



Annual Report 2004-05



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Chairperson's Report

The past year has been, as the saying goes, 'interesting times' for housing policy. The 'reshaping public housing' platform of reforms, announced in April 2005, propose, amongst other things, that existing tenants on so-called 'moderate incomes' will be encouraged – and new tenants who do not continue to meet the Department's eligibility criteria will be forced – to move out into the private housing market. Worryingly, at the same time as the Department of Housing becomes more formally a welfare agency, it is also being given coercive and punitive powers, such as those relating to 'Acceptable Behaviour Agreements'. Meanwhile the private housing market, largely under the influence of Federal tax policy, is unable to deliver secure, affordable housing. Home ownership remains unaffordable for low and average income earners. The private rental market has continued to lose low-rent properties, gain high-rent properties, and is dominated by small-scale landlords who are geared to profiting from sales rather than rents – and hence keeping the tenure insecure. Meanwhile, debate continues as to how – or even whether – the planning system should be directed to providing affordable housing.

As the State's peak non-government organisation for low-income consumers of housing, Shelter has advocated for our constituents across all of these policy areas in the past year. We have also been increasingly involved, through our seminars and our growing training program, in building up the knowledge of our constituents and their capacity to engage in lobbying for policy reform themselves.

Shelter itself has experienced some big changes, too. As members will be aware, Shelter's Policy Officer, Harvey Volke, died early in the new year. Harvey had a long association with Shelter, as an employee and before that as a Director, and was admired throughout the housing sector as a champion of social housing and tenants' rights. We miss him still. Also early in 2005 our other Policy Officer, Hazel Blunden, left Shelter to work for a Member of State Parliament, where she continues to work on housing policy issues. Recently, Shelter has employed two new Senior Policy Officers, Joy Connor and Robert Mowbray, each of whom brings vast experience and expertise in housing issues to their new roles. That Shelter attracts employees of such talent, despite community sector wages, says much for their own dedication, as well as for the reputation of the organisation. In the months before Joy and Robert were appointed, Mary, Craig and Flora worked tremendously hard to meet the organisation's commitments. On behalf of the Board and the membership, I thank them.



Shelter is funded mostly by the Department of Housing, and we could not operate without its support. On behalf of the Board and membership, our sincere thanks. Thanks also to the Hon Carl Scully and the Hon Joe Tripodi, each of whom in the last year served, successively, as Minister for Housing, for the consideration they gave to Shelter and our work. As I write, a new Housing Minister, the Hon Cherie Burton, has recently been appointed, and we look forward to working with her in a similarly constructive, if sometimes critical, manner.

Thanks also my colleagues on the Board of Shelter, each of whom serves as a volunteer. In particular, I thank Nick Warren, who is retiring from the Board at the present election, having served the maximum number of successive terms allowed under the Shelter constitution. That's no mean feat! Nick has served as a Director and lately as Secretary, and in his long involvement with the Shelter Board he helped steer the organisation through difficult times and build its present policy expertise.

Finally, thanks to the Shelter membership for your continuing interest in Shelter's work on behalf of low-income consumers of housing. The importance of this work is only growing.

Yours faithfully

Chris Martin

Chairperson, Shelter NSW

Shelter NSW Inc

About us

Shelter NSW is a community-based, state-wide, peak body, which promotes the housing interests of low-income and disadvantaged people in New South Wales.

History

Shelter NSW was established in 1975. We have advocated and campaigned for support of public housing and the development of community-based initiatives like tenant-managed housing cooperatives, community-based housing associations, and local government planning innovations for affordable housing.

Purpose

Shelters mission is to work for a just and equitable housing system.

Shelters role is to:

- promote a coordinated response within the community sector to housing issues impacting on access to housing by low-income and disadvantaged people;
- work with and influence government and relevant community sector organizations to develop housing policies and programs that meet the needs of low-income and disadvantaged people and offer appropriate housing solutions;
- increase public awareness of housing issues and support for adequate and sustainable responses;
- research and develop responses to housing issues;
- provide quality information, assistance and support to the community sector, members and other stakeholders.

Executive Officer's Report

For Shelter, this last year has been one of change.

2005 began with Harvey Volke's death. For most of its 30 years, Shelter's Board meetings, its committee's or its staff were graced by Harvey's presence. His contribution to the growth and development of this organisation was significant. His humour, wit, intelligence and generosity are missed. As you all know, Harvey was not a person who faded into the background. During the course of the year, there have been numerous times when I've turned to speak to him and realise yet again that that conversation will not be completed.

Other changes in staff have also been significant. Hazel Blunden resigned in February and now works as an adviser to Sylvia Hale, the Greens member of the Legislative Council. In June, Joy Connor was appointed as a Senior Policy Officer and, in July, Robert Mowbray commenced work also as a Senior Policy Officer. The recruitment process took longer than intended and, as a consequence, Shelter was short staffed for five months of the year.

Unfortunately, the political and economic context for our work continues to be difficult. Housing affordability in the private market and the sustainability of social housing continue to be the most crucial issues impacting on the lives of people on moderate and low incomes.

In April of this year, the Government announced a plan for *Reshaping Public Housing*. These changes effectively further ration the allocation of public housing to the needy of the neediest and will lock out a lot of people out who have traditionally had some access to public housing, including low income workers. At the same time, nothing has been done to improve or encourage the growth of lower-cost housing in either the private rental market or home ownership.

Using the current lingo, there is a desperate need for a 'whole of government' or a 'joined up' approach to the development of housing policy and programs. At present, at both State and Federal levels, responsibility for housing policy is spread across several portfolio areas. Policy and programs don't always work comprehensively and have failed to produce a housing system capable of providing housing that is affordable to people on low and now moderate incomes.

We are well aware that the solutions to the current crisis are not easy to find and that there will not be a one size fits all solution.



However, if we are to develop a housing system capable of meeting the needs of the community in the 21st century, there is need for extensive open debate and discussion. Most importantly, if the “punters” Shelter advocates for are to be well housed, governments must allocate sufficient funds and steer the system to enable the provision of low cost housing. Shelter also needs to play its part in both advocating to government and building support in the wider community for the policies required to make our housing system fairer.

In advocating for a fairer, more just housing system Shelter employs a range of strategies

- Information and education designed to enable Shelter’s constituency to access the public policy debate.
- Direct consultation with and advocacy to advise and inform government of our constituency’s views.
- Working with others to build partnerships to facilitate the pursuit of common objectives.

Below is a brief summary of our work over the last year.

Papers, Reports and Submissions Completed

- *Housing Sydneysiders* Submission lodged with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) on the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (November).
- Submission to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning on the Environmental Planning and Assessment amendment (Developer Contributions) Bill 2004 (December).
- Submission lodged with the DIPNR on the government’s proposal for a simplified and standard template for local environmental plans (October).
- Shelter Brief, *‘Levying developers for affordable housing’*, published (November).
- Workshop report *‘Community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates, Parramatta* (July).
- Report and Shelter brief *‘Community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates’*, completed (December). (Ronald Henderson Research Foundation project)
- Submission to the review of the Residential Parks Act 1998.
- *Intermediate training course in housing issues and policy: trainers manual.*
- *Public housing and community voices: Trainers Manual.*
- *Public housing and community voices: Participants Manual.*
- Contribution to the NCOSS pre Budget submission.
- Shelter Brief *Public Housing and nonhousing outcomes – a background brief.*

Papers, Reports and Submissions in progress

- *Housing Costs and Work Location in Sydney* (a joint research project with UWS and the Labour Council of NSW).
- Shelter Brief on models for NGOs to participate in urban renewal and regeneration projects.

Shelter seminars, workshops and training

- Shelter training course in housing issues and policy. Conducted in, Auburn (August), Queanbeyan. (October), Auburn (April), and Parramatta (May).
- Public Housing and Community voices - training program developed for Bonnyrigg tenants (May).
- Community regeneration and public housing communities for the Macquarie Bank (April).
- Hunter Tenants Advice Service (July).
- *Community economic development and regeneration of public housing estates* workshop, Parramatta (July).
- *Bursting at the seams*: Joint conference with NCOSS on the future needs of Sydney (November).
- *Affordable Housing on the South Coast* at Mollymook (November).
- *Housing Dollars, social value* seminar (July).

Public meetings and major presentations

- Housing costs and work location research project - Presentations/paper to EAROPH conference (Melbourne, 20 September) and *A Future that Works* conference (Newcastle, 8 December).
- Northern Rivers Council for Social Development regional forums on housing affordability - three locations - Grafton Lismore and Tweed Heads (July).
- Ashfield Council on Affordable Housing strategies (November).
- *Beyond Bricks and Mortar*: conference organised by the Macarthur Housing Co-alition (March). Presentation on sustainability issues facing social housing and the implications for tenant communities.
- National Community Housing Forum Seminar: presentation on community regeneration private financing and social housing.
- *Your Home ... Yeah Sure!* Community forum for public housing tenants (May): Presentation current issues arising for tenants of, and applicants for social housing.



Consultations Reviews and Committees

Shelter also participated in a number of consultations and reviews and contributed to the work of a number committees and organisations. A summary of our involvements is below:

Government

- Housing Reforms/New Products (Department of Housing).
- Antisocial Behaviour (Department of Housing).
- RED Community Council (Premiers Dept development project in South Sydney).
- Sydney Futures Forum (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources).
- Steering Committee for the Port Jackson Housing Company (Department of Housing).
- Registration of community housing providers (Office of Community Housing).
- Stock transfers from public to community housing (Department of Housing).
- Workshop on the management of high rise housing (Department of Housing).
- Workshop on framework for operational policy (Department of Housing).
- Affordable Housing Conference steering committee (Department of Housing).
- Living Communities Consultative Committee (Department of Housing).
- Reshaping public housing (Department of Housing).
- NSW Department of Housing and Settlement Services Coalition of NSW - Forum.

Non Government

- Australian Council of Social Services Board.
- Council of Social Services of NSW (NCOSS) Board.
- SAAP Peaks Group - NCOSS.
- Forum of Non Government Agencies - NCOSS.
- Mental illness and homelessness working party - Mental Health Coordinating Council.
- Mental Health Workers Alliance.
- Coalition for Appropriate Supported Accommodation for people with disabilities (CASA).
- Accommodation Crisis Group - ACON.
- Southern Sydney Tenants' Resource Service Committee.
- Parks Forum - Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association.
- City West Housing.

- Boarders and Lodgers Action Group - Tenants Union of NSW.
- Tenancy Legal Working Party - Tenants Union of NSW.
- Tenants' Union Board.
- Western Sydney Housing Information and Resource Network.
- Liaison with the Public Housing Customer Council.
- Illawarra Social Housing Forum.
- Macarthur Housing Coalition.

National Shelter

- National Shelter Council and Executive.
- National Community Housing Forum.

Shelter NSW resourced networks

- Affordable Housing Network.
- NESB Housing Taskforce.
- NSW Regional Shelter Network.

Mary Perkins

Executive Officer



Harvey Volke, Housing campaigner, 1939-2005

Harvey Volke, who has died at 65, was an informed and passionate campaigner for social justice.

Like many of his contemporaries, he responded to the moral crisis posed by Australia's participation in the Vietnam War by developing a sharp awareness of political and social issues. In his search for ways in which to build a more just society, he joined, then left, the Ministry of the Baptist Church, the Labor Party and the Communist Party.

From the late 1970s until his death, Harvey worked with community-based campaigns and organisations on housing issues. Apart from working in organisations such as the Tenants Union, the Central Land Council in Alice Springs and Shelter NSW, Harvey freely gave his time to local campaigns, to unfunded organisations and to National Shelter.

Harvey became a journalist in 1956, but in 1962 was ordained as a Baptist minister. In 1975, while finishing an arts degree in modern history and political science at Macquarie University, made possible by the Whitlam government's free university policy, he abandoned Christianity and joined the Communist Party.

He also became editor of the *Newtown Guardian*, where he began to take an interest in housing issues. Gentrification and urban change were resulting in the loss of cheap housing in Sydney. Many poor communities were displaced and many individuals and families suffered.

In 1978, he left the newspaper to take on those issues full-time, first as a project officer with the Tenants Union, then, from 1980 to 1982, with South Sydney Community Aid. He became a consultant to the NSW Housing Commission, joined the Housing Information and Referral Service in 1983, then in 1986 became a project officer with the NSW Department of Housing, where he worked on setting up tenancy advisory and housing referral services across the state.

In that time, he was involved in youth housing in Redfern, the push for a singles housing policy, the rehousing of squatters from sites taken over by the Eastern Distributor, the protection of boarding-house lodgers in inner Sydney and of caravan park dwellers, the protection of Royal Prince Alfred Housing Tenants, the establishment of youth refuges and the push for tenants' rights.

In the early 1990s, following his work with the land council in Alice Springs, he worked with the Western Tenants Information and Referral Service, on parks and villages with the Combined Pensioners and Supperanants Association, and as a project officer with Shelter NSW.

He did much significant voluntary work, giving selflessly of his time and expertise. At the same time, he completed a masters degree in modern history at the University of NSW.

Harvey made a difference to countless lives, without fanfare or a desire for recognition. He believed that if people had affordable housing, many other social justice problems would be solved.

A keen and talented communicator, he was not shy about engaging in vigorous policy debates with politicians and housing bureaucrats. He wrote many submissions and articles, made numerous presentations, and contributed to community and professional forums and to the teaching programs at the universities of Sydney and Western Sydney.

He was an avid researcher - at the time of his death he was enrolled at the University of Sydney, working on a PhD on the history of social housing. He believed that an understanding of history resulted in better policy.

For someone who might have appeared brash at times, Harvey was an incredibly well-read and highly cultured person, without any pretensions. He was gutsy and down to earth. He enjoyed everything from good food and wine to more heady pleasures such as music, poetry and literature - from Rumi to Rimbaud, from Messiaen to Arvo Part, from the theatre of Brecht to the novels of Tim Winton. He savoured history, which tells of human struggle and human triumph, from the very mundane to the most extraordinary.

Harvey lived the ambivalent life of a non-conformist - a rambunctious yet gentle-hearted person with a passionate temperament and a seemingly gruff exterior. He recognised the power of symbolic language in particular - the capacity for words to provoke and arouse.

There was no hereafter in Harvey's world view, only the moment, and he made every instant precious and meaningful, while retaining a wry sense of humour.

Harvey's partner of 10 years, Poppy, died in 2001. He is survived by his children, Sean and Fiona, his former wife, Beryl, and his brother, Ian. He also leaves a broader family - the many friends and colleagues whose lives are richer for knowing him.

Mary Perkins and Karine Shellshear



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present Shelter NSW Inc's Audited Financial Statement for the year ending 30 June 2005. We gratefully acknowledge Shelter's major funding source, the NSW Department of Housing for their continued support and financial assistance. This Financial Year, Shelter's Grant Income with interest amounted to \$378,045.60. Shelter also continued to raise funds from its membership and subscriptions, as well as from its successful seminar series, which are always well received, publicly. Other Income and expenses amounted to \$19,428.20.

For this financial year the accounts show that Shelter expended \$388,733.09 and overall, achieved a small surplus from its other income, of \$8,740.71 ending the year in a financially healthy state. This together with an accumulated surplus of \$49,002.00 from previous years has allowed for a healthy reserve to cover any unforeseen contingencies and to meet expenses required in meeting Shelter's aims and objectives.

On behalf of Shelter, I would like to thank the Minister for Housing, the Hon Cherie Burton, and the Director General of the NSW Department of Housing, Mr. Terry Barnes and his staff. We look forward to continuing a collaborative relationship that provides mutual benefits to our organisations and the social housing sector.

As of March this 24th 2005, at the General Meeting of its members, Shelter NSW appointed Churton Kelly Auditors who have prepared this year's Financial Statements and done an excellent job.

Shelter accomplishes a great deal with a dedicated and proactive staff team and a relatively small budget. I am pleased to take this opportunity to acknowledge staff's effort and dedication in carrying out the organisation's work so effectively. In particular, thanks to Mary Perkins and Flora Armaghanian for assisting me in my position as Treasurer and for their diligent management of Shelter's financial affairs. I also thank David Pierce of Pierce Munro Pty Ltd for his excellent accounting advice and assistance. I would also like to wish Shelter's new Treasurer all the very best in the future.

Narine Shellshear

Treasurer



Key result area 1:

A socially just and equitable housing system

Housing policies in the national, state and local spheres that reflect social justice and equity principles.

This year, Shelter NSW was represented on the executive of National Shelter, with Mary Perkins taking up the position of Vice Chairperson. National Shelter completed a strategic planning process and post election analysis. National Shelter's planned priorities and activities involve:

- a focus on housing supply issues for low income renters;
- meeting with Commonwealth Departments and Ministers;
- participating in the National Housing Alliance (the Alliance met with the industry super funds re investment in affordable housing);
- organising a seminar to run along side the National Housing Conference;
- seeking project funding to look at issues around negative gearing and investment in rental housing.

Shelter NSW contributed to the work of the National Community Housing Forum meetings held in November and April. Harvey Volke was the National Shelter representative on the National Community Housing Forum. Patty Chugg (Shelter Tasmania) replaced Harvey in February.

Mary Perkins has been appointed to the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) Board and has continued the liaison between the Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS), Shelter and ACOSS.

Shelter contributed to the NCOSS Pre Budget Submission to the NSW government. Shelter's policies in relation to social housing and affordable housing were adopted and advocated by NCOSS

Shelter participated in the consultative processes around the development of a Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney. Shelter's particular focus was on issues of housing choice and housing affordability. Shelter prepared a submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR). Shelter also participated in the NGO and Affordable Housing focus groups as well as the Sydney Futures forums. Unfortunately, the Metropolitan Strategy is unlikely to effectively address issues of housing unaffordability.

Shelter worked with local government to seek the inclusion of issues relating to housing choice and affordability in local and regional

strategies, primarily through the Affordable Housing Network which it convenes.

Shelter lodged a submission with DIPNR on the government's proposal for a simplified and standard template for local environmental plans.

Shelter responded to a number of requests from local government staff and councillors for information and advice on the planning system and affordable housing. Shelter attended a consultative workshop for an affordable housing strategy for Ashfield Council, provided extensive advice to staff at Byron Council and also Willoughby Council. At their request, Shelter met with a number of Greens Party councillors who want to get their councils to adopt affordable housing strategies.

In response to requests and the evident need for information Shelter prepared a briefing paper on amendments councils can make to their local planning instruments to enable the provision of affordable housing

Shelter prepared a resource paper (Shelter Brief 23, 'levying developers for affordable housing') and published it as a guide for councillors and community activists on what regulatory hurdles a council has to overcome before it can levy developers for affordable housing contributions.

The development of a range of options for affordable housing

Shelter NSW has continued to liaise with and work with the Department of Housing's Centre for Affordable Housing.


Shelter, working with the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla Social Housing Forums organised a forum on affordable housing on the south coast. The forum was held in Mollymook on 4 November 2004 and was co-sponsored by the Centre for Affordable Housing. Attendees included representatives from the LGAs invited, NGOs and church groups. Feedback indicated that the seminar was well received, considered very useful and has led to ongoing action.

Discussions were held with the Northern Rivers Council for Social Development about a similar event. The Rivers Council for Social Development sought and has received funding to organise a two day conference of affordable housing in the region in August 2005. Shelter liaised with the organising committee.

Shelter was invited by the Centre for Affordable Housing to join the steering committee for a national affordable housing conference held in Sydney in June 2005. Shelter contributed to meetings, which were focused on programming.

Shelter was invited by Centre for Affordable Housing and agreed to join a reference group for a consultancy project to develop a local government housing resource kit

Shelter convenes and participates in the Affordable Housing Network NSW. The AHN (opt-in) e-list has 59 members. Most of the



members of this network hail from local government. The group meets bimonthly and has an information clearinghouse role. Key items discussed were:

- planning agreement legislation,
- SEPP 10, and
- the work of the DOH Centre for Affordable Housing.

Meetings in 2005 are being held at Parramatta (host Parramatta City Council) rather than Redfern (Sydney City Council) in an attempt to get participation from councils in western Sydney.

Shelter provided information and advice to the Queensland Department of Planning and Local Government and Shelter WA about the NSW planning system, specifically developer levies for affordable housing.

Shelter Board discussed issues relating to stamp duties and land taxes, tax credits and private financing at its June and August 2004 meetings. A paper prepared by Frank Stillwell (University of Sydney) advocating the replacement of all state taxes on property transactions with a universal land tax was discussed at length.

The development of options for housing assistance for low-income and disadvantaged households

Issues concerning rent assistance were raised in material prepared by ACOSS, National and State Shelters for the 2004 Federal election. Shelter NSW worked with both ACOSS and National Shelter to resolve issues raised in the Shelter/ ACOSS paper *Rent Assistance: Does it deliver Affordable Housing* with the Department of Family and Community Services.

A project researching the needs of low-income workers, in partnership with the University of Western Sydney and the Labor Council of NSW, has progressed. The research has been completed (survey and interviews) and the final data analysis and write up has commenced. Papers were presented to the EAROPH conference (Melbourne, 20 September) and 'A Future that Works' conference (Newcastle, 8 December, by Hazel Blunden and Julia Perry). The data is being analysed and a further paper was presented to the mid year social policy conference at UNSW.

Shelter NSW responded to the Productivity Commission report into first home ownership.

Effective use of environmental planning to promote socially and economically sustainable communities

Shelter NSW and NCOSS jointly organised a conference 'Bursting at the Seams' 1-2 November 2004. The conference focused on the need for planning for a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable future for the greater metropolitan area. Feedback indicated that the event provided people with much needed access to information and debate

Shelter NSW and other key stakeholders advocated for a mandatory affordable housing SEPP and or changes to the EP&A.

that would encourage the supply of well located housing at an affordable price in well serviced locations

Shelter NSW often with NCOSS made representations to the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning and his department on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Developer Contributions) Bill 2004 (December). The bill introduces a regime of 'planning agreements' for developer contributions for affordable housing. This model is different from the 'inclusionary zoning plus affordable housing SEPP' model discussed and preferred by housing activists in the recent period, and has some disadvantages compared with that model. Shelter lodged a submission with DIPNR on proposed standard template for local environmental plans (October 2004). Unfortunately the Shelter/NCOSS suggestions for fixing the problem of SEPP 94F of the EP&A Act required a validating SEPP and for a DIPNR/LGSA intensive training program on the affordable housing planning agreement provisions were not agreed to. The Bill was assented to on 18 May 2005.

Shelter NSW provided comments to an Affordable Housing Network working group on a draft options paper on environmental planning instruments and affordable housing.

Shelter published resource paper (Shelter Brief 23, 'Levying developers for affordable housing' in November 2004.

Shelter NSW continued monitoring a potential review and reorganisation of all SEPPs (including SEPP 10). It wrote to the Director General of DIPNR asking for release of a consultancy report on review of SEPP 10. An FOI request for this report was lodged with the DIPNR on 21 April 2005 and was rejected.

The development of community capacity and effective linkages and partnerships between housing and non-housing services to housing-disadvantaged people and communities

A *Shelter Brief* on non-housing outcomes of social housing was produced in April 2005. This formed the background issues paper for the Shelter seminar on the same topic held in early July 2005. Both the paper and the seminar were effective ways of drawing out the issues and the debate about the interaction between the various government portfolios, professions disciplines and housing provision, community and individual well being.

Shelter was represented on the Community Council associated with the Premier's Department Redfern Waterloo project. The Council ceased to exist after the State government establishment of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority to manage the area.

On 29 November 2004 the *Sydney Morning Herald* printed leaked documents relating to a plan for the Redfern and Waterloo area including the redevelopment of public housing estates. Shelter with NCOSS made representations to the government. Major issues are: potential loss of public housing, potential loss of public amenity – open space recreation areas etc, lack of accountability to the



community and the parliament, exemptions from heritage and planning acts.

CSHA Bilateral is complete and was reported on in the newsletter. It has been discussed with both the Minister and the DG. The major issues are rent setting and disincentives to work and private financing.

Shelter resources the NESB Housing Taskforce, Meetings were held in August, October and December 2004, February, April and June 2005. A key issue of concern is the Department of Housing's eligibility criteria for assistance (covering public housing and Rentstart) which are tight and preclude many large low-income refugee households from getting assistance. This issue has been raised with relevant sections of the Department and with the Minister.

Meetings between the NESB housing taskforce and the Dept are held 4 times a year and are partly resourced by Shelter.

Shelter NSW has provided bimonthly Forum of Non-government Agencies (FONGA) meetings with regular briefings on the current issues facing social housing.

Key Result Area 2:

A sustainable and equitable social housing system

Public involvement in, and funding of, a sustainable and equitable social housing system

Members of Shelter NSW have been kept up to date on sustainability issues which have been regularly covered in the newsletter.

Shelter Board has discussed tax and financing issues related to funding at three meetings.

Shelter NSW continued to attend and contribute to Departmental advisory and consultative structures on 'new products' and policy revisions. Particular action has been on acceptable behaviour agreements (ABAs). Shelter's concerns about the potential negative impact of ABAs and policy around them on many tenants with disabilities etc has not abated but has eased somewhat in the light of further discussions with the department and with ministerial staff where we were given guarantees that the process would be focused on providing support in order to prevent evictions.

Shelter NSW met with OCH on the issue of tenanted property transferring from public housing to community housing and participated in a roundtable on the issue. Shelter was/is concerned that transfers of this kind do not disadvantage tenants.

Shelter participated in a Departmental review of the operational policy framework and the management and future of high rise housing.

Shelter responded to the Minister's announcements about the redevelopment of the Bonnyrigg housing estate. It liaised with the Minister's office, attended briefings and made comment in the media. Shelter was/is concerned that processes like this benefit both tenants' applicants and the social housing system. We are concerned about potential loss of stock and possible negative outcomes for tenants and the community.

Shelter responded to the Government's *Plan for reshaping public housing* announced on 27 April. Shelter attended briefings with the Department and met with the Minister. It has also met with a number of constituent organisations. Shelter remains concerned about many aspects of this plan and prepared a submission to government. Shelter has also agreed to participate in the Department's Reshaping Public Housing Reference Group.

Shelter NSW participated in initial discussions on the government response to an Upper House report on community housing, and has commented in a meeting on draft community housing issues paper. OCH has initiated a series of meetings around a proposed



community housing strategic framework arising from the recommendations of the Upper House report, and Shelter has participated actively in these, especially from the perspective of consumer rights and consumer needs.

Opportunities for social housing tenants (public, community and Indigenous housing) to comment on and influence policies affecting their lives

Shelter liaises on an ongoing basis with some Regional Tenant Resource Services (RTRSs), and was instrumental in advocating for a tenant advocate position for Minto tenants with South West Sydney Regional Tenants Association (SWARTA). It has also supported SWARTA's application for refunding of the position. Tenant groups generally participate in the email network carried out by the Tenant Support Network. Shelter attends the Public Housing Customer Council as requested on specific issues. It also liaises regularly with some members of the PHCC. Garry Mallard who is a member of the PHCC is also a member of the Shelter Board. In addition, support and back-up for NGO services and tenant groups has been provided on an ongoing basis.

A review of the participation of community housing bodies in the Housing Appeals System has been completed. The report and its recommendations are mostly in accord with Shelter policy proposals. The exception being that decisions made by the HAC will be recommendations to the Department or Housing Provider and will not be mandatory (they are also not mandatory for public housing). Community housing now participates in the Housing Appeals System, and all social housing tenants may use this process.

Effective and tenant-friendly management and regeneration of public housing estates

Shelter's recommended policies and guidelines on tenant and community friendly redevelopment and regeneration have been completed. They are available on the website and have been distributed to relevant parts of the Department of Housing.

The Ronald Henderson Research Foundation project on community economic development and the regeneration of public housing estates has been completed. An edited version of the project report was produced as a *Shelter Brief* (December 2004). This paper was presented at the Social Policy Research Centre Australian Social Policy Conference in July 2005.

Shelter NSW continues to participate in the Macarthur Housing Coalition, providing input into redevelopment of the Minto housing estate and helping to ensure tenants' views and concerns were taken into consideration. Shelter spoke at and co-sponsored a tenant-focused conference on the social impact issues associated with the redevelopment of the Minto estate "Beyond Bricks and Mortar" in March.

There was an increasing tempo of work in association with the Department of Housing on developing principles for urban regeneration, particularly in relation to the Department's forthcoming new urban regeneration project in Bonnyrigg in south-western Sydney. Shelter has liaised with the department in relation to this, and has advocated strongly that its own principles for adequate and honest tenant consultation be taken into account.

Shelter contributes to the Living Communities consultative committee and has raised issues relating to tenants as well as public interest issues related to privately financed projects

Shelter briefed senior managers of Macquarie Community Partnerships on social impact assessment and tenant risk management issues around redevelopment of public housing estates on 21 March 2005.

Shelter prepared and ran a training session on issues relating to the social housing system for Bonnyrigg tenants on 11 May 2005

Comments were provided by Shelter NSW to the Department of Housing on its draft 'community regeneration strategy 2005-2010' in January 2005.



Key Result Area 3:

Private rental housing, with security and affordability

A private rental market that provides secure, affordable, housing to people on low incomes

Regulations governing tenancy databases have now been introduced, improving the situation, though not addressing all of Shelter's concerns about these databases.

Shelter attended meetings of the Boarders and Lodgers Action Group (BLAG) and helped organise a round table with a number of organisations resulting in a draft joint communiqué on the rights of boarders and lodgers.

Shelter, in conjunction with National Shelter, lobbied for tax incentives for landlords to supply low cost housing in the lead up to the federal election.

Key Result Area 4:

Minimisation of homelessness

Shelter participates in the SAAP Peaks group. Major issues that have been worked on arose from negotiations on the new SAAP agreement.

Shelter NSW met with the Homeless Persons Legal Service and gave some feedback about mental health issues.

Shelter has continued to contribute to the development of the Port Jackson Housing Company by participating in the external steering committee. The major issues worked on were the service delivery model and the legal form of the company.

Shelter responded to several requests from students and community workers for research/statistical information.

Shelter gave presentations at a series of forums organised by the Northern Rivers Council for Social Development on the need for supported accommodation in the region.

Shelter monitored the aftermath of the Upper House inquiry into Mental Health.

Shelter joined the Mental Health Workers Alliance, established to raise issues around the current mental health system and the impact on workers. The Alliance is sponsored by the Labour Council of NSW. Shelter attended the launch and contributed to meetings.



Key Result Area 5:

Sector development and stakeholder relations

Appropriate consultation with our constituencies

Shelter liaised with several regions and assisted in organising several regional housing forums/conferences. Regional visits and training sessions have been conducted in the Northern Rivers, Hunter, South Eastern and Illawarra regions. Regular contact has been maintained with western Sydney through participation in WESTHIRN meetings.

Shelter continued to work on developing a regional network. During the year it had regional liaison contacts in the Central Coast, Far West, Hunter/Lake Macquarie, Illawarra/southeast, New England, Northern Rivers, inner/eastern Sydney, and western Sydney.

Shelter met with the Disability Council about their proposals for uniform standards for adaptable housing and agreed to participate in and provide some assistance for a forum or roundtable they are organising next year.

Shelter met with the Housing Industry Association to identify common issues arising from the Affordable Housing Summit. It discussed housing policy at the Commonwealth and State levels and the Metropolitan Strategy. Further meetings are planned.

Shelter met with the UnitingCare NSW.ACT Board of Responsibility. They would like to liaise on issues of common concern.

Appropriate information to our constituencies and the general public about housing issues and Shelter's work

Around the House, Shelter's newsletter was produced in September, December 04 and June 05. Because of staff turnover at Shelter, some editions of the newsletter could not be produced.

A review of the newsletter and membership information was completed and changes to the format of the newsletter and membership form have been completed.

Member e-bulletins were produced about every six weeks. The format of the March 2005 bulletin was changed to a proper e-bulletin format. That is, all the content is now in the body of the email, rather than as an attachment to an email. Many agencies and individuals are configuring email systems to reject emails with attachments or the attachment itself.

The Shelter NSW website had a minor makeover. It now has pages for Shelter's advocacy and education activities and for housing

news. Since September, it also includes dedicated pages for the NESB Housing Taskforce on the same basis as the pages for the Affordable Housing Network.

Three *Shelter Briefs* were published in the last reporting period ('Levying developers for affordable housing', 'Community economic development and public housing estates and 'Public housing and non-housing outcomes'). A fourth *Shelter Brief* on regeneration partnerships is in progress.

Educate our constituencies about housing issues and policy

A joint Shelter NSW / NCOSS conference on social sustainability and Sydney's future was held on 1-2 November.

A seminar on affordable housing on the South Coast was jointly sponsored by Shelter, the CAH and the Illawarra Forum. This seminar was held on November 4.

Shelter liaised with Northern Rivers Community Development Council about the planning of an affordable housing conference in August 2005.

The basic training course for welfare workers, 'Housing issues and policy 1', has been conducted, with positive evaluations from participants, in Auburn (25 August) and Queanbeyan (6 October). The course was run again at Auburn (19 April) in partnership with the Refugee Council of Australia, and 10 May at Parramatta in partnership with WESTHIRN.

A second, intermediate-level, training course was designed for generalist housing workers, 'Housing issues and policy 2'. The Rental Bond Board has approved an application a grant to run the courses on 10 occasions across the state. These courses will be run during the 2005-06 financial year.

In response to a request from the Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project, a half day training course for public housing tenants on the public housing system was developed, and delivered at Bonnyrigg on 11 May. It was well received, and will be delivered again at various occasions/places (e.g. Shellharbour, Redfern) in partnership with local organizations in the new financial year.

During the year Shelter NSW briefed other organisations on specific issues as requested and presented papers to numerous conferences and workshops eg on workers and housing at the EAROPH and Newcastle conferences; on the housing system at the Queanbeyan Housing Forum, the Tenants Union of NSW and the Community Housing Federation of Australia seminar; on redevelopment of public housing to the Beyond Bricks and Mortar Conference, and the public housing tenants' forum at Maroubra.

Shelter also met with Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders Commission (ATSIC) policy staff prior to ATSIC's windup and agreed to exchange information and build liaison once future structures of indigenous representation became clearer.

Key Result Area 6:

Organisational development

Constitutional changes were put and carried at the 04/05 AGM. These changes have been registered by the NSW Office of Fair Trading on 6 January 2005.

Board meetings were held at 6 weekly intervals and all were well attended. The Shelter Executive met monthly.

Reports on activities and issues were made to both the Board and the Executive in accordance with Shelter's reporting policies.

The first draft of both the OH&S policy and the policy and procedures manual have been completed, and the second draft is ongoing.

Shelter's current database is inadequate for the tasks required. Specifications for a new data base are being developed.

Regular reports have been made to the executive on OHS.

The self-identified priorities for staff development and training were met.

The Shelter library holdings and archives have been reviewed and culled. The organisational filing system has been reviewed and a new classification system has been developed and implemented.

Shelter has continued to generate funds through running conferences, seminars and training.

Shelter received core funding from the Department of Housing. It also sought and obtained a grant from the Rental Bond Board to roll out a training program in 2005-06.





Shelter NSW Inc

Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2005