

Co-op Connect

Spring 2014



OUR BUNBURY CO-OP HITS THE HEADLINES!

The lovely residents of our Bunbury member co-op ARCH (Alternative Resource Community Housing) have been featured in a new online seniors' magazine called *Living Well Navigator*.

The editor contacted us, wanting to inspire readers with the story of how a group of enterprising seniors has jointly met their own need for affordable housing.

The eloquent and photogenic member Bernie (above) was the perfect man for the job.

Check out the resulting story at:

www.mynrma.com.au/living-well-navigator/independent-living/how-i-started-a-housing-co-operative.htm

WELCOME TO OUR NEW TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



We are very pleased to welcome Natasha French to the Co-operation Housing board as our new Technical Director (Property).

Natasha has more than 10 years' experience in the property industry in Australia and internationally, and is currently associate director of a major real estate advisory firm.

She brings to the role extensive knowledge and experience of the planning and management of residential developments, including apartment and retirement village developments, and budget and stakeholder management.

We are very much looking forward to having her share and apply her considerable expertise to some of our potential growth opportunities.

UPDATE ON OUR LEASE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

On behalf of our member housing co-operatives, Co-operation Housing has successfully negotiated with the Department of Housing that any of our member housing co-operatives that choose to sign on to a lease agreement (see below) will **not** be required to draw their future tenants from the joint community housing waiting list.

The Department agreed that prospective tenants of housing co-operatives need to be 'co-op ready', and that drawing from the general community housing waiting list would therefore not be appropriate for our members.

DRAFT LEASE AGREEMENT DELAYED

The Department of Housing has advised us that an updated draft Community Housing Agreement, which was originally due to be available for feedback by the end of July, has been delayed and might not be available for some months.



CONSENSUS WORKSHOP A GREAT SUCCESS

Participants who attended our recent Consensus Decision Making workshop facilitated by Katrina Bercov found it extremely valuable.

One said: "I've lived in two co-ops over the past two years and they've both used consensus decision making, but even though people have tried to explain it to me I've never really got it until now. The trainer was very clear. She explained that consent is not the same thing as agreement, and now I finally understand how it can work!"

See right for upcoming workshops relevant to the co-operative sector.

CH COMMENTS ON NEW RENT-SETTING POLICY

The Department of Housing announced recently that its proposed new rent-setting policy would be delayed, as it has decided to have one final consultation phase.

Given the short consultation period and the impact the new policy will have on our member co-ops, Co-operation Housing has submitted a response to the proposed policy on behalf of its members.

The proposed new policy is available at:

www.communityhousing.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CH-Rent-Setting-Policy-September-2014.pdf

WANT TO 'GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER'?

At the recent National Co-operative Housing Conference in Melbourne, which Co-operation Housing attended on behalf of its members, members of the Murundaka Earth Co-op in Victoria mentioned a book that they recommended as a useful resource for conflict resolution.

The book is *Getting our act together: How to harness the power of groups*, by Glen Ochre, Director of the Groupwork Institute of Australia.

It is described as a practical guide that 'focuses on situations where problems most often arise and provides the "nuts and bolts" of how to overcome them', including helping readers to:

- > understand oneself in groups
- > get along with people
- > make decisions collaboratively
- > have great meetings
- > talk about difficult 'stuff'
- > start a new group
- > handle trouble when it strikes
- > resolve conflict.

The book is available at: www.groupwork.com.au/shop

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KEEP LEARNING

Keep your knowledge up to date or learn new skills relevant to the housing co-operative sector with these upcoming workshops.

Meeting Facilitation Skills

Saturday 29 November and
Sunday 7 December

For details, and to book, see:
www.greenswatraining.org

WA Tenancy Law I

Tuesday 25 November

WA Tenancy Law II

Wednesday 3 December

For details, and to book, see:
www.communityhousing.com.au

MORE CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS

Members of Murundaka Earth Co-op also offered a few tips of their own on the prevention and resolution of conflict.

- > Hold an annual retreat.
- > Use 'I' statements.
- > Engage an external facilitator to run group mediation.
- > Appoint a 'vibes watcher' (someone who observes and comments on group dynamics).