



WACOSS Forum

Building Emergency Relief Housing Networks

6 June 2007

Salvation Army Headquarters
333 William Street, Northbridge





Morning Programme


9:45 **Introductions / Housekeeping**

9:50 **Setting the WA Housing Scene**
Lynn MacLaren, WACOSS

10:00 **The Role of DCP in Assisting Homeless People**
Helen Miskell, Manager Non-Gov't Policy & Planning, DCP

10:20 **DHW Tenancy Assistance Programs**
Anne McCrudden, Department of Housing & Works


10:40 **Department of Housing and Works Review**
Bryan Walsh, Project Manager Review & Rebuild, DHW

10:55 *Tea Break* 


11:15 **The Effectiveness and Cost-effectiveness of Homelessness Programs** Paul Flatau, AHURI

11:35 **The State of Affordable Housing in WA**
Jim Anthony, Shelter WA

11:50 **Housing for Migrants**
Krys Sprigg, Department of Immigration

12:05 Questions 

12:25 *Lunch*



Afternoon Programme

1:25 **Case Studies**

2:10 **Private Rental Support and Advocacy Program: Ruah Tenancy Support** Anna Paris, Ruah Community Services

2:25 **Private Rental Access Scheme**
Donna Bannister, Foundation Housing

2:40 **HomeConnect**
Lesley Wilkinson, UnitingCareWest


2:55 *Break*

3:15 **The Expanded Role of Community Housing**
Julie-Ann Lorca, Community Housing Coalition of WA

3:30 **Tenants Advice Service**
No Room in the Boom Campaign
Rob Spinks, Tenants Advice Service

3:45 **Speakers Panel: Where do we go from here?**
Julie-Ann, Rob, Jim, Donna, Lesley, Krys, Helen

4:15 *Wrap Up*



The Housing Game

Introducing the Players

- Owner outright, owner with mortgage, renter (private/public), investor, homeless

Game board

- Private Residential Market
- Public Housing
- Community Housing
- Crisis and Supported Accommodation

Bonuses

- Government grants, loan schemes and tax breaks
- Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)
- Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA)



Is there a place for us?


Housing Stress in Western Australia
Department of Treasury and Finance

~850,000 homes

22,498 houses completed to Sept 2006 ABS

Surplus of 900 at June 2006 BIS Shrapnel

Deficit of 500 homes in 2006 and expects surplus of 1,500 in 2007 ANZ bank



What is "housing stress?"


Households in the lower end of income distribution (bottom 40%) with housing costs greater than 30% of household income.

Average loan repayment is now \$3009 month.
Annual household income required:

\$3009 month is 30% of	\$120,360
------------------------	-----------

Average weekly earnings in WA:

MALES is \$1 068	\$55,536
FEMALES is \$593	\$30,836




How does a “housing crisis” affect people?

Homeless people in WA in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme (AIHW)
11,400

1 in 3 homeless people (38%) in WA are in Perth metro and Kimberley regions

WACOSS survey of Emergency Relief providers and Financial Counsellors provides a snapshot.




Housing in WA

Private Residential Market

- Rapid escalation of property prices

Average house Perth area	\$508,900
	↑ 39% over the year
Outside Perth	\$496,000
- High population growth increasing demand for and price of rental properties

Vacancy rate	0.8%
Perth rental average	\$470/week




Housing in WA

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

As at March 2005

- 85,122 Western Australians received CRA payments
- Nearly 60% received the maximum amount payable (\$104 per week)
- After receiving CRA, 27.6% of households remained in housing stress

ShelterWA





Housing in WA

Social Housing

The term *social housing* refers to properties owned/managed by State Government (public) and the community sector.

- Public stock of 34,500 has been in slow decline
- Community stock of 4,275 units growing
- Over past 7 years there have been 90,000 listings either in public housing or on the waitlist.
- Public housing waiting list estimated at 15,000
- Rent set at 25% of income and capped






Survey of Emergency Relief Providers and Financial Counsellors

20 Respondents

335 Requests for housing help over the week of 21 to 25 May
 ~17 per agency

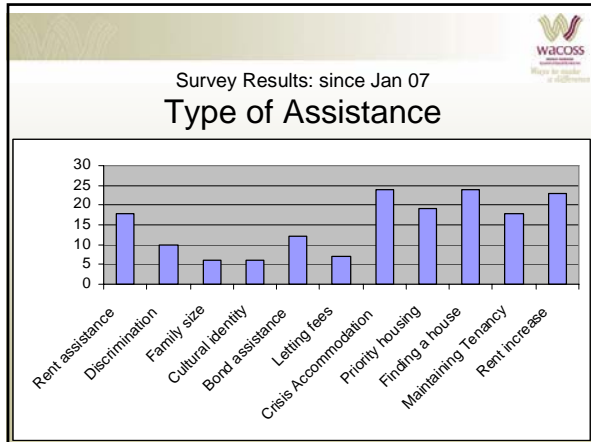
21% increase in requests related to housing matters over the past 3 months



Survey Results

Type of Assistance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a house Rent increase Maintaining Tenancy Crisis Accommodation Rent assistance Priority housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination Family size Cultural identity Bond assistance Letting fees
--	--



Survey Results

Most Common Problems

“Increases in rent impacting on people’s ability to maintain essential services and a modest standard of living.”

“Crisis accommodation as a result of termination notices, evictions, inability to afford increased rents, domestic violence, family and relationship breakdowns etc.”

representative statements

Survey Results

Most Difficult Issues

- Cannot access crisis accommodation due to extensive waiting lists; cannot provide immediate accommodation as this service is not crisis accommodation; cannot provide financial relief for bond/rent etc.
- Finding a house; assisting where rents have increased

representative statements

Survey Results

Advice Given

- Give list of emergency accommodation
- Turn people away
- Just keep trying
- Refer to local MP
- Bond assistance, Apartments WA, but for people with no savings, even that is difficult
- We have provided verbal and written info to assist tenants to defend their case in Court.
- Try to maintain existing tenancy by way of negotiating or seeking alternative assistance.

Survey Results

Advice Given

- Referrals, talk to Centrelink about rent assist, make sure you’re on DHW wait list. Maintain property and we can help with food/bill etc.
- Assist to pay rent and try to find someone to share; write letters of support.
- Need to be diligent in seeking a house and to keep record of all applications/rejections - needed if trying to obtain priority housing at DHW; provided lists of properties obtained on internet

Survey Results

Advice Given

“We help where we can, we refer where we can, but people have understood when we have had to say in some situations that there is no more we can do.”



Survey Results

Have you been able to refer?

Most responded “sometimes” or with limited success.

About a third said “Yes.”

“Yes, to Dept for Housing and Works, Salvo Careline, Crisiscare, TASWA, Centrecare, Women's Refuge Vacancies, etc.”

One agency said “No” and one chose not to answer.



WACOSS Forum

Building Emergency Relief Housing Networks

Lynn MacLaren

Senior Policy Officer

lynn.maclaren@wacoss.org.au

