

Australian Federation  
of Homelessness  
Organisations



ANNUAL REPORT  
2000-2001



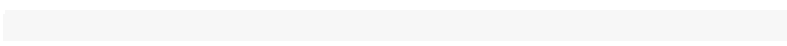


# Contents



Overview.....	1
Constitutional Objectives .....	1
Chairperson’s Report.....	2
Priorities.....	3
Founding Members .....	5
Profiles of AFHO Board Members .....	6
Homelessness Stats and Facts .....	8
AFHO Activities 00-01.....	9
Treasurer’s Report .....	12
Auditor’s Report .....	13

AFHO





# Overview



The Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO) was established in late 1998 by the Council for Homeless Persons Australia (CHPA), the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH) and the Women's Services Network (WESNET). AFHO was established as a consequence of the withdrawal of Commonwealth Government funding for these organisations in their own right, with a stated government preference for a single peak body on homelessness. These founding organisations considered and debated the government proposal for a single peak body for about two years, eventually deciding to pursue the establishment of AFHO as one of the few real options for keeping national advocacy around homelessness alive.

The founding organisations established AFHO with a joint vision **to proactively research, develop and promote national policy and action to reduce homelessness and its impact upon the diverse range of people it affects**. AFHO aims to achieve this vision through consulting with homelessness agencies nationally, undertaking research and policy development and educating the community about homelessness.

From October 1998 to February 2000 AFHO acted as a coordination mechanism for continuing the work of the secretariats of the founding members CHPA, NYCH and WESNET. Since February 2000 AFHO replaced that method of working with the employment of a consolidated AFHO secretariat staff team. Currently AFHO employs an Executive Officer, a Communications and Administrative Coordinator, a Policy and Networking Officer and an Administrative Assistant

Another important aspect of AFHO's continuing development as a new organisation is a commitment by the AFHO Board to pursuing diversity and equity as central elements of our work. One of the strategies developed towards meeting this goal was to create three new positions on the Board:

- an Indigenous position;
- a non English speaking background position; and
- a rural and remote position.

These specific positions were chosen in recognition of the significant levels of homelessness experienced by members of these communities and/or the need to develop culturally relevant responses to address homelessness among members of these communities.



# Constitutional Objectives



AFHO's Constitutional Objectives are:

To provide an effective national voice on homelessness and related issues by fulfilling the following:

- a) To be especially concerned with the well-being of individuals and groups experiencing or vulnerable to homelessness, and to promote their well-being through socially just policies and programs.
- b) To undertake actions, research and policy aimed at:
  - developing and promoting the association's policies;
  - preventing or ameliorating the extent and effect of homelessness; and
  - educating the community on issues relating to homelessness.
- c) To participate in and/or carry out programs designed to contribute to the alleviation or elimination of homelessness and related issues.
- d) To provide a structure which enables the members to inform policy development in a manner that is consistent with the objectives and vision of AFHO and also reflects their needs and/or the needs of their constituents.
- e) To provide a structure that maintains and develops relationships between members.





# AFHO Priorities



The key issues that AFHO will focus on over the 2001/2002 year are outlined below.

## **THE NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

The Government launched the National Homelessness Strategy (NHS) in May 2000. Since then, initiatives have included the distribution of a NHS Discussion Paper, the development of ministerial priorities and the implementation of a number of pilot projects associated with those priorities. The latest development has been the drafting of a comprehensive strategy paper by the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH). After Ministerial approval it is intended that draft strategy will form the basis of a national consultation.

AFHO intends to engage fully in the consultation process associated with the expected CACH report, over 2001/02. Specifically, AFHO will be looking for opportunities to be involved in any implementation strategies associated with the Report. AFHO will also be seeking ways to link the NHS with the various state and territory homelessness strategies being developed.

AFHO has recently commenced a project under the NHS, on Preventing Centrelink Breaches among Young People (and others) utilising SAAP and other non-government services. We will look for other NHS project opportunities over the coming year.

## **MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF THE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SAAP)**

All State and Territory Governments have signed agreements with the Commonwealth for SAAP IV. For the first time these agreements contain considerable variation between states/territories. This variation is captured in Schedule 7 of each Agreement. AFHO recently developed a National Overview of the Operation of SAAP IV, in an attempt to capture the national variation across the program. This overview is an extremely valuable resource for AFHO in our ongoing work relating to SAAP. In 2001/02 AFHO intends to monitor and assess the progress of SAAP IV. We will do this by scrutinising the Annual Report of SAAP to be compiled by the Commonwealth and expected to provide an overview of each State and Territory Government's progress in SAAP IV. We will supplement our consideration of this report through consulting with our SAAP networks in each State and Territory to verify and expand upon the information provided in the Annual Report of SAAP.

## **WELFARE REFORM**

Following the release of the *McLure Report* late last year, the Federal Budget in May 2001 revealed the government's initial plans for changes to our welfare system titled *Australian's Working Together*. The changes are based on some aspects of the *McLure Report*.

Briefly, *Australian's Working Together* initiatives include:

- the replacement of the Community Support Program with a new expanded Personal Support Program;
- the introduction of 850 new Centrelink Personal Advisors;
- the introduction of intensive assessments for indigenous, Newstart and Youth allowance customers currently not required to meet activity test requirements;
- an extension of obligations for some, and new obligations for others; and
- the introduction of a Working Credit system to encourage uptake of part time and casual work.

The government has committed to consultation on *Australian's Working Together* proposals by September 2001, and to reporting back to the public on the consultation findings in February 2002. AFHO will be actively participating in the consultations, including through the provision of a comprehensive written submission. We intend to base this submission on consultation we will do within our membership on the . We will also strongly encourage our members to engage in the *Australian's Working Together* consultation process.

## **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

Housing and homelessness are inextricably linked. The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) is the instrument through which public and community housing is delivered to low income earners throughout Australia. Government renegotiations for a future CSHA will have commenced by August this year and agreement by Ministers is expected to occur by July 2002. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) has

undertaken a round of selective consultations to date, providing background material for ministerial negotiations.

AFHO will be investigating opportunities to undertake research and consultation on a number of issues associated with the housing system in the context of future changes in housing assistance arrangements.

### **AFHO HOMELESSNESS POLICY PLATFORM**

One of the key challenges for AFHO has been to develop policy direction on homelessness and related issues inclusive and representative of the three founding organisations – the Council for Homeless Persons Australia (CHPA), the National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH), and the Women's Services Network (WESNET). In response to this AFHO commenced researching and writing a comprehensive Homelessness Policy Platform in September last year. Draft chapters developed to date include housing; crisis responses to homelessness; income, employment, education and training; domestic and family violence; health; poverty and, data and statistics. Further chapters to be developed include violence, discrimination, roles and responsibilities and the legal system.

AFHO will begin utilising significant portions of the existing draft while continuing to work on completing the platform. It is the intention of AFHO to undertake broad sector consultation on the final draft document within the next 18 months.

### **NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS CONFERENCE**

The last national conference on homelessness was held in Melbourne in 1998. This was hosted by the Council to Homeless Persons Victoria. The policy and practice landscape has changed significantly since that time. For example, AFHO has been fully established, a Commonwealth National Homelessness Strategy is underway, a range of State/Territory Homelessness Strategies have commenced, new SAAP and CSHA Agreements have been signed and further reform of our welfare system is well underway. Opportunities for stakeholders to consider the implications of these significant changes for homelessness and to capitalise on the opportunities they present, remain outstanding.

AFHO will commence work on developing a comprehensive proposal and secure resources to stage a National Homelessness Conference in 2002. It is our intention to investigate incorporating a National Indigenous Homelessness Forum within this conference.



## National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH)

*NYCH was established in 1982 to prevent and alleviate youth homelessness in Australia by:*

- providing coordination and resourcing to services for young homeless people nationally;
- monitoring government policy and service developments relevant to youth homelessness;
- undertaking policy development and research on youth housing/homelessness; and
- lobbying government and the broader community to take the required steps to reduce youth homelessness in Australia.



## Women's Services Network (WESNET)

WESNET is the national women's peak advocacy body which facilitates and promotes policy, legislative and programmatic responses relevant to women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. WESNET advances responses which:

- Ensure the safety of women and children;
- Empower them to live free of violence; and
- Improve the social, political and economic status of women.

WESNET works within a framework that promotes an understanding of domestic and family violence as gendered violence, and which acknowledges that women's and children's experiences are also intrinsically shaped by their race, ethnicity, ability, age and class.

WESNET's vision is to ensure that all women and children live free of domestic and family violence and its consequences. One of the consequences of domestic and family violence can be homelessness, and the major cause of women's and children's homelessness is domestic and family violence. WESNET contributes to AFHO policy, particularly on areas relating to women's and children's homelessness.



## Council for Homeless Persons Australia (CHPA)

*CHPA was established by State and Territory Networks in 1996 following concern that the needs of single adults and families experiencing homelessness were being overlooked by both Government and the wider community. The aims of CHPA are to:*

- advocate to achieve social justice for people who are homeless;
- undertake policy development in pursuit of the purpose of the organisation;
- facilitate information exchange between members;
- initiate and sponsor national research projects on homelessness and related issues;
- support and develop the capacity of State and Territory networks; and
- work in partnership with members and government to improve the quality of services available to people who are homeless.



# Profiles of AFHO Board Members



This section provides profiles of the AFHO Chairperson and the AFHO Board Members representing each of the founding member organisations of AFHO - the Council for Homeless Persons (CHPA), the National Youth Coalition

## NARELLE CLAY AFHO CHAIRPERSON

Narelle is the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Youth & Family Services in Wollongong and has been involved in a broad range of roles relating to homelessness which include advocacy and lobbying through peak bodies; community training on issues such as data, advocacy, and management; research projects including the National Housing Strategy; lecturer in various tertiary courses in human services. She has also had a high record of involvement around youth and general community services, policy development and service delivery; research and data analysis; industrial issues; and an appreciation of regional/rural issues gained from extensive work in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions on the South Coast of NSW. Narelle has also been a past member of many committees including the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH), the Data and Research Advisory Committee (DRAC), the Prime Minister's Task Force on Youth Homelessness and the Evaluation Committee for JPET. She is a current member of the NSW SAAP Ministerial Advisory Council.

## KATE LORD NYCH

*AFHO Secretary and Executive member*  
Kate began her career in the Community Sector as a supervisor at a shelter for homeless young people 20 years ago. For 18 of those years she worked predominately in the SAAP Sector in a number of crisis shelters and related support services for homeless and at risk young people. She is currently Program Manager for Anglicare Tasmania Inc in the southern region and is responsible for managing a range of programs including counseling and family support services, accommodation services, employment services, disability support services, and alcohol and other drug services.

Advocating for change at a systemic level has been an integral part of the work she has done in the community sector, and has been an active campaigner at a local, regional, statewide and national level around homelessness issues. As an active (founding) member of the Youth Housing Task Force of Tasmania (now the Statewide Youth Housing Group) she has been involved in NYCH for nearly 15 years, holding the position of Tasmanian Delegate for 8 years and currently Co-Chairperson.

## JULIE OBERIN WESNET

*AFHO Executive Member*

Julie has extensive experience in areas of domestic and family violence including regional and rural areas. She is the current National Chairperson of WESNET. Julie's employment history includes working in the areas of women's health, young women's homelessness, and academic work in sociology, political studies, women's studies and public health. She has worked at a women's refuge and domestic violence service in regional Victoria for 10 years, 7 of those as Manager. Julie's work in the area of domestic and family violence has been published widely. She has presented papers, workshops and participated on panels at conferences at a regional, state and national level. As Chair of WESNET, Julie has been involved in a number of national research projects on domestic and family violence over the last few years. She has been involved with AFHO since its inception and is committed to ensuring that issues around women's homelessness are a key aspect of the homelessness agenda.

## LIZ FRITZ CHPA

*AFHO Treasurer and Executive Member*

Liz has been Manager of Blair Athol Accommodation & Support Program at Bilinga on the Queensland Gold Coast for 11 years, and has worked with homeless people for 15 years. Blair Athol provides support and accommodation for single men, women and families (SAAP funded). Liz is a current Member of the Regional SAAP Ministerial Advisory Network, the Council to Homeless Persons South Queensland, and the TAFE Industry Training Reference Group - Community Services. She is also a past member of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness and the QLD SAAP Ministerial Advisory Council. Liz is particularly Interested in long term homelessness for single people and families, the impact of mental illness and addictive behaviours on single people and families, breaking the cycle of homelessness for single people and families, access and sustainability of housing for these target groups, and professional counselling services for homeless people.

## GRACE BOND

Grace works for Jundah, a women's domestic violence service in Cherbourg, QLD and was appointed to the Indigenous position at the AFHO Annual General Meeting in November 2000.

## WENDY ANDERS WESNET

Wendy is an Aboriginal person from central Northern Territory and is currently the Manager of Kempsey Women & Children's Service (NSW) which provides crisis accommodation, support and referral for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Wendy is the NSW representative for the WESNET Committee, and has been a member of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement for over 14 years. She was employed as the Indigenous worker at the Albury Women's Refuge for 12 years, before moving to Kempsey, during which Wendy has been a committed member of the NSW Women's Refuge Koori Support Group (Wallan Jindera's) and has also held the position of Indigenous Delegate on the NSW Women's Refuge Movement Working Party, and is currently the Mid North Coast regional delegate.

Leanne is currently employed as a Program Manager with Centrecare managing the agency's accommodation and outreach services and parent adolescent family services. Leanne has worked at Centrecare in WA since 1993. She has also recently been seconded as the non-government representative to work three days per week within the secretariat to the Western Australia's State Homeless Taskforce. The Taskforce is expected to be in existence for six months. Leanne is currently involved in a range of community sector activities including:

State/Locally: Chairperson, Community Housing Coalition WA (CHCWA); State SAAP Ministerial Advisory Committee member; SAAP Protocols Reference Group member, Quarterly Customer Service Manager meetings with Community Housing Coalition of WA; and Family Support Network member.

Nationally: CHPA Secretary and Acting CHPA President; and member of the Community Housing Federation of Australia.

## WILLIAM TILMOUTH

William was appointed in June 2001 as the Rural & Remote representative. He is the Executive Director of the Tangentyere Land Council in Alice Springs.

## GINNY HEWLETT NYCH

GINNY has many years experience in the field of youth homelessness with further experience in community based aged care and community health.

As previous Chair and then Co-Chair of NYCH she has witnessed the difficulties relating to loss of funding and the supreme efforts required to maintain an unfunded organisation.

GINNY feels fortunate to have been associated with AFHO since its inception and to have been part of working with a raw new organisation to the highly regarded, and highly professional organisation that AFHO is today. GINNY was the inaugural Chairperson of AFHO and is a current member of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness.

## ANDREW ASSER CHPA

Andrew has been a CHPA representative for 4 years, through his involvement with Homelessness SA (previously CHP SA) for 6 years, in which he was formerly a secretary and treasurer. Andrew is a Social Worker and Recreation Coordinator for Byron Place Community Centre and is responsible for Drug & Alcohol Counselling, Housing, Housing Outreach Support, Advocacy, and drop in centre work. Andrew is also Chair of ReLink SA.

## LEANNE STROMMEN CHPA

## ARA CRESSWELL WESNET

Ara is the manager of Beryl Women's Refuge in the ACT, where she is the only anglo/celtic member of a staff team of Indigenous and NESB women. Ara has over 17 years experience of direct service provision in the women's emergency services sector, and is an active lobbyist in the areas of domestic violence, mental health, chemical dependency, and homelessness and their impact upon women and children.

Aside from being an active member of WESNET since 1995, Ara is active in a variety of other ACT networks. She was formerly Executive Director of Toora Single Wimmin's Shelter (now Toora Women) where she worked for 14 years, commissioner with the ACT Legal Aid Commission for 3 years, and has sat on boards, steering groups and advisory bodies across a spectrum of issues that touch upon the lives of homeless people and the disadvantaged.

## ADRIAN PISARSKI NYCH

Adrian has worked in youth affairs for the past 20 years in Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and QLD mostly as a policy advocate or in coordination positions. He has worked in local government, community organisations, peak bodies and for government. As the Executive Officer of the Youth Accommodation Association he is responsible for coordinating the efforts of over 100 youth accommodation services in NSW to provide improved and more comprehensive housing assistance for young people in NSW who are homeless and or at risk of homelessness. Adrian is also a member of the Board and Executive of Shelter NSW, the peak body for housing in NSW. Adrian holds a Graduate Diploma in Community Management and is currently studying his Masters in Community Management at the University of Technology Sydney. He is a NSW delegate to and Chairperson of NYCH and a former Deputy President of the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition (AYPAC).



# Homelessness Stats and Facts



## **WHAT IS THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA'S HOMELESS POPULATION?**

According to an analysis of 1996 census data published by the ABS in late 1999 there were an estimated 105,300 homeless people in Australia last census night.

Of the 105,300 homeless people counted on census night in 1996, only 12,900 (12%) were staying in services funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). SAAP, jointly funded by Commonwealth and State Governments, provides funds for around 1,200 crisis services to homeless people around the country.

During 1999-2000, 90,000 homeless people gained access to SAAP funded services. Some of these individuals returned to services two, three or more times over the year so that services actually supported 157,600 people on separate occasions over the year.

Unmet demand figures for 1999-00 are currently unavailable. During 1998-99 it was estimated that up to 116,400 requests for homeless services (SAAP) could not be met.

## **WHO IS HOMELESS IN AUSTRALIA?**

While we don't have accurate information on the characteristics of the entire homeless population in Australia, we do know something about the characteristics of those who used services to the homeless last year (SAAP funded services):

- more women (55%) than men (45%) used these services;
- more young people than older people depended on SAAP. 36% of service users were under 25 years of age and 86% were under 45 years of age;
- Indigenous people were highly over-represented at 14%, compared with their 2% proportion of the Australian population;
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds constituted 11% of all people who used SAAP services compared to their 16% of the Australian population; and
- Up to 67,800 child visits were made by children accompanying adults to SAAP services over 1999/00.

## **WHY ARE PEOPLE HOMELESS IN AUSTRALIA?**

The key risk factors for homelessness in Australia are:

- unemployment (94% of SAAP service users were unemployed or not in the labour force);
- poverty (98% of SAAP services users relied on government incomes or had no income);
- lack of affordable housing; and/or
- discrimination in obtaining housing or employment or both.

Family conflict and unemployment are key factors in youth homelessness. For women, domestic and family violence are key factors in homelessness.

Unemployment, the lack of suitable long-term accommodation, and low vacancy rates in the private rental market are important factors in family homelessness.

Displacement as result of white settlement and policies of segregation and assimilation, discrimination, and low incomes are important factors in Indigenous homelessness.



# AFHO Activities 00 – 01



Over the past year AFHO has successfully moved from organisational establishment and development mode to operational mode. Examples of this transition include the election of a new AFHO board, the adoption of a new AFHO constitution, the completion of a review of National Secretariat Funding and major drafting of an organisational procedures manual. AFHO is now up and running as a firmly grounded national peak body.

## **THE AFHO BOARD**

Two board meetings were held over 2000/01. The first in Canberra in November 2000 and the second in Adelaide in May 2001.

A new AFHO board structure was introduced at the AFHO AGM in November 2000 (held in conjunction with the AFHO board meeting). Ms Narelle Clay was elected the new independent Chairperson, while Ms Grace Bond was elected to the new Indigenous position and Ms Soo Lin Quek to the new NESB position. Unfortunately we were forced to declare our new Rural and Remote position vacant at the AGM. However, it was filled at a later date by Mr William Tilmouth of Alice Springs.

At the May 2001 AFHO Board Meeting, the AFHO Board hosted a luncheon for the South Australian Homelessness Sector. Narelle Clay, the AFHO Chairperson spoke at this luncheon along with guest speaker, Anthony Albanese MP, ALP Shadow Spokesperson on Housing.

## **FUNDING**

After establishing a fully operational National secretariat over 1999-2000, AFHO was plunged into financial uncertainty by the announcement of a review of the National Secretariat Program (AFHO's funding source) in July 2000. Consequently, considerable secretariat and Board energy has been devoted to securing AFHO's funding future over the past financial year. AFHO's funding contract was extended to 31 December 2000 pending review outcomes, and then extended again until June 2001 'whilst details of the future structure for peak body funding were being finalised' by government. In 2001 the National Secretariat Program (NSP) notified AFHO that it would receive a three year contract from July 2001 similar to current funding levels.

One way AFHO has tried to mitigate funding uncertainty arising from dependence on government funding has been to develop a new membership category, associate membership. Our associate membership drive commenced in January 2001 and has proven a great success. We intend to continue to expand our growing associate membership base over 2001/02.

## **STAFFING**

AFHO Policy Officer, Annie Butkus, left AFHO in July 2000. AFHO extends its thanks to Annie for her hard work in assisting to set up a functioning policy base within a new national secretariat office. Following Annie's departure Elise Funnell and Alice Thompson were both employed on time limited contracts to jointly develop an AFHO procedures manual and an AFHO policy platform. At the time these two contracts were offered, AFHO was not in a position to recruit a new full time permanent policy officer due to our funding uncertainty.

From Sept 2000 to Jan 2001 the ongoing work of the AFHO secretariat was undertaken by Sally Watson (Executive Officer) and Macushla Hares (Administration Coordinator). In January 2001 the contract positions came to an end. Many thanks to Elise and Alice for their sustained high quality contributions to the development of two very substantial AFHO documents. In February 2001 Alice Thompson took up the permanent position of AFHO Policy and Networking Officer. In June 2001 Sira Nicholas commenced work in a newly created half time Administrative Assistant position.

## **PROJECTS**

Over 2000/01 AFHO has been involved in two projects funded outside of its core secretariat grant. The first was a national research project on outcomes for homeless people with a mental illness commissioned jointly by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and the Department of Health and Aged Care. AFHO was a minor partner in a consortium involving Craze Lateral Solutions (a NSW based consultancy firm) and St Vincents Hospital (Melbourne). A final project report was presented to the Commonwealth in November 2000. Unfortunately that report had not been released by the close of the financial year in June 2001.

The second project commenced in June 2001 and aims to produce resources to reduce Centrelink applied breaches among Youth Allowance and other income support recipients utilising services to homeless people. It is being funded under the National Homelessness Strategy (Department of Family and Community Services). Specifically, this project will:

- 1 Produce a wall chart explaining the breaching process and associated appeals and review mechanisms for use by SAAP and other non government service providers.
- 2 Conduct a series of workshops for non government workers to assist in the utilisation of the wall chart.
- 3 Produce wallet cards explaining the mutual obligation and breaching processes for young people and other income support recipients in contact with homelessness agencies.

The production of the wall chart and pocket cards, and the coordination of the workshop series is being subcontracted by AFHO to the Welfare Rights Centre (Sydney), on the basis of their expertise and experience in the production of previous products of this nature. It is expected the project products will be launched in August and the workshops will take place over September and October 2001.

A draft project proposal to host a National Indigenous Homelessness Forum was developed over the final quarter of 2000/01 in response to a request from the Department of Family and Community Services. It is yet to be finalised.

In May 2001 AFHO also tendered to undertake a project to develop Options for Consumer Satisfaction Measures in SAAP on invitation from the Commonwealth. The outcome of this tender process will be known early in the next financial year.

## **POLICY WORK**

Over the past year AFHO's key policy work has involved the development of extremely detailed policy chapters for our draft Homelessness Policy Platform, and considerable attention to housing policy, welfare reform, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and the National Homelessness Strategy.

Over the year AFHO policy platform chapters were drafted on *Poverty, Domestic and Family Violence, Housing, Crisis Responses to Homelessness, Health, and Data & Statistics*.

AFHO actively participated in the board of National Shelter and the ACOSS convened social housing workshops in a bid to improve and respond to housing policy issues. AFHO also sponsored a recent edition of the National Shelter National Housing Journal focussing on homelessness, and our Executive Officer served on the ACOSS Housing Policy Resource Committee.

AFHO's work on the Welfare Reform over the past year has involved media releases, delegations, a special edition of *AFHO News* on welfare reform, and a submission to the Minister on the final report *McLure Report*. AFHO is also in the process of drafting a substantial submission to government on the welfare reform proposals contained in *Australians Working Together* package released in the May 2001 Federal Budget. This submission will be completed by September 2001.

In relation to SAAP AFHO has been involved in media activity around both the release of data on children in SAAP and the release of the annual national data report. AFHO joined the new national SAAP Data Sub Committee, participated in a number of meetings of this committee and generated a summary document providing an overview of all SAAP IV agreements between the Commonwealth and all State/Territory Governments in May 2001.

In terms of the National Homelessness Strategy (NHS) AFHO published a number of articles (for example in *Parity*, the *NSW Shelter Newsletter* and the *National Shelter Journal*) on the NHS, met repeatedly with Departmental representatives, Ministerial Advisers and the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) to communicate AFHO's vision for the NHS and our frustration about its lack of progress. The NHS stalled somewhat from July-Nov 2000 awaiting the establishment of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) which met for the first time 9-10 November. Fortunately Ginny Hewlett (AFHO Board member and past AFHO Chairperson) was appointed to the CACH on the basis of her association with AFHO.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

The first edition of *AFHO News* was distributed to all SAAP services and others in October 2000, and it featured Welfare Reform. Another edition was distributed in February 2001, and a further edition was ready for distribution at end June 2001 (although it would have reached services in early July 2001). AFHO has also contributed to a range of other organisational publications over the year including the FECCA newsletter, *Parity*, the *Family*

Services Australia Newsletter and the Community Housing Federation of Australia Newsletter.

An AFHO pamphlet outlining our vision, objectives, the nature of homelessness in Australia and providing membership application details was developed to attract potential members and distributed widely.

Over 2000/01 our Administrative Coordinator Macushla Hares has been busy improving our website and posting the latest AFHO publications, media releases and submissions on it. It is now offering more up to date and useful information on homelessness and AFHO than ever before.

The AFHO Communications Working Party continues to explore further publication and communications options to maintain strong links between AFHO, our associate membership base and SAAP services nation wide.

The AFHO secretariat has kept regular communication with the AFHO Board via a weekly email message covering all business of the organisation. The organisation keeps regular contact with homelessness stakeholders nationally by widely distributing an email titled 'AFHO Activities' on a fortnightly basis.

## **CONFERENCES AND FORUMS**

The AFHO EO Sally Watson facilitated the Queensland Shelter Conference in September 2000 and presented a paper on the *Social Costs and Consequences of Homelessness* at the same conference. She also participated on a panel at a national government forum in Sydney examining housing people with high and complex needs in early 2001. Ginny Hewlett presented an AFHO paper at the National Community Housing Conference in Fremantle in November 2000 and Andrew Asser presented an AFHO paper at the launch of Homelessness SA in April 2001.

AFHO hosted a sector forum in Brisbane in early 2001 covering a range of national policy topics, and involving both non government and government speakers. It was well attended.

AFHO has participated on the Steering Committee for the National Housing Conference to be held in Brisbane in October 2001, and a decision was made at the May 2001 AFHO Board Meeting to make strong attempts to host a National Homelessness Conference in 2002.

## **NETWORKING & LIAISON**

AFHO continues to have a high degree of contact with both government and non government stakeholders in homelessness. A lot of energy is put into developing and maintaining these contacts, in order to increase our relevance and influence and to improve the overall potential for positive change in relation to homelessness.

Over 1999/00 AFHO met with a wide range of non Government organisations including the following: members of the new Families Peak, members of the new Disabilities Peak, Mathew Talbot Hostel (Sydney), 2010 Gay and Lesbian Youth Service (Sydney), Elsie's Women's Refuge (Sydney), Gateway Community Centre (Brisbane), 139 Club (Brisbane), Qld Housing Peaks (group meeting), ACROSS, Salvation Army (Southern Services), Welfare Rights Centre (Sydney), Alcohol and Drug Council of Australia, Homelessness SA, Housing Industry Association, Community Housing Federation of Australia, Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia and the ACT Women's SAAP Network.

AFHO also had considerable and repeated contact with a wide range of government officers over the past year including those responsible for SAAP, the CSHA, the NHS and welfare reform, predominantly in the Department of Family and Community Services. On the parliamentary level AFHO met with Senator the Hon Jocelyn Newman, the staff of Senator the Hon Amanda Vanstone, Anthony Albanese MP, the staff of Wayne Swan MP and Senator Andrew Bartlett.



# Treasurer's Report



## **AFHO FUNDING**

AFHO received a total of \$300,799 from the National Secretariat Program (NSP) (formally the Community Sector Support Scheme) during the 2000/01 financial year. AFHO also received a final payment of \$4,800 for its involvement in the Department of Family and Community Services funded project *Improving Outcomes for Homeless People with Mental Illness*. AFHO was contracted late in the financial year by the Department of Family and Community Services to undertake the project *Preventing Centrelink breaches among people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness*' payment of \$65,000 for this project has been received.

AFHO has finished the financial year with an operating surplus of \$8,192. The main areas of expenditure has been on salaries, National Board meetings and office operation expenses.

## **NATIONAL SECRETARIAT PROGRAM REVIEW (NSP)**

In June 2000 AFHO was notified by the Department of Family and Community Services that a review of the NSP would commence in July 2000. As part of the review a discussion paper on future funding structures was released along with an invitation for organisations to submit responses to the discussion paper by 30 September 2000. Findings and recommendations of the review were released in January 2001. A new structure of funding under the NSP had been developed with AFHO being advised that 3 year funding of a National Support Grant of \$250,000 and a Program Support Grant of \$51,101 would be offered. Negotiation began around the development of the new contracts and AFHO has recently signed a 3 year contract with the Department of Family and Community Services for annual funding of \$331,211 (GST Inc).

## **MEMBERSHIP**

At the November Board meeting decisions were made opening the way for AFHO's inaugural membership drive to commence. AFHO received a total of \$11,784 in membership fees in the 2000/01 financial year from a total of 136 members.

AFHO will continue to develop its services to members and hopes to increase its number of members to 500 by the completion of the 2002 financial year.

## **AUDITORS REPORT**

A copy of the 2000/01 Auditors Report for the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations follows this report.

**Elizabeth Fritz**  
**AFHO Treasurer**



# Auditor's Report



**REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF**  
**AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF**  
**HOMELESSNESS ORGANISATIONS INCORPORATED**

## ***Scope***

We have audited the financial statements of the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations Incorporated being the statement of Income and Expenses, Balance Sheet, Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2001. The Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and the information they contain. We have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with the Associations constitution and Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements, so as to present a view of the association which is consistent with our understanding of its financial position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

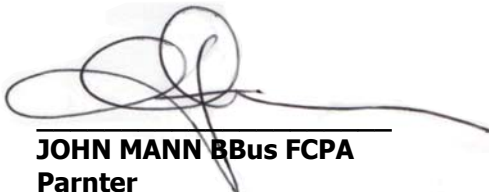
## ***Audit Opinion***

In our opinion:

1. The financial statements of the Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations Incorporated present fairly the assets and liabilities at 30th June 2001, and the income and expenditure of the Association for the year then ended in accordance with the basis of accounting described in Note 1 to the Financial Statements;
2. The Association has kept proper accounting and other records in accordance with general accounting practices and section 71 of the the Association Incorporated Act 1991;
3. The Association has complied with its own Constitution in regard to accounting policies; and
4. We have been provided with all the information and explanations that we required to form this opinion.

**EVERALL MERRETT AND MANN**  
**Certified Practicing Accountants**

**Dated: 27 July 2001**



**JOHN MANN BBus FCPA**  
**Partner**















**PO Box 603 Dickson ACT 2602**  
**Phone: (02) 6247 7744 Fax: (02) 6247 1649**  
**Email: [afho@afho.org.au](mailto:afho@afho.org.au) Web: [www.afho.org.au](http://www.afho.org.au)**