

Housing Matters

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Parties propose radical changes to housing funding

The national policy landscape for affordable housing has changed radically in the last few weeks, no matter who wins government at the upcoming Federal Election.

Labor leader, Kevin Rudd, who put housing affordability right up there on the election agenda, held a National Housing Affordability Summit on 26 July to help “clarify policy options”.

On the same day, the Minister for Family & Community Services, Mal Brough, announced a radical shake up of Commonwealth funding for public and community housing. While the timing of this announcement was clearly driven by electoral tactics, it means that there is now a consensus that there will be some big changes in housing funding.

Labor has made two policy announcements of his own since the summit. The first was to provide a \$500 million infrastructure fund to reduce the costs of new developments. The second was a \$603 million incentive for investors in new affordable rental housing.

The summit – an invited group from senior levels of industry, the community sector, academics and State Labor Ministers – was held to help shape options for Labor policy. As background, Labor released an



Tanya Plibersek, Labor Shadow Housing Minister, at Summit

options paper that canvassed a wide range of options to “inform a national debate”.

In this, they seem to have stolen a march on the Coalition who, having initially announced “that for the next CSHA from July 2008 we will immediately invite expressions of interest...for proposals...and approaches to using the available funds...”, are now proposing to use the information from the call for submissions to develop “a discussion paper on better planning for the delivery of social housing”.

Despite the summit not being about decisions, it produced some clear areas of agreement.

There is now widespread consensus that policy must be focussed on the supply side. Demand side measures such as

increasing the First Home Owners Grant have almost no support. Just as important, there seems to be agreement that it will take a long time before measures to reduce the costs of home purchase make an impact. However, governments can and should immediately develop policies to increase the supply of low cost rental housing.

The subsequent announcement of a rental investment incentive has clearly been influenced by the proposal, outlined by Julian Disney at the summit for a National Affordable Rental Incentive.

There was also consensus that not-for-profit housing providers will be central to the development and management of new low cost rental housing.

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From the President...

It might be time for optimism! It begins to look like housing has finally cut through as a political issue – at least at the Federal level.

Following Labor's housing summit it looks like the investment tap for affordable housing could really be turned on.

So with possible national incentives and new State programs it makes it a good time to be planning for the sector's 25th birthday so while we celebrate the past we can also look forward to the future.

However, there are already some challenges in implementing key parts of Planning for the Future. The Federation has argued strongly that it is inappropriate to expect people to put in expressions of interest to become a 'growth provider' until all the range of supply options available over the next few years are clearer.

It will also be hard to know whether to pursue new financing options until we know what rent models will exist and how they will affect our income streams. Even more immediately, we need to know what the long term funding model will be. The sector has been great in providing responses to the CHLP Options Paper. Now we have to get a new model developed.

We have made this point in our recent meetings with the Minister and the Director General of the Department.

However, I should also say that the meeting with the Minister really promises a good relationship into the future. We have met with his staff since then and expect to be able to have a regular and frank dialogue.

One of the issues we have been able to raise is the government's assistance to help the sector develop the next generation of IT we will urgently need.



Nick Sabel

The other concern that we flagged with the Minister was the process for providing sector input to the new legislation. The Federation Board is deeply concerned that the draft was only provided to individuals, including our Executive Director, on a confidential basis, and with limited time to read the draft and seek clarification.

The Federation is deeply disappointed that, despite a good lead up consultation process, this part of the process has been very poor.

Let's hope the rest of the new initiatives are better handled.

Nick Sabel,
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Budget sees sector pass 10% of social housing

This year's State Budget projects further steady growth for the community housing sector.

While public housing is planned to fall by a further 1,249 units, community housing will increase by 1,375 from 14,199 units on 30 June 2007 to 15,574 by the end of 2007-08. Just under a thousand of this increase (966)

will be stock transfer from public housing.

This is still a very small increase in social housing supply overall. There will be 40 new crisis accommodation (CAP) units and 30 new Aboriginal Housing properties, bringing the total increase in social housing supply to just 196 units.

(cont. on p. 4)

Parties propose radical changes

(cont. from p. 1)

Four specific commitments have so far come from the summit:

A National Rental Affordability Scheme, is expected to create 50,000 new affordable rental properties across Australia. It will cost \$603 million over its first five years, to support investment in rental housing at 20 per cent below market rents.

It will offer institutional investors who construct new affordable rental accommodation annual tax incentives and financial support every year for a period of ten years. Participating States will be expected to contribute at least \$2000 per year more in direct or in kind financial support for investors who access the tax incentives.

Federal Labor and State and Territory governments have agreed to negotiate a National Affordable Housing Agreement. This will aim to balance improved access to first home ownership, new affordable private rental and boosting the supply of social and crisis housing.

Kevin Rudd announced at the summit that he would establish a National Housing Supply Research Council that would provide research, forecasts and policy advice on housing supply.

His first policy announcement since the summit was that Labor would establish a Housing Affordability Fund worth \$500 million to fund some of the costs of new housing infrastructure. Local government would be invited to tender for these funds, to replace

some of the costs that currently add to house prices.

The announcement by Mal Brough on the same day as the summit had a very different flavour. The Federal Government attacked the State's record on social housing delivery, arguing that the \$10 billion of Commonwealth funding through the CSHA had failed to deliver additional housing to those most in need.

The release went on to say: "we are now radically altering our approach to ensure a better deal for future generations in need of affordable housing". The approach calls for expressions of interest from "all parties, including state and territory governments, the non-government sector and the private sector such as major builders".

The release made it clear that proposals should use the available funds to increase supply.

What is still not clear is whether this means all CSHA funding from the Commonwealth will now be directed to new supply. If it was, then it would remove all the recurrent funding that now fills the gap between the operating costs and maintenance and the rental income, despite increases in tenants rents over the past few years.

However, if it is additional funding for new supply, then it would significantly widen the range of organisations who could receive CSHA funds directly. This would include community housing providers, the private sector as well as existing state housing authorities.

Housing associations respond to flooding emergency

In June, severe storms hit the Central Coast, Hunter region and parts of Sydney.

The storms caused extensive flooding, damage, and loss of life.

Rainfall exceeded 300 mm in the Hunter region and parts of the Central Coast and Sydney. The Premier Morris Iemma declared a natural disaster for the affected areas.

Nearly 6000 State Emergency Service volunteers responded to over 17,000 calls for assistance. More than 105,000 homes were without power. Insurance claims have already topped \$200 million.

Newmacq, Pacific Link & Coastal were all affected in the storms. These associations responded to the crisis by putting on extra staff on emergency shifts.

Associations called and visited tenants to discuss damage to their homes, and to make sure that they were okay.

Lesley Bennett from Coastal reported that 13 of their properties suffered damage. Two households in leasehold properties had to be re-housed, including elderly tenants whose house was flooded.



Sheila Astolfi from Pacific Link says that her organisation and tenants were lucky because their damage was relatively minor. Most of the damage suffered was to carpets and roof tiles. Pacific Link and many of their tenants were without electricity for 6 days.

Many of Newmacq's properties suffered damage, and six houses were completely flooded. Newmacq organised for the carpets to be removed in these properties. One family was rehoused, but the others decided to remain in their homes.



Budget sees sector pas 10%...

(cont. from p. 3)

However, there will be a net loss of capital properties across the system with 1,521 lost through sales, demolitions or conversions and only 1,223 new dwellings due to be completed this year. Community housing is the winner on this front, with almost a 4% increase in capital properties, apart from stock transfers. When these are included, there will be a 15% increase in the sector's capital portfolio.

This continues the trend that has seen the role of the leasehold portfolio decline for housing

associations. This year there will be 90 new leases, but by the end of the year, leasehold will be only 37% of the portfolio. Five years earlier it was half (49%). This trend will accelerate as the growth strategy outlined in *Planning for the Future* begins to get traction.

By the end of 2007-08 community housing will have passed another milestone, managing over 10% of the social housing portfolio (10.5%, up from 9.6% in June this year).

Sector response on CHLP sends clear message

The sector has clearly rejected the option of tendering for CHLP leasehold funding.

While the Office of Community Housing has yet to determine its response to the outcomes of the recent consultation, a recent meeting of the CHLP Review Reference Group discussed the summary of sector views.

All up, there were 13 responses to the Options Paper prepared by OCH – a third of all providers from all parts of the sector, and one from the Federation.

The sector saw no reason to separate the capital and leasehold portfolios into two different funding programs with very different objectives and relationships with OCH. This view might have been driven by the clear opposition to a funding model which removed all recurrent funding from the capital portfolio.

Under the current funding all associations receive a net recurrent subsidy. Those that provided data to the Federation would lose between \$4,760 and \$160,800 income if this was removed (even if ITM subsidies were untouched). Across the sector, we estimated that the total loss of funding would be as much as \$3 million.

Probably more important, half the sector would make a loss if there was no recurrent

subsidy. But this is not due to inefficiency (higher costs). It is due to the very different rental income per tenancy across the sector. The range of average rental income amongst associations that provided data to the Federation was from \$3,217 to \$5,661 per property.

This strongly suggests that there should be two kinds of subsidies for capital properties – rental subsidies and subsidies for the higher costs of some kinds of associations, such as high needs tenants or small associations or those covering large areas.

The submissions also rejected a model that assumed funding for leasehold properties would only allow 'break even'. In fact, OCH reported that this approach in the options paper was never intended to be so literal, and should have allowed efficient providers to retain surpluses.

But the main conclusion was that providers supported the benchmarking approach rather than the tendering option.

It is hoped that the reference group will meet again to identify the steps that could be taken to provide OCH with some more input on future options, and to progress the design of the funding once OCH has finalised its response.

New housing for women affected by DV

Hume Community Housing is planning to purchase two two-bedroom properties in Liverpool to assist Aboriginal women affected by domestic violence.

The properties will be purchased using funds of \$850,000 provided under the State Government's Crisis Accommodation Project.

Support services will be provided by women's welfare organisation Joan Harrison Support Services for Women.

Joan Harrison runs a highly regarded domestic violence & Aboriginal outreach service. Joan Harrison is based in Liverpool,

and is well connected with Aboriginal services throughout the region.

Joan Harrison manager Tracy Phillips said there was a large Aboriginal population in Liverpool, and a high level of domestic violence in the community. They have consulted women in the community to ensure services are culturally appropriate and to improve access to services.

Lesley Wyatt said that the properties will provide a much needed service to clients already in housing need, offering up to 18 months accommodation for two families.

Growth provider & Debt Equity EOIs

The select EOIs for 'growth providers' have also now opened. These providers will be selected for a four year period and will be given preferential access to social housing new supply, long term leases, and the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund. Later this year another tender will be conducted to identify up to 5 'reserve growth providers'.

New short and medium term growth will be focused in Central Sydney, Greater Western Sydney, South Western Sydney and the Hunter and Central Coast areas. The Mid- and Far- North Coast are likely to be identified supply zones for the 'Reserve Growth Providers' to be selected later this year. Tenders close on the 2nd of October.

Preferred growth providers will be required to have an A grade registration status (as a demonstration of 'high performance') and manage a minimum of 200 capital properties that can be placed on a long term lease. The reason for the 200 capital properties requirement is because the government's strategy is to offer 35 years leases on 200 properties (excluding properties funded under

programs such as CAP and SHSP). The intention of the 35 year leases is to build capacity of preferred growth providers to be able to borrow funds against the income stream from these properties to buy or build additional affordable community housing.

A tender for \$6 million of projects under Debt Equity 2006-07 was announced on 6th June 2007. This is the second round of funding to be released under the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund. Eligible projects will involve a registered community housing provider purchasing or developing affordable housing using a combination of grant funds, their own equity and debt finance.

The \$6 million is available for up to 4 affordable housing projects, and a further \$30 million will be made available over the next three years. Tenders close on 7th September 2007.

The Tender Guidelines and the Tender Form are available from the NSW Government's eTendering website: <https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/nsw/>.

Aboriginal tenant participation project

The Illawarra Housing Trust (the Trust) has initiated a new project to consult with Aboriginal tenants to identify more appropriate tenant participation processes. The need for this project was identified by the Trust because the participation of Aboriginal tenants in available tenant consultation mechanisms was non-existent.

It has also been apparent that Aboriginal clients have not been able to access properties appropriate to their needs. The Trust aims to directly consult Aboriginal Tenants through a home visit and targeted Aboriginal only consultations. The Trust will specifically use this information to inform and review their allocation, asset maintenance, transfer and staff training strategies.

Jenny Stewart, EO of the Housing Trust hopes that the outcomes from the project will be a useful resource for the sector.

Jenny requests that "... if other organisations have done similar work in this area or have experience that might be useful, we would really like to hear from you, as the issues are likely to be sector wide".

The Housing Trust successfully applied for funds under the Community Development and Resourcing Grants Program 2006/07 auspiced by Office Of Community Housing. To contact Jenny Stewart at the Illawarra Housing Trust email jen@housingtrust.org.au or phone (02) 4227 1166

HAC to work with sector

The Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) has marked another year of successful achievements and positive outcomes for community housing agencies and clients.

A total of 14 appeals were received from CH clients, of which 35% were recommended for a change of decision. Community housing clients lodged appeals on a variety of issues including (in order of priority): Transfer, priority housing, eligibility to be on a waiting list, rental subsidy issues, offers of accommodation and former debt.

In other areas, the HAC is pleased to announce the commencement of a special project designed specifically for the community housing sector. The project is due to commence in the third quarter of 2007 and involves extensive liaison with community housing staff, executive and board members. The main focus will be to develop a revised *Internal Appeals Best Practice Guide* which is flexible and adaptable to a variety of housing associations as well as cooperatives state wide. Our Deputy Registrar, Yasmina Kovacevic, will be contacting a number of associations during July and August to organise visits and schedule seminars for

the staff on appeals and decision making skills. An extension to these visits will be an intensive workshop which will concentrate on reviewing the agencies policies on appeals, as well as other areas of policy

and practices which the organisation may have identified as in need of review. There is no charge to the organisation for this service as it has been incorporated into the HAC 2007/2008 Business Plan and an additional position has been created to assist with this project. Through this project the HAC hopes to add value to the organisations by providing expert advice and training in areas of decision making particularly in areas of front line client service environment.

If you are interested in having Yasmina visit your organisation, please contact her directly on 02 9715 7955 or via email on kovacevy@housing.nsw.gov.au.



Broken Hill CTS shuts its doors

Broken Hill CTS shut its doors on 1st July 2007. The Board decided to appoint a liquidator to wind up the service rather than wait until a new provider was identified in the area.

The Department of Housing is currently acting as agent for the CTS, in order that CTS tenants are able to keep their existing tenancy agreements and to minimise disruption to them.

The Office of Community Housing (OCH) are still in discussions with local stakeholders about the shape of a new provider that will manage the CTS stock and the Department of Housing properties in Broken Hill.

The Department has now decided to go to open tender to select the best possible social housing provider to manage both public and community housing tenancies. This decision is in consideration of the long-term needs for social housing in Broken Hill and follows consultation with tenants and many other community members.

The tender document is currently being drafted. Housing NSW and OCH is planning to call for tenders in September 2007 at the latest. OCH will continue to consult about the tender and the change process with tenants, applicants, community leaders and human service agencies in Broken Hill.

Stock transfer tenants satisfied

The Federation has recently completed a sector based review of the current round of stock transfers from the Department of Housing to community housing providers. The aim of the early review was to identify areas where the stock transfer process has been successful and where improvements could be made.

The review adopted a three strand approach to ensure that a wide range of relevant perspectives were included. The community housing sector, the wider tenants' movement and most importantly tenants who have transferred were asked for their views on the stock transfer program.

The most significant finding was the high levels of tenant satisfaction. 22 tenants from seven stock transfers contributed their views through a tenants' survey. **86%** of tenants thought that the transfer has gone well or very well.

Tenants clearly felt that they had been given sufficient information to make an informed decision about the transfer to community housing. Of the twenty tenants who responded to this question, 19 (or **95%**) agreed that they had enough information.

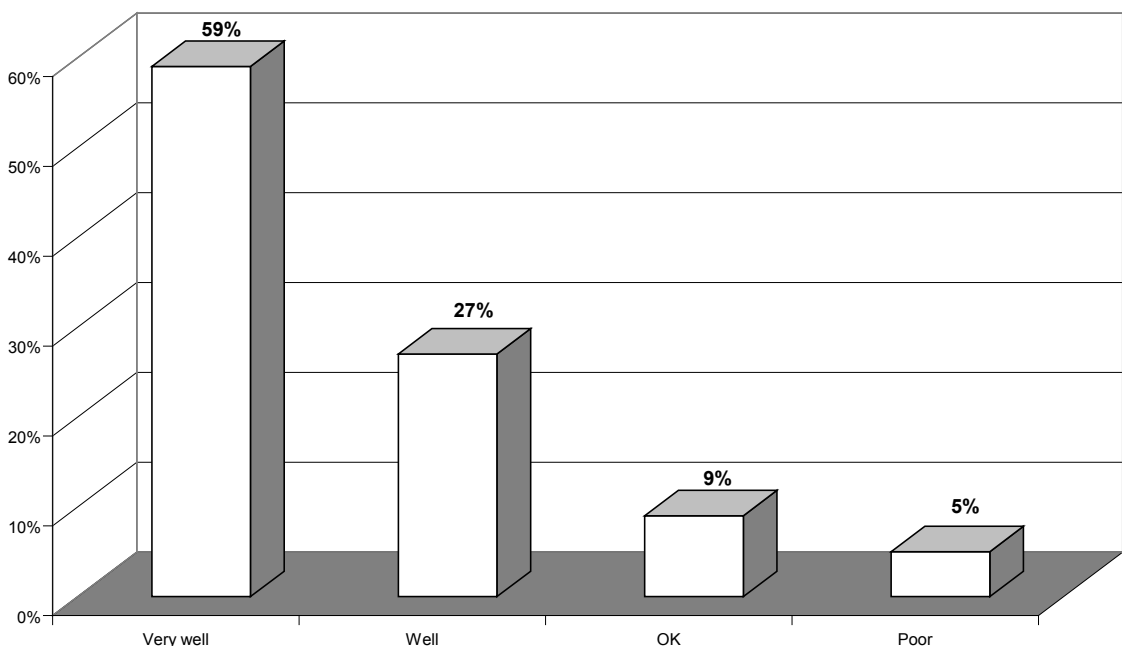
75% of tenants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service they are receiving in community housing.

A further 87 Argyle and Central Tablelands tenants also responded to inhouse surveys carried out by these associations. These surveys had a slightly different format, so a direct comparison is not possible, but the message is strikingly similar... **86%** of Central Tablelands tenants thought that their transfer to community housing went **well or very well**. **58%** said that the transfer went **'very well'**. **84%** of CTHA tenants said that they would **recommend transfer** to community housing. And **95%** of Argyle tenants described the transfer process as either **'good'** or **'excellent'**.

Community housing providers were more cautious in their appraisal of how the process is going. **No** provider thought that it had gone **'very well'** so far, but **four** out of the seven felt it had gone **'well'**. **One** provider thought it had gone **'poorly'**. The problems relating to process seem to relate to concerns about the viability of the stock, asset issues and some difficulties with the process itself. Providers are more positive about the outcomes from

'Overall, how do you think the change to community housing went for you?'

(cont. next pg.)



A fresh approach to supported housing for people with HIV/AIDS

Providing supported housing for people with HIV/AIDS continues to be an area of high and complex needs. The issues have been recently revisited by the Floating Care working party and a broader network for workers is being established to address the changing face of HIV/AIDS supported housing.

Floating Care is a supported housing program for people living with HIV/AIDS and a partnership between the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and the Office of Community Housing since 1997. Currently, several housing associations and as many support agencies are involved in delivering supported housing through this program.

A working party of housing providers and support agencies has enabled improved service delivery to clients through information sharing and relationship building. The aim has been for all organisations involved in the program to have representation at these meetings.

At the last meeting, it became clear that from the perspective of both support agencies and housing associations, supported housing for people living with HIV/AIDS covers a broader scope than just



James Fraser, Floating Care Team, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

Floating Care. It was decided to open up the Floating Care Working Party to include other organisations involved in HIV/AIDS related supported housing.

To kick things off, a seminar will be held later in the year, bringing together support agencies and housing associations involved in HIV/AIDS related supported housing beyond Floating Care. Attendees will be invited to join the next Working Party Meeting which will now be called the Supported Housing Working Party (SHWP).

(cont. from p.8)

a tenants' perspective: **six** out of seven providers think the process has gone 'well' for the tenants involved.

The report makes a number of recommendations about how the stock transfer process could be improved. These include suggesting that providers and OCH could re-double their efforts to engage the wider tenants' movement in the stock transfer process. Providers should also be encouraged to follow Argyle Community Housing's practice of surveying all tenants 6 weeks post transfer to ensure consistent information is available. The report also suggests clarity is needed on the issue of what tenants' choice really means in the context of stock transfer.

The report will be presented at the Stock Transfer round table on 27th August and is available on the Federation's website.

Community Housing Ltd Launch NSW Operations

Community Housing Limited (CHL) officially launched its housing services in NSW at the Mecure Hotel, Sydney on 10th August, with the appointment of Patrick Yeung (formally of St George Community Housing Co-op) as NSW Manager.

CHL is currently developing a number of projects through local partnerships in Sydney, Newcastle and the South Coast including the design and construction of 39 apartments in Artarmon, under the Debt Equity Program in a joint venture with ARCH and Willoughby Council. CHL NSW will be seeking to develop partnerships in which its property development capacity can be married to established community housing management providers, to expand the stock affordable housing.

Fraud and your organisation

The prevention, detection, and management of fraud are a fundamental governance issues for all boards. Boards have a key responsibility in protecting the organisation against fraud.

Fraud has the potential to have a very dramatic impact on an organisation, and in some cases has resulted in not for profit organisations being forced into liquidation. Fraud also poses a significant risk to other assets, including an organisation's reputation.

The *BDO Not for Profit Fraud Survey* was undertaken in 2006 by the BDO Chartered Accountants, the School of Accountancy at the Queensland University, and the Not-For-Profit Network. The *KPMG Fraud Survey* is undertaken biannually, and covers large public and private organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

Perceptions of fraud

How an organisation perceives the risk of fraud to their organisation will largely dictate the strategies it has in place to prevent, detect, and manage fraud.

The BDO survey found that 19% of respondents had experienced fraud in the past two years, a significantly lower figure than the 47% identified by KPMG as occurring in large public and private organisations.

The BDO survey found that while 65% of respondents identified fraud as a problem for the sector as a whole, only 16% of organisations identified it as a problem for their own organisation.

Types of fraud

By identifying the type of fraud that might occur, organisations will be better situated to implement appropriate policies.

The most commonly occurring fraud in the not-for-profit housing sector was cheque fraud (60%), followed by cash theft (20%) and database and intellectual property theft (20%).

An alarming 33% of loss experienced by housing organisations was between \$100,000 and \$499,999. This figure is, however, still significantly less than the average figure of \$714,000 suffered by large organisations surveyed by KPMG.

How is fraud identified?

Tip offs from staff or other stakeholders is the most common way of fraud being identified, representing 37% of detections in the BDO survey, and 43% in the KPMG survey. The second most common method of identification was through internal controls.

This data indicates the importance of having strong internal policies and a whistleblower facility.

What can you do to protect your organisation?

To protect your organisation, the first is to develop a fraud risk management strategy.

KPMG recommends assessing the risk of fraud to your organisation, ensuring that you have a Code of Conduct, and developing fraud risk controls. Auditing and whistleblower provisions are necessary in detecting fraud. Protocols covering internal investigation, accountability, disclosure and remedial actions are also necessary.

Your board may like to consider convening an audit sub-committee to oversee the implementation and monitoring of controls to mitigate the risk fraud.

Board members can take out Fidelity Insurance which provides cover against misappropriation of funds by employees or board members. It is worth considering the cost of this insurance against the potential risk of fraud.

If your organisation has a strong ethical culture, strong internal controls, robust internal and external auditing functions, and whistleblower facilities, you are well positioned to protect your organisation from, detect, and respond to fraud.

You can download copies of these publications from:

BDO Not for Profit Fraud Survey - www.qrl.com.au

KPMG Fraud Survey 2006 – www.kpmg.com.au

Board Report

June Board

The Board began by noting the impact of recent floods in the Hunter and central Coast on member organisations and expressed their concern. They also noted that Patrick Yeung's leave of absence from the board has ended and that he will return to the board at the next meeting.

The main agenda item was consultation with the Board on Planning for the Future. Maura Boland represented OCH and took the board through the thinking behind the plan. She also noted that the NSW strategy does not sit on its own, and can also be seen in the context of the national work being undertaken by States on an affordable housing framework.

Maura suggested that a number of national developments may be important. A new national housing agreement should offer support for community housing, work on a national regulatory framework should give private developers more confidence. But it may also create new challenges, since a national market could mean business be taken over by interstate companies.

The Board discussed how much change Planning for the Future could change through the consultations. Maura said they would welcome additional actions where there are gaps.

The Federation stressed that a number of areas of concern: that more effective rent setting is a pre-condition to viability; that the stop/start timing has been a real problem and that there has been insufficient time and information before the recent calls for

expressions of interest. The main issue of concern was the restricted access to growth.

Maura reminded us that although growth may occur in high needs areas, that diversity (different models) will be valued. Also, 'non-growth' areas does not mean no growth, just not new supply.

The point was raised that a future workforce with movement between community sector and government will definitely raise issues around salary levels.

The Board discussed its concern with the confidential briefing which Adam was invited to on the draft Legislation.

The Board also discussed the sector's 25th birthday. It agreed we should make a particular effort to involve other partners, including private partners, and government: and make it a PR event.

OCH has agreed to our request to reconvene the Stock Transfer Round Table.

The Board noted the growing number of amalgamations and the impact this will have on the future shape of the sector.

In the light of sector growth, but declining numbers of associations, the Board agreed to increase the membership base rate by \$20 for full members and affiliates; by \$6 for associate members; and to increase the per property cap from 515 properties to 750 properties.

The next meeting will be on 12th October.

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Personnel predictions: planning for your future workforce

The impending retirement of the baby boomer generation and the potential losses to employers has prompted the growth of workforce planning as a strategic management tool by many public sector and non-government organisations in recent years.

Workforce planning involves predicting future workforce requirements and then designing strategies to meet those requirements. This will be particularly important for the sector because of the significant growth we are likely to experience over the next five to ten years and the workforce challenges this will entail.

Workforce planning usually begins with the identification of the current workforce demographics, drivers and capabilities and then uses this as a basis to forecast future demand for labour, and skills. The gap between the future demand and the present supply can then be analysed to indicate what measures need to be taken in order to bridge the gap.

In a recent project we conducted titled *Identifying the Future Workforce Needs of Housing Associations in NSW* we estimated that the sector workforce is likely to grow by 45% over the next 5 years from approximately 293 employees (headcount) in 2007 to 425 in 2012. Using statistical modelling, we forecast the number of employees an association of a given size and growth scenario might need in five and ten years time (see table for selected examples).

These figures are only estimates but they provide a useful guide for associations to use in planning for their future workforce. Given the current skills shortage, the increase in the number of employees needed by associations will provide particular challenges for the sector in recruiting and retaining skilled staff.

Our project also identified the likely future growth in team leaders and housing development project managers as associations grew bigger. Interestingly, specific in-house financial staff such as accounts and bookkeepers did not appear to be required until an association grew to around 400 properties.

Our sector-wide gap analysis revealed that the most likely future skills shortfalls will be in housing development, middle management, and commercial skills. In order for the sector to move towards the desired skills and address future worker shortfalls, new training opportunities in these areas and the development of qualification pathways such as the introduction of a Diploma and Masters level courses in Social Housing, will need to be created.

The full report for *Identifying the Future Workforce Needs of Housing Associations in NSW* can be found on our publications page of our website:

www.communityhousing.org.au

Example Housing Association	No. properties (2007)	Actual no. of employees (2007)	If no. properties grows to (2012):	Forecasted no. of employees (2012)	No. properties (2017)	Forecasted no. of employees (2017)
1	1010	23	1647	31	2213	33
2	810	18	1883	33	2449	36
3	600	9	1127	25	1382	27
4	520	14	804	20	1016	23
5	300	6	354	10	474	13
6	54	2	115	4	235	7

Federation convenes Aboriginal Advisory Group

Aboriginal access to mainstream community housing is a key concern for the sector and for the Federation.

The Federation recently worked with a number of stakeholders to look at the barriers faced by Aboriginal people in accessing and maintaining tenancies in mainstream community housing in NSW.

One of the major recommendations that came out of this project was that the NSWFA should establish an Aboriginal Advisory Group. The Federation is currently in the process of establishing this Group.

The Federation invited Aboriginal directors, housing association executive officers, and tenants to join this Group.

Broadly, this group's role will be to provide advice to the Federation board about ensuring effective engagement with Aboriginal people by the Federation and the sector, and to provide advice on Federation projects that relate to improving access for Aboriginal people to community housing.

If you would like more information about this group, please contact Ellen Adele at the Federation on (02) 9281 7144 (ext. 201).

Tenant Network elects committee

The community housing sector now has an elected tenant body which can promote participation and represent tenants' points of view. Tenants of metro associations were able to elect a representative to the tenant network Rep. Committee either through their existing tenant structure or at the tenants' workshop held on 26th June. Ten of the 15 metro associations have now elected reps or deputies.

This is a major achievement for tenants and it has taken two years of hard work to get to this point. The Network got right down to work at the event, by preparing a response and a submission on OCH's 'Planning the Future' strategic plan.

Now that the committee has been elected, the Tenant Network will be run by tenants for tenants. The committee's next tasks are to elect their own Chair and Secretary and to

plan out their priorities for the year ahead. They will be direct the Federation staff who will be supporting their work.

The Rep. Committee has already agreed that it would like to explore the possibility of developing the Network into a state wide

body. This is likely to be a priority for the year ahead. The first step will be to contact regional associations who have tenant participation structures like Tenant Advisory Groups already in place and to discuss how the real challenges of distance and

communications can be overcome.

If you would like to be contacted about the expansion of the Tenant Network beyond the Metro area, please get in touch with Adam West at the Federation on 9281 7144 (ext 211) or adamwest@communityhousing.org.au



Tenants prepare a response to 'Planning the Future'

New workers at the Federation

The Good Practice Unit at the Federation welcomes Rita Hampton as new full time Training and Resource worker. Rita introduces herself:



I was in public and Aboriginal housing for quite a number of years (1996 - 2007), having worked with the Department of Housing in the role of Community Development Coordinator, Aboriginal Housing and NSW Aboriginal Housing Office within their Training Unit and also with the AHO Board and Executive & Client Services in their Aboriginal Housing and Information Services Unit providing information and resources to Aboriginal tenants and applicants, assisting with decision making, regarding AHO properties managed by the Department of Housing. This has given me a broad understanding and knowledge of the community housing sector. Prior to that I worked with a community resource centre located in the Penrith area and my role as the Aboriginal Community Services Coordinator was to deliver the community development project and provide training and resources to Aboriginal and mainstream

community controlled services in the Western Sydney and Blue Mountains area.

My people come from both sides of Australia, I am member of the Noongar people on my fathers side. The Noongar (Wudjari, Njunga, Nyungar, Nyoongar) of the south western corner of Western Australia, and a member of the Kamilaroi (Gamilaroi) people from New South Wales on my mother's side.

You can contact Rita by phone 9281 7144 (x204) or by email rita@communityhousing.org.au

Danielle Merrett joined the Federation in June as a temporary Research and Policy Officer. Danielle is currently finishing a Masters of Economics at the University of Sydney. Prior to working at the Federation, Danielle worked as a Program Manager at the Centre for Continuing Education, the University of Sydney. Danielle brings with her a range of research skills in Economics and Education.



DOH Certificate IV trainees graduate

The first group of Department of Housing trainees undertaking the Certificate IV in Social Housing graduated last month. The trainees are part of a pilot program between the Federation, the Department of Housing and Swinburne University of Technology. Two groups are yet to complete the course. A second project is under way to open the Cert IV to other staff in the Department, as a move to skill up staff.



NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



HOUSING MANAGEMENT HOTLINE

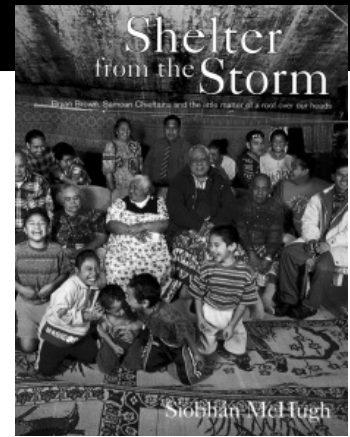
Non-Metropolitan
Telephone
1800 652 877

Sydney Metropolitan
Telephone
(02) 9211 8420

The **HOTLINE** will give
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
\$15.00 (inc P&P & GST)
(\$11/\$14 for Assoc/Full members)
Available from:

NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
Phone: (02) 9281 7144
Fax: (02) 9281 7603
Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au

Subscription for 'Housing Matters'



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	_____ (\$55each)
<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

Cert IV in Social Housing

Tenant Participation 1

CHCCS10A

26 September 2007

Tenant Participation 2

BSBATSIC510A

27 September 2007

Manage the organisation's finances, accounts and resources

CHCADMIN4B

24 October 2007

&

25 October 2007

Board meeting

Friday 12 October 2007.

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.

If you think mediation can help you, phone a Community Justice Centre. Mediation is free, voluntary and confidential. Community Justice Centres can be contacted on the following numbers:

Bankstown	(02) 9790 0656
Campbelltown	(02) 4629 9715
Penrith	(02) 4732 1933
Wollongong	(02) 4228 0433
Newcastle	(02) 4929 1211
Wagga Wagga, Bourke, Moree	- Free Call: 008 671 964

Website: www.cjc.nsw.gov.au

Email: info@cjc.nsw.gov.au