NT Shelter congratulates the NT Government and particularly the Strategic Policy Development and Coordination team within the Department of Housing Local Government and Regional Services (DHLGRS) for last November’s

**Territory 2030 Housing Conference**

-A very successful first ever NT event of this nature - on housing.

As a follow-on from the Conference the Department also sponsored a workshop which was co-hosted jointly by NT Shelter and the Urban Development Industry Association-NT (UDIA NT).

The workshop was attended by around 40 delegates from government, the development and building sector, the finance sector and the not-for-profit sector.

NT Shelter sincerely thanks DHLGRS for the support provided to NT Shelter to have such a high profile at the event.

We were also quite chuffed at how great our exhibition booth looked and that it attracted such a lot of interest and enquiries.

In the booth NT Shelter displayed a slide show of affordable housing developments from around Australia and we thank our many contributors.

Information from the Conference will very shortly be available on the Department of Housing website at www.housingnt.gov.au
**INEXPENSIVE HOUSING**

**THE NT’S NEXT TEST**

Friday 1 January 2011

*NT News Letter of the Day*

Toni Vine Bromley, Executive Officer, NT Shelter

The multi-billion-dollar Inpex development is set to provide a huge economic boost for the Northern Territory. The venture partner’s well-paid and highly qualified professional and technical staff will doubtless find comfortable accommodation in some of Darwin’s more stylish suburbs. However, in this election year, our politicians and planners must also give serious thought to the accommodation needs of those in our community on more modest incomes.

Our housing prices and rent rates in Darwin are among the highest in the country. The cost of living in the Northern Territory deters increasing numbers of people from settling here. We cannot prosper as a society unless we can find a solution which will provide affordable accommodation for the shop assistants, bus drivers and hospitality workers who keep the wheels turning in our economy.

**DARWIN’S ABORIGINAL HOUSING WOEFUL: REPORT**

30 November, 2011

*ABC News*

A report has found Aboriginal housing in Darwin is woeful. The Danila Dilba Health Service report found many homes are overcrowded, dilapidated and 14% of houses in the city’s Aboriginal communities have no showers or toilets. The report also found many households were desperately poor and just over half of those surveyed had a working freezer or fridge.

One of the report’s authors, Gokula Chandran, says the poor state of housing is dooming the next generation to poverty. “What they go through in that first five years of life has lifelong implications,” he said. “So all those chronic health issues and mental health issues can all be traced back to the first few years of life”. “Housing is the one thing that seems to hold everything in place, and once you get that right, a lot of other things, benefits, flow from it.”

**DARWIN PROPERTY PRICES TO LEAD WAY FOR CAPITALS**

Wednesday, 9 November, 2011

By Jano Gibson

*ABC News*

The keynote speaker at the Territory 2030 Housing Conference in November in Darwin says the city’s property prices should increase faster than in other capital cities. Brian Haratsis, from Macro Plan Australia, will be speaking at the Northern Territory Government’s “Balanced Housing Market” conference.

He says the increased workforce for the construction of Inpex’s multi-billion dollar gas plant and the new prison at Holtze will boost property values over the next few years. “Nationally prices are dropping as you would know. And I think prices in Darwin will begin to increase,” Mr Haratsis said.

“I think what will happen is the prices in Darwin will grow more slowly than the Gladstone, Mackay, which is the Bowen and Galilee Basin area. Much slower than the Kimberley. But they’ll grow fast than the other capital cities.”

“It will take 18 to 24 months as the project begins to lift off. So it won’t be tomorrow. There’s this idea that there will be a spike in demand tomorrow and a spike in prices tomorrow, and that’s just not true.”

**NEW REPORT CONFIRMS WHY CREATING MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING MUST BE A NATIONAL PRIORITY IN 2012**

Wednesday, 21 December, 2011

*NT News Letter of the Day*

Australians for Affordable Housing (AAH) has called on the Commonwealth Government and new Housing Minister Robert McClelland to make creating more affordable housing a major priority for 2012 in the light of the National Housing Supply Council’s third State of Supply report.

“For the third year in a row this report shows an unacceptable shortfall in the supply of housing in Australia. “Despite what many commentators call an ‘easing’ in housing affordability, the State of Supply report highlights that underlying demand is still strong, and indeed that high housing costs may actually be contributing to lower demand in the housing market as potential buyers are locked out”. The report outlines a cumulative shortage of 187,000 dwellings across Australia. This is contributing to high rates of housing stress with more than 20% of Australia’s renters and more than 10% of all households in housing stress”.

“Creating the National Housing Supply Council is one of the many achievements of this Government, but if the housing supply challenge outlined in this report does not result in Government action, including funding for new affordable housing, then we will continue to see high rates of housing stress and a generation locked out of home ownership. This is simply unacceptable”.

“A new Cabinet level Minister for Housing and Homelessness provides the Government with the perfect opportunity to have a renewed commitment to delivering the long term boost to affordable housing supply that is so clearly required”. “Australia has a structural problem in the housing market and only a comprehensive plan that includes extra affordable housing supply, taxation reform, increases to and reform of Commonwealth Rent Assistance and better and more targeted support to first home buyers will deliver the affordable housing solutions that low and middle income Australians need”.

* Australians for Affordable Housing is a coalition of national housing, welfare and community sector organisations to highlight the problem of housing affordability in Australia. For more information visit www.housingstressed.org.au
The latest AHURI Research Reports

Final Report: No. 179
Leader: Rhonda Phillips
The role of assertive outreach in ending ‘rough sleeping’
This project explored the ‘assertive outreach’ approach to addressing homelessness. Drawing on experience of policy-makers, service providers and service users in three Australian cities, it suggests that the approach has already yielded promising results in addressing primary homelessness. The study documents factors for success and some underlying principles for policy-makers and practitioners.

Positioning Paper: No. 144
Project Leader: Cameron Duff
The role of informal community resources in supporting independent housing for young people recovering from mental illness
Young people recovering from mental illness have a strong preference for independent housing, and the transition from supported accommodation to independent living is considered a major milestone in recovery from such illness. Informal (social, financial and emotional) resources provided by family, peer and social networks play an important role in recovery and social inclusion but their role in their transition to independent housing is unclear. This project aims to investigate the role of informal community resources in promoting stable housing outcomes and enhancing social inclusion for young people recovering from a mental illness.

Research Paper
Project Leader; Louise Crabtree
Principles and practices of an affordable housing community land trust model
Recent AHURI research has shown that Indigenous people are interested in forms of home ownership that allow them to hand their property on to children and are less interested in wealth accumulation (see Memmott et al, in Project 20501). As such, CLTs may offer a way of providing home ownership that is both affordable and consistent with Indigenous aspirations. This report forms one output of a larger AHURI-funded research project that is specifically examining the suitability and attraction of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and their communities.
The central purpose of this Research Paper is to introduce a general readership to the CLT model and to review the main aspects of its utilisation in the US and UK, as well as to provide background material for the specific research that is concerned with Indigenous housing options and CLTs.

Australian Charities & Not-For-Profit Commission Governance Discussion Paper
A consultation session is scheduled on the Australian NFP and Charities Commission (ACNC) for Darwin on 1 February. Also an implementation discussion paper has now been released to seek feedback on the functions and operations of the ACNC. Closing date for submissions is Monday 27 February 2012.
In the mean time I note the following key event in Alice Springs:

**Connecting the Dots - A Conference Shaping the Future of Infrastructure in Remote Indigenous Communities**

5-7 February 2012, Alice Springs

The Federal Government’s *Infrastructure Australia* is staging “Connecting the Dots” to influence sustainable growth in remote Indigenous communities through infrastructure. The conference provides an opportunity to discuss and progress innovative ideas to plan, develop and manage infrastructure in remote Indigenous communities. We note a couple of housing-specific items on the program.

For further information re the program, registration costs, etc. click on ‘Conference Program’ tab at http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/conference_series/connecting_the_dots.aspx

**Alice Springs Accommodation Action Group (AAG)**

The next AAG’s bi-monthly meeting is on Thursday 23rd February.

Attendance at these meetings is open to all community, social service and government agencies. Please contact David at ca@ntshelter.org.au if you would like to be added to the contact list or have further queries.

February’s meeting will provide the first opportunity to discuss and progress strategies that following the strategic planning workshop in mid-December. This was attended by approximately 20 people, providing an opportunity to review the group’s structure, its capacity to action items, and establish priorities for 2012.

It was ardently noted that the AAG needs to strive to achieve more for clients, with the August 2012 elections a key focus around which any actioning should be developed.

The key priorities identified by attendees were:

- Research of needs & evaluation of housing services for Alice Springs;
- Strengthening the integration of services;
- Development of a service system strategy to both increase housing and decrease homelessness.

**Barkly Region Accommodation Group (BRAG)**

The next BRAG meeting is in Tennant Creek on 28th February.

Attendance at these meetings is open to all community, social service and government agencies. Please contact David at ca@ntshelter.org.au if you would like to be added to the email contact list or have further queries.
Morgan Sabbith

Introduction
The new Homelessness Policy Officer has been out and about meeting with relevant service providers in the Territory.

A visit to Tennant Creek, Ali Curung and Alice Springs late in 2011 provided valuable contacts and information regarding the NT Homelessness sector focusing on current services and issues affecting delivery.

The Homelessness Policy Officer is meeting with homelessness service providers in the Darwin region currently.

To arrange a meeting, please contact Morgan at hpo@ntshelter.org.au.

Secure Care Facilities in Darwin and Alice Springs
Construction of secure care facilities promised by the NT Government is underway. The services, to benefit young people with complex needs and adults with a cognitive disability, will start to become operational in 2012.

Construction of the Darwin Stabilisation and Assessment Facility has recently been completed and recruitment for this service has commenced. The Central Australia Stabilisation and Assessment Service remains under construction. Building of the group homes is also on track and it is envisaged they too will open their doors in mid 2012.

Consultations are being held with organisations including SAFE NT, AMSANT, NT National Disability Service, NTCOSS, NT Shelter and NT Mental Health Coalition to gain views about establishing the service model and development and as a way to engage the sector.

The Secure Care website offers information about the service system ranging from frequently asked questions through to the plans of the facilities. http://health.nt.gov.au/Secure_Care_Facilities_and_Services/

Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2012
On any given night in Australia 105,000 people are homeless and nearly half of these are under the age of 25.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day aims to raise public awareness about youth homelessness and celebrate the resilience of young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Australia.

The 2012 Youth Homelessness Matters Day will be held during National Youth Week on Wednesday, the 18th of April. The 2012 theme is "Be part of the solution."

For more information visit http://www.youthhomelessnessmatters.net/

Homelessness Australia White Paper Report Card
Homelessness Australia is currently compiling a report card on the roll-out of the White Paper and its effectiveness. NT Shelter provided feedback to Homelessness Australia regarding the progress of the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, the National Quality Framework, Workforce Development, and Service Integration in the NT.

Katherine Accommodation Action Group (KAAG)
The next KAAG meeting is on Tuesday the 31st of January. All housing and homelessness service providers in the Katherine region are welcome to attend. For more information contact Morgan at hpo@ntshelter.org.au.

Darwin Accommodation Action Group
The next Darwin AAG meeting is on Monday the 13th of February. All housing and homelessness service providers in the Darwin region are welcome to attend. For more information contact Morgan at hpo@ntshelter.org.au.
CONFERENCE WORKSHOP
‘Building Partnerships Across Sectors’
10th November 2011
Toni Vine Bromley, NT Shelter

This workshop was generously supported by the NT Department of Housing Local Government and Regional Services as part of the Territory 2030 Housing Conference- ‘A Balanced Housing Market’

It was co-hosted by NT Shelter and the Urban Development Institute Australia- NT Branch (UDIA NT) and facilitated by Dr Tony Gilmour.

The workshop ‘Building Partnerships Across Sectors’ aimed to explore ways and future opportunities to increase housing supply through partnerships between the finance sector, the development and building sector, government and the not for profit sector (NFP) and was attended by 39 delegates.

Introduction; The increasing interest in social and affordable housing delivery – including the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) the Housing Affordability Fund (HAF), the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (particularly as it related to the economic stimulus offered to the construction industry and the subsequent boom in the construction of social and affordable housing) mirrors other public policy discussion which is generally focused on economic development. .................Why?

• Ideology of smaller ‘hollowed out’ governments looking more to steerage than delivery due to capacity being lessened; this along with ongoing budgetary restraints
• Policy realisation of the inter-connectedness of social and economic issues
• Value transfer- a push to make the public and NFP sectors more commercial and professional

Partnerships are recognised as being an inherently good vehicle for the delivery of social and affordable housing.

The NFP housing sector in Australia has developed rapidly over the past two decades and especially so since the introduction of the NRAS and NBESP.

The drivers of various schemes including NRAS are operating as a deliberate social policy agenda to facilitate partnerships ie less direct delivery by government / get others to do the borrowing and take risks / government steering not delivering.

The workshop included 3 presentations with a focus on key ingredients to successful partnerships and these are available on the NT Shelter website.

**Jan Berriman, CEO Central Australian Affordable Housing**

Jan discussed a number of projects she was involved with as CEO of Melbourne Affordable Housing noting each partnership arrangement was detailed and each project was its own beast.

Key ingredients to success;
• Innovation
• Leadership from government- committed to funding/ land / opportunities
• Working through partnership issues
• Commitment to agreed vision

**Ross Holt WA LandCorp**

Ross presented the development of a service worker (non-mining employees) accommodation in Karatha undertaken in partnership with National Lifestyle Villages where the State leased the site to NLV for 5 years at no cost and the State funded the civil and building works.

Key ingredients to success;
• Government role was leadership and strategic
• Alignment by partners to a creative demonstration project which was challenging, high risk and painful

**Geoff Smith CIC Australia**

CIC is involved in Joint Ventures including those in the NT at Lyons with Defense Housing Australia, and with CDU at Palmerston. Their objectives include profit plus delivering an affordable product and ensuring community diversity.

In a range of locations CIC are producing marketable social and affordable housing units, salt and peppered throughout developments. They have 16 different lot types in their Adelaide Lightview project and 3 different partners.

Key ingredients to success;
• Need for formality in partnership agreements- lock partners in legally
• Flexibility required to adjust to market response
• Design innovation
• Government role in steering vital

**KEY ISSUES TO TAKE FORWARD**

The NT Government is to be congratulated for initiating this great Territory 2030 event which generated good will and enthusiasm for possible future collaborations across sectors.

If we are to meet expected growth targets and grow the Territory economy for a boom time over the next 20 years, we all see the need to start building now to house our workforce as well as other lower income households.

This effort must be a whole of government approach - the economic future of the Territory depends on it and there are costs to be borne by not doing it.

As outlined by our 3 presenters, Government’s role in leadership and setting the strategic direction was an imperative with every successful joint venture.

Also, the government must be committed to developing opportunities for joint ventures to proceed.

Key issues identified were;
• Supply! Supply! Supply! The NT requires an expanded supply of affordable housing in all regional centres.
• Accurate data including understanding the household characteristics of the population is required to plan for current and projected housing needs now and until 2030.
• Data will inform risk levels and enhance security for financial institutions investing in the NT.
• Tax issues which inhibit investment in the lower end of the housing market must be challenged by the NT Government with the Federal Government.
• Developing new and additional incentives are imperative if the NT Government is to encourage investment in affordable housing in the NT.
• All sectors – Government, the development and building sectors, financial institutions and NFPs all have a role to play in improving housing supply outcomes however NFP’s may need some resourcing in order to develop their capacity to participate in partnerships and joint ventures.
• Government must improve efficiencies with land release and planning systems to reduce delays, allow the market to determine lot size applicability and to overcome NIMBYism.
Summary of the NT consultations on the National Regulatory System for Community Housing

Excerpt from Report by Michael Brooks
ARTD Consultant

Background
In June 2011, Housing Ministers across Australia agreed to a blueprint for a national regulatory system (NRS) for community housing providers. The proposed system seeks to introduce nationally consistent regulatory arrangements to promote the growth of the community housing sector nationally and aims to:

- Improve tenant outcomes and protect vulnerable tenants
- Protect government funding and equity in the sector
- Enhance investor and partner confidence.

This regulatory system will operate alongside the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission’s regulation of the not-for-profit sector.

NT consultation forums were held in Alice Springs and Darwin in December 2011. This report summarises the issues taken away from these two meetings.

Perceived costs and benefits
NT participants agreed that the national system had the potential to deliver net benefits in terms of:

- Supporting the delivery of quality improvements in housing services through the adoption of nationally consistent standards
- Underpinning the growth of community housing in the NT as a result of providers being part of the nationally regulated sector
- Increasing opportunities for partnerships and collaboration across States and Territories and across Tiers within the Territory
- Improving tenant outcomes by ensuring all community housing providers meet agreed standards
- Promoting greater certainty for investment in the community housing sector

The draft National Law and National Regulatory Code
Overall, NT participants indicated that the design elements of the National Law appeared to be sound although further information is required around:

- How the Code will be applied to regional and remote service delivery issues
- The relationship between the Code and State/Territory policy and funding conditions over the use of assets
- The definition of community housing assets—to make it clear what assets are included or excluded.

As a general comment, some participants expressed disappointment with exclusion of government providers from the National Regulatory System—arguing that this resulted in the continuation of an uneven playing field.

Implementation issues
Comments included:

- Ensuring the National Regulatory System does not lead to an additional regulatory burden
- Developing tools and templates to assist providers to document evidence for registration assessments and to meet reporting obligations
- Ensuring that adequate resources and support arrangements are in place to ensure NT providers are not disadvantaged because of the historically low levels of government-funded community housing in the NT
- Supporting Indigenous community housing providers to participate in the national system—without compromising their ability to maintain control over their land and their assets

Preferred option
Participants expressed in-principle support for the National Regulatory System over the status quo—although this support was conditional on the satisfactory resolution of key implementation issues.

Specifically, NT workshop participants highlighted the overall net benefits of the National Regulatory System in that it:

- Was consistent with supporting the growth of the community housing sector in the Northern Territory
- Would drive quality improvements in the NT community housing sector
- Would put a greater focus on remote housing issues by ensuring NT providers were part of the national community housing sector.
- Would attract additional resources, including private capital, to the NT community housing sector.

At the same time, workshops participants stressed that the benefits of national regulation would only be realised if:

- Sufficient resources were made available to support sector capacity building for NT providers
- Implementation took account of the delivery issues for providers in regional and remote areas in the NT—including the multiple issues faced by Indigenous community housing providers
- The system was implemented in a way that did not add to the overall regulatory burden for providers.

More information on the National Regulatory System for Community Housing can be found at www.nrsch.gov.au/
The Chief Minister
The Hon. Paul Henderson MLA

Brian Haratsis
Managing Director
MacroPlan

Adrian Pisarski
Chair
National Shelter

Dr Owen Donald
Chair
National Housing Supply Council

NT Housing Industry Panel Members;
Justin Gill
HIA
Kerry Osborne
UDIA
Quentin Kilian
REINT
A balanced housing market and affordability

By Graham Suckling, CEO UDIA Northern Territory

A balanced market (in economic terms) was defined as a housing market in which supply meets demand and prices are aligned with inflation. To achieve balance, we need to know the level of supply required to create that balance, noting however that achieving a continuous balanced housing market is impossible, because of inevitable fluctuations in economic conditions and our population.

It was suggested that in Queensland purchase or rental costs of 30% of income (the accepted standard for home affordability) that a couple earning $50,000 can afford to buy a property worth $190,000 or rent at $290 per week. These figures increase to $263,000 and $405 per week respectively for a couple earning $70,000 per annum and $375,000 and $580 per week for a couple earning $100,000.

However, we also need to consider ‘affordable living’ in addition to affordable housing, so the general costs of living in the Northern Territory need to be factored into our calculations of affordability. Overall, Australians are spending an average of 35% of household income on housing. To reduce that figure back to 25 – 30 % we either need a fall in prices (which was described as unlikely), or seven years of stability (ie house prices only rising in line with inflation).

Although there is a significant shortage of housing Australia-wide, economists warn against swamping the market; rather we need to keep the market balanced by making gradual adjustments.

Quantifying our growth – how many dwellings?

Because Australia’s trade is forecast to grow by 7.7% per annum (equivalent to China’s), we need to increase both home ownership and labour supply. As a very significant trade hub Darwin has an important role to play in this growth. The resources “super cycle” will run for at least 10 years and it is just starting. It is expected that the role of our airport will become increasingly important due to ‘fly-in fly-out’ employment.

The matter of exactly how many dwellings we will need is difficult to resolve with any accuracy. One speaker stated that we are currently building 1,000 per annum but need 1,500 per annum during the ‘spike’ period of 2012 to 2016 without major resource projects (it was suggested this figure could rise to 1,750 with the arrival of major projects). It was also suggested that we already have a shortfall which one speaker suggested was 11,000 dwellings and will need 37,000 new dwellings over the next 20 years – an average of 1,850 per annum.

Our uncertain growth figures and ‘boom-bust’ cycles are bad news for lenders, as they mean higher economic risks. At present the national finance industry doesn’t understand why there is such demand here and at particular prices. But with new projects such as INPEX, the new prison, the marine supply base, rail upgrade, defence resource enhancement and other development there will be very significant growth and a clear need for substantially more housing than we currently have.

Key issues for the NT are the accurate forecasting of our population over time, and keeping people here. Housing affordability is critically important component in keeping people here. It is clear that we need to reach agreement on growth levels and make a solid case to the finance sector if we are to enhance lending to fund our housing needs and build a more stable population and economic base.

How does the market operate?

While a balanced housing market means housing is provided across the whole spectrum of needs, and supply meeting demand, we do not have a perfect market in Australia. Issues such as imperfect consumer understanding, monopolies, regulations and tax structures all affect the operation of the market.

Other issues which are preventing the market from operating freely include government interventions on block size, regulations driven by community perceptions and objections, and inappropriate regulations. It was suggested that political leadership is a key ingredient and governments need to allow the housing market to operate more freely, for example with respect to block size.

Governments also need to avoid the mistake of stimulating demand (such as through home buyer incentives) but not stimulating supply to enable it to match demand; we need to focus on the supply side of the equation.

On the subject of block size, the Chief Minister stated that we cannot expect to continue with 800 square metre building blocks and 3 bedroom homes – ‘this is not happening anywhere else in Australia and we need to be more serious about block size’. However, there has been consistent community resistance to anything less than 600 – 700 square metres and the community does not appear to understand the link between housing affordability and block size.

Novel designs for homes on small blocks have received enthusiastic market acceptance elsewhere, despite small frontages and much smaller lot sizes, and there appears to be strong market demand for smaller apartments and houses in Darwin.

Industry concerns

Issues for the NT raised by industry include a shortage of land for development, difficulty financing projects, the ability to build fast enough to meet demand, facilitating inner city growth, block size and buying vs leasing.

The Panel session produced some key messages:

- The need for a wholistic approach to sustainability;
- Community education is needed regarding block size;
- Planning and design make a difference;
- There is a market for mixed tenure housing choices;
- Cost effective solutions need to be found;
- Management of urban communities, including public transport and social space, is critically important.
Housing Conference

Cooperation/partnerships

One clear message from the Conference and subsequent workshop was that achieving a balanced housing market will need all sectors to play their part - we need the development industry and the government to work effectively together. During the Conference there was a very interesting comparison between Sydney and Melbourne with respect to development, with Melbourne having performed significantly better. The main difference was said to be the difficulty in getting planning approvals in Sydney.

We need to replicate the degree of cooperation between government, developers and the community in Melbourne if we are to greatly improve our housing outcomes. The arrival of Unity Housing in the Northern Territory provides new opportunities for partnerships. Their Public Benevolent Institution status can mean substantial tax savings for partners.

Key ingredients for effective partnerships are innovation; leadership (particularly from Government); working through the issues together; and a commitment to an agreed vision.

It was also noted that the features of effective partnerships include:

- Formality (including legal aspects) early in partnering agreements;
- Flexibility to adjust to customer needs;
- The role of design innovation is a key;
- It is important to identify what specific attributes each partner brings to the partnership;
- Many schemes have numerous funders;
- There is justification for a senior NT Government planner to be dedicated to partnership projects;
- The single tier of government in the NT and ACT is an advantage;
- NT needs an infill implementation strategy;
- Simple mathematics dictates that we cannot continue to offer large lot sizes and maintain affordability.

Examples of effective partnerships in the NT include the Osborne Family Holdings/Salvation Army/NT Government example; St Vincent de Paul working with Redco and the federal government on a development at Coconut Grove; and an Ethan Affordable Housing example at Karama.

Ideas generated by the Conference and Workshop

- In Queensland housing needs assessments are now conducted to inform planning scheme reviews. If not already undertaken in the NT, this could be a useful innovation.
- It was suggested that resource companies will recognise the high cost of housing and start to invest (because the value of resources and minerals has increased very significantly, the capacity to pay higher salaries and contribute to housing costs is very high). We need to be engaging with these companies regarding the necessary increases in housing supply.
- We need to define affordable housing (price points, target group); define tenure (renters or purchasers); identify how to achieve ongoing affordability; develop diverse strategies and multi-faceted policy responses; and look for opportunities for leverage.

Katherine’s new A Place to Call Home Service

A new year brings a new way of life for one family in Katherine this year under the “A Place to Call Home” (APTCH) initiative. The program, run as a joint initiative by the Australian and Territory governments and managed in Darwin & Katherine by Mission Australia, aims to assist families experiencing homelessness to move into their own home.

After a nervous wait over the Christmas period, Mission Australia was able to hand over a set of keys to a previously homeless family of Mum, Dad and six children aged from 6 months upwards.

Mission Australia will provide the family intensive tenancy support and case management over a 12 month period to assist them build capacity to maintain an independent Territory housing tenancy.

On successful completion of the program the family may remain in the house and commence a lease agreement directly with Territory Housing with a reference from Mission Australia.

Mission Australia Regional Services Manager, Scott Wassman said this was the first family to gain a tenancy under this program in Katherine.

“We will be renting six renovated properties from Housing and are responsible for their good maintenance and condition. We receive referrals from Territory Housing for clients they assess as being suitable for APTCH. We then undertake our own assessment of the client to confirm their general suitability and specifically their willingness to comply with our terms.”

Among the terms and conditions is an agreement to work with a Case Manager to complete specific training modules designed to ensure the personal and life skills necessary to look after your own home are gained and the continuous issues surrounding maintaining a successful tenancy are understood.

If after 12 months it is determined that the tenant has fulfilled the requirements then the tenancy is passed onto Territory Housing and the tenant to deal direct.

Mission Australia Case Manager Samantha Twyman says that the family has settled in very well.

“The father is keen to look after his new garden and loved being able to mow their yard on the first weekend they moved in! Mum is keen to develop her life skills, especially her budgeting, and has also spoken of her desire to obtain a driving licence.

They are a lovely family and we wish them all the best in their new home and our journey through this next 12 months together.”

Mission Australia, Katherine (08)89717237
The **Beyond the current NAHA Conference Report**, including video files from both days, are now available to download from the AHURI website.

**What next for national housing policy?**

**Observations from Dr Jeff Harmer AO**

**Conference Rapporteur.**

The critical thing about housing policy and the NAHA for the future is first of all we need to understand that this is a system that produces affordable housing. The next NAHA needs to at least describe the various elements of the system (both participants and programs) that impact on affordable housing.

We need to start by acknowledging that the real problem is the lack of supply of affordable housing.

So what might a new NAHA look like? Well, consistent with previous comments, and the discussion and debate at this event the following observations are presented.

An agreement with multiple signatories, including local government, is not realistic. In the next agreement, we do need to contemplate the role the various players and programs play. We can do this in something that looks like an agreement between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions—which is essentially a funding agreement. But more importantly, other signatories to the agreement could exist in the form of schedules. By doing this the process has the capacity to be more inclusive.

There is also a need is to make clearer some of the more ambiguous elements of the current arrangements, such as the level of subsidies, effective marginal tax rates for public housing tenants, and rationales for rent setting that are linked to home ownership.

The next NAHA also needs to:

- **Build the community housing sector and make it sustainable.** There’s no doubt there’s a strong sense of the benefits of community housing in terms of diversity, management and ownership. Likewise, there exists capacity within the community housing sector to leverage private sector resources and to mix and match funding across governments and non-governments.
- **Provide sufficient certainty and sustainability, and recognise the need for ongoing subsidies to attract private finance into affordable housing.** This might be a NRAS Mark-2 that provides certainty for substantial private resourcing in the long-term.
- **Consider the impact of any changes on social housing tenants.** For example, issues of tenants’ rights, rent levels, security of tenure, the condition of buildings and such matters.
- **Continue to emphasise the need for and challenges of increasing the supply of affordable housing in those areas, such as remote Indigenous communities, where there is no housing market and in other areas such as mining towns.**

More information... http://www.ahuri.edu.au/calendar/beyondnaha_20111027.html

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**Rights On Show Art Exhibition 2011**

“**Reflecting on Housing and Homelessness**” was the theme for the Darwin Community Legal Service’s 17th Human Rights Art Award and Exhibition held at the Supreme Court in December 2011.

This subject is highly important to many Northern Territory residents, as the accessibility and affordability of housing becomes increasingly elusive for a growing number of individuals. The Northern Territory now has the highest rate of homelessness in Australia.

DCLS received many artworks from homeless, long grass and under-housed artists as well as many artists who are currently housed – nearly 100 entries inspired by this poignant topic.

The winning entry by an asylum seeker currently incarcerated in the Northern Immigration Detention Center reminded observers there are many reasons people can be homeless, such as fleeing persecution.

DCLS Executive Director Caitlin Perry noted our disappointment that asylum seeker entrants were unable to attend the awards ceremony, as the celebration and recognition of human rights is an important part of Australian society.

Darwin Community Legal Service looks forward to Rights on Show each year, as it celebrates and promotes the advocacy and advice work carried out by the organisation each week.

Toni Vine Bromley, Executive Officer of NT Shelter commented in the Rights on Show catalogue Introduction: “Access to safe and secure housing is one of the most basic of human needs and rights. A person who is homeless can face violations of their right to an adequate standard of living, the right to education, the right to liberty and security, the right to privacy, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to vote and many more.”

Artworks ranged from the novice, expressing themselves with paint for possibly the first time, to professional artists.

Several works, including ‘Cardboard Man’ a life-size sculpture made entirely from recycled cardboard and ‘Troccupy’ a decorated tent, tipped their hats to the worldwide ‘Occupy’ movement which has a focus on human rights, including the right to a safe home.

Hundreds of people enjoyed the Exhibition; tipped to be even bigger in 2012, with plans for a school excursion programme educating young people about human rights.

Stay tuned for the theme for 2012 Rights on Show, to be announced by Darwin Community Legal Service in the coming months.

“While ending homelessness should certainly be one of our highest goals because it is entirely preventable, we need to simultaneously increase the supply of housing both through the market and through the provision of social and community housing” Toni Vine Bromley, NT Shelter. Images on the website of previous exhibitions and a copy of Chips Mackinolty’s speech on homelessness in the Northern Territory remind us of the importance of human rights for all.

To find out more about Human Rights on Show, go to www.dcls.org.au
The Accommodation Options for Families Program is an initiative of the Victorian Dept of Human Services. The program is delivered in Victoria in a partnership between Homeground, Vincentcare, Hanover and SASHS.

These Evaluation Highlights published in the Victorian Council to Homeless Persons E-News on 12th January 2012 demonstrate a successful service integration project which we might consider here in the NT.

Background
The following data covers the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011.

The Accommodation Options for Families (AOF) program has been developed by the Victorian Government to address the needs of families who are currently residing, or at risk of residing, in unregistered rooming house accommodation. It aims to reduce the number of families residing in unregistered rooming houses and improve their access to short and medium term accommodation.

Funding covers interim family oriented case management and brokerage for purchasing short term accommodation and private rental.

- How many families has AOF assisted within the partnership group? 169
- How many children has AOF assisted within the partnership group? 416

Number of moves in the twelve months prior to AOF (from surveys undertaken with 84 households)

- 92% said their children's sense of safety and security had improved since the involvement of AOF.
- 64% said their children's experience of behaviours such as bedwetting, sleep difficulties, being withdrawn or aggressive had improved.
- 62% said their children's health had improved.
- 81% said they could better meet their children's needs such as meals, access to health care or educational support.
- 80% of parents said they felt less stress and anxiety.
- 63% said their children attended school more regularly.
- 67% said they could manage their finances better.
SIHIP - A joint NT and Australian government program is worth $672 million.

By 2013 the program is expected to deliver:
- 750 new houses,
- 230 re-builds and
- 2500 refurb for existing homes
in 73 communities and some town living areas.

The program also includes a target of 20% Indigenous employment.

As of December work in 45 communities was complete.
Work was still underway in another 14 communities and town camps.

1879 refurbishments and rebuilds were complete with another 34 underway
A total of 393 new houses had been built and work was continuing on another 266.

Over 250 Indigenous people employed in the delivery of the construction program.

### Remote Housing Update...

**as at December 2011**

This update is prepared from the December 2011 monthly
Remote Housing NT eNews from the NT Dept of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services.

#### Tiwi Islands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 new</td>
<td>66 complete 24 underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuilds and refurbs at Nguiu, Milikapiti, Pirlangim</td>
<td>198 rebuilds complete 13 underway at 3 sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Maningrida/ Warruwi/ Minjilang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110 new at Maningrida</td>
<td>53 complete 57 underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuilds and refurbs at 3 sites</td>
<td>78 rebuilds and refurbs complete 5 underway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Umbakumba/ Angurugu/ Milkyaburra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80 new</td>
<td>43 complete 37 underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 rebuilds and refurbs at 3 sites</td>
<td>71 complete 9 underway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Southern Region Re-furbs (29 communities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>708 refurbs complete in 27 communities</td>
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</table>

#### Other Communities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanbidji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barunga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binjari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kybrook Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jilkminggan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minyerri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pidgeon Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rittarangu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weemol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarralinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadeye/ Nganmarriyangga/ Peppimenarti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105 new at Wadeye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebuilds and refurbs at 3 sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tennant Creek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78 rebuilds and refurbs</td>
<td>70 houses rebuilt Infrastructure upgrade work nearing completion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Lajamanu/ Daguragu/ Kalkaringji

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 new at Lujumano</td>
<td>16 underway 24 rebuilds and refurbs complete 5 underway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Alice Springs Town Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>86 new houses</td>
<td>77 complete 24 rebuilds and refurbs complete 5 underway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbs and infrastructure improvements continuing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment on Reassessment of the NT Intervention

WHAT’S DATA GOT TO DO WITH IT? -Reassessing the NT Intervention
25 January, 2012
The Conversation
From Homelessness Australia INFORM 27/1/12
Since its introduction in 2007, there has been much debate over the effectiveness of the NT Emergency Response (NTER) in improving the quality of life in remote indigenous communities. Public discussion on using good evidence for policy making has so far not encouraged Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin to improve the quality of FaHCSIA data. Given the failure rate of policy making in this area, these data deficits are problematic.

Questions on the value of many of the measures in the NTER have been raised in official reports as well as in independent studies. Jumbunna, the Indigenous House of Learning based at UTS, researched evidence on the effectiveness of income management. We also compiled a report on the data that the Minister was using to justify maintaining and extending the program in The Journal of Indigenous Policy. We concluded that existing studies showed no reliable evidence of benefits to individuals or communities.

Income management should be one of the easier programs to measure as there are records of financial transactions. This data could be used to assess changes in savings and purchasing patterns, but none of these have been included in official studies. Statistics collected on school attendance, education, crime, health and child welfare should be able to offer evidence of changes in wellbeing and safety. However, this data –collected since 2007 – has shown scant improvement in wellbeing.

The best evidence offered by government media releases is in the form of anecdotal reports. Official surveys in WA and the NT included many positive accounts from individuals, but lacked any independent confirmation. Moreover, there are more questions about the validity of the minister’s claims of evidence, which are presumably intended to support legislation in the Senate for extending NTER measures.

There are two more research reports and a report that has been designed to support the legitimacy of the Stronger Futures Consultation Report. All show serious flaws in design, and fail to produce clear evidence for benefits that would support legislation in the Senate.

The Committee on Community Affairs is calling for submissions for the three Bills and holding hearings until the beginning of February. If approved, this legislation will continue and extend programs without any serious evidence that the current programs have improved the situation of NT communities covered by the intervention.

Official documents, produced in late 2011, try to claim that research proves the benefits of the intervention. The reports included an online survey of service providers and a commissioned study of people living in some of the targeted communities. The material below looks at these studies in more detail.

The survey covered the opinions of nearly 700 service providers, most of which were government-run or funded. Less than 9% were Indigenous, and few came from isolated communities. While most of the workers reported they felt safer and thought that their communities were safer, there was no independent evidence to support their claims. Their responses show that they saw better results in community safety and reduced problems in smaller (rather than larger) communities. This difference was not noted by the governments, which remain committed to developing the larger centres instead of smaller ones, which seem to function better. This view also emerged in the survey below. It is hard to see how these opinions validate the extension of the programs, given that there were reported criticisms about the loss of local control.

The Community Safety and Wellbeing Research Study (CSWRS) was an ambitious attempt to tap into local views. It covered 1411 residents in 17 remote NT communities. The emphasis was on opinions, so it might offer a credible record of some local views, but not any credible measures of actual benefits. It was not clear how the small local samples were chosen, which raises questions about the representative nature of the sample and the possible exclusion of dissident voices.

Interestingly, the report comments on the contradiction between respondents' positive perceptions on indicators such as school attendance, despite evidence of static or even deteriorating performance. These studies are part of the NT Emergency Response Evaluation Report. In its introduction, it includes the following caveat:

‘While the report does have a strong focus on data, it is important to understand that there are only around 45,000 Indigenous Australians resident in the NT including two communities. It can be difficult at times to observe trends in some outcome data for what is a relatively small population over a 4 year period. It is also important to understand that the NTER is a very complex policy response that has many elements. It is not always possible to identify the additional impact of individual measures because so many changes, both NTER and other measures, were introduced at a similar time.’

This extraordinary admission is in the context of the decisions already made on income management and the new Stronger Futures initiatives. There is no evidence that the new Improving School Enrolment and Attendance through Welfare Reform Measure (SEAM) initiatives will work, and they have no clear mandate from the so-called consultations. The O’Brien Rich Stronger Futures Quantitative Analysis Report attempts to address this. The report is a statistical analysis of notes taken by FaHCSIA staff at consultations in the NT. These were notes taken by public servants as feedback rather than research data, so the recycling of them in this way is odd. Nor was any ethics clearance sought to use them as such. In this light, the report should be read as a summary of information recorded during the consultations, rather than a representation of the opinions of consulted communities.

The best view of the data available is that the opinions of the community are diverse, but there is still no hard data on program benefits. As there is other evidence that purchasing patterns, for example, have not changed significantly because of income management, a moratorium on extending programs would be a good starting point for serious interest evidence-based policy. Why spend lots of extra money on extending programs without evidence that they work?

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Training can be customised and be delivered to meet your needs whether in the workplace, in your community and/or on campus.

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Entry Requirements
The course is recommended for people working in, or intending to work in the social housing sector. To enrol, you must be able to meet Batchelor Institute’s admission requirements. This means you should be at least 18 years old, have the support of your community and have the chance within your community or organisation for practical work experience. You will also need reasonable English literacy and numeracy skills.

Contact NT Shelter
Email enquiries@batchelor.edu.au Free call 1800 677095 Phone 08 89397254

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