



National Shelter Chairperson's report 2011–2012

In keeping with previous years I report from November to November rather than the financial year. The past year has been an exciting one for National Shelter. We have just employed our first employee, other than as a consultant, for 16 years.

This is possible due to a grant from FaHCSIA, not our first grant in that period but significantly it allows us to have a project manager to deliver a number of round table events and to undertake other tasks as part of our ongoing program.

We thank Minister O'Connor for his personal support in the process.

Emma Greenhalgh will be based at Queensland Shelter and we are currently developing her work program.

Otherwise it has been a year of consideration. The Commonwealth and States consider the future of National Partnership Agreements post 2013 and the federal treasury undertakes a technical review of the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

We have a range of new state governments on the eastern seaboard considering their level of support for investing in affordable housing and homelessness.

Housing markets in general have been flat or recorded decline in value up to 15% and the outlook for the housing industry remains gloomy based on building activity. The level of housing available and affordable to low income households continues to grow alarmingly.

We have also observed a stalling in the growth of community housing and states willingness to transfer property, especially with title and we have also seen increased activity and resistance to transfer by public tenants.

It all makes an interesting mix of considerations.

National Shelter will launch its policy priority statement later this month which provides a response on these issues and hopefully points to future policy on affordable housing.

As Chairperson of National Shelter it has been a hectic year. I have been to Canberra several times have met with Minister O'Connor twice and with his staff on a number of other occasions, we have continued our positive relationship with the Federal Minister and I have been impressed by his understanding of housing and his determination to continue to increase affordable housing provision.

He doesn't have the National Building Stimulus to roll out and finds himself in a fiscally difficult time, but we will continue to support moves for a growth fund and to increase NRAS.

I have also spoken at a number of events including:

- The AHURI NAHA Conference;
- NT Government Housing Conference;

- NSW Shelter Seminar;
- The ACOSS conference;
- Presented to a FaHCSIA forum on CRA
- 3rd Annual Affordable Housing Projects; 2-4 July 2012, Malaysia;
- CHFA Affordable Housing Exchange;
- The 7th National Homelessness conference;
- The first NGO conference on mental health

I have also represented National Shelter on:

- The Urban Policy Forum;
- NRS reference Group with help from Noelle Hudson at Queensland Shelter;
- Australians for Affordable Housing steering committee with help from Kate Cowmeadow at Queensland Shelter; and
- The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Social Housing and Housing Assistance.

We conducted a further round table on Indigenous housing issues and completed our previous contract with FaHCSIA, all in all a fairly busy year for National Shelter.

Whilst I remain an active chair, effectively an executive chairperson for National Shelter it is not a role that is unsupported. The National Shelter Executive has provided valuable support and I thank our Treasurer Adam Farrar, our Secretary Toni Vine-Bromley and our Deputy President Mary Perkins who have all made my life more manageable and ensure National Shelter continues to function.

At various other times I have been buoyed by the contributions of Alice Clark, Chantal Roberts and Leigh Watson and want to particularly mention Pattie Chugg from Shelter Tasmania, who provides consistent advice and support and is our longest standing member.

I also note the role played by staff of a number of State Shelters, notably Katie Florance and Craig Johnson at NSW Shelter and Kate Cowmeadow, Joanna Carson, Noelle Hudson and Kym Lawrence at Queensland Shelter who have all undertaken specific or ongoing tasks for National Shelter in 2011–12.

I have now been the Chairperson for 8 years and have enjoyed the role it allows me to perform. I am supported to do this by the Board of Queensland Shelter and I thank them and all our members for the confidence and support displayed for my tenure.

Adrian Pisarski

Chairperson