



Housing Matters

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Community housing resource allocation policy released

In September 2010 the Community Housing Division (CHD) released the new resource allocation policy, covering the allocation of all Housing NSW resources to registered community housing providers. This includes the reallocation of community leases and the allocation of major redevelopment sites or funding opportunities.

This new policy outlines the circumstances in which competitive and direct allocation mechanisms will be used. It is a departure from previous allocation strategies and reflects the rapid growth and change in the sector, including the implementation of the new regulatory system.

The policy allows resources under agreed thresholds to be directly allocated by Housing NSW. A standard methodology will be used to assess efficiency and value, and consideration will also be given to the broader impact on the development of the sector.

Decisions about the allocation of resources will continue to be made on the basis of need, guided by portfolio targets. The policy also aims to ensure the efficient and accountable allocation of resources and support the growth of a strong and diverse community housing sector.



In choosing the method of allocation, Housing NSW will seek to assign resources in a way that maximises providers' capacity to procure housing directly, with capital funds directly allocated wherever possible. This is in answer to research findings and feedback from the industry which highlighted the additional costs associated with the use of competitive tenders.

The Policy supports innovation in the sector, using allocation mechanisms that allow new entrants into the community housing sector, and funding new project or delivery models where evidence suggests that they can be more effective. It also seeks to increase certainty about the

availability and timing of resources allocated by the government.

The Policy aims to facilitate property development capability, acquisition capacity and the delivery of leveraging outcomes in the sector by providers. In order to grow the sector, the NSW Government strategy Planning for the future: new directions for community housing in New South Wales recommends aggregating resources to enable leveraging opportunities rather than spreading resources evenly among providers. As a consequence, resources will generally continue to be directed to high performing class one and two community housing providers.

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From the President...

Communication the key to growth

I've recently been reminded of how important communications is becoming to our sector.

This was prompted by a local mayor's very public opposition to the way in which Nation Building properties had bypassed council approval processes. He took very direct action to publicise his opposition. I was concerned that this would lead to the identification of social housing properties (award-winning developments in this case) and the stigmatisation of tenants.

These debates should never be conducted in ways that could make life hard for tenants. Fortunately, in this case our tenants weren't identified. But it reminded me again of how easy it is to be caught on the back foot, and the increasing importance of building relationships and understanding with public figures so that we can find better ways to have a conversation.

More than that, it's now very important that we have well-established media relationships and we can put out a release or get on the phone to show our side of the story and be assured of a fair run. This won't happen if we just approach the local media (or wider media such as talkback) with a response. It will depend on a history of providing good news stories to help them, while also giving us a higher profile in the community.

Some organisations in the sector are establishing wider relationships and a profile in the community – they're working with business leaders, with sporting bodies and others. That is, they are talking their place as community leaders.

These thoughts have made me focus on the importance of an



Bobbie Townsend
President

effective communications strategy, something which a number of organisations probably already have. To help our members develop their communications capabilities, the Community Housing Division is supporting the Federation in employing a communications officer for a year, specifically to develop the tools and skills for members to undertake their communications.

On a related note, the Federation AGM is on 10 December. Nominations have already been called for the vacant board positions, and I hope we see a strong interest from members.

Editor & Managing Editor
Adam Farrar

Writer
Megan Holbeck

Layout
Seema Manoj/Wendy Rockwell

Publisher
NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc.
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone/FAX
(ph) 02. 9281 7144
(fax) 02. 9281 7603

e-mail
nswfha@communityhousing.org.au

Website address
www.communityhousing.org.au

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Housing portfolio split in two

The announcement of the ministries in the new Federal Government has resulted in big changes to the arrangement of the housing portfolio.

Mark Arbib is the Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness, a new title which seems to point toward narrower housing responsibilities than those of his predecessor. He has a wide portfolio, which also includes Minister for Sport and Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development.

Affordable housing, in particular the National Rental Affordability Scheme and the Housing Affordability Fund, has been moved to Tony Burke, the Minister for Sustainable Population, Communities, Environment and Water. The National Housing Supply Council has also gone to Tony Burke's portfolio.

We welcome both ministers to their new positions, and congratulate them on their appointments.

It would appear that the National Affordable Housing Agreement will still be administered through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs

(FaHCSIA). The Minister for Housing in cabinet remains Jenny Macklin.

It seems that in practice the housing portfolio has been divided into two: the supply of affordable housing, and issues focused around housing provided for those who are eligible for public housing. This places community housing in a difficult position as the growth of the sector has centred on its ability to play a diverse role across 'social housing' and affordable housing for low and moderate-income households.

Similarly, the National Affordable Housing Agreement was designed under the previous arrangement so as to be able to pull together a range of elements that drive housing affordability. There would be concerns if this became more tightly focused on social housing only.

Despite the Federation's concern about social housing's separation from the broader areas of housing affordability and access, there are also some positive changes. Housing affordability is now linked to key areas of public policy such as population and community sustainability, a very positive step.

Historic equal pay case hits the courts

Historic equal pay case hits the courts

Equal pay cases are nothing new: they have been going for more than 100 years. However, the union-run national equal pay case for community and social workers currently underway with Fair Work Australia (FWA) is set to make history, impacting on about 200,000 people within the community sector, including those employed within the community housing sector.



The case is based on an argument around the comparative value of work, comparing the low pay rates of the female-dominated community sector to those of the public sector. As Emily Mayo, an Organiser at the Australian

Services Union says: 'We're not talking about women and men who do the same job earning more or less money than each other. We're talking about how we value the work more broadly.'

Continued on pg 7

AHI took delegates for a ride in the UK

The Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) organised a 'Housing Study Tour' to England in October, timed to allow participants to attend the International Housing Summit in the Netherlands. The tour ran from 18–22 October, following the International Social Housing Summit from 12–14 October.

The tour had a maximum of eight people, allowing them to study social housing operations in England in detail, as well as to build real connections with colleagues overseas, and within the group. AHI CEO Joan Ferguson was the tour guide, so it was no doubt a lively trip! There were visits to housing associations in Norwich, Liverpool, Kent and London, as well as dinner with Lord Richard Best, former head of the National Federation of Housing Associations, at the House of Lords itself.



Forging links with UK colleagues, Michael Newey, CEO of Broadland Housing Group

This was the first overseas study tour organised by the AHI, and its program was designed to complement the Summit's focus on financing social housing, environmental sustainability and changing demographics. According to Joan Ferguson, some of the key benefits of the tour were, 'Being able to compare your organisation in its own environment with others who are like, but not like. People on the tour also spent a whole week together, so long-term professional networks were formed.'

Those on the tour only paid cost price, while members of the AHI received a ten per cent discount on entry to the International Housing Summit.



An older scheme in Bracondale, Norwich, part of a portfolio transferred to Broadland Housing Group from another charity in the 1970s - lived in by older people.

Title transfers delays close to resolution

The transfer of title to properties under the Nation Building and title transfer programs has been significantly delayed until a tax ruling is received. As we go to press, the ruling is expected any day.

The ruling was required because, despite tax advice that GST should not be payable, there is always a possibility that the ATO could take a different view. The ruling has taken far longer than expected.

The decision turns on some very technical issues, but the possible problem arises if vesting the properties is seen as a 'supply for consideration'. If this was the case, the impact would be worst for properties over five years old – those involved in the title transfer program.

However, the mood is now optimistic that the imminent ruling will remove any concerns and title transfer will be able to proceed.

Draft Compliance Framework released

Although the process of registering community housing providers is well underway, until recently the approach to ongoing regulatory oversight had not been defined. In September the Registrar of Community Housing released a draft Compliance Framework detailing how it will deliver the regulatory functions to ensure registered community housing providers' ongoing compliance with the Regulatory Code.

A two-year transitional period for implementing the regulatory system began on 1 May 2009. This first draft of the Framework outlines the policy for implementing the compliance functions during this transitional period, and signals the Registrar's approach for the comprehensive Compliance Framework due to begin on 1 May 2011.

Feedback on the broad principles and proposed approach for compliance promotion and monitoring is being sought, as are contributions on matters for consideration in the development of implementation policies and procedures. According to the Registrar, Roxane Shaw, 'The three areas in which we're really looking for feedback from providers are the compliance monitoring, compliance action and compliance promotion elements of the Framework'.

Submissions are very welcome, and can be made by visiting www.rch.nsw.gov.au and following the links. Shaw again: 'We really encourage people to make contributions because we want the compliance framework to work for the sector, so we're very interested to hear people's views and suggestions as to what will work well.' The deadline for submissions is 13 November.

Consultation sessions to outline the framework and take comments were held on 20 October in Sydney and 4 November in Lismore. There was a very good response to the offer of 'consultation sessions by request', as well as a series of meetings for stakeholder groups.

At the end of the consultation period, comments will be analysed and a report prepared. The Framework will be reviewed and republished as an Interim Compliance Framework, hopefully by the end of the year. This will provide the broad principles and approach to be operated under until May 2011. Between December 2010 and May 2011 the office of the Registrar will work with the sector to develop the methodologies, benchmarks and approaches to be taken so that at the end of the transition period the final Compliance Framework can be finalised and published.

Farewell to Tony

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our colleague and friend Tony Peake. Tony was with Pacific Link for nine years and rose to be their CEO. He was a fun and free spirit that lived a good and full life. He had lived and experienced many parts of the world and what it had to offer. He will be sadly missed for his quick wit and sense of humour. His knowledge on everything had no bounds and his network connections were unsurpassed. He was a mentor to many of his peers and an advocate and founder of the asset managers network. He passed away in South Australia on the 13th October 2010.



Tony Peake

Indigenous housing forum a success

In July National Shelter ran a forum to discuss a range of housing issues facing Indigenous people, and to develop possible solutions. The meeting included delegates from all states and territories (except Victoria), with representatives from both Indigenous and mainstream housing organisations.

Following the forum, National Shelter called for an urgent injection of resources to improve the available housing supply. According to the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, there are 20,000 fewer properties available for Indigenous people nationally than are needed, increasing the problems of homelessness and overcrowding.

Another issue identified at the forum was the disadvantage that Indigenous peoples face in all sectors of the housing market, including home ownership, private rental accommodation, public rental accommodation and community housing. They are more dependent on rental housing, particularly social housing, than other Australians, yet face discrimination within the private rental market. 'As a group we would like to work with the government to develop programs which facilitate relationships between Indigenous communities and real estate bodies in an effort to minimise the discrimination and maximise housing solutions,' said Adrian Pisarski, Chairperson of National Shelter.

According to Shelter, the Commonwealth's recent (and long overdue) funding to expand the supply of housing falls well short of meeting the need. The accompanying reforms also ignored calls for adequate and comprehensive participation processes for Indigenous communities. Instead, delivery of Indigenous housing is increasingly being taken out of Indigenous hands, leading to an increased risk of inappropriate housing design, delivery and management.

The forum emphasised the need for enhanced self-determination in the process of improving housing outcomes, increasing both the capacity of Indigenous people to manage their own housing and their direct involvement in the process. They also called for:



Forum participants

- more resources to be urgently directed to producing the 20,000 dwellings;
- support for Indigenous community housing providers to play a central role;
- the involvement of Indigenous communities in all aspects of the response, from high-level policy to on-the-ground delivery and management;
- mainstream government and community providers to engage with Indigenous communities to develop appropriate housing and support in;
- programs to be developed to support Indigenous people to access market housing, including home ownership and private rental; and
- the establishment of an Indigenous-owned and controlled National Indigenous Housing body.

The value of developing a national Indigenous housing alliance was recognised by all the forum delegates. According to Jim Allen, chairperson of the Budawang Aboriginal Housing Corporation, the forum was very valuable. 'We were able to give a view of what is happening, not only at each state level, but how that all links into the national view. Now agencies like Shelter, as well as non-Indigenous housing and social welfare organisations, have a view of what is actually happening within Aboriginal affairs as regards housing.'

The final report from the forum is available on the National Shelter web site, www.shelter.org.au For further information, contact Adrian Pisarski, Chairperson of National Shelter, on 0417 975 270.

The Affordable Rental Housing SEPP - what do you think?

A preliminary review consultation of the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (ARH SEPP) was held at the NSW Department of Planning on 23 July so that the social housing sector could give feedback on its experience with the policy. The NSW Federation of Housing Associations sent representatives, as did the Council of Social Service of NSW, Shelter NSW, Housing NSW, the Centre for Affordable Housing, the Department of Planning and the National Disability Service.

The ARH SEPP aims to increase the amount of affordable housing by streamlining the process of building properties which satisfy specific criteria. The review of the policy began at the end of July this year, exactly one year after its gazettal. Councils throughout NSW provided data for use in the review, including the number of Development Applications lodged under the SEPP, the approval rate and time frame, and the number of dwellings constructed using it.

The Federation was able to give some feedback from its members at the consultation, ranging from the specific to the general. Although most community housing providers have had limited experience with the SEPP, many see the instrument as key to their plans for future expansion.

According to Tim Gavan, CEO of BlueCHP: 'We've been using the ARH SEPP for planning purposes and it is a very high priority of ours. We've retained a specialist town planner to help us to look at using it... and we are now advising other organisations who want to do their own development on the best way to use the ARH SEPP and how to maximise the value of their own properties using it.'

The Federation would like to know how our members are finding the ARH SEPP: is it being used; in partnerships or alone; are there any problems? Contact Poppy Dowsett at the Federation with any feedback (ext 213)

Equal Pay - Continued from pg 3

The full bench of FWA inspected the work sites of a wide variety of community service organisations in September, aiming to familiarise itself with the issues. According to Mayo, the inspections in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and NSW were: 'to look at our work, who we are, what we do and how important we are in the community. It will form a really important part of our case.'

Submissions closed in August. Other dates for the case were changed in September due to the protracted election process, with extensions sought by governments and unions.

Statements of evidence from the government and other parties are now due by December, with hearings to take place from January 2011. During these hearings, witnesses will be heard based on submissions, including workers in the sector, expert witnesses and others.

Mayo says that some of the workers' evidence is very powerful. 'When those witness statements are heard in the court, there will be tears in the courtroom – they are very moving.' A decision on the case is expected around April next year.

A campaign for full funding of the case has been running since even before the case was lodged in March this year, as a large proportion of the industry affected by the case relies on some level of government funding to carry out their work. Increases in pay need to be funded, so the campaign in the courts is being matched by an equally strong campaign in the community and politically. A commitment for full funding has not yet been made.

As part of this campaign, 10 June was National Equal Pay Day, with gatherings held across the country. Shortly afterwards, John Brumby, the Victorian Premier, announced a commitment to fund the State Government's portion of the increase. Each state is campaigning to fit their election cycle, as well as campaigning together federally.

According to Mayo, the federal campaign is going well. 'During the federal election we concentrated on getting people to support the idea of equal pay. Now it's time to shift it up as the case shifts up and get more concrete commitment.'

For more information, and to join the union and the campaign, contact the Australian Services Union in Sydney on (02) 9310 4000.

A community development approach to

By Sue Goodwin, Eileen Baldry, Jude Irwin and Alison Wannan

Concepts such as 'locational disadvantage' and 'neighbourhood effects' are often applied to housing estates, suggesting that disadvantage and social exclusion are exacerbated when public housing tenants live in concentration. These representations of estates have resulted in the championing of new models for public housing, including increasing 'social mix' and 'tenancy mix' through estate de-concentration and redevelopment. An alternative to these models is to work with estate communities using community development approaches.

Working from the Ground Up (WFGU) is a University of Sydney and University of NSW Australian Research Council funded research project in partnership with Housing NSW, Health and TAFE exploring participatory approaches to community regeneration in two adjacent public housing estates in south-eastern Sydney. The estates house more than 3,000 people, similar in scale to the large public housing estates currently being redeveloped in western Sydney. The project is based on community development principles, starting from residents' understandings and residents' priorities for change. The model also prioritises community involvement in the design, re-design, implementation and evaluation of development initiatives.

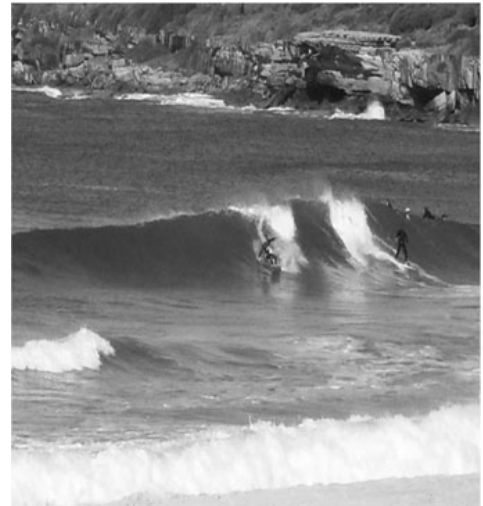
The approach is based on prior research in Australia and the UK, indicating that:

1. Community development initiatives require time,
2. Positive action in public housing estates entails growth of community confidence and capacity,
3. Small-scale community activities are a good base for the development of effective resident participation and service provider partnerships; and
4. Health, social, education and economic opportunities in disadvantaged

neighbourhoods need to be developed and provided locally.

WFGU is concerned with developing an understanding of what informs change. Quantitative and qualitative tools are being developed to gauge the impact of community development initiatives, including changes in levels of social disadvantage, resident participation, social cohesion, neighbourhood livability and service partnership strength over the five years of the project.

The first phase of WFGU entailed engaging residents through a household survey, community feedback sessions, meetings with tenant groups and an action research project with young people. The household survey contained questions based on Buckner's neighbourhood cohesion scale to elicit a portrait of residents' perceptions of place and community. Residents gave suggestions for what needed to change and how to bring this about.



Location

The majority of residents we engaged with said they were attracted to living in their neighbourhoods, felt loyal to the people in the area, wanted to work together to improve the neighbourhood, planned to continue living in the area, and liked their neighbours, particularly those who lived close by. The location of the estates was regarded very

social housing estates



Behaviour of young people

with buses 'clean and cheap'. Only around half the households on the estates have a motor vehicle, compared to 85 per cent and 90 per cent ownership in the neighbouring private households. The young people like being close to their friends and 'to Nan, and my aunts, and everything'. Location is important to people, but particularly people who are on low incomes, are aged, have disabilities, or are unwell.

But these neighbourhoods are not paradise. Many residents did not feel safe at night, and crime, vandalism and drug abuse were of serious concern. However, the most common problem highlighted by residents was the behaviour of young people. As one resident explained: 'The kids are terrible. They scream and run and throw things at the window. Especially on the weekends and after school.' Yet many residents – including the young people themselves – had ideas about solving these problems including: helping kids see the area as theirs, providing more activities for young people, and providing more support for children and for parents. The young people said they wanted better facilities, more activities and for others to change their attitudes toward them. 'I don't like it how just because we live (here), people are like, "Oh youse live there and youse are rats" and all that'.

Residents expressed a desire for changes to

highly – residents love the beach, the fresh air, the quiet, and appreciate the proximity to schools, hospital, shops, clubs and parks. Many commented on the availability of accessible public transport

the physical environment and to relationships with Housing NSW. Some of the housing was regarded as run-down – 'falling to bits' – and residents wanted higher quality, more responsive maintenance and repairs. Others wanted more attention paid to the communal areas, suggesting lighting, rubbish removal, more fencing between apartment blocks, and improved local parks, streets, shopping centres and other public spaces. The main park in the centre of one of the estates and the dilapidated shopping strip were singled out for regeneration, 'particularly for the children'. These improvements were regarded as the responsibility of others – Housing NSW, the Council, local businesses and services – but also something residents could be involved in.

Importantly residents want more support for people who are 'doing it tough': people with mental illnesses, those who are frail, do not speak English, are bringing up young children, are isolated or unwell. Support needs to be located locally, preferably in the estates themselves, and people suggested playgroups, English classes, exercise classes, a community centre for older people, computer classes, community events, a place for young people to hang out, and opportunities for people to meet others and find out about local resources.

This information, and the willingness of residents, local services and tenant groups to work on key issues, has inspired a raft of new initiatives around residents' interests: an older residents' group, a multicultural group,



Crime and vandalism

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Directors' Page

Supporting growth

Many housing associations are growing rapidly, as is their need for additional support. Recognising this, in July 2009 the Community Housing Division (CHD) commissioned the Australasian Housing Institute to conduct a review of areas requiring more capacity support.

Of the areas identified by the review, three have been selected for growth support from the NSW Federation of Housing Associations: governance; building CEO leadership and skills; and people management. The Federation has developed programs to assist the sector in these three areas, with funding from CHD. Although the impetus to undertake these activities came from the accelerated stock transfer program, access to this support is not limited to those who received stock through the program.

Supporting governance

A high-level course designed for directors of growing community housing providers was run on 2 September, made up of two parts. The Federation's morning workshop concentrated on the challenges of governing growing organisations, and how to manage these. The afternoon session was a tailored training event run by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, entitled 'Strategy and risk for growth organisations'. Andrew McNulty of MA Housing attended the event, saying: 'It was an excellent training program and the AICD trainer was very experienced and knowledgeable.'

The Federation is also developing templates for planning for ongoing governance needs, which will include updates of the current governance good practice guides. Individual associations will also be able to opt-in to a governance review.

Building CEO leadership

One strategy to support CEOs to reflect on and replenish their leadership ability and skills is the CEO Network. This provides an opportunity for CEOs to share experiences and challenges in a community housing context. A CEO workshop was held on 8 October, where, with input from the Centre for Social Impact, leadership issues were explored with interstate and local CEOs of growing organisations.



Julie Garland McLellan of the AICD and directors

People management

The Federation is building on its workforce strategy to provide position descriptions for emerging positions, as well as salary information and benchmarks for employment across the sector. The idea of working with recruitment firms to plan for future recruitment needs is being explored, as are new ways of attracting people with the right skills into the field. Two new resources have also been added to the Federation's Resource Bank: a checklist for HR policies, and an overview of current industrial relations in Australia (as part of the updated Human Resources Good Practice Guide).

NSWFHA Board of Directors

President	Bobbie Townsend	(02) 9281-1764	bobbie@womenshousingcompany.or
Treasurer	Karen Andrew	(02) 6361-2339	executiveofficer@ctha.com.au
Secretary	Nick Sabel	(02) 4731-5851	nicks@wenworth.org.au
Director	Nazha Saad	(02) 9585-1499	nazha.saad@sgch.com.au
Director	Greg Budworth	(02) 4929-5537	greg.budworth@compasshousing.org
Director	Bobby Murphy	(03) 8221-4969	terry.bobby@bigpond.net.au
Director	John Nicolades	(02) 9699-6055	j.nicolades@swish.org.au
Director	Toni Comber	(02) 6772-5133	tonicomberhousingmanager@bigpond.com.au
Director	Nicola Lemon		[on leave until October 2010]

Industry Development Framework released

The NSW Community Industry Development Framework was released in May 2010. According to Rennie Gay, Senior Policy Officer in the Community Housing Division (CHD), it is '...an outline of the areas where we need to focus effort to increase the capacity of the community housing industry'.

The Framework outlines the priorities for investment and activity in order to develop the industry during the next three–five years.

The roles and responsibilities of different industry partners in delivering these outcomes are also discussed, including those of peak industry agencies and the Registrar of Community Housing.

The CHD is in the process of developing its own strategy for industry development, based on the structure and priorities identified in the Framework.

Farewell to Laurel Draffen

Laurel left her role as manager of the Good Practice Unit at the end of September, and she will be sorely missed. During her eight years in the role, she has massively expanded our range of training, including running sessions in other states and for public housing officers. However, the most exciting development has probably been the creation of a whole e-learning program for the community housing sector. As well as developing the training unit and seeing it grow tremendously, Laurel has built our consultancy support for the sector and become a foundation of the Federation's work.

Laurel has started her new role as Manager of Industry Learning at the Aged Care



Laurel Draffen

Standards & Accreditation Agency, an opportunity which allows her national scope and opportunities in a new industry. Everyone at the Federation wishes her the very best.

Registration support workshops for Aboriginal community housing providers

The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) has commissioned the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to assist in the implementation of the Provider and Assessment Registration System (PARS) process for the Aboriginal community housing sector. The Federation's roll is to provide registration support workshops to providers who may consider registering for PARS, with one-day sessions to be held throughout the state until December 2011.

The Federation has undertaken four workshops since August, with events held in Dubbo, Sydney, Newcastle and Tamworth. There was great interest from all participants.

Further sessions will be held next year, in collaboration with the PARS Team (Office of the Registrar) and AHO, with scheduling to be released at the end of November. As there are more than 200 Aboriginal community housing providers within NSW, all providers will be invited and will have the opportunity to attend any of the planned workshops.

The PARS system is similar to the mainstream Housing Pathways process, although altered to better suit the sector's needs. Under this system, the 'PARS Team' at the Office of the Registrar is responsible for completing assessments of the registrations,

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Provider Profile

Central Tablelands Housing Association

Diverse, growing and mysterious...

Central Tablelands Housing Association (CTHA) is a regional community housing organisation with its administration office in Orange. The organisation covers a large geographical spread, with branches in Orange, Bathurst and Mudgee and an outreach program that takes in Kandos, Rylston, Wellington and Molong.

Like many housing associations, CTHA is growing rapidly: it is about to take on 186 new properties

through the Nation Building tender, and was also successful under the Asset Ownership Tender. However, this growth is only one side of this diverse organisation. CTHA auspices and manages a lot of programs with a variety of partners and funding sources, and this side of the organisation is also thriving.

The newest of these programs is the Emerge Youth & Family Service in Orange. Funded by Community Services, this specialist youth accommodation service provides 24/7 supported accommodation for up to five young people. According to CTHA Executive Officer Karen Andrew, 'Always at the foreground is bringing families back together'. It operates on a continual care model, providing early intervention and outreach, and it also works with families, looking at some of the issues that lead to family breakdown.

Another program managed by CTHA is Operation Courage, which provides support, advice, advocacy and referral to women escaping domestic violence. This unique service operates under a partnership agreement with local service providers and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Orange police that allows information to be

exchanged (with the victim's consent) so that the service coordinator can contact the victim, provide advice, referral and temporary accommodation if needed.

The Central West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service commenced last year, and it complements Operation Courage. This regional program aims to help domestic violence victims obtain effective legal advice and support, and allow them access to networks of

professionals who can assess their social and welfare needs. As Andrew puts it: 'It's not just a bandaid; it's about looking at what else these women need.' This project is running in four locations, Orange, Cowra, Parkes and Forbes, with a part-time team in each comprising a generalist worker and Aboriginal worker, supported by a part-time coordinator.

CTHA also auspices the Wellington Short Stay Accommodation Service, which provides a home environment over weekends for Aboriginal people visiting family at the Wellington Correctional Centre. A number of other new developments are also in the pipeline.

According to Karen Andrew, these programs came about as the organisation strived for diversity. 'We felt there wasn't going to be a lot of growth in our area in terms of social housing and we wanted to think about other ways we could make our organisation viable into the future. It was about thinking outside the square: what other things could we do to complement the needs of people in our community without duplicating what was already available.'



Coordinator of Operation Courage conducting some internal CTHA staff awareness training

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Housing associations get serious about sustainability

With the prices of electricity and water continuing to increase, rent isn't the only issue when considering whether housing is 'affordable'. Many housing associations are taking steps to decrease the environmental impact of their properties, as well as tenants' costs, from workshops for tenants and staff, to changing light bulbs and renovating dwellings. Two housing associations who are taking real steps to reduce their impact are Compass Housing and Homes Out West (HOW).



A happy tenant about to commence his tenancy in one of Homes Out West's upgraded properties

the impact of housing design and practice. According to Budworth, 'Lessons learned from this project will help inform the ultimate goal of developing a sustainable neighbourhood'.

HOW operates in the areas around Deniliquin and Albury, where the yearly temperature range is 0–40°C. With both energy prices and temperatures forecast to increase, the organisation is conducting a trial on six properties of various types in different locations, aiming to transform them into more

Compass's sustainability program is called GROW, and aims to improve the organisation's performance in areas including the social and environmental fields. Projects include replacing the Compass car fleet with enviro-diesel and hybrid vehicles, helping staff reduce their ecological footprint, and helping tenants to create community gardens. However, it's their Enviro Build project that has got people talking.

Design work has been completed for the project, which will result in the building of a six-star, sustainable duplex on a block owned by Compass in the Central Coast suburb of Toukley. According to CEO Greg Budworth, Compass plan to place a 'green' tenant in one of the new dwellings, and a 'brown' (more mainstream) tenant in the other. Brown and green tenants will also be placed in more conventional houses to gain understanding of

sustainable, economical and comfortable dwellings.

Extensive consultation with experts and tenants was undertaken to determine which improvements could deliver the biggest environmental impact and provide greater affordability, comfort, and appeal at an economical cost. Changes implemented include improving ceiling insulation, installing roof vents, ceiling fans, solar hot water systems, panel heaters and heavy-duty blinds. Other improvements still to come are water tanks and electricity-generating solar panels.

The tenants' satisfaction and savings, as well as the condition and maintenance needs of these properties, will be reviewed quarterly. This information will then be used to inform the potential rollout of improvements across further properties.

New faces at the Federation

The newly renovated Federation offices are already bursting at the seams thanks to all our new staff members: we warmly welcome Poppy Dowsett, Maja Frölich, Adell Hyslop and Kevin Saide to the team.

Poppy and Maja are our new Policy Officers. Poppy holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and joined the Federation in June after two and a half



Poppy Dowsett



Maja Frölich



Adell Hyslop

Continued on pg 15

Keep Them Safe: the workshops

The Community Housing Division provided funding for the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to deliver Keep Them Safe (KTS) training for community and Aboriginal housing providers. Between August and October, the Federation's Kevin Saide and Rachel Loutitt ran several half-day sessions focusing on issues under the legislation, concentrating on the role of providers as mandatory reporters.

The training concentrated on two key aspects of KTS legislation: the role of mandatory reporters and what this means, and the process and purpose of information exchange. The workshops were also designed to help organisations to develop clear policies, procedures and guidelines for implementing the legislation, particularly relating to these points. The importance of having one person designated as the liaison between the organisation and Community Services was also stressed as this enables consistency, accurate reporting and a source of expertise for further training within the organisation, as well as allowing solid relationships to form.

Christine Woods, Vocational Trainer at Argyle Community Housing, attended the training at Surry Hills on 20 August. According to her:



Training session at Port Macquarie

'The Keep Them Safe training presented by the Federation provided a good general overview of changes in the legislation and how these changes might impact on the day-to-day role of community housing workers. The visual and written resources were excellent, as was the reference list provided by the trainer.'

In collaboration with the Aboriginal Housing Office, ten sessions were held for Aboriginal housing providers in October. This training was delivered by Mareese Terare, who provided culturally safe and interactive training for workers.

Partnership delivers a win for community housing

The partnership that the NSW Federation of Housing Associations has developed with TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute (WSI) to encourage the uptake of e-learning by the community housing industry has been recognised by the project funders. In a recent press release, the partnership was described as 'a strong model of collaboration between an industry association and a TAFE, with each party contributing its own expertise to implement a multiple-year business case to integrate e-learning into overall workforce development'.

The business case, developed with 'Industry Integration of E-learning' funding and support from the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, aims to improve engagement

with training for the workforce, particularly for remotely located workplace learners in the community housing sector. Since commencing in 2009, the partnership has developed and piloted three online units, with 35 employees completing Diplomas of Social Housing across NSW.

Laurel Draffen from the Federation and Beth Hobbs from WSI said that the collaborative nature of the strategy is maximising benefits for learners. 'The Federation is contributing content knowledge and playing a strong role in the delivery of training, while WSI has taken on a "consultancy" role, contributing technical expertise and working with staff at the Federation to help develop their e-learning capabilities.'

Launching Common Equity

On 4 August Common Equity NSW (CENSW) was officially launched. The Hon Frank Terenzini, the Minister for Housing, addressed the meeting, saying, 'The launch of the newly formed Common Equity NSW will provide cost-effective delivery of new social and affordable housing by providing a co-operative owned infrastructure.' The event was hosted by the Tamil Senior Citizens Co-operative in Enfield.

According to Chris Jefferis, Chair of CENSW, over the last few months the company has gone from strength to strength, increasing its property portfolio and providing real prospects for future growth. The company expects to

be managing more than 500 properties throughout the state by March 2011.



Frank Terenzini, the Minister for Housing, at the CENSW company launch

Community Development Approach

cont from pg 9

an 'emailing your grandchildren' program, and a group for young women with children. WFGU is resourcing residents to develop and sustain these initiatives, as well as assisting in the development of new service networks in mental health and for young people and children. The local Housing NSW office is also working with tenants in new ways.

These initiatives are small-scale and local, developing resident confidence and capacity and enhancing access to community resources and local services. They require time and a commitment to effective resident participation. They also involve a lot of barbecues! Community development approaches to improving public housing estates build on locational advantages and the positive properties of neighbourhoods.

New Faces at Federation *cont from pg 13*

years at the Assets Division of Housing NSW. While there she worked on several exciting projects, and brings with her knowledge of social housing history and design. She is completing a Masters in Film Studies part-time at present.

Maja Frölich has a Bachelor of Social Sciences and five years' experience within the human services sector in Australia. Prior to her policy role with the Federation, Maja worked with Carers NSW, focusing on the development of strategies to reach diverse communities and ensure their inclusion in service provision and policy development.



Kevin Saide

In July, Adell Hyslop joined the Federation as the coordinator of a project supporting the Aboriginal community housing sector. The project provides workshops, intensive

support, and the establishment of peer networks to assist with the Provider Assessment and Registration System for Aboriginal providers. She brings a decade's experience in key government departments and community organisations including the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, NSW Heritage Office, Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water and Nowra Local Aboriginal Land Council. She is of Aboriginal heritage herself, and has experience in developing and implementing policies and services to address issues within local communities.

Kevin Saide started at the Federation in May as a Training Resource Worker. From July until November, he filled Ruth Djordjevic's position as Training Delivery Coordinator while she was on leave. Kevin's particular areas of interest include policy development in response to community issues at a national level, equality in education, community engagement, human resource management and politics. He has worked in the community sector for more than 30 years.

Calendar of Events

New Worker Induction Training – November 2010:

Social Housing – the Big Picture: Work effectively in social housing CHCCH301A

Wednesday 24 November, 2010

Rent: manage tenancy rent, charges and rental arrears CHCCH413A and Manage rental assistance process CHCCH414C

Thursday 25 November, 2010

The following Diploma compulsory units will be delivered via e-learning:

Manage OHS processes HLTOHS500A

18 October to 26 November 2010 (6 week online training program)

Keep Them Safe Training for Aboriginal providers

*7th December - Parkes
9th December - Tamworth
10th December - Newcastle*

Registration Homelessness NSW Information Sharing

24 Nov 2010

Our 2011 Training program will be available on our website by end November 2010.

www.communityhousing.org.au

If you would like to organise additional training, on a fee for service basis, please contact the Training Co-ordinator Estelle Lohman, at the Federation on (02)9281 7144 Ext. 205 or estelle@communityhousing.org.au

Registration for Aboriginal providers *cont from pg. 11*

while the AHO is the funding and regulatory body, as well as the final decision maker. The Federation is at arm's length of the assessment and decision-making process and therefore has been given the role of providing training to the Aboriginal community housing providers.

Nine Aboriginal housing providers were selected to take part in a PARS pilot, with final decisions to be completed by the AHO in November. This will lead to a report on the system and a review of the PARS guide.

Central Tablelands HA *cont from pg 12*

CTHA is 'smack bang in the middle of a restructure'. It's a big one: the organisation will come out the other side as a company instead of an incorporated association, with a redesigned staffing structure, a new model

of governance and a mysterious new name. So keep an eye out for Central Tablelands Housing Association and what they're up to next: it'll be interesting, no matter what they're called...

HOUSING MANAGEMENT HOTLINE

NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



Non-Metropolitan Telephone
1800 652 877

Sydney Metropolitan Telephone
(02) 9211 8420

The HOTLINE will give information on:

- ◆ Tenancy Management
- ◆ Maintenance and Repairs
- ◆ Policy and Best Practice

Operating Hours
Monday to Friday
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Subscription for 'Housing Matters'



Housing Matters

Federation Members receive a free subscription to Housing Matters newsletter. Additional subscriptions are \$55 per year for members (or 1/2 price for Housing Association Board Members, \$27.50 each). Non-member subscriptions are \$66 per year for 6 issues.

Organisation

Name

Address

Phone Fax

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Please send this form and payment to:
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