

# Shelter WA's vision for the development of an affordable housing system forum

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More than fifty people attended a Shelter WA (SWA) event last week where Board Chair Mark Glasson and CEO Michelle Mackenzie spoke about SWA's vision and strategies moving forward to lead the development of an effective housing system.

Among the guests were Shelter WA members, representatives from government, industry and the community services sector and people with lived experience of homelessness. Shelter WA was delighted that the Housing Minister Peter Tinley also attended.

Mark Glasson highlighted that the Board has developed a new strategic plan that will position SWA to assume a more strategic leadership role across the housing spectrum.

For this to occur, collaborations, partnerships and innovation will be critical.

"As a community we need to get ahead of the game – to be solution-focused, though not with pre-determined solutions," Mr Glasson said.

"We need a strong eye for the lived experience of others and to see that experience, reflected in policy and action - in the disability sector, Aboriginal community and tenancy reform."

Mr Glasson then invited Shelter's CEO Michelle Mackenzie to address the attendees.

Ms Mackenzie thanked everyone for their attendance before acknowledging and thanking Board members and the people who have helped her transition into her new role.

Ms Mackenzie focused on Shelter WA's approach, moving forward which includes focusing on the whole system and levers available for change, and building on Shelter WA's policy expertise and knowledge, with a key focus on collaboration, and strategic engagement to deliver outcomes.

She added that Shelter WA would have both a regional and metropolitan focus to understand the impact of different housing markets on housing access.

Ms Mackenzie then explained Shelter WA would continue its strong advocacy work for the housing needs of specific population groups and will be ensuring that people with lived experience of housing insecurity informs all the organisation's work.

"We will succeed when we work collectively, with our partners and members, to catalyse and build a groundswell for change," Ms Mackenzie said

"When government, industry and society have the confidence that everybody should have a home that enables them to thrive."

Shelter WA's CEO then talked about the key pieces of work the organisation will be undertaking which will include education and engagement around an effective housing system to bring together the evidence, voices and stories that will illustrate compelling cases for change.

Also, using Shelter WA's membership of the Metronet New Private Reference Group to create more inclusive communities and deliver diverse housing choice and bring our policy positions to life. Policies which include planning reform; better use of under-utilised land, building on the strengths of the community housing sector; greater access to affordable private rental housing and harnessing the strengths of the private sector to increase affordable housing supply.

Further, working with Shelter WA partners to use Metronet to respond to the housing needs of specific population groups, including Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and persistent mental health issues, young people and seniors,

Ms Mackenzie spoke about how thrilled Shelter WA is to be working with the WA End Homelessness Alliance and that with the Alliance, Shelter WA is seeking funding from Lotterywest to become the backbone organisation to support this work moving forward.

In closing, Ms Mackenzie told the attendees that Shelter WA recently received a significant grant to upgrade its Website, will explore how to maximise its DGR status and will be crafting events to inspire solutions to drive change.

"Shelter WA has a renewed focus on partnerships and collective action, with a clear vision and outcome for all our work."

Formal proceedings ended with Shelter WA staff members explaining their roles and their shared vision that all people living in Western Australia have housing that enables them to thrive.

