



Sheltershortz

Registered organisations at the Homelessness, Health and Housing Expo 2006

- Women's Information Service
- No Pulgi
- Fred's Van
- Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement
- Enfield Community Health
- Byron Place
- Magdalene Centre
- SA Cervix Screening Program
- Asthma Foundation
- Red Cross Inner City Support Program
- Homelessness SA
- MACHA
- Big Issue
- OARS
- Hutt St Centre
- Salvation Army Towards Independence
- Westcare and Karpandi
- Streetlink
- Catherine House
- Northside Community Services
- Hep C Council
- Drug and Alcohol Services (DASSA)
- RAH Health Promotion Unit
- Bilby Bus
- Homeless & Parenting Program Initiative
- Breast Screening
- Centrelink
- APOSS

If your organisation's name does not appear on this list, you are NOT registered and will be unable to participate on the day. A Certificate of Currency from your organization is required for registration.

Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo Update

Name the Event Competition Winner - "Let's Get Together"



Maria is pictured here receiving her prize money and a certificate of recognition from Janet Adkins, Shelter SA's Research and Policy Officer.

Talk about serendipity. When we rang Maria with the news that she had won the 'Name the Event' Competition, Maria told us that it also happened to be her birthday!

The competition came about after extensive consultation with stall holders after last year's event. The evaluation undertaken during and after the event strongly recommended that the event could be structured to work more directly

with the homeless and those at risk, at every level. This involvement even extended to the (re)naming of the event. To this end, the competition was announced in early March, involving visits to all of the day centres and the Big Issue to promote the competition and the Homelessness, Health and Housing Expo itself. Over 50 entries were received. We believe Maria's winning entry 'Let's Get Together' epitomises the aims of the day. Together we can ensure that those in need of assistance are receiving the appropriate help. Together we can raise awareness of the impact that the lack of appropriate accommodation can have on individuals and family health. And the issues faced by those experiencing homelessness and insecure tenure are enormous, we need to work together to deal with them effectively.

The program for the day is chockfull - Homelessness SA has joined with us to hold their quarterly forum on Health and Homelessness between 10 and 11.30 am. The music will start as lunch is being served. Games will get under way at 12.30. There will also be an Art Exhibition from the Magdalene Centre, Karpandi and Byron Place, and please smile for our official photographer on the day (Graduate from the photographic course offered through the Magdalene Centre) David Norman.

Fliers are being distributed, if you haven't received one send us a line/call us and we will send one out to you.

See you there

Register your organisation
by November 9!
Contact Margo or Cheryl on 8221 6488 for
information.

Governments and Partnerships Conference

The Governments and Communities in Partnership: from theory to practice was a conference recently held at Melbourne Park. Collaboration and partnerships have become a strong theme over recent years, from state

government to NGO's, dealing with big picture issues to working more effectively with limited resources. But what exactly is meant by the term 'collaboration'? How do we 'build capacity through partnerships'? Or even develop private, community and government partnerships? The latter point is of particular interest given the differing jargon, approaches and resources available to private, community and government agencies. Further, acknowledging these differences can impact upon perceptions of success of the partnership and future desire to participate in collaborative working models. Yet as we continue to work in environments of limited resources and experience an increase in the variety and depth of need, the success and efficacy of service provision is under threat. Therefore, it was with great interest that staff from Shelter SA (along with 500 others) attended this conference. The following are

highlights and thoughts from the event by one of the attendees. The author hopes this article may inspire readers to comment, argue or debate some of the points raised here.

Speakers at the event were recruited from as far afield as Ireland, Canada, Austria and Italy, in addition to local academics and representatives from non-government organisations. As Mark Considine cited in

shift away from silo thinking and towards 'collaborative partnerships'.

National policies aimed at addressing national concerns have a tendency to impose a 'one size fits all' approach to problem solving. This can be seen in recent discussions around setting a national education policy and the concerns raised in this debate. Similarly with housing. Currently every

state is reporting tight vacancy rates; an increase in the cost in the private rental market and a shortage of available properties effectively excluding low income earners from the private rental market. Any attempt to address this issue at a national level must necessarily fail to

account for the strengths and weaknesses of specific regions and most importantly fail to take into account the varieties of exclusions specific regions are experiencing. For example, an inner city region may be reporting high levels of discrimination against young families, while young people in regional South Australia may be moving out of the area as a result of a combination of a lack of educational opportunities and a lack of affordable accommodation. To effectively address issues as they are experienced

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The Melbourne Park Function Centre

his opening speech 'Entrepreneurial governments...focus not simply on providing public services but on catalysing all sectors – public, private and voluntary – into action to solve their community's problems' (Osborne and Gaebler 9002:20). There has been a powerful swing to localisation and individualisation, posited as 'good' and beneficial to all in contrast to bureaucracy which is posited as negative, comprised of rules, regimentation and fragmentation. This has resulted in a paradigm

Collaborative partnerships have the potential to address local issues more effectively than broad national or federal policies/programs.

Governments and Partnerships Conference (cont.)

across a country as diverse as Australia, we need to look beyond our immediate surrounds/ contacts/networks/ industry. This was perhaps the strongest point of the conference. Collaborative partnerships have the potential to address local issues more effectively than broad national or federal policies/programs. Moreover, partnerships today are developed in response to experienced need and are not simply a rehash of 70's feel good models of operation.

Another key point of the conference was the extent to which partnerships have been operating around the world and that Australia is still in its infancy in this regard. Luigi Burrioni from Italy spoke of the '*Programmazione Negoziata*', developed since the early 90's with the aim of promoting the set up of tangible and intangible local competition goods and an institutional environment capable of fostering employment growth and private entrepreneurship in regional areas in Italy that are in decline. Co-operation between public and private actors and the search for collaborative advantages are among the main pillars of these policies. (This was an area of particular interest given the growing concern for regional towns in South Australia including the

migration of young people away from these areas and the sea change phenomena).

Another speaker of interest was Anette Scoppetta from Austria, who discussed some of the lessons learnt from Austria's problems with unemployment levels of the elderly (elderly is defined to include anyone over 50 years of age!!). Although Austria performs well overall in employment,



Apartments in Inner City Melbourne

unemployment of this group was 30%, and would obviously lead to a whole range of other concerns. Austria's response has been the TEPs - Territorial Employment Pacts - contracted regional partnerships to better link employment policy with other policies in order to improve the employment situation on regional and the local level. TEPs have been in existence since 1997 and are considered as new forms of governance at regional and the local level. Camilla Couch from the NSW TAFE delivered a

presentation entitled '*Shifting Responsibilities: A case for building access for marginalised young people for training and employment in an urban public housing community*'. Young people living in public housing in The Rocks area of Sydney were experiencing all of the indicators of disadvantage - generational unemployment and low educational levels - in an environment adjacent to residential areas of

extreme (and harbour side) wealth. Many Australian firms seek partnerships which attempt to engage in the social, moral and cultural context in which they operate.

Lend Lease initiated links with the wider community by developing a Community Engagement Strategy (a collaboration between eleven organisations living and working in the area). From this, a decision was made to focus an initiative on youth unemployment. Couch's presentation also raised some pertinent questions including: the sustainability of such projects, ownership and responsibility of key social problems - are they the domain of public or corporate bodies?

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Governments and Partnerships Conference (cont.)

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Presentation summaries are now available at the University of Melbourne Website
www.public-policy.unimelb.edu.au/conference06/presentations.html

The above outlines represent just three types of issues that are being addressed using collaborative models of working. Partnerships such as these are in practice around the world and have been for some time. For Australia to begin to successfully incorporate these models would require a paradigm shift in our funding practices and to challenge the current time frame we operate under. For example, projects funded in Australia are generally offered in one to three year blocks. These funding practices and time frames neatly fit within terms of government. Yet, to address some of the pressing concerns, such as the current housing shortage; the lack of supports available to young homeless people under the age of 16; the lack of larger homes appropriate to Indigenous or African families or any other of the plethora of concerns South Australians are experiencing, require a concerted effort from the community at large, including local government, NGO's, local schools and businesses, individuals and state government. Indeed, support for the above mentioned concerns could be recruited from such disparate organisations as Education, apprenticeships/traineeships, justice/law departments, the building

industry, philanthropic society's, and family or maternal health services, in addition to the more obvious supports. Issues seldom disappear after twelve months or three years. Indeed, when working with marginalised groups, it may take 12 months to three years to develop the levels of trust required to engage with some groups. Are we really making the most of opportunities to address these concerns?

Given the relative increase in housing need experienced by South Australians over the past few years: increased waiting periods for those in need of EMERGENCY accommodation, the growth in families and young women experiencing homelessness, and the shortage of affordable accommodation across the country, it would appear as though we are unable to attend to the symptoms of housing need let alone the causes. How often have we (as workers) pooled resources, time and energy together for a project, established our credibility with the target group and experienced success, only to find the funding contract run out because we did not have enough staff/resources/time to reapply for additional funding? Thinking, acting and operating outside and beyond the time frames currently in operation may

allow for greater attention to be directed at the causes as well as the symptoms of housing need. More realistic timeframes would also allow for relationships to be built and developed throughout the sectors and at all levels of government (federal, state and local).

It appears to the author that the time is ripe with potential to nurture and develop creative responses to the causes and symptoms of housing concerns. This may require challenging some of the more established ways of working, (such as time frames) and certainly challenge our work practices (such as factoring in networking time to our job descriptions, to engaging with organisations outside of our traditional areas of interest). We currently have a government keen to address homeless and housing issues in this state. This alone has generated and renewed discussions around the importance and interrelatedness of housing to health and education. Working in collaboration, rather than competition, has the potential to explore solutions and working relationships (effectively sharing the load) that have hitherto remained unexplored.

At the Coalface - Housing Applications

The housing worker I met with this month alerted me to a potential problem with the new 'Housing SA' application system. This is to alert other workers of the problem, if they have not already come across it.

For those who are not familiar with the housing application and allocation process, a little background information. In 1998 a decision was made by the coalition government in conjunction with the states and territories to move towards targeting public housing to those in greatest need.¹ By 1999 the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement reflected this move and subsequently, the Category system was introduced to structure the housing waiting list to 'ensure *that* a uniform approach to property allocations'* occurred.

Four categories were introduced:

Category 1 - for applicants in *urgent* need, as determined by a 'needs assessment'.*

Category 2 - for applicants, for whom the private rental market or other housing options are not suitable or accessible as a long term option.*

Category 3 - for applicants who meet the income and assets test but do not pass the needs assessment into category 1 or 2.*

Category 4 - is for Housing Trust tenants who wish to transfer to another Housing Trust property.*

It is well known that the physical number of public housing properties has reduced significantly from 59,738 ten years ago in June 1995 to 46,122 by June 2005.² This means that people assessed as 'Category 3' are lulled into a false sense of security - that they *will* get a house. However, realistically, it is unlikely they will be housed. For example, according to 'Trust in Focus 2004 - 2005', 50% of the people in Category 3 would not be housed for 2 years, at the very least.²

This suggests that people in Category 3 need to try elsewhere for housing, such as the private rental market or HomeStart. This may be the reason why, under the new Housing SA system, there are now two application forms. One form is an application for housing and the other is a housing assistance form, for 'Bond Assistance' etc.

Now back to the problem, the housing worker informed me that, while the 'Housing Application' form will provide the person with a Category, solely filling out the 'Bond Assistance' form does *not*. Therefore, while the applicant may not want Housing Trust housing, they may want to apply for other types of housing such as Community Housing. Without a

category they cannot do this. Therefore housing workers need to ensure that people fill out *both* forms, if they require housing.

So remember:

"The housing application form will get the Category but it may not get you public housing. Gaining a Category will open up all the other housing options - the Bond Assistance form won't."

It is the *category* that is important!



1

Trust in Focus, 2003 - 2004 & 2004 - 2005, South Australian Housing Trust.

² Hulse, K. 2002, "Rent Assistance: Time for a Policy Review?", *Just Policy*, No.25, 13 - 25.

* Allocations and Vacancy Management Policy and Guidelines, version 13, 2006, Housing SA.



As we approach our final meeting for the year (23rd November) our members have raised some compelling issues recently, particularly as they relate to ASHRA's aims/goals for the next year. Over the course of our first year, we have used our meetings to get to know one another, voice our individual and organisational concerns around the needs of our target group as they relate to housing and related needs. From this we have gained an increase in understanding of the needs of refugees and new arrivals to this country.

Of particular import is the inter relatedness of housing to education and health especially in the first year of arrival. It is estimated that refugees move home around five times in one year, often between friends and relatives and housing provided through the formal support structure. The high mobility of this group strongly highlights the need to increase the networking capabilities of organisations to ensure refugees do not fall through the cracks and not receive the support they are entitled to. It has often been reported at meetings that the only means of support being accessed by new arrivals has been via a neighbour, a volunteer or even someone they met on a plane!! (True story) This means that the specialist knowledge of the CALD worker and/or

housing support worker, the types of supports available and a greater understanding of visas and their respective entitlements MUST become GENERAL knowledge.

Another key issue was the need for housing support in the second and subsequent years of arrival in Australia. The first six – twelve months in the settlement process leaves new arrivals with information overload. There is a plethora of information that is given to new arrivals; from cultural information to do with life in Australia, to how to access health services, education and language learning. New arrivals are contending with all of this often while recovering from the trauma of leaving their home under stressful circumstances, and there are a variety of supports available to ease this initial process. However, access to supports is greatly reduced for subsequent moves. New arrivals are often expected to look for and inspect potential properties, sign (and understand) lease agreements, notify utilities of moving dates and final readings, access financial assistance (if eligible – and find out if they are eligible), organise removalists, notify Australia Post of change of address and so on. In fact, all of the things that even those of us who have lived in this country all of our life can have difficulty with.

These issues, among others, have occupied much of the discussion at ASHRA along with how best to address them. To this end, ASHRA has been involved in the development of a multicultural directory; this is in its final stages and we are currently seeking funding for its publication. Networking is also fundamental to addressing these concerns effectively. Members are now becoming familiar enough to ring one another to ask for help or offer a housing vacancy directly. Networking also involves a level of trust, to feel comfortable enough to raise an issue that can be sensitive or politically loaded, yet still requires further discussion. In an environment operating in competitive tendering, this can be enormously problematic and it is a credit to our members that our meetings and discussions have been so lively, entertaining and informative.

Networking takes time and a great deal of energy. Shelter SA is committed, through its formation of the ASHRA branch, to nurture and support the network and its activities required to address these concerns. We look forward to another year of heated debate and lively discussion, and to action – whether it is research, the development of resources, greater involvement in advocacy or something else.

Final meeting for the year is scheduled for the 23rd of November.

We look forward to seeing you there.

New members always welcome.

Across My Desk

To give our readers a better idea of the types of activities we are involved in, the kinds of requests we are asked each week, and to promote greater accountability to our members, we thought it might be useful to feature a new section – ‘Across my Desk’. We are often asked questions or receive requests for information on a broad range of issues and from a broad range of people/requirements. As some of our responses will show, we don’t always know the answer, but we will do everything in our power to find out. Readers are also encouraged to respond to queries raised.

Question

A male on a disability pension was about to be evicted from his lodging house in a week and he was investigating his options as regard to housing before he was left homeless. He had phoned the Emergency Accommodation Service of SA, but was told that they do not help single males only women and children. He had also contacted some Boarding Houses, but was told they could not help him unless he was homeless and referred by a Social Worker (those that are still operational). Being on a limited income he was looking for shared accommodation but needed short term accommodation (so he wouldn't be homeless!) while he continued the hunt for a rental property.



Shelter SA staff often hear similar stories, people on low incomes are priced out of the rental market and therefore have limited options. We suggested he look into Community Housing, which he was unaware of, but we informed him he may not get immediate housing through them. There are **very few options open to single males** for short term accommodation, **there is no up to date list of Boarding Houses in Adelaide** the information we have is a few years old, so many of those listed are no longer operating! **Where do single males go for help in finding accommodation?** If anyone knows of a current boarding house list or operates one feel free to forward those details onto us.

Question

We received a call from a Tenancy Officer working at a local Housing co-operative. Due to the increase in volume of requests for housing, her co-op had been receiving over the past two to three years, officers at the co-op were required to write numerous rejection letters. The Tenancy Officer said she felt terrible writing rejection letters to people that were obviously in dire need of housing, and a letter did not seem enough to offer these people. She wanted to offer more than that, so she began to talk with the Community Housing Council of SA (CHCSA) about possible alternatives she could suggest in the rejection letters. Among the suggestions CHCSA recommended was Shelter SA. The Tenancy Officer wanted to include Shelter SA's contact details in this list.

As the peak housing body, staff at Shelter are often the first or last point of call for people in housing need; sometimes to air their grievances, sometimes to ask for help or ideas. Therefore what is common knowledge to us can be quite a surprise to our members. This has the unfortunate effect upon some groups in high need to feel as though they are being singled out and that there is no-one that cares about their circumstances. (For example, a person rang us last week to tell us that they had been informed that the waiting list for emergency housing was now four months!) Once we started chatting about the extent of need around the state, the Tenancy Officer seemed a bit relieved. We suggested to the Tenancy Officer that they may be interested in writing an article about this for our monthly newsletter. The shortage of affordable accommodation has increased enormously over the past year, resulting in services being stretched beyond capacity. This has placed services and individuals like our caller in the uncomfortable position of playing King Solomon. Who do we house, the young mother with a child with a disability, or the young man in a wheelchair? How do we decide who has the greater need? And when there are so many deserving individuals in need of support and there is a shortage of accommodation how does staff deal with having to say no? For people like our Tenancy Officer, they take action. It is a credit to her and to Community Housing. We look forward to your article and encourage all of our readers to consider contributing to our newsletter.

Upcoming Events

***Homelessness &
SAAP Reform
Homelessness SA
State Conference
November
16 & 17***

November 14	<i>Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo “Let’s Get Together”</i> Whitmore Square Adelaide 10am-2pm
November 14	<i>Women’s Housing Caucus Annual General Meeting, 3pm–6pm</i> Torrens Building, Victoria Square
November 16 & 17	<i>Homelessness & SAAP Reform Homelessness SA State Conference</i> Function Centre, Allan Scott Park, Morphettville More information: Tel 8359 2989
November 23	<i>ASHRA</i> Torrens Building, 3pm



The Women’s Housing Caucus will be holding their next exciting event on Tuesday 14th November 2006.

Some interesting speakers will be presenting at the forum:
**‘Shoring up the Foundation, SA Innovations:
Education, Housing and Students at Risk’**

The event, which will incorporate their first AGM, will be held in the
Carnegie Mel I on Campus, Torrens Building, Victoria Square
We would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Carnegie Mellon for this event.

The AGM will run from 3:00 - 4:00 pm, with the forum following from
4:00 – 6:00 pm.

Fliers will be circulated soon.



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Housing: a basic human right

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