

Submission  
No 17

## INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS AND LOW-COST RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

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# Churches Community Housing

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The Director  
Rachael Simpson  
Legislative Council - Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Simpson

**Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Homelessness and Low Cost rental Accommodation**

Further to our electronic lodgement on Friday 6 March 2009 of our abovementioned submission, enclosed please find a signed copy for your records.

Churches Community Housing Ltd decided to not lodge an extensive submission but to focus on two areas that we believe the church sector can offer possible solutions to the issue of homelessness and the provision of low cost housing to key workers.

We believe that under Terms of Reference b. *methods of fast tracking the capacity of providers to deliver low-cost rental accommodation in a short time frame* and d. *current barriers to growth in low cost rental housing*, the church sector can offer possible solutions if the issue of title can be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the government and churches.

This matter has previously been raised in our submission to the Legislative Council's Inquiry into Community Housing - February 2002.

It would be appreciated if the comments contained in this letter could be included with our Submission.

The Committees consideration of our Submission is appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Derek R Yule  
Chief Executive Officer  
9 March 2009



## ***Churches Community Housing Ltd***

The Director  
Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

### **Re: Inquiry into Homelessness and Low-cost Rental Accommodation**

#### **Submission from: Churches Community Housing Ltd.**

Churches Community Housing Ltd. (CCHL) was established in 1996 to assist churches and church welfare agencies in NSW to develop affordable, community housing initiatives for families and individuals on low incomes in partnership with the State government. CCHL is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee that was established by the NSW Ecumenical Council. CCHL's membership is made up of all major church denominations in NSW including Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox churches.

The aim of the organisation is expressed as the desire to support church groups in their mission of compassion and justice as they seek to follow Christ's example to care for those who are most disadvantaged. One of CCHL's roles as a peak organisation is to represent and communicate on behalf of the church sector their views and concerns on housing and in particular on the availability of suitable housing for those most in need.

CCHL is not only able to help churches in the development of community housing partnerships but also has a separate division that is a registered and accredited housing provider currently managing approximately 350 supported tenancies across the greater Sydney and Hunter Regions. This division is able to assist churches and church agencies in developing solutions for viable tenancy and property management for community housing that seeks to meet the accommodation needs of local church based welfare responses to those who are homeless and needing support. We currently partner with over twenty welfare and support agencies.

We all acknowledge that having a safe, secure and affordable place to live is one of the most basic human rights, yet it is not available to all within our society and the church has a

commitment to improve the living standards of those on the margins of society. To call their own members and wider society to advocate for justice and to work in partnerships with government and the community to meet the needs of the homeless.

As well as having an understanding of the support needs for people on low incomes and those possibly facing homelessness, we believe that the church has the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of housing outcomes through the expansion of partnerships with the government.

Our unique and significant contribution to this issue is to make the churches aware of the need for housing partnerships to meet the housing needs of those on low incomes.

Currently we have been making the church sector aware of the opportunities for affordable housing partnerships with government under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) and we are pleased to advise that there is substantial interest in this model as it closely fits the needs of how the church sector wishes to work in partnership with government. (Two successful NRAS applications in the first round.) As a result of our meetings a number of Anglican and Catholic Dioceses are searching their property portfolios for suitable land and buildings for redevelopment in NRAS housing partnerships.

The reason that the NRAS partnership is acceptable to the churches is that the property title remains with the church. This issue of title has been an ongoing difficulty for both the churches and government in partnership developments. (*Refer to our submission to your Inquiry into Community Housing – February 2002.*)

We believe that there is further potential to develop creative partnerships between the churches and government to meet not only the needs of the homeless and those on low incomes but also to provide key worker accommodation. It still appears to be limited by the issue of title.

Your consideration of our submission is appreciated, it is hoped that you will be aware of the support and partnership potential that is available from the churches in dealing with these issues of suitable, safe and secure accommodation for all within our society.



Derek R Yule

CEO – Churches Community Housing Ltd

6 March 2009