

The 2010 NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing *Information pack*

All community housing providers in New South Wales are encouraged to enter the 2010 Awards for Excellence in Community Housing.

The judges are keen to receive entries from co-operatives, churches, housing associations, supported housing and local government providers.

Housing organisations of all sizes and from all areas across New South Wales will be considered, and judges have been requested to consider the context and resources of each organisation in their decisions. The Awards recognise excellence across the diverse community housing sector, and all organisations that apply will be given equal consideration.

The Awards will be presented at the NSW Community Housing Conference Dinner & Awards Night at the conference venue in Newcastle on the 27th of September 2010.

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How to nominate an organisation

Nominations close Monday 2nd of August.

Please circulate the attached nomination form to anyone you think might like to make a nomination. Organisations can also self nominate if they believe they deserve to be recognised for their excellence in the following areas:

- NSW Award for Overall Excellence in Community Housing
- NSW Award for Overall Excellence in Co-operative Housing
- NSW Award for Excellence in Service to Tenants
- NSW Award for Excellence in Tenant Participation
- NSW Award for Excellence for Contributions to Building Communities
- NSW Award for Excellence in Asset Management
- NSW Award for Excellence in Organisational Management & Governance
- NSW Award for Excellence in Creative Solutions
- NSW Award for Excellence in Partnerships
- NSW Award for Excellence in Annual Reporting

When a nomination is received, the organisation nominated will be contacted and asked to provide supporting information. **Organisations will have until the 9th of August to provide supporting information.**

IMPORTANT DATES

<u>2nd August</u>	nominations close
<u>9th August</u>	supporting information must be submitted by nominated organisations
<u>27th Sept</u>	Awards will be presented at the conference dinner

Introducing the Awards

The NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing were established to recognise the achievements of the community housing sector and to encourage excellence. The NSW Awards Steering Committee administers and presents the Awards.

Award Objectives

The NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing were established in 2002, and are open to all non-government and local government organisations involved in the development and provision of community housing. The objectives of the Awards are to:

- Identify and recognise best practice in the provision of community housing;
- Encourage a culture of continuous improvement within the community housing sector;
- Make information and resources available to assist community housing providers and administrators achieve best practice in the management and delivery of community housing; and
- Promote community housing as a high quality provider of social housing.

Awards Administration & Judging

The Judging Panel will be convened in the coming weeks and comprised of four members with considerable experience in community housing.

Award applicants cannot participate on the Judging Panel. The responsibilities of the Judging Panel, and its individual members, are to:

- Assess applications for the NSW Awards for Excellence in accordance with the criteria for each award, and decide on a winner in each category. Highly commended applications in each category can be nominated for special mention at the presentation;
- Declare any potential conflict of interest; and
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

NSW Awards Nomination & Entry Process

This year, nominations have been opened so anyone can nominate a community housing organisation that they think deserved to be recognised for excellence.

Nominated organisations should provide documentation to support their nominations.

Selection Process

Each applicant will be assessed against selection criteria in a given category. The selection criteria for each of the awards are explained in greater detail in the following sections.

Where possible, applications should be submitted in Times New Roman font size 12, single spaced.

To aid Judges in the selection process, criteria should be addressed as directly as possible.

Applicants must respond to all the selection criteria for a particular award. The Awards will be judged on a competitive basis. Judges will contextualise each entry to ensure that an organisation's size or location does not impact on the judgement of excellence.

The Judging Panel may choose not to present an Award in a particular category where it feels there are no entries that adequately meet the selection criteria.

The decision of the Judging Panel is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

Supporting Information

To support their nominations, organisations should provide *three copies* of the following information:

o **ENTRY FORM**

Please provide the completed and signed entry form.

o **BACKGROUND NOTE**

The background note should be one A4 page. It should cover your organisation's purpose, location, size, and any other background information you would like to include

o **YOUR WRITTEN STATEMENT**

Your written statement should be no more than four A4 pages. It should address the selection criteria for the award category.

o **REFEREES STATEMENTS**

Please provide two brief statements from referees in support of your application. Referees can be anyone associated with the organisation (for example: local support service, community member, or a tenant).

Please include two separate referee statements for each award entry. Referees must also sign the Referee Declaration on the Entry Form.

o **OTHER INFORMATION**

Organisations should address selection criteria as carefully as possible, and avoid including unnecessary information.

- Please provide appropriate supporting information, such as data and case studies.
- Organisations that have completed the Office of Community Housing registration process should include evidence of "A" grades where relevant to the award category.
- Up to six photos can be included, but no videos will be accepted.
- Please also include two copies of your logo or letterhead.

With the exception of the Award for Excellence in Annual Reporting, no other attachments or policies need be provided.

Closing date for supporting information is 9th August 2010.

Send supporting documentation to:

Awards Secretariat
NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Level 3, 64-76 Kippax Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
Ph: (02) 9281-7144 Fax: (02) 9281-7603

Awards criteria

This information kit has been developed with the aim of introducing the awards and explaining the criteria used by the judges when awarding the categories in the NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing. It also provides some examples of evidence that the judging panel will be considering.

In addition it has been designed as a resource to assist best practice across the category areas.

1. Award for Overall Excellence in Community Housing
2. Award for Overall Excellence in Co-operative Housing
3. Service to Tenants
4. Tenant Participation
5. Contributions to Building Communities
6. Asset Management
7. Organisational Management and Governance
8. Creative Solutions
9. Partnerships
10. Annual Reporting

Introduction to the category

In the category of Overall Excellence judges will be looking for examples of excellence in both the delivery and development of community housing. This category encompasses all of the other categories, so looking at the criteria used for other categories will also help with your application.

The winner of this category would be seen to be achieving the overall aims of community housing¹, such as: affordability; choice; responsiveness; security; sustainability; fairness; respect; participation; partnerships; quality; and accountability.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

The criteria for this category are aimed at three different areas of organisational activity:

1. Excellence in all areas of the organisation's operation (including corporate governance, asset management and organisational management)

This criterion is aimed at how the whole organisation functions. Such an organisation would have demonstrated strength across all the other award categories, and in areas of management that are not specifically included such as financial management (see the other information sheets.) While brief examples of strengths in each area of management should be given, the main evidence should be descriptions of the procedures that enable the organisation to develop and maintain high standards *across* all areas of the operations. For example, these might include the organisation's approach to recruitment or evaluation, review and planning procedures.

Evidence to support this criterion could also include:

- Examples of which accountability systems are used to ensure transparent management and feedback to stakeholders, management and funding bodies;
- How the financial management of the organisation is structured and maintained;
- Examples of which administrative and information systems are being used and how the office environment is structured; and
- Descriptions of asset management, including maintenance programs and the acquisition and development of stock.

In summary this criterion is looking for a detailed description of how the organisation makes decisions, and how they then are incorporated into its day-to-day activities.

¹ National Community Housing Standards Manual, 2003 p9

2. Sustained benefit to tenants and the local community (including the history of the organisation's contribution, and the structures in place to maintain it)

This criterion moves on from the *capacity* of the organisation to consider what it *achieves* for tenants and the community.

It is aimed at the organisation's interaction with their tenants and the local community. It explores how they are contributing to a sustained quality of life for their tenants and engaging in an ongoing contribution to their local community. Historical details could be submitted as evidence that the strategies are ongoing and sustainable.

Evidence to support this criterion could include examples of:

- How tenants access local services and the networks that sustain continued access, and what mechanisms and strategies are put in place to facilitate the ongoing support links that make a tenancy sustainable;
- How the organisation adapts to the changing needs of its tenants and incorporates these needs into planning and stock acquisition. A lot of community housing organisations support long-term tenancies, resulting in a population that has changing needs. You might give examples of how the decisions around stock acquisition and development respond to these changing needs. For example, modifying accommodation to incorporate the needs of frail aged;
- Any initiatives that are undertaken to respond to the changing demographics of the local community. For example, targeting initiatives at a particular group that has a growing need in the local area, such as young unemployed men, or responding to a community who wish to establish their own housing, such as ethno-specific housing; and
- Initiatives that tackle the wider challenges faced by the community. These could include the organisation's involvement in estate renewal and community development. It might show how the organisation supported its tenants to develop their social and economic participation in the community.

3. Initiatives that actively promote community housing

Finally, this criterion explains how the organisation has used its strengths and achievements to help strengthen the sector as a whole. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of involvement in ongoing dialogue and planning with policy and decision makers and the community at large. This could include participating in area planning meetings; and
- Examples of how the organisation helps to expand the range of options within social housing to meet diverse housing needs. It might include the promotion of community housing by informing tenants of any wider issues in housing and giving them the chance to become involved in advocacy to influence broader policy in the sector.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.

Introduction to the category

This category is specifically for tenant-based organisations funded to operate as housing co-operatives. The criteria for this category are aimed at four different areas of organisational effort:

1. Excellence in Tenant Relations:

This criterion focuses on what the co-op achieves for tenants, taking into account the organisation's interaction with tenants. Examples may include:

- evidence of high levels of *tenant satisfaction*; as well as
- examples that maximise opportunities for *tenant participation*, such as in either:
 - democratic structures, committee/meeting and decision-making processes; and/or
 - alternative organisational activities; and/or
 - informal social, civil or altruistic activities.
- examples of the co-ops support to its members in expanding their *educational skills* and abilities to improve their capacity and participation in either the co-operative or the broader community, and to improve social and economic capacity. The co-op will show examples of training and skilling offered to members over a 18 month period.
- additional but not necessary - the co-op may provide evidence of initiatives undertaken to adapt to members *changing needs*, like ageing and disability; or change in household size – showing how the co-op has sought to adapt to the specific needs of its members e.g. modifying accommodation to meet the needs members.

2. Community Building

This criterion looks to examples of practices that help build both the internal community of the co-operative and/or build bridges with the local and broader community.

This may include:

- innovative ways of conveying information to members – keeping them informed and involved, as well as
- examples of member involvement in the co-op community – such as work bees; or
- examples of the members' involvement in neighbourhood activities, local government activities, church activities, local clubs, local arts, or with broader institutions – such as nursing homes, hospitals, schools, public events – improvement activities that benefit a broader public.

3. Organisational Management:

This criterion looks to examples of efficient decision-making systems (planning, policies and practice) to deal with overseeing of tenancies, finances, assets and accountabilities.

4. Sustainability:

This criterion looks at examples of planning and action for improving long-term sustainability.

Examples may include:

- examples of business planning; risk management planning; asset management planning; ecologic and environmental sustainability planning – and/or
- examples of improving and sustaining the surrounding environment – by way of gardening, landscaping, ecological improvement and the introduction of energy saving products

Introduction to the category

This Award is presented to the community housing organisation that demonstrates excellence in its service to tenants. Assisting tenants to establish and maintain affordable, secure tenancies is the key objective of community housing. These tenancies then provide a basis for future social and economic participation. As a lot of community housing organisations don't own stock, security of tenure often cannot be guaranteed, but examples of how the organisation maintains security of assistance without compromising tenants' social and economic participation can be demonstrated.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

The criteria are aimed at three different areas of activity:

1. *Sustained benefit to tenants*

This criterion is looking for the significant achievements arising from the organisation's relationship with its tenants and the local community. It could include descriptions of activities undertaken or historical groundwork that has developed relationships with the local community. Ultimately it would demonstrate that the strategies adopted by the organisation have led to important change in the well-being of tenants in the local community.

Evidence for the criterion could include:

- Examples of significant and sustained outcomes for tenants, such as: quality of life improvements; increased independence; greater social integration; participation in work, training and education; or more access to, and involvement in, the local community;
- Information collected through surveys, evaluations or informal discussions that shows a picture of sustained benefit to tenants and/or the local community;
- Examples of how the organisation adapts to the changing needs of tenants and how this is reflected in decision making and stock acquisition;
- Examples of how a housing co-operative has benefited the lives of tenant members;
- Descriptions of how tenants are informed of their rights and are supported to exercise them;
- Examples of the ways that the organisation or its tenants have been significantly involved in successful community initiatives – in particular responding to challenges identified by the community; and
- Examples of the way the organisation has worked with the community to overcome conflict, prejudice or discrimination to build acceptance for its tenants in the wider community.

2. Evidence of tenant satisfaction

Tenant satisfaction can be shown through the level of participation in projects, quotes, surveys, or stories. This criterion is an opportunity to show how the organisation ensures that it communicates with and listens to tenants. It is also part of the evidence of the value to tenants of the service provided. Evidence to support this criterion could include:

- Examples (and the results) of regular or one off initiatives undertaken to determine tenant satisfaction, such as regular feedback mechanisms or an evaluation day;
- Tenant satisfaction is strongly linked to tenants' knowledge of their rights. Include examples of how the organisation facilitates this process, or which communication mechanisms such as newsletters, regular meetings or social events, are in place;
- Examples of how the organisation seeks information from tenants when establishing and maintaining tenancies, and examples of good procedures around ending tenancies, such as exit interviews; and
- How the organisation clearly communicates to tenants how income is assessed in accordance with funding guidelines and how they assess income in a fair, confidential and consistent manner.

3. Effective referral and support links with relevant agencies

This criterion assesses how the organisation links with support services and other relevant community services to sustain tenancies and improve the quality of life for tenants.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of any formal or informal support agreements between the organisation and support services;
- Examples of how information is relayed to keep tenants informed of changes in the available community services that may affect them;
- Examples of tenants accessing and utilising support services, and how this translated into tenancies being maintained;
- Descriptions of referral process to a range of services and what strategies are in place to support the tenancy;
- Examples of ways that problems in accessing support have been overcome; and
- Any other support strategies that are proven to support the long-term maintenance of the tenancy.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.

THE NSW AWARD FOR

EXCELLENCE IN TENANT PARTICIPATION

Introduction to the category

This Award is presented to the community housing organisation that demonstrates excellence in fostering tenant participation.

Tenant participation is about making sure that all tenants have the opportunity and choice to have a say in the decisions that affect their homes and communities. Encouraging meaningful tenant participation provides benefit to both housing organisations and tenants.

When tenants have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their homes and communities, organisations are able to ensure that decisions appropriately reflect local needs. It can lead to greater tenant satisfaction as they have more choice and power over their homes, and a greater sense of community can be created.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

The criterion is aimed at one area of involvement:

1. Facilitation and Encouragement of Tenant Empowerment through Participation

This criterion is an opportunity to show how the organisation encourages and facilitates tenant participation, and how it communicates with and listens to tenants. Evidence to support the above criterion could include:

- Examples of how the organisation engages with tenants and ensures they have the opportunity and resources to participate effectively and make meaningful contributions (including any special arrangements that have been made to assist tenants that may have difficulty contributing, such as tenant with disabilities, or from non-English speaking backgrounds);
- Details of how tenants participate in decision-making. This could be through a range of approaches, from participation in governance to participating in specific activities such as strategic planning through tenant council or other tenant structures;
- Examples of structures in place for *ongoing* tenant feedback and planning; for example, exit interviews, yearly evaluations, suggestion boxes;
- Examples of flexible and inclusive approaches to decision making that recognise the benefit of tenant involvement;
- Policies and procedures that ensure that conflicts of interest are guarded against when tenants are involved in decision making;
- Examples of the benefits tenants have achieved through their participation;
- Examples of how the organisation encourages tenants' knowledge of their rights and how to participate in decision making about their tenancy; and

- Examples of communication strategies to ensure that tenants are kept well informed.

Remember: Your written statement must address the criterion directly, and be no more than four pages long.

Introduction to the category

This award is presented to a community housing organisation that demonstrates it has actively worked within its local or other community to build social capital. Building communities can be about developing the capacity of that community to work together to address local needs. This could be as broad as involvement in a whole-of-suburb, estate or town initiative. It could also be a small, local initiative that makes a long term difference to the people involved. Building communities may arise from activities with or between tenants or it could be activities that include other organisations and individuals in the community.

Criterion used by the Judging Panel

The criteria are aimed at two areas of involvement:

1. Involvement with the local community

This criterion is aimed at determining how the organisation facilitates a range of involvements in the local community. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Evidence of any joint projects that have been undertaken with the broader community;
- Examples of inclusion of tenants, workers or board members on committees involved in broader community issues;
- Examples of collaboration with and support for other organisations in the community;
- Examples of tenant involvement in local community events;
- Examples of initiatives taken by the organisation or tenants that have had a benefit for the wider community, such as community gardens;
- Involvement in wider community planning; community or economic development initiatives; and
- Promotion of social housing within the community.

2. Sustained benefits to tenants and local community

This criterion assesses whether the strategies undertaken by the organisation have led to ongoing changes to the well being of tenants and members of the local community. Evidence for the criterion could include:

- Examples of significant and sustained outcomes for tenants and/or the community, such as quality of life improvements, increased independence, greater social integration, participation in work, training and education or more access to, and involvement in, the local community;
- Information collected through surveys, evaluations or informal discussions that shows a picture of sustained benefit to tenants and/or the local community;

- Examples of how the organisation adapts to the changing needs of the tenants and the local community, and how this is reflected in decision making and stock acquisition;
- Examples of how a housing co-operative has benefited the lives of tenant members and/or their local community;
- Examples of the ways that the organisation or its tenants have been significantly involved in successful community initiatives – in particular responding to challenges identified by the community; and
- Examples of the way the organisation has worked with the community to overcome conflict, prejudice or discrimination so as to build acceptance for its tenants in the wider community.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.

Introduction to the category

This award is presented to the organisation that has shown an excellent approach to the use of assets to maintain their standard, maximise their value and deploy them to best meet the needs of tenants and applicants – all in the most financially efficient ways.

The category is quite broad because it can include design decisions, asset development strategies, procurement procedures, investments, maintenance, planning and so on.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

Five criteria have been used to determine excellence in this area of activity:

1. Enhanced quality of life for tenants

This criterion is aimed at showing how responsible asset management can enhance and sustain quality of life for tenants.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of how the management of assets by the organisation improves the tenants' quality of life through better living conditions and by maintaining high standards;
- Examples of how quality of life is maintained through fair, equitable and transparent maintenance and upgrade structures; for example, if the tenant has a say in the planned upgrades, or if a system is in place to record the pattern of upgrades so that everybody gets a turn;
- Any stock acquisition and development that has been undertaken in response to the changing needs of the tenants and the local community, such as the acquisition of accessible stock for people with disabilities; and
- Examples of design features that both improve the quality of the stock and the quality of life for the tenant.

2. Responsiveness and cost-effectiveness

This criterion is aimed at the practical descriptions of how the organisation is responsive to the needs of tenants in terms of maintenance. At the same time, this should show how this is achieved cost effectively.

Evidence supporting this criterion could include:

- Details of how the organisation is responsive to the tenants' maintenance needs and which strategies are in place to make this response cost-effective. For

example networks with local trades people who can respond quickly and efficiently;

- Examples of procedures to monitor the quality of responsive maintenance and notification of any reports. This could include ways in which tenants are involved in the evaluation of contractors or services; and
- Examples of processes and criteria for making judgements about the cost-effectiveness of alternative asset management strategies, such as major upgrades versus disposal.

3. *Energy efficiency and/or environmental benefits*

This criterion is aimed at strategies used to ensure energy efficiency and determine environmental benefits instead of negative environmental impacts.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Any ongoing or once off strategies to minimise negative environmental impacts;
- Any strategies that have incorporated existing environmental elements into the housing design or living environment in a positive way;
- Examples of how sustainable energy design features are incorporated into projects or have been utilised in existing stock; and
- Examples of benefits to tenants of retrofitting or energy efficiency – especially in the form of lower costs to tenants.

4. *Cyclical maintenance and upgrade plans*

This criterion is aimed at the organisation detailing their maintenance and upgrade process.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Details of a system of maintenance that is ongoing and can minimise the need for purely responsive maintenance;
- A management plan for upgrades that maintain the quality of life for tenants and ensure the longevity of assets;
- Procedures to evaluate the property acquisition or disposal options against high long-term maintenance costs; and
- Procedures to assess the long-term value of the portfolio and to balance this against long-term needs, such as the need for services in an area with declining property values.

5. *Sustained benefits to the local community*

This criterion is aimed at sustained benefits to the local community through asset management.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of asset management that improves the quality of the properties and enhances the interaction with the local community, rather than impacting in a negative way;
- Examples of developments or joint ventures that improve social mix;
- Examples of involvement in local planning; and
- Any development that involves the local community and improves housing for the general community.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.

THE NSW AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE IN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

Introduction to the Category

This award is presented to the organisation that has an excellent structure and process for governing and managing its activities. This includes office procedures, decision-making and communication.

This category also includes a strong element of tenant participation as part of its underlying philosophy.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

Five criteria have been used to draw out details of this area:

1. A culture of planning, evaluation and service development

This criterion gives the organisation the chance to show how the planning process works and how it is implemented into activities. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- A clear statement of purpose and examples of the way this is used to guide planning and service development. Descriptions of how, and how often, the statement is reviewed could also be included;
- Details of how the organisation evaluates its services to tenants, and how this changes the way things are done;
- Details of how the organisation evaluates its interaction with other community stakeholders and funding bodies, and how this changes the way things are done;
- Examples of strategic planning processes and schedules;
- How the organisation maintains accountability to staff, tenants, board, community groups and funding authorities;
- Details of financial planning, financial management systems, and procedures for financial monitoring in key areas of the service, such as arrears; and
- Examples of the board taking a leading role in strategic planning and evaluation.

2. Highly developed and effective organisational systems (including documented policies and procedures that reflect best practice)

This criterion is aimed at information on the day-to-day running of the organisation and strategies that create efficiency aimed at a better outcome for the tenants.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of office systems, record management and how these systems have helped produce better service delivery;
- A statement of roles, responsibilities and liabilities; examples of codes of conduct that cover decision-making; and meeting procedures that provide accountability, such as effective minute taking processes;

- Conflict of interest policies as they relate to staff and board decisions and relations with tenants, staff, or the board; or other policies such as vehicle policies;
- Examples of effective IT systems – particularly their ability to integrate different aspects of the business, such as tenancy and financial management;
- Examples of good financial systems, which include annual budgets that reflect priorities and funding guidelines; and
- Examples of the board's role in directing the organisation.

3. A positive work environment for paid workers and/or volunteers

This criterion wants to explore the working environment as a general move towards overall professionalism in the sector. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of how the office environment is a safe, secure and accessible workplace;
- Examples of how the office environment maintains the health and well-being of workers and/or volunteers; and
- Systems that have been implemented to support the work of volunteers and staff and include them in ongoing professional development.

4. Leadership in strategic directions.

A widely distributed statement of the mission and purposes of the organisation shows what the organisation does, why it does it and whom it aims to serve. It also gives the organisation something to review performance against and works towards accountability.

This criterion is aimed at examples of how the board is enabled to develop strategic directions and its ability to measure performance and be accountable. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of how the board measures its program activities against the mission statement;
- Examples that show how the organisation plans strategically at a governance level and how this impacts on implementation at an operational level;
- Details of long-term planning and development that strategically directs resources to identified goals and priorities; and
- A governance and management structure that can respond to the changing needs of the tenants and the broader community.

5. Active participation by tenants in all aspects of the organisation

This criterion requires the organisation to show how tenants are involved in the running of the organisation, and how the organisation actively brings to life the philosophy of tenant participation that underpins community housing. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Details of how tenants are involved in decision making and planning;
- Policies and procedures that ensure that conflicts of interest are guarded against when tenants are involved in decision making;

- Examples of how tenants are kept informed of sector developments and the news of the organisation; and
- Examples of how the organisation facilitates this process or what communication mechanisms are in place, such as: newsletters, regular meetings or social events.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.

Introduction to the category

This award is presented to the organisation that shows examples of creative ways of solving problems, innovative design or a creative way of responding to tenant needs. The category is quite broad so if your organisation has had a great idea and implemented it successfully and you think that other organisations could benefit, enter this category.

In general, the category is aimed at organisations which have solved a problem in a different and demonstrably better way to the way that solutions have been found in the past.

Organisations that come up with creative solutions tend to see problems in different ways – perhaps they recognise when things can be done better or they might see opportunities that others haven't seen. They may see either a new need or a new opportunity because they have used new or better information. Creative solutions might also involve working with new kinds of partners or applying approaches from other areas of work. A good example might be using commercial investment practices for a non-profit organisation.

Creative organisations may be more likely to take risks, but they will also be very careful that the benefit justifies the risk and that they are able to manage the risks to protect the organisation and the tenants.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

Three criteria have been used to identify excellence in innovation:

1. A creative solution to an identified need

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Examples of creative ways of responding to an identified need;
- What evaluation process was undertaken to identify the need for the project and what processes are in place to identify whether it has achieved its aims; and
- What was new about the need identified or why were the old ways of responding not good enough? Remember this could be, for example, a design need in terms of an environmental issue; a tenant need in terms of modification or responsive design; or a community need in terms of stock development or community building.

2. Relevance to other community housing organisations

Some solutions have the capacity to be taken up by other organisations and can influence the way other organisations work. This criterion looks at whether the

creative solution adopted by the organisation could be replicated in another organisation or in a similar situation. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Suggestions of how the project can be taken up by other organisations. Though the project may have been need-specific, examples of how the overall process may be used;
- Descriptions of the initiative that make clear the factors that made it possible and successful;
- Whether the project challenged the sector in a way that pushed the boundaries and could engage the sector as a whole; and
- Descriptions of any ways that you have tried to let others know about the initiative.

3. Sustained benefit to tenants and the local community.

Evidence for this criterion could include:

- How the creative solution impacted, or will impact on the community, and examples of how it provided sustainable benefits for tenants and the local community;
- Examples of community inclusion in the process, decision-making or implementation; and
- Description of any evaluation of the initiative

<p><i>Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.</i></p>

Introduction to the category

This award is presented for excellence in partnering between a community housing organisation and other community or government partners. Partnership arrangements can range from the very formal negotiated agreements between support agencies and housing associations, through to informal community involvement.

A partnership does not have to be formal or even negotiated to be considered in this category – but it does have to be relevant and useful to the partners involved, and to provide real benefits.

A significant feature of this award is that it is awarded to each of the partners involved. Therefore all partners must jointly submit an application under this award.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

The criteria cover two different areas of partnerships:

1. Organisations develop a partnership to meet a specific need

The criterion describes what the need is, how it was identified, and how the partnership was developed to address the need. Evidence to support this criterion could include:

- A description of the need that the partnership was set up to address;
- Description of how the partnership was identified and developed, eg; linkages in the community, housing and support relationship, pooling of resources;
- A description of the projects planned or undertaken together, eg; objectives, description of what each partner is contributing, services delivered;
- Examples of the way tenants are involved in the development and/or ongoing monitoring of the partnership and its objectives; and
- Description of the evaluation of a partnership and recommendations for the future.

2. The organisations work collaboratively to meet the need more effectively in partnership than they could independently

This criterion describes how the partnership is implemented to ensure the need is met effectively. Evidence to support this criterion could include:

- Examples of outcomes from the partnership, for example: improved tenant quality of life, coordination of housing and services, and neighbourhood activity;
- A description of the partnership arrangements, either formal or informal; and

- A description of how the partners' contributions are coordinated and monitored, for example: steering committee, reporting, evaluating, and conflict resolution procedures.

Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long. For the Partnerships award, all parties must be listed under the section : Details of Person(s) Submitting the Entry, on the Entry Form.

THE NSW AWARD FOR

EXCELLENCE IN ANNUAL REPORTING

Introduction to the category

This award is presented for an outstanding annual report. Annual reporting is important for accountability to communities, funding agencies, partner agencies, and other stakeholders. It provides information on the activities of a community housing provider and its current and future plans. The type of report that an organisation provides should be appropriate to its own circumstances. A small co-operative will report very differently to a large housing association or a church based housing provider.

Applicants must attach 3 copies of their latest annual report, in addition to their written statement, to the entry form.

Criteria used by the Judging Panel

There are three criteria for this award:

1. Appropriateness of the reporting format for the community housing organisation

The size and complexity of an organisation will determine how it should report to those who have an interest in its activities. Some reporting requirements are set down by law and these should be met as a matter of course. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Description of how the annual report is used and distributed by the organisation;
- Description of the size and structure of the organisation;
- Examples of the way the annual report has been used as a promotional tool by the organisation; and
- Examples of evaluation and feedback on the annual report from tenants, members, other organisations or government.

2. Clear and relevant financial reports that meet internal and external requirements.

Minimum requirements for financial reporting are usually determined by funding relationships with governments and incorporation laws and regulations. The financial reports should assist the reader to understand significant future and current issues for the organisation. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Concise financial report with relevant notes and cross references;
- An explanation of the statutory basis on which the organisation conducts its fundraising efforts and acknowledgement of any government funding; and

- For example, five-year summaries of information on the number of tenants and applicants by housing need, demographics, waiting lists et cetera. Charts, graphs or photographs could be utilised to illustrate this information .
- 3. *Reports on activities that show what the organisation hoped to achieve, what it did achieve and any plans for the future.***

This criterion looks at the way the organisation describes what it did in the last year and what any significant issues might have been. It can also be used to highlight any emerging issues that could be looming. Evidence for this criterion could include:

- Reports on performance outcomes including key performance measures / indicators on arrears, property standards, tenancy demographics and information, tenancy management;
- Reports on strategic and business plans, the goals of the organisation and whether they were achieved or advanced during the year;
- Reports on community involvement, projects undertaken, results achieved and future activities planned;
- Corporate governance issues – the role of directors and management, code of conduct covering accountability, independence, appointment and retirement of directors, ethical standards; and
- Reports on involvement of volunteers and tenants in providing the services.

<p><i>Remember: Your written statement must address all the criteria directly, and be no more than four pages long.</i></p>

**2010 NSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY HOUSING
NOMINATION FORM**

Please tick which category you would like to nominate the community housing organisation for. You can tick more than one box.

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overall Excellence in Community Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Overall Excellence in Co-operative Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service to Tenants | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Solutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Participation | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Reporting | <input type="checkbox"/> Asset Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational Management & Governance | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributions to Building Communities |

Nominee (organisation you would like to nominate)

If you don't know the organisation's contact details, please provide as much information as you can.

Organisation's name: _____

Organisation's contact details: _____

Nominator (your details) *please note you do not have to provide your details if you would like to remain anonymous*

Your name: _____

Your contact details: _____

Why do you think this organisation should win an award for excellence? Please provide as much information as you can. You can attach another page if you need more space.

Please provide details of a referee that may be able to provide more information to support this nomination.

Referee name: _____

Referee contact details: _____

Fax to: Awards Secretariat, FAX: (02) 9281 7603 / or scan and email to: rachel@communityhousing.org.au

2010 NSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY HOUSING
ENTRY FORM

- All entrants must complete and sign this form.
- To enter more than one category, please submit a separate entry form addressing the selection criteria for each new category.

I wish to enter my organisation in the following category for the 2010 NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing: (please tick one box)

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Overall Excellence in Community Housing | <input type="radio"/> Overall Excellence in Co-operative Housing |
| <input type="radio"/> Service to Tenants | <input type="radio"/> Creative Solutions |
| <input type="radio"/> Tenant Participation | <input type="radio"/> Partnerships |
| <input type="radio"/> Annual Reporting | <input type="radio"/> Asset Management |
| <input type="radio"/> Organisational Management & Governance | <input type="radio"/> Contributions to Building Communities |

Please tick:

- In submitting this entry I accept the judges' decision as final. I confirm that the information given has been checked and is accurate.
- We agree to allow the details of this entry to be made available to the public.

Details of person submitting the entry:

For *Partnerships award* please provide this information for all parties in partnership. Use another sheet if necessary.

Name: _____ Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

2010 NSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY HOUSING
REFEREE DECLARATION - #1

Name: _____ Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Phone: _____

I confirm that I have seen the application submitted on behalf of

_____ (*organisation name*)

and the information it contains is correct to the best of my knowledge. My referee's statement is attached.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

2010 NSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY HOUSING
REFEREE DECLARATION - #2

Name: _____ Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Phone: _____

I confirm that I have seen the application submitted on behalf of

_____ (*organisation name*)

and the information it contains is correct to the best of my knowledge. My referee's statement is attached.

Signature: _____ Date: _____