

Community Housing Council of SA Inc. (CHCSA)

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

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Weekly E-Bulletin 45/05 - Friday 16th December 2005

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From the Executive Officer's Desk

This week marks the end of another calendar year for the CHCSA. The CHCSA offices will close on **Friday 16th December** for the Christmas and New Year period and re-open on **January 9th**.

2005 has proved to every bit as hectic as was expected at the beginning of the year and looking down the line at 2006 we are in for lots more of the same.

In reflecting on the year gone by its tempting and somewhat easy to look at the so-called 'big' issues faced by the sector and the CHCSA. Many of these I have covered in our Annual Report so I don't intend to repeat them here other than to note that the [Change Management Project](#) and [New Funding Agreement](#), the [Housing Plan for South Australia](#) and the [Affordable Housing Debate](#) have dictated much of the work of the sector in 2005.

The CHCSA also put a lot of energy into exploring new [Regional Infrastructure Models for Community Housing](#) as well as promoting new ideas in [Strengthening Co-ops](#) including compiling a substantial information booklet on [Sector Technology \(IT\) Needs](#).

Beyond these important but somewhat laborious issues the things that really stand out for me are the all too rare but uplifting moments that each year brings in its own different way.

The [CHCSA International Co-operation Day Celebration](#), launching of the new houses for the [Intellectual Disability Accommodation Association \(IDAA\)](#) and the [Glencoe and Arcadia Housing Co-operatives](#), the [CHCSA Annual AGM Celebration Dinner](#) and the [SACHA Community Housing Sector Drinks](#) were all important functions to mark significant developments and achievements within the sector throughout the year. These events allow us to temporarily stand back from the hard work performed throughout the year and share some fun and laughter together.

Without doubt however two of the outstanding highlights this year for me have been [The Women's Housing Association \(TWA\) 25th Year Celebration Dinner](#) and the Launch of the [PEACH Housing Co-op Oral History 1983-2005](#). Both of these events in their respective ways have underscored the true purpose, trials, tribulations and triumphs of both Housing Associations and Housing Co-operatives.

In celebrating 25 years of service to women and children who have survived domestic violence TWA in my view spoke on behalf of all Housing Associations who continue to demonstrate compassion, purpose and tireless commitment to those less fortunate in our community. The

occasion was significantly marked by the attendance for the whole evening by the [Governor Her Excellency Marjory Jackson-Nelson](#) and the Minister the [Hon Jay Weatherill MP](#).

The launch of the **PEACH Housing Co-op Oral History 1983-2005** is another tale of inspiration for all those in the Co-op sector. Reading through the 'warts and all' 21 year history of PEACH many Co-op members will easily identify with the struggles of participation and the pain of conflict but will also be uplifted by the tenacity, commitment and camaraderie of its members. The overriding sentiment of the PEACH story is one of learning, support, fun, community and friendship, often in spite of and sometimes because of the difficult times they endured. If the Co-operative Housing movement is about building better communities through secure, affordable and self managed housing then its hard to go past the history of PEACH as an exemplary tale. Please contact the CHCSA in the New Year if you want to get a copy of their Oral History (Cost is \$5 per copy).

Finally, as we wind up for the year I want to take this opportunity to thank the many sector members and others who continually support the CHCSA while at the same time acknowledging those whose other sector commitments keep them busy elsewhere.

To the Staff of the CHCSA Maria, Ante, Matt, David, Domingo, the CHCSA Chair Evette Johnson and members of the Board of Management, elected representatives of our various committees, volunteers Evette and Renfrey, trainers Liz and Graeme, SACHA management and staff and my CHFA colleagues around the country, wishing you all a happy and safe festive season.

Disability Services Boosted by Community Grants ~ from Minister Weatherill's Office
Disability services in South Australia have had a major boost to funding with the announcement today of an extra three quarters of a million dollars.

The \$770,000 from the Community Benefit SA Grants will pay for projects for 75 community organisations.

Minister for Families and Communities, the Hon Jay Weatherill MP has announced the one-off grants of up to \$35,000 – provided from gaming machine taxes.

Minister Weatherill said the money would help progress a range of initiatives in metropolitan and regional areas. *"Non-government and community organisations are critical to improving the lives and well-being of disadvantaged people – including those with a disability,"* Minister Weatherill said.

"These grants are designed to take some of the pressure off such organisations and help them continue their valuable work."

"For some organisations, the extra financial assistance will enable them to buy or upgrade equipment or establish training and workshops. In other cases, it may help employ staff or provide respite care. Ultimately each project that receives a grant is using that money to improve the quality of life for people with various types of disability in South Australia."

Community Benefit SA is a State Government program established under the Gaming Machines Miscellaneous Act of 1996. Each year, \$4 million is allocated in two rounds to community organisations through the grants.

Minister Weatherill said other groups to benefit from the grants included families with children, young people, Aboriginal people and those from multicultural communities, including refugees.

"Community Benefit SA grants build on the Rann Government's commitment to supporting community and non-government organisations to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged individuals, families and communities," he said.

Since 1996, Community Benefit SA has conducted 20 funding rounds, distributing \$28.2 million from gaming machine taxes for 360 one-off projects to more than 800 community organisations.

Community Housing Dispute Resolution and Appeals system

This **new Dispute Resolution and Appeals System** has been a topic of discussion in CHCSA Forums throughout November.

A workshop was also conducted by SACHA on 24th November which included representatives of CHOs which have experienced an appeal; CHO members who attended the initial workshop conducted by Trish Hensley; CHO Consultants; HASSA; CHCSA; the Community Mediation Service and the Public and Community Housing Appeals Unit.

SACHA has developed **Introductory Information; a Policy, Guidelines and Model By-laws** which will all be on the SACHA website at <http://www.sacha.sa.gov.au> in the week starting **Monday 19th December 2005**.

SACHA is now eager to receive feedback from all Housing Association and Co-operative tenants and members **by Wednesday 18th January 2006** via e-mail to <mailto:monique.pringle@dfc.sa.gov.au> or by post to SACHA (GPO Box 1669, Adelaide SA 5001) or by phone on (08) 8207 0134 (Monique Pringle) or (08) 8207 0115 (Jane Fletcher). This feedback will be incorporated into the documents prior to the **launch of the Community Housing Dispute Resolution and Appeals system on February 15th 2006**.

Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS)

What is CCeS?

Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS) are internet-based facilities. Community Housing Organisations (CHOs) can use one of the CCeS products, Income Confirmation, to request a Centrelink customer's Income Statement. This statement is the equivalent to what Centrelink currently issue customers, to confirm their entitlement status (how much income they receive).

CCeS provides real time, immediate information for single enquiries to enable CHOs to determine a customer's eligibility for their services or for subsidised rent payments. CHOs can also request multiple records enquiries which are processed within 72 hours. This process is called batch request and more information can be obtained from Centrelink using batch enquiries (note that batches sent to Centrelink need to be provided in a format compatible to Centrelink's systems).

What about privacy?

CCeS has strict privacy and security standards and CHOs must have the customer's consent before their Centrelink records can be checked by the CHO. Centrelink will provide appropriate wording for this consent form. The consent form needs to be retained by the CHO for 5 yrs after last access, for audit purposes. Community Housing Organisations need to be registered to use CCeS, and must have a contract with Centrelink for this purpose. CHO users, within the organisation, are required to sign individual security declarations and will be issued with a unique user logon and password.

How do you use it?

Approved users within CHOs log into a secure site through the internet and select the confirmation service they need (single or batch enquiries). They enter the customer's details and receive an Income Statement, tailored in line with the details the CHO requires to determine eligibility for housing or rental subsidies.

What about support for the CHO?

If your CHO decides to register to use the Centrelink Confirmation eServices, Centrelink will provide you with support including online help, materials and user guides, and help desk services five days a week. The eServices are provided free of charge to CHOs which assist Centrelink

customers. There may be some initial administrative costs associated with System to System interfaces and testing for batch enquiries (if necessary).

How does my CHO register to use CCEs?

- Firstly read the Terms and Conditions of the Contract, found at <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>.
- Complete the Business Application at the above website.
- Return the Business Application to the South Australian Deduction & Confirmation Services Account Manager - contact details available from Ph. (08) 8306 1655.
- Centrelink will send your CHO a start-up kit.

If you have any questions or need further information please contact Di Hutchison, the Account Manager on (08) 8306 1655.

Community Housing Application System (CHAS) - "Your Opportunity to comment on System Features" ~ SACHA

After many developmental months the **Community Housing Application System** [or **CHAS** as it is affectionately termed] has taken its first steps!

System features and "must haves" are now well advanced with standard Application Forms for both Associations and Co-operatives drafted in consultation with each Reference Group. An invitation will be extended to all CHOs in the new year to provide formal feedback on these documents at a "*conversation forum*" to be scheduled in mid February [the December/January period is traditionally hectic with Xmas functions & festivities not to mention the implementation of the new Funding Agreement!]. System development will commence shortly after.

If you would like to take a "**sneak peak**" at the **CHAS**, please go to the SACHA Website and follow the links, there you will find a simple explanation document of the proposed system, as well as a copy of both draft application forms. Your comments and feedback are welcomed by clicking on the "**provide feedback**" link online. Please click here <http://www.sacha.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=400>.

If you do not have access to the web site and would like a copy of the documents mentioned, please contact Lynley Street at SACHA via phone (08) 8207 0131 or via e-mail to <mailto:lynley.street@dfc.sa.gov.au>.

CHCSA Offices Christmas/New Year Closure and Emergency Contacts

The CHCSA wish to advise Members that it will be closing for the Christmas/New Year period at **1pm on Friday 16th December 2005** and will re-open at **10am on Monday 9th January 2006**.

No CHCSA Forums, Meetings, Education and Training Courses will be held in January 2006. Calendars and Timetables for 2006 for all CHCSA Forums/Committees as well as Calendars and "Online Bookings" for the "Introduction to Community Housing (ICH)" Course and the Public Information Sessions ARE NOW available on the CHCSA Website. Please go to <http://chcsa.org.au>.

We wish to remind everyone of some important phone numbers to note ;

- **Emergency Accommodation Service** (between hours of 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday)
Phone 1800 003 308
- **Crisis Care** (between hours of 4pm - 9.00pm weekdays, 24 hours per day on weekends and public holidays) Phone 13 16 11
- **Domestic Violence Crisis Service** (between hours of 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday - after hours calls and weekend calls automatically diverted to Crisis Care) Phone 1300 782 200

SACHA will close on Friday 23rd December 2005 and re-open on Wednesday 28th December 2005. Their contact phone numbers are (08) 8207 0233, or Country SA Toll Free is 1800 686 366.

<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 Spanish Speaking Worker - Domingo Garcia</p>	<p><u>CASUAL TRAINERS AND VOLUNTEERS</u> Casual Trainers – Liz McCarthy, and Graeme Gow Volunteers – Renfrey Ansell and Evette Johnson</p>
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DIARY DATES

Friday 16th December	CHCSA Christmas Office Closure
Monday 26th December	Christmas Day Holiday
Tuesday 27th December	Proclamation Day Holiday
Monday 2nd January 2006	New Year's Day Holiday
Thursday 26th January 2006	Australia Day

If you want to unsubscribe to the E-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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