

Housing Matters

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National Rental Affordability Scheme underway

Treasurer Wayne Swan and Minister for Housing Tanya Plibersek officially launched the Federal Government's National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and opened the first round Call for Applications on the 24th of July.

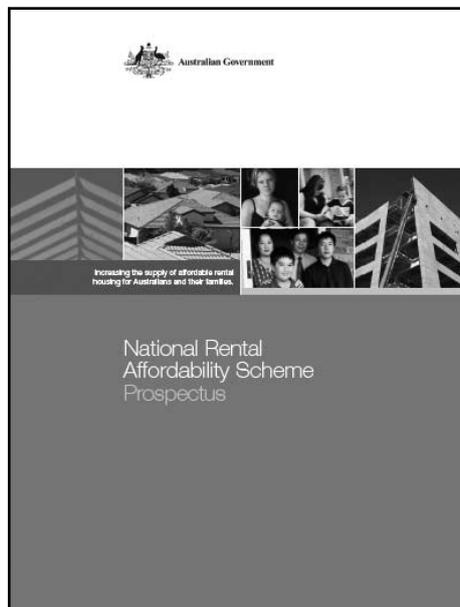
The Scheme ultimately aims to leverage institutional investment to increase the supply of affordable rental housing dwellings by 50,000 by 2012. The dwellings will be rented at 20% below market rate.

The first Call for Applications closed on the 4th of September. A second Call for Applications will be issued in October.

Because of the timelines most projects put forward for the first call will already have been in the pipeline. So it may not be until the second call that it becomes clear how much appetite for this new area of investment there is.

The Scheme will offer investors a Commonwealth incentive of \$6,000 per dwelling per year refundable tax offset or payment, and a State incentive of \$2,000 per dwelling per year in direct or in kind financial support.

In NSW the state contribution is loosely divided between investment and incentives targeted to the



non-government sector and 3000 incentives aimed at private proponents.

The first and second Calls for Applications seek proposals delivering completed dwellings available for rent during the 2008-09 and 2009-10 financial years. The third round, likely to be opened in March 2009, will seek applications for the "Expansion Phase" delivering dwellings available for rent by June 2012.

To be eligible for incentives under the Scheme, applicants will need to meet mandatory requirements and weighted criteria. While one criterion is weighted towards

proposals consistent with State affordable housing priorities, with a preference for growth providers, applications from non-growth providers will still be considered.

Partnership Facilitators have been appointed to assist organisations to make applications under the Scheme, and bring together potential partners interested in pursuing NRAS opportunities.

MacroPlan Australia has been appointed in NSW as the state facilitator. The Community Housing Federation of Australia has been appointed as the national facilitator, and the Federation will act on their behalf in NSW.

Information sessions are now being conducted across the country to inform potential applicants about NRAS. For more information, please contact FaHCSIA.

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From the President...

How much have things changed?

The launch of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) looks like changing our environment profoundly.

In its first implementation phase this could mean up to 3,400 new affordable housing tenancies in NSW. Given the state priorities, it is likely that much of this will be managed by housing associations and perhaps 10% will be directly procured or developed by associations.

But there will be other changes that come along with this. Perhaps the most significant could be the far more active involvement of other sectors with community housing providers. The recent NRAS information sessions give an idea of who these are.

Many are local developers. A few are financiers. Some are potential investors. There are also a range of consultants – project managers, financial services and so on. Working with these will raise the profile of the sector within the housing and development industry and also widen our horizons.

One of the very significant new contacts is likely to be the aged care sector. Aged care providers have been specifically encouraged to become involved in NRAS. Partly this is because of the need for older people to access affordable housing. It is also because many have land and other assets available and experience in development.

But there may also be significant opportunities to establish new partnerships between community housing and aged care providers. In NSW there is a strong preference for NRAS tenancies to be managed by registered community housing providers. Some aged care providers might seek registration, but others could contract out tenancy management to our sector.

Even beyond NRAS, we are likely to see longer term relationships between the two sectors growing.

The Federation has been looking at ways to support the sector in this new environment. We have been working with the Centre for Affordable



Nick Sabel

Housing and with MacroPlan, the NSW partnership facilitators for NRAS. The Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA) is a national partnership facilitator and we will support that work in NSW.

Of course NRAS is just one part of a series of changes that have, one by one, built a new basis for what community housing is and how it works. We now have the growth providers, some debt equity projects, stronger rental income streams (that may be offset by changed subsidies), the new regulation and accreditation arrangements. How much difference will this make to the way the sector can respond to housing needs in our communities across the state? The coming conference will be a chance to take stock as a sector on what the total changes add up to.

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Housing Affordability Fund launched

The Federal government launched the latest of its policy initiatives on affordable housing on 1st July 2008. The Housing Affordability Fund (HAF) is designed to make housing more affordable by reducing two areas of cost and delay for housing developers.

The first of these two areas is infrastructure costs, such as water, sewerage, roads, open space and community facilities. These costs are incurred by local and state governments and are often passed on to developers and in turn to buyers of new homes. The second area the HAF aims to tackle is the holding costs incurred by developers as a result of long development application processes.

The HAF will be given primarily to local government and schemes in high demand

areas will be prioritised. While the HAF will not have the same impact as the National Rental Affordability Scheme on community housing associations, there may be some benefits for providers considering large scale development proposals, as the HAF could reduce the impact of the cost of putting infrastructure services in place.

The Commonwealth government anticipates that 50,000 new home buyers across Australia will be helped over 5 years by lowering the burden of infrastructure and regulatory costs built into the purchase price of a new home. The HAF also includes \$30 million to roll out electronic development assessments across the country.

More information is available from:
www.facsia.gov.au

New Registrar appointed

A warm welcome to Ms. Roxane Shaw, who was appointed Registrar of Community Housing in July. The Registrar position acts as the regulator for community housing in NSW and is responsible for overseeing the Regulatory Code including systems, assessing applications for registration and registration status of organisations.

Roxane comes from the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing where she was Deputy Branch Manager. With a team of sixty five staff, her role evolved around implementation of new legislation. Roxane has also worked as Acting Commissioner for the ACT, Community and Health Services Complaints Commission. Roxane's background in the human services sector brings a wealth of experience to her new role.



Roxane Shaw
Registrar of Community Housing

Launch of South Coast Community Housing Limited

A merger between Eurobodalla Community Housing Ltd and the Shoalhaven Community Housing Scheme saw the launch of South Coast Community Housing Limited on June 30th. The new company services areas from Nowra to Batemans Bay and will retain two members of the previous Eurobodalla board.

Marg Kaszo, CEO of the new South Coast, explained that the merger took several months to occur and that it had gone exceptionally well. Marg made special mention of Lesley Oatley, CEO of Argyle Community Housing Inc, who was a committee member that assisted in the merger. She commented that Lesley's contribution and that of others meant a very smooth transition.

The launch was held at the Boatshed Restaurant in Nowra. In attendance was NSW Minister for Housing Matt Brown, Shoalhaven Mayor Greg Watson and representatives from the Office of Community Housing and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations. Also present were members from both previous boards, Brian Murnane from Blue CHP, local support agencies and other government agencies.

Minister Brown spoke at the event, and Marg Kaszo commented, "It's great that the Minister is supporting this consolidation and maturing of the sector. He has been a long time supporter of local services." John Olsen the previous Eurobodalla Treasurer and long time board member also spoke at the launch.

On the day, staff member Helen Reay was presented with her Certificate IV in Social Housing. Helen had studied the qualification through the Federation and was presented with it by Minister Matt Brown and Adam Farrar, Executive Director of the Federation.



(photo by Attila A Bicskos)

Community housing rental policy update

The roll out of Community Housing Rent Reforms began on the 1st July 2008. A second series of workshops was held by the Office of Community Housing in July to assist with the implementation of the changes.

An Excel-based Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) calculator is currently being trialled while a web-based tool

is developed. The calculator allows for phase-in assessments for existing tenants and can calculate multiple CRA recipient households.

The new Community Housing Rent Policy and Rent Reforms fact sheet are now available on the Housing NSW website:

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au>

Greening community housing

Community housing should be included in any green initiatives implemented by Housing NSW. Earlier this year Housing NSW released an Environmental Sustainability Strategy paper which recognised the need for greater sustainability in key operational areas such as new supply, retrofits and ongoing maintenance. In a submission to the consultation process Jenny Stewart from The Housing Trust recommended a number of strategies for the greater inclusion of community housing.

As housing associations become larger, and take over stock management of Public and Affordable Housing, they will increasingly take on energy efficient aspects of property design that may have previously been undertaken by Housing NSW.

Jenny suggests that, "Housing NSW develops comprehensive building guidelines to ensure passive solar design and energy and water efficiency are incorporated into all new developments."

She also recommends that, "information is provided to community housing providers on 'green' builders, trades people and other relevant contractors such as pest control."

"Water storage tanks need to be supplied and plumbed to toilets and washing machines as part of all new dwelling construction."

When it comes to conserving natural resources The Housing Trust recommendations addressed emerging issues from redevelopment sites. These include ensuring there is space for recycling and individual or communal outdoor space to develop community gardens for composting and sustainable gardening, providing education to create tenant sustainability leaders, creating raised bed, no dig gardens rather than removing topsoil and turfing and the greater use of plants indigenous to the local area, and readily available through local suppliers.

Also utilise Aboriginal or Community Groups that have established native seed banks and nurseries to ensure that appropriate native species are used in landscaping. Where the landscaping is part of a tender, Housing NSW needs to ensure that the landscaping plan is appropriate and that it is complied with. Jenny refers to situations where inappropriate tree species have been planted and housing providers have had to foot the bill for expensive tree removal when trees have grown too big for the site.

A range of opportunities to support sustainable communities was also recommended. Jenny suggests that Accreditation and Registration incorporate reporting on environmental management plans and community involvement in environmental sustainability projects and that training be provided through the NSW Federation of Housing Associations in the development, implementation and monitoring of Environmental Management Plans (EMPs).

Housing NSW could also provide housing providers with a comprehensive list of rebates currently available for obtaining energy and water efficient appliances and continue to negotiate with utilities for additional and innovative rebate programs for social housing tenants.

The Housing Trust has received frequent requests for assistance with control of insect pests and vermin and other animals eg mice, rats, possums, spiders, termites and cockroaches. The Trust has had difficulty accessing reliable information in relation to sustainable pest control and recommends that information is provided to housing providers outlining the environmental impacts of particular treatments and recommending the use of sustainable products/processes.

Growth providers for Tasmania

Should Tasmania join other states in pursuing a growth provider strategy to provide new housing supply? A recent discussion paper published in April by Anglicare Tasmania *“Going for Growth: the pros and cons of using community housing associations to increase housing supply”* by Kathleen Flanagan, identifies some of the key challenges for the Tasmanian government. However in doing so the paper also provides a useful overview of what’s happening nationally in relation to planned growth for community housing.

Flanagan describes the growth provider model as a strategy attractive to housing authorities across Australia because community housing providers are perceived of as more flexible and innovative than public housing and also have access to additional resources through tax breaks and their tenants’ Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

“The strategy is based on the provision of government capital (either through funding grants or through transfer of title to public housing properties) which the recipient community housing organisation then uses to leverage private investment.”

Flanagan’s national overview of community housing signals that there is an intention at least by many state governments to pursue growth strategies. Tasmania has been implementing a strategy to expand community housing as a means of increasing affordable housing since 2006.

Tasmania now has two growth providers operating in the state, Tasmanian Affordable Housing Limited (TAHL) was established in 2006 to head lease newly constructed properties from the private market with the state government providing a subsidy to ensure affordability and from 2008 the Victorian registered Community Housing Ltd, (CHL) will also begin to develop and manage new properties in partnership with the state government.

In Victoria, a new regulatory framework was legislated in 2004, and 6 organisations were registered under the new system by 2006. The Victorian government has committed funding of \$100 million (2006) and

a further \$300 million (2007-08) for housing association growth. In South Australia, the government has flagged the development of a community housing not for profit growth program and 14 housing associations are being assessed to identify potential growth providers.

In 2007 the SA government announced an additional \$20 million funding for community housing provision.

Also in 2007 the ACT government released an Affordable Housing Action Plan which targeted the growth of community housing through the Community Housing Company which is being restructured in preparation for a transfer of title of 135 publicly owned properties and \$3 million of capital funding.

Here in NSW we know that seven growth providers have been identified and additional finding arrangements will be driven by the \$49.8 million Affordable Housing Innovations Fund to finance debt equity, and \$70 million in direct funding to community housing organisations.

Should Tasmania establish community housing growth providers of the size and scale of other states?

Anglicare Tasmania states that, “A new approach should not be implemented just because it is innovative, but because it will deliver the best possible outcomes for existing social housing tenants and Tasmanians living in housing stress who need the affordability and security of tenure provided by social housing”.

The Deputy Premier Lara Giddings, the Minister responsible for Housing, announced as part of the Budget Estimates process that the Tasmanian government would be consulting widely over the next three months to “look at innovative ways of improving and expanding our public housing stock”.

Options include consideration of new community housing associations, or a State Owned Company as recommended by a recent Legislative Council Inquiry into

(cont. pg 12)

Standards and Accreditation Unit closes

Community housing providers turned up in force on June 26th to acknowledge the work of the Accreditation Unit and mark its closure as a unit of the Office of Community Housing. The Standards and Accreditation Unit has been in existence for over 10 years, and during that time has contributed to raising the standards of community housing provision through the Accreditation process. The Unit was overseen by an advisory group, whose members included Bobbie Townsend, Lesley Wyatt and Robbie Buchannan from ARCH.

Over the past ten years, the impact of the sector being involved in a continuous improvement process that underpins the accreditation system has benefited providers in all aspects of normal day to day tasks as Bobbie Townsend observed, "The sharing of good practice and knowledge especially between peer evaluators has strengthened the sector."

The Standards and Accreditation Unit has always enjoyed a positive relationship with the

sector, which was fundamental to the success of the system, staff such Denise Dwyer, Ben Wong and Amanda Standish to name a few.

Lastly under the leadership of Unis Goh – the sector continued to work closely and in a way that was very unique. Unis with her dedication and passionate style will remain with us for a long time.

St George Community Housing was awarded its third Accreditation certificate as the last one to be issued by the Unit. Peer evaluators from the sector including Sue Ogier, Jenny Stewart, Lesley Oatley, Patrick Yeung, Bobbie Townsend, Frank Birkefeld, Lesley Wyatt and Coral Garratt were all awarded certificates of appreciation for their contribution.

The Executive Director of Housing NSW, Mike Allen, announced the tender details calling for a new accreditation provider has been agreed upon and will be advertised next week.

Members of the Western Housing Alliance

The Western Housing Alliance met in Orange in June for a governance refresher session run by the Federation. Directors and staff were able to discuss future directions for the community housing sector from the perspective of small regional providers.

The Western Housing Alliance is made up of Lithgow, Western Plains and Parks Forbes community housing services. The Alliance is designed to help these smaller organisations support each other and to share resources.



Staff and directors of the Western Housing Alliance meet in Orange for a governance refresher training session.

Will the new National Affordable Housing Agreement

By the end of this year we will have a new national agreement for delivering Commonwealth resources for housing. The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) will be much broader than the old Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) that has served us since the middle of last century.

It seems likely to include the Commonwealth Rent Assistance program and will certainly include the new initiatives like the tax incentives provided by the National Affordable Rental Scheme, the Housing Affordability Fund and the housing for homeless people under A Place to call Home, as well as new elements such as planning approaches and a government land audit.

Other homelessness and Indigenous programs will also be part of the broad approach, although it is less clear in what form.

The housing sector has been advocating for such an agreement for the last four or five years. It is hoped that it will allow for far better housing policy and expenditure by bringing together the many policy levers that affect housing outcomes.

The development of the NAHA is being undertaken by a group of housing and central agency officials, the Housing Working Group, jointly chaired by the Federal Minister, Tanya Plibersek and Tasmania, and the Heads of Treasuries (HoTS).

The new NAHA is just one of a new group of agreements between the Commonwealth and States that will consolidate the many agreements that previously existed. The new arrangements will involve a small number of special purpose payments (and the NAHA is one) and National Partnership payments under a new COAG intergovernmental agreement. The partnership payments will be more tightly specified agreements than the new SPPs.

A significant difference to the old CSHA is that the NAHA will not be a fixed term agreement. Rather it will be a rolling agreement that will

be reviewed from time to time. This provides both more certainty and more flexibility.



*Tanya Plibersek
Federal Minister for Housing*

The NAHA is almost certain to include both Specific Purpose and National Partnership payments. Many people expect that Indigenous housing programs will be covered in a National Partnership payment and, following from the Green Paper on Homelessness, there is speculation that the payments previously covered by SAAP may also become a partnership payment.

In early October COAG will consider drafts of each new SPP and proposals for National Partnership payments. Funding arrangements will be finalised at the December 2008 COAG meeting.

One of the most important changes under these new arrangements is the nature of the financing and performance reporting. Whereas previously the CSHA required matched contributions and specific bilateral agreements with each state on the outputs that would be delivered, the new NAHA will be far broader.

First, the special purpose payment funds will not be tied or matched. They will go straight to consolidated revenue. And while the states will need to provide their own funding to achieve the overall results expected, there will be no specified matching requirements.

make a difference?

Second, the new agreements will identify the objectives and outcomes, but won't go into how these are to be achieved. This makes the agreement on outcomes crucial to the success of the new agreement, and most advocacy has been focussed on this issue.

Over the past few months a number of 'roundtables' have been convened by the National Affordable Housing Summit Group chair, Julian Disney. These have been a forum for at least some stakeholders outside government to debate the approach and for these views to be fed back to government.

A consensus seems to be building that the new agreement should include a national affordable housing goal. An example of a goal discussed in the forums is to halve the proportion of low- and moderate-income households who have housing costs



*Prof. Julian Disney
Chair of the Summit Group*

exceeding 30% of their incomes, by 2020. Even more important, it has been argued that there should be clear targets to help achieve this goal.

One target that would balance achievability against the supply that would be needed to achieve the goal is 120,000 new dwellings delivered through affordable housing programs by 2015. There is strong pressure for 30,000 new dwellings, in addition to the NRAS funded dwellings, to be funded over the next four years.

Increasingly there seems to be agreement that this overall target should be broken down into two or three 'bands'.

The first is housing provided at a cost that is likely to be affordable to lower income households or higher needs households, and these groups should make up the majority of the tenants housed in this band.

The second band would be provided at rents more like those for NRAS – below 80% of market. Even here, it is suggested that at least 25% should be rented by low income or high needs tenants. The third band could include home purchase programs for low- or moderate income households.

Growth targets could also include targets for specific types of "high-need" households, such as Indigenous households or homeless people. But it could also include progress targets for each state.

Of course the biggest debate will be about financing.

Again, there is a growing consensus that the agreement must provide additional funding for growth – unlike the recent history of the CSHA which has seen declining funding that has not even covered operating costs.

The other side of this coin is that there needs to be a more explicit subsidy stream for the ongoing operating costs of all providers – government and non-government. At least part of this should help fund the reconfiguration and upgrade of existing social housing assets.

There are some radical proposals for how to deliver this finance.

One suggestion is to establish an Affordable Housing Growth Fund made available to states on a per capita basis to fund a proportion of the new capital costs (leaving the states to determine how to fund the rest). Growth funding would also include the new incentives provided under NRAS.

Some have also proposed that the First Home Owners Grant should only be made available

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International trends in social housing

Declining affordability, increasing demand and low supply in many countries have forced a resurgence of interest in social housing.

International trends in the sector include growing diversification of approaches to ownership, financing, subsidisation, and allocation methods. The distinction between traditional social housing and other types of affordable housing is becoming increasingly complex, with a mix of public, not-for-profit, and for profit providers typical on international level.

The direction of social housing is changing in Australia too. For community housing providers, this means a shift in the way business is conducted, as new policy initiatives target community housing specifically for its ability to provide affordable housing.

Key areas that have received increased attention are supply management, allocations, funding and delivery mechanisms.

An observable shift in international housing policy strategy has been the return to supply side subsidies to increase stock, in countries such as Ireland, England, France, Belgium, Austria, New Zealand, Netherlands, and United States. The Affordable Housing Innovations Fund (AHIF) is intended to encourage provider leveraging through a debt equity model.

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) has also been implemented by the Australian government in an attempt to increase supply through investment incentives. These are both supply side strategies intended to increase growth, specifically through community housing.

Although investment in new housing stock is increasing, it is unlikely to result in significant real growth, requiring the renewal of existing stock to be a key component of any growth strategy.

A Common Access System (CAS) is being developed by Housing NSW to streamline the application process and standardise the information gathered to make allocations decisions. Similarly France, England, and Scotland have introduced social integration strategies designed to stabilise existing communities, prevent future residualisation, improve current issues, and create a viable social mix within housing.

Ensuring financial viability of community housing providers is an ongoing aim of social housing, both in Australia and abroad. Financial viability has been addressed through personal housing allowances in the Netherlands, UK, Germany, and France and through revenue supplements in the US, Canada, and NZ. Unlike NRAS they are demand side subsidies.

In Switzerland both supply and demand side methods are used to ensure financial viability, where rents are regulated for the private housing market, and supply side subsidies are given to social housing landlords.

Finally, delivery mechanisms are increasingly important as the line between social and affordable housing is blurred. A number of different types of group structures are being implemented in social housing, including amalgamations of housing associations, consortiums, trusts, and especially public-private partnerships; all designed to promote growth and stimulate funding of affordable housing in Australia.

Common international trends include diversification and privatisation of providers through stock transfers, the sale of public companies, and government grants aimed at direct capital funding.

The challenge for the social housing sector in Australia and abroad will be to continue to find innovative approaches to increase the availability of affordable housing.

June/August board meetings

Major Items

The board agreed to send a letter to the Minister on the rent changes, noting that in principle we agree with CRA maximisation, but highlighting our concern about impact on existing tenants, and other implementation issues.

A full board discussion of the proposed Common Access Strategy will be held, recognising that it will have a major impact on all members.

The Board met with Roxane Shaw who has just been appointed as the Community Housing Registrar. Roxane discussed her approach and the next steps for introducing the new registration system.

Strategic issues

Bobbie reported that she will continue to represent the Federation on CHAC until October when the new CHAC will be announced.

The board discussed major new national developments. It agreed that the Federation would make a submission on the Homelessness Green Paper. In particular, it discussed the NRAS at both board meetings. It noted the Federation submission on the NRAS technical paper and state contributions. It particularly discussed the emerging tax issues for NRAS, and the partnership facilitation role.

The current negotiation of a National Affordable Housing Agreement was discussed. It was agreed that it will be important to be involved in a national advocacy effort to seek national funding for new social housing supply.

The board also discussed the issues related to possible title transfer in NSW, and noted the discussions that have been held with consultants, peaks and growth providers on these issues. It also discussed how we can still influence the new subsidy arrangements that will soon be finalised for associations.

The board noted the wind up of the Accreditation Unit and that the tender for a new provider had not been released. The options for the Federation to tender were discussed.

The president reported on his recent meeting with the NSW Community Housing Tenants Network supported by the Federation.

The appointment of a facilitator was agreed to develop the Federation's next 5 year strategic plan.

Members issues

The board discussed the lack of information available to members on planning data used by Housing NSW to make decisions.

It was also agreed to seek a Rule change to reflect the fact that Federation members may operate in a number of jurisdictions and may manage tenancies on behalf of other members.

Business items

The results of the 2008 membership satisfaction survey were considered. It was agreed that the membership renewal process should be used to promote the Federation's work on behalf of the sector.

The draft business plan was approved subject to OCH agreement on funding. The board also reviewed the potential Federation project work arising from Planning for the Future.

A number of new business opportunities are being explored. It was reported that Laurel Draffen had met with AHO CEO Russell Taylor, and will prepare a proposal re what the Federation can do to deliver training to Aboriginal housing providers. Training proposals are also being explored with other states and a joint tender for the accreditation service is being prepared with QMS.

The Next meeting is 10th October 2008.

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Farewell to Renee Davidson, ESRHA

The Federation farewells Renee Davidson, from six years as Chief Executive Officer of Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Association (ESRHA).

Renee has gone to a new job in Health and we wish her well.



Growth providers for Tasmania (cont. from pg 6)

Housing Affordability in Tasmania. The Deputy Premier says "The Government has no preconceived position on these issues and we are genuinely interested in seeking the community's views on the best way forward. This is not about privatising public housing, nor making a profit from public housing, it is about the sustainability of housing in a

changing environment," Ms Giddings said.

Other states are still at early stages of implementation of growth provider strategies for community housing, however community housing is set for significant change. Flanagan's article visit: <http://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/>

National Affordable Housing Agreement (cont. from pg 9)

for designated home purchase assistance programs under the NAHA.

A more radical proposal that is being actively debated in the lead up to COAG is that the operating subsidy – in effect the old CSHA funding – should now be paid based on Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). In effect, public housing tenants would become eligible for CRA, although the payments might be made directly to state housing authorities. The cost of this proposal would be the same as the current CSHA payments.

This approach would put all parts of the housing system on an equal footing when it comes to their operating subsidies. But there is heated debate about how this will affect some states and whether an operating subsidy, rather than a rent subsidy, is the best approach.

Finally, the other part of this suggested package is a redevelopment fund for existing social housing dwellings that might be established for a limited period.

The challenge is to give these ideas real momentum. A coalition of CHFA, ACOSS,

National Shelter and Homelessness Australia have launched a campaign under the Australia Fair banner to push for increased funding needed for new supply. A national day of action at the end of September will push for an additional \$7.5 billion over the next four years to add 30,000 new homes.

Without this, the new NAHA will do nothing to provide the urgently needed growth of social housing, as well as expanding the supply of rental housing for low and moderate income working households.

Over the next few months we might see a new agreement that will really make a difference. It might pull together the levers for effective housing responses. It might provide the new funds so urgently needed to renew our social housing asset and increase the supply of affordable housing.

What we see over the next few months will be the test of both the Rudd Government's and the state's ability to create a new focus on housing.

Office of Community Housing Executive Director visits Sapphire Coast Tenancy Scheme

Maura Boland, Executive Director of OCH, recently visited Sapphire Coast Tenancy Scheme Inc. (SCTS). This was Maura's first visit to the far south coast of NSW. The time was used well, and Maura was able to visit a project and make presentations to a far south coast community housing provider.

Maura's visited an over 55's project that was part of the 2007 re-development plan in Merimbula. Several of the tenants and their carers welcomed Maura and talked about the pleasure and pride they felt in their properties. Maura was invited to view the inside of one of the disabled units by one of the tenants.

Maura then travelled to Bega along the beautiful coast road to present SCTS their re-accreditation for the third time and a certificate of registration as an A grade organisation. The event was well attended by 35 members of local service providers and the Lord Mayor of Bega, Tony Allen.

Maura spoke about the Planning for the Future and the greater role that organisations such as the SCTS had to play. In winding up her speech she said "Sapphires are renowned for their brilliant colour, durability and lustre. They are also one of the hardest gems around. Sapphire Coast is all that and more".



Sue Ogier, Maura Boland and Chairman, John Boag

New Director of Community Housing Strategy

A warm welcome to Deborah Georgiou who has been appointed Director of Community Housing Strategy at the Office of Community Housing. Deborah kindly sent us a few words to include in the Newsletter.

"This is a good time to be working in the Office of Community Housing. The emphasis on the growth of the sector and making sure that community housing fulfils its potential as a partner in the delivery of social housing makes my job both challenging and stimulating.

I think I bring a strong mix of skills and experience to the job – I have worked in two of the resourcing agencies in the sector, ARCH and the Federation, and in public housing and community regeneration. I have also worked in Australia and the UK. My

background gives me an understanding of how the social housing system works, what the possibilities are for the system, and how community housing providers can play an increasing role in delivering outcomes for individuals and communities.

Since starting in this position I have experienced some interesting times! Community Housing Strategy is responsible for rolling out the implementation of CRA maximisation, supporting the implementation of the new regulatory code and registration system, working with providers to support capacity building initiatives and exploring title transfer. These are all such significant issues for the sector that its impossible not to get excited by the possibilities and to feel part of a real agenda for change."

First Scoping Passports awarded to sector

At the start of July, Housing NSW awarded scoping passports to 16 workers from the community housing sector. The 16 had attended a two day training event run by Meredith Corrigan from Housing NSW to explain HNSW asset standards and how to apply these standards when scoping



Housing NSW Scoping Training participants

properties. Participants then had to undertake a separate half day assessment event. The assessment event was based on the inspection of a HNSW property. Participants had to correctly identify whether elements of the property met or failed HNSW standards for safety, functionality and appearance.

All 16 participants were assessed as “Competent” and were awarded with a “Scoping Passport” that recognises competency and licenses the holder to scope Housing NSW properties.

There was huge demand for the training and the event was run a second time to ensure that everyone from the sector could attend. These events were a successful partnership between the sector, the Federation, HNSW and the Office of Community Housing and the Federation will look for further opportunities to develop similar events in future.

A busy year for success!

The Federation congratulates recent graduates of the Certificate IV in Social Housing. First mention goes to Marilyn Wingrove from Community Housing Mid North Coast, who completed the qualification via distance in a record ten months. Well done! When asked how her experience of distance study was, she commented:

“I have been employed by CHMNC for nearly 16 years and I am 62 years old. I doubted my abilities to be able to do the course. After speaking with Estelle at the Federation I gave it a go. Well, I have enjoyed every moment of it. It validated what I have been doing over the years and I also gained insight into some of the legislations that I was not familiar with. All my ‘markers’ were helpful and without their feedback and guidance I doubt whether I would have maintained the confidence to continue.”

Others who have completed the course via distance include Helen Reay from South Coast Community Housing, Donna Mitchell from City West and Kylie

McDonald from Coastal Community Tenancy Scheme. Kylie’s feedback on the course was that while studying via distance had its challenges, the outcome was that her practice improved and her confidence increased.

Finally, a special mention goes to Dorothy Tuagalu who started the course face to face and completed it through distance from New Zealand. Dorothy’s perseverance in completing the qualification is a testament to her commitment.



Donna Mitchell and Marilyn Wingrove

NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



**HOUSING
MANAGEMENT
HOTLINE**

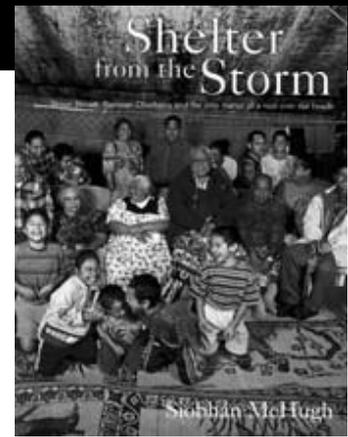
**Non-Metropolitan
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**Sydney Metropolitan
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(02) 9211 8420**

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information on:**

- ◆ Tenancy Management
- ◆ Maintenance and Repairs
- ◆ Policy and Best Practice

Operating Hours
Monday to Friday
10.00 am to 1.00 pm



Shelter from the Storm

*Bryan Brown, Samoan
Chieftains and the little matter
of a roof over our heads*

Author: Siobhan McHugh
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

Public housing has provided millions of Australians with much more than just a roof over their heads. In recent years, public housing has attracted more than its fair share of criticism.

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations decided to do something about it and commissioned a book that would tell the stories of former and current tenants of public and community housing. We wanted to show, in a non-threatening way, the pivotal role of social housing in the lives of a range of people.

Shelter from the Storm promotes a positive view of social housing and personalises the experience of social housing. Like all true-life stories, there are the occasional brickbats as well as bouquets. Bryan Brown, Jennie George and Mark Latham are three of the better known stories in the book.

Shelter from the Storm

NSW Federation of Housing Associations copies - *out of print*

To purchase an e-book:
www.ebooks.com/ebookd/book_display.asp?IID=309382



Housing Matters

Federation Members receive a free subscription to Housing Matters newsletter. Additional subscriptions are \$55 per year for members (or 1/2 price for Housing Association Board Members, \$27.50 each). Non-member subscriptions are \$66 per year for 6 issues.

Organisation

Name

Address

Phone Fax

<input type="checkbox"/>	Type	# of subscriptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Member	_____ (\$66each)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member	_____ (\$55 for each additional)
<input type="checkbox"/>	HA Board Member	_____ (\$27.50 each)

Please send this form and payment to:

NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010
Ph: (02) 9281 7144 Fax (02) 9281 7603
Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au
Website: www.communityhousing.com.au



Calendar of Events

Social Housing Training

Understanding Culture

CHCCS405A - Elective 2
24th September 2008

Understanding Aboriginal Culture

HLTHIR4A - Elective 2
25th September 2008

Develop and Implement a Community Renewal Plan

CHCCD20A - Elective 1
1st October 2008

Facilitate Client Participation in the Organisation

CHCCS10A - Compulsory
2nd October 2008

Going to the Tribunal

CHCAD6A - Elective 2
2 Day Training
29th & 30th October 2008
(Cert IV or Diploma Level Unit)

Other Scheduled Training

Orientation to work in mental health

CHCMH1B,
2 Day Training Session
17th & 18th September 2008
(accredited)

EO Network

All sessions 10 am - 12:30 pm
followed by a network lunch
31 October 2008

NSW Community Housing Conference

10 September 2008
11 September 2008
9:00 - 5:00 pm

If you would like to organise additional training, on a fee for service basis, please contact the Training Co-ordinator Estelle Lohman, at the Federation on (02)9281 7144 Ext. 205 or estelle@community-housing.org.au

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRES

HELPING SOLVE PROBLEMS BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS

If you are having a disagreement with a neighbour that you just can't settle, it may be best to get some help.

Community Justice Centres have trained mediators who can help you solve your problems quickly and fairly. Mediation can help solve problems between neighbours on issues like:

- pets
- children
- noise
- garbage
- unreasonable behaviour
- family disputes.

What is mediation?

Mediation is where people voluntarily get together with mediators to settle their conflict in a way which is fair and acceptable for everyone involved.

How can Community Justice Centres help?

Mediators are trained to help people to settle their disagreements by:

- Listening to each person talk about their concerns;
- Helping people talk to each other about their problems; and
- Helping people to come up with their own solutions.

CONTACT

If you think mediation can help you, why not contact the Community Justice Centre:

Phone: Client Service Line - 1800 990 777

Website: www.cjc.nsw.gov.au

Email: info@cjc.nsw.gov.au