Notice of Annual General Meeting

NT Shelter’s 18th AGM
will be held
9.30-11 am
on Thursday 4th September 2014
at
Level 5 Jacana House 39-41 Woods St, Darwin
and video conferenced to
Level 3 Jock Nelson Building 15 Hartley St, Alice Springs
1st floor, Randazzo Building, 14 Katherine Terrance, Katherine

Order of Business
- Acceptance of Minutes of previous AGM held 18th October 2013
- Presentation of Annual Reports
- Appointment of Auditor for 2014/15
- Election for 2 vacant Board positions (nominations forms available from the NT Shelter website)
- Declaration of election

For any other business to be considered please advise the Secretary c/- eo@ntshelter.org.au within 7 days of the AGM.

Following the AGM we have 2 presentations relating to community housing;
- Mr Ken Bone, General Manager, Dept of Housing will provide an overview of progress in the NT Government’s new Housing Strategy
- Mr John McInerney, Chair, National Industry Body for Community Housing will consult with delegates present on the formation of a national body- see page 4 inside for more details- or download papers regarding the NIB on the NT Shelter website under Policy Papers on our Reference Materials & Publications Page.

NT Shelter Update

It seems we have been working furiously over the past couple of months.

Since February, NT Shelter has been working with a small group of housing providers to form a Coalition of NT Community Housing Providers- see Page 4 for details.

We have also been in discussions with APONT for many months regarding the possibility of co-hosting an NT Aboriginal Housing Forum. In recent months this has begun to gain traction. Now some funds have been identified and a working group established involving Central Australian Affordable Housing, AMSANT, NAAJA, CAALAS, APONT and NT Shelter. We are hopeful that more information will be forthcoming about an event early in 2015.

NT Shelter has also recently prepared 2 funding applications;
One to the Dept of Social Services through the Housing and Homelessness Service Improvement and Sector Support Program to develop, in partnership with the Department of Housing, an evaluation tool or mechanism for housing and homelessness services throughout the Territory. A project which would be for 3 years if successful. The need for such a mechanism was specifically identified through NT Shelter’s regional Homelessness Forums and the 2014 Homelessness Summit. Along with everyone else who submitted applications through this Program, we expect to be notified of the outcome by November this year.

The other project has arisen in recent work with the Coalition of NT Community Housing providers. This submission though the Community Benefit Fund- Major Grants program- seeks funding to;
- engage consultants and facilitators to work with NT housing providers to assist in equipping the NT NGO housing sector to establish a pool of (registered) Community Housing Organisations (CHO’s), within the framework of the NT Govt’s Housing Strategy.
- build capacity within the NT NGO Housing Sector, including the Indigenous housing sector, to operate as registered Community Housing Organisations (CHO’s) and
- identify models for community housing governance and service provision that work in the context, scale and circumstances of the Northern Territory.
We expect notification of the outcome of this six month project by the end of September.
More info on the AHI Professional Development Guide is available at www.housinginstitute.org

Partnerships to Support Social Housing Tenants Professional Practice Seminar
Achieving positive outcomes for tenants and local communities through tenant support partnerships.
Wed AUG 27 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM | Sydney
AHI Member Rate $540.00 AUD incl GST Non-member rate $630.00 AUD incl GST
Discussion topic:
- Housing and Support working together for quality outcomes
- Partnerships between Specialist Homelessness Services and Community Housing Providers
- Critical Success Factors for Partnership Arrangements

Stock Transfer Professional Practice Seminar: Taking stock of stock transfer – past, present, future
Monday OCT 13 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM | Adelaide
AHI Member Rate $540.00 AUD incl GST Non-member rate $630.00 AUD incl GST
With transfers of social housing to community housing providers gathering momentum in Australia, this seminar provides timely opportunity to take stock of stock transfer process, past, present and future.
The Adelaide seminar seeks to explore
- where Australian stock transfer has been successful and where improvements could be made
- forms and scale of stock transfer predicted across Australia
- good practice principles of larger-scale stock transfer
- stock transfer challenges and concerns – e.g. process issues, viability, asset management, impacts for tenants transferred

It's Time to Renew Your NT Shelter Membership

Our members are very important to us and we hope you will re-new your membership.

OR if you would like to become a member, please complete the membership form/invoice which can be found on our website.

To make sure we connect with all staff and workers, please add email addresses of staff in your organisation who may wish to be included on our mailing list.

Please return your completed membership form to NT Shelter along with your payment.
If you have any queries, don’t hesitate to contact Toni at eo@ntshelter.org.au
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Housing (Presented by Criterion Conferences)
23rd & 24th September, 2014, Darwin

Strengthening tenancy agreements & access to affordable housing options in remote & regional areas.
The rate of homelessness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is currently four times that of non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous households are ten times more likely to be living in overcrowded conditions compared to non-Indigenous households. In addition, the rate of home ownership for Indigenous households is about a third compared to two-thirds for non-Indigenous households.

This conference will focus on how both housing providers and government departments can better deliver affordable housing solutions in remote and regional communities through appropriate tenancy management framework and strong partnerships.

Housing affordability: keeping a home on a low-income

WHEN: Thursday, 28 August, 2014 8:45 AM – 12:30 PM
WHERE: Mercure Grosvenor Hotel Adelaide, James Alexander Room, 125 North Terrace, Adelaide
RSVP: Wednesday, 27 August, 2014

With one in ten Australians paying 30% or more on housing payments, and unemployment and underemployment on the rise, how will our low-income population continue to afford housing? Join AHURI as we use the latest AHURI and international research to explore the short and long term impact unemployment and underemployment has on the ability of people to pay rent or a mortgage.

We are very pleased to have Professor Sten-Åke Sterberg (Stockholm University) giving an international perspective and sharing his research on housing evictions and homelessness.

This important event will give your organisation the opportunity to join the discussion about the housing challenges facing Australia’s low-income population and what can be done to address them.

Convened by AHURI, this half-day session will be informed by the significant body of evidence developed by AHURI on this matter, including Dr Sharon Parkinson’s Final Report Wellbeing outcomes of low-income renters: a multilevel analysis of area effects, and Professor Iain Campbell’s Final Report The housing security consequences of underemployment.

For event agenda and registration go to http://www.event.com/events/housing-affordability-keeping-a-home-on-a-low-income/agenda-1c002b4e748c49a384b8cd38145151f6.aspx

National Housing Conference 2015: mark the date!
28–30 Oct 2015, Perth
Over the past few months NT Shelter has been working with a small number of NT urban based housing providers to form a Coalition of NT Community Housing Providers.

The Coalition has also welcomed that the NT Government and the Department of Housing in particular has articulated a desire to work with our sector to investigate a greater role for community housing providers in managing, owning and potentially developing new social and affordable housing in the Territory.

The NT Not-For-Profit housing sector therefore seeks to work together and with the NT Government to establish a framework through which options for collaboration, negotiation and development are advanced.

If the NT is to reduce its social housing costs and improve overall social outcomes for those who are disadvantaged in the housing system the emergence of a sustainable, well regulated and adequately resourced NFP housing sector must be supported as part of the solution and this includes the Aboriginal community housing sector.

While the need for government subsidies in housing for low income households will always be present, the creation of a diversified housing sector involving a range of managers and providers, with lower level government subsidies, combined with private and other forms of finance, as well as public/private and non-government partnership approaches in the management of housing assets and services, must be explored.

The NT NFP sector already manages and owns over 800 properties and innumerable individual tenancies. The sector is:
- Grounded in its relationships with the community and able to tap into resources, social capital and below market financial capital and capacity to deliver a strong local response
- It has existing relationships with vulnerable and disadvantaged people in need of housing as well as strong relationships and partnerships with other social service providers
- It has a passion to redress the poor housing situation of vulnerable people and a values base embedded in empowering people to establish pathways to independence
- It has the capacity to be flexible, relatively low cost and nimble

In order for community housing to develop in the NT there needs to be clarity and continuity of housing policy and a commitment by all to community housing growth and this is what we seek to work towards.

For the options and issues under consideration to be implemented, three strategies are essential:

1. Registration of the CHO under the Regulatory Code for Community Housing to provide assurance to NTG that it is entering into an arrangement with a recognised CHO.
2. Working collaboratively with recognised CHO’s to develop a 5 year social and affordable housing growth plan for their community and the provision of short term operational funding to provide the required working capital for the CHO’s to implement their approved growth plan.
3. Capacity building within the sector including training in housing management, business management, property development, financial modelling and risk management.

For any further info or to subscribe to our Community Housing E-News please contact;
Toni Vine Bromley at eo@ntshelter.org.au
or in Central Australia-Hal Bisset at Central Australian Affordable Housing at hal.bisset@caahc.org.au
A National Industry Body for Community Housing Organisations

The national Working Group established to further develop the proposal for single National Industry Body (NIB) has made considerable progress over recent months.

In July, we distributed a series of papers that included a more detailed proposal clarifying the objects of the NIB, the service offer and values proposition with further details relating to the structure including branch structure, membership, governance and allocations of functions.

Also included in the information pack was a proposed organisation chart, draft constitution and an indicative fee schedule showing the allocation of membership fees between a national office and state branches.

The aims of establishing a single, unified industry body articulated by the Working Group are:

- Be one voice for the industry as a one stop shop for providers and a single source for policy, advocacy, representation, training and resourcing;
- Provide more effective national representation to government, other national peaks and the private sector, with the national peak being no longer at “arms length” from providers and being more relevant to multi-jurisdictional providers;
- Deliver more and better services to members, by combining the resources and expertise of existing peak bodies across a national market and creating a strong base for an expanded service offer;
- Better connect our sector through improved access to peer networking for providers, our people and our customers; and
- Create a more resilient and independent organisation by diversifying income sources and reducing reliance on funding from government.

Between late July and early September, further consultation will be conducted with the chair of the working group John McInerney meeting with providers who are currently members of the various state peaks in each state and other interested parties to gauge the sector’s support for the proposed restructuring of the current national peak and the current independent state peaks.

Two initial consultations have been completed in Western Australia and also with the NSW Federation and the majority of participants have expressed overall support for the proposal as it is seen as a progression of the industry with the potential to provide organisations within the sector more political clout, greater community awareness and support as well as access to advice and services that will benefit organisations.

Reservations have been expressed at both consultations about the risk of diminishing effective services currently being offered at State level by the state peaks and also the future capacity to address state specific issues that might not be seen as a national priority.

The Working Group is very aware that members are stating very clearly that they want their organisations also represented very strongly at a state level as well as acknowledging the importance of Federal legislation, policy and programs, and budgets on the delivery of effective low income housing.

John McInerney - Chair, National Industry Body Working Group

NOTE:
The papers referred to in this article are available from the NT Shelter website under Reference Materials & Publications and in the Policy Papers/Research/Submissions page.

- John McInerney will be conducting the NT consultation on this matter at the NT Shelter Annual General Meeting on 4th September.
Excerpts from Recommendations in relation to Housing - prepared by David Havercroft

The Forrest Review report was issued on 1st August 2014 in response to the Indigenous Jobs and Training review chaired by Andrew Forrest on behalf of the Australian Government.

Understandably much has been made in the media regarding the Forrest Review's recommendation for sweeping adoption of income management for people on social security benefits.

The following excerpts are taken from the Report’s Summary of Recommendations in relation to housing (p.44-46; p.58-59):

Chapter 6: Incentives for housing and mobility

When we look at the reasons for serious disadvantage, we don’t have to go much further than housing policy. Our system currently traps first Australians into living in remote communities, whether they want to or not, even when there are no jobs there. When one is asking to end the disparity through employment, this policy, perhaps, is the most irrational of all that this review has considered. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator Nigel Scullion, is making major inroads into the inefficiencies of the programmes and practices he inherited. We continue to support his efforts.

If we are to end the disparity, getting and keeping a job must be a rational choice for all first Australians to make. There are many inputs to this choice, like the support and training individuals receive, what they are obliged to do in return for welfare and what impact it will have on their lifestyle, especially housing. Yet the comments made by Elders to me across Australia, such as Mr Ritchie Ali Mai, a highly respected Cape York leader, support this case. He, like the other Elders, state firmly that nothing changes a family’s life or improves its standard of living more quickly than living in a home the family owns. This is particularly so for the safety and security of children, for, among other reasons, visitors can be controlled.

People told us outright they would give up the dole for a job anytime—but not if it meant losing their house. The pull of low-cost housing, even on welfare, is too strong. An urgent shift is required.

We must use housing to make employment much more attractive, not less attractive. Right now, the most expensive houses to build are those being built, with taxpayer funds, in communities where there simply aren’t meaningful long-term careers for the majority of first Australians who live there.

The discount in housing must be applied when there are strong prospects of employment and long-term careers.

Social housing is a significant part of the Australian welfare system; it has an estimated cost of more than $7 billion over four years to the Commonwealth alone. For many of Australia’s most vulnerable citizens, social housing is a valuable part of society’s safety net. About one-third or over 100,000 people are in social housing and on income support that requires them to look for work.

Across Australia the lowest rents are paid in the most remote social housing tenancies. For them, the social housing system often undermines job aspirations and entrenches welfare reliance. A person can be discouraged from taking a job because state and territory housing authorities deem that an income higher than the dole means eviction from social housing.

Compulsory rent deductions from welfare payments would stop cheap or free public housing becoming part of the welfare trap and support individuals relocating for work. It would also prevent unnecessary evictions that result from rental default. These funds can and should of course go towards rent or home loan interest subsidies when there are suitable job prospects and careers.

Job seekers, especially those in remote Australia, said they did not have the personal resources to move for work. None we spoke to knew where they could go to get help with the cost of mobility.
In particular, people living in remote Indigenous communities who wish to leave for work must be shown a clear way out. We need to build on existing programmes and significantly expand support for people to take up work where the market provides it, and enable them to orbit* back to their home communities without losing access to housing or employment.

Home ownership is a critical incentive to keep people in jobs and out of the welfare trap.

Most Australians have a job so that they can meet their aspiration of home ownership, to generate wealth and provide security for their families. The 2011 census showed that 37% of first Australian adults lived in owner-occupied homes compared to 70% of other adults.

* The Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership introduced the term ‘orbiting’ in relation to Cape York communities—see http://cyi.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Cape%2520York%2520Agenda%2520final.pdf Broadly speaking, the term refers to the mobility of Indigenous people from remote communities to take up education and employment opportunities in regional and metropolitan centres, while also retaining their connection with ancestral lands.

Recommendation 17: Housing

That the Commonwealth, state and territory governments work together to put in place housing delivery mechanisms to support and encourage workforce participation, optimise transition and mobility to work, and remove disincentives and impediments to taking up work.

This would involve reforming land tenure arrangements, increasing mobility assistance, and prioritising housing and home ownership for those in work. This will be achieved by taking the following implementation steps:

17.1 Commonwealth Government:

17.1.1 building on existing mobility programmes by making accommodation part of a support package for people relocating from remote communities to take up jobs that includes access to secure accommodation in town; brokered assistance such as bonds and rent advances for the private rental market; and case management for families including financial management support and assistance with accessing schools and health care

17.1.2 enabling Indigenous Business Australia to accept substantial private sector capital to increase the capital available for employment home loans for first Australians

17.1.3 enabling Indigenous Business Australia—once a portion of the first Australian employment home loan portfolio is performing to market expectations—to sell that portion into the commercial markets in order to recycle those funds to create more low interest (initially) home loans for all first Australians, provided they have been employed for 12 months or more

17.1.4 having the Australian Treasury credit-enhance up to $500 million (at a time) of first Australians’ home mortgages. Indigenous Business Australia can then provide a credit enhancement to its loan portfolio by way of a partially guaranteed loan book, which will allow it to borrow funds at competitive prices from the banks

17.1.5 redirecting remote housing funding to increase first Australian employment home loans administered through Indigenous Business Australia with generous deposit assistance for first Australians who relocate from the remote areas to better labour markets for work and retain a job for at least 12 months

17.1.6 deducting rent on a compulsory basis from income support entitlements for social housing managed by the states and territories, and ensuring that the money is used to subsidise rent for people who move to take up employment and pursue a career. Rents should be set at 80% of market rates or at least cover the cost of the asset.

17.2 State and territory governments:

17.2.1 giving existing social housing tenants on activity-tested payments an incentive to relocate to better labour markets to take up jobs a preference to a rental house at the location of the job. After one year of employment this would trigger a purchase option

17.2.2 continuing eligibility for public housing for those who take up and retain work for up to 30 months while they transition to the private rental market or home ownership

17.2.3 giving priority in the allocation of social housing to families in employment and meeting social obligations, such as their children regularly attending school, over those who are capable of working but choose not to

17.2.4 ensuring that all public and social housing tenants on activity-tested payments pay rent at a comparable market rent (not less than 80% of the private market rate in a comparable location), up to a reasonable cap, with an appropriate transition period

17.2.5 publicly reporting on the implementation of these new arrangements on the CreatingParity website, including providing annual data on rents charged compared to rents collected and the rent default rate to ensure social housing is not a welfare trap.

Chapter 8: Empowering people in remote communities to end the disparity themselves

Every Australian has the right to choose where they live, but not to disregard the law of the land or accepted social norms wherever they live. The accepted social norms for families and communities,
all across Australia are that children go to school, adults go to work or are meaningfully engaged, and residents feel safe and secure in their homes and neighbourhoods.

However, this is often not happening when the occupants do not own their own home. Due to the lack of individual responsibility, these houses often become severely overcrowded. Individual land ownership needs to be unlocked quickly for first Australians to resolve this problem themselves and own or build their own houses. This would also save enormous taxpayer-funded construction costs and minimise ongoing maintenance bills... (for further commentary on housing in this chapter refer to report)

**Recommendation 25: Remote housing**

That governments ensure the approach to remote housing on Indigenous land is revised to include performance-based funding to move to a sustainable system with strong incentives for workforce participation and home ownership.

This will be achieved by the Commonwealth, state and Northern Territory governments agreeing on a new approach to social housing delivery that has the following implementation steps:

- **25.1** state and territory governments enforcing tenant obligations for public housing, in particular in remote communities
- **25.2** only building new social housing in remote communities on land with secure tenure that can be used for business investment and private home ownership, through long-term leasing or freehold title, where traditional owners agree
- **25.3** state and territory governments giving priority in the allocation of social housing to families in employment and meeting social obligations, such as their children regularly attending school, over those who are capable of working but choose not to
- **25.4** publicly reporting on the implementation of these new arrangements on the CreatingParity website to ensure Indigenous land is open for business where traditional owners want this and the number of applications that are escalated to the minister beyond the 30-day point and the two-month point
- **25.5** introducing suitable performance-based payments into funding arrangements for land councils and native title representative bodies and service providers.

**26.1 Commonwealth Government:**

**26.1.1** using its funding leverage and, specifically, its powers to devolve decision making to more regional structures (to ensure land councils are responsive to the wishes of traditional owners who have requested to freehold or lease their land to enable business investment and/or home ownership)

**26.1.2** driving accountability for land council performance by stipulating a short timeframe (30 days) to determine requests to pursue development where the Northern Territory Government has provided the necessary prerequisites (such as cadastral mapping, town planning and other essentials) and where there are indisputable instructions from the traditional owners for housing allotments for freeholding or leasing, and land councils have not acted in a timely fashion. If this timeframe is not met, the request should be automatically escalated to the responsible minister to take up with the land council and must be resolved within two months.

**26.1.3** investing in social housing in remote Indigenous communities only where there is appropriate land tenure to enable business investment, economic development and private home ownership.

**26.1.4** publicly reporting the implementation of these new arrangements on the CreatingParity website to ensure Indigenous land is open for business where traditional owners want this and the number of applications that are escalated to the minister beyond the 30-day point and the two-month point.

**26.1.5** introducing suitable performance-based payments into funding arrangements for land councils and native title representative bodies and service providers.

**26.2 State and the Northern Territory governments:**

**26.2.1** ensuring arrangements are in place to achieve private investment and home ownership on Indigenous land with the agreement of traditional owners along with the necessary land administration arrangements.

**26.2.2** with the agreement of traditional owners, establishing and implementing on Indigenous land with long-term leasing or freeholding that enables private investment, robust land planning and administration systems, cadastral surveys and town plans, and maintaining and delivering local government services that will assure the value of land and assets constructed in remote areas.

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**National Shelter update, reviews and inquiries galore, submissions and working papers**

- National Shelter has now submitted a report on Young People in Social (and other) Housing and Workforce Participation. We have received some feedback from DSS about further strengthening the report which we intend to complete by October 2014.

- We have also now made submissions to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 1) Bill 2014 And Social Services And Other Legislation Amendment (2014 Budget Measures No. 2) Bill 2014. To view that submission you should visit the senate submission page to view our submission and others.

- We are also preparing submissions to the McClure Welfare Review after a process where we have shared information across peaks and welfare agencies. We will post a copy of our submission on our webpage when it is complete.

- There are other Senate Inquiries approaching which we also intend to make submissions to including: the extent of income inequality submissions due by August 22 and on health policy, administration and expenditure which has some bearing on housing with submissions due by September 10.

- We are also waiting for news regarding the Housing and Homelessness Review announced by Minister Andrews but as yet without a terms of reference, structure or head. We will have a considered submission to that inquiry and are holding an additional council meeting in August to consider our approach to that and other important processes.

- The Federal Government has also announced an intention to look at Federalism and Taxation as two of its first term priorities and we will contribute to those processes as they occur.

**DSS Funding**

National Shelter made two submissions to the new DSS grants process, one to extend our current contract beyond 2016 and the other to support the development of our National Rental Affordability Index we have been building over the past two years.

**National Council Meeting**

In August we are having an additional National Council Meeting to discuss the range of submissions and process coming up.

West Australia announces peak tender result

In exciting news for Shelter WA they have been awarded the new tender to become a single affordable housing peak in West Australia. At the same time, we recognise that the result of the housing peak role having been put out to tender is that two housing peaks have been reduced to one, and we commiserate with the staff and board of the unsuccessful tenderer, CHCWA, who have worked to support the community housing sector in WA over many years.

The focus of the new role is around policy advice and information with a specific reference to ensuring West Australia is represented in national discussions on housing affordability. Within this may be a role for National Shelter to provide a connection and advice about how national issues play out in WA and potentially for other states. It raises the importance of Commonwealth discussions rather than state or federal discussions; which also includes the role of local government and the NGO sector in discussing and helping frame policy.

**Senate hearings**

The Senate Community Affairs Committee which received submissions for its affordable housing inquiry is currently holding public hearings kicking off in Adelaide. National Shelter looks forward to making a presentation to follow up our submission and Shelter SA appeared before the committee in Adelaide.
With NT Shelter’s preparation of its NT Shelter Homeloosness Roadmap (recommendations for action) almost complete and following the NT Homelessness Summit in May, I look forward to working with various stakeholders on strategies and actions towards outcomes for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These stakeholders will undoubtedly include agency representatives from the Alice Springs Accommodation Action Group (AAG) and Barkly Region Accommodation Group (BRAG).

The Roadmap will provide a lens through which both groups can further develop work on a range of priorities identified at strategic planning workshops held for the AAG and BRAG in March & April. These were significant workshops, not previously reported on here, with general agreement by attendees that there is a need to draft position papers calling for regional housing responses.

While these papers are still being prepared, it is appropriate to detail the identified key priorities here.

The AAG identified:
- Priority 1: An innovative community housing partnership led by the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company (CAAH);
- Priority 2: Two more visitor parks in Alice Springs; and
- Priority 3: Use the R.JCP Scheme to repair and maintain houses.

The BRAG identified:
- Priority 1: Increased supply of social housing;
- Priority 2: Research & evaluation, particularly but not limited to investigating innovative housing procurement & delivery models;
- Priority 3: Visitors accommodation park(s); and
- Priority 4: Developing community capacity to build houses (e.g. through sweat equity approaches).

Alice Springs Accommodation Action Group (AAG) – Next Meeting

The AAG is the principal forum for ongoing discussion and lobbying on housing and homelessness issues in Alice Springs and its surroundings.

The next regular AAG meeting for 2014 is on Date: Tuesday 12th August, from 12:30 to 2:30pm
Venue: Andy McNeill Room, Alice Springs Civic Centre

Workshop Session

The second hour of meetings continues to be dedicated to a workshop session.

In the second hour of the August meeting, Central Australian Affordable Housing will outline a potential partnership model for community housing for low income households with support needs, for discussion.

The remaining AAG meetings for 2014 are scheduled for Wed 1st October & Wed 3rd December.

Barkly Region Accommodation Group (BRAG) - Next meeting

BRAG is the principal forum for ongoing discussion and lobbying on housing and homelessness issues in Tennant Creek and the Barkly.

The next regular BRAG meeting for 2014 is on Date: Wednesday 20th August, from 10:00am to 12:00 Noon
Venue: Government Building Conference Room (1st floor, above Territory Housing) Peku Ru, Tennant Creek

The final quarterly meeting for 2014 will be on Wednesday 19th November.

Mapping the Housing System

After an exhaustive review of software applications, NT Shelter bites the bullet this month to commence its housing system mapping work, using Mindjet ‘mind mapping’ software.

After the positive, initial work undertaken with the Alice Springs AAG to collate information on social housing and accommodation facilities in Alice Springs, we look forward to getting going on this enduring project.

In Central Australia and the Barkly, I will be contacting agencies in the coming months as we gather information.

Partnerships For Impact central Australia (PFicA)

I have been a member of the PFicA Workgroup in its different guises since 2012. PFicA has evolved out of work commenced under the banner of ‘Desert City Partnership’ - to foster sustainable relationships between funding organisations and desert community organisations to contribute to better social, education, health and economic outcomes in desert Australia.

Work continues on shaping this initiative, aimed at unifying and enhancing efforts towards systemic change.

NT Shelter would particularly like to acknowledge the considerable efforts of Desert Knowledge Australia, and in particular recently departed CEO John Huigen, in championing this dialogue for better, smarter collaboration over recent years.
‘Strengthening Networks’ workshop

Patrick Moriarty from ‘Our Community’ (refer: http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/) facilitated the day long PFICa ‘Strengthening Networks’ workshop on March 26th.

This provided networks and groups with a range of tools to ensure group health and efficacy, and to strengthen agencies’ ability to collaborate.

Contingent from both the Alice Springs Accommodation Action Group and the Alice Springs-based ‘Right To A Home’ coalition were amongst participants.

At more recent planning sessions of the PFICa working group members have refined the vision, mission and objectives of PFICa; work is now underway on developing activities for the coming year.

Please contact me at ca@ntshelter.org.au if you would like to learn more of PFICa, and NT Shelter’s involvement.

AHURI
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

Progressing tenancy management reform on remote Indigenous communities
New and emerging models of tenancy management in remote Indigenous communities

Daphne Habibis, Rhonda Phillips, Peter Phibbs, Julia Verdouw
for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, University of Tasmania, University of Queensland, University of Sydney,
7 July 2014

Housing reforms in remote Indigenous communities have resulted in a variety of tenancy management arrangements involving state, community and private housing sectors. This project identified different models of tenancy management, considered their housing outcomes, and shared the policy and practice lessons across jurisdictions.

This project involved convening an Investigative Panel comprising non Indigenous and Indigenous experts on tenancy management from the research, policy and practitioner communities. The project authors also visited four remote Indigenous communities in Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia in between the two panel meetings.

Until recently, housing in remote indigenous areas was largely provided by Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs). ICCHOs were often small kin-based organisations, whose tenancy management practices differed from the standardised bureaucratic practices of state and territory housing authorities. However, concerns over past failings of housing management in the ICCHO sector led to management being transferred to state and territory housing authorities.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) has involved capital works improvements and tenancy management reforms. Queensland and South Australia opted to manage remote Indigenous social housing assets directly, while the Northern Territory and Western Australia have combined direct management with third party arrangements (either contracting to ICCHOs, Shire Councils or Community Housing Organisations). The heavy reliance on the state directly managing this program is attributable to political pressure to deliver to tight timetables, and the likely time delays, increased resources and political complications involved in outsourcing to external organisations without good governance practices in place.

At its half-way mark, the NPARIH reforms have succeeded in negotiating more formal tenancy agreements, allocations that are more needs based, increased rent collections and improved maintenance systems. However, to achieve high quality housing services, more sustainable and appropriate models will need to be developed to improve tenant education, rent setting and collection, Indigenous workforce recruitment and skills development, asset protection, and leveraging further local employment from tenant support arrangements.
NT Shelter’s Homelessness Policy Officer (HPO) is currently focused on finalising the 2014 NT Homelessness Summit report and supporting National Homelessness Persons’ Week events in Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine.

2014 NT Homelessness Summit
The 2014 NT Homelessness Summit was held on the 13th – 15th of May 2014 and consisted of a Pre-Summit Sector Day and a two day Summit. Hosted by NT Shelter and the NT Department of Housing, the Summit attracted a Territory wide audience, bringing together more than 170 participants from the specialist homelessness sector, mainstream services, Aboriginal organisations as well as NT and Australian Government agencies.

Recommendations
The development of recommendations by the Summit delegates was a core focus of the Summit, and in particular, the Sector Day. The recommendations are now included in NT Shelter’s Homelessness Roadmap, which also incorporates recommendations from previous Summits and the Regional Homelessness Forums held in late 2013. The Roadmap will ensure that action on these recommendations is articulated and progressed.

The key recommendations include a focus on:
- Investment priorities;
- Increasing investment to early intervention and prevention;
- Growing social and affordable housing; and
- Improving collaboration and integration.

Documents for Download

Homelessness Persons’ Week in the NT
2014 Katherine Homelessness Day
This event was opened by the Mayor of Katherine and featured information stalls, entertainment, and food and beverages. The main attraction was the ‘sponsor a breakfast’ initiative which offers an inclusive atmosphere and free breakfast to people experiencing homelessness in a dignified manner.

This whole-of-community event builds public awareness and raises funds for people experiencing homelessness while highlighting the good work undertaken to support the many people impacted by homelessness in the region.

Katherine Homelessness Day was established by the Katherine Accommodation Action Group (KAAG) in 2013 to focus the Katherine region during National Homelessness Persons’ Week. Approximately 150 people attended including people experiencing homelessness, the general public, staff of supporting agencies, and tourists.

- Well done Katherine!

Playback Theatre - Homelessness: We can’t afford to ignore it!
This event was held on 8th August at Chambers Crescent Theatre, and presented by Darwin Community Arts, CereNTworx Community Theatre and NT Shelter. The performance explored the costs of homelessness:
- to people experiencing homelessness;
- to those who work alongside people experiencing homelessness; and
- to our communities.

Playback Theatre is a collaborative performance in which audience members provide the script by sharing moments and stories from their own lives. These are played back by the actors and a musician. Playback is personal, poignant and community building.

NT Shelter’s Homeless Persons Week Forums in Alice and Darwin
on 3rd and 13th August NT Shelter brought 2 guest speakers to both Alice Springs and Darwin to discuss 2 important homelessness matters:
- Pathways for older homeless people into housing and aged care support
- Outcomes from the Journey to Social Inclusion Project which explored practices & outcomes of a model of integrated intensive case management for ending long term homelessness.

Participants at the forums also looked at how such models could be put into practice in the NT.
Accommodation Action Groups
The HPO facilitates the Katherine (KAAG) and Darwin Region Accommodation Action Groups (DRAAG).

KAAG
Recently, KAAG has focused on preparing for the 2014 Katherine Homelessness Day breakfast event and identified the need for basic amenities for washing and laundering to people experience homelessness in the region. KAAG will establish a working group to consider the challenges and feasibility of a multipurpose space to provide these basic amenities as well as be a focal point for homelessness services delivery.
Next Meeting:
10:00am – 1:00pm Tuesday 30th of September DCF Meeting Room,
Unit 2/3 First Street, Katherine.

DRAAG
The DRAAG meetings provide an opportunity for networking, raising issues, promoting best-practice, and instigating sector relevant projects. DRAAG will begin planning a homelessness awareness Christmas campaign at its next meeting.
Next Meeting:
2:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 8th October
The Salvation Army Meeting Room,
Darwin Cupus & Community Centre, Cnr Lee Point Road
and Yanyula Drive, Anula.

Council for Homeless Persons Australia (CHPA)
NT Shelter’s HPO is the NT representative for CHPA and will be attending the meeting in September. Sector issues identified through NT Shelter facilitated Accommodation Action Groups, the NT Homelessness Summit and general networking will be reported at the CHPA meeting for national consideration.
CHPA is currently focussed on preparing to host a homelessness and mental health workshop on the Gold Coast ahead of the National Homelessness Conference. Note: CHPA is one of three founding member organisations of Homelessness Australia, along with the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH) and Women’s Emergency Services Network (WESNET).

8th National Homelessness Conference
10-12 September 2014, Gold Coast

The HPO will be attending the Homelessness Conference on the Gold Coast in September. The conference brings together participants from a large cross section of homelessness services, academics, government and allied health professions to discuss directions for addressing homelessness in Australia. It offers each State and Territory the opportunity to reach workers, managers and decision-makers to discuss how the changes in funding will work in your jurisdiction. As well as providing an avenue to share and learn from one another in the development and roll out of each State/Territory implementation plan.

The National Homelessness Conference is an opportunity to discuss and debate the issues, ideas and mechanisms and hands-on practical approaches for better service delivery.
I hope to see you there
For more info go to http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Specialist Homelessness Services Collection Data

Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Collection Data will be more accessible from July. Through the AIHW website, users will be able to access a number of data cubes for the 2011-12 and the 2012-13 collection year to quickly select, filter and arrange aggregated data on selected variables of interest, using drag and drop functionality. Tabulated data from the SHS cubes can then be exported into Excel if users prefer this format for data analysis and reporting.

SHS data cubes will present subsets of weighted, confidentialised, aggregated data about SHS clients for 2011-12 and 2012-13. The data in the cubes accords with the published annual reports, and has been organised into four cubes;
- SHS client demographics,
- Housing situation on presentation and at end of support,
- Other indicators such as education and labour force participation at start and end of support, and
- Support services needed and provided.

Each SHS cube opens with a standard view: client count by year, gender, indigenous status and age group. Additional variables can easily be selected and arranged using the ‘drag and drop’ function.

The counting unit for the aggregated data in the data cubes is uniquely identified clients, however you cannot access data about an individual client through the data cube. Data in the cubes will achieve a balance between data accessibility and confidentiality, in line with AIHW’s obligations, and will be accessible by anyone via the AIHW website.
It is important that activities such as Homeless Persons’ Week (4–10 Aug 2014) focus positive attention on the fact that alleviating the effects of homelessness benefits both individuals and the community.

Previous AHURI research demonstrates that there are very-high costs to the community when people are homeless. The average cost of health and justice services (including police and corrective services) in 2004–05 for a client of a homeless community centre (which provides daytime support to homeless or otherwise highly disadvantaged people) in Western Australia was $15,718 per year. In comparison, health and justice costs for the general community were just $1,690 per person per year, $14,027 less.

Recently published AHURI research has greatly expanded our understanding of the costs to the community of homelessness and the benefits of providing support for people who are, or at risk of becoming, homeless. It targeted housing and health support delivered to homeless people fully or partially (to reduce the costs of non-homelessness services (including health, justice, welfare payments, children in care and eviction from public housing costs) to average Australian population levels, it would result in estimated savings to government of as much as $29,450 per client per year (in 2010–11 dollars).

The high incidence of physical and mental health conditions, drug and alcohol use and low education levels of clients of homelessness services suggest that this is unlikely to ever be achieved. Indeed, a National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing in 1997 estimated that about 40% of people living in Melbourne rooming houses, special residential accommodation and emergency accommodation had experienced schizophrenia during their lifetime, and 43% of men and 20% of women abused or were dependent on alcohol. Nevertheless, even a 10% reduction in the cost of non-homelessness services would substantially offset the cost of providing homelessness support, as well as providing positive outcomes in quality of life.

To determine the costs of non-homelessness services in 2010–11, researchers surveyed people who had very recently (in the previous 3 months) started using homelessness support services.

Of those who undertook the initial survey:
- 74 were single women using homelessness support services which provide assistance for single people who don’t have secure accommodation. This includes women affected by domestic violence and those with accompanying children.
- 69 were single men using homelessness support services.
- 41 were people using tenancy support services.
- Tenancy support services help people at risk of losing either a private or public tenancy by assisting with budgeting to meet rental costs; referring clients to mental health and drug and alcohol services; modifying anti-social behaviours; and developing housekeeping skills. Private tenancy support services include financial assistance such as bond, rental and moving costs.

The first survey showed that a large proportion of respondents incurred very low health costs before they first accessed a homelessness support service. Approximately 40% of both single men and tenancy support clients and 22% of single women’s services had health costs of less than $1,000 per year. Justice costs, however, were quite high, with single men respondents costing the community $9,195 on average in the previous year. In addition, 17% of respondents experienced a period when they didn’t receive any income (on an average of 21 weeks).

One-year later those respondents who agreed were resurveyed to establish any changes in their use of non-housing services.

The second survey revealed that average health costs increased for single men and for tenancy support clients and decreased for single women. Single men’s health costs went up due to an increase in overnight stays in hospital and drug/alcohol facilities. Tenancy support clients’ health costs increased because they went on to a homelessness support plan as part of their contact with the homelessness support service. This means that their health needs were now being met where previously they were not.

Overall health costs decreased for single women because of their reduced use of outpatient/day clinics and fewer overnight stays in hospital and mental health facilities.

By the time of the second survey, justice costs for single men had decreased due to them experiencing fewer nights in prison, fewer court appearances and fewer incidents of being the victim of an assault or robbery. Tenancy support clients also recorded a decrease in justice costs due to fewer incidents of being the victim of an assault or robbery. Justice costs increased marginally for single men. Welfare payments and employment income increased by the second survey, when only 8% of respondents experiencing a period when they didn’t receive any income (on an average of six weeks).
Being part of a homeless assistance program helped respondents access or maintain eligibility for appropriate government welfare payments. For single men, Newstart income dropped while Disability Support Pension income rose dramatically indicating that the homeless services helped respondents be properly assessed with regard to disabilities that affected their working lives.

Average government welfare benefits received in the 12 months before the first survey and after one year:

- Single men: 1st survey $8,498, 2nd survey $10,522
- Single women: 1st survey $11,789, 2nd survey $12,253
- Tenancy support clients: 1st survey $14,062, 2nd survey $14,197

Increase in income: $2,024, $464, $135

Source: The cost of homelessness and the net benefit of homelessness programs: a national study

In addition, employment income rose across each of the three groups. This suggests that those who accessed homelessness support services were able to earn more, possibly because of greater stability in their home circumstances.

Average employment income per week received in the 12 months before the first survey and after one year:

- Single men: 1st survey $639, 2nd survey $919
- Single women: 1st survey $362, 2nd survey $656
- Tenancy support clients: 1st survey $413, 2nd survey $76

Increase in income: $294, $76

Source: The cost of homelessness and the net benefit of homelessness programs: a national study

Although there are economic benefits for the community, most importantly homelessness support services have an essential role in delivering better living outcomes for vulnerable people. The WA Department of Housing showed that 91% of people who accessed a homelessness support service (between May 2010 and June 2011) were still housed 12 months later.

The AHURI research survey also revealed that of people who were case managed by a homelessness support service (including single men, single women and tenancy support clients) 38% believed that without help they would have ended up as primary homeless (e.g. sleeping rough); 17% would have had poorer mental/emotional health outcomes; 11% would have had poorer physical health; and 10% believed they would be dead.

This edition of AHURI Evidence Review draws from the following AHURI research projects:
- The cost of homelessness and the net cost of homelessness programs: a national study
- The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of homelessness prevention and assistance programs, and
- Homelessness and mental health linkages

See more at: http://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing_information/review/evrev060#sishash.7btMylQk.dpuf
Contact us at NT Shelter

Darwin Office:
10/21 Cavenagh Street, Darwin
PO Box 1577 Nightcliff NT 0814
Phone (08) 8981 5003
Web www.ntshelter.org.au

Executive Officer
Toni Vine Bromley
Mob 0428 802 240
Email eo@ntshelter.org.au

Admin Officer
Clare Corfield
Email admin@ntshelter.org.au

Homelessness Policy Officer
Morgan Sabbath
Mob 0428 820 944
Email hpo@ntshelter.org.au

Central Australia Office:

Central Australian Policy Officer
David Havercroft
Phone (08) 8952 6975
Mob 0439 524 900
Email ca@ntshelter.org.au

On the NT Shelter website
www.ntshelter.org.au

- Subscribe to our E-Bulletins
- NT Shelter Housing Fact Sheets published July 2014 with data on urban housing from 2005 to 2014 - March/September Quarters
- Policy papers & Submissions/ National Industry Body for Community Housing
  The prospectus includes draft organisational structure, constitution and indicative budget that will enable you to consider the merits of the proposal in more detail.
  - Detailed Proposal
  - Budget Scenario
  - Proposed draft Constitution
- NT Combined Peaks Portal;
  The web-based system to meet standards and maintain quality.

NT Shelter has joined with NTCOSS, COTA NT. NDS NT and the NT Mental Health Coalition to offer tailored online support services- Stanfords Performance Pathways (SPP) and Management Support Online (MSO) - to support and resource our member organisations in their operations and service delivery functions. Organisations that are members of any of these NT peak bodies are entitled to a 15% discount on subscriptions to both MSO and SPP. For a free trial go to https://www.ngoservicesonline.com.au/nt-combined-peaks/

Newsletter

NT Shelter welcomes stories from the sector for inclusion in our quarterly Newsletter.

To submit articles please contact Toni Vine Bromley at eo@ntshelter.org.au

The deadline for copy in the last newsletter for 2014 is 24th October.

E-Letter

NT Shelter’s E-Letters for both Housing and Homelessness are issued in months when a hard copy newsletter isn’t sent out.

If you would like to subscribe or include an article for these please contact NT Shelter as follows:
- for the Homelessness eLetter
  - Morgan Sabbath; hpo@ntshelter.org.au
- for the Housing eLetter
  - Toni Vine Bromley; eo@ntshelter.org.au

www.shelterme.org.au

ShelterMe - a Territory wide on-line directory of services for homeless Territorians or those looking for services. Print a category, region or page!

- Contact NT Shelter for any further information or to add or update an entry on the database
- Check out the website and refer your clients to it
- Call us if you want more ShelterMe contact cards

Contact NT Shelter at admin@ntshelter.org.au