

“Reinventing Social Housing- a once in a generation chance”

A presentation to the AHI Breakfast September 23 2009

From Gary Wilson's notes

Michael Lennon, Chief Executive Officer, Housing Choices Australia, shared his insights into some of the key issues regarding the current opportunities in the delivery of nonmarket housing across Australia.

Michael Lennon is currently an advisor to the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs on the new National Affordable Housing Agreement. Michael's career has encompassed a number of executive leadership positions in a wide range of public agencies associated with housing, planning and urban development

He posed the question: Do we feed the broken system or put resources into building a new one?

Michael Lennon says the biggest problem in housing is that demand exceeds supply, particularly in the lower half of the market. The bottom 40% of income earners need 251,000 more homes. The country needs 90,000 more homes just to catch up with the 1996 levels of public housing.

Michael said more rental incentives and tax changes are needed, and because of the changing demand dynamics, our housing “products” also need to change.

He believes there is no longer any political will for public housing, which he describes as an “old model” that suited former times. Waiting lists for public housing are NOT a measure of housing need. 62% of social housing tenants are not working.

In spite of extra funds for social housing, the amount given indicates that it is not a high priority. The \$6.4 Nation Building funds are being applied to a failed system. State governments are now responsible for public housing deficits and must ensure the recurrent costs of new social housing.



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“Reinventing Social Housing” (cont.)

Some of the dilemmas facing housing authorities are:

- How to meet differing needs at different times in peoples’ lives?
- How to balance the housing market in the federal context?
- Future deficits need to be managed
- In a world of multiple providers, what is the role of public housing?
- Who is to design the housing system reform?
 - How can housing reform attract private finance?
 - How can we engage, plan, get land, and include infrastructure into policy and funding decisions?
 - Can State housing authorities design their competitors?

The core housing reforms needed are:

- Choice-based listings for tenants
- Decreased concentrations of disadvantage
- New housing providers at scale (nationally, the average size of a community housing organisation is 36 homes)
- Blending financing models
- Setting up consistent and common reporting across the country
- Defining clear roles and responsibilities.

By 2012, the NAHA will have been renegotiated, interest rates will have risen, public spending will have declined, population will be increasing and housing prices will be rising. According to Michael public housing debts will be increasing, social housing will have stalled, and shortfalls in housing supply will be increasing, OR alternatively, there will be a much more optimistic scenario being played out – it’s up to all of us to work towards that positive outcome.

On 14 July 2009 “The Age” Newspaper published an article by Michael, part of which said:

The public housing estates were well planned environments with healthy parks, solid schools and conveniently located shops. For thousands of households they provided the perfect platform for family life, educational advancement and a stepping stone to home ownership.

But we also need a systemic change to tackle a system that no longer works. Housing in Australia needs institutional reform. We must find new ways to blend public and private money, building upon the Housing Association model led by the current Victorian Government. We need to break up concentrations of disadvantaged people - particularly around the public housing estates, which in some places entrap families over generations.

One way to improve the situation is to ensure that affordable housing is built into all of the planning scenarios for managing metropolitan growth and change. It is worth pausing to reflect on the underlying cause of the US sub-prime mortgage crisis and its impact on the global financial crisis. An under-investment in basic social housing saw families with no other option but to take up poorly regulated and ill-considered home ownership using financing methods that ultimately led to the destruction of some of the world's biggest financial institutions. There are important lessons to be learnt from this.



Shelter SA's Annual General Meeting

We Invite you to our

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 21 October 2009
1.30pm – 4pm

Old Parliament House
North Terrace, Adelaide

Come join us for a stimulating panel discussion with

Debbie Faulkner (Flinders University/AHURI),
Alice Lawson (Affordable Housing Innovations Unit, Housing SA) and
Angela Hazebroek (URPS/Planning Institute of SA - to be confirmed).

Join a facilitated discussion around the topical subjects of housing need, and initiatives for increased housing supply in the context of the 30 year plan for greater Adelaide.

The panel will run from 1:30 to 3:00pm at the latest, followed by a short break and refreshments before Shelter's brief AGM at 3:15pm.

*Please note that for security reasons, **you need to RSVP to the Shelter office on 8223 4077 or email cheryl.shepley@sheltersa.asn.au by Friday 16 October** so Parliamentary Passes can be prepared. Parliament House has a security screening system much like the airports, which takes a little bit of time, so please plan on arriving between 1.00 and 1.20pm to ensure a 1.30 pm start.*



Old Parliament House, North Terrace Adelaide



Advocacy: Just How Far Can We Take It?

By Cate Jones

Advocacy is a vital undertaking in a civilized and democratic society. For organisations like Shelter, it is our role, our purpose, to advocate for government housing policy that promotes inclusive lives for disadvantaged people. As workers it is our task to monitor, analyse and evaluate policy to ensure that we identify unjust discriminatory or exclusionary practices. Shelter SA's systemic advocacy work, that examines the structural blocks to equity, is inescapably political in nature and organisations that engage in this kind of advocacy can sometimes be seen as critical of government.

The Rudd Government, unlike the previous government, has accepted the role of advocacy as an essential part of charitable, philanthropic and 'not for profit' organisations and their work. It has been swift to reassure that funding will not be withdrawn from programs or services because organisations may question or be critical of government policy. Openness to new ideas and, in fact criticism, was made evident when Rudd initiated the 2020 Summit, then through the development of the Social Inclusion Agenda, which has engaged with NGO's, and the creation of the Social Inclusion Board. From this perspective, it appears as though the Rudd Government is supporting advocacy and welcoming ideas and debate.

The previous government had built-in 'anti-advocacy' clauses in funding arrangements that meant organisations were unambiguously forbidden to speak out against policies and structures that generated further disadvantage for people using services. This essentially silenced any productive argument or debate relating to policy making. The Rudd Government is opposed to 'anti-advocacy' clauses and it has made it clear that it will not impose these as limitations on funding agreements.

To stipulate that the activities of NGO's be non-political, as the previous Liberal Government demanded, is a denial of the right of the community and individuals to give voice to their concerns. We live in world jam-packed with contested views that arise from differing and contrasting life experiences, values and social positions. Consensus within political systems is a myth. We bear witness to this everyday as we watch the conflicting factions within political parties, our work places and sometimes, our homes. Surely, it is the role of NGO's and their democratic right, to give voice to the need for change within systems that deny inclusivity. Advocacy by the NGO sector is critically important to enabling democratic processes. It is through enabling these democratic processes that we endorse representation and diversity, and therefore offer some empowerment of those who may well be excluded. It is surely the role of NGO's to take the voices of those most often silenced to those who make decisions. It is through listening to, and more importantly hearing, a diversity of voices that policy decisions are less likely to fail and are ultimately more inclusive and robust.

If the status-quo isn't working, we must work towards change. From my experience, people tend to ignore what is actually happening around them and reconstruct a reality that is safest for them and this suggests an inchoate fear of change. I ask "Who fears change the most?" It is my belief that those who are most afraid of change are those who feel that their positions, values or ideologies are challenged or under threat.

Advocacy has a huge role to play in bringing about change. But it must be on-going, constant and not restricted to the role governments would like it to play.



Adelaide Too Expensive for Teachers and Emergency Workers

By Gary Wilson

On July 27th, Bankwest released its Second Annual Bankwest Key Worker Housing Affordability Report.

Owning a house in the city they serve remains an unattainable dream for Adelaide's struggling emergency workers and teachers. 74% of council areas in Adelaide are unaffordable, because the median house price is more than 5 times their salary. Thus many essential workers are locked permanently in the rental market, or have to face a long commute to the communities they serve.

The report says "Even more worrying is that affordability has continued to decline over the past few years in Adelaide. Of South Australia's 38,000 key workers, 18,000 are teachers, 15,000 are nurses, 4,000 are police officers, 500 are fire and emergency workers, and 500 are ambulance officers."

Nurses, fire-fighters and teachers are priced out of 95% of Local Government Areas (LGA's) in Adelaide in March 2009. Additionally, 30% of regional LGA's in SA were unaffordable for fire-fighters and nurses.

Median house price in Adelaide in March 2009 was \$373,500. The most affordable LGA was Playford (median of \$230,000), while Salisbury (\$273,500), Gawler (\$284,500), Onkaparinga (\$312,500) and Tea Tree Gully (\$343,500) are more than 5 times the annual salary of key workers. The most affordable country LGA's were those with the least population: Southern Mallee, Peterborough, Le Hunte, Kimba, Orroroo/Carrieton, etc.

The least affordable metropolitan LGA's (in declining order) were Walkerville, Burnside, Unley, NPS, Adelaide, Holdfast Bay, Prospect, Mitcham, Adelaide Hills and Charles Sturt – all had house price to earnings ratios of 6.0 to 10.8.

Units are more affordable for key workers than houses, with the median unit price unaffordable for key workers in only 5% of LGA's in Adelaide.

More detailed analysis, data and table are contained within the 30-page Bankwest Key Worker Housing Affordability Report, available at www.bankwest.com.au

Two Reports of Interest

The Private Rental Market – Trends and Implications (June 2009)

www.sgsep.com.au/sgs-staff-presentations-and-papers

Does Australia have enough housing? By Owen Donald (August 2009)

www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/cf/apnhr/Presentations/



Homeless Connect: Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo Update by Margo Johnson



The Homeless Connect event aims to improve the health and wellbeing of those who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Last year around 350 people participated in this event, taking advantage of the range of free information that was offered including health checks, housing information, and getting involved in all of the activities on the day.

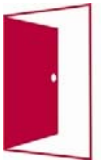
Preparations are well under way for this year's event with just over 30 organisations already registered. And they are: Anglicare, Asthma SA, Baptist Care WestCare, Byron Place Community Centre, Cancer Council of SA,

Centacare's Bilby Bus, Centacare's HAPPI Program, Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA), Edmund Rice Camps (SA) Inc, Hep C Council, Kumangka Aboriginal Youth Service, Legal Services Commission of SA, Life Without Barriers, Magdalene Centre, Migrant Resource Centre, Mission Australia, OARS, Quit SA, Resthaven, Salvation Army Towards Independence, SAVIVE, Shelter SA, South Australian Dental Service, South Australian Lebanese Women's Association, Streetlink Youth Health Service, Tenants Information and Advocacy Service (TIAS), The Walk In Robe (Saltchurch) UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, UnitingCare Wesley Bowden, Unity Housing Company (Support Services), Women's Legal Services and Workskil.



There are a number of ways that you can get involved: we are still looking for representation from organisations working with people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The event is a great way to promote your services to others in related fields, so why not come along and showcase your services activities? Attendance at the event is also a great way to find out what types of supports and activities are currently on offer.

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Homeless Connect: Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo Update (cont.)

We are also **looking for volunteers** to assist on the day and in the lead up to the event, so if you are able to contribute 1-4 hours on the 10th of November please contact Margo at Shelter SA on 8223 4077 or email: margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au (A full list of job descriptions for tasks will be available to view from the Shelter SA website in the next few weeks).

We are **also looking for people with specialist skills** on the day – for example: jugglers, henna tattooists, musicians and performers, magicians, puppeteers, masseuse/masseur, podiatrists, dentists, optometrists and hairdressers just to name a few.

Your contribution will be greatly appreciated by all who attend the event and can make a considerable difference to those who are doing it tough at the moment. We look forward to seeing you there!



The Expo will be held on
Tuesday, 10th November 2009

10am - 2 pm

Whitmore Square
Adelaide



Legal Clinic Celebrates Three Big Years

by Bill Manallack, Coordinator, Housing Legal Clinic



A large group of lawyers, social workers and associated professionals gathered recently to celebrate the third anniversary of the Housing Legal Clinic at a luncheon catered for by the Market To Table community catering group. The Hon Jennifer Rankine MP attended and presented Certificates of Appreciation. A special Certificate of Achievement was presented to the Legal Clinic's first client, David Norman, representing the large number of homeless people assisted by the lawyers.

More than 1,300 homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless have received pro-bono legal advice and support at the Housing Legal Clinic since it opened in 2006. The pro bono lawyers provide legal advice on a wide range of issues including debt management, paying fines, tenancy disputes, discrimination,

personal injury, family law, criminal law, making wills and immigration law.

David Norman's life was in turmoil when he presented as the first legal clinic client three years ago. He had pressing legal issues keeping him from taking positive steps to turn his life around. According to David the Legal Clinic lawyers listened intently to assist him with his problems.

'Before I went to the Housing Legal Clinic, people looked at me like I was nothing, but when I went to the Legal Clinic suddenly I was listened to, I was someone to be reckoned with, not just someone who was homeless,' Mr Norman said.

David had become homeless in just three months, after losing his job because of an injury and having a relationship breakdown with his daughter and fiancé. After four years of 'wandering in the wilderness,' he started getting his life back on track through a number of services and in particular the Legal Clinic. With the return of his confidence, David completed Certificates two and three in Community Services and is now employed full time. He has rebuilt his relationship with his daughter and is a Vendor Mentor for The Big Issue and has completed a public speaking course.

David is just one of the many marginalised people to receive life-changing support from the Legal Clinic. Five Adelaide law firms with 125 volunteer lawyers run weekly 2-hour legal clinics at five community welfare organisations – The Magdalene Centre, Hutt Street Centre, Catherine House, Byron Place Community Centre and UnitingCare Wesley in Port Adelaide – providing legal services with a commercial value in excess of \$1.5m.

Coordinator of the Housing Legal Clinic, Bill Manallack, said the legal clinic model provides the most professional legal support service in the most cost-effective way.

"Taking the volunteer lawyers to the host community organisations is the only way that most homeless people will have access to professional legal services. With solutions to their legal problems, homeless people are able to take the next step in exiting homelessness, and for those in housing we prevent them from becoming homeless."



David Norman



Seniors Sharehousing Guide Update

by Margo Johnson

Shelter SA has been working in collaboration with the Office for the Ageing on research around the housing requirements of the over 50's for the past few months, with the aim of producing a resource similar to the Sharehouse Toolkit, called the Seniors Sharehousing Guide.

We are still looking to complete more surveys with people over 50 who are living in a sharehouse arrangement – go to the Shelter SA website: www.sheltersa.asn.au to download the survey or call Margo on 8223 4077 to conduct a telephone interview.

The research and first draft of the Seniors Sharehousing Guide are now nearing completion and we will be inviting housing consumers, service providers and staff working with the over 50's to comment and provide feedback on this draft. Participants of the *Affordable Housing Alternatives for Seniors Consultations* held recently have already provided the researcher with considerable insight into the dilemmas many people over 50 are currently coping with – and many were unaware of the kinds of supports that are available in SA. As in previous projects, we have found the feedback and comments received from our networks have provided invaluable expertise and insight into the needs of housing consumers. Wherever possible, these comments will be incorporated into the final document in order to better address the variety of issues that our fellow South Australians are experiencing.

We are looking for your assistance in a number of areas:

- Have we got your service details correct? Some of the contacts we have included have been sourced from internet sites and promotional materials – so please let us know if the details we have listed are accurate and the most appropriate.
- Would you like to recommend a service or activity? As in previous projects, we have found that even with extensive networking, attending events and scouring the internet, there is occasionally a service that gets overlooked. If you know of a service that has been useful to you, then please let us know.
- How easy is the document to use? We anticipate that the resource will be useful to housing consumers, services working with the over 50's and researchers alike, so it is important to present the information in a number of ways. Feedback from service providers from previous projects requested a Services Index at the end of the document and housing consumers will search for information within themes – so we have tried to incorporate each of these suggestions. But what about font size and layout – can you find what you are looking for easily? There is also scope for contacts to be listed or colour coded by region (northern, southern, western and eastern metropolitan, regional area or suburb) further down the track. This may make it easier for service providers wishing to network with others in related fields – contact lists could be collated in Excel format and made available by request from Shelter SA.

Your contribution will assist in creating a valuable resource for those working with the over 50's and the housing consumers themselves and we look forward to hearing from you.

Throughout the process of developing the resource, contacts have been created with a range of interested parties, from housing consumers and volunteers to age specific services and organisations. All recipients of the Seniors Distribution list will automatically receive a copy of the draft in the next couple of weeks. If you have not received a copy or would like to be included in this list, then please contact Margo on 8223 4077 or email: margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au



Housing Progress by Gary Wilson

First Home Owners Grant

Between October 2008 and the end of August 2009, the First Home Owners Boost assisted 53,000 new purchasers into homeownership, with 10,773 of those in South Australia.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

The National Rental Affordability Scheme allocated 422 properties in Round 1 and a further 542 in Round 2. In Round 2, 311 are in inner metropolitan, 123 in outer metro, and 108 in rural areas.

Of the 961 incentives approved, 55 were delivered in 2008/2009 financial year. A further 600 are forecast to be delivered in 2009/2010 and the balance over the following two financial years to the end of June 2012.

Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan

As of August 31st, the following information was made available:

Number of homes completed/under construction/earmarked under the stimulus package so far?

Stage 1 Completed: nil. Under construction 55, total 248 (including the 55). These will be completed by June 2010 as required

Stage 2 -Target around 1120 with 75% of Stage 1 plus Stage 2 to be completed by December 2010.

Number of Housing SA homes repaired/under repair/earmarked for repair under the stimulus package so far?

Completed: 3. In progress over 300. Earmarked a further 150 - expect to do a total of up to 500

Housing SA

Number of homes completed/under construction/committed under the State housing funds?

To 31/8/09 Housing SA has completed 27 dwellings and has 265 under construction. The target for completions for 09/10 is 407 dwellings.

Shelter SA T Shirts

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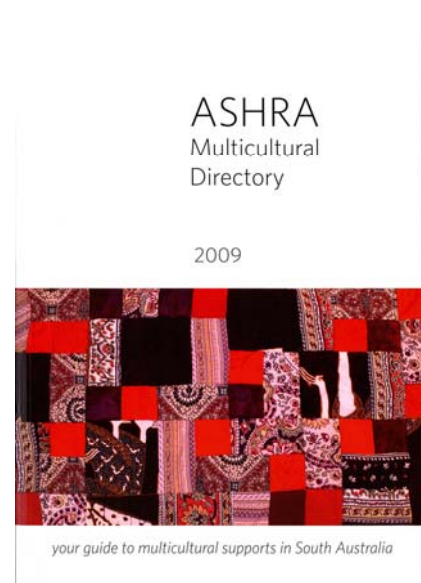




ASHRA Multicultural Directory 2009

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).

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 8223 4077



Shelter SA Membership

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2009-2010

Fees are now due!

Membership Forms are available from

www.sheltersa.asn.au/membership

Homeless Connect: Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo Adelaide 2008 DVD



The DVD of the Homeless Connect: Homelessness, Health & Housing Expo 2008 is now available.

If you would like a copy of the DVD, please contact Margo at Shelter SA on 8223 4077 or by email at margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au

Upcoming Events

Anti Poverty Week

11 - 17 October 2009

More information: www.antipovertyweek.org.au

Adelaide Thinkers in Residence—Public Lecture with Professor Laura Lee An Integrated Design Strategy for SA 14 October 2009, 6pm

Adelaide Town Hall, Adelaide

Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Laura Lee, FAIA, Professor of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University will discuss her recommendations for intelligent investment in design, planning and development in our State toward sustainable futures. Bookings are essential. Visit http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2009events/ATIR_LauraLee.asp to book and for more information.

Shelter SA Annual General Meeting

21 October 2009, 1.30pm

Old Parliament House, North Terrace Adelaide

Integrated Service Delivery—'Holy Grail' or 'Magic Bullet'? Breakfast with Rhonda Phillips

21 October 2009, 7.15 - 9am

Mercure Grosvenor Hotel, North Terrace Adelaide

Rhonda draws on International and Australian research, including a recent AHURI study, to uncover the myths and realities of attempting policy and service integration. This informative and provocative discussion will be of interest to housing and human services practitioners involved in policy, management or frontline work Cost: members—\$35, non-members - \$55 **register on line at:** <http://www.housinginstitute.org/events/register/register.php>

SACOSS Annual General Meeting

27 October 2009, 3pm

Marjorie Black House, 47 King William Road, Unley

More information: <http://www.sacoss.org.au/events/agm.html>

Community Housing Council of SA Country Forum, Annual General Meeting and Members Cocktail Party

30 October 2009

Adelaide Pavilion, corner of South Terrace and Peacock Road Adelaide

The Hon Stephen Wade, MLC, Shadow Minister for Housing will be a guest speaker at the cocktail party.

Homeless Connect: Homelessness, Health and Housing Expo 2009

10th November 2009, 10am-2pm

Whitmore Square, Adelaide

If you or your organisation would like to participate in this year's event, contact Margo on 8223 4077 or email: margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au This event is proudly brought to you by the Adelaide City Council, Housing SA and Shelter SA

National Housing Conference

24 - 27 November 2009, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, Melbourne

<http://www.nationalhousingconference.org.au/melbourne2009>

Create a Better State SACOSS Housing Advocacy Day

30 November 2009

More information at ww.createabetterstate.wordpress.com



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Housing: a basic human right

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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