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Welcome from the President

It has been my pleasure to work across the social housing sector as AHI President for another year. Our sector has achieved much during the year, with the stimulus package cushioning the downs. There will be some tough times to come with housing organisations facing budget cuts and restructures. In this uncertain environment, one constant is our need for information - through discussion, sharing of good practice, personal development and keeping in touch with what each other thinks. The AHI is firmly positioned in this resourcing and facilitating role, keeping on top of changes to remain responsive.

Operating Results

In a challenging year for the organisation our financial survival has teetered on the brink; our 10 year old funding model has housing authority grant funding at its centre, but this is no longer a given. Our retained earnings deficit of $120,000 is a huge challenge, but one the whole Board is actively engaged in turning around. We have taken decisive action to broaden our revenue generating activities and to cut costs. We have supported our CEO to develop a new business strategy, with a focussed finance strategy, and outsourced the accounting function to improve financial operations and advice to the CEO and Board. We confidently look forward now to a profitable 2012-2013.

The AHI is at a cross roads, facing operating issues amplified by the deficit in our budget. I have no doubts that the sector needs an organisation to focus on our professional development needs: to equip our members and customers with the skills and knowledge to better meet client needs and expectations; to give individuals the knowledge and confidence to participate more broadly in the housing sector, to make their contribution beyond the confines of their job; and to represent collective interests. The AHI has shown itself to be worthy of this important role, building a solid reputation for high quality and relevant products, reaching all parts of the sector including people working in homelessness, and all disciplines involved in the housing industry. We have shown ourselves to be a resilient and tough organisation able to withstand setbacks. We continue to deliver a wide range of workshops across Australia and New Zealand, programs that are rated very highly by participants, members and non-members alike. We also launched our professional recognition scheme, another step towards the broader recognition of housing workers as housing professionals.

Looking to the Future

To improve our financial position in the short to medium term we need to do more of what we do well, build strong and enduring partnerships with industry stakeholders and provide the professional development products and services needed in the industry today and in the future. Importantly, to strengthen our impact and our reach, we need to create an environment where joining the AHI is seen as the norm and becomes the natural thing to do when you get a job in housing. Our long term viability will depend on building reserves to give us financial and operational security and flexibility, diversifying our revenue sources and keeping our costs down, but at the same time properly resourcing our activities.
Board and Governance

A warm welcome to the new Directors who joined during the year: Jason Cubit and Kathleen Gregory. A sincere thank you to those who retired: Jenny Clark and Roger Jameson. All Directors have contributed to improved governance, assisted by our ongoing governance improvement project that has introduced a governance framework, Board Charter, new delegations and Director Selection process. We have also changed our committee structure, by rolling all sub-committees into the Board, to ensure coherence in our decision making.

Garry Gardiner

It is with great sadness I report the sudden passing of our Indigenous Director, Garry Gardiner in July 2011. His loss is felt keenly by his family, his community, the housing sector across the Northern Territory and nationally. Our deepest condolences to the many who loved and respected Garry. We will miss Garry’s presence at the AHI and always value the contribution he has made.

People

The AHI staff have borne the brunt of the organisational stresses, and done so with good grace, flexibility, skill, inventiveness and hard work. My sincere thanks on behalf of the Board to our CEO Joan Ferguson and her team.

Corporate Supporters

I would personally like to thank our corporate supporters, for not only their financial support, but their continuing involvement with the organisation.

Conclusion

As housing professionals we are accustomed to challenge and adversity and at the AHI we have embraced these challenges and used them to refocus our efforts, to refine and sharpen our business strategy. We are modernising our governance structure and business practices. This will have a positive impact on both the organization and services to members. The AHI will move forward as a robust and sustainable organisation, able to achieve its mission to support a confident and competent social housing sector.
**Introduction**

The AHI celebrated its 10th birthday in 2011. I would personally like to thank all of those members, branch committee members, staff and, in particular Board members, who over the years have built the foundations of a modern professional association for the housing sector in Australia and New Zealand.

We started as a very small operation and whilst our current operations are still on a modest scale, we now have most key elements in place for further developing the organisation and its support for housing professionals.

This year saw us firmly establish the AHI as the organisation setting the standard for what it means to be a modern housing professional in Australia and New Zealand. We introduced the Professional Recognition Scheme in December 2010, opening up registration for those who satisfied the criteria through the qualifications route.

Our Learning and Development Program is a major success with over 9,000 people attending workshops since 2005. Our mix of expert facilitators, a focus on the development of skills and practical application of knowledge and a strong emphasis on peer learning has led to front line housing workers and their managers supporting our public and in-house programs.

Celebrating the achievements of colleagues in the industry through the AHI’s Awards for Professional Excellence is one of the most satisfying parts of my job. People in housing are reluctant to seek the limelight, but it is important to affirm to ourselves and to the wider community the importance of housing in people’s lives and the significant contribution housing people make.

Branch committees are crucial to connecting members locally and to recruiting new members. This year we have added our LinkedIn member group to connect those people who prefer to connect with colleagues online.

HousingWORKS is our highly regarded quarterly magazine, offering members the opportunity to share opinions, ideas, examples of good practice and to hear from decision makers and experts in housing. This year we asked members what they thought of the magazine – the information gained from that survey is invaluable to us in improving the magazine. We have introduced an online option for the 50% of members who are keen to receive HousingWORKS through the internet.

**Overview of financial results**

Whilst this year has been a great success in terms of the organisation’s achievements, the financial result – a retained earnings loss of $120,000 – is of considerable concern.

This poor result is a mix of factors including the need to make new and increase existing provisions for staff leave liabilities; the late withdrawal of financial support by a funder; the deferral of the leadership retreat leading to a failure to achieve sponsorship and registration fee targets; and increased costs for the delivery of the professional development program.

It will be a challenge for the organisation to trade out of this situation. We will need the support of our members and the broader housing sector to do so.
Strategic Focus

We have developed a clear long term business strategy, with an associated finance strategy, to guide our strategic and operational focus. If we are to improve the organisation’s financial position we will need to

1. sustain and strengthen our partnership with state housing authorities
2. grow membership of the AHI
3. strengthen our relationship with the not for profit sector
4. introduce corporate membership
5. build enduring partnerships with private sector sponsors of the AHI Awards
6. increase the take up of tailored, in-house products by housing organisations
7. maintain a high quality learning and development program for the broader housing and human services sector
8. increase member networking opportunities in each jurisdiction, with the support of local branch committees

The Future

There is real change in the housing sector, principally the rapid growth of the community housing sector; a renewed focus on Aboriginal housing; changes in the structure and operations of public housing organisations and a strengthening of the policy and program frameworks for homelessness.

At a time like this it is essential that there is a place for individuals, no matter which organisation or which sector they work in, to act as a profession to drive professional standards and development, influence policy and to share ideas, opinions and the stories of what does and doesn’t work.

As an industry we need to build mature institutions which provide the essential infrastructure to ensure that the contribution of the social and affordable housing sector to both a civil and fair society and a strong economy is recognised, supported and most importantly delivered.

The AHI can be one of those institutions if our members and our sector want it to be.

Joan Ferguson
CEO
Highlights

99 new members

Launch of the Professional Recognition Scheme in December 2010

Photos: One of the first certified housing professionals in Australia: Luke Roberts and Karina Hogan (Victoria); Susan Ring (NSW) with Neil Sandal, Chair of the AHI Education and Practice Committee

First overseas study tour

Photos: AHI Study Tour to England
Feedback from workshops

- Great to learn practises of other housing service providers and presenter.
- Awesome! Everybody should have access to this
- I have a greater understanding of mental health, the signs to look for and how to deal with clients who are unwell
- Course delivered professionally. Facilitator has a vast knowledge & industry experience.
- Learnt importance of giving immediate positive feedback
- Presenter had good understanding of client housing issues.
- Great course content and resources. Good class interaction

Professional Excellence in Housing Awards

Photos: Winners and guests at the Western Australian, Victorian and Tasmanian Awards presentations

Member Networking events and breakfasts with Ministers

Photos: National Homelessness Week Event, Lunch with Minister Burney, Spring Regional Forum unites social housing practitioners in Newcastle, AHI’s breakfast forum with Minister Heatley
HousingWorks and HousingPeople
Members

Highlights

- 99 people joined the AHI this financial year
- 37% of members are involved in community housing
- 30% of members live in New South Wales
- 51% of members earn between $50,000 and $100,000 per year

Location
Board of Directors

Lynden Pennicott

President

Lynden’s current role is of Manager Housing Operations, Housing Tasmania, within the Department of Health and Human Services. He has worked in banking and finance; project management and has extensive experience in leading change in Australia and overseas. Lynden joined the Board in 2007 and has contributed to the AHI making significant progress in developing improved and more contemporary governance arrangements.

Garry Gardiner

Director, Indigenous Housing

Garry passed away in July 2011. His passing is a loss to his family, friends, community and to the housing sector.

Shirley Trebilcock

Director, South Australia

Shirley is the Manager Maintenance, Asset Services with Housing SA. She has over 30 years experience in the management and development of maintenance services. Shirley has served on the Board of Directors since 2008 and is proud of her achievements in raising the profile of the AHI within her organisation and the housing sector more broadly in South Australia. Shirley has been instrumental in arranging and promoting events such as bus tours, breakfasts and the AHI Awards. She is an active member of the Education and Practice Committee.

Kathleen Gregory

Director, Western Australia

Kathleen is the CEO of Foundation Housing, one of Western Australia’s most forward thinking housing organisations. She has 25 years experience working in the not for profit sector as a worker, executive officer and Board member. Fifteen of these years have been spent working in the not for profit affordable housing sector with extensive experience in the development and management of affordable, secure rental housing for households on low incomes, provision of effective tenancy management and support models that enable individuals and households with complex needs to maintain their tenancy and the provision and management of appropriate housing for Aboriginal families living in urban areas. Kathleen joined the Board of Directors in 2010 and has made a significant contribution to the work of the AHI through her perspective on community housing.
Unis Goh PSM  
**Director, New South Wales**

Unis is a member of Disability Council of NSW, a Ministerial appointment for 4 years from 2011-2015, provides advice to the NSW Minister for Disability Services. She has extensive experience in housing and human services, in both the public and not for profit sectors. Unis joined the Board in 2009 and has served the Board with diligence and honour for the full term of the appointment and achieved increased in membership in NSW and financial sponsorships for some events held in NSW.

Jason Cubit  
**Director, Queensland**

Jason is the Chief Executive Officer of the Horizon Housing Company in Queensland. He joined Horizon Housing Company in November 2007 as the CEO, prior to this he spent number of years as General Manager STEPS Community Housing Solutions in Tasmania and 5 Years as Manager Asset Services and various other roles within Housing Tasmania. Prior to this most of Jason’s career has been as a Project or Development Manager with various consulting engineering/building companies across Australia. Jason joined the Board in 2010.

David Matthews  
**Director, Australian Capital Territory**

David is Director of ACT Housing. He has extensive experience in public housing service delivery, homelessness policy and funding; regulation and funding of community, affordable housing, children’s, youth and family policy and program management. David joined the Board in 2010.

Andrew MacGregor  
**Director, Victoria**

Andrew is a Project Manager in Housing & Community Building, DHS Victoria. Andrew has extensive experience in housing operations, policy and program management. Andrew joined the Board in 2007.
About us

The AHI’s enduring purpose is to build a housing profession confident in its ability to contribute to the social, economic, and environmental well being of the people of Australia and New Zealand.

Our vision is of a housing profession respected and valued for helping improve people’s lives and creating communities people are proud to live in.

Our aim is for housing professionals to be proud of being members of the AHI.

We intend to deliver on these goals through

- Improve member and customer experience. We want our members and customers to know that our products and services are designed to meet their needs and compare favourably with local and international offerings. We want our members and customers to experience our people as knowledgeable, proactive and friendly.
- Deliver great products. We want to be regarded as the professional development provider of choice for housing professionals and the organisations which employ them. Our products and services should equip the profession for the opportunities and challenges of the future.
- Create operational excellence. We need to make the best use of our people, our technology and other resources to support best practice operations.
- Show industry leadership, beginning with uniting the housing community and then moving on to shape housing agendas, both policy and practice.
- Manage sustainable and profitable growth that benefits members, customers, the industry and other stakeholders
Summary of Activities

Professional Recognition

The AHI plays an important role in acknowledging achievement and setting standards for what it means to be a housing professional. Building the reputation of social housing professionals remains core business of the organisation. In order to achieve our aims we run the Professional Recognition Scheme (PRS) and the Awards for Excellence in Social Housing.

Our work this year marks a shift in how we as housing people see ourselves. We have set standards of professionalism and we have set robust and internationally comparable benchmarks for achieving those standards. We have created a space to acknowledge and celebrate our achievements as individual professionals, as housing organisations and most importantly as a sector here to do a tough job well.

Highlights

Launch of the Professional Recognition Scheme
22 housing professionals join the PRS in the first six months
Housing awards presented in four jurisdictions to 12 individuals and 11 teams.

The Professional Recognition Scheme

The PRS introduces, for the whole of the social housing sector in Australia and New Zealand, a Certificate in Housing Practice. In order to be awarded this Certificate AHI members must demonstrate that they have reached the standards set in the Skills and Knowledge Framework; undertake a two year Continuing Professional Development Program; and sign up to a code of conduct.

In this first year of operation, participation in the PRS is limited to those who demonstrate they have reached the standard through the qualifications route. We would like to thank our partners at Swinburne University of Technology for not only providing the only AHI recognised housing courses in Australia and New Zealand, but for their tireless support in improving the housing education for the housing profession.

AHI members have contributed mightily to the development and ongoing governance of the PRS through the Education and Practice Committee.
Our thanks to

Neil Sandall  Committee Chairperson
Roger Jameson  Victoria
Unis Goh  NSW
Mike Pelling  Swinburne University
Shirley Trebilcock  South Australia
Jenny Samioloff  Victoria
Mary Kadonis  University of Wollongong
Tacye Bowen  NSW
Suellen Macaffrey  St George Community Housing
Laurel Draffen  NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Sarath Mataraarachchi  NSW

Professional Excellence in Housing Awards

The AHI works to showcase achievement and highlight to the rest of the world the valuable role social housing people play in our community. Recipients of the AHI Awards provide examples of leading-edge practice; earning the admiration of their colleagues; and most importantly, making a real difference in the lives of the people and communities we serve.

We would like to make a very special mention of all the people who nominated their colleagues for awards. It is no easy task to convince a colleague to allow their name to be put forward. People in social housing hesitate to seek the limelight, yet when a colleague takes the trouble to nominate someone whose work they admire, the pride and sense of achievement is there for all to see.

We would also like to congratulate everyone who was nominated for an award. You certainly demonstrated the achievements of our sector, going about your jobs with enthusiasm, integrity and commitment.

The AHI presents awards for

- Outstanding Achievement;
- Inspirational Colleague;
- Tenant Led Initiative;
- Leading Practice;
- Leading Innovation; and
- Leading Housing Solutions.

AHI members contribute to this endeavour through the Awards Committee. We thank those whose job it is to make the very difficult decisions

Lynden Pennicott  Committee Chair
Rhonda Phillips  Queensland
Hans Gerritsen  Western Australia
Lynden Esdaile  New South Wales
Roger Jameson  New Zealand/Victoria
Mike Pelling  Victoria
Joan Ferguson  AHI Chief Executive
Professional Development

Since 2005 the AHI has delivered professional development events across New Zealand and Australia to more than 9200 social housing professionals. We support the development and promotion of a skilled and professional social housing sector working towards achieving the best possible outcomes for clients and local communities, and for organisations. We offer a wide range of learning and development opportunities designed for members, those who are looking to become members and others working in the housing industry.

As part of our ongoing development, we are working on new initiatives including on-line learning, professional on-line networking, partnerships and new workshops; all designed to enable social housing professionals to achieve excellence.

Highlights

- 64 Learning and Development Workshops around New Zealand and Australia
- 32 of these specially tailored for organisations and run ‘in-house’
- 1426 people attended these workshops

Learning and Development Program

The AHI is a respected, approachable and flexible provider of expertise. Our learning and development program is devised after close consultation with our sector to ensure that we understand and can support their needs for a skilled and professional sector. Each of our learning and development workshops is expertly facilitated and presented by highly skilled and experienced practitioners. Their knowledge and experience enables them to enrich peoples’ personal skills and professional development; benefiting their team, their organisation and the sector.

The AHI regularly offers public workshops throughout Australia and New Zealand attended by a cross-section of individuals and organisations. Feedback from these workshops strongly indicates how valuable these are for facilitating the sharing of issues, experiences and best practice.

- “Wow! Your presentation skills are of an extremely high standard, you managed to keep the whole room engaged for a two day workshop. ..You were clear and precise and very knowledgeable.
- Obviously you are very passionate and caring with people…the fact that you provided excellent listings of resources was another bonus.”
- “Excellent. Engaged us all. Great examples. Extremely knowledgeable presenter.”
- “One of the best facilitators I have encountered. Held my attention - had a good understanding of our work.”
- “Very enjoyable - will take away helpful management strategies.”
- “Very rarely do you find such an interesting presentation, with lots of practical approach to issues.”
- “Excellent materials. Positive, upbeat and participatory.”
- “The workshop was excellent. I had been fishing around for something like this with the right sort of presenter for some time.”
- “The speaker was great and delivered the information well. He taught me a very respectful and positive way to deal with clients.”
The AHI offers a suite of fourteen one and two day workshops designed to support quality service delivery and management in housing organisations.

- Client Focussed Team Management
- Client Focussed Service Collaboration
- Coming to Grips with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Conflict Resolution and Mediation
- Effectively Engaging Customers
- Making Tenant Participation and Engagement Meaningful
- Mental Health First Aid
- Promoting a Positive Culture of Respect and Support
- Service Choices
- Working with Clients who have Drug and/or Alcohol Dependency
- Working with Complex and Demanding Clients
- Leadership Awareness
- Managing for Success
- Stepping Up - A Roadmap for New Supervisors

Tailored Courses

Our learning and development workshops have been flexibly designed so that we can tailor the content and style of delivery to the needs of individuals working within a specific area of social housing or to those of a particular organisation. We work with a wide range of organisations to develop customised workshops designed to closely align with their learning and professional development needs. The AHI then provides the organisation with an evaluation report analysing salient outcomes and suggesting ideas for future learning and professional development.

Seminars and Master Classes

We hosted the first Leadership Retreat in August 2010, with 28 participants. This event was designed to promote self-awareness and develop skills to improve leadership effectiveness and performance in emerging and established housing leaders. We offered a highly interactive program, which gave participants the exceptional opportunity to network with industry peers, practice leadership skills, interact with key industry people and business leaders, reflect on and explore their leadership approach and style, and identify opportunities to maximise leadership effectiveness.
Connection and Information

Housing professionals want to connect with colleagues to help develop business relationships; explore new thinking about the way they operate; and work together to achieve common objectives and solve common problems. The AHI supports industry connection and networking through a number of products and programs, which include in-person and on-line opportunities.

Highlights

- **87% satisfaction rating for HousingWORKS**
- 42% of HousingWORKS readers prefer to receive their magazine on-line
- 88 members join the LinkedIn AHI Members Group
- 46 followers in Twitter
- 596 members and guests attend networking events around Australia and New Zealand
- Hosted first overseas study tour

**HousingWORKS**

The quarterly journal HousingWORKS encourages the sharing of ideas and approaches by people delivering services, policy and program managers, policy thinkers and opinion shapers. It provides relevant and topical information to those working in the social housing sector - in the government, community and academic sectors. HousingWORKS is published four times a year. In February 2011 we conducted an on-line survey to find out what people think about HousingWORKS and to understand of how we can improve our reader’s experience.

The survey asked questions about the range of topics covered; the quality of articles; readability of articles; frequency of issues; layout and design; and the format of the magazine. We received 123 responses – a return rate of 15%. Overall it can be concluded that HousingWORKS is a valuable source of information for AHI members, with an overall satisfaction rating of 87%. As a result of the survey findings we have decided to provide HousingWORKS on line for the 42% of members who prefer to read their magazine digitally.

**Housing People, LinkedIn and Twitter**

Members can stay in touch with each other and with the AHI through our monthly e-magazine Housing People, Twitter and the AHI Member Group on LinkedIn. These activities help build a sense of community and common purpose within the sector. Our growing use of social media allows members to stay connected no matter where they may be and to join the discussion where and when they wish.

**Member Networking**

Local networking events encourage those with a common interest in a particular location to share ideas and practices. This year we have hosted 14 member networking events, with nearly 600 members and guests attending. Almost two thirds of the events were held in South Australia and New South Wales, reflecting the strength of those branch committees. Events covered a wide range of topics from homelessness, urban renewal to South Australia’s remote Aboriginal communities.
On the international front the AHI hosted its first overseas study tour. Members took the opportunity to share experiences and opinions with housing professionals working in leading housing associations in England. We would very much like to thank colleagues from Notting Hill in London, Riverside in Liverpool, Broadlands in Norwich and West Kent in Sevenoaks for their hospitality and friendship. The highlights of the trip had to be dinner with Lord Richard Best at the House of Lords and dinner with the Riverside team in the very beautifully renewed city centre in Liverpool.

Members play an incredibly important role in facilitating networking. We would like to thank those members who hosted events and members of branch committees for their tireless support in generating activity at the local level.
The AHI employs a small and dedicated small team to manage the organisation’s operations. In addition to this team, we are privileged to work with contractors who each add enormous value to the work of the organisation.

**Joan Ferguson**
Chief Executive

**Kelly Badewitz**
Event Manager

**Olena Sydorenko**
Marketing and Member Services Manager

**Trainers and Facilitators**

**John Flanagan**
Facilitator

**Rachel Green**
Facilitator

**Phillippa Harris**
Facilitator

**Scott Natho**
Facilitator

**Donella Roberts**
Learning and Development Consultant
Facilitator
During the year we said goodbye to

Kirsty Apps
Business Support

Martin Blaszczk
Writer and Editor

Natalie Jameson
Professional Development Co-ordinator

Kerry Nicholls
Business Support Manager
Building a sustainable organisation

AHI Business Strategy 2011-2012 Summary

Vision
Housing people are respected and valued for helping improve people’s lives and creating communities people are proud to live in
Housing professionals are proud to be members of the AHI

Mission
Our enduring purpose is to build a housing profession confident in its ability to contribute to the social, economic, and environmental well being of the people of Australia and New Zealand.

Values
Accountable practices-Continuous improvement –Supportive environment –Customer satisfaction - Integrity

Goals
Customer responsiveness Great products Operational excellence Industry leadership Sustainable growth

Activities

Professionalism
◆ Professional Recognition Scheme
◆ Awards for excellence in social housing

Development
◆ Learning Workshops
◆ Tailored in-house workshops
◆ Policy and practice seminars
◆ Leadership Retreat

Connection
◆ Local networking events
◆ International networks
◆ Housing Works magazine
◆ Housing People newsletter
◆ Website
◆ Photographic exhibition
◆ Social media links

Influence
◆ Housing workforce roundtable
◆ on-line housing discussion community
◆ advisory committees
◆ input into housing policy and program initiatives

Business Support
Membership Finance Governance Partnerships People Planning Accountability Technology Administration Marketing
Finance Strategy Summary

**Long term expectation**
Sufficient revenue to sustain the services members expect, whilst maintaining reserves and investing in our people and organisation infrastructure

**Purpose of the strategy**
Sustainable growth, with profits invested to deliver member value

**Key Elements**
Minimum year round liquidity (\$amount) - Control financial risk – Operational and financial flexibility – Funding (% of total income) – Retained Earnings target (\$amount)

**Goals**
- Certainty of funding
- Increased revenue from membership fees
- Predictable and growing income stream from events
- Long-term sponsorship partnerships
- Excellent finance management and operations

**Actions**

**Business Focus**
- Integrate business and finance plans
- Strategy
- Plan
- Define impact on financials
- Forward looking financial analysis
- Understand drivers
- Properly resource all work

**Measure and Manage**
- Clear, accurate, current financial reports
- Robust pricing policy
- Financial projections
- Identify future problems
- Monitor business and finance results
- Manage performance

**Business Development**
- Secure long-term commitments from key financial supporters
- Act on opportunities to source one-off or short term funds
- Increase member numbers
- Introduce corporate sponsorships
- Grow the professional development product range

**Manage and Control Financial Risk**
- Know the problems in the business and their impact on the finances
- Implement internal control and compliance
- Regularise cash flow ratios throughout the year
- Implement finance policy and procedures

**Underpinnings**
Board Skills; Out-sourced accounting; know the cost of business elements; reduce costs; use technology to drive business improvement
Corporate Supporters

The AHI is very pleased to maintain a strong relationship with state housing authorities and we thank the following organisations for their corporate supporter funding during the year:

Sponsors

We would also like to thank our sponsors for their commitment to the social housing sector and their support of the AHI: