



Housing PEOPLE

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AHI has a busy program scheduled for Housing Week in Victoria, with three thought-provoking events organised.

What Future for Aboriginal Housing in Australia?

The housing conditions of Australia's Indigenous peoples are receiving significant government attention. Much of the focus at the moment is on remote communities, although most AHI members agree that significant issues remain in urban and regional areas.

This event is the first AHI interactive discussion about the future for Aboriginal housing in Australia, with keynote speakers from around the country including Tom Slockee (South Eastern Aboriginal Regional Management Services), John Chacko (North Queensland Regional Indigenous Housing), Toni Vine-Bromley (Northern Territory Shelter), and Sharon Papen (tbc) (Aboriginal Housing Board Victoria). Tuesday 2nd September from 1.30pm - 4.30pm, at the Jasper Hotel, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne

Homelessness prevention, prioritization and allocations: strategies and initiatives in UK, Ireland and Canada

An interesting and thought provoking breakfast with Lynden Esdaile, Executive Chairperson Housing Appeals Committee (Member of NSW AHI Branch Committee). Lynden has just completed a Churchill Fellowship scholarship research tour to Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and will present her findings and lead discussion with practitioners on issues such as prevention strategies for homelessness, private rental market, allocation and choice based letting. She will bring together the strengths and weaknesses of her findings and stimulate discussion on what Australia policy makers and practitioners can learn from her research. Friday 5th September from 7.30am -10.30am at The Apartment, 401-405 Little Bourke Street Melbourne

The Climate Change Green Paper and the Impact on Social Housing Sustainability

Hear from speakers from the Office of Housing, Sustainability Victoria and the Victorian Public Tenants Association discussing updates and analysis of new initiatives, the impact of energy and water-saving measures on social housing, and what can tenants contribute and what help do they need. The Green Paper has suggestions, but will they make an impact? 3rd September 1.30- 4.30pm Jasper Hotel 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.

Waterloo- an important documentary revived

"Waterloo" is an historical account of the 1970's battle by residents of this inner Sydney suburb of Waterloo to save the area from 'slum clearance' and redevelopment by the old Housing Commission. A thought-provoking documentary by filmmaker Tom Zubrycki that provides insights into an important period of activism in Australia. Wednesday 3 September 6.30-7.30pm, The Jasper Hotel, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. Entry free.

These events are free for AHI members.

For more information about these events, or to register on-line, go to http://www.housinginstitute.org/events/events_results.php

AHI would like to thank the Office of Housing, a division of the Victorian Department Of Human Services for their sponsorship of these events.



Industry News

Long-term AHI member Lynden Esdaile has recently returned from an overseas study trip, undertaken as part of her Churchill Fellowship, awarded to her earlier this year. Lynden is the Executive Chairperson of the Housing Appeals Committee in NSW, a previous AHI Board member and is on the NSW Branch Committee.

Churchill Fellowships are granted to practitioners in many fields for professional development and for the opportunity to gain knowledge which can benefit Australia.

Lynden's project was to examine changing social housing practice in England, Scotland, Ireland and Canada in May and June 2008. In particular, she wanted to examine how recent housing strategies in the UK, Ireland and Canada could provide some fresh perspectives in addressing priority housing need and homeless people in an environment where appropriate housing is increasingly expensive and scarce. Cities Lynden visited included London, Bristol, York, Gateshead, Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin and Vancouver, British Columbia.

Lynden's project was to look at:

Strategies for assessing and responding to people in housing crisis and priority need including early intervention, tenancy support and homelessness prevention.

The housing rights and responses under legislation & policy for homeless and priority housing need clients;

The 'on the ground' impacts of new and changing policy approaches, including local needs assessment systems, new allocation systems (such as Choice Based Letting), the wider use of rental subsidies, and new ways to engage with the private rental market.

Lynden said, "It was a fascinating experience, and a chance to step outside of the day-to-day operations of my normal job managing the appeals process, and to think about different approaches to shared housing dilemmas. I found that housing policy makers and workers in all areas are searching for sustainable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in housing crisis. It was really useful to be able to assess what is workable in an Australian context, and what is simply not a practical approach for us".

Lynden will be presenting an AHI workshop titled



Homelessness Prevention, Prioritisation and Allocations on September 3rd in Sydney and in Melbourne on September 5th as part of Victoria's Housing Week.

See the AHI website for details.

Anyone interested in applying for a Churchill Fellowship should visit the website at www.churchilltrust.com.au.
Left: Lynden with Karen O'Shannacery of the Lookout Society who provide Homelessness Services in Vancouver.

Branch Committee News

South Australia..things have been busy with Branch Committee meetings and plenty of events. At the May committee meeting, guest speaker Warren Smith, Executive Director of the Playford Alive Project gave an overview of the project and the challenges it faces and there was a Bus Tour of Westwood. Joan Ferguson was the guest speaker at the Branch Committee meeting in June, as well as presenting a seminar on Outcomes-Based Performance Measures for Social Housing. July was even busier with Derek Wright, Director Mental Health Operations addressing the Branch Committee about Housing and Mental Health, Raichel Green running a 2-day workshop on Mental Health First Aid. During August, the branch committee meeting features Wendy Malycha, CEO of St John's Youth Services discussing the Foyer Model approach to addressing homelessness issues. An Inner City Bus Tour and Breakfast exploring Affordable Housing are also in the pipeline.

Victoria ... Around 60 people attended the first of three Branch breakfasts on housing affordability and expanding the supply of affordable housing. These events are being held in conjunction with the Planning Institute of Victoria, and Kath Hulse and David Imber covered a huge amount of ground in responding to the topic 'Housing affordability: cyclical problem or structural mess...and what to do about it'. More detailed notes on the first of these seminars will be available shortly.

The second of the three events on Thursday 21 August 2008 will be a discussion about taxation policy and affordable housing. Terry Burke and Michael Lennon will be our guest speakers, and the event will be chaired by Ken Marchingo.

We are also gearing up for a role in Housing Week during the first week of September. Thanks to Joan and Kerry for their efforts in preparing our Housing Week funding bid.

New Zealand Our events programme is proceeding well. 13 people attended our tour of the Housing NZ Talbot Park complex. Feedback from those attending was great and thanks Stuart Bracey for his time in hosting it for us.

A Symposium on Affordable Rental Housing was held in Waitakere, West Auckland on July 22nd, with an amazing attendance, including lots of media due to the presence of the Housing Minister (see page 1). Judith Le Harivel attended the Homelessness Working Group meeting.

Planned events include a discussion about the Wellington City Council housing upgrade project in August and a Joint Session with Lifetime Design Foundation in September.

We are also hoping to organise an Asset Management Conference to be held in Wellington in December to coincide with the New Zealand professional excellence awards dinner.

Meet New Member...



Like many AHI members, **Larry O'Brien**, Business Development Manager for PowerHousing Australia, has worked in several fields.

He spent 15 years marketing Australian intellectual property in the IT Industry, and 15 years in working in juvenile justice and with children with high and complex needs. Larry reckons his welfare background makes him ideally suited to negotiating between government, the community housing sector and the for-profit sector.

He commenced work with Loddon Mallee Housing Services in October 2005, when CEO Ken Marchingo bravely commissioned him to put together a national

organisation of non-profit community housing providers. Originally called the "National Brand", this concept was initially met with a degree of cynicism. However in November 2006, PowerHousing Australia was formally constituted with 15 foundation members. In 2008, the company was registered with ASIC, and now has 20 member organisations across Australia.

Larry feels it's an exciting time in the sector, with state governments increasingly focusing on the "growth nonprofit affordable housing provider" as a key delivery strategy, the federal government engaged and ready to roll with NRAs and other initiatives, and the community housing sector, and particularly the PowerHousing Australia members, up for the challenge!

Larry's own family struggled to find a home when he was young. "I commend every worker in this field who makes a difference to people on a daily basis, by providing a decent, affordable place to live".

What's been happening in Professional Development? Tracey Acton provides an update...

June and July saw the temperatures drop but the action pick up in the professional development opportunities being offered to social housing professionals across Australasia.

Based upon feedback from training participants and management across all jurisdictions, *Working with Demanding and Complex Clients*, *Strategies for dealing with Drug and /or Alcohol Dependency* and *Mental Health First Aid* have been embedded into the foundation professional development calendar of the AHI. All three topics continue to be offered across locations on an annual basis, either as public access events or in-house training programs, to support professional development opportunities for new staff and those who have not been able to participate previously.

In June Steve Morgan, our trainer for *Working with Demanding and Complex Clients*, *Strategies for dealing with Drug and /or Alcohol Dependency* travelled to Launceston and Hobart. Steve worked in partnership with local community service the Drug Education Network to provide one event in each location for people working with tenants of social housing services. He also provided in-house training for Department of Housing staff in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Skills. All workshops were very well received with

waiting lists indicating a high level of interest. Steve also offered training to departmental staff in Perth and more broadly to other services in Kalgoorlie through the Department of Housing and Works, ensuring training was delivered in regional areas, where places were reserved for staff. Canberra ended off the month with the delivery of both topics on the 29 & 30 July respectively.

Mental Health First Aid, delivered by Raichel Green five times throughout June and July in NSW, Melbourne and Adelaide was highly rated, with requests for delivery in more regional areas in South Australia.

The AHI has also been working with the Department of Housing in Queensland to develop training in Advanced Communication and Interviewing Skills to support implementation of policy and practice changes in housing needs assessment. The pilot event was held on 15 & 16 July, with 40 frontline housing staff from across Queensland attending, with another follow-up event planned for August. This event is a great example of how AHI can work alongside different jurisdictions, providing professional development support to staff to accompany policy and practice changes. AHI's intention is to ensure high quality service delivery to people using social housing services.

Apologies to Shane Hamilton, featured in last month's Housing People article on the Breakfast Forum in WA.

We were given incorrect information about Shane's title. Whilst he is the Executive Director, Aboriginal Housing and Infrastructure, his current role is Acting Deputy Director General for WA's Department of Housing and Works.

Sorry Shane!

AHI's Green Paper Response

If you'd like to read the AHI's submission to the Green Paper on Homelessness, simply go to the AHI's website (www.housinginstitute.org), click on News, then Latest News.

The response is available as a downloadable pdf file.

Diary dates - Upcoming Events

Event	Location	Date
What Future for Aboriginal Housing?	Melbourne	2nd September
Homelessness prevention, prioritisation, and allocations	Sydney	3rd September
The Climate Change Green Paper & the impact on Social Housing	Melbourne	3rd September
Breakfast- Homelessness prevention, prioritization & allocations	Melbourne	5th September
Working with complex and demanding clients	Adelaide	22nd September
Working with clients with drug/alcohol dependency	Adelaide	23rd September
Mental Health First Aid	Darwin	25th September

Launch of National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) was launched by the Treasurer, the Hon. Wayne Swan and Minister of Housing the Hon. Tanya Plibersek on 24 July, and Unis Goh attended representing the AHL. Following is her report on the event...

Over fifty guests across the sectors from business, community housing and governments attended the morning tea launch of the NRAS on Thursday 24 July at the Hilton Hotel in Sydney.

In addition to Minister Tanya Plibersek, Treasurer Wayne Swan, an Industry Super Fund Management representative and a Westpac Bank representative also attended.

The key themes presented at the launch include:

- This initiative is designed to stimulate interest from three levels (governments, institutional investors and community housing providers) to work together in partnership so that this long-term strategy deliver homes for the future sustainability of a prosperous society.*
- NRAS is designed to make renting more affordable in two ways, an overall increase in the number of rental homes, and by providing a fixed term rent that is 20% below market price.*
- To increase supply, NRAS offers investors incentives to build new affordable homes that will be rented at 20% below market price. The Federal Government's contribution is \$6000 per unit, per year for 10 years as a refundable tax offset.*
- State and Territory Governments have also committed to supporting NRAS by contributing to investors \$2000 per unit per year for 10 years in direct or in-kind financial support.*
- About 1.5 million households are expected to be eligible to take advantage of the Scheme.*
- The Federal Government is committed to deliver 50,000 rental units over the next 4 years, with another 50,000 units delivered if demand is still strong beyond 2012.*
- A legislative framework is being developed to provide*

long-term certainty for this Scheme. Calls for applications were made in July 2008.

A Prospectus outlining the details of the Scheme was provided to guests.

Both Westpac and the Industry Super Fund Management gave strong support for this Scheme. Their interest was in taking a long-term approach to investment. The Industry Super Fund Management representative said that NRAS has a place in the Super Fund Portfolio in Australia (similar to many other countries including the US) in using this kind of opportunity to benefit both shareholders and people who need affordable rental housing. This means a new class of investment called "Asset Class" is being created under this Scheme.

Attendees expressed a high level of interest and keenness in NRAS. Minister Tanya Plibersek also told us that there has been a good response to the Scheme to date.

The morning tea provided an opportunity for delegates across sectors to be reassured by the Treasurer and the Minister of Housing about this Scheme. It also provided a great atmosphere for networking with potential players who are keen to participate in this national scheme. I was particularly pleased to hear Minister Plibersek telling reporters at the morning tea that our community housing sector is strong, and that it manages tenancies and properties in a way that minimises the risks when dealing with problematic tenancy issues.

It was an enjoyable morning tea for me, as I caught up with some old colleagues in community housing and Housing NSW, as well as introducing AHL's role in housing issues to new people I met there. Other AHL members who attended included Mike Allen, Vivienne Milligan, Patrick Yeung, Adam Farrar, Lesley Wyatt, Bobbie Townsend, Nazha Zaad and Nicola Lemon (apologies to other attending members whose names I haven't listed).

For more information about the National Rental Affordability Scheme, visit the available on the website www.fahcsia.gov.au