



Australasian **Housing** Institute

*Supporting housing professionals*

# Annual Report

## 2009 – 2010



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**ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10**

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**President's welcome**

The 2009-10 financial year was an exciting time to be working in housing. It began in challenging economic times in the midst of the global financial crisis, but provided great opportunities for housing professionals as Australia's national government implemented its reform agenda. Those reforms are now in full swing, with a significant new supply of housing and associated systemic reform which is beginning to manifest itself in actual changes on the ground; these in turn are making a real difference to client outcomes.

The Australasian Housing Institute is at the forefront of the agenda, supporting our members to be part of and to lead this change. Our excellent professional development program has been expanding and evolving to meet the needs of a rapidly changing housing system. We've responded with such offerings as our first ever New Zealand conference, which featured some of the best housing thinkers of our time, both local and international. The feedback we received showed the event to be highly relevant to housing practitioners and I look forward to more opportunities to share ideas and experiences with our NZ colleagues.

With such ground-shifting changes happening in Australia the AHI is also equipping its members to be leaders in housing delivery and reform. One of our key projects this year was to plan and organise the first AHI Excellence in Leadership Retreat. The fantastic program of speakers from the community sector, government and business was structured to allow participants to engage with speakers and one another.

Facilitating engagement and networking is what we continue to do best, whether it's through our many events, or our high quality publications, *Housing People* and *Housing Works*, which provide a resource of information, practice and topical discussion for members. The Institute's Professional Excellence in Housing Awards are a cornerstone of AHI activity, recognising and promoting best practice for the benefit of members and clients of social housing. They continue to showcase the very best innovation, practice and achievement by housing practitioners – a profession which has a profound impact on the lives of some of the most disadvantaged in society, but which too rarely takes time acknowledge and celebrate this work.

I would like to thank outgoing Board members for their hard work and welcome new members on-Board. You give up freely of your time and expertise and I am grateful to you for making the commitment to serve the organisation and its members. All of the great work the AHI does could not occur without the dedication, hard work and skills of our CEO and staff. While the Institute has only a small staff team, they punch well above their weight. Their efforts are what allows the AHI to deliver our services across Australia and New Zealand and make a difference for our members. Thank you for another year of helping the organisation deliver.

Finally, I look forward to the coming year. We have an expanded professional development program for members and the housing sector to take advantage of, and many other exciting opportunities to

share lessons, exchange ideas, celebrate achievements and support each other as professionals in a time of great change.

Lynden Pennicott

President

**From the CEO**

Housing matters. People need a decent home they can afford in a community they are proud of. Our role, as the professional association for people involved in housing, is to support our members to make a real difference to people's lives.

And what a year in housing it has been. It started with the roll-out of the Australian Government's Nation Building and Jobs Plan, which is delivering a much-needed boost to

the available stock of social and affordable housing. A number of Australian Community Housing Organisations are undergoing rapid growth, while established providers, most notably our large public sector agencies, are doing an excellent job in delivering the stimulus properties and integrating their activities with reforms now underway in the sector.

The Australasian Housing Institute has been busily adapting its offerings to this new landscape. Increased resources must follow increased demand and this year we recruited a new professional development team – a move which virtually doubled the AHI's staff. Our new team members not only set about delivering an impressive program of events and training, but focused on developing new products, building an online learning platform and began work on formal recognition and accreditation of housing professionals. One of the great successes of this new drive was the planning and preparation of the inaugural AHI Excellence in Leadership Retreat. The retreat was held in August 2010, so we will be providing a full account in next year's report.

Our members lie at the core of our organisation; they are the driving force behind the vision, objectives and strategies of the Institute. We remain tireless in our efforts to promote the benefits of membership to the housing sector. This year we conducted a membership recruitment drive, 'Each One, Reach One', where a grand prize was the incentive for every member of the AHI to recruit at least one other housing person.

Despite some success with this drive, membership of Institute continues to grow only slowly and we are acutely aware that it is the strength of our products which serves as the best marketing tool for our association. This year the AHI events schedule was especially full and that is no better exemplified than the last two months of 2009, when we organised half a dozen events in and around the National Housing Conference, held awards ceremonies in three separate jurisdictions and hosted our first major conference in New Zealand.

It would be remiss of me not to mention what was perhaps the highlight of the year in the Institute's calendar. In October 2009 we took great pleasure in honouring two of Sydney's most prominent Aboriginal rights activists and social housing advocates with lifetime achievement awards. Colin James AM, Director of the IB Fell Housing Research Centre at the University of Sydney and Michael Mundine, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company, were presented the awards at a special ceremony by Her Excellency, Governor Marie Bashir.

With significant growth in the type and extent of the AHI's activities, this year it was also necessary to turn our attention to 'professionalising' our professional association. The Institute undertook work on strategic planning, formalising internal business systems and commenced a governance review. In time, these corporate building blocks will put the organisation in a much stronger position to manage growth and change in future.

The Institute's priorities for the year ahead are to:

- equip housing professionals for the challenges ahead
- deliver top quality professional development services for our members and other customers
- recognise excellence in housing practice
- inform and connect housing professionals around housing practice and policy
- improve our business sustainability, especially by growing the membership base and offering a broader range of services.

The Institute is very fortunate in its small but dedicated staff team. I would like to thank Kerry Nicholls, Kelly Badewitz, Martin Blaszczyk, Kirsty Apps, David Jones and Donella Roberts for their contribution. I would also like to thank our contractors and temporary staff, who play such an important role in bringing their expertise to a small team: Philippa Lawrence for her layout and design skills; Naomi Mawson for her photography; and John Flanagan, Steve Morgan, Rachel Green, Scott Natho and Philippa Harris for their training and facilitation;

Joan Ferguson

CEO

**Our Work, Our Vision**

Housing people are no ordinary professionals. They combine the skill sets of social workers, asset managers and business people to put and maintain roofs over the heads of those most in need. Our goal is to support, develop and celebrate this important profession by giving its members the opportunity to belong to a professional association and make connections with colleagues in the sector.

Because the expertise required of housing people is unique, we wish to recognise professional standing against a set of defined standards and accredit courses which assist housing workers achieve those standards. Our members strive for informed policy development, and we aim to provide them with a voice in the public conversation about social housing and be influential in the policy environment.

Our professional development program, publications and other activities support the building and sharing of housing practice skills, ideas and approaches. We inform members about topical policy and practice issues and encourage their input on issues affecting their profession.

The Australasian Housing Institute is the professional association of people working and volunteering in the multi-disciplinary housing industry. We support our members to achieve excellence in social housing and the best possible outcomes for their organisations, clients and communities.



## 2009-10 Highlights

### Professional Development and Learning

The AHI offers a comprehensive range of learning and development products and services to housing professionals and their organisations. This year, we ran more than 50 events across Australia and New Zealand, which attracted over 1200 participants. In 2009-2010 we delivered 14 one and two-day courses (open to members and others) and 15 courses in-house for social housing organisations in a total of 46 days training.

Evaluation of our training shows a consistently high level of satisfaction from participants. The training is relevant to their work environment and stretches their knowledge and skills development. Members of the Planning Institute of Australia in Victoria and South Australia receive CPD points for approved AHI events.

The courses included: Working with complex clients; Working with clients with drug and/or alcohol dependency; Mental health first aid; Negotiation and conflict resolution; Advanced communication and interviewing skills; Client focused team management; Anti social behaviour, Promoting a positive culture of respect and support in the workplace, Leadership awareness and Managing for success. Nearly 60% of our training sessions were provided in-house. This delivery option is popular with larger housing organisations as they can organise training to suit their needs and budgets. We also facilitated two National Practitioner Forums for senior housing executives.

Evaluation scores for our courses consistently average in the range of four-five out of five points, across all courses, trainers and jurisdictions. It is not uncommon for participants to give a course straight fives, and for the average score for an event to be in the high fours. It is pleasing to note that many participants remark that our training is the best and most relevant to their work they have ever attended.

We work in challenging times, with a ceaseless demand for improved housing practice. The Institute hosted a number of seminars and workshops to assist housing professionals to explore new work methods. Members and guests enjoyed hearing from a wide variety of speakers at more than 26 breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea events.

Prominent presenters included Michael Lennon and Andrew Larkin who conducted forums around Australia discussing the community housing revolution currently underway and described their visions for the housing sector in Australia and New Zealand. Our members were given the opportunity to meet with the housing ministers of New South Wales (Minister Borger), Queensland (Minister Struthers) and New Zealand (Minister Heatley) Rhonda Phillips provided timely contextual research on service delivery integration, with one of these seminars coinciding with the launch of Homelessness Week in NSW, while Dr Sarah Blandy led discussions on the vexed issue of how to appropriately house sex offenders.

At the National Housing Conference, the Institute hosted a session called ‘Deadly! The Future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing’, which featured success stories in Aboriginal housing from around the country. It was particularly encouraging to see strong attendance and lively participation by Indigenous people at this event, where there was standing room only.

Also at the conference, the AHI facilitated a meeting of minds between the UK’s established and Australia’s nascent community housing sectors. ‘Community Housing CEOs in Conversation’ gave local housing executives the opportunity to hear from and share experiences with some of the large British contingent at the conference, including: Kate Davies, Chief Executive of Notting Hill Housing, Howard Farrand, Chief Executive of West Mercia Housing Association and President of the Chartered Institute of Housing, and Michael Newey, Chief Executive of the Broadlands Housing Association.

On the training side, the AHI began a fruitful collaboration with Donella Roberts, an expert consultant on learning and development matters. Donella took on the sizeable task of organising and running the very first Excellence in Leadership Retreat and introduced two new courses to our training portfolio: a one-day public leadership course (Leadership Awareness) and a two-day in-house leadership course (Managing for Success).

Other new products added this year included ‘Promoting a Positive Culture of Respect and Support’ and ‘Coming to Grips with Antisocial Behaviour’, while trainer Rachel Green updated her own ‘Mental Health First Aid’ module. The Institute also ‘lost’ one of our veteran trainers this year; Steve Morgan took up a position as a psychologist/ trauma expert to assist at war crimes trials at the International Criminal Court in The Hague – an indication of the calibre and reputation of our trainers. In turn, we were glad to welcome on board two new trainers: Scott Natho and Philippa Harris.

## **Policy and Practice**

The Institute provided input into the consultation on the Regulation and Growth of the Not-for-Profit Housing Sector conducted by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The AHI hosted a number of forums over 18 months canvassing many of the issues raised in the discussion paper. Michael Lennon spoke with members around the country about his ideas for reforming social housing. Andrew Larkin led discussions about building a more diverse social housing system. The comments of members from these events and additional member feedback formed the basis of this submission.

More broadly, it was informed by the depth and breadth of our members’ experience in social housing – as practitioners, researchers, policy makers, service users and advocates. The full text of the submission is available from the AHI’s website.

**Publications**

*Housing WORKS* is the Institute's quarterly journal and is the only publication of its type in Australasia. The magazine highlights a range of practice initiatives and policy debates; contributors from the sector are supported by an editor.

During the year *Housing WORKS* featured articles from social housing professionals from around Australia, New Zealand and, increasingly, from colleagues overseas. Housing ministers from around Australia and New Zealand were given the opportunity to respond to questions from the Institute's members as part of a regular column. Two new regular features, a personal profile of a housing professional and a 'Question on Notice', were also introduced during the year. In 2009-10 four editions were published: in August, November, February and May.

Our member e-newsletter, *Housing People*, comes out monthly and features news and views from and relevant to the AHI's members. In February 2010 the newsletter was re-developed from a downloadable and printable document to a fully web-based publication, and its frequency was raised to a monthly basis. *Housing People* was published nine times during this year – an increase of 50% on the number of editions published in 2008-09.

In 2009-10 the AHI embarked on a process of fully redeveloping and re-designing its website, with a view to increasing online interaction with our members.

AHI publications are now also run in accordance with a formal editorial policy, which is available on the Institute's website.

## Recognising excellence in housing practice

### Professional Excellence in Housing Awards

The Australasian Housing Institute Awards provide an opportunity to showcase social housing success stories. The awards formally recognise and reward excellence in professional practice, from the grass roots to the most senior levels. They promote to our colleagues and the community at large the difference that social housing professionals make to people's lives.

In early 2009 we reviewed the program, as entries had outgrown early expectations and the systems and processes were not coping with the volume. As a result a new simplified awards structure of six individual and team categories was introduced from 2009. In November 2009, winners from the individual jurisdictions from the previous year came together at the National Housing Conference in Melbourne for the hotly contested Australasian Professional Excellence in Social Housing Awards (the last to be held under the old format). During the year award ceremonies were also held in South Australia (October 2009), New Zealand (December 2009) and New South Wales (May 2010).

The full list of winners is attached at Appendix A.

### Photographic Exhibition

*Facing up to the challenge: Images of social housing* people is a collection of 50 or so portraits of housing professionals from around Australia – members of the Australasian Housing Institute – taken by Brisbane photographer Naomi Mawson. Developed in collaboration with graphic artist Philippa Lawrence, they seek to debunk the myth of 'faceless bureaucrats' by capturing the passion and individuality of volunteers, housing workers, public servants, academics and community builders.

In 2009-10 the exhibition was launched by Minister Karen Struthers in Brisbane and featured prominently in the grand foyer of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre during the National Housing Conference. Some of the portraits have gone on permanent display at the headquarters of Housing NSW in Ashfield. The Institute was also able to keep expanding the number of its members with their own photographic portrait by commissioning new photography in New Zealand and Western Australia.

## Board of Directors

The Australasian Housing Institute is governed by a Board of Directors of up to 12 people who following the 2008 rule changes are now elected for a two-year term. The Board of Directors governs the work of the organisation, adopts an annual budget, makes organisational policy and represents the organisation in a wide range of public forums.

The board's committees examine relevant issues in detail and advise the full board of critical issues. At 30 June 2010 the AHI's board comprised:

**President:** Lynden Pennicott

### **Branch Representatives**

New South Wales: Unis Goh

New Zealand: Roger Jameson

Northern Territory: Garry Gardiner

Queensland: Jennifer Clark

South Australia: Shirley Trebilcock

Tasmania: vacant- Liz Murray was coopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010

Victoria: Andrew MacGregor

Western Australia: vacant- Kathleen was coopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010

Australian Capital Territory: David Matthews (coopted April 2010)

Company Secretary: Joan Ferguson

### **Sector Representatives**

Indigenous Housing: Garry Gardiner

**Chief Executive Officer:** Joan Ferguson

Finance and Risk Management Committee

- Unis Goh PSM
- Andrew MacGregor
- Lynden Pennicott

Education and Practice Committee

- Roger Jameson
- Shirley Trebilcock
- Neil Sandall
- Michael Pelling
- Jennifer Samoiloff
- Unis Goh PSM

Member Services Committee

- Unis Goh PSM
- Shirley Trebilcock

For the personal profiles of AHI Board members please see Report in the Financial Statements

**Corporate Information**

The Australasian Housing Institute Ltd (AHI) is a company limited by guarantee that is incorporated in Australia. Members undertake to contribute \$10 each to the property of the company if it is wound up while they are a member or within one year after they cease to be a member.

**Corporate Governance**

The Board of Directors met on 7 occasions during the year,

by teleconference for six meetings and one face-to-face meeting at the National Housing Conference in Melbourne. Directors' attendance at Board meetings is noted in the table below.

Director		Number of Meetings	Attended	
Jennifer	Clark	7	6	Appointed 12/11/2008
Terry	Daly	4	0	Resigned 26/11/2009
Shane	Edmonds	4	4	Resigned 26/11/2009
Garry	Gardiner	7	4	
Unis	Goh	3	3	Appointed 26/11/2009
Roger	Jameson	4	3	
Andrew	MacGregor	7	6	
David	Matthews	2	2	Appointed 08/04/2010
Lynden	Pennicott ( President)	7	7	Appointed 26/11/2009
Tony	Rantell	4	1	Resigned 26/11/2009
Neil	Sandall	4	1	Resigned 26/11/2009
Shirley	Trebilcock	7	6	Appointed 12/11/2008
Matthew	Woodward	4	4	Resigned 26/11/2009
Frances	Ferguson ( Secretary)	7	7	Appointed

### Indemnification and Insurance of Directors and Officers

In the reporting period, the company has paid premiums in respect of a contract insuring all the Directors of the Australasian Housing institute Ltd through Association Liability Insurance, against costs incurred in defending the proceedings for conduct involving wrongs in the course of professional duty or as Office Bearers and all matters covered in policy no. 08MUL558383.

The total amount of premiums paid was \$3469.43 to which the Directors were not asked to contribute. No indemnities have been given or insurance premiums paid, during or since the end of the financial year for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the company. No person has applied for leave of court to bring proceedings on behalf of the company, or intervene in any proceedings to which the company is party, for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the company for all or any part of those proceedings during the year.

**Acknowledgements**

The Australasian Housing Institute very much appreciates the financial assistance we receive from our corporate supporters and sponsors. Without their assistance we would not be able to deliver many of our projects and programs. We are also truly grateful to our members who provide in-kind help in so many ways – running branch committees, helping to organise local events and being the public face of the organisation.

Corporate Supporters for the 2009-2010 financial year were:

Housing NSW:	\$109,00
Department of Housing QLD:	\$40,000
Office of Housing VIC:	\$45,000
Housing SA:	\$40,000
Housing Tasmania:	\$9091
Housing New Zealand Corp.:	\$0.00
Dept. of Housing and Works WA:	\$27,273
Territory Housing:	\$10,000
Housing ACT:	\$10,000

**Event Sponsors** for the 2009-10 financial year were:

Keystart Homeloans	Lake Maintenance Pty Ltd
Mecu credit union	Christchurch City Council
VicUrban	Defence Housing
Homestart Finance	BlueCHP Ltd
City of Salisbury	PowerHousing Australia
NSW Federation of Housing Associations	Housing New Zealand Corporation
Urban Land Development	Global Mark



## Financial Report

The organisation generates funds to deliver the products and services members and industry expect from their professional association through four main sources: grants from housing authorities; revenue from events; membership fees and sponsorship. This year our revenue decreased by 6% from last year and our costs increased by just over 2% resulting in a loss of just over \$8,000. Whilst this was a disappointing end-of-year result, the loss is relatively small and the organisation has sufficient funds at hand to continue full operations.

We retain a focus on growth of our professional development programs with a commitment to double our professional development offering in the year ahead. Planning is well underway for this expanded program, particularly in the area of tailored in-house programs for housing organisations.

Funding from state housing authorities accounts for 45% of our income and supports a wide range of programs, including our awards program, the *Housing Works* magazine, member breakfasts, learning and development events and member networking events. This year funds have also been used to assist the AHI develop our professional recognition scheme and continuing professional development program.

Just over 40% of income is derived from registration fees from learning and development workshops and events. These events are modestly priced and are now, in the main, covering direct outlays. Events in Darwin and Perth do not recover full costs. We aim for the learning and development program to be fully recovering all costs during the coming financial year.

Membership fees total \$59,230 and account for just over 9% of revenue. Membership fees are used to support member networking events, the organisation's governance and the member e-newsletter, *Housing People*.

Sponsorship of our products and events is increasing and although still accounting for 4% of revenue is an important contribution to the viability of our awards program.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank members, housing authorities, sponsors and our customers for their on-going support of the Institute and look forward to successful partnerships in the future.

The small increase in costs is mainly due to an increase in payments for office costs and of course CPI. The cost of hosting workshops (venue, catering, trainer travel and accommodation, printing) has all increased in the last five years. The AHI has opened a small office in Canberra, shared with another housing organisation, to better enable us connect with colleagues in other national organisations.

The organisation has not increased membership fees since 2001 and has not increased the cost of learning and development workshops and other events in five years. Our pricing policy will be a significant discussion in the year ahead.

Whilst trade debtors have increased significantly from the previous year, this is explained by the very major increase in the number of events hosted in the last quarter of the financial year. A significant portion of our customers are government organisations, whose terms of trade are most usually 45-

60 days. This presents a cash flow risk, but one which is known and managed. There is no material credit risk exposure to any single receivable or group of receivables.

The AHI does not retain reserves and has no funds invested for the long term. All funds are applied to operations in the year they are generated. This places the organisation in a weak cash flow position, which we intend to address in our five year finance strategy currently under development.

Governance and oversight of the organisation's accounts and financial management is provided by the Finance and Risk Management Committee (comprising Lynden Pennicott, Andrew MacGregor and Unis Goh). Kerry Nicholls provides book-keeping and accounting services.

**Appendix A****2009-10 Professional Excellence in Housing Award Winners****Australasia**

<b>Award Category</b>	<b>Recipient</b>
Outstanding Achievement in Social Housing	Peter Willans Local Coordinator, Community Partners Unit Housing Tasmania
Inspirational Colleague	Mercia Bresnehan Executive Director, Housing Tasmania
Member of the Year	Shirley Trebilcock Manager of Maintenance Urban Strategy and Asset Investment Housing SA
Excellence in Housing Management	Wodonga Housing Team Department of Human Services, Victoria
Excellence in Asset Management Practice	Philip Bockos Senior Program Manager New Supply for Greater Western Sydney Division Housing NSW
Excellence in Delivering Support Solutions	Whangarei Accessible Housing Trust Whangarei District, New Zealand
Outstanding Contribution to Change in Delivering Community Renewal or Urban Regeneration	Afton House (A multi-agency team consisting of Housing SA, the Office of Ageing and Disability Services and Unity Housing.)
Supporting Professional Development in the Workplace	Neila Penny Housing WA

Outstanding Contribution to Increasing Environmental Sustainability	Major Projects Directorate and Central Sydney Housing Services Division  Housing NSW
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**South Australia**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
Inspirational Colleague Award	Lynley Street  Project Officer, Strategic Project Development  Community Partnerships and Growth Directorate, Housing SA
Leading Innovation Award	City of Salisbury
Leading Practice Award	Land Management Corporation
Special Mention	Angela Rawnsley and Irene Adair  Allocations Officer  Regional Manager, Housing SA Whyalla
Leading Housing Solutions Award	St John's Youth Services

**New Zealand**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
Inspirational Colleague Award	Alan Bernacchi  Programme Manager, Community Renewal, Housing New Zealand Corporation
Leading Innovation Award	The Lifewise Trust
Leading Practice Award	Healthy Housing Programme  (A joint initiative of Housing New Zealand Corporation and the Auckland, Counties Manukau, and Hutt Valley District Health Boards.)

Leading Housing Solutions Award	Wellington City Council
Outstanding Achievement in Social Housing Award (Posthumous)	Norma Te'o Community Support Officer, Pasefika Pulse Trust Incorporated

**New South Wales**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Recipients</b>
Inspirational Colleague Award	Laurinne Campbell Manager, Western Region, NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
Outstanding Achievement Award	Ray Brincat, Relocations Co-ordinator, Housing Services Division, Housing NSW
Leading Innovation Award	Sarah Barclay, Emmanuel Smith-Aspros Bridge Housing
Leading Practice Award	Property Relocation Team (Housing NSW)
Special Recognition Award	Jean Cinis President, Western Sydney Regional Public Tenants Council
Leading Housing Solutions Award	Frances Jamieson, Senior Project Officer, Learning and Development Community Regeneration Team – Housing NSW