

AHURI Housing Conference: 28-30 October 2015.

Location: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre - Riverside Theatre

Notes from the Attendance by Geoff Barker:

INTRODUCTION:

Commencing at 1.00pm the start of the first day was a stimulating array of General subjects to whet the appetite of delegates...

Welcome to Country Dr Robert Isaacs OAM

1. **Welcome from conference convenor** Mr Tony De Domenico, Chairman, AHURI Ltd

Introduction to the program Dr Ian Winter, Executive Director, AHURI Ltd

2. **Official welcome** Hon Colin Holt MLC, Western Australian Minister for Housing

Plenary - Federal Minister's keynote address

Facilitator Dr Ian Winter, Executive Director, AHURI Ltd

3. **Keynote address** Hon Christian Porter MP, Federal Minister for Social Services

Plenary – keynote address: Structural changes in Australia's housing system

Facilitator Ms Nicole Lockwood, Board Member, Infrastructure Australia

4. **Keynote address** Prof Gavin Wood, Emeritus Professor of Housing and Urban Studies, RMIT University

The single late afternoon Session also provided an interesting presentation

Structural changes in Australia's housing system

Prof Gavin Wood, Emeritus Professor of Housing and Urban Studies, RMIT University

The Second day offered a wide variation of topics and with so many streams and presentations selecting the most appropriate was difficult.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In terms of the Conference there were around 800 people in attendance and a wide range of exhibitors of housing related services, products and facilities. The presentations included local, interstate and international delegates sharing ideas, experiences and challenges on a wide range of topics:

1. Housing Affordability
2. Housing Finance
3. Disability Sector
4. Aged/Seniors Sector
5. Community Housing
6. Indigenous Development
7. Participative processes
8. Social Housing
9. Potential for Public/Private ventures
10. Private sector
11. Needs analysis and forecasts

AHURI Housing Conference: 28-30 October 2015.

There were too many sessions with overlapping relevant presentations so in some cases it was not possible to attend concurrent sessions.

PERSONAL PRESENTATION FEEDBACK

The Think Tank to which Jane Bringham, Zel Iscel and I were allocated had a good selection of people [30 people in all] to present relevant and related topics but the venue and facilities were totally inappropriate. The setting was a glazed rectangular “room” with no ceiling and high stools and café/bar tables with poor acoustics plus there was no impedance of the background noise from the major reception hall that entered freely over the glazed partition walls. This had a major impact on the ability of people to hear what was going on especially Zel who relies on aural ability to take in the gist and details of conversation. [Jane had specifically asked for an enhanced assisted hearing surround sound system – which had been installed thankfully as it helped people at the rear of the session to hear what was going on].

In addition no electronic aids were allowed for which included a deficit of power outlets to which a projector or computer could be connected. This meant that the film Zel and I produced could not be shown.

Jane, Zel and I ran the start of the session with short presentations and then open discussion and Q&A. We explained the background to the RI/ANUHD campaign and emphasised the failure of Industry to achieve anywhere near the National Dialogue Targets. The conclusion was very much aimed at gaining support for a regulated system of basic UD principles. Questions and feedback during the session was good for all presenters – even with the uncomfortable venue. A more appropriate venue would have allowed for an improved outcome. Zel and I showed the Film on my laptop over lunch but it was a poor venue and the sound was not audible drowned out by an overwhelming hum of background noise.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

Some of the more relevant talks attended included:

- **Mr John Zandler** CIMC Modular Building Systems Australia
- **Ms Irina Cattalini** WACOSS
- **Hon Cheryl Edwardes** Expert Advisory Panel for the White Paper on Reform of the Federation
- **Mr Mike Allen** Disability Housing Futures
- **Mr Neil Thomson** WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- **Mr Steve Pomeroy** University of Ottawa, Canada

Friday Think Tank - housing continuum

- **Mr Stuart Deagan** Yarra Community Housing – Tenant perspectives on the role of participation for finding a place on the housing continuum
- **Prof Martyn Hook** RMIT University and **Mr Finn Pederson** Iredale Pederson Hook Architects (*joint presenters*) - Developing cultural competency in delivery of housing solutions in Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley: case study Walumba Elders Centre
- **Ms Cara Peek** Nyamba Buru Yawuru - Yawuru native title holder's housing and community development framework

Disability Housing Futures Stream

- **Mr Mike Allen** Disability Housing Futures
- **Dr Michelle Gabriel** University of Tasmania
- **Ms Astrid Reynolds** Summer Foundation

Interestingly Universal Design was not a regular topic in any of the talks I attended apart from those by your delegates. However the involvement of people in the Housing Development and Management processes was regularly raised and while this was seen as a major contributor to

AHURI Housing Conference: 28-30 October 2015.

“appropriate” housing provision the practice was raised and discussed more by community organisations, academics than policy advisors and program managers...

Dealing with the increase in Homelessness was also covered and the Summer Foundation provided a balanced view based on experience, theory and practice.

Garnering Finance was an interesting topic with the idea of capturing static funds held in land and existing housing discussed.

Zel was a sponsored delegate to the Conference but she was only able to attend a half day of the overall conference and sought an appropriate reduction in the full day attendance rate but was told that a full day was only possible at \$795! – Outrageous. Not even a discount concessional rate for a blind person. This forms one of the components of feedback to the organisers.

Some interesting Conclusions from the Conference:

1. The idea that Social or Public Housing is now seen as a “Transition” to what might be considered more permanent forms of Tenure
2. Social Housing Stock is ageing and costing more and more to manage and maintain
3. Redevelopment of old land into higher density is seen as a must to stop urban sprawl.
4. Demand for housing is changing with the makeup of Housing tenancies dominated by single persons and single parents with children [mainly women]
5. A demand for smaller houses is taking over from the larger houses although still a need for multiple sleeping spaces/bedrooms
6. There is a possibility of “Share houses” using different designs where there is independent sleeping spaces and Ablutions but shared living areas/spaces in a single dwelling. Such ideas could be an answer to many challenging tenancy needs
7. Community Housing sector is taking over as the dominant provider of subsidised/public housing.
8. Massive increase in housing rental subsidies needs to be looked at differently. Government is reducing support and making it more difficult to qualify for subsidies.
9. Plenty of NGO’s and community organisations active in various fields:
 - a. Affordability
 - b. Advocacy
 - c. Disability
 - d. Youth
 - e. Community Housing
 - f. Homeless
10. National Shelter still active but struggling

Geoff Barker

PM+D Architects P/L

Rights and Inclusion Australia and COTA/ANUHD Delegate

NOTE:

I also attended the 8th International Urban Design Conference at which I also presented a paper with the title “A sustainable City is an Inclusive City” in which I also raised the campaign to achieve the incorporation of basic UD accessible principles into the National Construction Code [BCA].