

## \$33.2m extra for Housing

Speaking at ACT Shelter's AGM on 12 December 2003, Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope announced an extra \$33.2m would be provided for housing in the ACT.

The funds will be spent on new public, community, and indigenous housing and are additional to the existing housing budget and the Government's commitment to replace the stock lost by the decommissioning of the Currong Apartments next year. The additional funding is from accumulated funds in the former Home Loans portfolio.

Unfortunately Housing Minister, Bill Wood MLA was unable to be at the meeting, however the Chief Minister, as did ACT Shelter, recognised his hard work in influencing the Government to strengthen its housing commitment.

Shelter also sees this announcement as an important recognition that Canberra has a severe housing crisis.

While all Australian capital cities are experiencing the pressure of declining housing affordability, the characteristics of the Canberra housing market, in particular the under-supply of affordable social housing, means that increasing numbers of low to middle income households are experiencing severe housing stress, or worse, homelessness

There has been some easing in the private rental market as there has been substantial unit development, however, this is mostly at the middle to upper end of the market. When demand for housing outstrips supply, rents are pushed up and landlords can pick and choose tenants. In this situation, there is a strong likelihood of increased discrimination against disadvantaged



*Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope speaking at Shelter's AGM*

ACT Shelter has warmly welcomed the this increased funding that far exceeds the Government's annual obligation under the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement.

groups, including indigenous people, young people and people with disability or mental illness. The additional funding allocated by the Government will go a long way to assisting these groups.

# ACT SHELTER'S BUDGET PRIORITIES

**Contact Shelter for a copy of the full submission**

## **Supply Of Affordable Housing**

That the Government not proceed with schemes to head lease properties from the private rental market.

That the ACT Government provide discrete capital funding to redevelop the Currong Apartment site .

That the Currong site remain in public ownership.

That the ACT Government develop a public and community housing supply strategy that includes increased public housing acquisition and is funded from budget surpluses and surplus Home Loan Fund funds.

That Housing ACT work collaboratively with relevant community organisations to develop targets for the social housing supply strategy.

That the Affordable Housing Taskforce recommendations 12, 37, 33, 38 and 39 be immediately implemented.

That recommendation 33 be amended to raise the percentage of floor space from 3-4 per cent to a minimum of 10 per cent.

## **Year of Built Environment 2004**

That the ACT Government provide secretariat and project funding for Year of the Built Environment 2004.

## **Housing Information**

That funding be provided for the establishment of a Housing Information and Referral Service. This service should build on the infrastructure of existing information services.

That the ACT Government work with ACT Shelter to improve the information technology capability of housing and related services, including the development of an internet 'housing portal'.

That funds be allocated for a community education and information campaign on housing access.

## **Public Housing Management**

That the Tenants Union ACT be funded to employ a social housing tenants education worker who would undertake education and information strategies for tenants, tenants groups and advocates. This worker could also advise Housing ACT on appropriate information strategies targeted to tenant and community organisations.

That the Preventing Eviction Program be removed from the Community Linkages Program and be funded under

the Homelessness Strategy initiatives. Further that the Department consult with ACT Shelter and organisations funded under the program to revise the program guidelines.

That the Preventing Eviction Program be funded for a minimum of one full time position in each service.

That the Preventing Eviction Program be extended to regions without a current project.

That additional funding be allocated to a public housing retrofitting program that is developed in consultation with tenants and the Conservation Council. Discussions should also occur with the community housing sector to ascertain the need to extend the program to community housing tenancies.

That a grant program be developed to assist low income tenants to install thermal quality curtains.

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## **From Kevin Bray, Convenor - Social Justice Task Group, ACT Churches' Council**

The Social Justice Task Group of the ACT Churches' Council recently met ACT Government Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, Mr Bill Wood MLA, to discuss homelessness in the ACT. Mr Wood will be receiving advice on a Homelessness Strategy from a Homelessness Advisory Group of government and community representatives in December and the Task Group welcomed the opportunity to discuss its views on the need for an holistic, comprehensive strategy. Mr Wood encouraged the Task Group to engage all ACT MLA's and the wider community in the ongoing development of an effective strategy and the Task Group is therefore pleased that a copy of its submission to Mr Wood is being published by ACT Shelter.

### **Introduction**

The Brisbane City Council has developed a homelessness policy as part of its objective to "establish an inclusive city". The Council's **Homelessness Charter** was published in April 2003. Issues covered in the Charter include participation, homeless rights, service delivery and facilities so as to establish an inclusive, non-discriminatory city. The Charter recognises that "... homeless people are citizens with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else in the city."

In addition, the Homelessness Charter gives an outline of areas of service and provision of facilities that the council can provide. For example, the Council has undertaken to "...consider basic infrastructure in appropriate public spaces ... such as showers, toilets, basic shelter and access to cooking, storage and washing facilities."

The Charter confirms the status of homeless people as "... a significant group of stakeholders in the city, whose needs and rights will be respected." The Charter also recognises that conventional consultation processes may not include homeless people and undertakes to "... consult with homeless people about public spaces that are regularly used by them."

### **The Case for an ACT Homelessness Charter**

The ACT Government has announced a number of initiatives aimed at addressing issues faced by people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These include the development of an ACT Homelessness Strategy, building on the Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT (2002) and the present work being carried out by the Homelessness Advisory Group (HAG). The recently announced Social Plan provides an overarching policy framework within which detailed actions and services for addressing homelessness may be implemented.

The Social Justice Task Group of the ACT Churches' Council welcomes these developments. There is, however, a concern that while there is a quite proper

and strong focus on preventing homelessness and providing adequate housing stock, there is an insufficient focus on those who currently face homelessness and are living private lives in public places or who are in temporary, insecure accommodation (eg. homes of friends/relatives or as boarders/lodgers).

By expressing in concise terms a government-endorsed, community-wide commitment to addressing homelessness, an ACT Homelessness Charter similar to the Brisbane City Council Charter could help to ensure a holistic, multi-dimensional, well-resourced homelessness strategy.

The Charter's primary role would be to articulate key principles of support for homeless people and establish priorities for action on homelessness by government, business and the wider community. It would be a focal point for service delivery and accountability recognising the rights and powerlessness of those in our community that are among the most vulnerable. **The Task Group urges the ACT Government to develop such a Charter.**

A commitment to implement a Homelessness Charter would ensure:

- an ongoing examination of homelessness across all Government actions
- a template of principles that would govern present and future programs and actions
- the development and implementation of specific, concrete proposals.

An effective Charter could lead to improved, more equitable services and facilities in many areas of government administration – in health, recreation, policing, housing, emergency accommodation, urban planning, transport, employment, indigenous affairs, human rights and non-discrimination. Some examples are:

- (a) Justice: - The introduction of anti-discrimination provisions based on economic and social rights, to protect people experiencing homelessness against discrimination; the

development and implementation of effective means of appeal by homeless people against unfair decisions, including through the ACT Ombudsman or the Human Rights Commissioner, as well as the appointment of a client advocate as outlined in recommendation 31 of the Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT.

- (b) **Urban Services:** - The provision and effective maintenance of amenities such as washing, cooking and showering facilities which are accessible to homeless people, having regard to the differing needs of different groups (eg, single men are likely to need rather different facilities, possibly in different locations, from those best suited to women, the elderly, parents and single parents). Moreover, the design of urban parklands should have regard to the need for both a user-friendly and homelessness-friendly environment for those who are living their private lives in public places;
- (c) **Policing:** - Development of protocols and training programs that ensure that the police offer protection and practical assistance, rather than persecution, to some of the most vulnerable members of our community;
- (d) **Health:** - Prescribing and monitoring the dietary value offered by organisations and programs which provide meals and food to homeless people. Also, provide some outreach facilities to ensure basic medical and dental health;
- (e) **Planning:** - Ensuring that urban planners and developers consider the impact of development projects on homeless people (eg, the Kingston Foreshore site had previously offered homeless and transient people a living space, as did many of the parklands destroyed by the Canberra fires and subsequent fire prevention measures. There is also a need to identify areas that are frequently used by homeless people (e.g. the Cotter, Glebe and Griffin Centre areas) so as to provide facilities in places where they will be used.

**.. the Kingston Foreshore site had previously offered homeless and transient people a living space, as did many of the parklands destroyed by the Canberra fires and subsequent fire prevention measures.**

The spirit and intent of a Homelessness Charter should be formally incorporated into government decision-making, for example by requiring a 'homelessness impact statement' as an integral element of ACT Cabinet documents and other relevant policy papers.

## Conclusion

The Task Group has prepared this brief proposal for an ACT Homelessness Charter by consulting some members of the community who have themselves experienced homelessness. We support the Government's initiative in establishing the HAG and in calling for the preparation of a draft Homelessness Strategy by the end of 2003. Churches in the ACT are called on, to varying degrees, to assist homeless people and much is done with limited resources and facilities. A Charter along the lines we have proposed would be an over-arching framework for outcomes of equity for both long and short-term homelessness. A Charter would assist those that are disadvantaged in managing their affairs and lives in an ever more complex society.

*Social Justice Task Group – ACT Churches' Council  
September 2003*

*To comment write to: The Social Justice Task Group,  
The ACT Churches' Council, C/- PO Box 1981  
CANBERRA ACT 2601*

*The rights of people living private lives in public places is being considered by the Homelessness Advisory Group for a Charter of Homeless Rights, similar to Brisbane City Council's Homelessness Charter which was announced at the National Homelessness Conference in April 2003. For more details see:*

*[www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/council\\_at\\_work/  
support\\_community/homeless\\_strategy/download](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/council_at_work/support_community/homeless_strategy/download)*

The Act Government released its draft homelessness strategy *Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness* for public consultation on 5 December 2003. The deadline for comments has not been published, but as the consultant will need time to incorporate consultation outcomes, prior to the March 2004 launch, you should aim at the end of January 2004.

The draft strategy is available on the web at:  
**[www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au)**

or contact Ashley Martin at DHCS on 6205 0534, if you need a hard copy sent to you and to confirm the submission deadline.

## SURFING AT BEGA - a homeless person's perspective

It's been a cold winter but it's great to be sofa surfing for a while. A bit hard on the back and my friend's not sure that his dole will cover the next electricity bill. The showering is cool, but not as cold as a tap in the park.

We've heard that people are talking about getting stuff done for us who are doing it rough. I hope so. The only public shower is closed, the shelter of trees out at Cotter Dam has been pruned back after the fires and the Village is starting to lock up its blocks. Even my friend Gavan was caught humping it with his friend in the park. There's no privacy anywhere these days. But Gavan wasn't randy for long. When the northerlies and rain blasted in he and his friend huddled under the back stairs of the Griffin Centre near the disposal bins. The security guards don't like you hanging around shopping centres unless you 'look right'.

Anyway the sap is now rising and with the warmth the flies and mosquitoes are back again - along with the cops, drunks and not in my back yard attitude to us homeless in the bush(less) capital.

I hope that those in the know do stop us getting evicted and do increase housing. But also make life for us better while we are doing it tough and waiting for the policy outcomes. If they are unsure what to do just ask and we'll tell 'em in one way or another.

But it is really simple they just have to figure what they would need as citizens and people who had to live their private lives in public spaces.

*Tasman 2003*

*This article was submitted by 'Tasman' (name and address supplied), who unfortunately has first-hand experience of being homeless in Canberra.*

## CONGRATULATIONS HAVELOCK HOUSING ASSOCIATION!

### **Havelock Housing Association Scoops National Awards**

Havelock Housing Association a local charity who provides homes to the disadvantaged in our community won two National awards at a National Community Housing Conference in Adelaide for their outstanding performance in 'Excellence in Organisational Management' and 'Excellence in Service to Tenants and Communities'. They were also presented with two 'Highly Commended' awards, for their performance in the areas of 'Excellence in Corporate Governance' and "Overall Excellence in Community Housing".

The Chief Executive Officer, Nicola Gordon stated that she was delighted with the results and that they had worked consistently during the year to exceed core standards which has resulted in the Association being the first accredited community housing organisation in the ACT receiving a maximum three year accreditation status. Nicola commented 'The Canberra community can be proud of the fact that the ACT, through Havelock Housing Association is leading the way in community housing and in its services and commitments to

tenants. We are proud of the fact that during substantial growth to the Association, we have continued to stay focused on our members - our tenants and continue to meet our social objectives.



Havelock Housing Association is currently the largest provider of Community Housing in the ACT, providing homes for people on a low income including specific programs for single parent families, refugees, tenants with mental illness, group share accommodation at Havelock House and a range of other projects.

# CANBERRA'S NEW BOARDING HOUSES

From Tania Parkes

*The concept of 'boarding houses' conjures a particular image in the minds of most people - a multi room residence with shared bathroom facilities and lounge areas. It may also summon perceptions of establishments fostering social dysfunction by inappropriately housing elderly men with drug and alcohol problems or mental illness.*

Modern boarding houses can be quite different. While some retain the full extent of communal living, others stretch the notion of boarding accommodation by featuring bed-sitter and one-bedroom self-contained units on a common site. These new designs provide improved amenity for residents and address some common management issues. They are smaller in scale, often purpose built, target specific population groups (eg women), avoid concentrations of people with similar needs (eg mental health problems), ensure access to outreach support where appropriate and have responsive tenancy management.

There has been a national decline in low cost boarding and rooming house accommodation over the past decade. Traditionally run by private proprietors, compliance with building codes and health and safety regulations has made investment in these establishments less attractive when compared with the tax advantages of other investments. This decline is also partially due to community concern that boarding houses had become substitute institutions and dumping grounds for people who could not be housed elsewhere.

At one stage in Canberra's history there were many hostel and boarding accommodations. They were, however, never meant for the poor. Rather, they were intended to entice workers from other states to the national capital for employment with the Commonwealth Government. There continue to be private boarding houses in Canberra catering to more affluent students and single

workers. These establishments charge rates beyond those affordable to the 'working poor' or to people whose main source of income is a Government payment. While referred to as low cost accommodation, private boarding houses in the ACT often consume a high proportion of income.

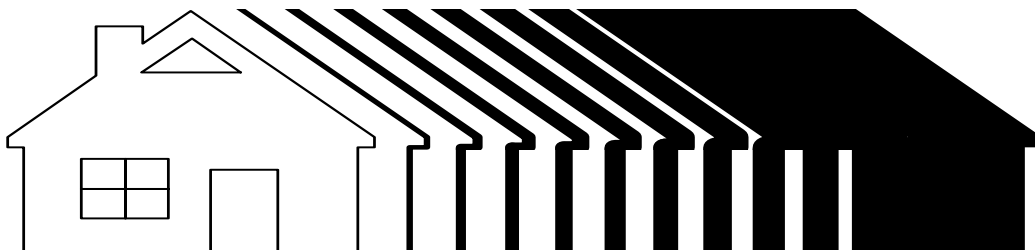
The revival of interest in boarding house accommodation coincide with reduced availability of public housing due to redevelopment and disposal, the prohibitive cost of private rental and gentrification of urban areas.

***'Boarding Houses are smaller in scale, often purpose built, target specific population groups (eg women), avoid concentrations of people with similar needs (eg mental health problems), ensure access to outreach support where appropriate and have responsive tenancy management.'***

Although many people prefer self-contained flats, for others there are benefits to boarding house living beyond that of its relative 'cheapness'. For many sharing the cleaning compensates the disadvantages of sharing bathroom facilities. Communal cooking, dining and living areas can encourage social connection. Access is easy in that generally residents do not have to pay a bond or purchase furniture, utensils and linen. It

can offer an environment of community that can break through the isolation often experienced by the disadvantaged in society. For people leaving Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services, rehabilitation institutions or who have never previously lived independently it can offer structure, support and companionship.

The ACT Youth Housing Task Force, the Poverty Task Group and the Standing Committee on Health and Community Care Inquiry into Elder Abuse raised the lack of boarding house accommodation





in the ACT. Major areas of concern identified included:

- ▣ the lack of ‘exit’ points in the housing market for single people leaving SAAP crisis accommodation;
- ▣ the lack of housing options for single people requiring a low level of ongoing support to ensure the stability of their accommodation; and
- ▣ the lack of cost effective affordable housing options for single people generally, i.e. housing which is affordable for low income people without significant operating subsidy from the ACT Government.

Against this background the ACT Government initiated the ACT Boarding House Program pilot as an appropriate way of providing a housing option midway between independent living and supported accommodation – supportive housing.

The first Government owned, community managed boarding house to be established under this Program was a six bedroom house (five with their own entrances) with shared facilities in Ainslie. It is home to young people aged over 16 requiring an appropriate environment to pursue education

and employment. This house has been operating successfully for 12 months under the management of Lowana.

The second boarding house will be home to eight older women who are not financially independent for reasons of family breakdown. A house in Chapman is currently being refurbished to provide eight en suite bedrooms and a guest room for visitors such as grandchildren, a large kitchen with several work areas, lounge and dining rooms, enclosed and open courtyards and an office. There is ample storage for residents’ possessions.

***‘The revival of interest in boarding house accommodation coincides with reduced availability of public housing due to redevelopment and disposal, the prohibitive cost of private rental and gentrification of urban areas.’***

The third boarding house will comprise 22 self-contained units with some indoor and outdoor communal spaces in two adjacent buildings (11 units in each) for adult singles with low incomes. This boarding house will be purpose built on a greenfields site in the Gungahlin Town Centre. Construction has been delayed for several months by development appeals from the Gungahlin Community Council.

***Tania Parkes is a local consultant who has undertaken many studies and projects on housing issues in the ACT.***

**Shelter’s Budget Priorities (continued from p2)**

That the Housing ACT introduce a ‘rent holiday’ or other incentive system to assist tenants who wish to enter the workforce.

That Housing ACT review rent rebate assessment system with the aim of removing inequities for working tenants.

That Housing ACT introduce a rent increase free threshold for tenants who work casually from time to time.

That the ACT Government introduce a Low Income Concession Card.

In addition to the funding that ACT Shelter and the Tenants Union receive for tenant participation project development, that funding be allocated for tenant participation activities.

**Ainslie Village**

That through an auspice organisation, Ainslie Village residents be funded to employ a community development worker to coordinate community activities and facilitate resident involvement in the redevelopment and other community processes.

**ACT Shelter Resourcing**

That in order to assist ACT Shelter enhance its services, the ACT Government provide it with an additional \$60,600 per annum in recurrent funding.

# TAKING ON THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP AND DOING THE UNORTHODOX

Kerrie Tim

*On any social or economic scale in which you could compare Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders with the wider community, my people are still considerably disadvantaged. And despite the best efforts of Commonwealth and State governments over the past thirty years, despite some really good policies and programs, the results are still damning and they diminish us all.*

I can remember my parents telling me not to get involved in Aboriginal affairs and study to be a doctor (this is primary school mind you) while what I saw modelled around me were the two most important people in my life spending almost all of their time working towards improving the lives of our people. I gleaned the significance of this important commitment from watching them, rather than what they told me. So I feel as though I grew up with a strong sense of social justice, a keen awareness of inequities, and a strong belief that you could turn around the inequities that our people, and other Australians, faced.

I watched my Mum and Dad go out and talk to Murrin in the area and the region about what was needed to help get our people off the streets, out of the fringes of local towns and into housing. But not just any housing, although they often took what they could, but also appropriate housing. Mum often lobbied to get appropriately designed houses to all the Murrin who were homeless in the region.

***'If ever there were examples of thinking flexibly being innovative and never taking no for an answer my parents modelled it.'***

I thought I would tell you some examples of my parents' successes gaining appropriate housing for Murrin:

▣ *A housing loan scheme* – I saw my parents lobby the Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs Minister for loans for a cooperative of Aboriginal people to build their own houses. They were successful and many of the Murrin in our town participated in building their own homes, including my parents, and paid back the loan at affordable rates, supported by the local housing body.

▣ *Housing for transient populations* - My Mum lobbied for and gained funding to build a number of basic houses linked to each other yet separate, with walls that could be rolled open, surrounding a central cooking area and ablution blocks. Different language groups could be housed separately yet they could choose to meet at an open cooking area to eat and or sleep together.

▣ *Appropriate housing for young parents* - When the numbers of young people becoming parents grew, flats were built to accommodate them. They were set up in such a way as to provide separate living spaces but close enough for the parents to back each other in raising their families.

▣ *Flats for young people* - As the number of young people facing poor education outcomes and low employment opportunities grew, as well as high contact with the justice system and increased homelessness I saw my Mum work with the police, the courts, federal and state governments and anyone else who could help to turn around these circumstances. She successfully lobbied the State Government to fund a set of high-rise flats aimed at housing and supporting young single people. She even got them to agree to have it handed over to the Aboriginal housing organisation rather than remain under State administration.

I've talked about a success story, now I want to talk about racism as a significant challenge, both the personal effects of racism and the institutional effects.

I don't remember a time when racism hasn't affected my life, the lives of my family or the lives of our people. For many of my people, access to resources needed to survive and thrive - water, food, housing, education, jobs, medical and legal services, and so on - is severely limited by the operations of racism; which in my mind often makes my parents' achievements even more extraordinary.

Often the institutions that are supposedly established to protect and inform us, such as government agencies, the police, the criminal justice system, the media, and so on, often end up being agents of racism. Some of them took our children from their parents, thinking they were doing the right thing, but these actions merely compounded the disadvantage

our people already faced. And here we are today still trying to deal with the legacy of those early policies...still trying to develop new policies that won't compound the existing disadvantage.

The Commonwealth approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs supports a policy of 'practical reconciliation' - to address disadvantage in health, housing, education and employment. Although it isn't called this the approach is very much a human rights agenda. ATSIC on the other hand, as the peak national Indigenous representative and policy body, advocates self-determination. ATSIC advocates an Indigenous rights agenda, to have the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples protected in either legislation, the Constitution or through a treaty or agreement.

Both of these approaches could be a good marrying of the two approaches to the benefit of effecting improved outcomes. Yet these two approaches can keep ATSIC and the government at loggerheads and become *the* focus instead of improved outcomes for Indigenous people being *the* focus. ATSIC is already marginalised from the development of government policy and programs. We don't have our peak national Indigenous advisory body at the table advising or negotiating on our behalf. The development of policies for our people are often left to non-Indigenous people. Our thinking and our contribution to the process is belittled or ignored. We can feel powerless in the face of this and give up on our own capacity to influence or be involved directly in the development of policies that are good for our people.

We, as a country, can develop policies that end poverty and oppression everywhere and for everyone. We have both the intelligence to develop these policies and the resources to carry them out. We, together, must actively develop and pursue policies that will value every person, no matter where they live, no matter what their religion, race or nationality is. This is something we are capable of, but we must give up the well-established pattern of life that has had sections of our population benefiting from the enforced poverty of others. We have developed enough resources so that no one needs to live in poverty. There is

***'We have developed enough resources so that no one needs to live in poverty. There is enough for all of us.'***

***'We, as a country, can develop policies that end poverty and oppression everywhere and for everyone. We have both the intelligence to develop these policies and the resources to carry them out. We, together, must actively develop and pursue policies that will value every person, no matter where they live, no matter what their religion, race or nationality.'***

enough for all of us but the people most affected by them need to be involved.

Some things that I think we are doing well is focusing on building stronger families and stronger communities. As we develop the capacity at the local level, in families and communities, there should be a decreasing demand on government or any other intervention.

Research and data here in Australia and overseas already shows that prevention and early intervention and community capacity building programs are effective long term responses to many social problems. In Indigenous communities, with about fifty percent of our population 15 years of age and under, and some seventy percent of our population thirty years and under, we are crying out for a shift in policy towards prevention and early intervention. The zero to five years are critical for the future of my people and Indigenous policy needs to be responsive to our young population (in stark contrast to the ageing population of the broader Australian community).

So, where to next? The Coalition of Australian Governments has a pretty good framework for achieving the necessary structural change within and between governments. Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander communities are beginning to identify their own strengths and capacities and are bringing these to negotiating tables with government and with each other. Above all developing leadership is critical, especially with a focus on youth, and the earlier we start the better.

Finally, the examples of locally driven innovative housing solutions show what strong leadership in a local community can achieve, even in the face of racism, and that model also provides hope for what is achievable at the State and Commonwealth level.

*This article is a critique of a paper presented by Kerrie Tim at the 3rd National Homelessness Conference: beyond the divide, convened by the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations in April 2003. This critique has been produced by ACT Shelter with Kerrie's permission.*





*Shelter's retiring Chair, the Reverend David Webster hands over the reins to new Chair Evie Kollas at our AGM on 12 December 2003.*

## ACT SHELTER 2004 FORUMS

All Forums are held at Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Avenue, Turner 12pm to 2pm

- Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February
- Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March
- Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April
- Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May
- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June
- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September
- Monday 2nd October
- Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Please contact us if have any ideas or issues for 2004 forums.

## SHELTER'S 2004 COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Evie Kollas
Secretary	Deb Pippen
Treasurer	Eduard Duyvan
Committee Members:	
	Marion Reilly
	Cathi Moore
	Greg Weir
	David Hopkins
	Emma Robertson

## TENANT PARTICIPATION

ACT Shelter and the Tenants Union are currently negotiating a contract with the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services to advise the Department on a tenant participation program.

We will work with the Department and tenants to identify issues and potential model(s) for tenant participation. DH&CS has indicated that it wants to see tenant participation as a part of the culture of the Department.

Our CSHA consultation identified participation as a high priority for tenants. They told us they wanted to participate at a high level and this means having opportunities to influence public housing policy.

We anticipate finalising our contract by February 2004, after which we will engage a project worker to assist us with this exciting project. One of our first steps will be to hold a workshop with tenants to identify positives and challenges for them in participating. We will compare the results with questions asked of Department staff and develop processes to address the issues raised.

To discuss the project further contact:

**Annette at ACT Shelter on 6247 3727**

**Deb at the Tenants Union on 6247 1026**

## XMAS CLOSURES

### **Tenants' Advice Service**

The advice line will be closed from 25 December, it will re-open Monday 5 January 2004

### **Tenants' Union ACT**

The office will be closed from 25 December, it will re-open Mon 5 January 2004

### **Welfare Rights and Legal Centre**

The service will be closed from 25 December, it will re-open Mon 5 January 2004

### **Office of Rental Bonds**

The office is closed from 25th December, it will re-open Mon 5th January 2004

### **Residential Tenancies Tribunal**

The Tribunal will be closed from 15 December, it will re-open 12 January 2004

### **Office of Fair Trading**

The Office will be closed from 2 pm on Wednesday 24 December 2003 and will re-open for business at 8.30 am on Monday 5 January 2004

**For information on a range of common tenancy problems go to:**

**[www.tenantsact.org.au](http://www.tenantsact.org.au)**

If you have an urgent tenancy problem and need more than general information call the **Legal Aid Advice Service on 1300 654 314**

## OUR SURVEY RAFFLE WINNER

# ***Congratulations!***

Congratulations goes to P. Stafford of Oakes Estate, who was the lucky first prize winner of ACT Shelter's CSHA Questionnaire Raffle. Ms Stafford won a \$50 Grace Bros Gift Voucher.

Thank you to everyone that participated in our recent CSHA Consultations. Your participation was extremely appreciated in defining future directions for a new CSHA.

Contact ACT Shelter on 6247 3727 for a copy of the report.

Bill Wood, Minister for Housing drawing ACT Shelter's CSHA first place prize winner with ACT Shelter's Executive Officer, Annette Wade



# ABOUT ACT SHELTER

ACT Shelter is an independent community organisation funded by the ACT Government to consult on housing issues for low to moderate income people, and to report their views to government.

We hold regular monthly forums and special meetings on housing issues of concern to people in the ACT. ACT Shelter encourages community participation in identifying important issues.

ACT Shelter disseminates information through quarterly journals, update bulletins and develops networks of people with common interests in housing issues. We have a strong brief to work with people experiencing particular disadvantage in the housing market, such as women, young people, those with a disability and those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

If you know anyone who is not currently a member and would like to join, and is either a low to moderate income earner, or has a particular interest in housing issues, please ask them to complete the membership form below.

All members receive this journal free of charge, along with regular update bulletins, as well as getting monthly invitations to our forums and workshops mailed directly to them. Membership fees include a contribution to the continuing work of National Shelter.

## ***HOUSING FACTS***

AUSTRALIA'S SOCIAL HOUSING SYSTEM HAS DECLINED AS A PROPORTION OF HOUSING STOCK FROM 6.2% IN 1994 TO 4.7% IN 2001. IN THIS TIME THE NATIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LIST HAS GROWN FROM 195,000 IN 1990 TO 223,290 IN 2001.

*(National Shelter Policy Platform, (c) 2003.)*

# ACT SHELTER MEMBERSHIP

## **TAX INVOICE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISATION (if applicable):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: ACT Shelter  
PO Box 894  
Civic Square ACT 2608

## **PAYMENT:**

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Income under \$40,000 \$5.00  
Income over \$40,000 \$10.00

### ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP

Unfunded \$15.00  
Funded under \$100,00 \$30.00  
Funded over \$100,00 \$40.00

ABN 13 348 226 983

GST Inclusive

Address: PO Box 894 Civic Square ACT 2608  
Email: [actshe@atrax.net.au](mailto:actshe@atrax.net.au)  
[www.shelter.net.au/act/](http://www.shelter.net.au/act/)

Phone: 02 6247 3727

Fax: 02 6247 3474  
Web: