

Affordable Housing Strategy 2004-2008 Stage 1 — Implementation Update

This edition of ShelTashortz will continue the theme of reporting on the Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS). Also included in the March 2004 Shelter mailout is a copy of the Community Housing Federation newsletter and the latest *Renting in Tasmania* booklet, which outlines the amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act (1997) which came into effect this month, as well as the new boarding house rules pertaining to boarding houses which will apply after 1 July 2004.

In December 2003 the Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy was launched by the then Premier Jim Bacon, and was applauded by Shelter for its breadth and level of funding commitment (see Dec 2003 ShelTashortz). The Strategy has a four year framework and will be implemented over 2 stages. Stage 1 will be the first 2 years of the Strategy.

For Stage 1 the State Government will spend almost \$90 million, including a special injection of \$45 million to support a major capital building program and an expanded housing assistance program. This first stage will focus on 3 major areas.

- 1 To respond as quickly as possible to increasing the supply of affordable housing across all housing tenures.
- 2 To provide increasing support to people on low incomes in high need.
- 3 To undertake the groundwork to build the infrastructure to enable a more diverse range of affordable housing provision and assistance.

The Affordable Housing Reference Group role is to oversee the implementation phase of the Strategy and to coordinate a range of working groups. Shelter Tasmania sits on the reference group along with a range of representatives from the community and private sectors, State and Local government, and the building industry. Shelter, along with other reference group members, is participating on the following working group.

Working Group	Aim
Tas Together benchmarking group	To propose some housing benchmarks to be forwarded to Tas Together
Support/Tenancy Workers for the private rental market	To develop expression of interest documents and probity measures
Consortium of private landlords	Establish and support a state-wide consortium of private landlords so there is housing quarantined for people on low incomes
Bond Board Group	Increase the security and return of bonds for tenants and to capture data about private rental
Community Sector capacity building group	Develop skills and infrastructure of the affordable housing sector, especially the community sector
Housing Information Service group	Develop a single point of contact for information on housing assistance and related issues
Conversion of commercial space to residential (shop-tops) group	Develop guidelines and expressions of interest for a demonstration project.

Another working group consists of Housing Tas area managers and relevant community groups to look at initiatives through the provision of small grants to 25 community groups to support local urban renewal and capacity building activities. **The Affordable Housing Strategy website address is: www.dhhs.tas.go.au/housing**

The working groups vary in their lifespan and composition and duration. Some have already started while other are yet to convene. Shelter encourages all of its member to contact its office for more details and certainly do so if you would like more direct input into the process. Shelter is committed to keeping you informed of the strategies and outcomes developed by the working groups.

Do you believe in
affordable
housing
for all Australians?

IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY
A MEMBER OF SHELTER
WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

Please contact us and we will send you membership information. By joining Shelter you help in providing a voice that influences government policy.

Shelter's ability to achieve positive results in housing and homelessness policy is dependent on a cross section of the community being involved, you can do this by becoming a member of Shelter.



Housing: A key to well-being

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Private Rental Assistance Roll Out



As part of the Affordable Housing Strategy the State Government has provided over 1 million dollars for the next 2 years to the Private Rental Assistance (PRA) Programs delivered by Anglicare in the North and North West and Colony 47 in the South. These additional funds will mean that Anglicare and Colony 47 can provide increased assistance to low income earners to establish and maintain private rental accommodation. This increase in funds will now broaden the eligibility criteria, particularly for single people and sole parent families, through increasing the income threshold by 20%. Couples and couples with children will also be eligible for discretionary assistance if their income is over the current income thresholds.

PRA, known in southern Tasmania as Ca\$h, will now also be providing 'Start Up Packs' for people renting for the first time or those who have had difficulties in the past maintaining tenancies. These packs will include a \$50 ChickenFeed voucher to buy things like cleaning products and household sundry items, as well as information brochures on services that may be useful e.g. Centrepay, ACCESS and the Tenant's Union. An intensive assistance program will also be delivered which will offer follow up support to those needing more than just a bond/rent appointment. The follow up assistance will include referrals to other services such as financial counselling and budgeting support. Services in southern Tasmania may have already heard of this assistance through Colony 47, where it has been branded as the Home & Hou\$ed program.

In addition, both Anglicare and Colony 47 will have a Rural Development Worker for a 12 month period. Anglicare in the North and North West will each have .5 of a position and Colony 47 in the South will have .8 of a position. These workers will visit existing support services in rural areas to establish protocols with current workers so that bond and rent assistance can more readily be accessed by people in outlying areas. These workers will also undertake substantial advertising campaigns and promotion of the service in these areas. It is envisaged that the work done over this 12 month period will lay a foundation and protocols to increase PRA access for rural areas beyond the life of this 12 month position.

For more details on these new programs and how to access them you can contact:

For the North
Anglicare on 6334 6060
For North West Tasmania
Anglicare Devonport 6424 8581
Anglicare Burnie 6431 8299

For the South
Colony 47 Ca\$h 6231 2182

National Homelessness Peak to meet in Hobart.

"The Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO) will be hosting a networking luncheon for the Tasmanian homelessness sector on Wednesday 5th May 2004 at Athena's on the Pier, Elizabeth Street Pier, Franklin Wharf, Hobart. SAAP service providers, service users, peak organisations and state departmental staff are invited to attend.

The forum provides an opportunity for people within the homelessness sector to come together and discuss both national and Tasmanian homelessness issues.

If you would like to attend the luncheon or would like further information, please contact the AFHO office on 02 6247 7744 or afho@afho.org.au"