



Community Housing Council of SA Inc. (CHCSA)

"The Peak Body for Community Housing Organisations in South Australia"

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Weekly E-Bulletin 25/07 - Friday 7th September 2007

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Ministerial Bus Tour of Housing Co-operatives ~ Report Back

On Friday the 27th July 2007, the **Co-operatives Representative Council** were fortunate that the **Hon Jay Weatherill MP** (Minister for Housing) and **Gabriel Hummel** (Advisor to the Minister) accepted an invitation to join us (Liz McCarthy, Evette Johnson, Judy Gay, Mr Gay, Sue Grant, Sarah Henderson and Gavin Jones) on a bus tour of Co-operative housing. The Rep Council was keen to show the Minister a variety of housing styles and demonstrate how community housing has changed people's lives.

The Bus Tour commenced at 9.30am in the City at an eight-unit development built in 1992 and managed by **Inner City Co-operative Housing**. This development consisted of a communal garden and a common room that is also used as their office and thanks to Eleanor we visited her 1 bedroom, two-story apartment.

Next stop was Rydleton where Cecilia an environment student has a 2 bedroom attached trust property managed by **La Luna Housing Co-operative**. This property had a back extension, which added an extra dimension, and Cecilia showed off her back garden with great pride.

Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative was next on the list and provided a wonderful morning tea at **Broadview House** in Blair Athol, which is an independent living facility and houses 10 senior residents over the age of eighty. Julia Hennekam (Housing Manager) informed us that this facility had been renovated from two 3-bedroom older brick homes and is complete with a dining room and housekeepers that provide meals for the residents. Each unit had a view to the garden and all the residents were keen to tell their own stories to the Minister and Gabby.

Last but not least on the list was Hampstead Gardens to a redevelopment managed by **Peach Housing Co-operative**. We visited one of the 3-bedroom units built in 2002 where Jill lives, and proudly showed us her converted carport and her glorious garden that she designed.

All of the hosts were proud to have the opportunity to show off their homes. It was great to see the Minister enjoying the Tour and took great interest in talking with many of the Co-operative Members. It certainly gave him an opportunity to view first hand the experiences of living and being involved in a Housing Co-operative.

Thank you to the Minister and to Gabby Hummel for their time. Thank you to our warm and inviting hosts. Thank you to the Co-op. Rep. Council and to the CHCSA Staff for organising a great event.

Liz McCarthy
Chair
Co-operatives Representative Council

Insurance and Unoccupied Properties in Excess of 60 Days ~ By a Community Housing Member

The CHCSA received this information earlier this week from a Co-operative Member and it was suggested that it may be of interest to all Community Housing Organisations to be reminded on this Clause in their Insurance Policies.

"The insurance policy covering properties contains a clause restricting the cover where premises are unoccupied in excess of 60 days. The Insurer will not extend this period of cover under any circumstances and cover from alternative insurers is not available due to the high risk associated with this situation. Damage relating to malicious damage and arson rise are much more prevalent in unoccupied premises.

Cover is restricted to the following perils were the unoccupancy period has reached 60 days:

- earthquake
- escape of water
- storm or rainwater damage
- flood or lightning damage

As a measure to counteract the restriction in cover we recommend that someone stay at premises so that the 60 day period will start again".

The information relating to the **unoccupancy** is highlighted in the Community Housing Organisations Manual provided with Insurance invoice and documentation from Office for Community Housing.

Australian Workplace Relations System and Community Housing Organisations ~ By Office for Community Housing

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW THE AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE RELATIONS SYSTEM (WORKCHOICES) AFFECTS YOUR ORGANISATION?

The Australian Workforce Relations System affects all Associations and Co-operatives which employ paid staff (i.e. mostly Housing Associations)(external service providers are not paid staff).

Some changes are quite complex and it is **very important** that Associations and Co-operatives understand the Workforce Relations system in order to fulfil Human Resource Management requirements and to avoid possible fines.

All Associations and Co-operatives need to get their own legal advice as to whether they are a constitutional corporation or not.

- If an Association or Co-operative is not a constitutional corporation it is business as usual, using the State Awards etc.
- If an Association or Co-operative is a constitutional corporation it will have major impact on the way it runs its business.
- The changes that need to be made may be minor (e.g. the details which must be on all payslips), but if those changes aren't made there are serious consequences for the organisation (large fines starting at \$2,750 per offence per employee).

Two new Australian Government Departments have been created to regulate the Workplace Relations System and to support organisations and employees.

The Office for Community Housing encourages Associations and Co-operatives to seek out information relevant and specific for their business operations, from the Workplace Authority and the Workplace Ombudsman, which are professional bodies set up to assist businesses to operate under this specific WorkChoices/Workplace Relations legislation.

Association and Co-operative staff/Board members are welcome to approach these places for assistance in understanding and applying the system in their organisation:

1. **Workplace Info-line Ph: 1300 363 264**
2. **Workplace Authority www.oea.gov.au**

148 Frome St, Adelaide 5000
Ph: 8402 8013

- The Workplace Authority's primary role is to accept lodgements of workplace agreements.
- In doing this, the Workplace Authority provides free support and information to both employers and employees on agreement making. The Workplace Authority is also available to assist employers and employees understand the **Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard**. An employer or employee can ask the Workplace Authority to check agreements before they are lodged to ensure that they do not contain **prohibited content**.
- The Workplace Authority will give details of Workplace Relations System requirements and answer your questions. It offers an **introductory information session** which provides an overview of the Workplace Relations legislation – what's changed and what's stayed the same. The session explains the Fair Pay and Conditions Standard, Protected Award Conditions and introduces the different types of workplace agreements and the broad process to establishing agreements in the workplace.

3. The Workplace Ombudsman www.wo.gov.au

Level 2, 148 Frome Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Switchboard: (08) 8225 8298

The Workplace Ombudsman can protect and enforce workplace conditions in three ways.

- Education – to ensure that employers and workers understand their rights and obligations at work under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*.
- Monitoring Compliance – monitor workplaces and investigate complaints to ensure that workplace rights and obligations are being complied with.
- Applying penalties through court action – they can start litigation action where there is evidence of a breach of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (the Act). They can seek penalties for breaches of the Act with regard to a range of employee entitlements such as meal breaks, public holidays, and parental leave.

4. Further information is also available from Business SA

www.business.sa.com
Enterprise House
136 Greenhill Road, Unley SA 5061
Ph: 8300 0000

Business SA can provide:

- "WorkChoices – Options and Obligations for South Australian Businesses Booklet" - \$77 member price or \$99 non-member price
- "Work out WorkChoices CD Rom" \$330 member price \$396 non member price

National Housing Co-operatives' Conference 2007: Reflection, Celebration & Vision ~ by Community Housing Federation of Victoria (CHFV) ~ repeated item

CHFV is pleased to advise that they will be hosting a **one day National Housing Co-operative Conference**. The conference will be held at State Netball & Hockey Centre in Royal Park, Melbourne on **Thursday 20th September 2007**, and will be a time for Reflection, Celebration & Vision of the Housing Co-operative model in Australia.

The conference is for Housing Co-operative tenants, housing workers, service providers, policy makers, state and local government delegates, academics and others focused on and interested in retaining a vibrant and viable Co-operative housing model.

Included in the program is:

- A selection of short films celebrating Co-op tenant stories
- International & national key-note guest speakers and presentations
- Nine concurrent dynamic workshop options
- Networking and discussion opportunities
- Conference dinner and entertainment
- Post Conference Event: A half day bus tour of some of Melbourne's Community Housing.

Further information including Program, costs and Conference Registration Forms are available from the Conference Website. Please click [here](#).

<p><u>STAFF</u> Executive Officer - Ciarán Synnott Manager, Admin/Finance/Communications - Maria Demasi Administration Officer - Ante Gajic Senior Policy Officers - Matt Fisher & David Kilner Sector Resource Worker - Philip Studt Spanish Speaking Worker - Domingo Garcia</p>	<p><u>CASUAL TRAINERS AND VOLUNTEERS</u> Casual Trainers – Liz McCarthy, Graeme Gow, Philip Studt, Kate Reynolds</p>
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DIARY DATES

Saturday 8 th September	CHCSA Spanish Speaking Forum
Monday 10 th September	CHCSA Hills & Southern Forum
Wednesday 12 th September	CHCSA Central Forum
Friday 14 th September	CHCSA Co-operatives Representative Council
Friday 14 th September	CHCSA Policy Committee
Monday 1 st October	LABOUR DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY
Wednesday 3 rd October	CHCSA Disability Focus Group Meeting
Friday 5 th October	CHCSA Associations' Forum
Friday 12 th October	CHCSA Co-operatives Representative Council
Friday 12 th October	CHCSA Policy Committee
FRIDAY 19 TH OCTOBER	CHCSA COUNTRY FORUM, AGM AND MEMBER'S CELEBRATION DINNER

-Bulletin, please click on the following link and place the word "unsubscribe" in the Subject Header.
<mailto:info@chcsa.org.au>.

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