



Reality Check Opinion of Gary Wilson, Executive Director

After the Federal and State budgets, there is good news about the amounts of funding available for the construction of much-needed new housing. In addition, there are sweeping reforms and innovations in the homelessness sector.

Certainly the lack of supply of affordable housing has been a major issue, but through a combination of (mostly) Federal programs, there will be 1,500 new homes built by Christmas 2010, and a total of 5-6,000 new homes over the next four years.

However, this is a drop in the bucket compared to what is needed. The National Housing Supply Council's *State of Supply Report* (Feb 2009) says South Australia will have between 134,000 and 191,000 new households over the next 20 years. They also anticipate net additional dwellings at between 69,000 and 174,000.

If low-income households make up (roughly) 40% of all households, that means we need between 27,600 and 76,400 new affordable homes over the next 20 years. We know that 30,000 renter households are in housing stress and 39,000 home purchasers are in housing stress.

In 2004, then Minister Jay Weatherill commissioned Professor Andrew Beer et al to find out how many new affordable homes were needed. Their conclusion was that in order to meet the housing objectives of the State Strategic Plan, the State Government needed to generate affordable housing opportunities for 19,000 households between 2004 and 2010. This was a significant aspirational goal at the time, and has not been met.

The State Government is to be commended for allocating:

- \$81.8m for 407 new social housing dwellings,
- another \$25m from the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund for 240 homes
- funds for 31 new homes for people with disabilities and 62 new homes as part of regeneration programs

but at the same time, 575 older Housing SA homes will be sold (230 for low to moderate income first home buyers) – at least there is a net gain for a change.

In the meantime, many families and individuals approaching homelessness support services continue to be turned away because of a critical shortage of resources. The question remains: Where are these people going to live while these new homes are being built and will there be enough new homes to house the number of people that need an affordable home?

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Telling Stories - Angelina's Story by Cate Jones

For some time now I have been advocating for an Anangu woman called, for the purposes of this article, Angelina. She has come into my office almost on a daily basis and we have developed a relationship based on trust and the knowing of each other. I am aware that my position at Shelter SA does not include individual case-work and my role with Angelina has not been a case-worker's role, it has been the role of advocate and friend. But I would like to tell her story because she has been through an epic journey to eventually obtain housing through Housing SA. Also, it is through working with her I have realised that assumptions are made about Aboriginal homelessness, and homelessness in general, that are sometimes misguided.

Angelina comes from a small community that is situated within the APY Lands. She has for reasons that are her own business, decided to live down here in Adelaide. And I ask the question, isn't it reasonable for an individual to live where they want to live if the place they choose to call home is within their means? I have discovered through working with Angelina, and other Anangu people, that many Anangu come down here for cultural reasons that remain undisclosed to most non-Aboriginal people including service providers, and those who do know the motivation are closely connected in some way to the individual who has made the move. I would like to make it clear that I am not an expert in Aboriginal culture but I have learned so much working with Angelina that my understanding of these issues has, over time, rapidly increased. It is often assumed that Anangu people arrive in Adelaide for medical or family reasons; what is not widely known is that cultural matters arise on the Lands that drive some Aboriginal people from their communities. Colonisation has come very late to more remote areas of South Australia compared with more Southern regions, and up North the contact with non-Aboriginal expectations, values and vices is leaving a trail of cultural devastation that can be likened to a state of shock.

So her story starts with moving down from the lands to the house of a 'friend-Aunty'. The woman is not a relative but someone she could stay with for a while until she found a house. This 'friend-Aunty' is a woman who has offered, over the years, so much support to Anangu and other Aboriginal people; she deserves a medal and a great deal more. She feeds, clothes and offers shelter to people, their children, grandchildren and continues to fight for their rights, which mostly centre on housing. She is known to many that work in housing services.

Angelina believed that she would find a house and settle down here. However, that didn't happen and she could not stay with her 'friend Aunty' forever and as happens in many Aboriginal households severe over-crowding leads to tension and conflict builds between people. So Angelina left the house and was homeless, but she soon had a partner who she had met through living on the streets. He is an Iranian refugee who has suffered unbelievable trauma, both before leaving Iran and then on his journey, as an illegal refugee on a boat, to Australia. They have taken great care of each other throughout their homeless circumstances.

What I didn't know when I first met Angelina is that she is a translator, a trained teacher of three Aboriginal languages and worked at a school for some time. She is also a brilliant traditional painter and follows in the footsteps of her father, whose art works sell throughout the world. When she and her partner were finally offered some temporary accommodation at an Aboriginal hostel, I brought some of the canvasses and paints I had at home so that she could start painting again. Margo Johnson also brought in some paints and brushes for her from home. We now have at Shelter a small collection of her works, which are for sale if anyone is interested in coming in to look. All money from the works will, of course, go to Angelina.

But the journey through homelessness was horrific. Many nights they slept rough and othertimes, slept at the detox unit if there were spare beds. Angelina doesn't drink so if they were able to get beds at detox they were offered on compassionate grounds. Staying a night at 'friend Aunty's place was reserved for emergencies. They did the rounds of homeless services for meals and showers. Angelina would always arrive at my office freshly showered and smelling like a flower and then we would start



Telling Stories (cont.)

the housing search again, discuss options or she would ring the Aboriginal Private Rental Liaison Officer (a truly compassionate woman.), who has also supported her through this very difficult, depressing time. What amazed me about Angelina was that she kept her spirits up until almost the very end. Just before they were offered housing, I started to see her fortitude fading and I wondered just how much people can actually endure before they totally lose heart and their sanity. She sometimes came in with her sister, who was also homeless but now has a room at a boarding house.. I can feel the love they share for each other and have advocated for them both. Sometimes, Shelter was simply a place where they could come and have a cup of tea and biscuits if they had not eaten. It has been a place of comfort for them both, not a drop-in-centre, a place where they could sit for a little while, relax and chat.

When I heard that the Aboriginal Private Rental Liaison Officer had found Angelina and her partner a house, not a private rental but a Housing SA property, I was overjoyed, very happy. But what I hadn't considered to a great extent, as the focus was essentially getting them housed, was that they would need furniture, clothing, sheets, blankets, food and the list goes on. They have been provided with some furniture from funds that the Aboriginal Private Rental Liaison Officer has in her very small budget and the a local government Community Fund, very kindly donated a brand new double bed and a kitchen table and chairs, but They are still missing most of the basics. Angelina came into the office yesterday and we walked over to the Magdalene Centre to apply for some of the many things they offer. For me, this was an incredible learning experience. I now understand what this service offers and it is a truly wonderful thing. We finally left the Centre laden down with household stuff that most of us take for granted: knives and forks, tea-towels, face-washers, saucepans, tinned food items, a raincoat, socks and more. Angelina had a \$20.00 voucher for meat and a \$10 voucher for fruit and vegetables. She had a \$5 phone card that would enable her to call her father on the Lands who has been very ill, Working with Angelina has given me a very direct understanding of the impacts of homelessness, the boredom many homeless people experience, the complete lack of anything to do or anything to focus on, anything for individuals to give themselves to and the endless wandering from place to place, walking, looking for somewhere to be, to eat, to sit. It has made me aware of the paranoia people experience sleeping out, the fear that harm may come to them or to their friends. The dread that other homeless friends, and in Angelina's case family, will become hopeless alcoholics, drug addicts or dangerously exploited. Drug dealers are currently taking advantage of homeless people, Anangu included, to get them hooked on meth-amphetamine or other drugs.

Angelina couldn't start painting until she had a place at the hostel and some space to herself. She told me that when she started to paint, all the other Anangu women in the hostel were happily crowded around her telling her to "paint it like this...do it like this" and it became a sociable, sharing company, exercise she could never have taken pleasure in or attempted while homeless.

I also have built an excellent network of people within support agencies, and knowledge of the many services that offer food vouchers or emergency support, like the Playford Community Fund that is funded by FAHCSIA and freely gives (also delivers) furniture and household goods to those that are needy. I learned that, and especially for Aboriginal people, the need for an 'independent living skills program' is so critical, I can't comprehend why this prerequisite for many who have been homeless or are young, continues to be overlooked.

This experience has not only broadened my understanding of homelessness, it now will act to build Shelter's resource base. People always speak of linking those very newly housed to services. They speak of drug and alcohol services, domestic violence counselling, child support services as if once people are housed they will be able to grow if they are linked in to these. While I completely agree with these approaches, I think that perhaps a vegetable peeler, a frypan or a warm bed might be more useful in the very short run. It is a step-by-step process and each phase of the journey has to be supported by people who care, are not simply in caring roles, but genuinely care. And I met many of these people through Angelina's journey to housing.



Housing for Older People from Gary Wilson's Notes

On May 19th, **Prof. Andrew Beer** launched the **Elderly Citizens' Homes** report "*Our Homes, Our Communities: The Aspirations and Expectations of Older People in South Australia*" (available from www.ech.asn.au).

Andrew's team conducted numerous focus groups with people of different ages, and did a phone survey of 1,200 others, as well as some interviews. Only 3% of South Australians live in housing for aged people and that will rise to 6% (compared to the USA's 12%). Andrew argued that the market is not meeting the needs of our older population, and certainly not their aspirations.

Most older people have less than \$200,000 in assets other than their primary home, and are willing to spend it and use it once only. The majority are willing to sell their home, but they don't want to put 100% of the sale into their aged housing. It should be recognized that 12% of older people are NOT homeowners, so have few assets. 11% of older people had incomes of less than \$16,000/year. Of those aged 75+, 60-70% would be classified as poor, as they only have the age pension.

Older people in public housing are grateful, as the alternatives are not as attractive. Homeowners aged 55-64 tend to have more assets, and higher lifestyle aspirations.

People want to stay connected and engaged with their neighbourhoods; they want homes that are affordable and near public transport. They want small clusters (10-20) of aged housing, and places with no maintenance; especially for women, not having any maintenance removes a lot of stress. They don't want housing that stands out as aged housing, and certainly don't want signs. They want to be part of their community, ideally in the same neighbourhood as they are now.

They will want services, but not necessarily on site. Illogically, they would like the services as part of their "housing", rather than having to pay extra for services.

Those with fewer assets are more willing to accept housing with only 1 bedroom. For others, they want 3 bedrooms, for hobbies and when the grandchildren or relatives visit.

Most don't understand the current financing models, especially the topic of deferred fees.

Women seem more willing to accept a move from the family home, and at a later stage, to accept a nursing home. Men tend to have more denial about their housing situations and needs. Interestingly, it is often people's accommodation that influences when they go to a nursing home (usual entry age is now 85).

Low income private rental tenants are vulnerable, living in insecure housing, and with limited access to appropriate housing for older people. For all older people, affordable housing in their later years means they will have more opportunities for socially-inclusive activities.

Andrew said cultural differences (people from CALD communities) are not great, but there seem to be more differences between people in different social-economic Groups.

Transport-Oriented-Developments may be good for older people (if they are affordable), as people want access to services.

People's "wants" are dependant upon what they KNOW about; the Dutch Humanitas model has many merits, but few know of it in Australia. It provides flats in local communities, often in multi-storey buildings.

ECH is questioning what privacy means, as it seems to include "neighbourliness and a private space out the back door". That organisation is also looking at environmental sustainability, as it is more important than previously anticipated for potential residents.



Housing for Older People (cont.)

National Shelter's Consultations

The following week, Roland Naufal conducted a National Shelter consultation in Adelaide; the morning saw a wide range of invited housing providers attend, with a smaller group of housing consumers attending the afternoon session.

Roland pointed out that older people in Australia are facing a crisis in housing affordability, and there are now opportunities to begin to tackle this problem. The Federal Government's 20,000 new social housing units and the National Rental Affordability Scheme combine to form a once-in-a-generation investment in social housing. National Shelter was seeking input to assist in influencing how these opportunities are realised.

Recent research shows there were over 112,000 older people in housing stress, and this number has doubled over the last 4 years (and all this was before the Global Financial Crisis!). The number of older people in rented accommodation will rise by 115% by 2026. The number of people over age 85 will triple. There are increasing numbers of older women who are single, with little or no superannuation and few assets.

There are 18,000 people aged 55+ who are homeless, an increase of 4,000 since 2001; these are not people with mental illnesses, drug or alcohol problems.

The drivers of this crisis are:

- An increasing number of older people
- A shift in public housing priorities
- Residential care being targeted to those with high needs
- And the Global Financial Crisis.

Independent Living Units number 34,700 across the country. They provide 27% of the social housing for older people, but their sustainability is in question. 6,000 are due to be closed or demolished, as the Federal government has changed the funding for them.

Housing is important because:

- It provides us access to local services, and prevents isolation and depression
- It is the basis of either wealth or marginalisation
- Good housing provides 6+ years of independence IF residents get appropriate supports, thus delaying entry into nursing homes until an average age of 85
- It provides wellbeing and a sense of self and belonging.

A number of key issues were raised in small group discussions:

- There is little housing for older people available in regional areas
- Public housing is mostly 3 bedroom, which may not be suitable for older people
- Affordability and on-going costs are a major problem
- Farmers seem to be moving to Adelaide, rather than to a closer town, because there is little housing or few services in their local areas. Small towns have no infrastructure, and older houses are not suitable for older people.
- Those with severe disabilities are living longer
- Public housing is not adapted nor adaptable, so tenants can't "age in place"
- Cluster housing may be an option, as it is then easier to provide care.
- Older people want security of tenure, often more than 5 years.
- At least 34% of those in public housing (13,000 households in S.A.) are aged 65+, and do not want to lose it (this includes 1,700 households where tenants are aged 85+)
- SA is not used to medium or high density housing, yet what will be provided may be good for support services and access to transport
- We need a mixture of styles; land values have not yet driven builders to consider multi-storey facilities
- People want discussions about their housing desires.



Housing for Older People (cont.)

Roland pointed out from his consultations that older people want to be involved in decisions about sustainability.

As part of an exercise, Roland asked the group what 2 main points they would like to make to State and Federal Ministers:

- Older people have a right to inclusivity and diversity
- Providing a good life is more than just providing care – it includes maintenance, independence and health
- Housing for older people is the responsibility of the community, and much more than just the responsibility of Housing SA
- When do housing providers and older people get a chance to have some input on the Greater Adelaide Plan?
- How can we best utilise existing housing stock and land (location)?
- Include Universal Design in ALL residential buildings/

The afternoon session was for older people “living the experience” in a variety of housing situations. Some of the points made:

- People on single incomes now in retirement villages are in financial stress
- Nursing homes are only for people with high needs now; hostels used to provide housing, but are not viable any more.
- Many Baby Boomers don't own their homes
- Housing for older people needs to be near services
- SA's aim is to have “ageing in place”, through financial packages, but there aren't enough packages; some people are lucky to get 2 hours of support a week.

Some of the issues raised were:

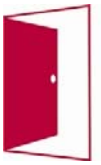
- Lack of available (and appropriate) housing
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Types of housing
- Adaptability of housing
- Housing that is purpose-built for older people is the best design
- People want to be in the community they know
- Transport is important
- Access to health care is important
- There is a need for housing for those “unable to care themselves” but who don't yet need a nursing home.

Share housing is a possibility if you know the other person well, but sharing may be appropriate for only a small proportion of older people.

Diverse groups need diverse housing.

Environment affects people's health. People want a place that is clean, repaired, has ambiance, and a reasonable standard of living. Most do not want 1-bedroom places, with the laundry in the bathroom. They will consider 1.5 or 2 bedrooms, or a lounge big enough to take a sofa that converts to a bed for a visitor. People need storage space, and home computers are both an outlet and a way of keeping in touch with far-flung family and friends.

Many people would prefer to stay in their current homes, for independence. Some will take out reverse mortgages to pay for services, but may end up in poverty.



Housing for Older People (cont.)

Developers are still building retirement villages and nursing homes for Boomers who don't want to go into them. Old age is not a problem to be fixed – it's just when people need extra support.

Again, participants were asked what they would like to tell government Ministers:

- Affordability and availability are big issues
- Community is a mix of older people with other members of the community
- Allocate funding in the long term, beyond the Stimulus.
- Diversity of housing is needed for a diversity of older people.
- **Housing for older people IS a vote-catcher**
- For those pensioners in the private rental market, a rise in CRA is needed
- Older people ARE discriminated against, and many can't easily move homes
- Older people panic if the rent goes up
- Increase support packages to older people
- Increase the range of housing and support options
- **Ageing in place is about the community, more than the house.**

Roland's draft report on the national consultations will be available in a few weeks, on the Shelter SA website.

Shelter SA is Finally Moving!

From July 20, we will be located at
Unit 44, 81 Carrington Street, Adelaide

The new phone number will be:

8223 4077

The new fax number will be:

8223 4099

All emails will remain the same

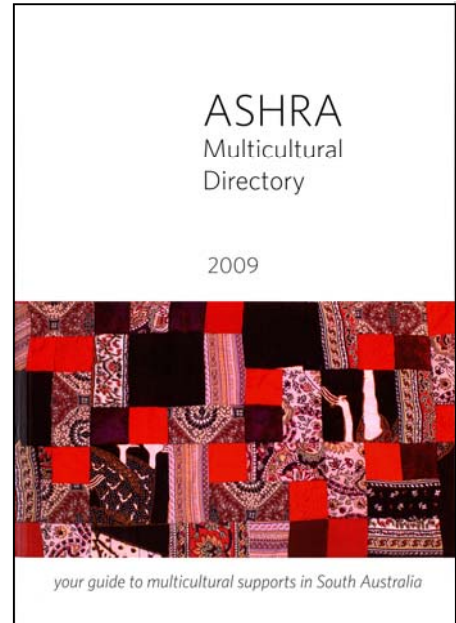


Launch of the 2nd Multicultural Directory & Public Forum

by Margo Johnson

The 2nd ASHRA Multicultural directory was launched on June 16th at the Migration Museum Chapel. The Migration Museum was an ideal venue to acknowledge and celebrate the enormous cultural and linguistic diversity that is evident in South Australia, while maintaining an emphasis on the struggles that continue to occur throughout the settlement process.

Around 50 people from a range of services and sectors attended, including health, education, employment, housing and community development to name just a few. The afternoon began with a general overview of the current housing situation in South Australia and was followed by speakers presenting on a range of settlement issues, including the experiences of asylum seekers, the difficulty in finding and maintaining accommodation for new arrivals, discrimination, the need for increased cultural competencies of mainstream services, and the impact on health services working with new arrivals. The forum finished with filmmaker James Maiden presenting on an upcoming film based on the Zimbabwean Homeless Soccer team who are currently seeking asylum in Australia.



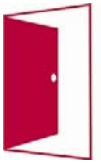
Adrian Bok from Australian Refugee Association

The forum clearly highlighted the variety of issues that are impacting on new arrivals and affirmed Shelter SA's fundamental belief that housing is a basic human right. Appropriate and affordable accommodation is integrally linked to health, wellbeing, education, civic participation and social cohesion. Yet in this current economic climate, all vulnerable groups, including new arrivals, are the first to feel the impact of declining affordability in the housing market. This has meant that new arrivals have missed out on services simply because they or their support worker were not aware of the range of services that are available, and equally important, that support workers and volunteers have to work so much harder to get clients' needs met.

The 2nd Edition of the ASHRA Multicultural Directory is a testament to the commitment of this sector to work collaboratively and to share information in what has been an extremely competitive environment. We have tried to make this edition the most comprehensive list of services that can assist new arrivals in South Australia; however it is by no means exhaustive.

What is ASHRA?

ASHRA (Agencies Supporting Housing for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) is Shelter SA's first branch and was formed in 2005 by a core group of just six individuals working with new arrivals. This small group has now grown to a network of over 500 organisations and individuals working with new arrivals throughout the settlement process. The aims of the ASHRA Network are to share information, create strong informal networks between organisations, raise awareness about refugee housing and related needs to the broader community, provide collegial support to those working with new arrivals and more readily identify the gaps in services. The ASHRA Network meets bi-monthly, produces a newsletter, and holds events. It is one of Shelter SA's aims is to provide an independent and community based voice to government about housing and homelessness issues.



Launch of the Multicultural Directory (cont.)

The ASHRA Multicultural Directory is an initiative of the ASHRA Network to provide immediate and effective support to the variety of people who are working with new arrivals (including community development workers, local councils, ESL teachers and home tutors, volunteers and so on).

It was difficult to gauge the level of need when we began work on the first edition, as there is no other resource of this type available in South Australia. We wrote multiple funding applications and were knocked back every time and eventually funded the publishing ourselves. Those 500 copies were gone within 6 months and ended up in libraries across the state, TAFE's, local councils and of course with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. A pdf version was made available in June of last year and since then we have had over 7000 downloads for this resource alone. Clearly we underestimated the level of need and the variety of services and individuals that would benefit from a resource of this type.



David Jock from Baptist Care
FUSE Program

Thankyou!



Migration Museum Chapel

We have been extremely fortunate to gain funding for the publication of this resource from the South Australian Law Foundation and we would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them for having the foresight and vision to support this project.

The second edition looks amazing and that is due to Drew Joyce and the graphics students of UniSA's Visual Communications Consultancy. This is Shelter SA's third venture with the UniSA Graphics students – in previous years, students have helped create the ASHRA identity when Daniel Bennett won the ASHRA logo competition. Last year Kieran Wallis updated the Shelter SA logo and worked on the Sharehouse Toolkit and this year Anna Chang and Mia Prerad worked on the Multicultural Directory. The benefits of this partnership have been especially rewarding for Shelter SA – the students get real life experience and are able to build their

portfolio of work and contribute to their employability once they graduate, non-government organisations are able to produce high quality and professional looking documents, and all payments for the work go to the students' end-of-year graduation.

And finally, we would like to thank the Halal Multicultural Cooking Group for the catering the launch – if you enjoyed the food and/or would like them to cater your next function, contact Sophia Katari at the Muslim Women's Association (email: mwa222@hotmail.com or Sophia Katari sophkatari@hotmail.com Tel: 8212 0800).

The directory can be downloaded from the Shelter SA website www.sheltersa.asn.au or hard copies can be ordered (free of charge) by emailing Margo margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au or by calling the Shelter SA office on 8221 6488.





Somewhere to Sit by Cate Jones

A couple of weeks ago I began the process of interviewing and photographing participants who have agreed to take part in my 'Meaning of Home' research. The first people I interviewed were a young couple who have just had a baby and are buying their first home. I had sent out all the information regarding the project and when I got there, they had a good understanding of the meaning of the project and the issues I am looking at. I took photographs of them playing with the baby on the sofa, out in their garden and they posed in front of some art work that has particular significance for both of them.

After this we started the interview. Below is a list of sample questions I am using to instigate conversation and these are really a flexible guide to explore answers:

- What is home to you? (a place, your house, country, birth-place, parents house)
- Is it a place that you yearn to return to and why? (For example: After you have been on a journey...how does knowing that you are on your way home make you feel? If your country represents home, how do you feel being separated from that country? Do you yearn for country? If you feel that you are fundamentally separated from what you consider home to be...how does that make you feel?)
- What is the most important aspect of having a home for you? (Is it your relationships, friends, family, extended family? Is it safety, security, a protected haven? A place where you can just be completely yourself, refuge from the outside world, public gaze, expectations?)
- What does your home say about you?
- Is there anything in particular in your home that especially talks about you, eg. A photograph, an object, etc?
- What do you think you would lose if you lost your home (and everything within it) tomorrow? How do you think it would make you feel?
- Where would you go....?

It was interesting to sit with these two and listen to their responses to the questions. And very interesting at the end when I asked the question 'What do you think you would do if you lost your home (and everything in it) tomorrow? There was a long pause. We started to talk about the bushfires in Victoria but as I was listening I realised that while this was an extremely traumatic event for everyone involved, the devastated victims of those fires were receiving support. The whole country was focussed and grieved for their pain and loss. Readers of my previous articles may remember that I lost my house in the last Ash Wednesday bushfires in South Australia and I will never forget the feelings of displacement, trauma and desolation, so I do not diminish or wish to minimise these experiences, but I realised that this metaphor did not evoke the dispossession I want to address that is specific to homelessness.

Both responded that they would be scared, terrified. The male participant said that he would probably turn to crime, steal food at least. But fundamentally both were lost for words. It is a question that those of us safely housed can barely comprehend, scarcely absorb and it frightens us.

Looking around at their house, I could see both of their identities reflected in that space. Their special photographs, paintings and outside of their house, the veggie garden and the front garden they are working on. Andrew Gorman-Murray describes how important domestic material culture is in confirming our identities and how 'things' we collect and place within our homes reflect and reinforce both inwardly and outwardly our place in the world.



Somewhere to Sit (cont.)

“Homemaking is, simultaneously, identity work, through which our identities are ongoingly (re)constructed in and through the home. As Blunt and Dowling assert, a particularly important feature of homemaking is its material dimension – those decisions and actions which mould the design of domestic materiality. The ‘new structures formed, objects used and placed’ by the occupants palpably ‘embody the values and meanings that made, selected, arranged, and preserved them. I suggest that people also accumulate *identity-fragments* through domestic material culture. By ‘identity-fragments’ I mean different axes of subjectivity – how identities are fractured along lines of class, gender, ethnicity and cultural heritage, sexuality, politics, etc.” (Andrew Gorman-Murray, 2007)

bell hooks, African-American academic, writer and cultural commentator, writes about the homes of black folk as sites where marginalised people can return to support and foster their relationships. Her essay titled ‘Home: a site of resistance’ talks about how black folk, subject to discrimination and racism in public life, can return to a safe place: a place where their own cultural ways and world views are affirmed and sustained. hooks writes of the “home-place”, as a space of care. She discusses the role of black women in the creation of these domestic spaces, no matter how simple, as integral to feelings of “at homeness”. (hooks, 1991)

Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a home-place, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut), had a radical political dimension. Despite the brutal reality of racial apartheid, of domination, one’s home-place, was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanisation, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside, in the public world.” (hooks, 1991)

For me, coming home on Friday nights, sometimes a bit stressed from a weeks work and sitting outside at the table looking over my garden, thinking, relaxing, unravelling the weeks work in my head and just staring into my own comfortable space is perfect. It’s where I unwind and disentangle myself from the demands of the world. Home is regenerative, not all the time, but most of the time. When times are demanding and the pressures of the world feel like they are overwhelming, home represents the space in which we can cry, scream, swear and let it all out.

So, if we consider how important home is as refuge, as a place in which we affirm and recreate our identities, we start to reflect on how it might feel like to be without. To be without refuge, without emotional space to let it all out or express ourselves and without anything around us which echoes back to us who we are, that says ‘this is your place in the world’; we are anchorless and as a result at the mercy of anything that happens to be heading in our direction. I can only imagine how traumatic it would be to be without my safe haven – somewhere to sit.

References:

Gorman-Murray Andrew (2007) Reconciling self: gay men and lesbians using domestic materiality for identity management in *Queer Space: Centres and Peripheries*. UTS

hooks, b. (1991) *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. London: Turnaround.



Observations from Colorado by Gary Wilson



In April/May I visited my ageing parents in Colorado, USA. When I was in high school, Colorado Springs had about 65,000 people – now it has 600,000, including 1,000 who are homeless.

A Homelessness Program

While there, I visited Ecumenical Social Ministries, a program for the homeless run by a combination of 8 downtown churches, of various denominations. Surprisingly, 30% of their clients have jobs, but most are on the minimum wage of \$7.28 an hour. For some, after they pay their child support, there is not enough money for rent. Median rent is \$169/week.

Unlike the services in Adelaide, the ESM does not offer storage facilities. There is a food pantry which can be accessed only 4 times a year by each client. There are facilities for computer training, housing advice, and opportunities to get assistance with job searches and applications. And there is a nurse on duty most of the time.

Some clients have a preference for “space”, rather than wanting to live in an apartment.

Extra Funding

There was also a public meeting to discuss the county’s EXTRA \$1m of funding from President Obama’s stimulus package (part of \$1.5 billion nationally). The county intends to use \$808,000 for financial assistance, and \$155,000 for relocations and stabilization of clients. Because youth homeless numbers are rising, some funds will be earmarked for them. Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing are two ends of the spectrum which don’t usually get much funding.

There had already been a meeting with 10 service providers, so it was disappointing to see the only people to turn up for a public consultation in the city council chambers, were a woman from habitat for Humanity, a reporter and me! The lady from Habitat for Humanity said they won’t be able to access these funds, but they do build 7 to 10 houses locally every year.

Funding is aimed at helping people obtain or retain housing. Funds can be used for a security deposit, rent or utility assistance, or to help pay moving costs, but the money is paid to the landlord, utility company or moving company – not to the person being assisted. Funds are used for short-term rent (3 months) or medium-term rent (4 – 18 months) and can include 6 months rent or utilities arrears. Individuals cannot get help through this program if they are receiving help under any other housing or utility program.

Such programs provide case management, counselling, coordination and outreach. In the USA, legal services and credit repair services are included. Administration costs are limited to 5% of grants.

What struck me about the homeless services and ESM were that agencies collaborate, to reduce duplication of services, and will combine their efforts to ensure a client’s needs are met.





Observations from Colorado (cont.)

The Housing Market

In Colorado Springs, 57% are homeowners and **34% are renters**. Home vacancy accounts for 7% of the real estate market. 29% of homes are in multi-unit buildings, and **45% of all renters are in housing stress**, paying more than 30% of their income.

The **average market value** for a home in Colorado Springs in June, 2009 was \$201,009, while the average sales price of a house was \$191,073 in April 2009, down 0.03% from March 2009. **House prices depreciated 4.7%** in the last 12 months.

The total inventory of available homes in the Colorado Springs market in June, 2009 stood at 5,596 homes. **Foreclosures made up the majority of the homes for sale**. This accounted for 3,376 real estate properties or 60% of the Colorado Springs real estate market. The rest of the market comprised existing homes and new homes totalling 2,220 and 2,220 houses respectively.



Looking at the number of homes and the average time homes are on the market (for sale) can indicate how long homeowners are willing to wait to sell their homes. It took an average of 67 days for homes in Colorado Springs to go from a listing to a ratified contract.

Figures from: http://realestate.aol.com/Colorado_Springs-CO-real-estate

Finally

Many Americans cannot exist without a car: the shopping centres are so spread out it is difficult to walk between shops, because they are so far apart, across huge car parks.

And it is a consumption-oriented economy. It seems as if one of the fastest-growing businesses is self-storage garages, constructed row upon row and even multi-levels, so people can store all their "extra, no-longer used" possessions.



Photos taken by Gary Wilson in the USA, May 2009.



Human Rights for the Homeless

In December last year the Federal government announced the Australian Human Rights Consultation. The Consultation was intended to gauge the national appetite for human rights and broad questions about existing and possible future human rights protections in Australia. Over the last six months the homeless persons' legal services in four states, including the Housing Legal Clinic in SA, have worked together to prepare a report for the Consultation. Consultations with people experiencing homelessness have been held and a written submission that incorporates the views and ideas of those consulted has been prepared.

In brief, the position is that people experiencing homelessness are subject to systematic and repeated breaches of their human rights on a daily basis, including in respect of the right to housing, the right to health, the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to privacy, and the right to participate. We strongly support the introduction of a Human Rights Act for Australia. This Act is necessary in order for people experiencing homelessness to seek redress and vindication when their rights are violated.

More detailed information is available from the Human Rights Law Resource Centre website hrlrc.org.au.

Legal Clinic Looking North and South

The Housing Legal Clinic (HLC) has been given the opportunity to expand into the northern and southern outer suburbs of Adelaide, thanks to a grant from the Law Foundation of South Australia. Since the establishment of the HLC in July 2006, legal clinics have been operating at inner city agencies – The Magdalene Centre, Byron Place Community Centre, Hutt Street Centre and Catherine House – and at the UnitingCare Wesley Family Centre in Port Adelaide.

The purpose of the grant is to explore opportunities for new legal clinics in Salisbury/Elizabeth in the north and Noarlunga/Christies Beach in the south. The key to the HLC model is that with volunteer lawyers we conduct two-hour legal clinics at the premises of host organisations and in partnership with them. We work closely with a wide range of other services – legal and community – to assist clients and to avoid duplication. With the support of local communities, new legal clinics will follow this model.

Bill Manallack
Coordinator
WRCSA Housing Legal Clinic
Bill-m@wrcsa.org.au



Looking at the Aboriginal Housing Crisis in 2009 - A Forum

On **Friday, 10th July from 2.00 – 4.30pm** a forum will be held at Nunkuwarrin Yunti called '**Looking at the Aboriginal Housing Crisis in 2009**'. The forum is intended to explore the critical challenges facing Aboriginal people who are in housing and those experiencing homelessness.

There will be a number of speakers including Klynton Wanganeen, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, and a worker and psychologist from Ngatunna Patpanga who will talk about housing issues for families and the impact of homelessness on young Aboriginal people. Phillip Saunders who is developing a plan for an Aboriginal Housing Company, will talk about the progress on the project and Gregory Wilson, who is the Curriculum Manager of Aboriginal Languages from DECS, will explore the barriers and issues for Anangu people seeking to live in urban environments.

Afternoon tea is provided and everyone is welcome. If anyone has questions relating to the forum please call Cate Jones at Shelter SA on 8221 6488 or 0428 828 595 .

Looking at the Aboriginal
Housing Crisis in 2009—
a forum

will be held on
July 10,
from 2pm–4.30pm

at
Nunkuwarrin Yunti.
182 Wakefield Street,
Adelaide

2009- 2010 Membership Now Due!

Membership fees for the 2009—2010 financial year are now due. An application form is included with this newsletter.

Your membership is very important to us, and we trust that you continue to find value in being a member of Shelter SA.

By supporting Shelter SA as a member, our collective voice is strengthened, and issues relating to affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness are given greater consideration by politicians and policy makers.

Together we can work towards a society where everyone has access to affordable and appropriate housing!

Upcoming Events

July 6

Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness Expo 2009

10am—2pm Victoria Square, Kadina

The Copper Coast Youth Council (CCYC) is putting on its first ever Homeless or at risk of homelessness expo. Everything is free for young people/

If you would like more information, please contact Jodi Russack on 8821 1600 or email jrussack@coppercoast.sa.gov.au

July 10

Looking at the Aboriginal Housing Crisis in 2009 - A Forum

2.00 – 4.30pm, Nunkuwarrin Yunti, Wakefield Street, Adelaide

See page 15 for more information or contact Cate on 8221 6488.

July 17

Walk a Mile in my Boots

Help the homeless get back on their feet this winter by experiencing, for just one hour, what it's like to live in their shoes. Walk a mile, from North Tce to South Tce along Hutt St, on a wintry Adelaide morning to get your breakfast in the parklands. Register as an individual, a team from your organisation, or as a family (for catering purposes children must be registered; gold coin donations will be accepted from children under 12yrs). Schools can run their own walk, please call Zorica on 8418 2528. Support Hutt Street Centre's work with Adelaide's homeless and vulnerable people. For more information and the registration form go to <http://www.huttstcentre.org.au/About.mvc/NewsEvents>

24-27 November

National Housing Conference—Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

To Register—<http://www.nationalhousingconference.org.au/melbourne2009/registration>

Early bird Registrations close on June 30.

Shelter SA T Shirts

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Until July 17

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Shelter SA is a peak housing organisation representing housing consumers' views to Government, the housing industry and the community. It is primarily concerned with the availability and adequacy of low cost housing, and that people on low incomes have access to secure, affordable and appropriate housing.

Please contact Shelter SA if you are interested in becoming a member, or would like further information.

Secretariat

Executive Director: Gary Wilson

Sector Development Officer: Margo Johnson

Project Officer: Cate Jones

Clerical Officer: Cheryl Shepley