

# ADVOCACY SNAPSHOT 2013-2015

JUNE 2015



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, Shelter WA published [Housing in WA: Sustainability and Affordability for the Future](#), a Policy Platform to guide our advocacy work from 2013 - 2015. The Policy Platform highlighted the fundamental challenges in Western Australia's housing market, and the changes required to achieve a fairer and more equitable housing system.

This Advocacy Snapshot has been developed to clearly illustrate, to our members and stakeholders, Shelter WA's key advocacy work in relation to the advocacy agenda specified in our Policy Platform.

## ■ ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Since 2013 Shelter WA has focused on four key advocacy areas to transform the current housing system:

- + **increasing housing affordability**
- + **reforming the private rental sector**
- + **expanding social housing**
- + **reducing homelessness**

Within these key advocacy areas Shelter WA's aims have been to inform policy-making and service delivery to promote the development of affordable housing and reduce homelessness in Western Australia within a whole of Government approach.

## ■ INFLUENCING CHANGE

Shelter WA's advocacy work has been successful in promoting and encouraging policy change so affordable accommodation and homelessness services are available for Western Australians. The following examples illustrate the advocacy undertaken by Shelter WA and other key stakeholders. Shelter WA:

- Joined other agencies and advocated in our Pre-Budget Submissions to the WA Department of Treasury over the past two years for more social housing. It is encouraging to acknowledge that the WA State Government committed \$560 million in the 2015/2016 Budget to develop 1,000 homes for seniors and families.
- Collaborated with other key stakeholders in dedicated campaigns to ensure the continuation of homelessness funding over the last three years. Collectively writing to Ministers, Senators and the Prime Minister and holding face to face meetings with key politicians, and generating media coverage. The response from the Commonwealth was to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), most recently until 2017, with the WA State Government also committing ongoing funding, to a total of over \$30 million p.a. for WA.
- Contributed to the Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing by providing a submission and giving evidence at a hearing. Many of Shelter WA's recommendations, which also echoed recommendations made by other stakeholders, were included in the Committee's final report, *Out of Reach? The Australian housing affordability challenge* (2015).

These recommendations included appointing a Minister for Housing and Homelessness, replacing stamp duty with a broad-based land tax, and examining the impact of negative gearing and capital gains discounts on housing affordability.

- Advocated to the State Government for better targeting of the First Home Owners Grant (FHOG) in our Pre-Budget submission, to promote increased supply of housing. In 2013, the State Government reduced the grant from \$7,000 to \$3,000 for those buying an established home, while the grant was increased to \$10,000 for eligible people building a new dwelling. In the 2015/2016 Budget, the FHOG was further restricted by removing it for existing dwellings and retaining \$10,000 for new construction. Shelter WA welcomes these reforms, and has also advocated for further changes to the Grant, including introducing means testing.
- Strongly supported retaining Keystart following a recommendation by the Economic Regulatory Authority to abolish it. Decisively, the WA State Government listened to the submissions of key stakeholders, including that of Shelter WA, and Keystart will continue to assist low and moderate income families into home ownership.

# ADVOCACY SNAPSHOT

In 2013, Shelter WA published **Housing in WA: Sustainability and Affordability for the Future**, a Policy Platform to guide our advocacy work from 2013 - 2015. This Policy Platform highlighted the fundamental challenges in Western Australia's housing market, and the changes required to achieve a fairer and more equitable housing system. As the peak body for social and affordable housing in Western Australia, a major part of Shelter WA's role is to undertake research, consultation, and inform policy to influence change in the market.

This Advocacy Snapshot provides a summary of Shelter WA's advocacy activities since 2013, consistent with our Policy Platform. This Update highlights for our members and stakeholders a broad description of our advocacy activities, including how we have sought to improve housing outcomes for low income people and others excluded from the current housing market in Western Australia. It also pinpoints long term and ongoing affordability challenges in the WA housing market, and provides insights into future work required for Western Australians to have access to affordable housing.

We are seeking your input to inform our future policy directions, including our new Policy Platform, which will be launched in early 2016. We welcome and encourage input from the sector, and to this end will communicate with key stakeholders during the second half of 2015. To be part of this consultation process, or comment in relation to this Advocacy Update, please e-mail Shelter WA at [research@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:research@shelterwa.org.au) or telephone (08) 9325 6660.

## ■ ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

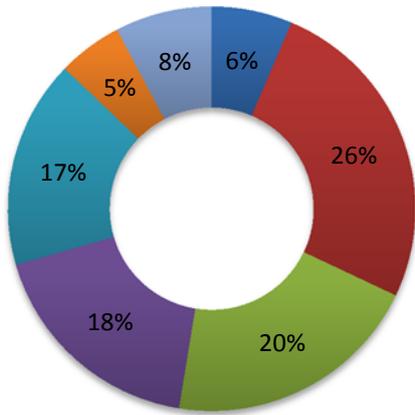
Shelter WA considers a **WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT** approach, as well as strong partnerships with housing providers, is required to achieve an effective housing system for all. Since 2013 Shelter WA has focused on four key advocacy areas to transform the current housing system:

- + **increasing housing affordability**
- + **reforming the private rental sector**
- + **expanding social housing**
- + **reducing homelessness**

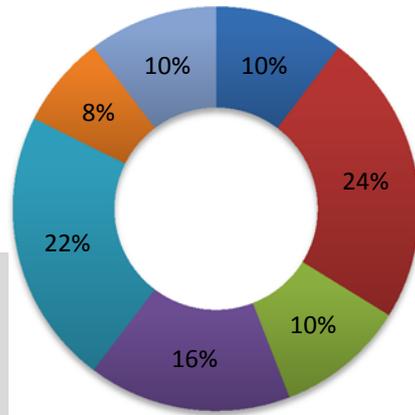
Under these key priority areas Shelter WA's aims have been to inform policy and service delivery to promote the development of affordable housing and reduce homelessness in Western Australia.

The diagrams below illustrate advocacy area undertaken by Shelter WA to influence change, and the extent to which the Organisation has focused on each priority area, including publication of research papers and policy submissions, and work to increase public awareness through the media and events.

### RESEARCH



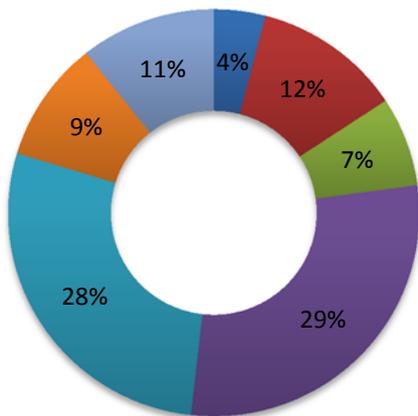
### SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT



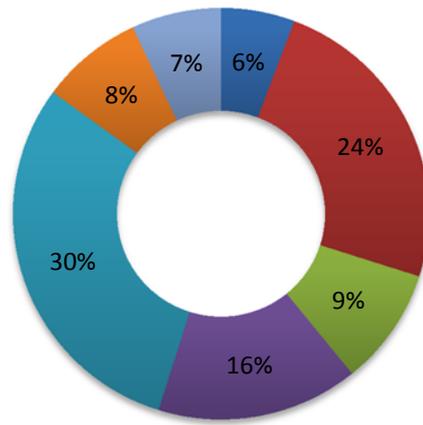
### LEGEND

- WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT
- INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
- REFORM THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET
- EXPAND SOCIAL HOUSING
- REDUCE HOMELESSNESS
- ENSURING ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR SERVICES
- ENHANCED CONSUMER PROTECTION

### MEDIA PRESENCE



### EVENTS



## ■ INFLUENCING CHANGE

Our advocacy work has been successful in helping to ensure affordable accommodation and homelessness services are available for Western Australians. Over the past three years, advocacy by Shelter WA, often in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders, has achieved the following:

- Shelter WA has advocated to the WA Department of Treasury for increased investment in social housing through our Pre-Budget Submissions over the past two years. It is encouraging to acknowledge that the WA State Government committed \$560 million to develop 1,000 homes for seniors and families in the 2015/2016 Budget.
- Shelter WA and other key stakeholders conducted concerted collective campaigns to ensure the continuation of homelessness funding. In collaboration with other peak bodies and service providers, we wrote to and met with key politicians, developed a robust media campaign, and also provided evidence at the Federal Inquiry into Affordable Housing. The response from the Commonwealth and WA State Governments was to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) until 30 June 2017, committing to over \$30 million for homelessness services in WA per year.
- Shelter WA provided a written submission and attended a public hearing for the Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing in 2014. In its final report, *Out of Reach? The Australian housing affordability challenge* (2015) the Senate Economics References Committee included many recommendations by Shelter WA, some of which were also echoed by other stakeholders. These recommendations included appointing one Minister for Housing and Homelessness, replacing stamp duty with a broad-based land tax, and examining the impact of negative gearing and capital gains discounts on housing affordability.
- Shelter WA has consistently advocated for better targeting of the First Home Owners Grant to low and moderate income households, and for the grant to be used to increase the supply of housing. In 2013, the State Government reduced the grant from \$7,000 to \$3,000 for those buying an established home, while at the same time increasing it to \$10,000 for people purchasing or building a new property. The Grant was further restricted in the 2015/2016 State Budget by removing it for existing dwellings and retaining \$10,000 for new construction. Shelter WA welcomes these reforms, and supports means testing to ensure the Grant is targeted appropriately.
- Shelter WA strongly supported retaining Keystart following a recommendation by the Economic Regulatory Authority to abolish this fundamental supportive mechanism for people on a low to moderate income. Significantly, State Government listened to the requests of key stakeholders in the sector, including those of Shelter WA, to maintain Keystart Loans for low and moderate income families, assisting this cohort to enter into home ownership.

## ■ ACTIVITIES

Between 2013 and 2015, Shelter WA focused on a broad range of issues through submissions to Government, research reports, media statements and coverage, and events and forums. For example, Shelter WA released seven major research reports including one on [Young People, Housing and Homelessness](#), and published a [Local Government Guide to Developing an Affordable Housing Strategy](#).

Shelter WA's research informed policy advice to government, a fundamental component of our advocacy efforts. Since 2013, Shelter WA provided 18 submissions to Government on a broad range of issues. Key submissions to State and Federal Government included our responses to the [Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing](#) and our annual [Pre-Budget Submission to Treasury](#).

Wherever possible, Shelter WA provided stakeholders with an opportunity to contribute to our policy advice and submissions to Government discussion papers. Through the use of consultative forums and by circulating relevant submissions to stakeholders for comment, we incorporated valuable sector and community feedback into our responses. For example, Shelter WA held five consultations across the metropolitan area, to contribute to a final report on the [Department of Housing's Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy](#). Shelter WA also circulated a survey to the sector, which informed advocacy to strengthen homelessness services and funding to those services. Over 90 respondents shared their views, which were incorporated into appropriate submissions.

Shelter WA is regularly contacted by media to comment on topical issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness. Shelter WA also proactively utilises the media and public forums to raise awareness and advocate for change in our areas of work. Shelter WA has been quoted in more than 64 media stories in the past three years.

Shelter WA worked closely with key stakeholders to systematically use digital media to disseminate coordinated messages in collaboration with other state-based and national organisations in 2013, 2014 and 2015 to extend funding each year for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

Shelter WA strives to utilise the most appropriate avenue for advocacy to influence changes in policy or practice. In addition to the methods described above, Shelter WA has regularly communicated with Ministers, senior government officials and private industry executives, as well as executives in not-for-profit organisations, to promote social and affordable housing and reduce homelessness. While much of this work has been 'behind the scenes', it was critical to effecting lasting change by working collaboratively with decision makers.

## ■ WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT

Transforming the housing system to adequately address affordable housing and homelessness issues represents a formidable challenge for Australian governments, as responsibility for the various areas which impact these issues is divested across numerous agencies and portfolios at the Federal, State and local government levels. While it is not feasible for all these areas of responsibility to be located in one agency or portfolio, it is imperative that coordination takes place for there to be any bearing on those impacts. To achieve this coordination, Shelter WA recommended in its Policy Platform that a single minister, at both State and Federal levels, have responsibilities for Housing, Homelessness and Urban Development.

## + DEVELOPMENTS

There have been many challenges and setbacks for affordable housing and homelessness funding and policy development at the Federal level over the past few years. In 2013, the Housing and Homelessness portfolio was subsumed into the broader Social Services portfolio, pushing housing further down on the national agenda (see Appendix 1).

In recent years, the National Housing Supply Council was dismantled, the Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness disbanded, and more recently national peak bodies, including National Shelter, Homelessness Australia and the Community Housing Federation of Australia were all defunded as of 30 June 2015.

In the past three years there have been six Ministers responsible for Housing and Homelessness at the Commonwealth level and three Housing Ministers at the State level. In WA, there are different Ministers for Urban Planning, Child Protection (which includes Homelessness) and Housing. The Hon Minister Morton currently oversees Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection which enables co-ordination across these portfolios, all of which intersect with homelessness. In June 2013, the Drug and Alcohol Office and Mental Health Commission were amalgamated facilitating vital coordination of these two policy areas.

## **+ ANTICIPATING**

The Reform of the Federation process currently underway may shift which levels of government are responsible for policy making and funding of housing assistance and homelessness services. The reform process may well result in greater coordination, a reduction in duplication and clarity of roles. However, it may also lead to a reduction in funding, minimal coordination and a de-emphasis on whole-of-government solutions to achieve housing and homelessness outcomes.

Shelter WA has already participated in a roundtable discussion with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as part of the Reform of the Federation process. We will also prepare a formal submission, based on input from our members and stakeholders in the affordable housing and homelessness sectors, once the Green Paper is released at the end of 2015.

## **■ HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Shelter WA aims to improve housing affordability by influencing urban planning, taxation settings, and affordable home ownership options through our policy advice to government. Between December 2012 and 2014 the median house price in Perth rose from \$480,000 to \$550,000 (REIWA, 2015), an increase of 14.6% compared to the consumer price index (CPI) of 3.8%.

In the December 2014 quarter, a Perth household on the estimated median income of \$86,700, paying no more than 30% of their income in repayments, would have been able to afford a property under \$404,000 (Housing Industry Forecasting Group, 2015). Many low and moderate income renters continue to find it difficult to save for a deposit and access home ownership.

While many households are unable to access affordable housing, several initiatives assist low to moderate income households into affordable home ownership. Shelter is supportive of the Department of Housing's commitment to bring new affordable housing to market and, through Keystart, offer home loan and shared equity products to low and moderate income households.

## **+ DEVELOPMENTS**

The First Home Owners Grant (FHOG) was provided to more than 19,000 recipients over the year to December 2014 (Housing Industry Forecasting Group, 2014).

The State Government reduced the grant from \$7,000 to \$3,000 for those buying an established home in 2013. At the same time, the grant was increased from \$7,000 to \$10,000 to build a new home. The FHOG was further restricted in the 2015/2016 budget by removing it completely for existing dwellings and retaining \$10,000 for new constructions.

Shelter WA provided a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing in 2014. We also provided evidence at a hearing for this Inquiry as well as other Parliamentary Inquiries. The Senate Economics References Committee's final report, *Out of Reach? The Australian housing affordability challenge* (2015) includes 40 recommendations aimed at improving housing affordability, echoing many of the recommendations made by Shelter WA and others to appoint a Minister on Housing and Homelessness, replace stamp duty with a broad-based land tax, and examine the impact of negative gearing and capital gains discounts on housing affordability (see Appendix 2).

## + ANTICIPATING

In March 2015, the Abbot Government released the Re:think Tax discussion paper, with a Green paper due out in late 2015. Taxation treatment of housing, including stamp duty, land taxes, negative gearing and capital gains, influence property prices. Shelter WA is in consultation with its members about their views on tax reform. Their recommendations will be used to produce a submission on tax reform later this year.

Shelter WA will also continue to monitor proposed changes to WA's planning system, as urban planning and development is integral in ensuring a diversity of housing types, for a range of households and income levels. We will seek input from the sector to inform our advocacy in this area.

## ■ RENTAL MARKET

The vacancy rate in WA continues to climb, from 2.1% in 2013 to 4.4% as of March 2015, according to the Real Estate Institute of WA (REIWA, 2015). The lower demand is due, in part, to slower population growth, including a drop in overseas migration and an increase in new construction. According to the Housing Industry Association, there was an increase of 21% of new dwelling commencements in WA in 2013/2014. This rate of new construction is expected to decline in subsequent years. The higher vacancy rate has contributed to a slight reduction in the median rent to \$430 per week as of March 2015, down from \$480 in June 2013.

While a lower median rent has given some relief to middle and upper income renters, there continues to be a shortage of housing that is available and affordable to people on low to moderate incomes in the Perth metropolitan area.

High housing costs combined with tightening eligibility for social housing programs means that many households will spend extended periods in private rentals. However, the rental market is not currently equipped to meet the needs of long term tenants. The rental market is still very much geared towards short-term housing, with tenants on short-term leases and owners primarily small investors who rely on negative gearing and capital growth to make rental housing a viable short-term investment. If the private rental market is to meet the needs of long-term renters it must be substantially re-oriented to make it more affordable, attract long-term investors, and provide more security for tenants.

## **+ DEVELOPMENTS**

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS), introduced in July 2008, encouraged changes to the patterns of investment in the private rental sector, by shifting away from small investors and moving towards institutional investors and structures that develop long-term rental investment. The scheme brought 2,525 new dwellings to the WA rental market, with another 2,801 approved as at 30 September 2014. On 13 May 2014, the Federal Government announced that no further incentives would be allocated for NRAS, and that funds previously allocated for Round 5 would be withdrawn. The Federal Government also tightened regulations for current rounds of NRAS to ensure projects are completed promptly (see Appendix 3).

On 1 July 2013, amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act 1989 (RTA) came into effect, adopting many recommendations made by Shelter WA and other stakeholders. These changes provided more consistency, clarity and increased some legal protections for tenants. Boarders and lodgers, however, are not covered under the RTA, and are vulnerable in the housing market. In late 2014, the Department of Local Government and Communities, and the Department of Commerce, both released papers relating to legislation affecting residential parks, caravan parks, and camping grounds. These reviews sought to balance the rights of users and residents with long term viability for owners.

## **+ ANTICIPATING**

It is expected that the Department of Commerce will release a Boarders and Lodgers Discussion Paper in late 2015. Shelter WA will prepare a submission, and is currently involved in a boarders and lodgers working group co-Chaired with Tenancy WA. We are also expecting the final recommendations from the review of the Residential Parks Long Stay Tenants Act later this year, which will affect residents in caravan parks.

## **■ SOCIAL HOUSING**

Social housing is an essential component of the housing continuum, providing accommodation to those unable to secure and maintain housing in the private rental market or access home ownership. The social housing system in WA is under significant strain, with demand far outpacing supply.

The Department of Housing in WA owns and manages more than 40,000 dwellings, while community housing providers own and/or manage approximately 9,200 dwellings. At 30 June 2014, there were 20,013 households on the wait list for social housing in WA. Wait times in some metropolitan or regional areas are up to 10 years, depending on household requirements. Social housing wait lists across Australia are showing similar issues to those experienced WA, with more than 225,000 applicants on wait lists nationally. An increase in the supply of social housing is urgently needed to address the growing demand.

## **+ DEVELOPMENTS**

Over the last three years, Shelter WA and other stakeholders advocated to government to increase investment in social housing (see Appendix 4).

The State Government announced \$560 million in the 2015-2016 Budget to develop 1,000 properties by 2017, aimed at halving the number of seniors and families on the priority wait list. The Social Housing Investment Package will deliver:

- 600 newly built social housing homes;
- 200 spot purchases of existing homes and pre-purchases of homes to be constructed; and
- 200 leases of the private sector.

The rollout of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (NRSCH) began on 1 January 2014. Western Australia has advised that it is committed to ensuring consistency with the NRSCH and as such is a participating jurisdiction of the NRSCH. However, the WA Government has not at this stage passed legislation to formally implement the NRSCH. The State Government is considering potential changes to its administrative regulatory system, including the adoption of key elements of the NRSCH, such as the National Regulatory Code.

## **+ ANTICIPATING**

The Reform of the Federation White Paper process is currently underway and has included the release of a Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper. The Reform process could have a significant impact on how the Commonwealth and States and Territories fund and manage housing assistance. The Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper considered changes to Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) including extending CRA to public housing tenancies with rents linked to market rates. In this scenario, CRA for public housing tenants would replace current funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA).

The Department of Housing convenes the Community Housing Steering Group. It is anticipated there will be outcomes and recommendations brought forward through this forum that will inform future directions for social housing.

## **■ HOMELESSNESS**

There were approximately 9,600 people experiencing homelessness in WA at the time of the 2011 Census, an increase of 16% from the previous Census in 2006 (ABS, 2012). Many of these people were in severely overcrowded conditions in urban and remote parts of the state. Additionally, there were over 7,000 people who were marginally housed, living in precarious accommodation including caravans and boarding houses. Regional and remote areas in particular saw an increase in homelessness. Some areas such as the Kimberley had a significantly higher rate of homelessness than the rest of the state.

During 2013-14, an estimated 21,437 people received support from a government-funded specialist homelessness service in Western Australia. Of these, 15,243 (71%) were adults and 6,196 (28.9%) were under the age of 18 (AIHW, 2014). People require homelessness services for a variety of reasons, including escaping domestic and family violence and relationship breakdown. Services are seeing an increase in the number of families seeking assistance due to financial reasons. An average of 65 people were turned away from specialist homelessness services in Western Australia each day.

Shelter WA conducted an online survey of homelessness service providers and people who use their services. We received 90 responses. Of those, almost 90% reported they or their clients were unable to access services because they were full. Further, approximately 50% suggested there were no programs providing an appropriate service for their or their client's needs. When asked about groups that are underserved, over 60% of respondents said that people with a mental illness require additional services and 55% said more services and accommodation options were needed for families in crisis. Homelessness services reported struggling to accommodate new clients, due to insufficient 'exit points' for existing clients in crisis accommodation.

## **+ DEVELOPMENTS**

Shelter WA worked closely with National Shelter and Homelessness Australia and other organisations in WA to advocate for ongoing funding for homelessness services in WA. The Commonwealth Government recently extended the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to 30 June 2017 (see Appendix 5).

This year, the State Government matched the Commonwealth funding of \$15 million per annum, primarily from existing allocations, and added \$2.5 million in new funding. However, the renewals have not included indexation or capital funding, representing a reduction in funding for homelessness services and accommodation. Shelter WA continues to advocate for adequate funding for specialist providers in WA to ensure the continued provision of quality homelessness services.

## **+ ANTICIPATING**

The review of Housing and Homelessness Services under the Reform of the Federation process will impact how services are funded and administered post 2017. In particular, the Reform process will determine whether the States or Commonwealth are responsible for housing and homelessness. There are some early indications that the Government is signalling a retraction of Commonwealth responsibility for the provision of homelessness services and crisis accommodation.

## REFERENCES

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- AIHW. (2014). *Specialist homelessness services 2013/2014*.
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- Economics References Committee. (2015). *Out of reach? The Australian Housing Affordability Challenge*. Australian Senate.
- Housing Industry Forecasting Group. (2014). *Forecast Dwelling Commencements in Western Australia, October 2014*. Perth: Department of Planning.
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- REIWA. (2015, March 18). *Perth Metro: Perth Market Snapshot*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from <http://reiwa.com.au/The-WA-Market/Perth-Metro/>

# Appendix 1

## ADVOCACY AIM: WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

Issue	Recommendations	Shelter WA Advocacy	Status
<p><b>Coordinated Portfolio</b></p>	<p>The Western Australian Government appoint a single Minister for Housing, Homelessness and Urban Development with responsibility for coordinating housing-related policy decisions across agencies, to ensure the effectiveness of the housing system across the whole continuum.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Submission to Draft State Planning Strategy</li> <li>- Submission to WA Labor Party Discussion Paper</li> <li>- Prepared submission for National Shelter to Federal Labor Discussion Paper of Housing Affordability</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to the Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>There have been three Ministers for Housing since 2012, with various combinations of other portfolios (Transport, Emergency Services, Mines and Petroleum, and Racing and Gaming). The Hon Colin Holt is the current Minister for Housing.</p> <p>In its 2015 report on housing affordability, Senate Economics References Committee recommended the Australian Government appoint a Minister for Housing and Homelessness, with the portfolio to be located in a central agency such as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Treasury, or in the Department of Infrastructure with formal links to the central agencies.</p> <p>In March 2013, the Hon Minister Morton added Child Protection (Homelessness) to her existing portfolios of Mental Health and Disability Services.</p>

<p><b>Expand NAHA</b></p>	<p>The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) embeds the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) as a permanent part of its decision-making, and expands it to include all forms of housing assistance. This includes funding for social housing, funding for affordable rental housing, rent assistance, programs to support home ownership and homelessness programs.</p>	<p>Submissions and Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-Budget Submission 2013-14</li> <li>- Pre-Budget Submission 2014-15</li> <li>- Submission to Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Submission to Inquiry into Commission of Audit</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to the Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The NAHA is currently under review through the Reform of the Federation process, which seeks to clarify responsibilities between State and Commonwealth Government including housing and homelessness issues.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended the Commonwealth and states and territories agree to establish a ministerial council on housing and homelessness within the COAG ministerial council system.</p> <p>It also recommended reforming NAHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expand to include all forms of housing assistance—funding for social housing, affordable rental housing, rent assistance and the various programs to support people to remain housed;</li> <li>• develop measurable benchmarks and ensure these benchmarks are used to evaluate the effectiveness of government expenditure on affordable housing;</li> <li>• improve the collection and publication of data, especially on the number of new homes added to the pool of social housing; and</li> <li>• ensure that funding is tied directly to concrete outcomes, for example, by tightening conditions on Commonwealth funding to the states that would realise growth in the stock of social housing.</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 2

### ADVOCACY AIM: INCREASE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Issue	Recommendations	Shelter WA Advocacy	Status
<p><b>Tax reform</b></p>	<p>The WA State Government to abolish stamp duty on property purchases and replace it with a more equitable, broad-based land tax.</p> <p>Abolish negative gearing; to shift the balance from a short-term investor focused housing market, to one more accessible and affordable to renters and non-investor home buyers.</p> <p>Proposed changes to the tax arrangements governing not-for-profit activities be carefully drafted to ensure that the provision of affordable housing is included in the definition of charitable activities and unambiguously continues to attract tax concessions.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Submission to Senate Inquiry into Commission of Audit</li> <li>- Pre-budget submissions 2014-15</li> <li>- Pre-budget submission 2015-16</li> <li>- Submission to Economic Regulation Authority (ERA) Inquiry into Microeconomic Reform</li> <li>- Submission to Re:think Tax Discussion Paper</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Economics of Affordable Housing research report with Curtin University, Dr Rachel Ong and student Melissa Piscetek</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sector consultation seeking input into Shelter WA's Pre-budget submission 2015-16</li> <li>- Melissa Piscetek presented her findings on the Economics of Affordable Housing at the Affordable Housing Network</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Tax Green Paper</li> </ul>	<p>Tax reform is currently under review. The Re:think Tax discussion paper was released in March 2015 with the Green paper expected at the end of 2015.</p> <p>On 19 September 2014, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) released for public discussion a Commissioner's Interpretation Statement on the provision of housing by charities. It addressed the key types of activities undertaken by providers and acts to reassure providers about the validity of their activities as a charitable entity under the new Act.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended state and territory governments phase out conveyancing stamp duties and transition to a broad-based land tax.</p>

<p><b>Planning amendments</b></p>	<p>There is improved co-ordination between all levels of government and housing providers in planning for housing, and in particular planning for affordable housing.</p> <p>All local governments develop an Affordable Housing Strategy to meet current and future community needs.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Department of Planning, Planning Provisions for Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Submission to Cockburn Council Affordable and Diverse Housing Strategy</li> <li>- Submission to Dept of Local Governments and Communities on Caravan Park Legislation</li> <li>- Submission to WA Labor Party Discussion Paper Planning and Housing Approval System</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research Project into Local Government Guide to Developing an Affordable Housing Strategy</li> <li>- Research report on the Impact of Fly-in/Fly-out on housing affordability in WA</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation at WALGA forum on Local Government and Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Participant in the development of the State Planning Strategy 2050</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide feedback to MRA on Affordable and Diverse Housing Policy</li> </ul>	<p>Local Government amalgamations were announced in Oct 2014 but abandoned in February 2015.</p> <p>In 2013, the Department of Planning undertook a consultation process on Planning Provisions for Affordable Housing. On 12 November 2014, the Department of Planning announced it was developing guidance material for local governments to enable voluntary incentives into planning schemes.</p> <p>The Department of Housing, Planning and WALGA are collaborating on a toolkit to guide local governments to produce Affordable Housing Strategies, or incorporate affordable housing into local government planning.</p> <p>In June 2014, the State Planning Strategy 2050 was released. It promotes innovative and diverse housing types including community titling.</p>
<p><b>Affordable Home Ownership</b></p>	<p>The National Affordable Housing Agreement supports the continued development of shared equity programs and other alternative home ownership mechanisms, and mortgage relief programs.</p> <p>The First Home Owners' Grant to be restructured to be means and asset tested.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-budget submissions to Treasury 2012-13</li> <li>- Pre-budget submission to Treasury 2015-16</li> <li>- Submission to ERA Draft Report into the Inquiry into Microeconomic Reform, supporting continuation of Keystart</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young People, Housing and Homelessness</li> </ul>	<p>In September 2013, FHOG was changed from \$7,000 to \$10,000 for new builds, while the grant for those buying an established home was reduced from \$7,000 to \$3,000. In the 2015/2016 State budget, the FHOG for established homes was removed, but \$10,000 for new builds was retained.</p> <p>From 14 March 2014, Keystart income limit for a single applicant changed from \$90,000 to \$95,000 in the metropolitan area.</p>

	<p>The WA Government supports implementation of alternative tenure models such as Community Land Trusts and land rent options to increase housing affordability for low and moderate income earners.</p> <p>Australian, State and Territory Governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to develop and implement programs to support access to social housing, private rental and home ownership for Aboriginal households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UWA Law School investigated affordable housing opportunities and creative land use (land rent, community land trusts, air rights)</li> <li>- Research report on the Impact of Fly-in/Fly-out on housing affordability in WA</li> <li>- Prepared submission for National Shelter to Federal Labor Discussion Paper of Housing Affordability</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA media release following State budget</li> <li>- Presentation to Affordable Housing Summit on air rights project</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to the Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The income limit for couples and families changed from \$130,000 to \$135,000 in the metropolitan and regional areas.</p> <p>In releasing the State Planning Strategy 2050, the WA Government's Department of Planning supported alternative tenure models. The Department of Housing has also explored using community land trusts in a WA context, but determined that current Residential Tenancy legislation makes it unfeasible.</p> <p>The Federal Government provides updates on the 'Close the Gap' strategy, in which housing is a key component. Recently a significant number of Aboriginal programs have been reduced down into four funding streams, which will potentially reduce the amount of funding and services.</p> <p>More recently, the Federal government has stated that it will not be providing funding for remote service delivery into the future. The State government has stated that some remote communities may have to close. This could have negative implications for remote Aboriginal housing, including increasing homelessness in remote and regional areas.</p>
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## Appendix 3

### ADVOCACY AIM: REFORM THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET

Issue	Recommendations	Shelter WA Advocacy	Status
<b>Modified Investment Mix</b>	<p>The Australian Government confirm its commitment to continuing a rental affordability scheme such as the National Rental Affordability Scheme, and double the number of property incentives in the next funding rounds.</p> <p>Tighten regulatory framework of NRAS to ensure timely delivery of new dwellings.</p> <p>Increase investment in affordable housing achieved through the creation of Affordable Housing Bonds or unit investment trusts</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Pre-budget submission to Treasury 2015-16 recommended assessing viability of Housing Supply and Social Benefit Bonds</li> <li>- Prepared submission for National Shelter to Federal Labor Discussion Paper of Housing Affordability</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participated in Reform of the Federation Roundtable</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to the Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>In May 2014, the Federal Government tightened regulations for current rounds of NRAS.</p> <p>At the same time, funding was withdrawn for Round 5, which meant the loss of 20,000 incentives.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended that Round 5 of NRAS be continued and a thorough cost benefit analysis of NRAS be undertaken, including a comparison of forgone revenue from demand subsidies such as the first home owners grant, and negative gearing and capital gains tax.</p>
<b>Improved consumer protection</b>	<p>Better protection for housing consumers - such as those living in caravan parks and other marginal tenures - including security of tenure and ongoing affordability.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Department of Commerce on Residential Parks Long Stay Tenant Act Review</li> </ul>	<p>Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act came into effect in August 2013.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Local Government and Communities Caravan Parks and Camping Ground Act Review</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA distributed information regarding the changes to the Residential Tenancies Act</li> <li>- Shelter WA delivered Tenancy Education to Aboriginal communities in the Fitzroy Valley</li> <li>- Presentation at Tenancy WA conference</li> <li>- Co-chaired meeting with Tenancy WA for Boarders and Lodgers Group</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Department of Commerce Boarders and Lodgers Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The Amendments provide greater protection and clarity for those covered by tenancy agreements. Boarders and lodgers were not covered in this review.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended that the states and territories review their tenancy laws to ensure that all rental properties are required to meet minimum standards.</p>
<p><b>Enhanced Rent Assistance</b></p>	<p>The current maximum rate of CRA needs to be restored to its real value in relation to the household budget.</p> <p>Extend eligibility criteria for state-funded rent assistance to low income wage earners who are not in receipt of Centrelink benefits.</p> <p>That the WA Department of Housing continue to support people to secure private rentals with bond assistance and through the Housing Pathways Program to assist over income public housing tenants secure accommodation in the private rental market or through home ownership.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA pre-budget submissions proposes expanding Rental Pathways Scheme to people on the public housing wait list</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research project modeling rates of CRA over time, undertaken with Dr Rachel Ong and Melissa Piscetek.</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Melissa Piscetek’s presentation on modeling policy changes to CRA and stamp duty.</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>Reform of the Federation, Commission of Audit, and Productivity Commission considered changes to CRA.</p>

## Appendix 4

### ADVOCACY AIM: EXPAND THE SOCIAL HOUSING SYSTEM

Issue	Recommendations	Shelter WA Advocacy	Status
<p><b>Increased Supply and Diversity of Housing Stock</b></p>	<p>The next round of funding for the NAHA support the growth of the social housing sector in WA to meet increasing demand.</p> <p>Commit to a social housing growth plan that includes clear capital targets for community and public housing, with timelines for implementation.</p> <p>The NAHA includes clear linkages with urban planning outcomes and taxation reform which promote the development and investment in affordable housing.</p> <p>See section above regarding NRAS</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> <li>-Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Commission of Audit</li> <li>- Pre-budget submission to Treasury 2015-16 recommended extending the Rental Pathway Scheme to social housing tenants</li> <li>- Prepared submission for National Shelter to Federal Labor Discussion Paper of Housing Affordability</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA participates in the Community Housing Steering Group</li> </ul> <p>Meeting with Ministers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Met with Minister Marmion re alternative financing for affordable housing</li> <li>- Met with Minister Holt re underutilised land and alternative financing</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The NAHA is currently under review through the Reform of the Federation process, which seeks to clarify responsibilities between State and Commonwealth governments.</p> <p>The Department of Housing is reviewing the progress to date of the <i>State Affordable Housing Strategy</i>.</p> <p>The Department of Housing convenes the Community Housing Steering Group.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended the Commonwealth and states and territories develop a long term, national affordable housing plan including base funding and reward payments linked to achievement by individual jurisdictions against performance indicators.</p>

<p><b>Sustainable Funding</b></p>	<p>The NAHA include an operational subsidy for affordable housing funded on a per dwelling basis and an affordable housing growth fund allocated on a per capita basis for the delivery of future affordable housing.</p> <p>The Productivity Commission examines the long term effectiveness of the current ways of subsidising rents, including Commonwealth Rent Assistance, income based and market based rents, to provide recommendations on the most effective way to ensure affordability for tenants within a sustainable social housing system.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Commission of Audit</li> <li>- Prepared submission for National Shelter to Federal Labor Discussion Paper of Housing Affordability</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research project modeling rates of CRA over time by Melissa Piscetek.</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Melissa Piscetek’s presentation on modeling policy changes to CRA and stamp duty.</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA to respond to Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The NAHA is currently under review through the Reform of the Federation process, which seeks to clarify responsibilities between State and Commonwealth Govt. including housing and homelessness issues.</p>
<p><b>Improved Social Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples</b></p>	<p>Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments engage in good faith with Aboriginal communities and their representatives over both the implementation of Aboriginal community controlled housing, and improvements to mainstream social housing to improve access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-budget submission to Treasury 2012/13 and Pre-budget submission 2015/16 recommended constructing Aboriginal visitor accommodation in Perth and regional centres</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation to Indigenous Housing Conference in Darwin, 2014</li> <li>- Shelter WA Executive Officer, Chantal Roberts, appointed the rep for Aboriginal Issues to the Council to Homeless Persons of Australia</li> <li>- Shelter WA delivered Tenancy Education to Aboriginal communities in the Fitzroy Valley</li> </ul>	<p>The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Aboriginal Housing delivered new dwellings and refurbished existing dwellings in remote communities.</p> <p>The State Government is reviewing the servicing arrangements for remote Aboriginal communities, including the closure of some communities.</p> <p>The Senate Economics References Committee recommended housing should be included in the Prime Minister's <i>Closing</i></p>

Improved Management		<p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper, including how changes will impact on Aboriginal housing</li> </ul>	<p><i>the Gap</i> report: that access to affordable and appropriate housing must be regarded in the same context as Indigenous education, health and employment.</p>
	<p>The Dept of Housing reviews income eligibility limits, in consideration of the increasing gap between income-based rents and private rental market rent levels.</p> <p>Rights of tenants, including security of tenure, security of rent levels, and access to complaints and redress mechanisms, be preserved in any transfer processes from public to community housing.</p> <p>Additional funding for the Dept of Housing to ensure preventative strategies are developed in relation to the DBMS.</p> <p>Proceed with implementation of the Natl Regulatory Framework for Community Housing and that it be administered independently of the government depts managing public housing, and be applied to State and Territory housing depts as well as to CHOs.</p>	<p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA report on Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy (DBMS)</li> </ul> <p>Events and Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA forums regarding DBMS - Kenwick, Guildford, Mandurah, Mirrabooka, West Perth</li> <li>- Shelter WA coordinated sector event led by seeking feedback on priority housing wait list</li> <li>- Shelter WA participates in the Community Housing Steering Group</li> <li>- Shelter WA held an Affordable Housing Network Meeting regarding DBMS</li> <li>- Presentation to Scales Murdoch Law Centre symposium re: Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy</li> </ul> <p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Radio interviews on DBMS</li> </ul> <p>Letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letter to Minister Marmion regarding DBMS</li> </ul>	<p>The Department of Housing is reviewing eligibility limits.</p> <p>The State Government has invested \$11 Million between 2012/13 and 2015/16 for the Disruptive Behaviour Management Unit which employs 35 staff.</p> <p>Amendments to the DBMS were made following advocacy by Shelter WA, SCALES and EOC.</p> <p>The rollout of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (NRSCH) began on 1 January 2014. See section above for more information.</p>

## Appendix 5

### ADVOCACY AIM: IMPROVE HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Issue	Recommendations	Shelter WA Advocacy	Status
<p><b>Restructured homelessness services</b></p>	<p>Continue focus on prevention and early intervention and continue to develop the 'housing first' approach.</p> <p>Expand the supply of social and affordable housing to provide 'exit points' for people in crisis accommodation.</p> <p>The needs of particular groups are considered in future services including young people ages 10-15, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, men with children, and visitor accommodation for Aboriginal people visiting Perth from regional and remote areas for medical treatment funeral attendances, etc.</p> <p>The Commonwealth and WA governments commit to the continuation of the National Partnership Agreements beyond 2014.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-budget submission to Treasury 2015/16</li> <li>- Submission to Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing</li> </ul> <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young People, Housing and Homelessness</li> <li>- Future of Homelessness in WA forum Book of Proceedings</li> <li>- <i>Parity</i> articles – from Renting to Homelessness; Strengthening Homelessness Services in WA; Reflections on Youth Housing and Homelessness in WA</li> </ul> <p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening Homelessness Services consultation, including over 90 surveys and interviews</li> <li>- Conducted interviews in Rockingham/Kwinana with people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>- Established Advisory Committee on Homelessness, chaired by Prof. Paul Flatau, UWA</li> <li>- Joint NPAH campaign with WACOSS and CHCWA, letters to MPs</li> <li>- Coordinated advocacy with Homelessness Australia, including full page letter in newspaper</li> </ul> <p>Meetings with Ministers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Met with Minister Morton re homelessness funding</li> <li>- Met with Minister Morton re NPAH and social impact bonds</li> </ul>	<p>The State Government established two short stay Aboriginal visitor hostels in Kalgoorlie in 2012 and in Derby in 2014.</p> <p>WA and Commonwealth extended NPAH 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.</p> <p>Commonwealth extended NPAH to 2017. 2015/2016 State budget matched NPAH w \$30 million of existing allocations for two years plus \$2.5 million of additional funding.</p>

		<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Future of Homelessness Forum with 95 participants</li> <li>- Participated in Homelessness Reference Group to increase networking and coordination among homelessness service providers</li> <li>- Rockingham/Kwinana Interagency forum</li> </ul> <p>Media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raised awareness through media statements and campaigns including NPAH and anti-poverty week campaign</li> <li>- Provided interviews to journalists on homelessness in WA</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shelter WA to respond to Reform of the Federation Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Improved Marginal Housing</b></p>	<p>The Department of Commerce develop a discussion paper on the rights of boarders and lodgers in WA, with a view to creating new legislation in this area.</p> <p>Governments increase funding to services which provide support and advocacy for tenants in marginal forms of housing.</p>	<p>Submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission to Department of Commerce on Residential Parks Long Stay Tenant Act review</li> <li>- Submission to Local Government and Communities Caravan Parks and Camping Ground Act review</li> </ul> <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- co-Chaired Boarders and Lodgers Working Group with Tenancy WA</li> <li>- Shelter WA hosts Advisory Committee on Homelessness</li> </ul> <p>To be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to Department of Commerce Boarders and Lodgers Issues Paper</li> </ul>	<p>The Department of Commerce has committed to developing a discussion paper on boarders and lodgers : Timeline TBA</p>