

Shelter Tasmania



2006
annual report



www.sheltert.as.org.au

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who is shelter?

Shelter Tasmania is an independent community organisation committed to the principle of accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing for every person and the elimination of homelessness.

about shelter

Shelter Tasmania is an independent not-for-profit housing peak organisation funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. Shelter represents the interest of housing consumers on low incomes and housing providers across Tasmania.

Shelter's membership consists of a wide range of housing and supported accommodation services, tenant groups, local government, community organisations and individuals interested in housing. The Council of Homeless Persons Tasmania is a subcommittee of Shelter.

Shelter aims to provide an effective Tasmanian voice on housing and related issues by fulfilling the following objectives:

- To promote and maintain the right of every person to access affordable, safe and secure long term housing that they identify as appropriate to their needs.
- To promote and maintain the right of every person to housing of a quality which enhances people's health, well-being, dignity and life opportunities.
- To promote the benefits of public and community housing in the community and across all levels of government.
- To publish, research, collect and disseminate information on matters relating to the provision of housing, particularly for people on low to moderate incomes.
- To create opportunities to support, establish, resource and co-ordinate non-government organisations and agencies with similar interests

and objectives to the Association.

- To promote opportunities for members of the community to access housing provision free from discrimination due to age, gender, ethnicity, health status or disability.
- To promote and support consumer and community participation in decision making in relation to their housing and to promote access to avenues of appeal across all housing tenures.
- To provide a structure that enables the members to inform policy development in a manner that is consistent with the objectives and visions of the association and also reflects the needs of homeless people and people who live in poverty or on low incomes.



management committee and staff

Shelter Tasmania Management Committee (including the Executive) 2004-2005

CHAIR

Gary Bennett - Bethlehem House Men's Shelter

VICE CHAIR

Andrea Witt – Centacare

TREASURER

Judy Munday - Tasmanian University Housing/
Avril Lever - Hobart Women's Shelter

SECRETARY

Suzanne Fisher– Hobart City Mission

PUBLIC OFFICER

Kate Gould - Red Shield Housing Association

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tracey McLeod/Sus Bailey - Colony 47

Michelle Domanska - Centacare North
(proxy for Centacare)

Phil Hammond - Anglicare North

Jenny Bertram - Magnolia House

Ria Brink - Karinya Young Womyn's Refuge

Michelle Ryan - Launceston City Mission

Leo Foley - Individual South

Shelter Tasmania Staff 2003-2004

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Pattie Chugg (1 FTE)

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCIAL OFFICER

Kate Ambler (.4)

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Therese Bromfield (.1 FTE)

Management Committee Meetings Held

- July Thursday 28th
- August Thursday 25th
- November Thursday 3rd
- December Thursday 15th
- February Thursday 9th
- March Thursday 9th
- April Thursday 6th
- May Thursday 4th
- June Thursday 1st



chair's report

I would like to welcome everyone to the Annual General Meeting. The past 12 months has been a particularly busy time for Shelter Tasmania.

Affordable housing continues to be a real challenge and for many people buying a house is now a distant dream. For those people on low income the increased rental costs are proving a real impediment to accessing the rental market. Those that do manage are invariably placing themselves in housing stress.

Community Sector Organisations working in the homeless area are all experiencing increased pressure from families and single people who cannot find or afford appropriate housing.

Unfortunately the gap is widening between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in the community and unless there is a concerted effort from both Federal and State Governments to address the issue of affordable housing the situation will only worsen.

During the past year we have held a number of Management Committee meetings at Ross and these have been very well attended by Committee members. It is important that Shelter continues to discuss issues on a State-wide basis and the contribution made by both Northern and Southern Committee members is critical. It is pleasing to report that in the latter part of this year we have gained representation from the North-West.

We have witnessed a change in direction with the State Government's Affordable Housing Strategy

which has resulted in the formation of an "Affordable Housing Association", chaired by the Rev Chris Jones from Anglicare. The association is still in its infancy and at the time of writing this report we are unclear as to the finer points. As well as Community Organisations, STEPS and Onecare are members of this association. As a means of increasing the level of affordable housing expressions of interest were sought from the private sector to build affordable housing properties on land released by the State Government throughout Tasmania.

Whilst we are pleased with any increase in affordable rental properties we firmly believe that there still needs to be an overall strategy to satisfy increasing demand. As yet no new properties are on the ground.

Another key change has incurred within the Department of Health and Human Services with the amalgamation of Housing and SAAP.

Shelter will continue to monitor housing issues in this state and we will continue to meet with and lobby the Government.

I would like to express my appreciation to all Management Committee members for their support and assistance during the past year and a special mention to the staff at Shelter Tasmania, Pattie, Therese and Kate for their hard work and commitment.

Gary Bennett
Chair 2006

northern management committee members

This report is a compilation of the findings of the northern board members of the Shelter Tasmania Management Committee.

The 63 area of northern Tasmania is experiencing intense pressure from insufficient housing infrastructure, increasing demand for all types of accommodation and spiralling costs of private rental properties.

Changes in the treatment of applicants of Housing Tasmania carrying previously acquired public housing debts, and their suspension from the waiting lists until those debts have been substantially repaid, has closed a previously available avenue of low cost housing for a vulnerable and at risk sector of the community. The high costs charged by maintenance workers contracted by the Housing Department result in the accumulation of high debt very quickly. These high debts can take a person on a subsistence Centrelink benefit years to pay off, removing them from Housing Department waiting lists and disguising the true need and demand for public housing. These people are then left with the option of unaffordable private rental, increasing debt levels, and a spiralling homelessness problem.

There is widespread concern about the effect of the proposed pulp mill at Longreach near George Town and the massive effect of increased population needed to provide a workforce during the years of the development, said to peak at approximately 4,000 during the construction phase. An influx of well paid working people will have a real impact

on low income earners who are already having problems securing affordable housing.

The feasibility study does not adequately address the housing issue. Government is currently struggling to secure more actual housing in acceptable areas through the Affordable Housing Association, so it is difficult to forecast how the additional pressure caused by the mill development will be addressed, and whether it will be possible to do so in a timely fashion that prevents escalation of homeless numbers in the Tamar Valley and surrounding areas, including Dorset and Meander Valley Local Government areas.

People on welfare payments are now competing directly with a growing proportion of working poor for the same properties. Employed people are preferred by landlords. The Shelter Tasmania members' client group is almost exclusively dependant on income support from Centrelink, and hence are finding it increasingly difficult to access affordable housing of an acceptable standard in low risk safe areas.

The 'Safe at Home' Initiatives have not impacted on the patterns of single men accessing the City Mission shelter. Seventy five percent of single men in the homeless shelter found accommodation in the private rental market, with only 25% securing public housing.

The Launceston Womyn's Shelter has reported no significant change in the numbers of women accessing the shelter. For many women 'Safe at

northern members cont.

Home' has not helped them maintain their homes. There continues to be many more people seeking shelter accommodation than available beds. The lack of shelter accommodation in Launceston for families continues to be a problem.

Without access to long term support for people with Drug and Alcohol problems, a Mental Illness or a combination of both relapse resulting in a cycle of chronic homelessness is common. The need for Transition housing services are finding that it is taking longer for people to secure accommodation because of the lack of suitable housing and that individual needs are increasingly complex. There appears to be a trend of rising levels of individual and family debt incurred by easy access to expensive finance, the high cost of telecommunication via mobile phones and the internet, and increasing use of legal and illegal drugs to escape the stressors caused by dire circumstances. This results in individual loss of hope and self determination.

Increasingly, private landlords and real estate agents are discriminating against people with bonds provided by the Private Rental Support Services. This can be an overt refusal or a covert screening out of those with subsidised bond assistance.

Overall, all services offering housing support have found that clients are having problems accessing appropriate Mental Health Services and ongoing mental health support workers. Dual diagnosis clients are often sent from service to service, and even when they are ready to seek help long delays

are experienced in accessing services, further exacerbating homeless issues. This is also the case for people under eighteen years old, many who are experiencing drug and alcohol problems and/or mental illness.

The northern Shelter members appreciate the opportunity to meet and network with workers from other regions and the availability of a state wide forum to present issues and changes in the housing sector. The increased northern membership of Shelter Tasmania is much appreciated.

Mim Domanska
On behalf Northern Members
Shelter Management Committee



In 1999 the Council of Homeless Persons Tasmania became a sub-committee of Shelter Tasmania. This was to ensure retention of a Tasmanian voice and on-going dialogue on homeless issues. Shelter has reworked the constitution so that it includes objectives that reflect the needs of people who are homeless. Representatives from each State and Territory meet twice per year to discuss common issues relating to homelessness.

CHPA is one of three councils that forms part of the Australian Federation of Homeless Organisations, (AFHO). The other two are NYCH, (youth) and Wesnet, (women). AFHO is the Peak National Body on Homelessness and is based in Canberra.

CHPA has particular interest in single adults and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The councils meet nationally on two occasions each year, May and October. This year both meetings were held at Canberra.

The meetings enable council representatives to discuss what is happening in their respective States and Territories with a view to exploring common themes to translate into policy direction for AFHO.

At both the May and October meetings representatives from all States and Territories agreed that access to appropriate and affordable housing was critical and that the general feeling is that the level of homelessness is increasing. We are confident that this issue will be reflected when the figures from the August Census on Homelessness are released.

CHPA council representatives are from both SAAP services and Peak bodies. In the case of Western Australia and Victoria the representatives are from funded Housing Coalitions. This provides the council with a broad overview of homelessness that extends beyond SAAP.

All Council members reported that feedback from their networks is that Community Sector organizations are bursting at the seams with increased pressure and demand. Shelters and transitional properties remain full and all states are experiencing difficulties, with no exit points.

There is a real feeling that people are being blamed for being poor and this is reflected in Federal Government policies.

Welfare to Work:

We discussed the impact of this new legislation where Centrelink recipients can have their benefits suspended for up to 8 weeks if they fail to comply with obligations. Homeless people are particularly vulnerable as they will invariably have no fixed address and are more likely to miss out on appointments with Centrelink. A Centrelink recipient may lose accommodation if their benefit is suspended. As this new legislation only commenced in July of this year it is too early to gauge the impact. As this is a broader policy issue we have agreed to monitor the situation and report any known occurrences to AFHO.

SAAP:

We see that the evaluation of SAAP V is critical, especially leading into negotiations towards SAAP VI. We also discussed the ongoing viability of SAAP and in particular the work force. Workers in Community Organisations are working harder for little reward and recognition. We all agreed that work carried out by workers is undervalued by Government and this may lead to staff leaving the Sector.

Commonwealth State Housing Agreement:

We see this as a critical issue as future directions are unclear. There is a feeling that there may not be a CSHA agreement as we know it. The current CSHA agreement expires in 2008.

Priorities Projects:

There are 3 key projects that CHPA are working on and keen to progress and they are as follows:

Children in SAAP services

Single Women

People exiting the Justice System

The above projects have all been accepted onto the AFHO Work Plan and we are awaiting advice as to how to proceed. The likelihood is that work will be carried out through a consultancy process.

AFHO Board:

I have recently been elected to the AFHO Board and I attended the October meeting as an observer, and I will be attending the May meeting as a Board member. The AFHO board comprises of 3 representatives from each of the councils and 3 independent members representing the interests

of Rural and Remote, Indigenous and Multicultural clients. There is an independent Chair. This role will provide me with an increased opportunity to inform policy and a better understanding on the national scene.

AFHO is planning to hold the next National Homeless Conference in August 2008, most likely in Victoria. Details will be confirmed in the near future.

Gary Bennett
CHPA Tasmania





CHFA activities in 2005-06

In 2003 Shelter Tas became a member of CHFA as the peak body for community housing in Tasmania and provides the state delegates and regular reports to CHFA on community housing in Tasmania. Many of Shelter's members are community housing providers ranging from small housing co-operatives to larger housing associations.

The Community Housing Federation of Australia (CHFA) is the National Peak Organisation representing the views of community housing providers in Australia. CHFA's purpose is to ensure community housing develops as a viable housing option providing quality housing services to tenants. This is achieved through research, public policy development, and advocacy of housing issues to Governments and other key stakeholders

Most importantly, CHFA maintains links with and between housing providers across Australia providing a voice for their interests at the national level. CHFA includes community housing provider representation from every State and Territory in Australia. CHFA enjoys a close working relationship with State and Territory community housing peak bodies, with peaks taking an active role in the on-going development of CHFA policy. Shelter Tas works closely with CHFA, through; the nomination of three state delegates; the dissemination of information, newsletters and reports to its members, and co-hosting consultations on community housing. Shelter distributes the CHFA ebulletin and CHFA newsletter. The newsletter is sent out with

the Shelter newsletter as part of the quarterly Shelter mail out.

CHFA builds links between the community-housing sector, the Australian and State and Territory governments, and other stakeholders on housing related issues. Throughout 2005-06 we did this through a range of forums and in partnership with many other community, private and government organisations including:

Involvement with the National Housing Alliance (NHA)

Meetings with the National Accreditation Council

CHFA is an active member of the National Community Housing Forum's (NCHF) Policy Advisory Committee (PAC),

CHFA has joined the Policy Committee of the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) and is focussing its work on this Committee around training issues for community housing workers and organisations.

CHFA is an active member of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Research Panel as the community sector representative.

CHFA is a member of the National Awards for Excellence Steering Committee.

CHFA consults with its members annually at our National Members meeting which was held in Perth in October 2005 where priorities for CHFA activity over the coming year are discussed and endorsed.

This year's top priorities were:

an alignment of policy positions between peak bodies and CHFA

models and subsidy arrangements around

affordable housing and the need for base-line data



at a national level infrastructure issues - primarily around emerging regulatory frameworks, quality improvement and the role of accreditation in regulatory systems, and the role of community housing in the overall housing system.

During the year, working groups were established to focus on specific topics or activities. Working groups convened during 2005-06 included:

Our changing sector CHFA has begun collecting information from community housing peak bodies about their involvement in and facilitation of amalgamations and consolidations in their sector. Mapping project CHFA has conducted the Community Housing Mapping Project – a nationwide survey of all known community housing providers. The aim of the Mapping Project is to provide an up-to-date snapshot of the community housing sector, by collecting relevant information on the total size and make-up of the sector nationally, including organisations not funded through the CSHA.

Advising government

CHFA maintains close contact with government on issues affecting our sector. During 2005-06, we participated in the formal audit of the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

National framework

Over 2005-06 CHFA has been a member of the National Sector Development Plan Reference Group, working with government staff on progressing one of the main commitments in the Framework for

National Action on Affordable Housing, the national strategy endorsed by the Housing Ministers in August 2005.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is an important part of the Australian Government's program response to housing. CHFA participated in a focus-group session on housing affordability and Rent Assistance as part of the review of CRA, commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and suggesting improvements.

Taxation

CHFA is a member of the National Roundtable of Non-profit Organisations, and through this body is a signatory to a submission to the Australian Tax office on several recent draft Rulings.

As a member of the Consultative Charities Committee, CHFA continues to raise and seek resolutions to tax-related issues affecting the community-housing sector.

Kate Gould
Mary Jenkins
CHFA Delegates



executive officer's report

2005-6 once again has seen the growth in membership of Shelter Tas, against the background of a progressively gloomy outlook in housing affordability in the State. The growth and consolidation of Shelter as the community based peak body for housing is due to the ongoing commitment of the Shelter staff and Management Committee and Members who deal or are concerned with the ever-present housing and homelessness issues.

Shelter continues to advocate for a significant change towards a more affordable and innovative approach to housing: in particular a more affordable and accessible housing system for families and individuals who are finding it increasingly difficult to secure sustainable long term affordable housing. Unfortunately, due to the increase in housing prices and rents to incomes, increasing numbers of people across Tasmania and Australia are living in unaffordable or short term and temporary housing.

Shelter and its members are concerned that the lack of access to affordable housing is a deep and significant problem facing Tasmania. The Housing and Supported Accommodation Service System (SAAP) is based on a continuum to support people from homelessness to long term housing. This can no longer operate effectively the system is blocked due to the lack of long term affordable housing to place people in. We need comprehensive and sustained action to increase the supply of affordable housing by Government, as well as in the business and not-for-profit sector, essential to reduce the ongoing economic and social damage that is being

caused. The overview below lists the pressures throughout the housing system.

The State of Housing - An Overview

In 2006 housing affordability is at an all time low. There is pressure across all housing tenures: from the private rental market, homeownership and public housing.

Private Rental Market (PRM)

- The PRM houses more low income people than public housing, but rents are increasing. A greater number of Tasmanians are living in housing stress: in fact there are 21,300 household in the private rental market with recent predictions expecting this will increase. (Housing stress is the term used to describe the people on the lowest 40% of incomes who are paying more than 30% of their income in rent),
- Tasmania has seen constant rent increases in the PRM. Rental costs for a 2 bedroom property in Hobart is now 40 - 50% higher than 5 years ago.
- For the past six year the vacancy rates (measure of the amount of unoccupied rental properties in a given area to indicate the availability of properties) across the State have remained under 3% in economic terms. This indicates a tight and competitive market. Recent data from the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania for August 2006 show vacancy rates for the following cities as:
 - Hobart 1.9% and 2.5% for Launceston, Burnie, Ulverstone and Devonport.
 - Concurrent with the increase in the cost of rent is an acute shortage of low cost rental dwellings.

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This is exacerbated by the tendency of higher income households to 'trade down' and occupy low rental housing to save on costs.

Homeownership

Medium house prices in Hobart have increased 233% in the past 4 years. The Tasmanian Home Loan Affordability Index (mortgage repayments to income) has decreased significantly over the past years. In 2005 Tasmania was the third least affordable state, ahead of NSW and Queensland. Rising housing costs have not been matched by increases in wages or income.

Tasmania has:

- Lowest average earning
- Highest proportion of people dependent on Commonwealth benefits
- Highest proportion of long term unemployed.

Public Housing

- The Public Housing waiting list remains at 3,000
- Decreasing numbers of, and ageing, stock
- A system that will only house those most in high need, adding to concentrated areas of disadvantage and reducing social diversity and the rent to sustain the system
- Public housing is in debt from old loans and still owes the Commonwealth approx \$260 million. 77 % of the money public housing receives each year from the Commonwealth (\$22million) is paid back to service the debt (\$17 mil)

Homelessness

The cost of the lack of housing is seeing increasing numbers of people made homeless.

The 2001 ABS census noted there are over 2,000 homeless people in Tasmania. Data from the 2005 census has not yet been released.

The above overview highlights the critical need Tasmania has to address many crucial issues for housing provision and affordability. Shelter as an organisation is strongly committed to present issues and suggest solutions to help alleviate the many problems. The following gives an overview of Shelter's involvements and activities.

Shelter Tas – The Organisation

Governance and Strategic Direction

Shelter Tas has evolved over the years into an organisation that has a diverse and sometimes complex role in promoting affordable housing issues within the State and at a National level, as well as being able to manage and maintain its core operations.

The 2005-6 year is the third of a three year funding agreement with Housing Tasmania; at the start of this agreement Shelter has placed priority on a well governed and accountable organisation.

In the past year Shelter has identified a number of risk management issues and put in place some new internal policies to monitor and manage the organisation. In December 2005 Shelter held a very successful planning day in Ross to evaluate the current Workplan and prepare for the next three years. Ideas from the planning day generated: the 2006 Shelter Questionnaire distributed in March 2006 to evaluate the service and get feedback from all Shelter members; a new Shelter Workplan for

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2006-9; and preparation to update the Constitution. Shelter continues to operate under the six key strategic objectives listed below.

Shelter's key strategic objectives for 2005-6 are:

1. To provide peak representation of housing issues to Government and the community Statewide.
2. To provide a sustainable, high profile and accountable Statewide organisation which has effective linkages within the State and nationally.
3. To contribute to the development of a comprehensive Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy, with emphasises on Tasmania's distinctive socio-economic environment and unique circumstances.
4. To promote and participate in a Tasmanian housing research agenda.
5. To promote housing consumer participation.
6. To raise the profile and awareness of housing issues broadly across all sectors.

Key Activities in 2005-6

This section addresses some of the key areas of work that Shelter has undertaken over the past year. The following section lists other meetings and work Shelter has undertaken throughout the year.

As a peak body many of Shelter activities are to represent housing consumers and providers views to governments, housing industry and the community, along with promoting consumer protection and rights across all housing tenures.

Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) 2003-2005 & Affordable Housing Organisation (AHO)

Last year's Annual Report noted how Shelter contributed significant resources and time to participate in a range of working groups and consultation as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy. This continued for the first six months of this year with Shelter participating on the Affordable Housing Reference Committee and several working parties. As 2005 progressed there was growing concern about the government commitment to funding Stage 2 2006-8 of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

In December 2005 Premier Paul Lennon launched the Affordable Housing Organisation as the key initiative the Government would be funding over the next 4 years, at \$6 million per year, which it hopes will create 700 new homes. There was no commitment to fund the second stage of the AHS. Shelter supports the AHO but sees that this initiative alone does not provide for a much needed sustainable public housing system. Another concern is that the Affordable Housing Organisation will take some years to develop and alone it will not increase the supply of new homes at the level we need. As the stated overview covered and repeated in our submissions, we need 1200 new affordable homes now. With the projected growth in housing stress, increased rent and mortgages we need to see the public housing system grow as well.

Shelter looks forward to working with the new AHO which is still in its development stage. As yet Shelter has not had the opportunity to scrutinise

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any of the operational details such as: policy and procedures, planned client group, rent levels and lease conditions. Shelter aims to report on these in the New Year, along with any other housing initiatives still being implemented from stage one of the AHS.

Affordable Housing Crisis Coalition (AHCC)

The AHCC was launched October 2005, due to the concern about the crisis in affordable housing and that Stage 2 of the Affordable Housing Strategy would not be funded. The founding members were made up of service providers Anglicare, Colony 47, Centacare and the Salvation Army, and peak advocacy bodies TasCOSS and Shelter.

The AHCC called on the State Government to invest in a range of strategies to address the housing crisis in Tasmania and to make sustained investment to resolve this problem. The AHCC undertook a number of activities to raise the profile of the housing crisis, including: public forums, petitions, media releases and press conferences. Then in February 2006 the AHCC launched an election policy statement on affordable housing in Tasmania, calling on all political parties in the 2006 State Election to commit to:

- A benchmark for public housing of 6% of the housing system, which means 1200 properties need to be built over the next four years.
- Remove the servicing of the Commonwealth Housing Debt from the Housing Tasmania Budget, and
- A ministerial appointment to ensure commitment to a whole-of-government approach to address the issue of affordable housing.

Although the Coalition no longer meets, Shelter continues to work with other organisations to promote the importance of investing more in affordable housing and to put forward solutions. Due to the importance of housing the community sector organization have agreed to make this there number one priority in their State Budget Submission.

Risk Management Seminar for Tasmania Community Housing Providers

On 29th June 2006 the National Community Housing Forum and Shelter Tasmania hosted a seminar on risk management in community housing for providers and tenants in Launceston, Tasmania. Guest speakers included Chris Elenor, a risk management expert and author of the NCHF publication *Managing Risk in Community Housing Operations: concepts and tools*. Karen Andrews from the Central Tablelands Housing Association gave a presentation on how risk management works in practice. Karen explained how the Housing Association had grown primarily through stock transfer and how the organisation reviewed and reworked its risk management practices in 2005 and restructured its assessment within the framework of the National Community Housing Standards. The seminar was well attended, with 35 participants especially from the North and North West of the State. Feedback from participants was very positive, with many to review or put in place risk management strategies for their organisations. Presentations from the day and an outcome paper are now posted on the Shelter Tas web site www.shelbertas.org.au. Shelter plans to host follow

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up sessions with members who were not able to attend on the day. Shelter would like to thank NCHF for resourcing the seminar, which was particularly of value to be held in a regional area.

Submissions

This year Shelter has contributed formally to a range of submissions on legislative initiatives and changes.

Proposed Rental Deposit Authority (RDA)

In July 2005 Shelter submitted a formal response to the Regulatory Impact Statement for the Proposed Deposit Authority for Tasmania released by the Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading. Shelter fully supports the establishment of the Rental Bond Authority (RTA). Shelter has long called for the benefits of a Bond Board for Tasmania in State Budget Submissions and lobbied Ministers. In this response Shelter supported the proposed RTA with some recommended refinements to the proposed model, including special attention being given to community housing providers and incremental bond collection.

Proposed Consumer Advisory Committee

In January 2006 Shelter took the opportunity to comment to the Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading on the proposed Consumer Advisory Committee and Amendment Bill 2005. Shelter was supportive of the proposed committee, with some additional comments. For instance, that the Committee would not replace other forms of consultation and public submission process, and it would need to be adequately resourced

with its own budget allocation.

Response to the Caravan Parks Issue Paper

In May 2006 Shelter provided input and comment to the Caravan Parks- Issue Paper distributed by Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading. Members gave input on a range of practices between parks and across the State. Many people on low income, due to the chronic shortage of housing, end up in caravan parks as a de facto form of crisis accommodation while others use it as the only form of longer term accommodation they can access. Shelter recommended that the residential tenancy amendment be made to the Residential Tenancy Act (1997) to explicitly cover the unique circumstances of renters in the caravan parks for both short and long term tenancies, including its own dedicated dispute resolution mechanism.

Pulp Mill Proposal

Shelter's submission to the Resource Planning and Development Commission on the proposed Bell Bay Pulp Mill Project, highlighted concerns that the Integrated Impact Statement (IIS) did not adequately address the need to increase the supply of housing in the Tamar Valley area, and the subsequent impact this will have on the local rental markets and in turn the impact on low-income housing consumers in the area.

Shelter Budget Submission

As a peak body Shelter is committed to ensure a State Budget Submission is delivered to Treasury each year as part of the community consultation process. Many of Shelter's previous

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recommendations have influenced other community submissions, as well as the State Government, to improve housing policy and consumer protection. The submission is based on consultation with members and approved by the Shelter Management Committee, with 25 recommendations organised around 8 key areas. A summary of recommendation are noted:

1. Affordable Housing - Social Housing

Recommendation 1.1

That the Tasmania Government allocate additional resources in the State Budget 2007/08 to Housing Tasmania's capital investment program to facilitate the purchase and/or construction of an additional 500 properties over the next 4 years, to be owned and managed by Housing Tasmania.

Recommendation 1.2

That the Tasmanian Government increase the level of funding to Housing Tasmania in 2007/08 in order to negate the loss of Commonwealth State Housing Agreement funding being used to retire the Public Housing debt to the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 1.3

That the State Government fund research into the issues of concentrated disadvantage and unemployment in our broad acre public housing, that will identify what structural changes are required to make these successful, sustainable mixed communities.

Recommendation 1.4

That a 3 month rent increase freeze policy be implemented by Housing Tasmania for public housing tenants who gain regular employment AND that a tenants' awareness campaign be launched in partnership with this change.

Recommendation 1.5

The rent freeze increase should be extended to community housing tenants in consultation with community housing providers.

2. Private Rental Programs

Recommendation 2.1

That the Tasmanian Government retain the funding initiatives as per the first stage of the Affordable Housing Strategy regarding resources for private rental tenancy support services aimed at assisting low-income Tasmanians to either seek or maintain private rental market.

Recommendation 2.2

That the Private Rental Tenancy Support Scheme be extended to work statewide with public housing tenants.

Recommendation 2.3

That the Private Rental Support Scheme be extended to cover community housing tenants on low incomes.

3. Enhanced Capacity of the Community Sector

Recommendation 3.1

That a Community Development Officer be funded in the office of Shelter Tasmania.

4. Consumer Protection in the Private Rental System

Recommendation 4.1.1

That a state-wide housing standards code be developed in consultation with building industry bodies, local government and non-government tenant organisations, and that these standards be incorporated into Tasmanian legislation.

Recommendation 4.1.2

That the standards code covers heating, fixtures, power, water, fire regulations, plumbing, security, mold and other concerns essential to habitable living standards.

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Recommendation 4.1.3

That the Residential Commission is empowered to: issue orders to landlords to comply with these standards, and to specify a time period; and Order that a landlord be liable for relocation costs if these are incurred by a tenant whilst the housing standard code is enforced.

Recommendation 4.1.4

That it be a criminal offence to offer a sub standard dwelling for rental.

Recommendation 4.2

That a single tribunal is established to hear all disputes arising from tenancies, be it for public or private rental; and that the tribunal is mindful and accepting of procedures consistent with natural justice, not simply reliant on paper-based arguments.

5. Home Ownership

Recommendation 5.1

That the Tasmanian Government continues to fund a range of Housing Tasmania strategies with appropriate financial and consumer safeguards to assist people on low incomes to access and maintain home ownership.

Recommendation 5.2

That existing homeownership schemes be extended to low income community housing tenants.

6. An Improved Planning System

Recommendation 6.1

That the State Government prioritises the implementation of the proposed statewide planning scheme for promoting affordable housing.

7. Responses to Homelessness

Recommendation 7.1

That Tasmania develops a comprehensive Homelessness Strategy.

Recommendation 7.2

That the State Government funds the gap in service delivery for children accompanying adults into SAAP Services, including appropriate exit strategies to long term housing.

Recommendation 7.3

That SAAP Services are appropriately funded to meet the needs of children.

Recommendation 7.4

That the State Government initiates a consultative mechanism for SAAP services and community housing providers to look at long term supported housing.

Recommendation 7.5

That appropriate resources be allocated to continue the three SAAP Regional Forums on a regular basis.

8. Migrant and Refugee Housing

Recommendation 8.1

That funding is provided to existing services that work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to fund programs that develop skills for refugees and migrants to find housing and maintain tenancies in the private rental market.

Recommendation 8.2

That funding is provided for bi-cultural staff from the main refugee communities to be employed by existing SAAP support services on an 'on call' basis.

Recommendation 8.3

That Public Housing and, where possible, community housing providers build or purchase more 4 and 5 bedroom houses, with emphasis on larger bedrooms.

executive officer's report cont.

Communication

A key role for a peak body is to communicate with its members, stakeholders and the community. Shelter this year continued to facilitate and promote the exchange of housing and homelessness information with the following:

- Statewide Shelter Management Committee Meetings in Ross (Dates posted on Web)
- Statewide Planning Meeting in Ross
- 2006 Shelter Questionnaire to all members
- Shelter Executive Meetings
- Quarterly mail out to members, which includes:
 - Shelter newsletter, ShelTashortz
 - Community Housing Federation Newsletter
 - A variety of current publications and promotional material
- Shelter e-news and email update

Web Page

The Shelter web page has been an invaluable and effective resource since its introduction in 2004. This year we have changed the format on the front page to highlight latest news and hot spots.

The web page is updated weekly with a range of housing and homeless information, research, grants, tenders and public notices. All Shelter submissions and publications are posted on the site.

Usage of the site continues to grow.

Last year there was over 75,000 hits and for the year ending October 2006 there was over 100,000 hits for the year (see table below).

Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Oct 2006	215	112	53	28	323	144744	840	1613	3369	6472
Sep 2006	239	126	61	32	336	166921	980	1833	3808	7179
Aug 2006	290	123	91	25	377	192810	802	2826	3843	8999
Jul 2006	258	131	57	30	386	154357	941	1780	4074	8018
Jun 2006	114	83	27	18	338	130399	546	812	2517	3445
May 2006	405	116	58	26	388	128144	812	1826	3617	12578
Apr 2006	328	104	45	25	379	101413	763	1373	3142	9852
Mar 2006	443	120	63	28	389	144719	889	1956	3748	13743
Feb 2006	350	99	40	19	352	107518	535	1134	2798	9805
Jan 2006	279	93	40	20	316	83616	620	1250	2888	8675
Dec 2005	184	76	35	21	274	119074	661	1111	2363	5719
Nov 2005	230	82	32	18	258	99293	543	974	2461	6902
Totals						1573008	8932	18488	38628	101387

executive officer's report cont.

National Shelter - www.shelter.org.au

Shelter Tas is part of the National Shelter network which meets twice a year at National Council Meetings to work on national housing issues.

National Shelter chairs the National Housing Alliance. National Shelter delegates attended the National Forum on Affordable Housing in July 06 which brought together leaders and representatives from the community sector, business, industry, unions, academia and local government to consider elements of a new National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), convened by the ACTU, ACOSS, HIA and the National Housing Alliance. A summary of this forum and the associated background and other papers can be obtained from our website at www.shelbertas.org.au

National Shelter is seeking a national commitment (from all levels of government and the community) to rebuild social housing, and developing means to attract significant private institutional (superannuation and other financial institutions) investment into affordable housing, adjusting taxation and other fiscal policy to ensure affordable housing is not disadvantaged against other forms of investment and developing mechanisms that planning systems can adopt to play their part in affordable housing development and planning. This would come together through a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process and could be one headline agreement like the CSHA or an articulated set of policies working together from different parts of government.

The forum was held in late July and achieved a high degree of convergence. We have now followed up that trip by meeting with a variety of State and Federal representatives and are hopeful that in the New Year COAG will take up the baton.

The Chair of National Shelter, when last in Canberra as part of the National Housing Alliance, met with Federal Labor members and advisors addressing a combined meeting of Labor committees who have some responsibility. In December we will be meeting Coalition committees and senior bureaucrats, further pressing our agenda.

Over the past year National Shelter has delivered papers at the National Housing Conference in Perth (Nov 05); a NSW Shelter Conference (May 06), the NSW Federation of Housing Associations Conference in Newcastle (August 06), chaired a session at the AFHO Conference in Sydney (May 06); attended the National Civil Society Dialogue (October 06). National Shelter met with Mr Miloon Kathari, the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Housing, and contributed to his overall consideration of housing in Australia.

Conclusion

To conclude, each year Shelter continues to evolve against what at times seems to be an ever growing challenge on the wider housing front. This is because Shelter, despite its limited resources, harnesses the input, support and commitment of many people who I would like to acknowledge.

I would like to thank the Executive Director of Housing Tasmania, Mercia Bresnehan, and the many

executive officer's report cont.

Housing Tasmania staff we meet with and make contact with on a regular basis. Importantly, I would like to thank Housing Tasmania for funding Shelter as the peak body for housing consumers and providers and for the small addition to Shelter's grant this year to allow 1 day extra admin support per week, which has made a real difference in the office.

First to fellow staff: Kate Ambler for all her work and skill in updating our policy and procedures, who left in July 06, and Therese Bromfield, who returned from Maternity Leave to work one day per week, whose design skills put the snap and sparkle into the Shelter publication and web page.

Next I would like to thank the powerhouse of Shelter: the Executive and Management Committee, who selflessly travel to the middle of the State each month, and especially Shelter's Chair, Gary Bennett, and his continued commitment to housing and the homeless clients he deals with on a daily basis.

In fact, all the Management Committee bring a range of skills and many years experience in the housing and homelessness sector that gives Shelter a unique credibility when dealing with housing policy and consumer protection issues.

This year saw our Treasurer, Judy Munday, leave the sector and I would like to thank her for providing strong financial skills to the organisation and also thank Avril Lever for replacing her as Treasurer.

I would like to thank all the Shelter members who have rejoined or are new members this year: without your input and support Shelter could not have achieved all that it has undertaken over the past year.

Pattie Chugg
Executive Officer



other activities

Summary of Other Shelter Activities 2005-6

Shelter participates and provides state and national delegates to the following:

National focus

National Shelter

- National Council Meetings- in Melbourne and Hobart
- National Housing Alliance
- State Reports

Council of Homeless Persons Australia

- Delegate and State Reports

Australian Federation of Homelessness

- National Peak hook-ups
- Board Member

National Community Housing Forum

- Policy Advisory Committee
- Board Member
- Selection panel for National Community Housing Awards

Community Housing Federation of Australia

- Delegates and State Reports

Tasmanian focus

Agency Sector Forum

- Housing Representative for Community Sector

Affordable Housing Strategy Reference Group

- Several AHS working groups

Meetings with the Minister for Health and Human Services

Meetings with the Minister's Advisors

Meeting with Attorney General

Shelter Executive/Housing Tasmania Meetings

Quarterly Meetings with the Director of Housing
Meeting with Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

- Statewide Industry Reference Group
- SAAP Southern Service Providers Group
- SAAP Northern Service Providers Group

TasCOSS

- Board Member
- Tasmanian Social Policy Council - Chair of Housing WG
- Consumer Project Working Group
- Peak Network Meetings

Women's Emergency Service Providers (WESP)

Stainforth Court Residents Action

State Wide Youth Housing Group (SWYG)

62 Provider Meeting - Migrant and Refugee Issues

Private Rental Working Group - with Tenant Union and Hobart Legal Centre

Submissions & Proposals

Caravan Park Legislation

Tas Together Review

Proposed Rental Bond Authority

Proposed Consumer Advisory Body

Review of Residential Tenancy Act

Proposed Pulp Mill

State Budget Submission

In Partnerships

Seminar on Risk Management for Community Housing Providers

Research

Interviewed and contributed to range of research topics and consultations and assisted students

Public Comment

Range of media interviews

treasurer's report

For the year ending 30th June 2006

Shelter commenced the 2005/2006 financial year showing \$22,337 in equity. The Shelter Management committee approved a deficit budget for the year to ensure that the activities planned for the year were provided for. The Income and Expenditure statement to 30 June 2006 shows a deficit of \$2,516 which is less than the deficit approved by the committee.

The Shelter Management Committee continued to have the accounts for this financial audited by Robert Dyson of Lorkin Delpero Harris Chartered Accountants. A copy of the Independent Auditors report to the members of Shelter Tasmania is attached to the Annual General Report.

Shelter staff members implemented all the changes recommended by the auditors from the previous audit and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Pattie, Therese and Kate for the excellent way they maintain the financial records on behalf of Shelter.

The total grant received from DHHS for 2006 was \$118,814. This was increased in line with CPI and included additional funding of \$3,975 to cover administration staffing costs. This has been a really positive investment and was an acknowledgement by Housing of the additional workload which is due to the expansion of Shelter Tasmania. This has freed up more of Pattie's time.

I thank the Director of Housing Tasmania for her continued support of Shelter Tasmania.

The website www.shelertas.org.au has been utilised more and more by our members, who are able to access information more quickly, therefore cutting office expenses considerably.

The recommendation by the management committee to increase membership fees (on a sliding scale), was due to the fact that fees have remained low and unchanged for a long time. The projected income generated by this will assist in the additional operational costs.

As the new Treasurer for Shelter Tasmania, I would like to thank all the management committee members for their support and assistance. I would also like to thank Judy Munday for showing considerable skills as Treasurer for 8 months of this financial year, and in particular I would like to thank Pattie for her dedication to her position as Executive Officer for Shelter Tasmania.

Avril Lever
Treasurer
Shelter Tasmania Inc.
10th November 2006

Audited Financial Statement

Shelter Tasmania Incorporated

Shelter Tasmania Incorporated

30 June 2006

SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006**

The Committee have determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The Committee have determined that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the accounts.

In the opinion of the Committee, the financial statements being Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditure Statements, Depreciation Schedule and Notes to and forming part of the Accounts.

1. present fairly the financial position of Shelter Tasmania Incorporated as at 30 June 2006; and
2. at the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Shelter Tasmania Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Gary Bennett, Convenor

Avril Lever, Treasurer

Dated this



21/9/06

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF
SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED**

Scope

We have audited the attached financial report comprising Statement of Financial position and Income and Expenditure statement for the year ended 30 June 2006. These statements have been prepared on the basis set out in Note 1 to the financial report.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report. We have conducted an independent audit of these accounts in order to express an opinion on them to the Members.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to the Members for the purpose of fulfilling their requirements under the Associations Incorporation Act (Tas) 1964. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report to any person other than the Members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the accounts are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects the financial report:

- (i) is presented fairly in accordance with the basis of accounting outlined in Note 1 to the accounts; and
- (ii) present a true and fair view in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Tas) 1964; including whether
- (iii) proper accounting records and other books have been kept during the period covered by the accounts.

Statements of Accounting Concepts and Accounting Standards are not applicable to the basis of accounting adopted by Shelter Tasmania Incorporated.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Qualifications

1. It is not practical for the Society to establish complete accounting control over all income prior to the initial entry into the accounting records and accordingly it is not possible for our examination to include audit procedures to extend beyond the amounts of such income recorded in the accounting records of the entity.
2. We have not inspected material items of fixed assets and have relied on representations from the Executive Committee as to the existence and carrying value of all items.

Qualified Audit Opinion

In our opinion, except for the effects on the financial report, if any, of the matters referred to in the qualification paragraph, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with the basis of accounting outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Tas) 1964 the financial position of Shelter Tasmania Incorporated at 30 June 2006 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.

Larkin Delpero Harris
Chartered Accountants



Robert Dyson
31 Davey Street
HOBART TASMANIA

Dated 6/9/2006

SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006

	2006 \$	2005 \$
INCOME		
Bank Interest	2,808	2,380
DHHS Grants	114,839	104,744
Other Grants	3,975	4,623
Membership	2,525	2,344
Sundry receipts	83	2
TOTAL INCOME	124,028	114,093
EXPENDITURE		
Audit	1,310	1,440
Bank charges	236	284
Computer Expenses	2,814	2,250
Consultant's Fees	500	199
Depreciation	2,642	3,067
Electricity	1,084	1,336
Equipment and Maintenance	18	1,060
Forums and Meetings	856	1,876
Insurance	1,278	1,231
Leave Provisions	1,988	2,716
Legal Costs	-	-
Memberships	1,546	664
Office Expenses	345	730
Postage	742	496
Printing and Stationery	1,999	2,466
Redundancy	2,309	4,113
Removal Expenses	-	-
Rent	18,471	17,791
Resource Materials	75	182
Repairs and Maintenance	23	27
Sundries	43	224
Superannuation	6,589	5,818
Telephone and Conferencing	2,000	2,225
Training	406	831
Travel and Accommodation	3,195	3,272
Unpaid Memberships	110	-
Wages and Salaries	75,965	63,393
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	126,514	117,691
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	(2,516)	(3,598)

SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2006

	2006	2005
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Commonwealth General Cheque Account	4,632	11,268
Commonwealth Cash Management Account	11,324	5,074
Commonwealth Employment Liability Account	28,604	24,132
Petty Cash	100	100
Trade Debtors	0	134
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>44,660</u>	<u>40,708</u>
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Equipment at Cost	24,299	23,497
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(12,491)	(9,849)
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	<u>11,808</u>	<u>13,648</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>56,468</u>	<u>54,356</u>
LIABILITIES		
Trade Creditors	590	382
GST Liabilities		
GST Collected	2,297	2,107
GST Paid	(1,314)	(1,203)
Payroll Liabilities		
PAYG Tax	4,546	4,170
Provisions		
Annual Leave Provision	3,493	4,286
Annual Leave Loading Provision	611	161
LSL Provision	10,720	8,732
Redundancy Provision	15,704	13,395
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>36,647</u>	<u>32,019</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>19,821</u>	<u>22,337</u>
EQUITY		
Retained Earnings	22,337	25,935
Current Earnings/(Deficit)	(2,516)	(3,598)
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>19,821</u>	<u>22,337</u>

SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This special purpose financial report has been prepared for distribution to the members to fulfil the Committee's financial reporting requirements under Shelter Tasmania's Constitution and the Associations Incorporation Act (Tas). The accounting policies used in the preparation of this report, as described below, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Shelter Tasmania's Constitution and with previous years, and are, in the opinion of the Committee appropriate to meet the needs of members:

- (a) The financial report has been prepared on an accrual basis of accounting including the historical cost convention and the going concern assumption.
- (b) The requirements of Accounting Standards and other professional reporting requirements in Australia do not have mandatory applicability to Shelter Tasmania Incorporated because it is not a "reporting entity".
- (c) Other significant policies:

Depreciation of Non-Current Assets

Depreciation is provided on fixed assets by charges against income at rates governed by the Commissioner of Taxation which will depreciate an asset over its normal useful life.

Income Tax

The Shelter Tasmania Incorporated is exempt from income tax under Section 23(g) (v) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 (as amended), as the organisation has been established for community services purposes.

NOTE 2: INCORPORATION

Shelter Tasmania Incorporated was incorporated in 1981, under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1964 (as amended) in the State of Tasmania.

NOTE 3: LIABILITY OF MEMBERS

The rules of Shelter Tasmania Incorporated state that in the event of winding up of the association, members are not liable to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the association.

SHELTER TASMANIA INCORPORATED
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2006

NOTE 4: GRANTS	2006	2005
DIHS Grant Quarter 1	\$15,936	\$41,897
DHHS Grant Quarter 2	\$22,968	\$20,949
DHHS Grant Quarter 3	\$22,968	\$20,949
DHHS Grant Quarter 4	\$22,968	\$20,949
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Grants (Excluding GST)	<u>\$114,840</u>	<u>\$104,744</u>

Shelter Tasmania Incorporated

Executive List 2005-2006

Chair

Gary Bennet
Bethlehem House
56 Warwick St
Hobart 7000

Vice Chair

Andrea Witt
Centacare Transitional Support South
35 Tower Road
Newtown 7008

Secretary

Suzanne Fisher
Hobart City Mission
50 Barrack Street
Hobart 7000

Treasurer

Judy Munday
Tas University Union Housing
1 Churchill Avenue
Sandy Bay 7005

to June 2006

Avril Lever
Hobart Women's Shelter
PO Box 68
NEW TOWN 7008

from June 2006

Public Officer

Kate Gould
Red Shield Housing
223 Macquarie Street
Hobart 7000

Larkin Delpero Harris
Chartered Accountants



Robert Dyson – Auditor
31 Davey Street
HOBART TASMANIA

Dated: 6/9/2006

