



COMMUNITY HOUSING
LIMITED
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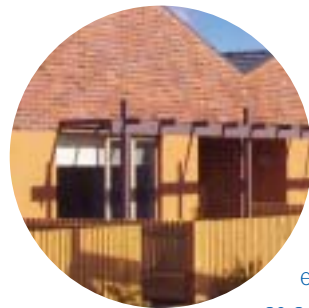
COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD

Newsletter

Vol 2 Issue 1, February 2005

Donations:

Community Housing Ltd is entered in the public register maintained by the Australian Business Register as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) therefore donations for more than \$2 could be tax deductible.



Housing Association Growth Strategy

CHL was successful in being earmarked by the Victorian Government as a prospective affordable housing

association. CHL submitted an expression of interest to expand to undertake activity as an affordable housing association in May last year. Approval means that CHL is able to start developing prospective projects to be funded under the \$70 million strategy to be committed by November 2006. At this stage projects are being considered across Victoria for a range of client groups. One of the most encouraging aspects of this early stage is the support of many local

councils in Victoria which are increasingly seeking to ensure that some of their lower income residents have access to good quality, affordable, long term rental housing.

In order to introduce the strategy the Victorian Government has passed legislation to regulate this future industry. The legislation was passed in December and we await the Government establishing an Office of Registrar and publication of registration criteria before CHL is able to register to receive funding and start projects.

Twyford Street Project

Community Housing Ltd (CHL) in partnership with Moreland City Council under the State Governments Social Housing Innovations Project has recently finished the construction of 12 units in Fawkner. These units have been specifically designed for people over 55, who live in or have strong ties to Moreland. The project will offer low cost, long-term rental housing to people in need.

CHL designed and built the units to be sympathetic to the neighborhood context and to be suitable for the needs of elderly residents. Some units are currently arranged for wheelchair users and others can be adapted in the future as needs require. A sheltered communal area with built in seats to encourage interaction between the elderly residents. Moreland City Council and tenants assisted and participated in the design process. The design supports CHL's and Moreland City Council's philosophy of allowing tenants to 'age in place'.



New Housing for single people in Croydon

The Minister of Housing opened on January 18th 2005 ten units designed and built by Community Housing Ltd in partnership with Maroondah City Council. This project is part of the State Government's Social Housing Innovation Project.

The project is well located and is in easy walking distance to shopping and community facilities. The projects offers several examples of innovative design which complement and enhance the streetscape as well as offering a high level of amenity for the tenants. This development allows for those who have a primary need for privacy or overnight stays plus the alternative for those who benefit in a supportive group atmosphere.

The four units at the front of the block offer an attractive addition to the streetscape. This has been achieved through sensitive design, which includes elements of the architectural styles present in the street.

A sliding wall provides flexibility in how the space is used while maximising space. Although these units are single bedroom the inclusion of a separate lounge allows tenants to offer overnight stays for family and friends, thereby strengthening social networks. These units could be described as being a friendly design, which is based on the needs of our tenants.

This building is flexible in design so that it can be transformed for many different residential situations dependant on the changing needs of residents. The multi tenant building at the rear of the block highlights design features to meet tenant needs. Each of the six studio apartments is self-contained with a separate bathroom, toilet, bed lounge and kitchen. This design offers the tenants choice in the level of interaction with the other tenants. The common areas include a lounge, laundry and additional kitchen where tenants are able to socialise or share a meal.

It is anticipated that the greater level of amenity offered by this design to the tenants will encourage long tenancies within a stable social network. This building is seen as an example of the preferred multi tenant housing design for the future.

Stable tenancies require less tenancy administration, this model offers much better economy in administrative costs thereby offering the savings made in administration to be directed to building more social housing.

Single people represent the largest group within the homeless population in Victoria. The housing opportunities available to single people on low incomes in the eastern and southern regions are mostly unaffordable, unsafe, insecure or are affordable but in another part of the state. This project demonstrates a solution to the chronic shortage of affordable secure housing for single people across Melbourne.



www.chl.org.au



CHL East

CHL East has its head office in Box Hill. From here our services stretch to

encompass the southern and eastern regions of Melbourne, with outreach locations in Ringwood, Wantirna, Belgrave, Lilydale, Yarra Junction and Healesville.

CHL East ensures the provision of affordable and sustainable housing through a number of programs.

The Housing Information & Referral (HIR) team are usually the first point of contact for many clients and service providers. The HIR team focus primarily the Cities of Whitehorse, Maroondah, Knox and Yarra Ranges, with outreach offices located within these boundaries. The team is highly skilled in providing up to date advice and information on a broad range of housing issues. It is here that CHL maybe able to prevent many housing breakdowns or assist clients though a housing crisis.

The HIR team also manage the expenditure of the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF). The HEF fund is used to secure or maintain long-term accommodation for clients in the east through the provision of assistance for rent in advance, rental arrears, removalist assistance and whitegoods. A feature of this fund is the Voluntary Repayment Scheme whereby clients, if they wish, can choose to repay some or all of their assistance; providing a larger pool of money from which CHL can assist. The generosity of former recipients ensures CHL can assist double the number of people in need through this fund.

The HIR team further manages the Family Violence Private Rental Program (Pilot), which supports women who have experienced family violence through additional funds, information and referral.

It is though the HIR team that clients access CHL's transitional housing (THM). Transitional housing is temporary housing for singles or families experiencing a housing crisis. The HIR team facilitate the entry into the THM properties through the approval of applicants for both nominated properties (where support agencies directly refer clients for specific properties allocated to their service) and general stock (which is available to all clients and services).

The HIR team facilitates planned exits from the THM properties through regular monitoring of the tenancies. Exits may include Private Rental, Public Housing (through Segment One applications for which CHL is a participating agency) or community housing.

The HIR team works co-operatively with the Tenancy team. Tenancy currently manage 277 properties with 305 tenancies. They are responsible for ensuring CHL manages the properties in accordance with the relevant Acts and that the properties are maintained and relevant rent is received.

Another important function of CHL EAST is the management of the Long Term properties. These properties are located through Eastern and Southern regions with properties located in such areas as Caulfield, Pakenham, Croydon and Lilydale. The long-term team targets marginalized groups and those on a low income. Prospective tenants are carefully matched to properties to ensure sustainability of tenancies.

The Long Term team manages 82 properties with 125 tenancies. These include rooming houses, single units and family homes and community residential units for people with disabilities (in partnership with support services such as Melba House). Rent is charged at Office of Housing rate (25% of income).

CHL East has proved adaptable to change and will continue provide innovative responses through such initiatives as the Front Door Pilot whilst still remaining true to the core vision of providing affordable and sustainable housing for all.



Community housing Ltd to deliver housing services in East Timor

CHL completed its research project in East Timor in December. CHL examined the feasibility of developing housing for people in need by consulting with local communities on their housing needs, examining legal arrangements on residential housing, assessing whether partnerships with government and local organizations could be formed, identifying funding options and developing housing design and program models which could be introduced.

During the six month project, suitable housing designs were developed through local consultation which could be delivered in a number of ways to meet the different financial position of those in East Timor. These designs offer housing of much improved quality, size and facilities to that commonly available at the moment. Once the design and cost of construction had been identified, CHL was able to develop a different occupancy arrangements based on local people's ability to pay. These range between rental schemes for those at the lower end of the income scale through to rental purchase and outright ownership for those with higher incomes.

CHL is now moving into the service establishment stage which involve:

- CHL has registered as an international non government organisation to carry out services in East Timor;
- establishing building operations to undertake residential construction;

- securing East Timor government support to develop a pilot project;
- establishing a partnership with the Portugese Mission which will train longterm unemployed timorese people in construction skills who will then be employed by CHL in its building operations;
- developing a partnership with UN Habitat's City Alliance program to carry out slum improvement in Dili;
- entering discussions with housing financiers to develop a locally appropriate credit scheme for residential housing.

The success of this next stage of operations will depend very much on the level of support CHL receives from the Government of East Timor in facilitating access to land and tenure for residents in CHL projects, support from financiers to develop products to suit the East Timor economic environment, donors in Australia to assist in providing for the not for profit rental housing to be managed by CHL and ultimately the response of the east timorese people to the housing options being developed.



Current housing conditions



Proposed East Timor Affordable Housing Project

Support contact numbers:

GIPPSLAND REGION: Homelessness ☎ 5120 2000
Long Term Housing Enquiries ☎ 5135 3777

EASTERN METRO REGION: Homelessness ☎ 1300 558 484

Useful contacts:

Tenants Union of Victoria ☎ 9419 5577 www.tuv.org.au

Consumers Affairs Victoria ☎ 1300 55 81 81 (local call charge) www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority ☎ 1300 137 164 (local call charge) www.rtba.vic.gov.au