

Housing Update



Identifying Community
Housing Needs

The Community Housing Coalition of WA

Winter 2008

Homeless Persons Week in WA

Homeless Persons' Week is on in WA this year from Monday, August 4, 2008, to Sunday, August 10.

Members from all around WA are invited to participate by organising an event in their area.

YACWA is getting right behind this year's Homeless Person's Week with a photo exhibition entitled, 'Home is Where My Heart Is' in partnership with Propel Arts.

The venue has been confirmed and the event will open on Thursday, August 7, 2008, and run until Sunday, August 10.

The exhibition will include pieces created by young people who are, or have been, homeless and they will work with a professional young photographer to produce a piece that illustrates what 'home' looks like for young homeless people.

CHCWA is facilitating the event in WA. Homelessness Australia is also encouraging organisations to become involved by holding an event that highlights the diversity of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Suggestions include:

- Invite people - politicians, business leaders, community organisations - to see how you work. Highlight need for corporate interaction to assist (such as providing places for work placements).

- Let your community know about the services you provide to people experiencing homelessness? Highlight the services you provide to help people who are homeless. Hold a morning tea or special event.

- Launch something special. Be it a new program, concept or announcement and especially if it is

additional funding. Invite the media.

- Get together with other services in your area and hold an event where you can show how you cooperate with each other. This is an ideal opportunity to gain additional supporters (corporate and government) and expose other organisations to the work that you do.

- Issue a media release alerting your media contacts to National Homeless Person's Week. (a suggested release can be provided if you wish to use it).

- Write an article for your local newspaper about your service, about the causes of homelessness in your area and practical actions individuals can take to assist.

More ideas are available on the following website http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/site/national_homeless_persons_week.php

TAFE Students develop plans for Homeless Persons Week 2009

Central TAFE students recently developed a business plan, a risk management plan and sponsorship proposals for CHCWA for next year's Homeless Persons Week.

The project was undertaken through Central TAFE's Central Events and Tourism (CEATS) and CHCWA representatives were invited to attend a presentation of the plans.

After seeing the high quality of the work the students produced, CHCWA's initial response was that it was a pity the students were not engaged sooner to help with this year's Homeless Persons Week.

CHCWA is coordinating the event which runs from August 4 to 10.

CHCWA thanks students Sindi

Dimovski, Rebecca Di Vincenzo and Rachael Crutchlow for their great presentation and, most importantly, for the plans on which they worked for the last six months.

In addition, thanks go to lecturers Nicolas Petit and Liz Bindon-Bonney for helping the students with their work.

Liz was also helpful suggesting ideas for this year's Homeless Persons Week.

CEATS is always looking out for projects and events and is interested in partnering with the not-for-profit sector to provide students an opportunity to work on industry-based projects.

CEATS works on real life projects mostly for the not-for-profit sector.

In the last six months, the students have undertaken projects or events for the City of Perth and UnitedWay.

Other clients have included the City of Wanneroo, the City of York, Active Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis Association, David Wirrpanda Foundation, Perth Pyrotechnics, Alila Hotels and Resorts and Toast Masters International.

If anyone is planning an event or a series of events to raise awareness or funds please consider giving Nicolas Petit or Liz Bindon-Bonney a call on 9427 1389.

**'Gimme Shelter'
concert success**
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Housing Affordability report out

CHCWA was represented at the hearing of the Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability in Perth in April by Executive Officer Colin McClughan, CHCWA's Best Practice Unit Manager Daniel Guise and CHCWA Board Chair Lynne Evans.

The Senate Select Committee was established by the Senate on February 14, 2008.

The committee was asked to inquire into and report on the barriers to home ownership in Australia, including:

- the taxes and levies imposed by state and territory governments
- the rate of release of new land by state and territory governments
- proposed assistance for first home owners by state, territory and the Commonwealth governments and their effectiveness in the absence of increased supply
- the role of all levels of government in facilitating affordable home ownership
- the effect on the market of government intervention in the housing sector including planning and industrial relations laws
- the role of financial institutions in home lending
- the contribution of home ownership to retirement incomes.

After the hearing, CHCWA Chair Lynne Evans was interviewed by an ABC reporter for a news bulletin.

CHCWA Executive Officer Colin McClughan was also interviewed by the Guardian Express newspaper.

The committee also held public hearings in Karratha.

The committee's report has been released and its findings appear to indicate committee members listened to CHCWA's concerns expressed in its verbal and written submissions.

In the report, the committee recommended the WA Government lift investment in community housing in the Pilbara region as a matter of priority and also recommended the Australian and WA Governments should establish a high-level emergency taskforce to come up with solutions to the housing shortage in the Pilbara to create long-term sustainable communities in the region.

Also raised in the report was the problem of complex planning processes which make it difficult to quickly bring land for home building on the market.

The report also recommends the \$7,000 first homebuyers grant be increased for those who buy a new house but cut for those who buy an established property.

It also recommends negative gearing arrangements be reviewed by the tax inquiry being conducted by the Government and noted that negative gearing could push up costs for people renting.

The full report is available on the Australian Parliament's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/SEnate/committee/hsaf_ctte/index.htm

Legal advice clinic

The Homeless Persons' Legal Advice Clinic (WA) Steering Committee Inc (Clinic) is working towards establishing a dedicated free legal advice clinic for homeless people in WA.

The Clinic's current focus is to obtain funding but the Clinic is seeking expressions of interest from service providers to people who are homeless, who may be interested in the provision of a legal clinic at their premises.

The Clinic envisages that the legal advice clinic will operate as an outreach service supervised by a dedicated principal legal officer and involving volunteer lawyers from private law firms at the host provider's premises.

The aim is to provide legal services for homeless people at places they visit and to build on the skills and services offered by existing service providers.

Farewell from former Executive Officer, Denise O'Dowd



Former Executive Officer,
Denise O'Dowd

Dear Members,

It is with a sad heart that I bid a very fond farewell to you. It has been an absolute pleasure working with you and in the sector. I was very blessed to have a fantastic team who I will miss so much and a very supportive Board who give up so much of their time and energy to CHCWA, it is just amazing.

I am very happy that Colin has stepped into the role and of course bringing with him that all important Irish charm. Good Luck Colin and I am sure you will do a wonderful job.

My CHCWA highlights have been the regional training trips that Janet Allen and I took to both Bunbury and Kalgoorlie, it is so true what they say about country hospitality.

It is just a wonderful experience to get

out there and see what amazing work is happening out in the regions.

The WA Conference of course was a very special experience and I learnt a lot from my Eastern States counterparts about stamina that's for sure.

I must say I am a huge fan of the networking sessions and not just for obvious reasons but I am always learning more each time I talk to people about what is happening in the sector.

It has been a very steep learning curve for me but I enjoyed every minute of it and I am hoping to stay in the sector in good old Victoria so it isn't so much goodbye, yes I want to make sure I am a Keynote speaker for the next conference (hint hint!).

So, thanks again and Dolores has promised to keep me updated.

From the Executive Officer...

Demand for community housing grows

Dear Members

Welcome to the first edition of the Housing update for 2008 and my first report as Executive Officer for the Community Housing Coalition of WA.

During my first three months, I have endeavored to meet as many CHCWA members as practical, including being at the quarterly Council meeting held in Bunbury on March 31.

The meeting was well attended by members from Boyup Brook, Nannup, Busselton, Capel, Bunbury as well as Perth.

As an organisation, we do represent a very diverse range of members scattered throughout the vast State of WA with each member providing a specialised service to their particular community.

For the staff at CHCWA, it has been a busy period.

We now have our team in place, namely Daniel Guise, BPU Manager, Dolores Gomeze Administration Officer, Gary Kleyn, Policy Officer, Louise Leicester, Training Support Officer, Tony Whitbread, Membership and Marketing Officer and myself, Colin McClughan.

As we at CHCWA see it, the key issues confronting the sector are still lack of availability of affordable housing, made worse by higher cost of mortgages, spiralling rents and more people dropping out of those markets and now looking for community and public housing.

The increasing number of people and families who can no longer afford private rentals or who have had their homes repossessed, places greater pressure on public and community housing.

Homelessness is also an increasing problem and has been publicised through the national media covering disturbing reports by researchers on the growing numbers of homeless in the community.

For our part, the Community Housing Coalition, as part of a national initiative and through its committee comprising representatives of the Perth Council, Central TAFE and St Bar-

tholomew's House, is involved in facilitating a Homeless Persons Week from August 4 to 10, 2008.

The event is aimed at drawing WA politicians, corporate leaders and the general public's attention to the plight of the homeless.

Although increasing awareness in all sections of the community is an initial objective, we are also attempting through this event to pose to the community and its leaders some simple but meaningful challenges which we believe will reduce homelessness in the communities around our State.

Overseas research

Research overseas shows homeless levels have reduced significantly through well developed policies in parts of Britain and some European countries.

It is the first time CHCWA has been involved in the event, although we are aware that one of our members organised a similar event last year.

Through our committee, we hope to include other agencies that are doing great work with homeless people so they can showcase to the general public what they are doing to make a difference.

Our Policy Officer Gary Kleyn has also been on the national roundtable for homelessness which produced a green paper for the May conference in Adelaide and which will culminate in a white paper to be released some time later in the year.

Whilst there are many challenges facing our members, there also seems to be a degree of optimism as the sector is witnessing leadership from the recently elected Commonwealth Government as well as the WA State and Local Governments with each rolling out funding or developing new policies which should contribute to increasing the number of affordable houses through the community.

Although those initiatives are welcome by our members, it also means that it is a time of great challenge for them as their resources are stretched to cope with increasing demand.



Executive Officer Colin McClughan

Our members also face the same problems as the rest of the community in finding and retaining suitably trained and committed staff.

It is my understanding that initiatives are already underway within the peak bodies to look at more effective recruitment methods and better ways to retain staff in their organisations.

Currently we are preparing our strategic plan, which we hope to have in place for the new financial year 2008/2009.

As the peak body representing a diverse range of Community Housing Providers, we see it as critical to our effectiveness as a lobby group to ensure we know clearly what the core issues are for members so in preparing our strategic plan we have sought input from our members and to date we have received important information.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank those members who have responded to our survey.

In conclusion, on behalf of the CHCWA board of management and staff, I would like to thank you for your continued support and give you my assurance that we will be working hard to represent your interests to Government and important stakeholders as we tackle the changes and challenges in the future.

Health service in big demand

The Best Practice Unit was out and about during February when Daniel and Louise visited St Patrick's Community Support Centre to meet Patricia Kenny who runs Hands On Health Association in WA.

Hands on Health is an Australia-wide association of volunteer health professionals and qualified therapists which aims to bring a wide range of health and care services to those who may be experiencing difficult times and

would otherwise not be able to access them.

The practice was established in 1997 and has been a significant division of the services provided by St Patrick's and is supported by the good people of St John of God Health Care Murdoch.

Donations form a large part of their income and the money is used in the purchase of new resources.

Hands on Health relies on an average of 25 local health professionals and

therapists from the community to volunteer their time and expertise.

Appointments are sometimes booked up a month in advance which demonstrates how successful the venture is.

Beyond providing healthcare on a physical level, Hands On Health seeks to promote self-esteem and restore human dignity by encouraging people to discover their self worth and solutions to their own problems.

Hands On Health treats between 50 and 80 St Patrick's patrons every week, providing chiropractors, hairdressers, massage therapists, physiotherapy, nurses and GPs, reiki and reflexology, just to mention a few.

A new program initiative is Diabetes Education - Prevention and Intervention, which is vital in this day and age.

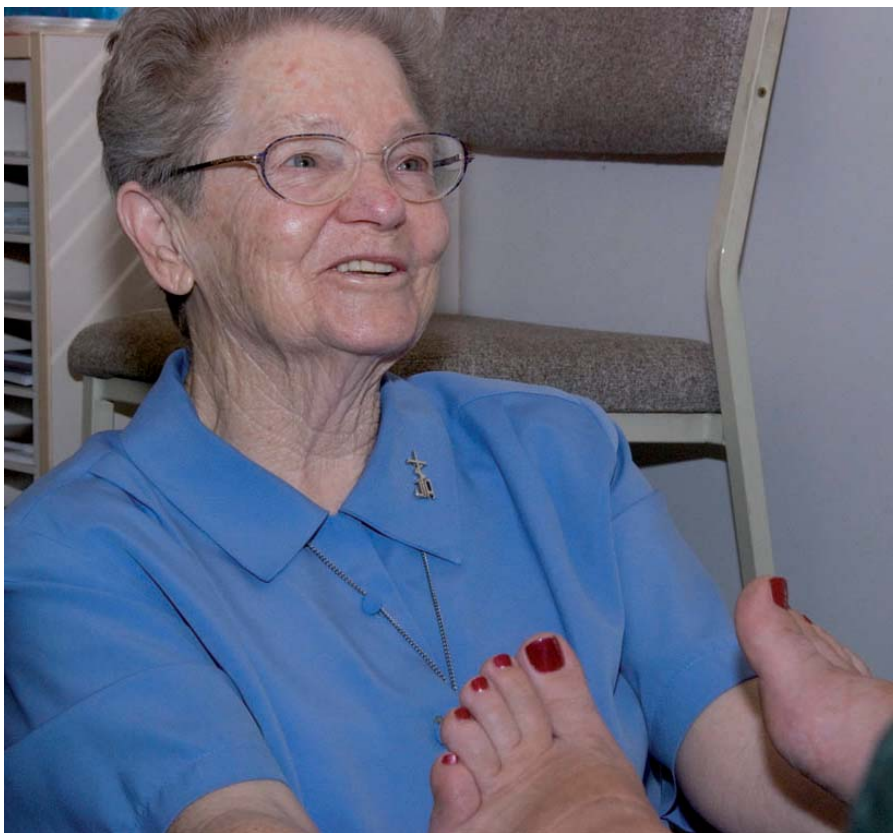
An important position the practice is looking to fill is a podiatrist for those who wish to volunteer.

The operation hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm.

The eligibility criteria for interested persons is that they live in the Fremantle zone, have a health or pension card and be aged 21 or older and have no dependants.

St Patrick's is to be complimented and congratulated on its support for Hands On Health which is the only clinic of its kind available in WA.

If you are interested in Hands On Health or St Patrick's, please visit their websites www.handsonhealth.com.au and www.stpats.com.au for more information.



Sister Anne-Marie at work for the Hands on Health Association in WA.

Government's Green Paper released

The Federal Government's Green Paper: 'Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness' was released in May to instigate public discussion on homelessness as well as highlighting challenges faced by homeless people and suggest ways of reducing homelessness in the next 12 years.

A White Paper will be released in September this year which will outline a national plan of action to 2020.

Three options for discussion were outlined in the Green Paper covering SAAP and mainstream services and

their role in combating homelessness.

The first option explores transforming SAAP to build a national homelessness response which focuses on four streams of support including youth, people experiencing or escaping domestic violence, single people and families in housing stress.

The second option explores improving the current SAAP response by providing extra investment to reform crisis services for the long term.

The third option focuses on improving the service response to homelessness and restricting SAAP to re-

sponding to crisis interventions.

CHCWA policy officer Gary Kleyn and several CHCWA board members attended the Homeless Conference in Adelaide at which the Prime Minister released the Green Paper.

Since the launch, a great deal of concern has been expressed about the thrust of the document which appears to undermine the working of SAAP.

The Green Paper is available at the following web address http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/housing/new_approach_stage1.htm

'Gimme Shelter' fundraising concert a huge success

By VICTOR CREVATIN

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 was on and there was no turning back!

Mother Nature was kind to us and turned on a glorious summer's night providing a stunning atmosphere for all to enjoy; and enjoy it we did.

The community support for the event was strong with just over 1,000 people in attendance who were thoroughly entertained by the cream of Perth's entertainers and artists right up until 10pm.

Special thanks to Walyup elder Marie Taylor for providing us with the Welcome to Country and also to Federal MP Melissa Parke who spoke about the important role of St Patrick's within the Fremantle community.

'Nothing could match the passion of the choir's performance'

For me, the highlight of the event was witnessing the St Patrick's Starlight Hotel Choir performing on the main stage and then racing off to do a special encore performance in the Art Centre court yard.

Sure there was the odd bout of



St Pat's Starlight Hotel Choir was a crowd pleaser.

nerves but nothing could match the passion of their performance and the magical atmosphere that they projected out to the crowd.

Keep an eye out for more performances from these talented people in the near future!

St Patrick's would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people.

The extremely talented performers on the night - Schvendes, Abbe May

and the Rockin Pneumonia, Kill Devil Hills, Dave Mann Collective, Danger Russ, Kinetic Theatre, Marie Taylor, MC Jim Fisher and St Pats Starlight Hotel Choir.

To the Sponsors and the Perth media; without your generous support 'Gimme Shelter' would not have been possible, your contributions were invaluable.

A big thank you goes out to volunteers who tackled the night with endless energy and big smiles on their faces!

To the people who came to the event and supported us whole heartedly. You showed us that you care about your community and you care about those less fortunate than others - St Patrick's thanks you all.

Last but not least a very special thank you to Phoebe Corke and Dave Johnson and their crack support team.

They went above and beyond the call of duty to help St Patrick's raise much needed funds; we thank each and every one of you.



Focus on the small provider

Small is beautiful says Roma Lewi, volunteer secretary to the Board of Management at Melville Mews.

"We have heard that phrase, so often, it can lose its impact but it is an apt observation of many objects, happenings and structures we greatly value.

"In an environment where we are urged to grow, expand and amalgamate, it is timely to assert that larger is not necessarily better," she says.

Roma sees a need for a mechanism where smaller providers can learn from each other and prepare for a regulatory environment.

After discussions with CHCWA, it was decided to form a steering committee the aim of which is to formu-

late ideas and ways in which to address the specific needs of smaller providers, to provide a forum and network opportunity and to share ideas.

The committee will act as a sounding board so CHCWA's work can reflect the interests of its smaller members.

CHCWA believes it is important that smaller providers have a voice that can be heard and this can be achieved by working together.

Melville Mews Incorporated has five purpose built houses on one campus designed for people with disabilities that was funded under the Local Government Community Housing Program about 12 years ago.

Parents of adult children with a range of disabilities assisted by the City

of Melville initiated the successful application for funding the project.

Melville Mews has established a tradition of being entirely administered by volunteers so the administrative costs of running the establishment are insignificant. This means funds are available to maintain the properties at a high standard.

Melville Mews provides long term, secure, affordable housing for six tenants, three of whom have lived in their houses since its inception and the others for seven years.

Smallness of scale fosters independence, friendship, cooperation, mutual assistance, links with the community and a real opportunity for tenants and all board members to share in the enterprise.

Partnerships with councils explored

The City of Stirling is aware of the housing affordability crisis (for both tenants and owner-occupiers) and the failure of the current market to provide a dwelling stock to match the needs of existing and projected demographic profiles.

So the city has been negotiating with CHCWA staff for several months to identify ways in which partnerships can be forged with CHCWA members in an attempt to alleviate the affordability problem.

The city is following the eastern States trend where many local councils have been increasing their commitment to providing affordable housing,

incorporating service worker housing (eg nurses, council staff and others) as well as social housing.

In many cases, the councils achieve this through joint ventures with community housing providers and developers.

In most cases, those councils provide the land and the community housing provider, with financial backing, provides the capital and ongoing management.

Earlier this year, CHCWA called for expressions of interest from members who were interested in developing or increasing their housing profile in the City of Stirling.

CHCWA staff presented a list of providers and their capabilities to the council which subsequently arranged a meeting with one provider the council selected.

The council and the provider are currently working through a proposal. Many more opportunities still exist at the council.

CHCWA thanks those members who expressed interest in being included in discussions with the council.

In the months ahead, more opportunities may arise with the City of Stirling or other councils and CHCWA will keep members advised of progress.

Where possible, CHCWA will facilitate meetings between councils and members.

To prepare for those opportunities, members need to ensure they have some workable joint venture models which can be presented to the councils.

The City of Stirling is significant because of its size but similar partnerships and opportunities for councils and community housing providers exist in any region in WA.

For more information about how a council or community housing organisation can become involved please call Gary Kleyn, policy officer at CHCWA on **9221 7933** or email policy@communityhousing.com.au



A Department of Housing and Works Policy Officer, Paul Pendergast, addresses a BPU Training Session in Albany recently.

Affordable Housing a key issue

Greg Peel, the Chief Executive Officer of Community Sector Banking, discussed a complex affordable housing model which CSB, together with Bendigo Bank, had developed at the WA Community Housing Conference in November last year.

He told conference delegates projects could be financed by leveraging existing stock and providing additional capital.

Mr Peel reinforced that message in January this year when he returned to WA to present an information session for members to provide details of the various financial models that community housing can adopt.

Mr Peel says affordable housing will be a key issue facing Australia in the next decade and if Australians are to tackle the problem as a nation and find a successful solution they will need to adopt a whole new way of thinking.

He says it is time to consider a more holistic approach to affordable housing and to find better ways to attract new streams of capital and new partnerships that enable the community to participate and have real ownership.

Mr Peel and colleague and Executive Director Peter Quarmby, have been working with indigenous organisations in north west Australia, including the Kimberley Land Council, to identify possible solutions to issues relating to sustainable social and economic development. They have focused on low cost affordable housing.

Greg Peel has provided financial solutions for Australian and international financial organisations for more than 25 years. He has held senior positions with Bendigo Bank for more than 10 years including the implementation of Business Banking.

Peter Quarmby has worked in the community sector for more than 20 years and is currently Chair of Jobs Australia Ltd. He also plays an active role in the development of national and international social banking.

Both agree that affordable housing, or the lack of it, is at crisis point and it is touching all parts of the country. "In WA, the enormous growth in property prices has led to the affordability gap becoming a nightmare for middle and low income earners," Mr Peel said.



Community Sector Banking Chief Executive Officer Greg Peel explains financial modelling details.

He said CSB has developed a managed equity model that is designed to attract a new stream of social capital into the delivery of affordable and social housing.

"The STEPS model has been designed and implemented in Tasmania and is underpinned by the involvement of a local community organisation and

some financial support from the Tasmanian state government as well as private investment.

"The Tasmanian Community Housing Property Trust was established to build affordable housing and to support the return to investors by ensuring the houses are fully occupied," he said.

Homelessness Roundtable

The Community Housing Coalition of WA was recently represented at a roundtable on homelessness in Sydney. CHCWA played a role in organising the roundtable, working with Homelessness Australia and other homelessness agencies in other states to compile a list of 100 attendees. CHCWA also helped develop the agenda for the day.

Representing CHCWA was Board Chair and St Bart's CEO Lynne Evans and policy officer Gary Kleyn. WA was well represented with CHCWA able to get 12 homeless specialists invited to the roundtable.

Also in attendance were the Department of Child Protection's Julie Waylen, Department of Housing and Works Roger Guinery, Ruah Community Services Anna Paris, St Patrick's Community Support Centre's Victor Crevatin, Association of South West Accommodation Neil Hamilton, Peel Region Services Trish McGowan, Anglicare's Mark Goerke and Outcare's Ernie Hansen.

Academics Paul Flatau of Murdoch University and Robyn Martin of Curtin University were also invited to attend.

The ideas which came out of the roundtable were fed into a green and white paper that the Federal Government is compiling to try to tackle homelessness. The paper will provide a 10-year-plan in an attempt to reduce homelessness.

Training demand high as regulation rolls out

In direct response to the challenges of regulation, the Best Practice Unit has markedly increased the frequency of training sessions in 2008.

A focus on providing training in regional centres has also paid off with well attended sessions and increased CHCWA membership from week long visits to Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton so far this year.

With the release of the preferred provider application, organisations are starting to approach me for assistance with completing the application.

I am more than happy to help wherever I can so please don't hesitate to

contact me at the office if you ever require assistance.

Feedback from training sessions and the recently completed BPU Sector Evaluation for the 2008 financial year have highlighted a desire within the sector for more sample policies and procedures to be available on CHCWA's website.

We will soon put a self-assessment guide for the preferred provider application on the website.

I am also in discussions with several Code of Practice compliant providers about putting their policies and procedures on the website.

While many providers responded that the current suite of training sessions offered by the BPU were adequate, some suggested that CHCWA offer Governance, Contract Management and Tenancy Law/Tenancy Management training.

I will be investigating the best way forward to act on those recommendations.

The BPU's next event will be an information session on DHW reporting requirements titled 'Navigating the statistical sea' at a date to be announced. Lena Pike has agreed to guest speak.

We've just updated the training calendar to add more dates for all the other training courses so check out the new calendar on page nine.

Daniel Guise
Best Practice Unit Manager

The Best Practice Unit has taken its training courses to the regions in the last few months.

(Left) BPU Manager Daniel Guise delivers a training course on Risk Management to a group of CHCWA members in Geraldton.

(Bottom Left) Daniel delivers another course to a group of members in Albany and (Below), BPU Training Officer Louise Leicester takes a group of members from the Bunbury area through a training session on Policies and Procedures.



2008 Training Calendar

Date	Event	Details
August (Date TBA)	'Navigating the Statistical Sea'	DHW reporting requirements.
August 5	Risk Management	Risk Management for Community Housing Providers.
August 18 to 22	Regional training – Goldfields- Kalgoorlie	Training will be tailored to the region based on direct consultation with providers.
September 2	Asset Management	Learn how to develop an asset management plan that outlines a strategy and budget for maintenance, re-developments, sales and acquisitions.
Mid-September	Regional training – North West WA	Training will be tailored to the region based on direct consultation with providers.
September 19	Rent Setting How to Maximise CRA - Perth	A workshop detailing how to maximise rental income while still providing affordable rents.
October 6	Developing Policies and Procedures	A workshop on utilising a policy template to assist in policy development.
October 29	Risk Management	Risk Management for Community Housing Providers.
November 11	Asset Management - Perth	Learn how to develop an asset management plan that outlines a strategy and budget for maintenance, re-developments, sales and acquisitions.
November 21	Rent Setting How to Maximise CRA - Perth	A workshop detailing how to maximise rental income while still providing affordable rents.
December 3	Developing Policies and Procedures	A workshop on utilising a policy template to assist in policy development.
Late December 2008	Networking Sundowner	

Training and Events Calendar for the BPU July, 2008, to December, 2008

For more information on any of the events please contact Daniel Guise on (08) 9221 7933 or bpu@communityhousing.com.au

New focus on homelessness

By GARY KLEYN

As expected prior to the Christmas break, 2008 started with a lot of promise in the community housing sector.

After the Federal Government changed, new energy and focus is now being directed towards finding solutions to homelessness as well as addressing housing affordability.

This means CHCWA has had to play a greater role in vigorous discussions in the hope of bringing about some tangible benefits to our members and ultimately our members' clients.

In the first week back after the

Christmas break, CHCWA held its first committee meeting to plan the Homeless Persons Week which will be held from August 4 to 10.

CHCWA has taken on the task of introducing this week to WA for the first time and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the other committee members, Samantha Gammans, Liz Bindon-Bonney, Tom Pavlos and the CHCWA Executive Officer, Colin McClughan.

Those individuals have enormous knowledge and experience which they

have channeled in the past months by devoting a lot of time and thinking into making this week a success.

The committee is working alongside the national organisers under the theme: Homelessness: It's not who you think.

A calendar of events has been developed that showcases some of the work that service providers are doing to work with the homeless.

We are keen for members and local communities across WA to get involved in organising events that will highlight the issue of homelessness which will then be promoted through the media leading up to the week.

Please give me a call or email policy@communityhousing.com.au if you would like more details about the week or would like to find out how you can play a part.

We can be thankful that homelessness is very much on the mind of our Prime Minister and his cabinet and CHCWA is working to ensure the issue remains at the forefront of Government policy in the years ahead.

To that end, CHCWA, as the peak homelessness body in WA, played a role in the development of the roundtable on homelessness which was held in Sydney in late March.

Earlier, CHCWA attended a small meeting at Parliament House, Canberra, with other State peaks and Homelessness Australia in drawing up a list of attendees for the roundtable and to setting the agenda for the day.

Following those early discussions, CHCWA was able to get 12 WA representatives out of a national total of 100 onto the roundtable.

The roundtable itself, was, by all accounts, a great success.

People representing different service providers and communities from around Australia were able to develop several ideas which were fed into the Federal Government's Green and White paper.

Although it was a success, the roundtable was by no means the end of the consultation.

CHCWA continued to be engaged as the Paper was formulated and urged members to write submissions to CH-

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CHCWA's (then) Executive Officer Denise O'Dowd (left) with Federal Housing Minister Jenny Macklin and Shelter Executive Officer Bronwyn Kitching at the WA Community Cabinet meeting at Canning Vale College.

Taking it to the top

The first Community Cabinet Meeting was held earlier this year at the Canning Vale College.

The meeting was part of the Federal Government's commitment to ensure consultation with the Australian people on national or local matters of concern to them.

CHCWA's (then) Executive Officer Denise O'Dowd met Federal Housing Minister Jenny Macklin and informed her about the housing afford-

ability crisis sweeping our State and the role Community Housing plays in addressing the issue.

The Minister was receptive to CHCWA's suggestions for tackling the current crisis, including putting extra funding into transitional housing, speeding up the planning process for new projects, developing a national affordable housing agreement, more support dollars to help sustain tenancies and expand the NARI scheme to cover Community Housing providers.

100 at Youth Homeless Forum

More than 100 people from around WA including CHCWA attended the Youth Homeless Forum organised by Anglicare in partnership with Parkerville Children and Youth Care.

Answering the question: "How can we eliminate youth homelessness within a generation?" were high profile advocates for reducing youth homelessness, Associate Professor David MacKenzie, member of the National Youth Commission Inquiry into Youth Homelessness; Wendy Malycha, Chief Executive Officer of St John's Youth Services in Adelaide and Tony Nicholson, chair of the Federal Government's White Paper Homelessness Steering Committee.

Tony Nicholson encouraged every-

one involved in providing services to homeless people to engage with the White Paper process by sending in submissions.

He said he could see that in the future all homeless service providers would need to be accredited. He also envisaged that the assessment of homelessness and the assessment of an appropriate participation plan for the homeless would be taken out of Centrelink and provided by accredited homeless service providers.

Mr MacKenzie pointed out that early intervention was crucial in reducing homelessness. He said part of the reason why the number of homeless youth in Australia dropped from 26,000 in 2001 to 22,000 in 2006 was the work of the Reconnect and the Home Ad-

vice Programs.

He said major reforms and reviews into the provision of State care for children needed to be carried out across Australia, including WA. He said those children who went through State care were most at risk of long term homelessness.

Ms Malycha spoke of her ideas to introduce the "Foyers" concept into Australia. She is trying to get a Foyer home established in Adelaide but the project is being opposed. Foyers is a concept first started in France after WW2 to provide homes to travelling youth. It has since been introduced in the UK and other parts of Europe and targets disadvantaged youth who are undertaking schooling. More information at <http://www.foyer.net/mpn/>

Addressing homelessness issue

• From Page 10

CWA on what they wanted included in the Green Paper and to give feedback when the Green Paper was released at the time of the National Homelessness Conference at the end of May.

CHCWA also provided feedback on SAAP V, which is under review, and also sought members' feedback on this.

Earlier in the year, CHCWA also had an opportunity to organise a meeting for members to listen to representatives of Bendigo Bank talk about opportunities for partnerships and innovative financial products that could be used by the sector to increase housing stock.

A big focus for me this year is to seek out different models that can be developed into useful partnerships between financiers, developers, State and Local Governments and our members.

As was acknowledged by the Federal Government when it announced ideas to develop 100,000 low-rent properties in the next 10 years, community housing organisations are in a unique position to deliver cost-effective management capabilities in the

provision of low-cost housing, which are funded by superannuation funds and developed by the property sector.

During our recent Council meeting in Bunbury, I was able to set up meetings with local politicians and representatives of the property sector in a bid to begin developing some of those partnerships and to show the potential of the sector for the development industry, particularly as they now face an economic downturn.

As part of a renewed focus to sit at tables with others to ensure our members are represented at the highest level, I was recently invited, along with CHCWA Chair Lynne Evans and board member Kathleen Gregory, to attend a forum organised by Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi to look at a future for Perth which includes community housing.

In addition, I have attended a mental health seminar and the SAAP Protocol Reference Group.

I have also attended meetings called to look at ways to develop Uniting Care West's HomeConnect program and the WACOSS consumer utilities project reference group.

During March, I organised a meeting with several members to consider

a way to go forward in relation to local council rates exemptions.

This meeting came in response to a media statement from Local Government Minister Ljiljana Ravlich who ignored recommendations put to her by the Local Government Advisory Board as well as CHCWA, which sought to create greater clarity in relation to rates for local governments and our members.

Under the Local Government Act, charity organisations are exempt from paying council rates but many councils still levy rates.

Those attending the meeting made it clear they would like to continue to press hard to achieve rate exemptions from councils which charge rates.

I have been taking up those concerns with local governments and also promoting other solutions which may strengthen the relationship members can develop with Local Government.

In the coming months, my hope is that some of the confusion and costs relating to rates exemptions, or the lack thereof, will be removed.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised here, feel free to call me, or anyone else at CHCWA, to discuss or seek advice.

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.

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