and sustainable growth in social and affordable housing will take several years to be realised as the taskforce recommendations are progressively implemented. This is particularly evident in relation to attracting investment from the private sector and leveraging housing growth through the non-Government sector.

The recent stimulus packages have been critical in turning around the levels of investment in social and affordable housing in WA as they will provide at least an extra 2,600 housing units to the housing stock in the next two years. However, there is concern that when the stimulus packages have been exhausted, Government funding for social and affordable

housing will fall back to pre-2009 levels. Therefore, in order to continue the momentum of social and affordable housing reform in WA, the taskforce urges the State and Commonwealth Governments to continue the level of funding consistent with the stimulus packages for affordable housing solutions and job creation for the 2010/2011 financial year.

The final chapter of the report clearly outlines that the key to significantly increasing the number of social and affordable housing units across the continuum relies on each reform and initiative outlined in this Report being actioned concurrently in a whole of Government approach under a State Affordable Housing Strategy.

The recommendations contained within the Report are:

- 1 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister for Housing to secure additional funding for the Department of Housing for the 2010/2011 financial year to develop a further 2,000 affordable housing units, with a specific focus on increasing social housing stock numbers.
- 2 The Ministers for Housing and Works, Planning, Local Government and Regional Development ensure that their Departments identify the synergies and opportunities between the different reform agendas to focus on increasing the social and affordable housing stock around WA.
- 3 The Department of Housing immediately implements a strategy to increase the supply of one and two bedroom dwellings for social and affordable housing.
- 4 The Department of Housing maintains a specialised construction program for larger homes that caters for the housing needs of larger households.
- 5 The Minister for Housing and Works approaches the Commonwealth Government to seek a review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance that considers its effectiveness in addressing housing affordability, appropriate levels of indexation and allowances for specific regions with high housing costs.
- 6 The Department of Housing immediately develops and implements a sophisticated demand model for the provision of social housing in WA which considers longer term economic, demographic and social trends affecting low income households.
- 7 The Minister for Housing and Works establishes a formal review and research process to focus on improving the supply of affordable housing in the regions, inclusive of the housing requirements of Aboriginal people.
- 8 The Minister for Housing and Works and the Minister for Regional Development work to identify funds within the Royalties for Regions program to be used to facilitate the development of key worker housing in the North West of the State.
- 9 The Departments of Housing, Planning, Local Government and Regional Development establish a mechanism that identifies the housing needs of each region in WA, inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal people in a regional and remote context.
- 10 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister for Housing to obtain an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments and National Rental Affordability Scheme subsidies for specific regions with high housing costs.
- 11 The Department of Housing pilots a time limited rental subsidy scheme in the Pilbara for apprentices and trainees to facilitate access to affordable housing for the period of their structured education.
- 12 The Department of Housing develops a strategic policy framework to address the housing needs of Aboriginal people living in urban and regional areas, inclusive of how they can actively participate in managing housing and establishing viable community housing organisations.
- 13 The Department of Housing renews its commitment to the Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Scheme and Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Loan and expands both initiatives to assist more Aboriginal households.
- 14 The Department of Housing reviews existing home ownership schemes to ensure they provide a complete home loan and support service to Aboriginal people.
- 15 The Commonwealth and State Governments allocate the necessary capital and recurrent funding for the development of four Aboriginal visitor centres in WA.
- 16 The Department of Housing reviews its policies and processes to

Taskforce report - a synopsis

ensure that heavily subsidised public housing does not remain the primary housing option for households in the longer-term, except for those with recognised 'life-long' complex needs.

17 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Minister for Child Protection to transfer responsibility for homeless services to the Department of Housing by June 30, 2010.

18 The Department of Housing develops and implements an affordable housing system by June 30, 2011, which is underpinned by a Housing Needs Register that assesses the housing needs of all applicants and directs them to appropriate housing options.

19 The Minister for Housing and Works to recognise that Government subsidies will always be needed to sustain the housing and support needs of households on long-term low fixed incomes and/or with complex needs.

20 The Department of Housing to develop and implement a strategy to successfully transition households with income above the department's eligibility limits into affordable rental housing, the private rental market or home ownership.

21 The Department of Housing develops and implements a plan that reduces under-occupancy in current public housing stock.

22 The Minister for Housing and Works approves a change to existing rent setting in public housing so that all tenants pay a minimum of 25 per cent of their income in rent by June 30, 2010.

23 The Department of Housing reviews its social and affordable housing rent setting methodology with a view to introducing tiered rental payments for tenants based on capacity to pay and improving access to support services.

24 The Department of Housing to maintain the existing Bond Loan Assistance Scheme and regularly review bond loan limits to reflect changes in the private rental market.

25 The Minister for Housing and Works commits to adequately funding support services for people in the social housing system to assist in sustaining tenancies and in moving people through the affordable housing continuum.

26 The Department of Housing identifies the support needs of current public housing tenants to assist with the development of individual housing plans.

27 The Department of Housing immediately establishes a Housing Innovations Team and allocates between 5 and 10 per cent of the department's capital expenditure budget each financial year to deliver the Housing Innovations Team Strategic Business Plan.

28 The Department of Housing develops a strategy and policy framework for the Community Housing Sector that clearly articulates its expectations of stock growth from each of its programs.

29 The Department of Housing continues to undertake financial, legal, tax and policy analysis to evaluate whether a Not for Profit Housing Company can use financial leverage to achieve a high level of sustainable growth in social and affordable housing provision at low unit cost.

30 The Department of Housing continues to develop the Affordable Rental Brokerage Scheme with the aim of introducing the scheme by December 31, 2009.

31 The Department of Housing analyses the potential costs and benefits of a time limited rental subsidy scheme which could meet the different housing needs of urban and regional areas.

32 The Department of Housing, through a public education program, encourages home owners to rent spare bedrooms to individuals and families seeking affordable housing.

33 The Departments of Planning and Local Government recognise housing as a key outcome of their respective reforms and work together to improve the diversity and affordability of housing in WA.

34 The Minister for Planning oversees the introduction of state planning reforms that will allow for the blanket subdivision of all lots across Perth below 800 square metres by December 31, 2010, and 700 square metres by December 31, 2011.

35 The Minister for Housing and Works lead the State Government in the adoption of a whole of Government State Affordable Housing Strategy that clearly outlines its priorities and plan to ensure the provision of housing that will accommodate the population of WA in the next 10 years.

36 The WA Planning Commission introduces a Statement of Planning

Policy related to affordable housing that clearly outlines the objectives and measures that are to be used to facilitate its provision in WA.

37 Metropolitan Local Governments develop Local Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their community and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers, types and tenures.

38 Regional Local Governments work together with appropriate regional bodies and stakeholders to develop Regional Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their communities and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers, types and tenures.

39 The WA Planning Commission updates the Guidelines for the Preparation, Form and Content of Local Housing Strategies.

40 The Department of Housing and Department of Planning commit to working with the WA Local Government Association and Regional Development Commissions to develop effective Local and Regional Housing Strategies that complement the new State Affordable Housing Strategy.

41 The State Government, through its various land development and redevelopment agencies, continues its role in the development of residential land to ensure the ongoing provision of affordable housing in WA.

42 The State Affordable Housing Strategy must clearly outline the role and objectives of each State Government land development agency, including the capacity to use their profits to support the ongoing supply of social and affordable housing.

43 State Government Land and Housing Agencies should act as market leaders by embracing innovation and demonstrating best practice in the design, development and construction of land and housing.

44 The Department of Housing, LandCorp and the Redevelopment Authorities provide a minimum of 15 per cent of their annual development for affordable housing and report against this benchmark annually.

45 The State Government undertakes regular reviews of each agency's landholdings to identify surplus sites that can be used for residential development with the first review completed by December 31, 2009.

46 The Department of Treasury and Finance amend the Asset Disposal Policy to ensure that all surplus Government land that is disposed of through the Property Asset Clearing House for residential development includes 15 per cent affordable housing.

47 The Department of Planning introduces changes to the Residential Design Codes and Local Government Planning policies to allow the use of ancillary accommodation for non-family members on lots of 800 square metres by December 31, 2010, and 700 square metres by December 31, 2011.

48 The Department of Housing develops a whole-of-Government State Affordable Housing Strategy to be presented to Cabinet by June 30, 2010.

49 The Minister for Housing and Works adopts the Affordable Housing Policy Framework to guide the initial reform process within the Department of Housing to encourage streamlined change processes and enhance affordable housing outcomes in the short term.

50 The State Government maintains adequate funding for Keystart so that it can continue to provide housing finance to people on low and moderate incomes.

51 The State Government continues to provide shared equity loans to households who would otherwise be unable to access home ownership.

52 The Department of Housing maintains its important role as one of the State Government's land development agencies and continues to retain profits from this activity to help fund social and affordable housing programs.

53 The Department of Housing continues to support the development of the Not for Profit housing sector.

54 The Department of Housing develops and implements a clear strategic asset management plan by 31 December 2010 to ensure best utilisation of the public housing asset base.

55 The Department of Housing acts as a market leader in land develop-

Housing 2020. Directions for

Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing

Message from the Minister

Secure affordable housing has been a neglected area of public policy for too long. As a consequence, the public housing system that has historically served Australia so well is increasingly unfit for the challenges ahead. It is not financially viable, it hasn't kept pace with demand and it hasn't been able to deal with the growing issues of declining affordability and housing stress.

Moreover, the mechanisms that should support it – in areas such as land supply, planning, and development finance – are not providing sustainable solutions. Capable well intentioned people are simply struggling within an outdated and fragmented system.

Concurrently, the financial crisis of recent times is pushing more people to seek Government assistance.

Government stimulus efforts have simultaneously sought to maintain capacity in construction and related sectors while addressing the growing number of people who would otherwise be unable to buy a home or who have lost their foothold in the private rental market. However, this is not a long term solution.

Against this backdrop, the new National Affordable Housing Agreement provides welcome intentions but as yet, limited breakthrough initiatives beyond the National Rental Affordability Scheme. More public housing, more program reforms and more rigid rationing will not provide the answer. Rather, a more ambitious and complementary suite of initiatives is required to harness the co production capacity of the public, private and community sectors to finance, develop and manage a sustainable affordable housing system.

In December 2008, I convened a Social Housing Taskforce under the chairmanship of Ian Carter and tasked them with the challenge of finding ways to reach an aspirational social housing target of 20,000 dwellings by 2020. The Taskforce made 56 recommendations – from land supply to built form, from homelessness to home ownership, from market to Government interventions. Those recommendations have formed the basis of this paper.

'Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing' provides the initial blueprint for a State Affordable Housing Strategy. It seeks to provide a progressive yet pragmatic way forward and will require strong

Taskforce final report

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ment and housing construction by demonstrating best practice and innovative projects to the wider market.

56 The Department of Housing develops a public education campaign that highlights the positives of affordable housing, including the achievements of current and past social housing clients.

The future direction will centre on four key reform streams:

1. Reforming the provision of public housing
2. Promoting growth through the wider participation of the other (community and private) sectors.
3. Increasing the supply and range of (affordable) land and housing options.
4. Improving support and transition incentives.

Together, they will drive the demand and supply changes needed to improve the housing system – with a range of significant actions already identified in each area.

Four key principles will guide the reform process drawn from ideas and concepts within the taskforce report:

1. More effective (limited term) interventions for more people, rather than a 'public house for life' welfare solution.
2. Stronger long term partnerships between the public, private and community sectors to finance and deliver housing solutions.
3. Wider affordable land and housing options outside the public system.
4. Active (improved) support and interventions to encourage transition to private accommodation.

All those principles are drawn from ideas and concepts within the taskforce report and collectively will ensure that effort is focused on making a discernable difference precisely where it is needed.

links between the State's housing, development and delivery agencies and between the Government, private and community housing sectors.

The long term nature of the challenge and the significant roles of these other sectors must be acknowledged – particularly in regard to innovative financing arrangements. The key lies in recognising the different objectives of the three sectors and pursuing the necessary complementary interventions. Government has a key role in leading such efforts.

Secure affordable housing for all Western Australians is the Government's ultimate goal and through this Housing 2020 Statement, we welcome practical suggestions on how this can best be achieved.

Hon Troy Buswell BEc MLA

Minister for Housing

Housing 2020

The State's affordable housing system is under strain.

The public housing waitlist has grown by 57 per cent in the last three years and recently passed 22,000. A similar number of low income households are also under significant 'silent' stress in the private rental market. In addition, many moderate income families struggle to meet their rent or mortgage payments.

This situation cannot continue; it is clear that the housing system in its current form does not have the capacity to address the gap or service the growing need of low to moderate income households.

As a result, a new approach is needed – one that brings with it a concerted effort on both demand and supply sides, and across the government, private and community sectors. No one sector can do this alone; partnership models are imperative if we are to meaningfully address the affordability challenge.

The Affordability Challenge

The primary gap is in the private rental market where median weekly rents have more than doubled in the last five years. Social housing (primarily subsidised public housing) is also congested with long stay tenants inhibiting the ability of the system to meet new demand. More effective action is required to increase the supply of secure affordable rentals while providing more options for existing renters to move into affordable home ownership. Addressing both issues together will help improve mobility through the system and reduce the pressure on social housing.

Membership of the Social Housing Taskforce was drawn from a diverse range of sectors including the Community Housing Coalition of WA, WA Council of Social Service, WA Local Government Association, Real Estate Institute of WA, Housing Industry Association, Hawaiian Group, National Australia Bank, Urban Development Institute of Australia (WA) and the Department of Housing.

In general, the taskforce was asked to conduct a high level review of the social housing system and advise on strategies to improve and expand supply.

Its primary Terms of Reference involved consideration of:

1. National and international models
2. How to increase the participation of other sectors
3. The long term role of the State
4. Strategies to improve the use of public housing stock
5. New and innovative funding approaches
6. Demand modeling methodologies
7. General sector capacity to support new approaches

The Taskforce report entitled: *More Than a Roof and Four Walls* provides a comprehensive assessment of current issues and problems, offering 56 recommendations covering a diverse range of proposals. Those recommendations are currently being considered and underpin the Government's proposed future directions as outlined below.

Future Direction

Collectively, the current context and Taskforce report reinforce the need for important changes on both the demand and supply side of the system. To do this, a new approach, with new thinking, new alliances and new creative effort, will be required for the longer term.

With this in mind, the table on Page 11 highlights the proposed direction for addressing the affordable housing challenge in the next decade.

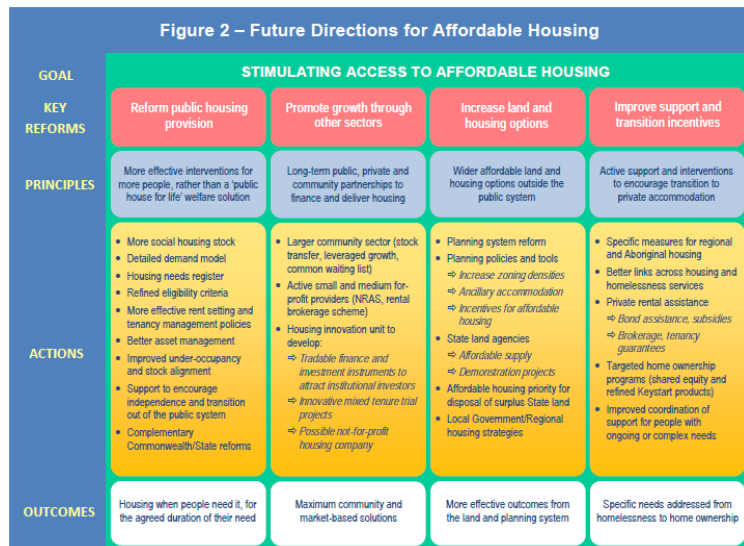
It is primarily centred on adopting a AAA approach where future housing solutions are:

Appropriate (to individual circumstances)

Available (where and when they are needed)

Future Affordable Housing

Affordable (within the means of low to moderate income earners)



Goal

The primary goal going forward is to stimulate access to affordable housing, with the aspiration of providing 20,000 new dwellings by 2020 – largely outside the public housing system. This will be done by simultaneously addressing demand and improving the supply of options along an 'affordable housing continuum.'

The rapid erosion of a healthy continuum in the last five years has seen the current system struggle to cope with rising demand:

- High private rents have placed thousands of households in unsustainable housing stress
- Home ownership is becoming an unrealistic goal as price hikes affect affordability
- The public housing system remains congested with long stay tenants and growing waitlists
- Makeshift dwellings and homelessness continue as major issues.

It is essential for a better system to be established that offers more people the help they need, when they need it, and for the agreed duration of their need. The focus should be on providing support and incentives to enable as many people as possible to transition through the various housing options towards self reliance. This can only be achieved by improving the range of opportunities and solutions for those on low to moderate incomes.

Reform Themes

Theme 1 - Public Housing Provision

Public housing is an expensive and inadequate solution for addressing the growing number of people who need secure affordable accommodation.

While it remains an essential option along an affordable housing continuum, the inherent concept of a 'public house for life' for everyone within the system is no longer viable or equitable.

For many tenants, lifelong public housing has created a cycle of low income dependency and a disincentive to gain skills and employment, and move on to other forms of accommodation and life opportunities. The reluctance of many households to move out of public housing has also contributed to falling vacancy rates and growing waitlists – creating persistent blockages that have limited the system's ability to help others.

To function as part of an effective continuum, public housing must be seen as a particular form of assistance to help people stabilise their lives and, where possible, build capacity to move on to other housing solutions. The 'public house for life' concept should focus on people with life long difficulties that prevent them from securing private accommodation.

A number of actions have been identified to help improve the public and the broader social housing system. They include:

- Increasing stock levels to help re-establish the social housing sector as a substantial and effective part of the housing system and meet rising demand
- Introducing demand modelling to help plan and manage resources around the State

- Establishing a Housing Needs Register to better match housing options to individual needs and capacity
- Implementing more targeted eligibility and rent setting criteria
- Implementing effective tenancy management policies to engender a culture of responsibility between tenants, housing providers and the wider community
- Developing a better asset management strategy to get the maximum benefit from public housing. A key focus will be on addressing under occupancy and aligning housing stock to the changing needs of tenants
- Strengthening support programs and other assistance to build tenants' capacity for long term independence outside the public system
- Pursuing integrated policy reforms at the Commonwealth, State and Local Government level to improve the effectiveness of the whole affordable housing sector

Theme 2 - Promote Growth Through Other Sectors

There is growing evidence about the potential benefits of harnessing the capacities of public, community and private sectors to increase affordable housing. Collaboration and co production between the three sectors is happening on a broader scale overseas where consortia play an essential role in financing, building and managing affordable housing.

For example, to promote growth, there is a need to tap into capital markets seeking healthy low risk returns. Institutional investment is an essential ingredient for boosting the financing and supply of affordable housing.

However, at present, this type of investment is inhibited by the absence of a suitable investment vehicle such as a housing trust and/or bond instrument.

In addition, access to affordable finance is needed so that households can generate the growth in housing stock needed.

It is also proposed to build on the foundations already laid with not for profit providers to create a larger, more diverse, competitive and sustainable sector capable of developing and managing social housing stock.

Initial actions to pursue these objectives include:

- Strategically transferring assets to non government providers to achieve growth in housing stock, and investigating the potential use of Keystart as a lender for this purpose
- Mobilising small to medium scale private investors. For example, encouraging the wider participation of 'grass roots' rental investors in affordable housing programs such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme and a possible rental brokerage scheme
- Establishing a Housing Innovations Team to work with key players in the housing and finance industries to:
 - Develop financial instruments, products or options to attract large scale institutional investment into the sector. For example with a housing trust and/or investment bond scheme
 - Pilot innovative affordable housing projects and approaches that combine the skills and resources of all sectors, such as mixed tenure models
 - Establish a possible 'Special Purpose Vehicle' or commercially focused affordable housing company to undertake special projects or activities as required

Theme 3 - Increase Land and Housing Options

Improving the supply of affordable housing outside the social housing system is required to increase the options available for those on moderate incomes.

To do this, an efficient and innovative land use and planning system is needed to maintain a steady supply of affordable land. Planning policies and regulations also need to address existing gaps and encourage a wider array of housing types that are both appropriate and affordable for current and future demand.

In addition, Government land development agencies can lead by example and deliver a steady supply of diverse and affordable land and housing products.

Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing

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Proposed actions to increase and un-constrain supply include:

- Reforming the planning system to improve responsiveness to the needs of smaller households. For example, a greater focus on 1 2 bed dwellings close to services to cater for the growing demand for aged and single person accommodation
- Improving planning policies, tools and incentives to encourage a wider range of housing densities, forms and tenures to provide appropriate choice and options. For example, providing density bonuses and encouraging the wider use of ancillary dwellings
- Encouraging State land development agencies to expand delivery of affordable land for a variety of housing types and tenures. For example, requiring a proportion of affordable lots within all developments and through influential demonstration projects
- Promoting the identification of surplus State land and its priority use for affordable residential developments
- Facilitating the development of local and regional housing strategies to identify and plan for the housing needs of each area

The Department of Planning is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the planning system consistent with the ideas presented here. It has released two central papers entitled *Directions 2031* and *Planning Makes it Happen - A Blueprint for Planning Reform*

Theme 4 - Improve Support and Transition

Even with wider affordable land and housing solutions available, active interventions will still be required to support specific households with long term needs and to maximise opportunities for people to transition through the housing continuum - from homelessness to stable rental accommodation and from rentals into home ownership.

To do this, it will be important to identify the relevant assistance needed by particular people and ensure the necessary supports and incentives are available. In this respect cooperation with other agencies is essential, as is private rental assistance and affordable finance.

To address those problems, relevant households will require tailored support to sustain tenancies, and where possible, to achieve the independence of private rental or home owner-

ship. Actions proposed or under way include:

- Addressing the particular needs of Aboriginal people and providing specific support measures for regional and remote communities
- Forging better links between housing and support services. A particular focus will be on improving the transition of households out of crisis accommodation and enabling the required support services to follow them through different tenure arrangements
- Providing greater assistance and transition incentives to help low income households access and maintain housing in the private rental market. This could include wider financial assistance in respect to bond loans and rental subsidies, or in new areas such as brokerage services and tenancy guarantees
- Providing access to affordable home ownership through targeted shared equity and loan programs - particularly for people on moderate incomes or with deposit difficulties
- Improving the coordination of support for people with ongoing or complex needs in cooperation with other agencies. Where needed, this would include tailored support packages to improve the seamless delivery of services

Together, they will drive the demand and supply changes needed to improve the housing system - with a range of significant actions already identified in each area.

Reform will be guided by four key principles:

1. More effective (limited term) interventions for more people, rather than a 'public house for life' welfare solution
2. Stronger long term partnerships between the public, private and community sectors to finance and deliver housing solutions
3. Wider affordable land and housing options outside the public system
4. Active (improved) support and interventions to encourage transition to private accommodation

All these principles are drawn from ideas and concepts within the Taskforce report and collectively will ensure that effort is focused on making a discernable difference precisely where it is needed.

Outcomes

If successful, the overall reform program will see the achievement of the aspirational goal of providing 20,000 new affordable housing dwellings by 2020 - largely outside the public housing system. Individually, each reform stream will also result in improvements to the affordable hous-

ing system to help people climb out of housing stress and migrate into other sustainable options.

This will deliver four key outcomes:

1. A public housing system that helps people when they need it for the agreed duration of their need
2. Maximum community and market based solutions to the affordable housing challenge
3. More effective outcomes from the land and planning system for people on low to moderate incomes
4. Specific needs addressed from homelessness to home ownership

In this respect, a key task will be to develop a more detailed Affordable Housing Strategy as a matter of high priority. This action oriented strategy will incorporate Taskforce findings and fine tune the proposed directions identified here. It will also identify the necessary priorities and tasks in each area and explore the specific interventions needed to address blockages across the housing system. In addition, it will specify the required governance requirements to keep the reform process on track.

The Affordable Housing Strategy will be an extension of this Directions Statement and be finalised during 2009/10 - with some initiatives being progressively implemented as soon as possible.

It is also proposed to complement this strategy with the better use of existing Government resources. In this respect, the Department of Housing will drive the wider affordable housing policy agenda set out in this statement, as well as deliver vital services along the affordable housing continuum - affordable land supply, a social housing safety net, private rental assistance and assisted home ownership.

Proposed Way Forward

This Directions Statement complements the Taskforce report. It provides a strategic context for considering its thoughts and recommendations.

However, before decisive action can be taken on either the Taskforce report or this Housing 2020 Directions Statement, the Government is keen to canvass other practical ideas about how to improve and expand the supply of affordable housing for low to moderate income households.

With this in mind, both documents have been publicly released and submissions have now been invited up to December 4, 2009.