

Housing Update



Identifying Community Housing Needs

The Community Housing Coalition of WA

Summer 2008

Forum on legislative framework

It has been a busy time for the Department of Housing and Works' policy team with the recent circulation of its 'Proposed Amendments to the Housing Act 1980 and Request for Comments' to the sector.

When registration was introduced in 2007, it was with the long term view of moving the policy based structure into a legislative framework within three to four years and is a condition of the State Community Housing Investment Program (SCHIP) funding.

Providers were sent the paper recently and CHCWA strongly encourages everyone to read and consider the contents most carefully, particularly giving consideration as to how the legislative framework will impact their business in the future.

This is a considerable change to the way community housing has traditionally been governed and the document raises several questions which must be seriously reviewed and discussed by the sector.

CHCWA recognises the need for Government to ensure it has sufficient structures in place to satisfy governance requirements and demonstrate transparency and accountability in the use of public monies and any legislative structure must be balanced and flexible enough to allow the sector to grow and develop.

The document raises many critical questions and issues that need to be fully investigated and answered before a legislative framework can be determined.

CHCWA will host a Providers' Forum on January 15, 2009, at the Boulevard Centre in Floreat from 8.30 am to 12 noon. Keep

an eye out for the flyer and CHCWA background paper which will be released in the near future.

The introduction of legislation will affect all providers and CHCWA believes it is imperative that as a sector, an informed and

constructive response be provided to the DHW.

All providers are therefore encouraged to attend the forum and enter into dialogue so that the proposal can be reviewed and your ideas and concerns conveyed to the DHW.

Vital forum to discuss Legislative Framework

A Breakfast Forum will be held on

Thursday, January 15, 2009

to consider the
Department of Housing and Works'
**Legislative Framework for Community
Housing Consultation Draft.**

All community housing providers are urged to attend the forum to provide input into developing legislative amendments to the 1980 Housing Act.

**Boulevard Centre
The Boulevard
Floreat**

8.30am to 12noon



Copies of the consultation package can be downloaded from www.dhw.wa.gov.au/400_2081.asp

Delivering sector development message

The Community Housing Directorate of the Department of Housing and Works is currently engaged in a program of taking its message of Sector Development to regional areas to explain the opportunities for growth, sector initiatives and capacity building.

As part of the program, Jeanette Barrington, DHW's Community Housing Sector Development Officer, visited Geraldton to address a group of local community housing providers to outline the new legislative requirements to qualify for funding from the Government for housing.

In May, 2007, the State Government allocated \$210 million to community housing in a four-year period starting in July, 2007. The money comes through the State Community Housing investment Program or SCHIP.

SCHIP funding is conditional upon effective regulation of the community housing sector, targeting of funds to larger scale 'registered' providers and allocations to community housing properties directly from the public housing waitlist.

Under the Public Housing Leasing program or PHLP, the DHW plans to capacity build and expand the community housing sector by transferring the management of public rental housing stock to large scale registered providers. The DHW believes that with SCHIP funding and the transfer of PHLP properties couple with effective sector consolidation measures, the Midwest Region can benefit from a substantial boost in social and affordable housing stock to achieve its aim of 'More people in housing.'

Jeanette told the Midwest providers that growth is the key to sector development. No one housing agency is currently equipped to meet the unprecedented demand for affordable housing in WA but she said the community housing sector was better positioned to maximise available incentives such as GST exemptions on new house purchases or construction.

Jeanette said community housing organisations could maximise growth opportunities outside the Community Housing Directorate by networking and fostering consolidation within the sector with their peers and or larger or

smaller community housing organisations. This could mean mergers and strategic alliances or partnerships on a strategic scale with one central management function or on an individual project level to provide local housing to meet the local needs of a particular target group.

Larger community housing organisations would have the capacity to resource housing and tenancy management across wider areas within a region with experienced housing management personnel, contractors and networks with service providers for support. Jeanette said this did not mean importing personnel from out-

side the region but to 'buy local and use local' wherever possible.

Jeanette said the smaller organisations do not have to merge with larger ones but several smaller ones could unite under the umbrella of one newly formed organisation. She said whichever path was chosen, it did not mean that passing housing management functions across to another organisation would result in any loss of stock to an organisation's client base.

Expressions of Interest for Growth provider and Preferred Provider status will be called for in the Midwest and Gascoyne Regions in either March or April next year.

New funding agreement

At a time when the demand for accommodation is increasing and with the public and community housing waiting lists at record levels, it is important for the sector that community housing is in a strong position to grow its housing stock.

The Community Housing Coalition of WA (CHCWA), the peak body for community housing providers, has to play a greater role in helping providers face the challenges of growing their housing stock while at the same time meeting the requirements of the Department of Housing and Works to become registered as growth, preferred or registered providers.

CHCWA has been negotiating with the Community Housing Directorate of the DHW for a new round of funding to cover the period July 2008 to June 2011.

A new agreement between the DHW and CHCWA would see CHCWA provide a greater range of resources and services across all community housing providers in WA.

We at CHCWA are pleased to have the confidence of the DHW demonstrated not only in them providing adequate funding for our activities but also for their support for our independent role which is demonstrated by our organisation's capacity to represent the sector to the three levels of government and other suitable forums.

CHCWA's role is important to the DHW and the sector through a comprehensive communication network and professional publications and our ability to interface between both parties in a meaningful, professional and positive manner.

To conclude, I would like to thank the senior DHW officers, Gary Ellender, the Acting Director of Community Housing, and Robert Heaton, the Manager of Compliance and Regulation, for their support and professionalism during the negotiating period.

Colin McClughan
Executive Officer

From the Executive Officer...

Welcome to new board members

It seems at the end of every year, we hear our colleagues, family and friends comment on how quickly the time has passed and for me it is no different, so it is time to reflect, at least on the last three months, for the purpose of the summer issue of Housing Update.

On October 24, we held our annual general meeting at which the members elected Annette Chivers of Zonta House Refuge Association and Pauline Farrell of First Fremantle to the board. Popular former board member Richard Sheridan has remained on the board as an ex officio member.

On behalf of the staff at CHCWA I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new board members and thank those who have moved on for the great support they have given the staff of CHCWA during their time in office.

Since the last issue, we have lost two staff members, Gary Kleyn, policy officer and Louise Leicester, training support officer. Alice Hennessy is the new training support officer assisting Daniel Guise.

At this stage, we do not have a permanent replacement for Gary, however we have been very fortunate to have the services of Julie-ann Lorca, a former Executive Officer, until December 19. Julie-ann is moving to Victoria in January, 2009, when her husband takes up a new post.

After the AGM, a forum was convened for CHCWA's small providers of which there were some 30 attendees. At the request of the small providers, the former Director of Community Housing at the Department of Housing and Works, Roger Guinery, and Garry Ellender, the current acting Director of community housing, attended.

Both Roger and Garry provided the members with the DHW's view on registration in which they said well managed providers had nothing to fear. The DHW took the view that providers would be encouraged to use registration as a tool to improve their business practices. Small providers which fall within the third tier of registration should expect the DHW to call for applications in March, 2009.

New Legislative Framework

The DHW is seeking feedback on a proposed new Legislative Framework for Community Housing in WA. According to the DHW, "the overarching intent of the legislative proposals is to grow and strengthen the community housing sector, to improve organisations capacity to work in partnership with Government and private sector, and to have an increased focus on organisational performance and quality outcomes for tenants."

CHCWA has sought and received an extension from the DHW from December 19, 2008, to the end of January, 2009, which will allow CHCWA the opportunity to conduct a sector forum in mid-January.

On November 29, 2008, the Council of Australian Governments met and issued a communiqué committing \$800 million over five years to combat homelessness. The allocation will be split 50/50 between the commonwealth and the states and is part of a commitment of \$10 billion in COAG's Affordable Housing Agreement which also includes \$1.94 billion over 10 years for remote indigenous housing.

The pledge of \$400 million over two years for social hous-



ing is not seen as being adequate by housing advocates with leading researcher and National Affordable Housing Summit Chairman Julian Disney stating that at least \$900 million for social housing was needed each year.

Despite disappointment in the amount committed to social housing, at a time of financial uncertainty within the Australian community, it is heartening to see government make a serious commitment to reducing homelessness.

To conclude my report, I would like to thank those CHCWA members who have made me feel most welcome when I have visited them, the CHCWA board for their guidance and support and not least CHCWA's staff who have assisted me in many ways since I commenced earlier this year.

I would also take the opportunity to wish all the readers a safe and enjoyable time with their family during the Christmas and new year period and I look forward meeting and talking to you in 2009.

Colin McClughan
Executive Officer

Diving into the surplus pool

The Department of Housing and Works (DHW) recently circulated its 'Discussion Paper on Rental Surpluses Policy' to community housing organisations asking them to consider and comment on the draft.

Thanks go to all those Local Government associations and not for profit community housing providers who provided feedback which will help to provide an informed sector response.

According to the discussion paper, financial modeling undertaken as part of the DHW's Community Housing Review 2007 estimates that \$3 to \$4million of rental surpluses are generated annually within the sector. Based on say a \$3million surplus per annum, and with 241 providers in WA, the surplus equates to about \$12,450 per provider. And, with about 5,000 properties in the sector, the average is \$600 per unit of accommodation.

The DHW believes the surpluses are not being reinvested into social housing growth, an issue that has been the subject of debate for some time. Sector feedback indicates smaller providers generally achieve minimal surplus, no surplus or a deficit which can change each year depending on the age of stock and varying requirements for refurbishment, repair, upgrade or improvement.

Historically, some larger providers have contributed to joint venture projects utilising cash reserves although it is unclear as to whether those reserves were generated solely from rental surpluses. Determining what percentage of cash reserves generated solely as rental surpluses in DHW funded projects were injected back into social housing growth would assist in painting a clearer picture of the amount

that could potentially be invested.

No information was provided in the paper as to how the financial modeling exercise was scoped. Inevitably, therefore, questions arise as to what amount has been factored in for the massive input by volunteers, local donations, grants and fundraisers which have for many years supported and subsidised many community housing providers and contributed to them achieving any surplus.

Some providers have voiced concern about the ability to attract ongoing volunteer, fundraising and donation participation from the local community where the surpluses generated in that community may be at risk of being allocated to other areas.

Concern over 'pooling'

There was a similar concern about ensuring that where 'pooling' may be undertaken, only those organisations with similar missions and client groups be matched together.

But, should the sector achieve a surplus of about \$3million in practice, and assuming it could be collected and administered without a considerable burden and cost to both the DHW and the sector, the 'surplus' could potentially add about six properties per annum (based on development costs of about \$450,000 per unit) to the State's social housing portfolio. Although the DHW estimates an additional 20 units per annum was achievable with \$3million, or around \$150,000 per unit, CHCWA believes seven units is more realistic in the current building and real estate market. This figure also makes al-

lowance for a land component.

The DHW proposes two options to deal with surpluses. Overall, providers were not in favour of Option 1 'Compulsory Pooling of Surpluses within the Department,' which would see all community housing organisations required to report annual surpluses and return those to the DHW. The DHW also agrees this would not provide sufficient flexibility for providers. A further question under this model would be how deficits might be handled and whether the organisations that have contributed to surpluses may then be reimbursed in deficit years.

Option 2, 'Varied Response based on Registration Category,' would see Growth and Preferred Providers retaining their surpluses, subject to an approved growth plan, and having the ability to attract surpluses from 'Registered Providers.' Registered Providers might have the option of pooling surpluses with another Growth, Preferred or Registered Provider; returning surpluses to the DHW for reinvestment with Growth or Preferred Providers; using surpluses for property upgrade or improvements/refurbishments; using surpluses to purchase additional equity in existing projects or using surpluses to build new community housing units.

There was qualified support for Option 2 with most providers wishing to retain independence in use of their surpluses by applying them to refurbishment, upgrade and fit-out projects. This is particularly relevant to the sector, given the amount of ageing accommodation stocks currently making up providers' portfolios which will require a higher level of investment to ensure their

Lynne Evans back as board chair

Lynne Evans was returned as chair of the Community Housing Coalition of WA Board at its annual general meeting on Friday, October 24, 2008.

Leanne Strommen was again elected Secretary and Ernie Hansen, Treasurer.

Four board positions fell vacant this year and they were filled by existing board members Don Tunnicliffe and Kathleen Gregory and Pauline Farrell and Annette Chivers were elected to the board for the first time. Richard Sheridan was invited to become an ex-officio board member.

Greg Ledger was appointed auditor for 2008/2009, after having filled that role for the four preceding years.

Committee representatives for the coming year are:

Community Housing Federation of Aust:

Daniel Guise, CHCWA BPU Manager, and Pauline Farrell, FOHCOL

Council to Homeless Persons Australia:

Lynne Evans, St Barts, and Marjorie Caw, Hills Community Support Group, proxy

Independent Living Program (ILP):

Marjorie Caw, HCSG

Community Sector Services:

Colin McClughan, CHCWA Executive Officer

SAAP Training Committee:

Daniel Guise, CHCWA BPU Manager

Housing and Urban Research Institute of WA (HURIWA):

Colin McClughan, CHCWA EO

WACOSS Peaks Forum:

Colin McClughan, CHCWA EO

WACOSS Consumer Utilities Program (CUP):

Colin McClughan, CHCWA EO

SAAP Training Advisory Committee (TAC):

Daniel Guise, BPU Manager

SAAP Protocols:

Colin McClughan, CHCWA EO

Comment on rental surpluses policy sought

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suitability in the longer term. Maintaining flexibility in the approach as to how such surpluses are utilised is critical, especially for organisations in regional areas where there is overwhelming support to retain funding within the area, and with specialist providers, many of which have much higher repair and maintenance costs due to their high needs client group. Similarly, the potential to purchase additional equity in existing housing projects is favoured by several organisations. As always, though, the devil is in the detail, and the critical issue is who decides how the money is applied. That is, how much autonomy will providers have in determining how funds are used?

The draft policy also discusses the 'authorised categories of expenditure' and what would be allowable by the DHW. It is interesting to ponder why such a list would be necessary, given the high financial compliance required by organisations through both the DHW's registration process and other

regulatory requirements. There is already a requirement for organisations to provide independently audited financial reports which should provide the DHW with a sufficient level of comfort in regards to transparency of an organisation's business operations. But, should such an expenditure list be implemented, it would assist providers if broad items of expenditure, such as what comprises 'staff and administration costs?' or in particular 'any other costs the DHW may reasonably deem as necessary from time to time,' could be more clearly defined.

Another issue is the DHW's current policy of setting aside 1 per cent for long-term maintenance. Given the ageing stocks currently held by the sector, many feel this is not sufficient. It also has implications when calculating rental surplus. CHCWA will investigate further and engage the DHW in discussion on the issue to establish what formula may be more appropriate.

The evaluation of surpluses will also be a key driver for the sector. The DHW is planning

to circulate an annual report but no details are available as yet to articulate how evaluation will be made and what the performance indicators will be. Although it supports an annual evaluation process, the sector would like to see more detail.

An extension of time for implementation would allow for further comprehensive detail and sector input and it would be envisaged that as this policy will be impacted by the legislative framework, a time-frame for implementation would be in line with the legislation's introduction.

There are several subsidiary issues canvassed in the document and a full report on the sector responses will be available on CHCWA's website in the near future. Although there are several issues that require further detail, CHCWA and the sector welcome the opportunity to work with the DHW in the development of a workable, sustainable rental surplus policy and CHCWA looks forward to liaising further with both the sector and DHW to progress the policy.

HCSG says thanks for support

The Hills Community Support Group recently held a Sundowner for stakeholders and funding bodies at the group's Enterprise House in midland.

The Sundowner was the final 25th Anniversary celebration in a series of 'thank you' events that have been rolled out throughout the year.

The theme for all events has been 'giving back to the community' – a thank you for its support, its response to the group's initiatives and for the care for those the group works with.

Enterprise House was filled with artwork created in workshops for the event by an enthusiastic group of older people, people with disabilities and Aboriginal ladies.

Artworks from the workshops were presented to Lotterywest and Midland Brick in thanks for their tremendous support for many years.

The 25 years History Update, *Next of Kin*, was launched by Councillor Dr Alan Pilgrim who



HCSG Chief Executive Officer Helen Dullard with Lotterywest Chairman Clyde Bevan at the Sundowner.

expressed his belief on 'the value of taking the time to capture the journey through telling the story.'

Author, Alice Nelson, spoke on the personal impact that gathering the 'stories' had on her.

"I will never forget this. I could easily work for HCSG,"

she said.

HCSG's Chief Executive Officer, Helen Dullard, acknowledged the encouragement, support and wisdom given to HCSG in the past 25 years.

Each Government Agency, Local Authority and others who attended the Sundowner have watched HCSG grow from an insignificant little entity with nothing but a dream to what it is today, an organisation with strong foundations, innovative and successfully building an infrastructure that will enhance its capacity to meet the ever increasing challenges of the sector.

Helen said how hard it was to believe that HCSG had grown to where it is now and that 96 per cent of that growth had happened in the last five years.

Helen also shared some of the milestones and significant issues that, in the last 25 years, have impacted on HCSG's growth from a cottage service to an organisation confident in its ability to provide high quality services throughout the Eastern Region.



Mundaring Shire Councillor, Dr Alan Pilgrim, launches the HCSG 25 years History Update, Next of Kin.

Stage set for Gimme Shelter '2'

The picturesque Fremantle Arts Centre will again come alive to the sound of music as the second Gimme Shelter concert takes to the stage on Saturday, February 21, 2009.

After months of planning, countless meetings, the St Patrick's Starlight Hotel Choir diligently rehearsing every Thursday morning and endless emails between the dedicated organising committee, the big event is on again and there is no turning back!

Rising local stars Abbey May and The Rockin' Pneumonia along with the Dream State Circus are already confirmed bookings for the concert.

The organisers are hoping that the local community will get right behind the event as they did last year and help make it even more successful.

If anyone is interested in becoming a sponsor, helping spread the word through their networks, helping out on the night, having an information stall if they are a non-Government-organisation or becoming involved in any way then please get in touch with Victor Crevatin by email at vcrevatin@stpats.com.au

The inaugural Gimme Shelter concert was held in Febru-



St Patrick's Starlight Hotel Choir set for another stunning performance at the next Gimme Shelter Concert.

ary, 2008, also at the Fremantle Arts Centre.

The community support for the event was strong with more than 1,000 people turning up for the concert on the south lawn with great local bands, speeches and entertainment including St Pat's own Starlight Hotel Choir which performed on the main stage and then raced off to do a special

encore performance in the Arts Centre courtyard.

St Pat's and other organisations which provide support for the homeless, had information stalls and the Gimme Shelter wristband appeal was launched.

The night was an overwhelming success both financially and in terms of raising awareness.

HCSG says thanks

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HCSG was founded 25 years ago to respond to community needs and it was those needs that created HCSG's diversity which has 'mushroomed' to embrace youth, aged, people with disabilities and carers.

In addition, a team of skilled, experienced and dedicated staff and volunteers provides the capacity for HCSG to plan for the future.

(Right) HCSG Chief Executive Officer Helen Dullard with Kym Cramer of Midland Brick.





CHCWA's Best Practice Unit Manager Daniel Guise meets Karen Worth, the Chief Executive Officer of Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation, in Fitzroy crossing.

BPU focuses on training for housing providers

This year, the Best Practice Unit (BPU) focused on providing as many community housing providers as possible with training and business improvement resources.

This has called for the frequent running of training courses in both metropolitan and regional areas.

The objective of running the courses is to expose organisations to best practice policies and procedures which will in turn improve an organisation's ability to deliver quality outcomes.

In November, 2008, the unit travelled to Fitzroy Crossing to meet Karen Worth, the Chief Executive Officer of Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation (MWWAC).

MWWAC is the oldest and

largest Aboriginal Resource Agency in the Kimberly region.

It currently services 35 communities located throughout the Kimberley, providing them with ongoing support and assistance as well as offering them a voice and avenue to Government.

The BPU discussed with Karen her hope and vision for the organisation's future and, where appropriate, advice was offered about the best way to apply various improvement strategies.

The organisation was also supplied with relevant resources which will aid in implementing updated policies and procedures.

The whole process was a success and we look forward to working with MWWAC in the future.

BPU Manager elected to CHFA Board

The Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA) held its annual general meeting and National Members' Meeting in Adelaide on November 27 and 28, 2008, with delegates from every state and territory meeting to discuss the many issues confronting the Community Housing sector across the nation.

At the meeting, CHCWA's Best Practice Unit Manager Daniel Guise was elected to the board.

Ciarán Synnott and Derek Yule were re-elected unopposed in the positions of Chairperson and Treasurer respectively.

Daniel joins Adam Farrar, Steve Bevington, Mike Myers and Jed Donohue as the other elected board members.

The National Members' Meeting began with a presentation by guest speaker Phil Fagan-Schmidt, Deputy Chief Executive of the Department of Families and Communities for the South Australian Government.

Mr Fagan-Schmidt outlined his government's viewpoint on the affordable housing crisis and detailed some of the South Australian Government's responses, including their HomeStart and Property Locator Programs.

The National Member's Meeting covered many topics during the two days including the National Affordable Housing Agreement, National Rental Affordability Scheme, the charitable tax status of housing providers, common equity schemes around Australia and the CHFA constitution.

Delegates also worked to develop CHFA's 2008-09 financial year work plan.

Combined 'Housing Celebration Day'

The Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) and Swinburne University held a combined 'Housing Celebration Day' at the Novotel Langley Hotel in Perth on November 12, 2008.

The day provided an opportunity for past and present Swinburne students, and the WA AHI membership to network and share industry skills and knowledge in addition to celebrating the great work done by all in the social housing sector.

The day was attended by CHCWA and Department of Housing and Works staff and others who are past and present Swinburne students as well as AHI members.

The day's events started with breakfast and were opened by AHI President Shane Edmonds who then chaired a discussion on the topic 'Challenges for Professional Education in Human Services.

Speakers included the DHW's Director General, Grahame Searle, Swinburne University's Dean of the Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Russell Crawford, and Brendan Moran of Housing South Australia.

This was followed by a session to celebrate the achievements of Swinburne University students past and present.

The Dean of the Faculty of Life and Social Science, Russell Crawford, and Professor Terry Burke were the keynote speakers.

An acknowledgement of students and sharing of student experiences facilitated by AHI Chief Executive Officer Joan Ferguson followed.

There was also a presentation by the AHI to Swinburne University to formalise professional acknowledgement of Swinburne housing courses.

In the afternoon, the AHI



(Left to right) Michael Pelling of Swinburne University, Neil Sandel, Australasian Housing Institute NSW Director and Gary Gardiner Australasian Housing Institute Indigenous Board Member discuss the topics at the Housing Celebration Day.

held a special general meeting followed by its annual general meeting the keynote speaker for which was Grahame Searle.

At the AGM, Shane Edmonds, Matthew Woodward and Anthony Rantell were appointed to positions of President, Community Housing and Volunteer representatives.

The final event of the day was a joint policy forum run by the AHI and Swinburne University facilitated by Joan Ferguson, AHI CEO.

The keynote speaker, Professor Terry Burke of Swinburne University, spoke on the topic of 'Failing markets and Housing interventions' and challenged the audience to think about the future of social housing.

A panel comprising leaders of the public and private housing sectors then responded to Professor Burke's speech.

On November 13, 2008, the AHI held a workshop at the Mantra on Hay on the topic 'Aboriginal Housing – Developing a Vision for the Future.'

This was the first of two workshops (the second will be run in Sydney) aimed to give

housing professionals and opportunity to offer input into a vision for the future direction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing in Australia.

The housing conditions of Australia's Indigenous people's are a significant cause for concern and an issue which is receiving Government attention.

Much of the focus is on remote communities although most AHI members agree that there are also major issues in urban and regional centres.

During the workshop, themes including funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social housing, home ownership programs, assistance into private rental, good quality social rental housing, building capacity for the sector, for organisations and for individuals, innovation, housing design, construction and maintenance, land and tenure issues, housing as a foundation for cultural life, economic prosperity, social well being, educational opportunity for all and good health, housing in the remote parts of Australia and the relationship between indigenous housing organisations and other parts of the housing industry were touched on.

Phase 1 of ILP evaluation launched

Sue Ash, the Executive Director of the WA Council of Social Service, recently launched the Independent Living Program (ILP) Evaluation Report.

The ILP is a supported housing program that has been in place for more than 10 years.

The WA Centre for Mental Health Policy Research is undertaking an evaluation of the ILP under the auspices of the WA Association of Mental Health and the Mental Health Division of the Department of Health to provide options for the future direction of the program.

The evaluation has been separated into two phases.

Phase 1 as a policy review focused on program management, operational and service development issues.

It was based on findings from literature, examples of best practice in other jurisdictions and input from extensive consultations with policy makers, service providers, consumers and carers.

Phase 2 will be developed as a retrospective, longitudinal study to better understand the characteristics of those who are successful in maintaining their tenancies and to assess the impact of the program on hospital use.

It is recommended that the final report of the Phase 1 policy review be read in conjunction with the report, *Reviewing the Independent Living Program: Discussion Paper for the Future Directions Workshop* which outlines the findings from the consultations and illustrated examples of best practice in supported housing programs.

The review puts forward a vision modelled on the Victorian system, which is regarded as the most effective in Australia, of a rehabilitation and support system that operates as a partnership between men-

tal health services and the NGO sector to provide a comprehensive and seamless network of services that promote recovery and social inclusion for people with psychotic illnesses and disability.

The Phase 1 Policy Review contains 21 recommendations for ILP future directions .

The ILP Evaluation Report Phase 1: Policy Review can be accessed on <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/mhpr>

Small providers meeting

A Small Providers Meeting was held following the CHCWA's annual general meeting on October 24. The meeting was in response to a request from several small providers via a survey that a meeting be held with representatives of the Department of Housing and Works to outline what regulation meant for small providers in the community housing sector.

The DHW's Community Housing Director, Roger Guinery, and the now Acting Director, Gary Ellender, attended the meeting. Roger Guinery told the meeting he was going on a six months secondment overseas and that Gary would be the Acting Director from Monday, October 27, 2008.

Roger said the DHW had recently seen growth in Community Housing and in general social housing (including Public Housing). He said there would be new providers from interstate building social housing as well as local WA providers.

Some providers were negative towards regulation but Roger said they were worrying unnecessarily. He wanted to reassure them that regulation would be a lot easier for small providers than it would be for growth or preferred providers.

Roger also said there were options open to small providers such as aligning with growth or preferred providers, in strategic partnerships, amalgamations or look at grouping with other small providers so as to reach preferred provider level which would entitle them to some SCHIP funding.

Registration is a requirement for all providers in order to keep some level of funding from DHW.

The DHW said there would soon be a call for expressions of interest for regional growth and preferred providers.

The DHW feels that local providers would be regarded highly in the EOI process owing to their local and community knowledge. Local small providers could also look at strategic alliances with larger providers to allow for growth opportunities whilst maintaining autonomy over the day to day management of their organisations.

Roger was asked a question from the floor about the role of CHCWA to provide independent input into DHW policy on behalf of the sector. Roger said it was important and healthy for DHW to have CHCWA provide the views of the sector towards DHW policy in an independent way and that this is what CHCWA's role is.

Roger and Gary want CHCWA to help in training all 241 providers in WA. Gary indicated there were currently six applications for growth providers and nine preferred providers. It was not expected that the third tier, registered provider application would start until March, 2009.

The DHW wants the sector to be able to manage suitable housing and for the organisations to be strong and sustainable going into the future.

Homeless Connect a success

An event which brought together homeless people and service providers in the central city has been hailed an overwhelming success by Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi.

Perth's first Homeless Connect, held at the City of Perth's Citiplace Community Centre, enabled people living on the streets or who have no permanent accommodation to access a range of services in a one-stop-shop situation.

They were also able to select donated items of clothing, food, toiletries and other goods which will help make their lives a little more comfortable.

About 44 Government and service agencies, ranging from Centrelink and the Department of Housing and Works through to the Salvation Army and Lions Hearing Clinic, provided one-on-one contact with people who might otherwise have difficulty accessing such services or who might not know they existed.

About 150 volunteers helped the homeless people and provided personal care services such as hairdressing, podiatry, optometry, showers, meals medical services and massage.

The Lord Mayor said Homeless Connect had its origins in the US and had previously been staged in Brisbane.

"The Council of Capital City Lord Mayors then took up the baton and I was very keen to see an event staged in Perth," Ms Scaffidi said.

"The City and Volunteering WA combined their resources to make the event happen and all those involved in ensuring its success are to be strongly commended.

"About 350 people availed themselves of the various services on offer, including 500 meals served.

"Our city has to be an inclusive city that takes care of those who, for whatever rea-

son, do not share the comforts and lifestyle that so many people take for granted.

"The event goes some way to improving connectivity between the city and those who are classified as homeless.

"While Homeless Connect is just for a day, the awareness of the services and providers that can be accessed will be of longer-term benefit to those who have visited Homeless Connect."

The basic numbers from the inaugural Homeless Connect Perth event are 650 people attending overall, comprising 150 volunteers, 100 service provider staff (44 service providers present), 50 launch invitees and 350 guests.

The kitchen provided 500 meals, 115 haircuts were received, 24 Showers, four truckfuls of donations were given away, equalling about 12 tonnes.

They included clothes, toys, food, toiletries and more and 250 'goodie bags' were given away on exit.

The Homeless Connect project brought together Local Government, State Government, Federal Government, businesses and community groups to provide free services to homeless people for a day.

In November 2007, at the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors meeting held in Melbourne, the first Australian Homeless Connect Project initiated by Brisbane City Council was discussed.

Due to the significance of homelessness throughout Australia and the impact homeless issues have upon capital cities, the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors resolved to make the project a national project supported by the various Capital City Local Government Authorities.

In 2007, Volunteering WA conducted a feasibility study

with the service provider sector on implementing the Homeless Connect Project in Perth.

The study indicated support from the sector and resulted in Volunteering WA and the City of Perth working collaboratively to build support for Homeless Connect in Perth.

According to the 2006 ABS census data, the number of homeless as a proportion of the population has increased in WA while remaining static nationally.

Data from the 2001 Census indicated more than 6,500 people were homeless within the Perth metropolitan area, or 65 per cent of the State's homeless persons.

The 2006 Census identified 13,391 in WA were homeless of which it is estimated that 8,704 are in the Perth metropolitan area.

The fundamental concept of the project is connection and this is between homeless people and service providers, between homeless people and volunteers willing to take the time to listen to their stories, between a range of services and between Government and community.

The goals of Homeless Connect are to improve access to services and housing for homeless persons in Perth, engage and increase the collaborative involvement of homeless consumers, business, non-profit community, and individual volunteers to work together to create solutions to homelessness, to improve the system of care by creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices among Perth's homeless provider community and to leverage private, corporate and foundation money and in-kind support to augment efforts to increase housing options and build service capacity for homeless persons in Perth.

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 and 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.

• **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 needs.

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.

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

We also offer members:

- Training in Managing Challenging Behaviour, Introduction to Community Housing, New Workers Induction, Asset Management, Developing Policies, Risk Management and Rent Setting.
- Regular meetings, to enable members to offer input into CHCWA policy.
- Members-only social functions, giving you an opportunity to meet other providers in a social setting.
- Workshops and forums to discuss technical, business and political issues.
- Realistic discounts on training fees.
- Access to research and statistical information.
- Members' section on the web site, where you will find 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