

# C.S.A. Circular

No. 3 December 1995

Community Services Australia

The National Body for Community Services in the Uniting Church

## *VISION Statement*



### ***Children, Youth and Family Subcommittee***

The decision to establish this sub-committee was made at the May 1994 CSA Committee meeting, following which Synods were invited to nominate representatives. The sub-committee comprises:

- Claerwen Little, Burnside (NSW)
- Ginie Udy, Children's Services Forum (NSW)
- Penny Gordon, Child & Family Care (Qld)
- Sherrie Coote, Kildonan (Victoria)
- Milan Poropat, Canterbury Family Centre (Victoria)
- Wendy Renton, Children's Ministry (Tasmania)
- Nova Fariss, Mofflyn (WA)
- Dean Collard, Manguri (WA)
- John Emmett, Joint Board of Christian Education

*(Continued on page 5)*

# National Issues

## Council of Australian Governments (COAG): Update

**A**T the onset of COAG, the aim was to establish national frameworks within States, covering standards, trans national accessibility, etc.

Now however, the COAG aim appears to be to introduce better competition: "more competitive and integrative markets" is the focus of new intergovernmental reforms, together with more efficient and effective arrangements for service delivery where services are provided through intergovernmental funding relations. The assumption is that competitive marketing principles can be applied to every area.

However, Professor Fred Hilmer has maintained that his report findings were not designed to apply to education, community services or health (reiterated in the *Australian*, 22/11/95). ACOSS has acknowledged it has a role in trying to force COAG to see that the Hilmer Report was not intended for the community services sector. ACOSS sees there is a big problem with governments taking Hilmer as orthodoxy before each sector is appropriately analysed. This is consistent with CSA's position and with our input into the Industry Commission Inquiry into Charitable Organisations.

### Housing Reform

Draft of revised CSHA was released in late November. The CSHA is a needs based, performance based agreement. However, the current provision of public housing is not commensurate with need, and waiting lists are not necessarily a good indicator of need. There is some doubt in the sector as to whether the COAG and CSHA reform agenda will improve the efficiency and responsiveness of State Housing Authorities. Reform seems to be placing more attention on property management rather than tenancy management and affordability issues.

CSA welcomed the Commonwealth Government's housing statement *Community and Nation*, released on 11 December 1995. The statement recognises that many people on low incomes have been seriously disadvantaged by the critical shortage of public housing and affordable private rental housing and homes for purchase. (See report on *Community and Nation*, below).

### Child Care

COAG is addressing:

- outcomes for children and families
- services for school-aged children
- child care versus pre-school care
- occasional care/long day care integration
- linkages between child care and other services
- Quality Assurance: accreditation and licensing
- better coordinated subsidy arrangements
- better policy coordination and administration.

The community sector needs to be outspoken on implications of privatisation of child care centres and pre-schools.

The Commonwealth's discussion paper, *A National Framework for Children's Services in Australia*, was released in late October 1995. CSA's Children, Youth and Family Subcommittee, in collaboration with the Secretariat, is coordinating a response to that paper (to be submitted by 31 January 1996).

### Community Services & Health

COAG is running with a "coordinated care" model. Department of Human Services and Health is taking the running with these trials, "in parallel" with COAG. Trials will be introduced in the first instance, with tenders invited from a range of providers, e.g. GPs, community centres, GP divisions. Trials (8-12) will be established around Australia, and States and Commonwealth must jointly agree to tenders. Some trials will be a mix of medical and community care needs, some a mix of medical, pharmaceutical and community care needs, and some community care only.

Problems already articulated by the community services sector include:

- How the consumer will be better off, or the degree to which consumers have a say in their own treatment.
- Where do funds for coordinator come from? Where does coordinator come from?

- Concern about the insistence on totally internal government committees.
- Types of health services to be included still unclear: disability? mental health? implications for HACC?

A new working party has been developed, and is chaired by Roger Wilkins (NSW). Although the Committee has met at least once, there are no terms of reference, and no information has been provided to the community sector.

### **Future directions which ACOSS plans to take:**

- Establish Hilmer's true position.
- Indicate how directly the same kinds of issues are impacting on many aspects of the sector: ensure information is circulated widely, and encourage a corporate understanding/memory of the issues and developments. To this end, establish State/Territory working groups and foster a growing working knowledge. The sector needs to discuss COAG and its implications, and needs to cooperate and share information on all levels, and insist the government works with the community sector.
- Keep abreast of other "reforms" happening at the same time:
  - ⇒ implementation of Industry Commission (Charitable Organisation) requirements
  - ⇒ EPAC Inquiry into child care
  - ⇒ EPAC Inquiry into community services
  - ⇒ Industry Commission emphasis on efficiency, and development of performance indicators to compare delivery of services in different states (agenda unclear).
- COSSes to encourage and facilitate community networking to identify how these "reforms" impact at the grass roots level. Forums should have national bodies as well as local representation.

### **Action for CSA:**

- Ongoing links with ACOSS, and ACTCOSS in the ACT.
- Coordinated response to COAG Framework for Child Care discussion paper.
- Place pressure on Government re Hilmer agenda: not meant for community services.
- Keep Uniting Church community service agencies abreast of information re COAG, through *CSA Circular* and *Link*.

## **Disability Services Consultations:**

**A**

AUSTRALIAN Law Reform Commission Review of Commonwealth Disability Services Legislation

CSA has developed a coordinated response to the Law Reform Commission's Discussion Paper No. 60. Thanks to all agencies who contributed to this paper.

Performance Based Funding: A Framework for Funding Disability Employment Services

In consultation with agencies, CSA is developing a response to this discussion paper. Specific disability agencies were targeted. If you would like a copy of the discussion paper, please call the Secretariat.

## **Community & Nation**

### **The Prime Minister's Housing Statement**

**I**

N 1945 the Commonwealth's commitment to affordable housing began with the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). This agreement marked formal recognition by government that access to affordable and appropriate housing was a matter of social responsibility.

But 50 years on, despite the one billion dollars allocated annually to the states/territories through the CSHA, social disadvantage and poverty associated with lack of access to housing still perpetuates.

The 1995 figures for people on the public housing waiting lists indicate that unmet demand has almost doubled in the past decade: from 125,570 to 235,000 in 1994. In addition, research indicates that people in disadvantaged households still spend a little over 32% of their income on rent.

Numbers of people wishing to access public housing have increased as demographics change - smaller households, increasing number of single parent families, more mobile population and greater flexibility in employment and leisure. Parallel to this is the perpetuation of a public housing system which has not moved with social and economic change. This statement is an attempt at micro economic reform to redress stagnation associated with the critical shortage of public housing and private housing affordability.

(Continued on page 4)

The release of the Commonwealth's statement "Community and Nation" has been welcomed by CSA. Overall the policy represents a positive step towards greater social justice for the families of low income people in Australia. It will attempt to overhaul Federal and State responsibilities and in general set a direction of reform, in the Minister's words which focuses "on people rather than housing stock".

The statement identifies the following:

- achievement of greater equity between low income renters in public and private housing by providing greater assistance to private renters;
- ensuring that new tenants in public housing do not pay more than 25% of their income into rent;
- through the Better Cities Program, there will be an injection of \$80m into capital funds for infrastructure projects, this is over and above the \$200 million pledged in the May budget;
- provision for low income earners to capitalise their rental assistance into home loan deposits;
- rejigging the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement;
- renewing of old public housing;
- reviewing the Housing Industry regulation;
- allowing private sector and community groups a much bigger role in the provision of housing; and
- incentives for private sector investment in the provision of public housing.

The proposed Commonwealth State Housing Agreement realignment is being projected as a revenue neutral scheme to increase home ownership. The centrepiece of the Statement is to ask the States to take full responsibility for building, upgrading and managing public housing. The abolishment of capital grants received for building public housing is to be offset by States receiving market rent from renters who receive Commonwealth rental assistance. In return the Commonwealth Government assumes full responsibility for rent subsidies.

CSA through a number of forums has indicated some concerns:

- the statement does not adequately address the lack of housing stock in Australia, and the long-term future for public housing is unclear;
- private renters on low incomes should not have to contribute more than 25% of their income in rent;
- higher rental subsidies must not lead to private landlords increasing rents nor restrict access to quality housing and infra-

structure support;

- security of housing assistance and security of housing tenure must be assured;
- ongoing financial commitment of the States, if the Commonwealth withdraws, must be ensured; and
- for home purchase, support for loan servicing is essential.

## **Employment : Distribution of Work, Work Sharing**

**C**SA has been involved in a Canberra based group looking at the issue of the redistribution of work.

The concern has come about in light of high unemployment, the rising lack of confidence in national economies and the security of individual households, and the increasing likelihood of dividing our society into households that are overworked and those that cannot get enough work.

The group is considering some important questions:-What scope is there for work to be redistributed such that employment levels might be reduced? Can we reduce work across the board and so increase the opportunity for all to work? How can we best use our two types of money - that is employment money (wages, salary etc) and unemployment money (welfare benefits, job schemes etc)?

These concerns have been on the agenda of employment policy makers in governments, unions, the Organisation for Cooperation and Economic Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Australian Council of Social Service, ACOSS, is also committed to grappling with this problem and instigated the Commission for the Future of Work to undertake research and facilitation of discussion which will lead to a range of policy recommendations to go to Federal Government and the wider community. In the private sector, work has been undertaken by organisations such as the Committee for Economic Development of Australia, and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The Canberra based group is putting together a paper which will feed into these broader processes. The group comprises representatives from the Churches, government, industrial relations and the private sector.

This paper will form part of a debate that focuses on building an Australia that recog-

*(Continued on page 5)*

nises our social support system must reflect that full-time permanent employment is no longer the norm. The Australia of the 21st Century should have in place policies which facilitate the fluid movement between paid and unpaid work, and between periods of casual, part-time and full-time work and which complement the changing demographics of an increasingly mobile and ageing population where a large proportion of children are raised in single parent households.

Focusing on ways of redistributing work is one means of working towards what Bob Holman in his book, *A New Deal for Social Welfare*, calls "mutuality" (Lion Books, 1993) ie promoting mutual obligations amongst all humans, which mitigates against competition and exclusion. Mutuality is at the core of any redistribution of work. It signals the value of work for the human community.

Conventional economic thinking assumes that growth is good and more growth is better. We can argue this approach fails. Our indications for this failure are the rise in demands

on human welfare services and the failure to respect the limits of a finite planet.

Simons, in his book *Competing Gospels: Public Theology and Economic Theory* argues we need to move towards a steady state economy where inputs and outputs merge to become "throughputs". These must occur within the "regenerative and assimilative limits of the ecosystem." (p.176)

Therefore moving one step further, we should challenge the notion of growth as measured by the GNP as such indicators do not measure the variety of human contributions to the economy - voluntary, domestic or household economy, informal work exchange. Simons argues that we need to pay attention to more of the factors that take away from or contribute to overall welfare - overall welfare is an indicator of economic welfare.

The distribution of work is endogenous and expresses our value of work, and affirms our need for self reliance. We are challenged

(Continued from page 1)

The Northern Synod is represented "from a distance" by Gale Hall, SA has yet to nominate a representative, and Frontier Services was recently invited to nominate a representative.

The sub-committee first met in Canberra on 15 November 1995. Major outcomes were:

General agreement to a charter for the sub-committee, which will function under the broader mandate of CSA.

Development of an action plan for the next six months: compiling a resource file; developing national position papers on key issues relating to this sector; and setting into place a system for informing/networking with the broader Uniting Church, especially those who have responsibility for ministry and/or services to children, young people and their families.

A first task for sub-committee members, in collaboration with the CSA Secretariat, will be to develop a coordinated response to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Discussion Paper, *A National Framework for Children's Services in Australia*.

CSA is now an associate member of Family Services Australia, and is seeking membership of the Australian Early Childhood Association. Through its Children, Youth and Family Sub-Committee, CSA also has links with other national and State bodies such as the Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia and State Associations of Children's Welfare Agencies.

## Aboriginal Health

**B**

URNSIDE is a NSW agency which provides a range of support to children, young people and their families, including support to a number of Aboriginal communities in western NSW through the New Ventures Scheme. Burnside also employs two Aboriginal workers on the mid North Coast.

Many of the western communities of NSW are characterised by an appalling lack of opportunities, services and support for Aboriginal people, especially children. Over the past two years, Burnside has committed over \$170,000 to projects targeting Aboriginal people and their children through the New Ventures Scheme. For example, in Brewarrina, Burnside has built a partnership with the Aboriginal Medical Service and assisted them in financing the construction of a new building to house the service. However, trying to determine exactly what the funding situation is for such a service, has led to some confusion regarding the new funding arrangements under the Aboriginal Health Program.

CSA is seeking to meet with the newly appointed First Assistant Secretary responsible for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services, Mr Robert Griew, to clarify funding arrangements and assist Uniting Church agencies such as Burnside to access funds accordingly. We would be very interested to hear from other agencies which have dealings with the Office, and with other State or local government agencies.

# CSA National Committee Meeting

**T**HE Committee's second meeting for 1995 was held in Canberra on 13 and 14 November. Major outcomes were:

- Acceptance of a theological/philosophical platform, developed for CSA by Rev Denham Grierson (see Page 1). The document identifies twelve commitments which reflect the identity, purpose and faith of the Uniting Church in the context of its community services. CSA invites agencies and individuals to use the platform as a working document, and please feel free to give the Secretariat any feedback.
- A financial management working group has been established to develop a long-term proposal for CSA funding. CSA is extremely grateful to those agencies and Synods which have supported us financially and in other ways over the first 15 months of our operation, and we look forward to continuing a close working relationship as our work on your behalf develops.
- Early in the new year, CSA will facilitate work on a comprehensive national data base of Uniting Church community services. Based on the Victorian Synod's resource file, the data base will be developed on a Synod by Synod basis, and when complete, will provide us with a range of factual "ammunition" with which to lobby government.
- In tandem with the data base project, is the ongoing development of CSA's research framework. Through its Committee members, CSA will develop a "register" of community services related research projects currently being undertaken by Uniting Church agencies/individuals, with a view to identifying gaps in research and initiating options for undertaking new research, such as identifying potential lead agencies who could carry out particular research, seeking government support for research, assisting agencies to develop research proposals, and commissioning research to be undertaken on CSA's behalf.
- CSA is also in the process of developing a package of policy papers to be used as foundational statements in the lead up to next year's election. Issues based, these

position papers will articulate CSA's stance on national concerns as they relate to the community services sector, e.g. poverty, youth unemployment and youth homelessness, and emergency relief.

The next meeting of CSA's national committee will be held in Canberra on 13 and 14 May 1996. If you or your agency wish to have any input, or provide feedback in relation to any of the issues addressed in *CSA Circular*, please do not hesitate to contact your Synod representative (see back page) or the CSA Secretariat.

## Media...

### Press Releases:

*Kennett "harangued" by Churches*, 21 September 1995

*Mixed Feelings about Industry Commission Report*, 28 September 1995

*Lawrence responds to pressure from Church providers of Specialised Dementia Care*, 27 October 1995

*Housing Reform Building Social Justice*, 11 December 1995

### Articles Written:

*Industry Commission Inquiry: Where to from here?* Paper given by Libby to ACOSS Congress, October 1995.

*Reforms: Perils or Progress for the Church in the Community Sector.* Paper given by Libby to Wesley Mission Planning Forum, October 1995.

### Research Report:

***Is integration successful? Looking at the needs of the elderly in an aged care establishment.***

Researched by a final year student in the Faculty of Health Education, University of Canberra, the project was undertaken at a Uniting Church nursing home and hostel in the ACT. The aim was to examine the effects of the policy of integrating cognitively impaired residents with other residents in an aged care environment. The results of the study reinforce the need for dementia specific residential care and the expansion of community services to facilitate older people remaining in their own home. *Please contact CSA for extra information.*

# Lobbying

## Aged Care

**P**ERSISTENT lobbying has taken place across the sector about the ongoing reform for aged care residential services. CSA and its sub-committee on aged care, USM, have been maintaining ongoing pressure on the Government, particularly on the issue of dementia specific residential care and cross-subsidisation. Dr Lawrence, Minister for Human Services and Health, finally approached the Uniting Church (through the Victorian Synod), and met with the CSA Executive on 19 October 1995 to discuss the future of dementia care residential facilities. The resulting offer from the Minister can be summarised as:

- Independent management review of dementia specific hostel facilities to identify basis of difficulty, assist with recalibration and current levels of funding.
- Temporary financial assistance will be provided on a time limited basis until the end of the management review process, to facilities at risk of immediate closure or in severe difficulty. Such facilities have been identified by CSA's sub-committee on aged care, Uniting Senior Ministries (USM), and will have to accept the management review as a condition of receipt of the emergency relief funding. However if the management review does not indicate aberrant practices or other management difficulties resulting in the deficit being experienced by that facility, then such targeted financial support will be considered as needing to be ongoing until such time as structural change is implemented.
- Ongoing work concerning the longer term strategy for aged care to continue: ie current assessment, Personal Care Assessment Instrument (PCAI) differentials (low to high), removing boundaries between nursing home and hostel funding. The Minister confirmed her commitment to input into the May Budget process the need for recalibration of the system and the injection of extra funds into dementia care.

CSA has also asked the Department to provide a firm statement on the policy position on cross

## National Networks

### CareSkills

You may be aware from previous circulars that CSA is involved with the National Training Company CareSkills. This company has now been in operation for a year, working as part of a national strategy to increase the quality training into the health and community sector industry.

CareSkills can assist agencies to access traineeships which will benefit your service and people wishing to train for work in our sector. The following may assist you to understand more fully the operation of CareSkills and how it may benefit your service/agency.

#### Who is CareSkills?

A national training company working closely with relevant state and national industry training advisory boards; working in conjunction with NETTFORCE to increase the level of quality entry level training.

#### Who ensures that CareSkills creates what industry wants?

The CareSkills Board comprises representatives from employers, unions and government. All key stakeholders have input into the identification and development of quality traineeships for the industry.

#### What does CareSkills do?

Develops, markets and promotes traineeships in the health and community services sector.

Develops or repackages curriculum for traineeships to meet national standards.

Develops training record books for on the job component of traineeship.

Advises employers on training for existing staff

Assists in the development of flexible delivery material and training resources for traineeships delivery.

#### What will CareSkills do for the industry?

Develop traineeships to meet the needs of the industry.

Assist the industry to employ trainees in a wide range of quality traineeships for the industry and assist the community services and health industry to access high quality training which meets their needs.

#### Who do you contact for further information?

There is a CareSkills Office in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. For assistance or enquires regarding possible Traineeships call Toll Free on 1800 639 775

## CSA National Committee Members

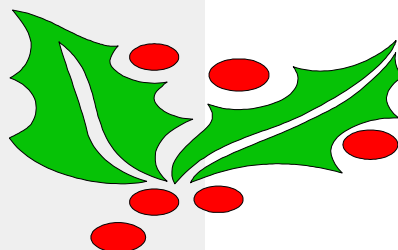
Rev Harry Herbert (Chair)  
Board for Social Responsibility (NSW)  
Ms Bronwyn Pike (Executive)  
Social Responsibility & Justice (VIC)  
Mrs Elaine Olley (Executive)  
Uniting in Care (WA)  
Rev Gregor Henderson  
Uniting Church Assembly  
Mr John Shipway  
Uniting Church Assembly  
Rev Brian Smith  
Frontier Services  
Mr Les MacDonald  
Uniting Ministry with the Ageing (NSW)  
Ms Claerwen Little  
Social Justice & Community Devpt (NSW)  
Mr Newton Daddow  
Comm. for Mission/Prahran Mission (VIC)  
Rev Kevin Green  
Wesley Central Mission (VIC)  
Mr Graham Bull  
Somerville Community Services (NT)  
Rev Don Catford  
Port Adelaide Mission (SA)  
Dr Elaine Martin  
SA Synod  
Mr Alec Lobban  
Div. of Aged Care & Domiciliary Serv (QLD)  
Ms Penny Gordon  
Child and Family Care (QLD)  
Mr Vaughan Harding  
Uniting Church Homes (WA)  
CSA recently accepted with regret the resignation from the committee of Ms Eversley Ruth, Community Services Manager of Frontier Services in WA. We welcome the new WA representative, Mr Vaughan Harding.

### CSA Secretariat Staff...

**Libby Davies**  
Executive Director

**Sue Leppert**  
Research Officer

**Diana Ryan**  
Admin/ Research Officer



## Conferences

### ACOSS Congress, October

The Secretariat and Executive of CSA were represented at the ACOSS Congress which took place in Sydney in October. The Congress commenced with the AGM and election of Board Members & Executive. Subsequent to elections, Libby was co-opted onto the ACOSS Board. Direct representation on ACOSS will further cement CSA's position as a key player in the national community services political arena.

The forums and sessions over the three days of the Congress gave exposure to the ideas, concepts and research of many in the sector. The shadow cabinet of Federal Government spoke about the areas of current policy interest and the reform agenda, the pivotal position of the NGOs and the commitment of non government input. Others used the occasion to refer to the framework of our social policy as locked somewhere within the boundaries of *Fact, Fiction and the Future* - the theme of the conference. It was an opportunity to focus our ideas, minds and networking on dialoguing about reform - its direction, focus, and status quo. Papers and sessions focused participants on parameters for evaluating reform, such as forging equality of opportunity and outcome, moving beyond welfare to strategies for strengthening the fabric of the nation and inevitably to the meaning of reform.

Libby presented a short segment on : *Industry Commission Inquiry - where to from here?* Harry Herbert was a key note speaker, together with Dr Carmen Lawrence and Mary Draper. This session considered issues associated with reform, asking: does it represent peril or progress for the sector? Of course as we are all well aware, there are no "magic answers"!

### Some Conferences in 1996:

March 25th-28th: *Intern. Forum for Child Welfare 1996 Asia Pacific Regional Conf.*, Somerville Community Services Inc, Darwin (Contact: Convention Catalysts Int, 089-411639).

April 12th-14th: *First Australian and New Zealand Conference on Sexual Exploitation by Health Professionals, Psychotherapists and Clergy*, Committee Against Health Professional and Clergy Abuse, Sydney (Contact: Extra Exhibitions, 02-5884677 int 612).

April 14th-17th: *Ministry with Seniors Conference*, USM, Perth (Contact: Vaughan Harding, 09-474 1788).

October 2-6: *10th International Lifeline Convention*, Dreams Vision and the Spirit. (Contact: Convention Secretariat, 02 262 4211)

### Community Services Australia

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