



## Issue 5: June 2009

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Community Housing information bulletin for 2009.

### Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan Social Housing Initiative Update

Information sessions outlining the guidelines and application process for the Economic Stimulus Plan Social Housing Initiative were held in several locations around the state in late April. These sessions were well attended and the department has received many enquiries about potential submissions.

The department has received a tremendous response from private developers, builders and not-for-profit organisations for stage 2 of the Social Housing Initiative. Applications and request for offers greatly exceed the funding available in Queensland for 4,000 rental units under stages 1 and 2.

More than 50 not-for-profit organisations have submitted proposals for capital grant funds to develop and manage over 400 social housing projects as part of the one social housing system in Queensland. A range of contributions are included in those proposals, with the most common being land, and others including cash, waiver of local government charges, pro bono assistance and borrowings.

The department's assessment team is considering all applications against the mandatory and performance criteria, and the Australian Government Social Housing Initiative guidelines. All recommended projects will be forwarded to the Australian Government for consideration by 30 June. The Australian Government has undertaken to approve projects by 30 August. Applicants will receive advice of the outcome from the Department of Communities in September 2009.

The closing date for tenancy management expressions of interest by not-for-profit organisations is **2pm on 6 July 2009**. To express an interest, providers should refer to the [application form](#) on the department's website.

For more information, refer to the [Nation Building page](#) for future updates on the initiative, or telephone the Housing Services call centre on 1300 880 882.

### Business Development and Innovation Unit update

Business Development and Innovation Units have been established in Southern Queensland (January 2009) and Central Queensland (May 2009), with the Northern Queensland unit to be established by July 2009. The units have a specific focus on increasing the capability of not-for-profit housing providers to become major providers of social housing across Queensland, and in encouraging innovation and continuous quality improvement by providers.

The Community Housing Resource Worker program ceased to operate in Wide Bay Burnett, Central Queensland and Mackay/Whitsunday regions on 31 March 2009. Community Housing Resource Workers in Townsville, Far North Queensland, North West Queensland, South West Queensland and Darling Downs regions will continue until 30 June 2009.

Staff members of the new Central Queensland Business Development and Innovation Unit located in Rockhampton are:

- Ms Sue Camps, Regional Business Development Officer
- Mr David Kraatz, Regional Support Officer, and
- Ms Jody Robb, Administration Officer.

The department is committed to ensuring a smooth transition to these new arrangements and has been working closely with the Community Housing Resource Workers throughout the implementation of the Strengthening Social Housing strategy.

### **Contact details for further information**

If you have any questions about service delivery, or compliance with the *Housing Regulations 2003* and funding agreements, please contact the Service Officer for your region, Service Delivery, Community and Public Housing on **3225 1253 or 1300 880 882** or email [servicedelivery@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:servicedelivery@communities.qld.gov.au)

If you have questions about consolidation or growth opportunities, please contact Kristine Abbott, Manager, Capacity Building and Regional Coordination, Business Development and Innovation Unit, on **3406 7620**.

If you have any questions about the National Community Housing Standards and the accreditation process, please contact the Senior Accreditation Officer, Standards and Accreditation Unit, on **3225 1718**.

## New tenancy laws statewide information sessions

The *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* will commence on 1 July 2009, replacing existing tenancy laws for renting in Queensland. While many aspects of the previous legislation remain the same, there are some important changes for community housing providers to be aware of.

Free public information sessions will be conducted by the Residential Tenancies Authority, so providers can access information about the changes to these tenancy laws.

You can [register for information sessions](#) to be held in various locations around the State. Bookings are essential.

All information provided at the seminars will also be available on the [Residential Tenancies Authority](#) website by 1 July 2009.

Date	Region	Venue	Times	Address
17 June	Sunshine Coast	Novotel Twin Waters	2pm and 6pm	Ocean Drive, Twin Waters
25 June	Toowoomba	Burke & Wills Quality Hotel	2pm and 6pm	554 Ruthven St, Toowoomba
1 July	Brisbane North	Kedron Wavell Services Club	2pm and 6pm	375 Hamilton Rd, Chermside
9 July	Hervey Bay	Hervey Bay RSL Club	3pm and 6pm	11 Torquay Rd, Pialba
15 July	Mackay	Souths Leagues Club	2pm and 6pm	181 Milton St, Mackay
16 July	Rockhampton	Rockhampton Leagues Club	2pm and 6pm	Cambridge St, Rockhampton
22 July	Townsville	Townsville RSL	2pm and 6pm	139 Charters Towers Rd, Hyde Park
23 July	Cairns	Holiday Inn - Cairns	2pm and 6pm	121-123 The Esplanade & Florence St, Cairns

## Neighbour Day 2009

*'The community you want starts at your front door'*

On Sunday 29 March, volunteer social housing tenants hosted a range of small Neighbour Day events around the State with some assistance from the department. Posters, flyers and invitations were sent, encouraging people to say hello, introduce themselves and keep in touch with their neighbours, especially those who live alone.

There were 12 events held this year around the state, compared to eight in 2008. Activities aimed at bringing neighbours together from next door and across the street.



Left to right - Uma, Marilyn, Theresa, Daryl (resident caretaker), Kyle and Hester

In Spring Hill, more than 40 tenants of 'bric housing' attended a social gathering which was organised by enthusiastic tenant group members and volunteers. Tenants played music, table tennis, kicked balls around, laughed, talked and shared some food. This and other planned activities have helped create harmony among the boarding house tenants who are a variety of ages and come from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

In Mackay, tenants of the Whitsunday Housing Company joined with the Mackay Regional Tenant Group and Mackay/Whitsunday Area Office to bring the Neighbour Day spirit to Cannonvale/Airlie Beach tenants. A beachside sausage sizzle and an informal tenants' meeting were organised. They focused on the importance of neighbours and attracted 25 participants with many commenting "we will have to do this again".

Local and regional tenant groups get together to build better communities in their neighbourhoods, across the regions and with lessors and the department. For information on Housing Services' Tenant Participation program, please contact Ms Mary Slivka on **3227 6650**.

## The 6th National Housing Conference - *Housing in a new era: building the connections*

Registrations are now open for the 6th National Housing Conference to be held in Melbourne from 24 to 27 November 2009.

This year's conference will explore the essential connections between housing, people, place, community and nation and will propose innovative solutions and partnerships to lead Australia's approach to housing policy reform into the future.

For more information about the conference program and registration, visit the [conference website](#).

## Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute - latest research publications released

The [Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute \(AHURI\)](#) is a national research organisation, specialising in housing and urban research and policy.

AHURI has recently released several new publications available to download from its website:

- [Natural disaster preparation and response: issues for state housing authorities](#) (final report)
- [Improving housing outcomes for young people leaving state out of home care](#) (positioning paper)
- [Housing implications of economic, social, and spatial change - key issues](#) (positioning paper)
- [Understanding what motivates households to become and remain investors in the private rental market](#) (final report)

## Let us know your email details

To ensure you receive key departmental updates, such as the Community Housing Information Bulletin, and correspondence via e-mail in a timely manner, please contact us if your email details change. You may even consider setting up a generic e-mail account for your organisation, rather than an account that may change when staffing arrangements do.

To update your e-mail address with the department, contact the Service Officer for your region, or call Service Delivery on 3225 1253.