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COMMUNITY HOUSING AWARDS FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia is holding its inaugural Community Housing Awards in December 2004. The Western Australian Community Housing Awards have been established to recognise the achievements of individual community housing organisations and to encourage excellence within the sector.

Supported through the sponsorship of The Department of Housing and Works, the Awards are a core initiative in the Community Housing Strategic Plan (2003–2008). “Create opportunities for innovation and leading practice”, the Awards aim to promote and strengthen a culture of leading practice within community housing organisations in WA.

The WA Awards follow successful state-based awards ceremonies in NSW and South Australia in recent years. It has been a long-standing aim of the National Awards for Excellence in Community Housing that state-based awards would follow.

The community housing sector in Western Australia continues to grow and the time has come to publicly recognise its strengths. The Awards will do this by acknowledging excellence across

four categories:

- Service to tenants and communities
- Corporate governance
- Innovation
- Sustainability

The Awards are closely aligned to the National Awards for Excellence in Community Housing, but will also reflect Western Australian priorities. Copies of the Award packages can be downloaded from the CHCWA web site www.communityhousing.com.au (see information below). Alternatively, you can contact the CHCWA office for an information kit to be posted out. The closing date for applications for the Awards is **Monday November 15, 2004.**

The Awards will be open to all organisations that are registered or in the process of registering with the WA Community Housing Code of Practice.

The Minister for Housing and Works, the Hon. Nick Griffiths, will present the Awards at a dinner being held on December 8, 2004.

The Awards and Dinner will come at the closing of the first community housing conference in WA since the late 1990s (it is interesting to note that the co-op sector has been running conferences in WA every year since 1996. This year's co-op conference is on the 7th of December).

The Conference theme will focus on, and emphasise, the successes of the community housing sector over the intervening years.

CDHP LEASE UPDATE

Progress is still being made on the review of the CDHP Lease. In May this year the Department circulated a draft of the new lease, however details of the lease fee were still to be worked out.

In June this year CHCWA undertook research into the level of lease fees that were affordable for providers, based on a range of sizes, target group, structure and location. The outcome of this work has been discussed with the Department and will inform negotiations around future levels of the lease fees. Watch this space...

For more information on the Awards:

Phone CHCWA on (08) 9221 7933
or E-mail
awards@communityhousing.com.au

To download the Awards Information Kit, go to the CHCWA website

www.communityhousing.com.au.

Click on “What’s on” and then download the PDF file on the sidebar “**2004 Community Housing Awards Information Kit**”.

Remember, applications must be in by Monday November 15, 2004

WA Community Housing Conference – Wednesday December 8, 2004.

Contact Pauline Farrell
conference@communityhousing.com.au



Community Housing
Coalition of WA

LET'S CELEBRATE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Showcasing Our
Successes

The WA Community Housing Conference and Awards Dinner.

For the first time since the late 1990's the Western Australian Community Housing sector is holding a conference! This will focus on the successes achieved by our sector. To truly celebrate, the Inaugural WA Community Housing Awards Dinner will follow the Conference. December 8 is looking like it will be a big day out!

The Conference is being held at the Broadwater Pagoda Resort Hotel and the Awards Dinner is at Frenchy's Restaurant. The venues are within walking distance of each other in Como.

The Conference and the Awards are strategies within the Community Housing Strategic Plan to create opportunities for innovation and leading practice and, as such, are being sponsored

by The Department of Housing and Works. The Minister for Housing and Works, the Honourable Nick Griffiths, will open the Conference and present the Awards.

Conference registrations are expected from a diverse range of government and non-government organisations that provide social housing throughout Western Australia. These include regional housing associations, church-based providers, indigenous organisations, cooperative housing groups, local government authorities, crisis accommodation providers and a large number of other community service organisations.

The diversity of the Conference program will ensure that those attending will find lots to interest them, including: looking to the future and how our organisations are changing; what sustainability might mean; and what does tenant participation really look like?

The concurrent sessions will cover a challenging range of topics such as: community housing in rural, regional and remote areas; what constitutes effective partnerships; what are the core values that underpin community housing; and managing the diversity of the community housing sector in WA.

In this newsletter package you'll find a registration brochure with

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WHAT'S ON?

Monday November 15, 2004

The closing date for applications for the Inaugural Western Australian Community Housing Awards. For information please contact

Awards@communityhousing.com.au

Thursday December 2, 2004

CHCWA Council Meeting, from 9.00am to 11.00am in the Conference Room, Claisebrook Lotteries House, 33 Moore Street, East Perth. For more information contact

Reception@communityhousing.com.au

Wednesday December 8, 2004

Community Housing Conference at the Broadwater Pagoda Convention Centre, 112 Melville Parade, Como. For more information contact

Conference@communityhousing.com.au

Wednesday December 8, 2004

Inaugural WA Community Housing Awards Dinner at Frenchy's Restaurant, 125 Melville Pde., Como. For more information contact

Awards@communityhousing.com.au

INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY TO BE DOCUMENTED - AT LAST!

Community housing is acknowledged for its diversity of models and approaches to housing that reflect local needs and deliver solutions appropriate to a local community. However, there has been no real attempt to record creative and innovative WA projects that have successfully housed many groups including those marginalised by culture, nationality or poverty.

Members of the Coalition have been asking for this to be documented since 2002. In response to a motion put to the 2003 Annual General Meeting, CHCWA developed a successful submission to LotteryWest earlier this year.

To be launched at the WA Community Housing Conference on December 8, the book will document these creative and innovative practices in 12 organisations. Photojournalist, Michael Wearne, is currently interviewing people from the following organisations:

- Baptistcare Geraldton
- City Housing
- Eastern Metropolitan Community Housing Association
- Fremantle Community Youth Services
- Fremantle Housing Association
- Hills Community Support Group
- Milligan Foundation – Mandurah
- Narrogin Cottage Homes
- Outcare
- St Bartholomew's House

- South City Housing Association
- Wesley Housing (Perth)

These organisations were selected from the twenty-five initially interviewed. To be eligible to be considered, all organisations were required to be registered or in the process of registering for the WA Community Housing Code of Practice. What became apparent was the extent and diversity of creative and innovative practice in the sector. This posed a difficult task for the Selection Panel.

At the end of the day, however, the Panel had to balance its decision by considering a range of factors including program, location, target group and the nature of the example of innovation.

When completed, 1,000 copies of the book will be circulated to everyone who attends the Community Housing Conference, CHCWA members, local government, state and federal members of parliament, other community organisations, educational institutions, libraries and government departments.

We would like to thank the members of the Selection Panel: Rob Spinks from Tenants Advice Service, Lisa Halibut from the Department of Housing and Works and Leanne Barron from the Office of Premier and Cabinet, for giving up their time to help select the 12 organisations listed above.



Key Providers in the Metro Area – Request for Proposals

One of the main strategies of the Community Housing Strategic Plan (2003-2008) was the establishment, by The Department of Housing and Works, of Key Providers in the metropolitan area. In July, advertisements calling for proposals appeared in the West Australian.

A briefing session for organisations interested in applying for Key Provider status was held on August 6. Jeff Mould, from the Department of Housing and Works, advised prospective Key Providers at the session that the Community Housing Program and Joint Venture Housing Program funds for 2004/05 could be split into 'metro' and 'country' funding, with only country providers being given the option of a submission process.

In the metro area, Key Providers would be the only organisations to have access to these funds. Jeff also said that benefits to Key Providers may include better access to land from the Department, the possibility of infrastructure funding, and some commitment to getting the provider to a state of financial viability. The Department expects Key Providers to be 'lateral and free thinking' and engage with them in relation to interpretation of policies and innovation.

An evaluation of the requests for proposals will take place early in 2005, organisations are expected to be advised in February, and the implementation will commence in March. The dates, however, are flexible and will depend on the submissions and the selection process.

The proposal forms and returnable schedule are available from the DHW website

www.dhw.wa.gov.au

(go to the Community Housing section).

The closing date for proposals is 2.00pm on November 30.

MORE THAN A BED: A CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER SERVICES FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN WA

Approximately 12,000 people in Western Australia and 100,000 people around Australia are homeless each night. Homeless people come from a broad range of backgrounds and ages, from the very young to the very old. More than a third of the homeless are children.

Since 1985, the main national response to homelessness has been the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). SAAP is a joint Commonwealth-State agreement that provides funding to over 1200 agencies Australia-wide. These agencies provide services and assistance to people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. The current SAAP agreement expires in 2005.

Despite the fact there was a 25 per cent increase in funding between SAAP III and SAAP IV, the program's services are unable to

GREG JOYCE TO RETIRE

Greg Joyce, the Director General of the Department of Housing and Works, has announced he will be retiring on the January 28, 2005. Greg joined Homeswest in 1973 and was appointed Executive Director in 1992. He is one of the most senior and respected bureaucrats in Western Australia and will be missed in the Department and the community sector. CHCWA wishes him all the best for his future.

meet the current demand. Every day hundreds of women, children and men desperately seeking temporary shelter are turned away. The chance of a homeless person being able to access a service is less than 50 per cent on any night.

The problem is compounded by the fact that increases in funding since 2000/01 have only covered the CPI and not met the real increase in costs. Although provision was made for the introduction of the Crisis Assistance, Supported Housing industry (CASH) Award, there has been no provision to fund wage increments. The Union has recently won a \$19 per week increase for workers in the industry. There is no additional funding to pay for this increase.

SAAP agencies are under increasing financial pressure as a result of other factors, including increased demands on the service, higher insurance premiums and the administration costs of the GST. The result is that agencies are being forced to restructure to minimise staffing costs and skilled, experienced workers are therefore lost.

This is creating a 'pressure pot' in which inexperienced, overworked employees try to support an increasingly frustrated and vulnerable group of people, whose needs are often very complex. Some SAAP agencies are forced into practices that can endanger people's lives.

To respond to this situation, the Australian Services Union (WA) (ASUWA), the Community Housing Coalition of WA (CHCWA), the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS), the Women's Council of Domestic and Family Violence Services (WCDFVS) and the Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA) have formed a Collaboration to campaign for better services for

homeless people called "**More than a Bed: a Campaign for Better Services for Homeless People**".

The Campaign is seeking a commitment from the state and federal governments to increase SAAP funding by 25 per cent to maintain services. It is also seeking an annual indexation figure that reflects the **real** increase in costs. The Campaign collaborators are also of the opinion that if the SAAP sector doesn't get the funding it needs it is in danger of collapsing!

"The Campaign is seeking a commitment to increase SAAP funding by 25 per cent to maintain services; and an annual indexation figure that reflects the real increase in costs."

The Campaign recognises that there is a significant level of unmet need, and that this should be addressed in the new SAAP agreement. However, the priority is to secure a 25 per cent increase to halt the decline in existing services.

The campaigning is already under way; to keep up-to-date with developments, check out the Campaign web site

www.morethanabed.org

Member Profile

St Bartholomew's House

Affectionately known as 'St Bart's', St Bartholomew's House at Brown Street, East Perth is an incorporated body associated with the Anglican Church.

From a one night's stay, for a young single man in crisis, to long-term community care for the aged, St Bart's covers the whole spectrum of community housing needs. It houses 84 people on site in East Perth; 54 in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) service, 10 in the community aged care program and 20 in the residential aged care program. Housing off-site consists of three crisis units (Cannington, Midland and Kwinana) with six people in each, as well as 61 houses in the Bentley area (under the ILP) and five 'exit houses' under the SAAP. The crisis units are for those with mental health problems and offer up to three months' accommodation.

Brown Street in the 'SAAP' (funded

by the Department for Community Development—DCD) only provides accommodation for men in crisis situations. Many of the residents have alcohol, drug and/or mental health issues. Most stay for one to three days; the rest stay anywhere from four days up to three months. About 83 per cent of crisis clients only stay once at the facility. St Bart's aims to help these men to become financially viable members of the community and to move on to longer-term accommodation.

St Bart's CEO, Lynne Evans, says wryly that because St Bart's services are 'not sexy' and that homeless men barely rate a mention in the wider community (compared to sick children or even battered women) organisations that care for them will always struggle for funding. There still seems to be a societal expectation that men should be able to cope and maintain their independence, she concludes.

After complaints from East Perth residents about supported accommodation tenants' behaviour, it was necessary to hold meetings with City of Perth Community Services, Safer WA East Perth committee - as well as with tenants. Over a period of six months, the issues were successfully resolved. This has resulted in a letter of support for St Bart's from the Safer WA East Perth committee - a complete (a very gratifying) turn-around.

"Alcohol is still our worst issue, from the point of view of incidents," says Lynne.

St Bart's works closely with Next Step, the drug and alcohol treatment centre. People coming out of 'detox' can find it difficult to get accommodation. Lynne would like to set up specific transitional accommodation for those people, away from people who

may still be abusing substances whilst living at St Bart's.

The residents with long-standing mental health issues, and who have been at St Bart's for a long time, often have no more suitable place to move on to - either under ILP or some other program. This ties up accommodation that would otherwise be available to new cases.

With its main funding coming from the DCD, the Office of Mental Health, and Health and Aged Care, St Bart's offers a multi-faceted service. A typical case may go like this:

HOUSING UPDATE

Housing Update is a publication of the Community Housing Coalition of Western Australia: 33 Moore Street East Perth, Western Australia.

Comments contained within this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of the Community Housing Coalition. Responsibility for this issue is taken by Mike Newbigin - Executive Officer. Email:

mike@communityhousing.com.au

A man comes out of prison in Qld, but uses all his money to get to the East Perth train station, in the hope that he may begin a new life in Perth. This man may have 10 days until his next CentreLink payment. Apart from offering accommodation, St Bart's aims to help such people avoid unhealthy influences in Perth, supporting him to 'step out' of the old ways and into something better.

Other support services are provided by agencies such as Perth Home Care, Community Aged Care, Meals on Wheels, and

NEW LOOK HOUSING UPDATE

After a considerable amount of struggle with templates and software CHCWA has finally sorted out our new look Housing Update.

Editions will be published each quarter and distributed free to those on our mailing list.

If you have any comments about the new look, would like additional copies, be removed from the list or write a contribution please contact us.

(Continued from page 2)

Carelink, and the resulting security of tenure helps stabilise residents. Because St Bart's is open 24 hours, tenants can phone and speak to someone anytime.

"In effect, although we're not funded for that service, because of it (the 24-hour service) there is always a contact, and that works very well," says Lynne.

In the case of a resident with no money left at all, St Bart's will offer one night's credit and then either endeavour to get an advance payment from CentreLink; or offer the client a chance to work off the debt.

The latter is through a system operating for the past two years in conjunction with CentreLink - whereby the residents clean the accommodation in return for credits towards their stay.

The main aim is always to stabilise the client's accommodation and get the best outcome for them.

"We start working with them to find out why they blew their budget and how we might prevent that happening again," says Lynne.

Once the resident has paid off fines, resolved any conflicts, sorted

out CentreLink payments, or found employment, they can go to the exit houses (where they may stay for several years) and from there back into the community.

Tenants have been encouraged to produce their own newsletter, now a regular feature at St Bart's. Five of the tenants in the Independent Living Program (ILP) have jobs and two attend university. The regular outings organised by



St Bart's have led to better social integration of the tenants. The resident dog (Bart the deerhound) also helps tenants in the crisis and supported accommodation (who have a range of social problems) to interact with and care for another living thing; so beginning to connect with other people.

The 'cleaning for accommodation' system helps

residents save cash for the day they move out, as well as helping them take responsibility for their environment. Tenants participating in this program say they find it enhances their self-esteem.

Completed in August 2002, Peter Hodge hostel in East Perth is a Joint Venture with the Department of Housing and Works and the Anglican Church, which houses 22 people on a long-term basis. St Bart's worked with Lori-

(Continued from page 1)

complete details of the Conference and we'd ask all of you to put December 8 in your diaries now!

Also inside the registration brochure, is a call for you to present a paper in one (or more) of the concurrent sessions.

You can stay up-to-date with the Conference through the website. The website includes a call for papers, program details, information about the venue and accommodation. The website address is:

www.communityhousing.com.au/conference

The Conference Coordinator is Pauline Farrell and the Conference structure and themes have been developed through a Conference Reference Group. Pauline can be contacted by e-mailing her at:

conference@communityhousing.com.au

keet Clubhouse, a drop in centre for people with mental illness, to design and complete a mosaic at the new hostel.

St Bart's has arranged for the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) to utilise its tenants for site clean up projects. DPI pays St Bart's, who then pay the tenants. This offers the tenants an opportunity to earn some income, whilst providing a useful service to the community. Some tenants have also volunteered at City Farm.

Apart from developing separate housing for Next Step's rehab clients, there are no specific plans for the future right now, apart from continuing to offer the best accommodation outcomes for some of society's most vulnerable people.

REVIEW FOR THE CODE OF PRACTICE

The WA Community Housing Code of Practice is about to go through its biannual review. Due to commence in November, the review comes at a time when the Code is coming under increasing scrutiny from both community housing providers and the Department of Housing and Works.

Anyone who has been following the development of the WA Community Housing Strategic Plan couldn't help but notice the increasingly important role the Code will play. This role is evident in such areas as the development of Key Providers in the Metropolitan area; and the requirement for organisations seeking funding to be in compliance with the Code.

The review will have its work cut out in examining the potential 'blurring' of lines between the Code of Practice and the National Community Housing Standards and Accreditation system.

The overall aim of the review is to make recommendations on any changes necessary to the Code and administrative protocols. This

NEW CHCWA PUBLICATIONS

We have recently printed two research and policy papers: "Review of the RHA Agenda" and "Common Waiting Lists".

The RHA (Regional Housing Associations) paper examines the rationale for their establishment and how that agenda has progressed over the intervening years. This is a topical paper given the establishment of Key Providers in the Metro area.

Copies of both papers have been sent to members. If you would like one please email:
reception@communityhousing.com.au

will include any actions needing to be taken in relation to the National Standards and Accreditation system.

All of this aside, it is, however, a requirement that a review of the Code of Practice and Administrative Protocols are undertaken at least biannually. The last review took place in 2001; however, it was not until 2002 that the CHCWA Council finally approved the changes.

This delay was mainly as a result of a lack of dedicated staff resources allocated to the Code. As part of its review of the operations of the Coalition in 2002, the Board appointed a resource officer to administer the code and chair the Code of Practice Monitoring Committee.

The review, to be undertaken by an independent consultant, will look at the operation of the Code over the last three years. Several key areas will be examined, including the impact of the adoption of the Code of Practice on registered organisations with a particular focus on issues such as compliance and tenant outcomes.

Over the last few years of operation, a number of gaps in the Code have become apparent, including the serious issues of sanctions and the need to develop some policies and procedures around de-registration. Of course, this will require some careful thinking as to what is a 'reasonable' number of breaches and what type of breaches of the Code are unacceptable, before de-registration is considered or imposed.

The 'Request for a Quotation' closed on October 15. However copies of the documentation can still be downloaded from the CHCWA website at

www.communityhousing.com.au (go to the 'What's On' page and download the PDF called "Tender for the Code of Practice Review" August 04).

The review is due to be completed in time for its implementation from July 2005.

AGM UPDATE

The eighth Annual General Meeting of the Community Housing Coalition of WA, heard from Peter Yu (the Chair of the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Council—AHIC) on the potential to form closer links between community housing and Aboriginal housing. These closer links could include closer funding partnerships, opportunities for community housing to compete for funds, and examining the potential to lease and manage Aboriginal public housing stock.

The meeting also heard from Cheryl Davenport (Chair of the Supported Accommodation Program State Advisory Committee) on the challenges facing the SAAP sector, including an ageing population and the need for a paradigm shift away from 'silo mentality'. Full copies of these speeches will be available on the CHCWA web-site soon.

The CHCWA Board for 2004/05 are:

- Lynne Evans Chair,
- Mick O'Loughlen Secretary
- Hans Gerritsen Treasurer
- Bob Chown
- Kathleen Gregory
- Ernie Hansen
- Nola Kelly
- Roma Lewi, and
- Greg Stubbs

QUALIFICATIONS IN SOCIAL HOUSING – SOON

After two years of negotiations, CHCWA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the WA Centre for Leadership and Community Development (Challenger TAFE) to deliver nationally recognised, competency-based Social Housing qualifications to the sector.

CHCWA also worked with the Department of Education and Training and the Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure Directorate to secure funding of \$80,000 to develop the curriculum materials.

The development of these curriculum materials required the secondment, to the WA Centre for Leadership and Community Development, of CHCWA's Sector Development Officer, DI Niyati. DI has been on secondment since late July. With the first two units completed, a trial of the training is due to commence in the last term of 2004.

CHC40802 Certificate IV in Social Housing will be the first available qualification.

This qualification covers workers who are engaged in delivering social housing services to tenants, applicants, and the community. It is also an appropriate qualification for policy workers in the non-government sector.

To complete Certificate IV, each person will have to cover 15 units.

Below is an outline of the units that will be available for CHC40802: Certificate IV Social Housing.

15 units: 9 Core units + 6 Electives (at least 2 from Group 1)

The units need to be selected from those listed below:

(Core) CHCCH1B Orientation to Work in Social Housing

(Core) CHCCH26A Support Client Participation in Organisation

(Core) CHCCD12C Apply a Community Development Framework

(Core) CHCCS301A Work Within a Legal and Ethical Framework

(Core) CHCINF5B Meet Statutory & Organisational Information Requirements

(Core) CHCOHS301A Participate in Workplace Safety Procedures

(Core) CHCCOM3C Utilise Specialist Communication Skills

(Core) CHCCS9A Provide Support Service to Clients

(Core) CHCCH23A Provide Advice to Tenants and/or Clients

(Core) CHCNET4A Work with Other Services

(Core) CHCCH10C Manage and Maintain Tenancies

(Group 1) CHCCH11B Manage Housing Applications

(Group 1) CHCCH12B Manage Housing Allocations

(Group 1) CHCCH13C Manage Tenancy Rent and Charges

(Group 1) CHCCH16B Manage Vacant Properties

(Group 1) CHCCH17B Respond to Property Maintenance or Purchase Enquiries

(Group 1) CHCCH19B Manage Property Maintenance

(Group 1) PRXPD33A Undertake Property Inspections.

(Group 2) BSBATSIC403A Maintain and Protect Culture

(Group 2) BSBATSIC501A Conduct a Community Meeting

(Group 2) HLTHIR4A Work Effectively in a Cross Cultural Context

(Group 2) CHCCS405A Work with Culturally Diverse Clients and workers.

AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY HOUSING STRATEGIC PLAN

As a result of a resolution made by the CHCWA Council earlier this year, discussions have been taking place between CHCWA and The Department of Housing and Works on the time-lines and priorities for implementing the Community Housing Strategic Plan.

A working party, made up of Jeff Mould and Bob Thomas from the Department, Mike Newbigin (CHCWA), Steve McDermott/Tony Grealy (St Patrick's) and Fiona Callan (Northside Housing Association) met during August and September and worked through many of the implementation issues and priorities.

These priorities and time-lines were subsequently discussed at a forum for CHCWA members in mid-September. The results of this and the final Community Housing Strategic Plan, which includes time-lines, will be widely available soon.

CHCWA has negotiated for all those working in the sector, who wish to receive the Certificate, to be assessed in the workplace—this will establish the areas in which they are already competent. A training plan will then be created and the organising of training sessions, at a time and place convenient to those involved, will be arranged.

Fees will be the standard TAFE fees and traineeships are available.

For further information contact Di Niyati at Challenger TAFE on email:

diane.niyati@challengertafe.wa.edu.au