



nsw Federation of  
Housing Associations inc

## Federation Bulletin



### KEY MESSAGES FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS WHEN PRESENTING THE COMMUNITY HOUSING MESSAGE

Following the recent NSW election it is an appropriate time to contact your local MP (new or not) to put forward the case for community housing. To facilitate this we have put together some key messages which can be part of your presentation: obviously localise it as much as possible and the key messages can be woven into an electronic presentation or informal notes.

### RESPONDING TO THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING

- In NSW, more than 10% of households are in housing stress, meaning they spend more than 30% of their incomes on rent and that their income is very low, low or moderate. Of these households, 70% are in Sydney.
- When the media talk about 'affordable housing' they often forget renters. Housing affordability is an issue for both renters and buyers.
- Today more households are renting, but there are not enough properties available at rents affordable to low and moderate income households.
- In fact, 70% of properties let at rents that would be affordable to families in the bottom half of incomes are rented to people who could afford to pay more. In Australia there is a shortage of 526,000 rental properties; *affordable* and *available* to these households.
- Community housing providers, together with all levels of government, are the key to meeting this need.

- The community housing sector has been expanding rapidly. Last year it grew by 17% (3,000 properties) and is expected to grow by more than 40% this year.

### **WHAT IS COMMUNITY HOUSING?**

- Community housing is secure, affordable rental housing for those on low to moderate incomes that is managed by registered, not-for-profit housing providers.
- Community housing providers have strong links with local communities and are well positioned to meet local housing needs.
- Community housing is more than bricks and mortar; it can also link tenants to local support services and into employment and education.
- Community housing providers work closely with, but are independent from Housing NSW. The peak body for community housing in New South Wales is the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (NSWFHA).

### **INVESTING IN COMMUNITY HOUSING INCREASES SUPPLY**

- The community housing sector can now leverage its own property assets to attract investment from both housing industry developers and government.
- Housing NSW is transferring some ownership of some public housing properties to community housing providers to grow the housing pool.
- Community housing tenants also receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance so there is more sustainable rental income.
- The creation of an independent Registrar of Community Housing and other NSW and Commonwealth Government reforms are helping build a stronger and more financially independent community housing sector.
- The regulation of community housing provides all stakeholders with assurance and information about the strength of providers. Importantly, the regulation is risk-based and identifies problems in time to fix them.
- The community housing sector is looking to work with private sector partners to create innovative, environmentally

sustainable, liveable housing for the future.

### **OUR SERVICES ARE IN THE COMMUNITY INTEREST**

- Community housing provides local solutions to local housing needs and is delivered by, and for the community.
  - The NSW and Commonwealth governments are working with community housing providers to increase the supply of good quality homes by building and maintaining houses locally for those on low to moderate incomes.
  - Community housing creates local jobs and reduces waiting times for maintenance and repairs on properties.
  - Community housing is increasingly providing affordable homes for key workers (care workers, nurses and other low paid workers) so they can live in the communities in which they work.
  - Community housing providers deliver quality housing that blends into the local community.

### **WE MANAGE A RANGE OF HOUSING TO MEET DIFFERENT COMMUNITY NEEDS**

- Community housing providers mainly manage 'social housing', but also provide other housing.
- Social housing is rental housing for those on very low incomes or who have a very high housing need; housing that is owned or managed by the government or registered not-for-profit organisations.
- Applicants for social housing must meet the tight eligibility requirements for public housing.
- Social housing is provided by public housing, community housing, Aboriginal housing, crisis accommodation and services.
- We also manage low-cost 'affordable housing' for other community members on slightly higher incomes who are struggling to rent.

- Many community housing providers provide a range of housing for high-needs households, such as people leaving crisis accommodation.

### **COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS WORK WITH HOUSING NSW**

- Community housing providers are independent organisations but partner with Housing NSW to the benefit of households in need.
- Suggestions or complaints from community housing tenants should be directed to the client's provider rather than Housing NSW or a relevant government minister. This procedure will allow the matter to be processed or resolved in the quickest possible time.
- Housing NSW is currently driving a major reform process to increase the supply of good quality rental housing for those on low to moderate incomes. As a critical part of this initiative the Community Housing Division of Housing NSW is supporting community housing providers to build their capacity and skills to be a vital part of the housing mix.
- The transfer of titles of ownership to the community sector is an on-going part of the NSW Government's plan to deliver around 6,000 new affordable rental homes in the state by 2012 and get greater value from federal funding.

**Glenn Roach**  
**Media and Communications Liaison Officer**  
**(02) 9281 7144 ext 219.**

NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc  
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia |  
T +61 (0)2 9281 7144 | F +61 (0)2 9281 7603

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