

"HIGH HOPES" for

TASMANIAN HOMELESSNESS PLAN

The Tasmanian Homelessness Plan 2010-14¹ was launched on Friday 18th December, at Parliament House to the lively tune of "High Hopes" sung by the Tasmanian Choir of High Hopes. The Minister for Human Services Lin Thorp gave a positive appraisal of the plan, and assured listeners that the plan will not gather dust on

non-government reference groups and is now ready for further public consultation. The plan consists of 2 parts; the first providing a context for the plan while the second part outlines an action plan containing objectives to prevent and reduce homelessness.

These are: (1) Prevention and early intervention, (2) Improved Connections to Family and Community, (3) Improved access to Appropriate Housing, (4) Effective Service Responses and (5) Continuous Improvement and Quality. The strategies for facilitating these objectives are open for discussion through face to face consultation with consumers, specialist homelessness services, main stream services and the broader community and through written submissions. Closing date for submissions is 26th February 2010.

Shelter Tasmania welcomes the Homelessness Plan and agrees Social Inclusion Commissioner David Adams', comments at the launch that "the plan could make a big difference"², however this difference is contingent upon the Plan's successful implementation. To ensure the success of the implementation, Shelter encourages all stakeholders, to take the opportunity to respond to the Plan (see following details). Shelter would also like to see the consultation process with consumers, service providers and the community to continue for the duration of the implementation of the Plan and has recommended that a Homelessness Advisory Committee that includes members of the NGO sector is established to ensure that this happens.



Above: From left, Michael Douglas (Colony 47) and members of the ShelterTas Executive: Treasurer Avril Lever (HCM), Vice Chair Belinda Jones (Anglicare), Pattie Chugg (EO Shelter Tas), and Chair Andrea Witt (Centacare), at the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan Launch, with members of the Tasmanian Choir of High Hopes in the background.

the shelf but that the objectives outlined in the plan, will be realised. In keeping with the Government's strategy to make homelessness a whole of government and whole of community responsibility, the Plan has been developed in consultation with government and

Written responses can be submitted by: *email*: tashomelessnessplan@dhhs.tas.gov.au

mail: Tasmanian Homelessness Plan Feedback, Housing Tasmania, GPO Box 125, Hobart TAS 7000 or

online www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/tashomelessnessplan

LINK to DHHS site for details: http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/structure/operational_units/housing_tasmania/programs_and_strategies/national_housing_reforms/national_partnership_on_homelessness/tasmanian_homelessness_plan (or go to www.shelbertas.org.au).

¹The Tasmanian Homelessness Plan is one of the key initiatives outlined in the Tasmanian Homelessness Implementation Plan which is available at: http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_partnership_agreements/housing.aspx

²David Adams, The Mercury, Saturday, December 19, 2009, pg. 11

REQUEST for members FEEDBACK on The Draft Tasmanian Homelessness Plan

Shelter Tasmania will be writing a response to The Homelessness Plan. Can Shelter members please provide any comments and suggestions by 22nd January 2010 via email to pc@shelertas.org.au or call 62245488. See www.shelertas.org.au

THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT UNVEILS PLANS FOR 5 DEDICATED HOMELESSNESS FACILITIES PLUS \$12 M IN FUNDS TO BOOST AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To meet the target to reduce primary homelessness from 385 'rough sleepers' to 193, by the end of 2010 the Tasmanian Government has made the following announcements³:

DOOR OF HOPE - a 20 unit homelessness facility. The structure will be designed to incorporate an existing building owned by the Door of Hope Christian Church in Launceston.

CAMPBELL STREET FACILITY IN HOBART:

A \$16 million project that is to provide medium to long term accommodation for people experiencing homelessness and those on low incomes, managed by Common Ground **expected to be completed by the end of 2010.**

LIVERPOOL STREET, HOBART - supported Accommodation facility featuring 47 units,

22 of which are to be occupied by people experiencing homelessness, also managed by Common Ground. **Plans approved by Council.**

YOUTH SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATION FACILITY

– **LAUNCESTON:** A Street to Home Initiative, this facility is still in the planning stages. **Requests for Proposals will be developed by the end of this year.**

LEVENBANK, ULVERSTONE - 20 supported accommodation units for people experiencing primary homelessness – **Site has been purchased and tenders expected to be called early 2010.**

EXTRA: \$12 million, under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, to go to Centacare to develop 78 new housing units across Tasmania.

Increase in Demand for Homelessness Services

Specialist Homelessness Services funded under the National Affordable Housing Agreement are reporting an increase in the demand for homelessness services in Tasmania over the last 12 months and that the demand continues to exceed the capacity to respond. Despite commitments by the Minister for Human Services, Lin Thorp, that the Government is on track to halve primary homelessness in Tasmania by the end of 2010⁴ specialist homelessness services struggle to meet the immediate demand for emergency accommodation. Information gathered by Shelter for this year's Budget Submission highlighted the pressure on homelessness services. For instance, young women's refuges in the south of the state recorded a turn away rate of 450 young

women since the beginning of 2009, while a crisis support service for women and children reported a turn away rate of 630 in the last financial year⁵. These figures highlight the demand for housing and support but with many of the key initiatives outlined in the Homelessness Plan still in the planning stages these won't be available until the end of 2010, when we will begin to see some of the facilities and corresponding support services in operation. The immediate demand for support services, especially from specialist homelessness services and for more, long term affordable and appropriate housing, be that, private rental or public housing remains high.

³Tasmania's Homelessness Population is divided into 4 categories: Sleeping rough: 385, Staying with friends and relatives: 1248, boarding houses: 252 and SAAP Accommodation: 622 (C. Chamberlain (2009) Counting the Homeless 2006 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra).

⁴Lin Thorp (MLC), Minister for Human Services, Tasmania, <http://www.media.tas.gov.au>

⁵Shelter Tasmania (2009) Annual Report page 11: <http://www.shelertas.org.au/>