

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- The Local Government Association (LGA) has established an Affordable Housing Working Group. Membership of this Group has now been finalised and consists of:
 - The Lord Mayor, Mr Michael Harbison (Chair),
 - Mayor James Maitland, Wakefield Regional Council,
 - Mr Stephen Rufus, Chief Executive Officer, Berri Barmera Council,
 - Mr Peter Peppin, Chief Executive Officer, Adelaide Hills Council,
 - Wendy Campana, Executive Director LGA,
 - Mr Philip Fagan-Schmidt, Director, Affordable Housing Innovations Unit (AHIU), and
 - Mary Marsland, Chair SA Affordable Housing Trust Board.
- The LGA Working Group first met in November 2007 and has since had several meetings in which it considered and progressed a range of affordable housing issues.
- The Working Group has also called for Expressions of Interest for affordable housing projects in a variety of council areas and types as well as working through a range of issues often seen as bottlenecks or constraints to the development of affordable housing. This includes the consideration of practices, planning policies and procedures and infrastructure/services delivery in councils as well as in the relationship and interface with the State Government and its agencies through these processes and in development. A number of responses have been received and the LGA is following up with councils that have expressed an interest in developing affordable housing initiatives.
- A national Local Government Kit on Affordable Housing is nearing completion and has been considered by Planning and Local Government Ministers. An Affordable Housing Resource Kit specifically prepared for South Australia will be released by 30 March 2008 by the Affordable Housing Innovation Unit (AHIU).
- A number of resources for Local Government are currently available from AHIU and Planning SA. These include a Better Development Plan module and guide for affordable housing, and a key data website providing important demand and supply statistics by local council area.
- A number of national affordable housing initiatives are also of note for Local Government:-
 - A \$500 million Housing Affordability Fund with the goal of streamlining development approval processes and reducing infrastructure charges and developer costs
 - \$30million from the Housing Affordability Fund has been earmarked to roll-out nationally electronic development assessments and on-line tracking services to streamline planning approvals and cut the costs of new homes;
 - A National Rental Affordability Scheme, addressing rental affordability, by increasing the supply of affordable rental housing, conditional on financial support from the States and Territories;

- A plan for an audit of Commonwealth, State and Territory land for possible release for housing development (excluding operating Defence bases); and
- More information on these initiatives is expected following the COAG meeting scheduled for late March 2008. The LGA and the LGA Affordable Housing Working Group will ensure that councils are well informed of opportunities presented by these initiatives.