

# Housing Update



Identifying Community  
Housing Needs

The Community Housing Coalition of WA

Autumn 2007

## WA Community Housing State Conference on November 22

The 2007 WA Community Housing State Conference is being held in the Hotel Rendezvous (Observation City) in Scarborough on Thursday, November 22, starting at 8.30am.

A dinner will follow in the evening at which the 2007 State Awards for Excellence winners will be announced.

Award nominations will be sought for:

- Overall excellence in Community Housing
- Excellence in Service to Tenants and Communities
- Excellence in Service to Tenants and Communities in rural and remote areas
- Excellence in Corporate Governance
- Excellence in Asset Management
- Excellence in Organisational Management

The conference will have three key themes, each of which will be introduced by a keynote speaker and followed by a choice of three concurrent sessions.

### 1. Community Housing – our face for the future

A. Smart Housing: Thinking outside the square for innovative solutions to developing community housing.

B. One Size Doesn't Fit All - retaining diversity and choice in a changing environment.

C. The Tyranny of Distance – developing community housing in regional, rural and remote WA.

### 2. Innovations and Models for Growth, Sustainability and Viability:



*The Agencies for South-West Accommodation recently gained Code of Practice Registration. Best Practice Unit Manager Denise O'Dowd presents the COP Registration Certificate to ASWA Chief Executive Officer Anne Mills.*

A. Poised for Growth – alliances, partnerships and opportunities.

Examining opportunities for future growth, alliances and partnerships.

B. Breaking Ground – Examining new possibilities for extending models for delivery of Indigenous Housing.

C. All I Want is A Room Somewhere - homelessness in the future – causes, costs, solutions.

### 3. Maintaining Quality outcomes in a changing environment

A. Navigating the sea of change - legislation, regulation, explanation.

B. More than just bricks and mortar. Examination of the Separation of Landlord and Support functions.

C. Empowering Tenants through meaningful participation: best practice tenant participation mod-

els.

A call for submissions document will be released in the next few weeks.

The aim of the 2007 WA Community Housing Conference is to educate and inform the sector of current and future directions in social housing, consider contemporary business and continuous improvement strategies and practice and provide an opportunity for organisations to develop stronger partnerships, put into practice new skills and gain a better understanding of the broader context in which they work.

We are seeking to build on the successful outcomes of the 2004 WA Community Housing Conference.

Community housing in WA is growing and changing rapidly.

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# Community Housing – DHW Review

As part of its overall Review and Rebuild Strategy, the Department of Housing and Works (DHW) has started a Community Housing Review.

As part of the consultation process, the Department hosted two workshops with the first held on March 15, 2007.

At the first workshop, Glenn King, the Director of Community Housing at DHW, presented on 'Community Housing in WA,' outlining the Department's proposed future vision for community housing.

Garry Ellender, who has been appointed by the Department to undertake the review process, gave a presentation on 'Community Housing in the Social System,' focusing on operational level issues within the context of the

broader social housing system.

Christina Kadmos, the independent facilitator, encouraged feedback through both large and small group discussion the purpose of which was to provide opportunities for the sector to voice their opinions and to propose creative ways to address some of the key challenges raised.

The session was well attended with about 50 interested parties participating on the day.

The second workshop is being held as this edition goes to print and more details will be available in the next edition.

The Department is undertaking one-on-one stakeholder meetings in addition to the workshops and recently called for submissions through its advertisements in the West Australian Newspaper.

CHCWA has been able to negotiate an extension of the deadline for submissions which were originally due to close on March 30, 2007. The deadline is now April 30, 2007.

We welcome your feedback to [eo@communityhousing.com.au](mailto:eo@communityhousing.com.au) and will be forwarding a submission in due course.

Alternatively, you may wish to lodge your submission or comments direct to: [garry.ellender@dhw.wa.gov.au](mailto:garry.ellender@dhw.wa.gov.au)

On completion, the review report will provide recommendations around regulation, standards and compliance requirements for community housing providers; strategies to enable effective capacity building and growth of the sector; reforms necessary to improve business process and service delivery by DHW.

The draft paper will be circulated for comment, and we understand this will happen some time in May.

The final report and proposed implementation plan is due out in June, 2007.

Copies of the minutes and presentations for both workshops have been emailed to workshop participants; however you may also request these by contacting our offices on 9221 7933 or visiting our website at [www.communityhousing.com.au](http://www.communityhousing.com.au)

We urge you to engage in the review process to ensure that the community housing sector can participate in shaping the future of community housing in WA.

## **Social Housing Review draft paper circulated**

As part of its Review and Rebuild Strategy, the Department of Housing and Works has also been undertaking a Review of Housing Service Delivery in partnership with Curtin University's Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities.

The resulting discussion paper, 'Ways Forward? Directions for Housing Service Delivery' is available at [www.dhw.wa.gov.au/582\\_1322.asp](http://www.dhw.wa.gov.au/582_1322.asp)

## State Conference 2007

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Between 1998 and 2003, the number of accommodation units within the sector grew by 64 per cent, from about 2,100 to 3,500 units.

The sector continues to expand and the currently estimated number of 5,000 units is expected to increase in the near future.

Housing affordability is one of the key issues facing an increasing number of people in WA and indeed nationally and the community housing sector is well placed to contribute to the development and implementation of a solution to this national crisis.

But the continued reduction in funding through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) is likely to continue and, with the very real prospect that it may cease within a few years, community housing is at a crossroads.

The current Review of Community Housing by the Department of Housing and Works is likely to set the direction for Community Housing in WA into the future and sees the sector poised for substantial change.

Increasingly, stakeholders are recognising the largely untapped potential of community housing.

However, several challenges face the sector as we move towards the future with the prospect of major growth.

Coupled with the likely implementation of a regulatory system and the department's interest in the development of common wait lists, is the need to address immediate and pressing affordable housing shortages as well as the issue of support dollars for organisations providing support services for their residents and tenants.

Within this context, there has been an increasing acknowledgement of the need for community housing providers and other stakeholders in WA to come together to share experiences and stories as well as to identify and articulate possible strategies to address the key issues facing the sector as it moves forward.

Given the current climate of change, the conference provides a timely opportunity for the sector to ensure it is kept informed and aware of the issues and opportunities that are likely to arise in the future.

## From the Executive Officer...

# Housing affordability making the news

Dear Members,

**W**elcome to the first edition of the Housing Update for 2007!

The first two months of this year have again proven to be extremely busy for community housing across the nation. Housing affordability continues to be the topic of the day as home ownership and rental costs spiral ever upwards with the lack of affordable housing and increasing costs causing further pressure on those least able to absorb the increases.

The Demographia Survey, a worldwide housing study, ranks WA among the 25 most unaffordable cities in the world in terms of housing affordability. House rentals in metropolitan Perth rose by 3.8 per cent in the December quarter to \$270 per week with unit rentals up 4.2 per cent to \$250 per week making the overall median rental for Perth \$260 per week.

Social Housing waiting lists are at an all-time high with Department of Housing and Works wait lists showing a three to five-year wait for housing. Community housing providers struggle to keep pace with increasing demand as more people are affected by escalating costs.

With Treasurer Ripper continuing to dangle possible state tax reduction carrots on a long piece of string, we must wait until May to see what level of relief, if any, is available in the form of tax cuts. However, a reduction in stamp duty for first home buyers and possible land tax subsidies should form a part of a much bigger, targeted approach to housing affordability and access.

The Federal and State Governments must make a solid commitment to housing affordability strategies in order to make a difference in this crisis. The State's economy is at boom levels with surpluses in excess of \$1.4 billion so the State Government must, as a matter of urgency, focus on ways



*Executive Officer Julie-ann Iorca.*

of increasing the supply of affordable housing to alleviate the current chronic shortage.

### **Community Housing Review - part of DHW's 'Review and Rebuild' strategy**

Another key area for focus has been the Community Housing Review being undertaken by the Department of Housing and Works as part of its 'Review and Rebuild' strategy. The purpose of the review, as outlined in the Department's Review of Community Housing Project Plan, will be to "examine, all processes, procedures and structures associated with the delivery of Community Housing and make recommendations on models to be implemented that will ensure the delivery is effective and efficient in meeting the future direction of the department." 1

It does appear that the State Government has an interest in growing the Community Housing Sector, as articulated in the DHW report, "Is Public Housing in WA Sustainable," which contains a recommendation to capacity build the Community Sector. Of course, with that growth will come a requirement for necessary infrastructure supports to ensure we

remain sustainable and accountable as a sector.

As such, regulation of the sector will be a key area of focus for the department and the sector, and CHCWA will be working hard to ensure sector participation in the development of a regulatory framework that remains flexible while being sufficiently robust to afford private enterprise and government sufficient confidence in the robustness and stability of the sector and thus increase opportunities for funding and partnerships.

Of course, it is heartening to see that community housing is receiving greater airtime with the State Government's recent announcements of funding injections into community housing through the key provider strategy and the implementation of a shared equity loan scheme. However, it is vital that a long term strategy encompassing more than stop gap measures be developed and accolades should be somewhat restrained until larger, broader, longer term strategies to address this crisis are identified and implemented.

That said, we are looking forward with some optimism to the future for community housing in WA and the opportunity as a sector to partner further with Government and other stakeholders to address the issue of housing affordability and availability in this State.

As part of its consultation process, the department is hosting two forums. The first was held on March 15 and attracted strong interest, with some 50 interested parties attending to hear the department discuss its vision for the future of community housing, and to participate in feedback sessions. A second forum was held on April 3, 2007, and considered in more depth issues like growing community housing - strategies and options, regulation, registration and standards, common wait

# Makeover for the CHCWA website

The CHCWA website is currently undergoing a complete makeover.

Although the site has provided members a source of information in the past, it has not been an easy site to maintain and update.

Bam Creative is undertaking creation of the new site and they are ensuring that it will not only contain all of the necessary current information but it should also be easy to update and maintain by CHCWA staff.

Bam focuses on simple and user friendly designs which ensure you as the end user can navigate the site easily and get the information

you want quickly.

The upgrading is also an ideal opportunity for members to tell us if there is anything that you consider should be included on the site that is not there now and which may be useful to other site users in the future.

The new look site represents at a glance what the CHCWA and community housing is all about and it will have all the old feature plus a few new ones including a news resource to keep everyone up to date with the latest news as it affects in the sector.

Keep a look out for our official launch.

And, on the subject of publications, we would appreciate input from members with story leads for inclusion in this magazine and also in the weekly CHCPen.

CHCPen is an ideal instrument to promote your coming events, advertise items for sale and tell other members what a great job your organisation is doing.

The Housing Update is a great magazine to tell everyone about the projects you are involved in – who knows, your story might even attract some media interest!

We look forward to hearing from you – simply e-mail reception@communityhousing.com.au

## News in brief ... ..

### Successful nomination to the NGO Industry Roundtable

Late last year, NGO Industry Plan signatories met to consider a preferred model for the proposed Industry Council, to develop a set of operating parameters for the Council, and develop an action plan for its establishment.

As a result, a high-level Industry Roundtable has been established, and comprises:

- 7 representatives selected by

Government

- 7 representatives selected by the NGO sector
- 1 independent Chair

The Department of Premier and Cabinet is arranging the selection process for the seven government representatives on the roundtable and the Community Services Sector has completed its selection of representatives.

Our Executive Officer has successfully nominated for a position on the Industry Roundtable, and is looking forward to carrying out her responsibilities, which will be to represent the broad interests of the non government human services sector and to keep the sector informed on matters of interest being dealt with by the Roundtable.

### Successful nomination to the National Social Housing Qualifications Advisory Group

Congratulations to Denise O'Dowd, our Best Practice Unit Manager, who recently nominated and was successful in gaining a place on this important national advisory group.

The National Social Housing Qualifications Advisory Group has been formed by the Australian Housing Institute (AHI) to review current national social housing qualifications and to provide input and support to AHI's CEO in her role as representative for social housing professionals into the Industry Reference Group's Community Services Training Package

Review.

Denise will be the only WA representative to the advisory group, and looks forward to keeping us informed of progress.

### Housing Minister's Forum convened

As part of the Department of Housing and Works Review, the Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon Michelle Roberts, has convened a new Housing Minister's Forum, which will replace the previous Housing Advisory Committee, which was disbanded last year.

The Forum will operate under a new terms of reference and its remit will be to:

- Operate as a source of advice to the Minister for Housing and Works on issues relating to the provision of social housing and the identification of housing needs of the community, either on the initiative of the Forum or at the request of the Minister
- Provide advice on the development of new policies and guidelines in the areas of perceived need
- Provide a forum to report on related activities, new activities or achievements of the DHW
- Provide an opportunity for interaction and consultation between key stakeholders in related housing delivery areas.

Our Executive Officer has been invited to participate in this Forum and we look forward to bringing you more information in future editions.

## From the Executive Officer...

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lists and allocation rights, as well as other key issues such as flexibility, diversity and choice.

The department is also meeting with individual organisations and other key stakeholders and called for submissions from interested parties. Once again, I would encourage members to participate by tabling submissions.

A review reference group has been formed by the department, of which CHCWA is a participant.

We welcome informal feedback to

eo@communityhousing.com.au.

### (Footnote)

1 The full document can be found at

www.dhw.wa.gov.au/review

# What's happening in the BPU?

Last year ended in fine style with a Networking Breakfast in Floreat looking at both the Access Card and the Cost of Homelessness Survey.

Michele Kosky, of the Health Consumers Council of WA, gave a dynamic presentation on the Access Card and the implications it will have for the Community Housing sector.

Dr Paul Flatau, of Murdoch University, also gave an update on the research study into the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of homelessness prevention and support programs.

The report will be available soon.

In January, the Key Provider follow up forum was held.

The forum was very productive with Warren Camarri from of the Department of Housing and Works outlining the department's strategy.

The two Key Providers also updated the sector on progress.

Please see the full article in this edition for a complete run down.

The first training session of the year kicked off with Minding your "Ps and Ps": simplifying policy development.

The feedback was very positive with requests for a similar session focusing on procedure development.

We will be running this session again in both Bunbury and Kalgoorlie due to popular demand.

The BPU is coordinating the COP review which is a priority for this year; please see the article in

the magazine covering the review process.

It is very important that the sector gets involved in the consultation process as the Code

should be driven by the sector.

The events calendar for 2007 is ready and we are all geared up for an exciting and productive

year.

We are looking forward to going on a few road trips this year and getting to meet our regional members.

## 2007 Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details
January 31 <sup>st</sup> 2007	Key Provider Forum - Follow up - Metropolitan area	Warren Camarri and the 2 Key Providers to present update on the Key Provider Strategy followed by a workshop to allow feedback and discuss the Proposed Guiding Principles.
February 21 <sup>st</sup> 2007	Sector Training – Minding your P' s and P's - Metropolitan area	Developing Policies and Procedures.
March 27 <sup>th</sup> – 28th	1. Sector Training – Minding your P's and P's 2. Sector Training – Rent Setting - Maximising Commonwealth Rent Assistance 3. Revised COP Consultation Forum	South West Regional Training Program -sessions will be run in Bunbury.
May 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2007	1. Rent Setting - Maximising Commonwealth Rent Assistance - Metropolitan area 2. CHCWA Council Meeting	Increase your rental income by capturing Commonwealth Rent Assistance  The opportunity for members to hear about what is happening at CHCWA and to vote upon key issues.
May 24 <sup>th</sup> 2007	Revised COP Consultation Forum - Metropolitan area	To allow sector consultation on the Revised Code
May 30 <sup>th</sup> - 31 <sup>st</sup> 2007	1. Sector Training – Minding your P's and P's 2. Sector Training – Rent Setting - Maximising Commonwealth Rent Assistance 3. Revised COP Consultation Forum	Kalgoorlie, Goldfields
July 26 <sup>th</sup> 2007	Revised COP Consultation Forum - Metropolitan area	To allow sector consultation on the Revised Code
August 13 <sup>th</sup> 2007	CHCWA Council Meeting	The opportunity for members to hear about what is happening at CHCWA and to vote upon key issues
September 26 <sup>th</sup> 2007	Sector Training – "Don't Take any Chances" - Metropolitan area	"Don't Take any Chances" -Risk Management for Community Housing Providers
October 25 <sup>th</sup> 2007	CHCWA Annual General Meeting	
November 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2007	WA Community Housing Conference	To Formally launch the Revised Code
November 2007	Sector Training - Metropolitan area	Registration Forum for the Revised Code
December 13 <sup>th</sup> 2007	Networking Sundowner - Metropolitan area	Sustainability of the Sector

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

# Key Provider Strategy Forum

Warren Camarri, of the Department of Housing and Works' Community Housing Branch, started the Key Provider Strategy follow-up forum in January this year by responding to questions about the Key Provider Strategy which arose at the initial forum in August last year.

## Lack of communication

One of the key concerns at the August forum was poor or no communication from the DHW to Key Providers and organisations that were being asked to establish a partnership.

Mr Camarri said the DHW recognised there had been issues.

"We should have listened and talked more," he said.

The process has changed with the DHW now talking to organisations right from the application stage.

Organisations seeking capital funding are encouraged to talk to a Key Provider and obtain a letter of support to submit with their application.

The DHW in turn prefers to contact a Key Provider and tell them they have spoken to an organisation at the application stage.

For existing projects, all organisations are encouraged to discuss potential management with a Key Provider but he said if they couldn't, it wasn't the end of the world.

## What does 'non-compliant' mean?

Mr Camarri said a 'non-compliant' provider was an organisation which had an unproven or unsatisfactory track record in housing management, did not have a specialist target group and was unwilling or unable to comply with funding agreement conditions.

He said failure to provide data returns to the DHW was an important consideration in defining an organisation as non-compliant.

In practice, organisations are currently assumed to be compliant 'unless identified otherwise.'

## Implementation Strategy

Under the strategy, the majori-



Participants of the Key provider Strategy follow-up forum.

ty of CHP and JVHP funding goes to the Key Providers.

Currently CDHP and CAP programs are not included.

## Key Providers' Perspective

Kaz Sternberg, the General Manager of Access Housing, and Kathleen Gregory, the Chief Executive Officer of Foundation Housing, shared their experiences of the Key Provider strategy so far.

Ms Gregory said the shift by the DHW to work more closely with partnerships was positive.

Foundation Housing's focus is to provide more social housing, to work in conjunction with the sector and to give people more choices.

Ten agencies have support agreements with Foundation.

Negotiations with agencies are based on seeking 'mutual benefit' and she said regulation was an important issue to be dealt with so that Key Providers could work with the private sector and be accountable for the large stock holdings that would eventuate from the strategy.

Kaz Sternberg said Access Housing now has 12 Memorandums of Understanding with agencies.

The change in approach by

DHW in working with potential partners in agreement has been welcomed.

She has found that MoUs clarify responsibilities, processes and communication.

Both Key Providers face similar challenges around increased housing costs, low access to land and an increasing demand for accommodation.

## Key Issues arising from group discussion

### Department for Community Development (DCD) and Office of Mental Health

Neither department has been involved in the process so far but the Key Provider strategy has opened up policy and funding gaps that need to be addressed.

The DCD funds organisations to provide supported accommodation but not to supply outreach support.

By separating the support and property management functions under the Key Provider strategy, some support agencies may face challenges in maintaining those programs.

A similar situation was highlighted with Mental Health programs.

# All I want is a room somewhere...

This is the title of a report which is nearing completion and which focuses on sustaining, increasing and diversifying lodging house accommodation in metropolitan Perth.

The report has been drafted by CHCWA on behalf of the Boarding and Lodging House Working Group which was formed by Department of Housing and Works (DHW) in April, 2006.

The group was established in response to the 'Where Will They Live?' campaign and the findings of research reports by CHCWA, Shelter WA and the Tenants Advice Service (TAS).

The current working group comprises representatives from a range of organisations including DHW, Department of Community Development, Department of Consumer Protection, CHCWA, TAS, Shelter WA, WA Association for Mental Health, community housing organisations and a private lodging house operator.

The research undertaken by the Working Group involved discussions with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the Health Department and various Local Government representatives.

It found that relevant staff often had limited understanding of lodging houses as a result of inconsistent definitions and an absence of guidelines.

This situation may worsen if there is no definition of lodging houses included in the new Public Health Act.

The research has also shown that the demographics of lodging house residents are diversifying in addition to an increase in the number of 'traditional demographic' lodging house residents seeking accommodation.

The current housing affordability crisis has seen a shift in demand for lodging house accommodation.

It is now also attracting 'key workers' such as cleaners and those employed in the hospitality and retail sector who are de-



*One of Foundation Housing's lodging house properties.*

scribed by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute as 'those who are deemed essential for the efficient working of the local or regional economy.'

Given the nature of their work and the importance of location, it is not always practical or possible for such people to sign a six or 12 month lease.

Rising land prices and increasing costs have created challenges for lodging house operators and several lodging houses in the Perth metropolitan area have closed in recent years.

While - in some cases - lodging houses provide less than optimal accommodation, they perform an important function, and their demise, unless matched by expan-

sions in other forms of low-cost housing, has considerable impact for individuals and the broader human services and housing systems.

In contrast, there are several providers who can demonstrate that lodging house accommodation of a suitable standard can be provided given sufficient financial input.

The report being finalised to go to the Minister for Housing and Works will cover a wide range of recommendations including targeted assistance for lodging house operators, amendments to planning regulations to reduce confusion and allow greater flexibility and better consumer protection for boarders and lodgers.

## The Key Provider forum

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### Guiding Principles in the Delivery of the Key Provider Strategy

A set of Guiding Principles to provide a general framework around the tripartite relationship between the Housing Authority, Key Providers and other Community Housing Providers was draft-

ed after the Key Provider forum in August 2006.

Those principles were in general accepted at the January Forum with some minor alterations.

The draft Guiding Principles will be reviewed to include the points suggested by the feedback groups and will then be re-circulated to the sector for final discussion.

# Foundation Housing project a milestone

Several years of planning and consultation came to fruition recently when plans for a \$6.5 million Community Housing Development in Midland were announced.

The development will provide affordable housing for key workers drawn to the area by the new police complex and the expanding medical facilities at the Swan Districts Hospital and mental health clinic.

It will include commercial space as well as artist and low income singles and couples accommodation.

The development is a joint venture between Foundation Housing and the Department of Works in partnership with the Midland Redevelopment Authority.

The new development at the corner of Helena Sreet and Foundry Road will feature 27 residential units and 455 square metres



The site at the corner of Helena Sreet and Foundry Road. where the new development will be built.

of commercial space.

It consists of 12 two-bedroom apartments, nine one-bedroom apartments and six studio units.

Thirteen of the units will be in the new 'affordable housing' category and available to key workers such as law enforcement workers and medical staff.

The remaining apartments will

be for traditional community housing tenants.

"The new project at Midland represents a new direction for Foundation Housing," Chief Executive Officer Kathleen Gregory said.

"For the first time, Foundation Housing will undertake all the project management and design work.

"The inclusion of commercial space will also help cross-subsidise the project."

Ms Gregory said the Midland project was due for completion in mid-2009.

It is part of Foundation Housing's \$35 million capital works program being undertaken in conjunction with the WA Government which will result in up to eight different housing projects being built.

She said Foundation Housing aims to increase the number of community housing units and homes in the northern and eastern regions of Perth, and not just growing through amalgamations.

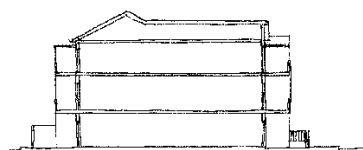
"We are quite happy to talk to groups that want us to manage their housing stock but we will not instigate the discussions," she said.



Foundry Road Elevation



Helena Street Elevation



Typical Section through Units

MIDLAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
CNR WALLSEND ROAD AND FOUNDRY ROAD, MIDLAND

ELEVATIONS & SECTION  
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100m

An artist's impression of the proposed \$6.5 million Midland Community Housing Development.

# Breakfast presentations informative

A huge thanks to Michele Kosky for an exciting and informative presentation on the Access Card.

Michele has given us the contact details of the Director Stakeholder Engagement Access Card in Canberra, Mary Barr, for follow up questions and they are telephone **02 6223.4488** or [Mary.Barr@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:Mary.Barr@humanservices.gov.au)

Also please email Denise at [bpu@communityhousing.com.au](mailto:bpu@communityhousing.com.au) for a copy of Michele's presentation.

We would also like to thank Dr Paul Flatau of Murdoch University for the update on cost of homelessness project and are looking forward to the report which will be available soon.

Thanks to everyone who came to the networking breakfast in the early hours to hear the two presenters. It was a lovely end to 2006 and all the CHCWA staff are looking forward to seeing you at future events.

Michele's presentation covered the following:

## Why an access card?

- to improve access to, and delivery of the Australian Government's health and social services/benefits
- to meet privacy needs and expectations
- to significantly enhance proof of identity
- a major technology upgrade using proven standards, technolo-



*Michele Kosky outlines what the Access Card means.*

gies and processes

## Benefits for individuals

- one card –not several
- your identity is more secure
- restricted access to your information
- option to customise
- one-off registration for access to many services
- update details –only once
- quick verification of your entitlements
- less paperwork
- easier access to one-off emergency payments

## Benefits for the Commonwealth

- More accurate payments
- Reduced health and social service fraud
- Efficiencies of replacing 17 cards with one

- Less red tape
- More responsive emergency relief payments
- Opportunity for increased use of self service

**The access card system** – how it works

**The card** – what it looks like - chip design

## Project update – Dec 06

- Key personnel are in place
- High level architecture and business requirements finalised
- New website and information
- Stakeholder engagement underway –consumers, privacy, health sector, financial sector, governments, third parties

## Next stage

- Release of key tenders
- First part of Legislation
- Detailed registration strategy underway
- Consultation along the way
- Access Card Consumer and Privacy Taskforce
- New Stakeholder Engagement Branch

## Key dates

- Registration from early 2008
- Cards required from 2010 to access services and payments

## Further information

[www.australia.gov.au/accesscard](http://www.australia.gov.au/accesscard)  
For specific access card matters telephone the Stakeholder Engagement Branch, Pablo Carpay on **02 6223 4763**.



*Dr Paul Flatau gives an update on the homelessness project.*

# Code of Practice Review 2007

The COP Review Working Group has been working hard at implementing all of the recommendations from the review that was undertaken in 2005.

There is a huge amount of work involved in the process so the original deadline of July 2007 has been extended to November 2007.

The revised standards are:

## 1. Allocations and tenant selection

Systems for the selection of tenants are transparent, fair and maintain a balance between need and available resources.

## 2. Tenant rights

The rights of tenants are respected and tenants are supported to exercise their rights.

## 3. Access to Information

Tenants and prospective tenants are provided with comprehensive, consistent and current information that meets their needs and is readily accessible and communicated appropriately.

## 4. Tenant participation

Tenant involvement in organisational activities and decision-making is both encouraged and supported.

## 5. Privacy and confidentiality

All tenant/applicant information is treated as confidential and tenants' rights to privacy and dignity are respected.

## 6. Grievance procedures and appeal mechanisms

Complaints are addressed promptly and fairly, and tenants are assisted to raise complaints without fear of retribution.

## 7. Tenancy Management

Tenancy management practices aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for tenants and comply with relevant legislation, contracts and individual tenant needs.

## 8. Property and Asset Management

The organisation will ensure a comprehensive and structured approach to the long term management of assets as tools for the efficient and effective delivery of community benefits.

## 9. Organisational management

Management practices are efficient, committed to continuous quality improvement, ensure accountability and deliver good outcomes for tenants, including but not limited to:

9.1 Occupational Health and Safety

9.2 Financial Management

9.3 Employment and Training

9.4 Administrative Systems

9.5 Volunteers

9.6 Conflict of Interest

9.7 Risk Management

9.8 Planning and development

9.9 Monitoring and Evaluation

9.10 Community Accountability and Transparency

## 10. Governance

The organisation is led and con-

trolled by an effective Board which collectively ensures delivery of its objectives, sets its strategic direction and upholds its values and ensures business continuity.

The BPU will be hosting several COP consultation forums to give the sector an opportunity to have its say.

We will be circulating discussion papers before the forums in order to allow optimal feedback.

The forum dates are:

May 24 Perth

May 31 Kalgoorlie

July 26 Perth

Keep an eye out in the weekly CHCPEN for more details.

Hope to see you all there.

## Staff changes at CHCWA



**Beth Edwards** is the new CHCWA Policy Officer.

Beth previously worked at the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the Environment and Energy Statistics Section in Canberra for four years.

She transferred to the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics in Darwin where she was responsible for a new project to provide information to Indigenous people in culturally appropriate ways.

Beth has also worked in Local Government providing aged care services in Melbourne.

During 2006, she went on 12 months leave to teach English in a school in rural India and to trav-

el in Australia.

Beth is looking forward to working in the not-for-profit sector and learning about issues in community housing.

She feels strongly about improving conditions for socially disadvantaged people.



**Dolores Gomez** is CHCWA's new Administration Officer.

Dolores has many years experience in accounts and administration.

She previously worked as accounts officer in the Bridging and Foundation Department at Curtin University and before that as accounts officer in the Department of Defence based at the Leeuwin Barracks.

# Access Card Bill introduced

The Federal Government's Access Card legislation, called the Human Services (Enhanced Service Delivery) Bill 2007, was introduced to the Parliament on February 7, 2007.

And on the same day, Attorney-General Philip Ruddock admitted the controversial smartcard which will contain personal details of people's health and welfare history could be abused by future governments.

Liberal backbenchers have raised concerns about the card and even Federal Liberal MP Bronwyn Bishop expressed fears about the scheme.

Mr Ruddock said: "No government can bind its successors. It's never been asserted that you can legislate now and that a new government can't amend it."

But Human Services Minister Ian Campbell said that was covered under the newly introduced legislation.

"Under the draft laws, any future government would have to pass legislation through Parliament to use the smartcard as a national identity card.

"Anyone demanding to see the card for identification purposes could be jailed for five years. It is an anti-ID card law," Senator Campbell said.

And in keeping with the haste with which the Access Card has been pushed forward, on February 21, 2007, the chair of the Access Card Consumer and Privacy Taskforce, Professor Allan Fels, released a discussion paper on Voluntary and Medical Emergency Information that can be considered for inclusion in the consumer-controlled area of the Access Card.

Submissions on the discussion paper were invited but the closing date of March 16, 2007, only allowed about three weeks for any submissions to be made.

Professor Fels said: "The purpose of the discussion paper is to initiate comment and help inform debate about the issues related to the storage of emergency informa-

tion in the customer-controlled area of the access card."

Officials of KPMG and the Office of the Access Card appeared before a senate committee investigating the new legislation supposed to establish the legal framework for the Access Card.

In its submission to the Senate Committee, the Office of the Access Card said the cost of identity fraud in Australia was between \$1bn and \$4bn a year.

Yet on the same day, Commissioner Keelty's boss, the Minister for Justice, Senator Chris Ellison, issued a media release claiming the cost of identity fraud in Australia was only \$1.1bn a year.

"All major political parties including the government have said they are opposed to a national ID card.

"Yet why is it that only a few coalition MPs still can't see what everyone else can – that the Access Card is a national ID card," Ms Johnston said.

CHCWA has reservations about the proposed card and how it im-

pacts on the community housing sector.

The decision to spend up to \$1 billion of taxpayers' money without any public consultation is a concern and CHCWA considers the money would have been better spent on providing more community housing for the ever increasing number of families caught up in the housing affordability crisis.

CHCWA is also concerned that the basics of the card were already determined before any attempt was made to gauge public opinion.

Registration for the card could also be a problem for some people in the community housing sector as well as homeless people.

Legislation needs to be introduced to restrict the use of the card to address privacy and consumer rights.

The card also raises the question of how it will impact on current commercial, State and Local Government entitlements and concessions.



*Cyrenian House recently gained Code of Practice Registration for its Saranna Women's Program and the group was presented with its COP Certificate.*

*At the presentation were Best Practice Unit Code of Practice Officer Janet Allen (left), Therapeutic Community Manager, Wendy Shannon, Executive Assistant, Malvina Limb, Executive Director, Carol Daws and CHCWA Board chair, Lynne Evans.*

## Who we are and what we do

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

### CHCWA's role is to

**• Represent the interests of local government and non-government social housing providers in WA.**

We make representations on behalf of the community housing sector to state and federal governments and also through our membership of relevant state and national committees including the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP), The Community Housing Federation of Australia, the WA Housing Minister's Forum.

**• Promote and expand local government and non-government social housing in WA.**

CHCWA is intimately involved in the ongoing promotion and expansion of community housing. This includes working with national, state and local governments to increase their commitments to community housing.

**• Improve the delivery of local government and non-government social housing in WA.**

CHCWA also works at a grassroots level to improve the delivery of community housing through advice, resourcing and training. CHCWA is the agency responsible for administering the Code of Practice for the community housing sector in Western Australia.

**• Identify unmet social housing needs**

Since merging with the Council to Homeless persons in 1999, CHCWA has become increasingly involved in homeless issues and now works to clearly identify unmet social housing need.

### Becoming a member

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

Membership of 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.

Full membership of CHCWA 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.

### Membership benefits

Improve the operating environment for your organisation by providing input into policies, positions and practices relating to community housing.

CHCWA takes your suggestions and represents your views to politicians, Government departments, the media, special interest groups and other stakeholders, ensuring that your concerns are heard and resolved.

Membership also offers

- Automatic access to **CSS**, the Community Sector Services common insurance arrangement.
- Regular **Council** meetings, to enable members to offer input into CHCWA policy positions.
- Members-only social **functions**, giving you an opportunity to meet other providers in a social setting.
- Workshops and forums, providing opportunities to discuss technical, business and political matters relating to the sector.
- Discounts on training workshops.
- Research and statistical information.
- Members' section on the web site, where you will find detailed information on current events, training opportunities and invitations to members-only functions.
- Opportunity for free advertising on our website.
- Free publications

### Membership Fees:

Fees are based on the number of dwellings managed by the applicant:

**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