



Shelter NSW

Strategic plan 2008–2011

Shelter NSW is a nongovernment, nonprofit, social change agency. It is part of the network of Shelter organisations in each state and territory and a member of National Shelter.

Vision

A fair and just housing system

Purpose

To advance the housing interests of low-income and disadvantaged people in New South Wales

Roles

- advocating for systemic change
- providing community education

In undertaking these roles, Shelter uses a number of support strategies, including:

- research
- policy development
- providing educational products on key housing issues
- networking and partnering with other nonprofit nongovernment organisations and consumer organisations
- promoting a coordinated response from within the nongovernment sector where appropriate

Shelter NSW acknowledges the specific contribution that nonprofit nongovernment organisations can make to a fair and just housing system and for this reason is committed to building the capacity of nonprofit housing and housing-related services through our advocacy and community education work.

Shelter NSW also believes that a fair and just housing system would be better achieved if the voices and activities of housing consumers are present. For this reason, Shelter NSW is committed to working with housing consumer organisations and activists.

Strategic approach

This 3-year strategic plan comes at a time when there will be some new opportunities for Shelter's work. At the formal level, the simple fact that the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement will be replaced with a National Affordable Housing Agreement ensures this. Beyond that, there has been a change of government and policy approach in the Commonwealth sphere. The changes in the external environment will influence the course of Shelter's business over the period of this strategic plan.

To effectively take advantage of the opportunity in the development of state and federal housing policy will require:

- a) strategic priorities
- b) criteria to identify relevant and realistic policy areas to work on
- c) a process for proactively identifying relevant policy areas and taking appropriate action.

In addition to taking advantage of the current national and state opportunities Shelter NSW will also:

- a) respond to the changing context through, for example, submissions to inquiries etc
- b) provide community education to help organisations in the nonprofit and consumer organisation sectors to understand how the housing system works.

To achieve all the above Shelter NSW will undertake a range of activities including research and policy writing, participating in committees, preparing publications including Newsletter, eBulletins, Shelter Briefs, research papers and website maintenance.

To enable all of this work to happen Shelter NSW will also work on good governance practices, effective networking, evaluation, staff development and financial sustainability.

A more detail description of the above follows.

A. Focal points

Three focal points for the work of Shelter NSW are:

- a) the national housing agenda
- b) NSW housing policy and programs
- c) holistic housing policy, i.e. a system-wide approach.

B. Criteria for identifying change projects

Shelter NSW will develop an overarching campaign (a little like the ACOSS 'Australia Fair' campaign) that will be comprised of a number of 'change projects'.

In each of the 3 years of this plan, Shelter will choose a small number of 'change

projects' that will be given the highest attention, priority and resources during that year. A 'change project' will be an integrated suite of research, policy, information and education activities on a discrete matter that meets the selection criteria indicated below. Our reason for this is to identify changes that can be achieved with concentrated focus and effort. The projects are called 'change projects' because the result of Shelter's work on this project will be an identifiable and measurable change that benefits low-income and disadvantaged households.

Shelter NSW will use the following criteria to identify change projects from a shortlist of policy areas to work on over the 3-year period:

- a) Is the issue a critical matter?
- b) Is there evidence that can be used/developed to explore the issue and make a case for change?
- c) Could the issue feasibly be addressed within a designated time frame?
- d) Is a result achievable with current Shelter NSW resources/staffing?
- e) Can a demonstrable indicator of success be identified and measured (i.e. would we be able to attribute a change to the result of Shelter's efforts)?
- f) Would there be duplication of effort if Shelter got involved? (Is the issue not being addressed in a significant way by others?).

Use of these criteria will also take account of the appropriate time frame: short-term issues for action over 1 to 2 years; medium-term issues for action over 3 to 5 years, and long-term priorities for action over more than 5 years. Their purpose is to assist Shelter to focus and reprioritize its resources on change activities where Shelter can make a difference and can know it made a difference.

C. A process for proactively identifying policy issues and change projects

The process of identifying appropriate policy issues to work on and taking appropriate and relevant action is an evolutionary one. Some of the core ingredients of the process over the 3 years will include:

- a) initial scoping of a specific policy areas to identify a potential change projects
- b) research to test the selection criteria (e.g. considering the views of public policymakers, the state of play in the housing industry, consultation with stakeholders)
- c) assessing feasibility and considering resource allocation
- d) developing project plans including evaluation methodology
- e) identifying the campaign goals and its performance indicators.

It is envisaged that as this process proceeds the focus will be refined.

D. A capacity to respond to changing environment

As well as the proactive processes indicated above, Shelter NSW will have processes to respond to the changing context including:

- a) writing submissions in response to inquiries and other relevant requests that arise, where relevant to the designated policy area

- b) writing in support of other organisations' submissions and requests (consistent with Shelter NSW policy and expertise)
- c) contributing to the consultative and other processes managed by other organisations (where the issue is consistent with Shelter's policy and expertise).

E. Community education

Shelter NSW has a key role in helping nonprofit nongovernment organisations understand how the housing system works. During the 3 years, Shelter NSW will continue its community educational activities. These activities will both complement and supplement the organisation's policy advocacy, but will have a dynamic and branding of their own. The range of housing issues and matters covered by educational activities may include matters that are not within the select list of policy change areas.

Shelter will continue to offer a range of short training courses and in addition it will also continue to present at conferences/seminars, workshops and community meetings.

Priority will be given to nonprofit nongovernment organisations that need to better understand the housing system in order to better do their own work.

Priorities for audiences for training workshops (one of the educational activities to be undertaken over the 3 years) in 2008-09 will be:

- a) NGOs working with NESB clients and/or refugees and/or recent migrants
- b) public housing tenants
- c) NGOs working with people with disability.

Priorities for audiences for training workshops in 2009-10 and 2010-11 will be determined in the operational plans for each of those years.

F. Direct activities and outputs

In working on the processes for identifying proactive change projects, in responding to the changing context, and in providing community education, Shelter NSW will undertake a range of direct activities that will support these 3 processes. The areas of direct activities and outputs are:

- a) Policy
 - Research
 - Submission writing
 - Representation to governments
- b) Consultation and networking
- c) Representation on government and NGO committees
- d) Education and training
 - Training workshops
 - Seminars/conferences
 - Presentations at conferences /workshops and community meetings

- e) Media/Publications (these are relevant to both policy advocacy and community education, depending on the media)
- Newsletters
 - Member eBulletins
 - Research papers
 - Website maintenance
 - Factsheets
 - Learning resources used with training workshops.

G. Outcomes

Each of the change projects chosen in the 3-year period of the plan will have a discrete, achievable and measurable result indicated (following the process indicated in section C). The achievement of that result will be reported on during the annual reporting processes to the Shelter membership and to Housing NSW.

The face-to-face educational activities, i.e. seminars and training workshops, will have identified learning outcomes, and will be evaluated by participants directly.

H. Enabling activities

Shelter NSW will undertake activities that enable it to achieve all the above.

Priorities for enabling activities in 2008 to 2011 include:

- Good governance practices
- Effective administration
- Networking
- Evaluation plans and strategies including evaluation of specific activities and ongoing quality improvement processes
- Staff development
- Financial sustainability.

Annual operational planning and reporting framework

Within this context of the strategic plan, Shelter NSW has an annual operational plan and reporting format. The operational plan and reporting format is structured around the following areas. The questions listed below will be addressed in reports to the Shelter NSW Board and to Housing NSW.

A Priority policy issues

- What are the policy issues that have emerged where Shelter can undertake a change project to make a difference?
- What is the policy debate around them?
- What are the policy choices for Shelter NSW in relation to them?

B Proactive identification of change projects

- What is the change project taken within the policy areas selected in A?

- What was done?
- What has been learnt?
- What was achieved?

C Responding to the changing environment

- What has changed in the context? What's new?
- What submissions and other relevant documents has Shelter NSW prepared?
- What issues have been addressed in consultative processes and committee work?

D Community education

- What are the current priorities?
- What education and training activities have taken place?
- What learning outcomes were achieved?

E Direct activities and outputs

- What have been the activities and outputs in relation to all the above. For example: What meetings have been attended? What publications published? What consultations have taken place? What seminars/conferences have been organised?

F Outcomes

- What changes have happened because of Shelter's work over the year?

G Enabling activities

- What enabling activities have been done?