
A social housing professional association for Australia?

Report of a study

What is a professional association?

- ◆ The Australian Medical Association
- ◆ Royal Australian Planning Institute
- ◆ Australian Association of Social Workers
- ◆ The Chartered Institute of Housing

Why are we asking the question?

- ◆ The task of social housing practitioners has become more challenging - but...
- ◆ No voice for practitioners in determining standards of practice, training & education or a voice in policy debates
- ◆ No one promotes the profession or professional advancement

The size of the industry

- ◆ Estimated 11,000 practitioners
But no information available on indigenous housing practitioners
- ◆ Made up of:
 - 5,100 paid public housing
 - 500 paid community housing
 - 5,400 volunteers

Steps being taken

- ◆ Development of training and education
- ◆ The CIH had begun to accredit courses
- ◆ Many people wanted to consider our own association

What was the project?

- ◆ Social Housing Industry Training Reference Group
- ◆ Funded by Queensland, NSW, Victoria and South Australia
- ◆ Carried out by the National Community Housing Forum

Findings

- ◆ Strong in-principle support - more than 75% of respondents and informants
- ◆ But support depended on the kind of organisation
- ◆ Should not duplicate roles of existing organisations

What should it do?

- ◆ Promote professional standards and good practice
- ◆ Opportunities for practitioners to share information and debate issue

What should it do?

- ◆ Develop and recognise the skills of social housing practitioners
- ◆ Foster opportunities for professional advancement
- ◆ Advocate on social housing

Who should it cover?

- ◆ A very broad coverage
- ◆ public, community, indigenous and affordable housing practitioners
- ◆ front line staff, managers, policy, administration, management, advocates
- ◆ paid workers and volunteers

Who should it cover?

- ◆ All States and regions
- ◆ Could be Australasian - NZ
- ◆ Must not be dominated by eastern states
- ◆ Must involve rural practitioners

Eligibility

- ◆ Experience as well as formal qualifications
- ◆ Different categories of members
- ◆ Must not be an elite organisation
- ◆ Must not be dominated by senior managers

Next steps

- ◆ A call for practitioners to form a steering group to set up an association over the next 6 months
- ◆ A minimum founding membership of 300 from around the country
- ◆ Some initial funding support for this stage

Next steps....

- ◆ Consult further with:
 - indigenous housing workers
 - volunteers - particularly co-ops and tenant groups
 - the CIH
 - possible seed funders

Next steps

- ◆ Three years to become fully established
- ◆ Establish branches in every State and Territory (ultimately regions)
- ◆ Need initial funding support - but declining over three years
- ◆ 1,800 members by the end of this time

Next steps....

- ◆ Work in partnership with other organisations to:
 - accredit training and education courses
 - build ways to recognise experience
 - establish mutual relationships with overseas bodies
 - broker good practice information
 - sponsor forums for debate and professional development

Next steps...

- ◆ It's up to practitioners now