NSW GOVERNMENT | **Family & Community Services**

Planning for the Future:

New directions for community housing in New South Wales
2007/08 – 2012/13

Review Report
December 2013

Overview

Planning for the Future (PFF) has successfully guided the growth and development of community housing over the past six years from 2007/08.

Its major objectives have been achieved or exceeded, in particular, the growth of the community housing industry and the sector's increased financial viability and self sufficiency. The main strategy target, to have 30,000 properties managed by the sector by 2016, is well underway to being met with the total number of properties funded by the NSW Government standing at 27,450 at June 2013.

During the period of the strategy the major initiatives supporting an increased role for community housing in the provision of social and affordable housing were all delivered. Some of the highlights include:

- establishment of a regulatory system for NSW, now the basis of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing

- development of the *Community Housing Contract Compliance and Performance Management Framework*

- participation by the larger community housing providers in Housing Pathways the shared access system for housing assistance in NSW

- the implementation of changed rent policies enabling the leveraging of private finance

- the positioning of community housing providers to successfully take up NRAS subsidies in NSW.

Planning for the Future was developed and delivered as a partnership between the NSW Government, community housing providers, peak industry bodies, and the industry more generally. To support its delivery the NSW Government developed the first Community Housing Industry Development Framework with clear priorities for investment in providers, the industry network and the non government workforce.

The sector has become increasingly more professional over the lifetime of the strategy. The NSW Federation of Housing Associations has established itself as the major provider of social housing workforce training in Australia, not only for NSW community and public housing, but also in other jurisdictions. This has been complemented by the Australasian Housing Institute, comprised of social housing professionals in Australia and New Zealand. Continuous quality improvement is achieved by a voluntary accreditation system based on National Community Housing Standards.

The title of Planning for the Future was prescient with its legacy of being a well established, vibrant and strong community housing sector ready to face the next set of future challenges.

Purpose of the Review

Planning for the Future: New directions for community housing in *NSW* was the NSW Government's strategy for the growth and the development of community housing for the period 2007/08-2012/13. This report sets out the outcomes of a review of Planning for the Future (PFF) undertaken in the six months following its completion in 2012/13.

The report documents performance against the overall PPF growth target for community housing in NSW, and against each of the major themes of the Strategy.

Background

Planning for the Future was developed by Housing NSW, the community housing sector, and the Community Housing Advisory Committee (CHAC). The strategy had a headline target for growth of the community housing sector from 13,000 to 30,000 homes over a 10 year period (to 2017/18), and highlighted three major reforms that were seen as central to delivery of the growth target:

- development of a statutory regulatory system for community housing to give increased confidence to tenants and investors

- leveraging private finance on government investment in community housing to provide additional housing

- rent reform to increase rental income received by community housing providers to improve financial viability and service debt on new housing.

In addition, the strategy identified five key 'themes' with associated 'actions'. These themes were:

1. Growth

2. Diverse and flexible responses

3. Stronger communities

4. Capacity and confidence

5. Viability and sustainability

Actions under each theme were to be delivered either through Housing NSW leading on the activity (42 initiatives), or by Housing NSW supporting the sector to lead (38 initiatives). In practice, many initiatives were led on behalf of the industry by the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (the Federation), a key partner in the delivery of PFF.

In 2008, to support implementation of some of the key reform projects in the strategy, Housing NSW put in place a specific program management framework to ensure that cross agency initiatives were delivered effectively. The program included establishment of the NSW Regulatory System, delivery of the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund projects, and a range of capacity building initiatives to support better long term asset planning and management.

In 2010, implementation of PFF was further supported by the development of a NSW Industry Development Framework and Industry Development Program, a three year approach to building industry capacity to deliver on growth and changed industry arrangements.

In 2008/09, the Community Housing Advisory Committee received a progress report on the implementation of the strategy that concluded that it 'still provides a remarkably robust strategic framework for community housing after two years of its five year life, and a period of rapidly changing context'.

A changing environment

The context for community housing in NSW changed significantly during the period of PFF. Some of the major impacts on the operating environment included:

- change in the Australian Government and replacement of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) with a National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA)

- Global Financial Crisis (2008) and the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan

- change in the NSW Government in 2011, resulting in Housing NSW joining the Department of Human Services, now Family and Community Services (FACS)

- transfer of responsibility for government owned housing assets to the Department of Finance and Services[1]

- introduction of the National Rental Affordability Scheme

- development of a National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

The impact of these changes on the community housing industry was reflected during the implementation period for PFF, resulting in a shift in focus for some specific initiatives due to the need to respond differently to the new environment and new opportunities and challenges. This changing context is reflected in the structure of the Review report which does not comment on the outcomes of each specific action, but more generally addresses the key initiatives that contributed to performance under each theme.

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[1] The Land and Housing Corporation was subsequently transferred back to the Department of Family and Community services, as a separate Division, in August 2013.

Theme 1: Growth

Property numbers

The only target in PFF was for the sector to grow from 13,000 properties under management to 30,000 properties over 10 years.

During the period of the strategy, the first six of those 10 years saw a doubling of the size of the community housing sector from 12,892 properties under community housing management used for long term housing at 30 June 2006, to 25,954 at 30 June 2013. These are properties vested, leased or funded by Housing NSW and the NSW Land and Housing Corporation. This figure does not include properties that providers have acquired using their own resources, or that are managed on a fee for service basis.

The overall size of the portfolio, when crisis and transitional housing is included, was 27,450 at 30 June 2013, or around 18% of all social housing in NSW. Within six years of the commencement of the strategy, the growth in property numbers was just 2,550 short of the full 10 year target due for delivery in 2016/17.

Table 1: Rate of property growth over the strategy period
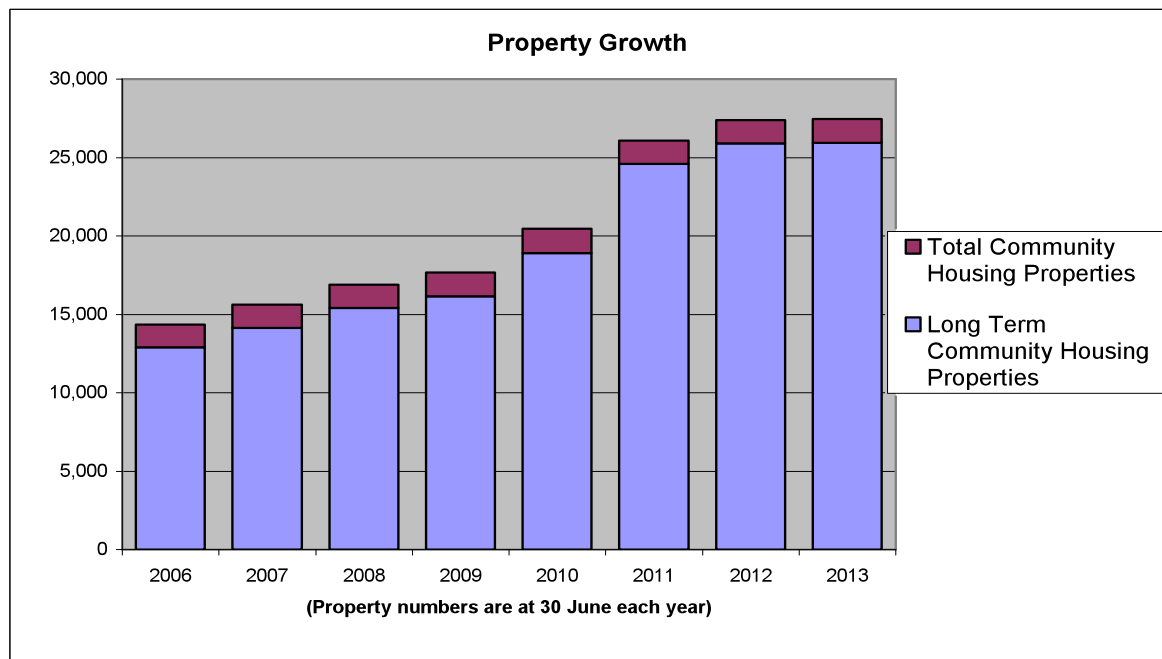
The most rapid period of growth was between 2009/10 and 2010/11 due to the numbers of properties delivered under the Nation Building economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP). Figures for long term community housing as at 30 June each year are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Annual property growth numbers

Year	Long term community housing properties	Number increase over previous year	% increase over previous year
2006	12,892		
2007	14,140	1,248	9.68
2008	15,397	1,797	12.71
2009	16,141	744	4.83
2010	18,910	2,769	17.15
2011	24,584	5,674	30.00
2012	25,894	1,310	5.33
2013	25,954	60	0.23

Facilitate Investment in Community Housing by Providers

Affordable housing programs

Since 2006, the NSW Government has provided capital funding to community housing providers to deliver affordable housing. Under these programs, providers combine grant funding with their own equity and/or borrowings, to build or buy housing for use as affordable rental housing.

By the end of the period of PFF the numbers of affordable housing properties being managed by community housing providers had reached 1,597 with providers having combined government funding of $226m with around $40m of their own equity, and $145m in debt finance, to deliver 415 more homes than could have been delivered by government funding alone.

National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

In 2008, the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) was established to encourage large scale investment by financial institutions and not for profit organisations to increase the supply of new rental housing for low and middle income families. Since then over 4,000 NRAS subsidies have been approved for community housing providers in NSW, with 1,600 of these having been delivered by 30 June 2013.

Community housing providers in NSW have delivered a range of products under NRAS. While the Federal Government provides annual incentives for ten years to all successful NRAS recipients, NSW has provided its contribution to NRAS as both an annual incentive and for community housing providers only, also as an upfront capital contribution. The upfront capital contribution enable community housing providers to retain ownership of NRAS dwellings beyond the ten year NRAS period and to house a full range of household income groups, including low income households eligible for social housing.

Transferring ownership

In addition to using capital funds to deliver affordable housing, there was significant work undertaken through the period of PFF to develop the arrangements by which community housing providers could use assets to leverage private sector investment.

In 2009 KPMG conducted a cost benefit analysis of title transfer that demonstrated its significant benefits in underpinning and delivering additional affordable housing. In response to this, the NSW Government amended the Housing Act 2001 to enable the ownership of Government properties to be transferred to community housing providers.

A major source of growth during the period of PFF was the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP), an initiative of the Australian Government in response to the Global Financial Crisis. The social housing component of NBESP contributed a total of 5,519 properties - 40% of the total growth of the sector.

In 2009, the NSW Government approved transfer of ownership of a total of 6,020 properties to community housing providers via a competitive tender process. This comprised 5,520 NBESP properties, and 500 properties already managed by community housing providers. At June 2013, 3,099 of these properties had been transferred with a further 2,921 remaining.

By the end of 2012/13, community housing providers had borrowed, or had an approved facility to borrow, over $47m against the properties vested to them by the NSW Government, and over $114m against other capital properties, and had built a total of 91 additional properties.

If all transfers are made, and all agreed targets met, around 1,200 new properties will be delivered by providers by June 2021, at no additional cost to Government.

Invest Funding in Community Housing Supply

Growth providers

One of the major ways in which the NSW Government facilitated the growth of the sector was through implementation of a Community Housing Growth Provider Program. Two rounds of tenders were conducted in 2007/08 for mainstream providers seeking to become approved growth providers, and the NSW Government then targeted resources for new supply under PFF to those providers.

The purpose of the Growth Provider tender was to ensure that providers receiving growth funding clearly demonstrated the capacity to manage a significant change in the scale and functions of their organisation. A total of seven providers were awarded growth provider status:

- St George Community Housing
- Affordable Community Housing (now trading as Evolve Housing)

- Community Housing Limited

- South West Inner Sydney Housing (that became Bridge Housing)

- Compass Housing Services

- North Coast Community Housing

- BlueCHP (a group structure comprised of five metropolitan Sydney housing associations).

Transferring management of public housing to community housing

The Property Transfer Program (PTP) was the second largest single source of growth of community housing over the life of the Strategy, comprising 33% of the total increase in properties under management by the end of 2012/13. A total of 5,036 properties were transferred between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2013.

Initially the Property Transfer Program focused on securing individual tenant and provider agreements to transfer, creating areas of mixed management. In 2009 the Program shifted focus to a whole-of-location approach involving the transfer of all public housing properties in a given location.

Using the planning system

Under PFF providers were to be encouraged to use planning and other incentives to maximise the yield of affordable housing developments, and several community housing providers have used the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP to develop new housing both on their own and in partnership with other developers and organisations. This was developed jointly by Housing NSW and the Department of Planning.

Case study 1: Argyle Community Housing - a new generation boarding house

Argyle Community Housing was vested a site in Bowral with a dwelling that had reached the end of its economic life, with no possibility of consolidating the site with adjoining sites. The best opportunity to maximise the development potential of the site was to use the provisions of the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP to develop a new generation boarding house.

The boarding house has six self contained units and another central unit with common facilities for client interaction and also for use by support services. The project is due for completion in December 2013 and is targeted at stable but homeless young people, particularly those who want to maintain an apprenticeship or finish schooling.

Argyle have worked closely with Wingecarribee Council throughout the planning process, and Council assisted in consulting and approving the development application as well as providing an exemption for development application fees.

Expand partnerships delivering community housing

There was significant activity to expand the partnerships entered into by community housing providers during the period of the Strategy. As well as partnerships in the finance and development sector, partnerships to deliver integrated housing and support arrangements were also a focus and these are addressed in Theme 2 below.

Tools to support partnerships

Housing NSW has produced a number of brochures in partnership with the sector that promote community housing to private sector partners.

including:

- *A growing opportunity - Community Housing Enterprises - Overview for Investors*
- *A new property class – Community Housing – Overview for Developers*
- *Enriching communities – Community Housing.*

Exploration of group structures and special purpose vehicles

Community housing providers have explored a range of organisational structures to facilitate growth. In addition to considering special purpose vehicles for particular projects, there have been mergers between providers to form larger organisations.

One example of this was the formation of BlueCHP, a Class 1 registered community housing provider. In November 2007, in response to the Growth Provider Program tender, five providers[2] collaborated to create a specialist housing development vehicle to purchase or develop affordable rental housing for people on low to moderate incomes. The individual members of BlueCHP manage over 4,500 properties across 39 NSW Local Government Areas.

Under the strategy, the NSW Federation of Housing Association also produced a key resource for community housing providers in relation to new business models entitled, *Considering group structure options: a resource for housing associations (2008)*.

Participation in the renewal of public housing estates

The Strategy identified participation by community housing providers in the renewal of public housing estates as an important initiative, providing opportunity for growth, community building and diversification.

An example of this is the transfer of the management of the Bonnyrigg public housing estate in October 2007 to St George as the housing manager for the

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[2] These providers are Argyle Community Housing, Hume Community Housing, Southern Cross Community Housing, Wentworth Community Housing, and Women's Housing Company

Newleaf Communities partnership to redevelop the Bonnyrigg Estate. Stage 1 of the project was completed in June 2010.

Improving the assurance and policy environment

During the period of the Strategy a whole range of significant reforms were introduced, designed to provide additional assurance to the NSW Government and other stakeholders about the management and ownership of properties by a growing community housing sector. These reforms included:

Legislation to support ownership transfer

Amendments were made to the Housing Act 2001 to enable the transfer of title to community housing provider of NSW Government owned assets. This transfer was to be made through the 'vesting' of assets with a registered interest being placed by the NSW Government on the title of the properties.

Properties over which the NSW Government has a registered interest cannot be traded or redeveloped without the agreement of the NSW Government. This agreement cannot be unreasonably withheld and the level of social housing transferred to ownership must be maintained.

Affordable Housing Guidelines

In response to the growth of affordable housing dwellings being delivered as a result of specific government funding programs or through provider equity or private sector borrowings and as part of the Strategy, the NSW Government developed the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines setting out parameters for the management of affordable housing funded or part funded by the NSW Government.

Community Housing Resource Allocation Policy

In September 2009 Housing NSW issued the Community Housing Resource Allocation Policy 2010/11 – 2012/13. The Policy set out clear objectives for the use of resources through the three year period, the circumstances under which resources could be allocated and the means of allocation. This was the first time the NSW Government had developed a public document setting out its approach to resource allocation.

New community housing policies

The period of the Strategy also saw significant activity in the development of key policy documents designed to underpin the operations of the sector and provide certainty about key policy settings such as eligibility and rent. Policies developed included resource allocation, rent, access and eligibility and asset management.

Theme 2: Diverse and Flexible Responses

Access to housing meeting a range of needs

Under the Strategy, the NSW Federation of Housing Associations produced a key resource to support partnership working by community housing providers entitled, *Large scale partnerships with the private sector (2008)*.

Community Activity Survey: Partnerships and supported housing

To understand the extent of partnership activity engaged in by the community housing sector, in 2012, Housing NSW conducted a Community Activity Survey of Community Housing Providers and 29 Class 1, 2 and 3 providers, each managing over 30 general social housing properties, participated in the survey.

In relation to partnerships and supported housing, the survey found that 5,077 tenancies were operating with formal housing and support partnerships, of which 1,225 were State-wide formal agreements, and the rest were formal local level agreements and that all providers surveyed were involved in informal partnership arrangements.

State wide formal partnerships included:

- Homelessness Action Plan (15 providers)
- Housing and Support Initiative (13)
- Disability Housing and Support Initiative (8)
- Young People Leaving Care (5)
- Out of Home Care (3)
- other (11).

The types of formal local partnerships reported on through the survey included disability support (26), mental health support (25), support for young people (25) and drug and alcohol support (20).

Port Jackson Supported Housing Program

The Port Jackson Supported Housing Program (Port Jackson) commenced in 2006 at the start of the Strategy period with a key objective of establishing sustainable supported housing tenancies for people with high support needs that were not being met in the public, community and private housing markets.

St George Community Housing Ltd manages the program which has 211 properties in the City of Sydney and Inner West. 21 support partners[3] were appointed to the program and they nominate clients and are responsible for brokering support packages, delivering services, monitoring and updating support plans. Support partners fund their participation in the initiative.

An independent evaluation of the Port Jackson program conducted in 2008/09 showed that, as clients experience stable accommodation and access appropriate ongoing support provided by community partners, a broad range of non-housing related outcomes are achieved.

Housing and Support Initiative (HASI)

The Mental Health Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) is a partnership between NSW Health, the Department of Family and Community Services – Housing NSW and non-government community housing and accommodation support organisations, and is jointly funded by NSW Health and Housing NSW. HASI aims to provide people with mental health problems or disorders with access to stable housing, clinical mental health services and accommodation support.

During the period of the Strategy participation by community housing providers in HASI has grown to 14, managing a total of 358 properties allocated to low, high and very high HASI clients.

The Social Policy and Research Centre's Evaluation of HASI in 2012 found that most clients believed that HASI had contributed to their better overall quality of life compared with before they entered the program.

Disability Housing and Support Initiative (DHASI)

The Disability Housing and Support Initiative (DHASI) aims to provide linked housing and support to support people with complex housing needs in order to assist them to sustain their tenancies and participate to the fullest potential in the community. The program was introduced in 2007/08, during the period of the Strategy. Currently seven community housing providers manage a total of 45 properties.

Young People with a Disability Leaving Care Project (Leaving Care)

From 2008 to 2012, Housing NSW managed the Young People with a Disability Leaving Care Project (Leaving Care) in partnership with Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC). Under the arrangement, Housing NSW agreed to provide up to 40 social housing properties per annum to leaving care clients, comprising a mix of public and community housing properties. ADHC also contributed $2.86m in funding for modifications for these clients under a Memorandum of Understanding with Housing NSW.

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[3] Some of the support partners include: Aid Dementia & HIV Psychiatry Outreach Team, Barnardos Australia, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, Community Restorative Centre and Oasis Youth Support Network – Salvation Army

After the expiry of the agreement in February 2012, the Chief Executive of Housing NSW approved the transition of the Leaving Care Project to business as usual.

Housing Pathways

In April 2010 Housing NSW introduced a new integrated access system for housing assistance, with one common application form and one register for public and community housing. The new system, *Housing Pathways*, was designed to provide a simpler and fairer process for clients seeking housing assistance. The largest twenty five community housing providers, and Housing NSW, as the provider of public housing, all participate in *Housing Pathways*, drawing applicants for social housing from a shared Housing Register.

Respond to the needs of particular population groups

Community Housing for Aboriginal People (CHAP)

The first Aboriginal Access Strategy was developed by Housing NSW in 2008/09. This focused on increasing Aboriginal people's access to community housing, and resulted in the proportion of Aboriginal households in community housing increasing from 6% to 8%.

Building on this, in 2012, Housing NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) developed the *Community Housing for Aboriginal People (CHAP): increasing access and sustaining tenancies 2012-14 Strategy* with key priorities to deliver an upward trend in Aboriginal households living in community housing and a focus on sustaining these tenancies.

The strategy brings Aboriginal and mainstream community housing providers together to work more collaboratively, build organisational capacity through partnerships of mutual benefit and prioritise the delivery of services to Aboriginal people. Implementation is being guided by a steering committee comprised of Housing NSW-Community and Private Market Housing, AHO and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (the Federation).

Recognise tenants' different life stages and preferences

Affordable housing

The growth in affordable housing being managed by community housing providers through the period of the Strategy means that with income eligibility ranging from very low through to moderate income levels and flexibility in rent setting (eg discount to market and income based rent models), there are a more diverse range of options for tenants that better recognise their different life stages and preferences, and that provide a pathway from social housing into the private rental market.

Assisting people into private rental and home ownership

Community housing providers participating in Housing Pathways now facilitate access to private rental products and services delivered by Housing NSW. This means that there is effectively 'no wrong door' for clients seeking housing assistance including private rental assistance.

There has been some exploration of affordable home purchase initiatives such as shared equity during the period of the Strategy, however, the focus on other major reforms such as the development of the National Regulatory System, implementation of NRAS and the transfer of stock to providers meant that home ownership did not have as much priority placed on it during the period of the Strategy.

Case study 2: Homes North's pilot managing properties in public housing estates as affordable housing

Under the project, established in 2010, Homes North Community Housing manages 27 properties, 16 in Tamworth and 11 in Armidale. The properties are located in areas of social housing concentration and the objectives of the project are to:
- introduce a broader range of tenants into the estates to assist with changing the social, physical and economic make-up of these areas
- facilitate access to affordable rental housing for low to moderate and moderate income households
- where appropriate, facilitate access to sustainable home ownership for low to moderate and moderate income households.

First home buyers are encouraged to apply as the project is designed to assist them into an affordable purchase option.

This project has demonstrated the factors that lead to the success of such an initiative, and has had some positive outcomes in terms of home purchase and encouraging new affordable housing tenants into housing estates.

Support specific geographical or regional responses

The Strategy identifies actions to support regional or geographical responses including through cross provider service planning at regional and local levels, and the development of new delivery models and innovation for low demand areas.

In response to this, several whole of location property transfers were undertaken in regional locations, with the community housing provider becoming the only provider of general social housing in some areas. In addition funds were allocated to support the replacement of, or new, crisis and transitional accommodation in regional areas across NSW during the period of the Strategy. During the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2013, around $7.85m was invested in funding new and replacement crisis and transitional accommodation in regional areas.

Respond to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

A number of initiatives were introduced during the period of the Strategy to respond to the needs of people who are homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Crisis accommodation

The Strategy identified delivery of a five year Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) integrated with support funding as key to delivery of homelessness services. This was delivered by Housing NSW through the leasing of around 1,500 CAP properties across NSW to registered community housing providers, both mainstream providers and homelessness services, linked to funding for Specialists Homelessness Services.

Camperdown Common Ground Project

The Camperdown Project was officially opened on 15 November 2011, to provide housing for long term homeless people and people on low to moderate incomes in inner city Sydney. It is based on the successful Common Ground model from New York, providing secure housing and on site support services. Mission Australia Housing is the asset and tenancy manager for the project, which was jointly funded by the Australian and NSW governments. The property has 104 units and space for on-site support and tenancy services and social enterprise. Camperdown Common Ground is targeted at a range of people:

- 52 units for long term homeless people with access to support and health services on site and in the local community

- affordable housing for people on moderate incomes and for whom rents are set at about 75% of market rent

- single people on low incomes and who are priority approved for social housing.

Platform 70

Platform 70 was established in August 20111 as a 'street to home' approach jointly funded by the NSW and Commonwealth government under the National Partnership Against Homelessness (NPAH) to provide housing linked with support services to 70 chronically homeless people in Woolloomooloo. The target clients are rough sleepers who may be facing discrimination or other barriers in accessing private rental accommodation.

The model uses private rental housing to achieve housing solutions for chronically homeless people, reducing the reliance on crisis and transitional accommodation and enabling clients to have a choice about where they want to live which may fall outside Woolloomooloo. Bridge Housing Ltd manages and coordinates the program in partnership with NEAMI, a mental health and rehabilitation support provider, and brokers housing from five metropolitan and regional community housing providers.

Project 40

Wentworth Community Housing is the lead agency for the Project 40 supportive housing project funded as part of the Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan commenced in 2010. Project 40 partners with around 80 support agencies to deliver homelessness and other supported housing initiatives, referral, advocacy and case management for people who are homeless.

Project 40 Coordination Groups are in the LGAs of Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith, and they assess applicants against a vulnerability index, their level of chronic homelessness and their connection to the local community to allocate support packages. Wentworth Community Housing allocates 45 properties to the Project, which has a 91% tenancy retention rate, and has housed around 38% Aboriginal households since it started.

Theme 3: Stronger Communities

The *Community Activity Survey of Community Housing Providers* carried out in 2012 found that a large number of community housing providers were involved in tenant participation and community development activities. 28 of 29 providers were involved in tenant participation activities, 24 in community development, and 19 in some form of social enterprise activity.

The most frequently reported social enterprise activities in the survey were:

- educational financial assistance (eg scholarships) (12 providers)

- no interest loan schemes for tenants (eg white good purchase) (12)

- micro enterprise activities (assisting tenants to establish a small business) (5)

- purchase of local services owned by tenants or employ tenants eg lawn services (5).

Social and economic participation by tenants in their communities

Community Development Resourcing Grants

The *Community Development Resourcing Grants* (CDRG) is a biennial program administered by Housing NSW. In 2011, the budget for community housing of $30,000 was allocated to three $10,000 grants to support the development and implementation of innovative approaches to tenant participation. The successful applicants were:

- Affordable Community Housing (now Evolve) - to train young tenants as tenant leaders in partnership with the University of Western Sydney. Six students completed the program and graduated in October 2012

- Compass - to implement online community engagement to respond their geographic spread by developing and delivering tenant access through a communication hub on their website

- Metro – to establish a partnership with a local contractor to provide training and employment opportunities for long term unemployed tenants (this project was refocussed around sustainable outcomes for people with mental health/other issues.

Tenant participation: Good Practice Guide - 2008

As part of the Strategy and to support community housing providers to increase the participation of tenants in advisory and decision-making structures with their organisations, Housing NSW funded the NSW Federation of Housing associations to develop a resource for providers, the *Tenant participation: Good Practice Guide – 2008.*

Case Study 3: Evolve Housing's Tenant Employment Support Scheme (TESS)

Evolve's Tenant Employment Support Scheme (TESS) is a financial inclusion initiative that aims to provide assistance to tenants or their partners who are starting employment for the first time, or re-entering the workforce after a gap of 12 months or more.

Approved applicants for the TESS are entitled to a 12 week period where their rental subsidy is not adjusted to reflect their new income. The incentive is actively promoted through Evolve's Tenant Council, Local Tenant Groups and its newsletter.

25 tenants have been approved for TESS since the Scheme was established in February 2011.

Microfinance and No Interest Loan Schemes (NILS)

Some community housing providers provide financial assistance to their tenants through services such as No Interest Loan Schemes (NILS) low interest loan schemes and matched savings plans. Microfinance products can assist individuals and families by providing affordable credit to enable them to purchase specified goods or services.

Case study 4: St George's Essentials Interest Free Loan Scheme

St George Community Housing's Essentials Interest Free Loan Scheme is an initiative that provides interest free loans of up to $1,000 on fair and reasonable terms to enable tenants to purchase essential household goods. Goods may include washing machines, dryers, fridges, furniture, health and medical equipment, and educational tools.

The loan amount is paid directly to the retailer, and the tenant repays the loan by committing to an affordable loan agreement. Loans are limited to one per household. The Scheme opens twice a year; from June to July, and December to January.

Since 2005, St George has distributed over $50,000 to 75 tenants with an average repayment rate of 99%. The loan funds received are 'recycled' and redistributed each year to St George tenants who apply for a loan.

Youth Scholarship Program

The *NSW Housing Youth Scholarships* and the *NSW Housing Youth Achievement Awards* commenced in 2006/07. They were the first programs to target young people living in social housing, and were a partnership between Housing NSW and the NSW Department of Education and Training (now Education and Communities). Initially 100 scholarships were awarded each year, increasing to 168 in 2008/09, with 200 each year from 2009/10. 16% of the scholarships have been awarded to young people living in community housing.

Community housing provider assistance to young people

During the period of the Strategy, some community housing providers have further developed their own programs for providing financial assistance to children of their tenants.

St George's Student Bursary Scheme was introduced in 2005 to ease the financial burden tenants experience when educating their children and/or themselves. It is a way of encouraging education, and recognising its importance in building community capacity and future social and economic engagement in society. 542 tenants have received bursaries to date, and a total value of $460,000 has been given to students to support them with their educational pursuits.

Case study 5: Compass' Grow a Star program

Compass Housing's *Grow a Star* program aims to identify young people with a talent in areas such as music, dance and sport and link them to a mentoring program. The program is based on weekly extracurricular activities delivered by role models, mentors and volunteers.

The program has a focus on involving corporate and other partners, such as Westpac, the Millet Foundation and the Entertainment Book to sustain mentoring and activities for young people who may benefit from a specialised talent program. Participants may also be invited to apply for any available talent scholarships provided and funded by a partner support agency. Eight applications were received in 2012/13 and all were funded.

Encourage community development activities by community housing providers

Resources to support community development

Under the Strategy Housing NSW funded the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to produce some key resources to assist community housing providers to focus on developing communities. These were:

- *Doing community building: A resource for housing associations - 2007*

- *Community Engagement and Development Process (Draft): For community housing providers.*

Doing community building: A resource for housing associations (2007)

This resource has sections on workforce participation, education, health, crime, social cohesion and economic development, and aims to assist providers to understand what is required to play a role in community building, particularly in relation to housing estates.

The commitment of larger providers to community development over the course of the Strategy is evident in the growing number of staff employed to undertake community development and tenant participation activities. The NSW Federation of Housing Associations Workforce Report 2011 indicated that there were 11 staff working in these areas within the 27 providers that participated in the survey.

Place based renewal activities

The Strategy identified a number of initiatives designed to engage community housing providers in estate renewal. In 2012/13 the Federation undertook a research project into working on estates, to demonstrate the capacity of community housing providers to make a difference. This led to the development of an Estates Knowledge Hub, a practical resource designed for community housing providers working on estates or managing concentrations of homes within a neighbourhood.

Some community housing providers became very involved in estate renewal during the period of the Strategy, for example St George in Bonnyrigg, and several providers have implemented place based or neighbourhood initiatives at a local level, working in partnership with local communities.

Case Study 6: Rotoract Park, Young - Argyle Community Housing

Argyle Community Housing has taken over management of the social housing in Young from Housing NSW. The area is quite isolated from the broader community. Several hundred people live there and around 80% are social housing tenants and 20% are private residents and they rarely interact. There are a significant number of single parent families.

Tenants asked that the local park be renewed as there are very limited recreation facilities or attractive public spaces in or near the neighbourhood. Argyle has led redevelopment of the park to engender pride in the local community, provide facilities and promote a sense of social inclusion.

Argyle provided seed funding for the project with contributions from a number of other sources, including community groups, Rotary and through successful grant funding applications. Young Shire Council also provided in-kind contributions to the implementation of the project.

Argyle engaged landscape architects, the local high and primary schools, residents and the adjacent pre-school to develop a plan. It includes an amphitheatre, seating, a half size basketball court, paths, planting of trees and gardens, a COLA and BBQ shelter and facilities.

Contribute to local and regional economic development

During the period of the Strategy, community housing providers have become increasingly involved in trying to generate economic opportunities for their tenants and the communities they operate within.

In 2009, the NSW Federation of Housing Associations developed *Playing a role in locally based economic development: A resource for housing associations.* This resource was designed to assist housing associations to take a more active role in their local economy, in particular through encouraging greater economic participation by their tenants through such means as training or establishing micro-enterprises or social enterprises.

Case study 7: Southern Cross Community Housing's community development activities

Southern Cross Community Housing, based on the South Coast has implemented a variety of community development activities, including:

- *Rent It Keep It* programs for clients to gain access to an maintain a private rental tenancy
- approved by the Office of State Revenue to be a Work Development Order sponsor under the Life Skills and Financial Counselling categories. This enables tenants or clients on any courses to earn credit towards outstanding fines. This includes volunteer work and attending treatment such as drug and alcohol and mental health programs. This is a major incentive for their tenants to attend courses and treatment to improve their situations.
- Yard Assist program that links volunteers to provide assistance around the house and garden for people who are not coping, such as older people or people with disability.
- working with local Aboriginal organisations to increase access to housing and sustaining tenancies for Aboriginal tenants.
- Educational Scholarship program to help tenants and their children with educational costs
- Participation in the Shoalhaven Women's Wellness Festival in Huskisson in March 2013.
- Donation of $1,440 to Ulladulla Youth Centre for its music program. This arose from two of their teenage tenants being regular and enthusiastic participants

Theme 4: Capacity and Confidence
Manage risk through regulation

Planning for the Future saw considerable changes and strengthening of community housing regulation, one of the most significant reforms during the period of the Strategy.

NSW Community Housing Regulation

NSW Community Housing Regulation was introduced in May 2009 following amendment of the Housing Act 2001 by the NSW Parliament in 2007. The legislation provided for the establishment of an independent statutory officer, the Registrar of Community Housing, to administer the new system. The Registrar is accountable to the Minister of Family and Community Services.

All community housing providers that receive assistance from Housing NSW must be registered and comply with the NSW Regulatory Code, which has eight performance areas with requirements that community housing providers must meet.

There are four classes of registration. The level of requirements for each performance area is proportionate to the scope and scale of operation associated with the registration class of an organisation. Not all classes of registration involve organisations meeting all requirements.

Registration of community housing providers took place between May 2009 and May 2011, with compliance checks also commencing in 2011. As of 30 June 2012 there were 231 registered community housing providers, comprised of 13 Class 1, 16 Class 2, 13 Class 3 and 189 Class 4 providers.

Development of a National Regulatory System for Community Housing

In 2010, Housing Ministers agreed to introduce a National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH). This is a key reform direction under the 2008 National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which places significant emphasis on the community housing sector as a key component of an integrated social housing system.

NSW is leading the development of the system and is the host jurisdiction for the National Law and the Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012 was introduced into the NSW Parliament in June 2012 and passed in August 2012. This system is scheduled to go live on 1 January 2014.

Building confidence in the community housing sector

Annual Statement of Performance

The Registrar of Community Housing is required by the *Housing Act 2001 (NSW)* and Housing Regulation 2009 to provide advice to the Minister of Family and Community Services on the regulation of the community housing sector.

The latter, and advice to stakeholders more generally, is done by way of an *Annual Statement of Performance* that records sector outcomes against the Regulatory Code, and identifies trends and issues in the administration of the regulatory system. Annual Statements of Performance have been issued so far for the years ending 30 June 2011, 30 June 2012 and 30 June 2013.

Strategic Stewardship Research Project

During 2012, the Registrar of Community Housing conducted the *Strategic Stewardship Research Project*. The Project Report was published in February 2013 and included findings in relation to governance, risk management and strategic planning practices for Class 1, 2 and 3 community housing providers. The Project compared performance in 2011 (40 providers), with initial performance at registration in 2009 (42 providers).

Sector Snapshot

The Sector Snapshot provides a short half yearly profile of the sector, together with summary data on sector performance for Class 1, 2 and 3 providers. It supplements the full review of all Classes in *Annual Statements of Performance* by providing timely summary data in mid year. Two Sector Snapshots have been issued so far, in February 2012 and February 2013, which are based on data as at 30 June 2011 and 2012 respectively.

Community Housing Contract Compliance and Performance Management Framework

During the period of the Strategy Housing NSW introduced new contracting arrangements and developed the *Community Housing Contract Compliance and Performance Management Framework*. The Framework was formally reviewed in June 2012 and a revised approach implemented from 1 July 2012.

Under the Framework, Housing NSW collects quarterly data relating to contract performance and compliance. Contract performance is reviewed against benchmarks and providers receive quarterly feedback on their contract performance both in terms of their own trends in performance and compared with other providers on a de-identified basis.

Accreditation

During the period of the Strategy, administration of community housing accreditation was successfully transitioned out of the NSW Government.

In 2008, Global-Mark successfully applied to become the provider of accreditation services to community housing providers in NSW. Housing NSW provided Global-Mark with some initial, limited funding with the intention that at the conclusion of a two year period the service would be self-funding.

Global-Mark is an international accreditation organisation that provides the accreditation system on a fee-for-service basis. Accredited organisations are re-certified every three years through a full business review of their systems. As of June 2103 there were 13 accredited community housing providers in NSW (out of a total of 22 in Australia). Global Mark is now providing accreditation services for CHPs across Australia.

Promotion of community housing by providers

A number of community housing providers, such as Compass Housing, Evolve, and Southern Cross Community Housing, have produced promotional videos about their options. These serve not only to promote them to stakeholders and investors in their areas of operation, but also to promote community housing more generally.

Develop a community housing sector development strategy

Industry Development Framework

In 2010, Housing NSW developed the *Community Housing Industry Development Framework* which set out the priorities for industry development investment and activity for the period 2010/11-2012/13. The Framework identified the roles and responsibilities of different industry partners in delivering those priorities, including peak industry agencies and the Registrar of Community Housing.

The Framework had three major goals and associated strategies:

- Goal 1: The community housing network is broadened and deepened through targeted communication and promotion, industry data development, and building greater depth in the network of industry partners

- Goal 2: The capacity of the industry workforce is enhanced through improved induction and training and support for economies of specialisation

- Goal 3: The capacity of housing providers is strengthened through improved strategic planning, governance and risk management practice.

Industry Development Strategy

In 2011 Housing NSW developed and rolled out a suite of industry development projects as part of a three year Industry Development Strategy to deliver the goals of the Framework. Some of the key projects were:

- engagement of the private sector, including finance and property development, to increase the profile of and confidence in the NSW community housing sector and to expand opportunities for growth

- strengthening the network and communication links with the larger housing providers, with a specific focus on their senior executives, to share and exchange ideas on ways to promote growth and advancement of the sector.

National Industry Development Framework

In 2009 Housing Ministers agreed that a national industry development strategy was required to build the capability of community housing providers. In March 2013, they endorsed a National Industry Development Framework, which outlines the setting and skills required for the community housing sector to play an extended role in the future. This work was lead by NSW. Each state and territory will apply the Framework as appropriate.

Workforce strategy

Under the Strategy, in August 2007 the NSW Federation of Housing Associations released a report *Future Workforce Needs of Housing Associations in NSW*, and in June 2009, a *Workforce Strategy for Community Housing Providers in NSW.*

This strategy outlined action required to develop a productive, responsive and sustainable workforce in the context of significant sector growth. The skill areas identified as requiring attention were property development, middle management and commercial skills.

The strategy identified four approaches, attracting and retaining skilled people in the workforce, increasing the skill and competencies of the workforce, developing career pathways and enhancing human resource management practices.

In 2009 Housing NSW introduced secondment opportunities to enable NSW Government employees to experience working in a community housing environment and that community housing provider vacancies could advertised through an email alert to all Housing NSW staff.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations has been consistently funded by Housing NSW over the period of the strategy. Funding given to the Federation has remained constant at $748,000 pa (ex GST) since 2009/10 and represents around a third of the Federation's overall income, which reached $2.3m in 2012/13.

The Federation was a significant partner in delivery of the outcomes of the strategy through delivering many industry development activities, developing sector practice resources and guidance and supporting policy and infrastructure development for the sector. In addition during the course of PFF the Federation established a number of professional/peer networks, produced a range of Good Practice Guides and supported emerging areas of business through its '*New business pack for housing associations'* comprising a number of publications produced in 2008/09.

During the period of the Strategy the Federation become the leading provider of social housing training in Australia. It became a Registered Training Organisation, delivering training through its Centre for Training in Social Housing including Certificate IV in Social Housing and Diploma of Social Housing. In 2011/12 it delivered training to 2,170 students.

Churches Housing Inc

On 1 July 2010 Churches Community Housing was split into two organisations. Ecclesia Housing was established as a community housing provider, and Churches Housing Inc (CHI) as the peak body for the churches sector with the aim of assisting churches and church welfare organisations to develop housing initiatives for individuals and families on low incomes in partnership with the NSW Government.

CHI received annual funding of $288,268 from Housing NSW in 2012/13, and this has been maintained for several years. CHI works with church organisations to identify opportunities for them to use their resources to meet local housing needs.

Target resources by strengthening the research base

Australasian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)

During the period of the Strategy the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) undertook research on a number of topics relating to the growth of community housing. This is an independent not-for-profit national network organisation that funds, conducts and disseminates research and reports on housing, homelessness and cities and Housing NSW has provided support to AHURI since its inception.

Prepare partners to work with community housing providers

Building the confidence of finance and development industries

Confidence in the community housing sector by the finance and development industries has been built through a number of means, including through implementation of Community Housing Regulation, Tripartite Deeds between Government, the community housing provider, lenders and industry development activity.

To support the strategy, the NSW Industry Development Framework and its associated program of initiatives specifically focused on building an understanding of the sector by key industry partners. As a result a briefing was hosted by KPMG on 12 April 2010 with over 90 participants, including the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Housing and representatives of institutional lenders, legal firms, the financial services sector and infrastructure consultants.

Partnerships between the development industry and community housing providers have also been encouraged through the Affordable Rental Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (the SEPP) and the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Under the SEPP, the NSW Government required that affordable housing properties delivered through infill development be managed by community housing providers.

Resources and materials to support these partnerships were prepared by the Centre for Affordable Housing. In NRAS, a number of new partnership models were developed to take advantage of community housing providers' skills and expertise in housing delivery and management. This was encouraged by NSW prioritising projects managed by community housing providers.

New capabilities

In 2009 Housing NSW initiated a *Property Development, Construction and Project Management Program* for selected community housing providers. The purpose was to pilot a capacity development program in these areas, with the then Assets Division of Housing NSW providing mentoring to selected growth providers. The program aims were to enable the providers to acquire knowledge and skills to make them informed clients, and to develop organisational capacity by involving their staff in all aspects of property development and construction projects.

Increase awareness of community and affordable housing to potential tenants

The awareness of community housing among potential tenants was significantly increased through the period of the Strategy through initiatives such as Housing Pathways, the promotion and launch of every Nation Building site and provider strategies to promote themselves within their local communities.

Record of Understanding with Police

A *Record of Understanding* (ROU) between the NSW Police Force and community housing providers has been operating since October 2011. This provides a means of developing local relationships between community housing providers and the Police and is an administrative arrangement designed to facilitate the exchange of relevant information. The community housing providers covered by the ROU are those participating in Housing Pathways.

Theme 5: Viability and Sustainability

Financial health of sector

The Registrar of Community Housing's *Annual Statement of Performance 2012* describes a viable and sustainable sector in good financial health with:

- healthy cash flows - the sector's operating surplus and margin in 2010/11 was $107.7m and 3.4% respectively

- increased capitalisation - total community housing assets increased as a proportion of all assets for Class 1,2 and 3 providers and grew from 10% to 34% between aggregated 2007/08 to 2009/10, and 2010/11

- increased private debt – interest bearing debt for Class 1, 2 and 3 providers increased from $122.9m in aggregated 2007/08 to 2009/10, to $169.5 in 2010/11.

Increase the funds available by developing alternative rent models

Community Housing Rent Policy

The Community Housing Rent Policy, incorporating CRA maximisation, was implemented from July 2008. Financial modelling indicated that the increase in rental income to the sector would be $18.2m in 2008/09, and an estimated $23m when fully implemented. This amount is likely to have been considerably higher by the end of 2012/13, given the significant increase in the number of properties under management, alongside increases in rents and CRA entitlements.

Community Housing Rent Policy Implementation Review

In late 2012, the Community and Private Market Directorate (CAPMH) engaged O'Connor Marsden & Associates PTY Ltd (OCM) to carry out a review of the implementation of the Community Housing Rent Policy. The objective of the Review was to better understand the current application of the Rent Policy and make recommendations to improve practice. Recommendations are being progressed jointly with the sector.

Support best uses of the subsidy stream for community housing

Community Housing Leasing Program

The major recurrent funding stream for community housing is the *Community Housing Leasing Program* (CHLP) that provides funding to community housing providers to headlease properties in the private market.

A review of the Program in 2008/09 led to changes being introduced from July 2009. Previously the Program subsidised both capital and leasehold properties, but the introduction of CRA maximisation under the Community Housing Rent Policy enabled management of capital properties to be self funded from rental income. A further review in partnership with the sector is underway.

By the end of 2011/12, 5,569 leases were held by 27 providers for general social housing, and an additional 176 leases were used for crisis accommodation by 30 community housing providers. The total cost of the Program in 2011/12 was $58.6m.

Improve maintenance management

Community Housing Asset Management Policy

During the period of the Strategy, Housing NSW developed a *Community Housing Asset Management Policy* distributed to the sector in November 2012. This policy sets out the requirements community housing providers must comply with in managing assets. It clarifies the respective roles of government and providers, and recognises providers' increased asset management responsibilities, including asset ownership, management, planning and maintenance.

Crisis Accommodation Asset Strategy

The *Crisis Accommodation Asset Strategy* was developed in 2012 to guide the future use of the crisis portfolio in the context of reform of the homelessness sector through *Going Home Staying Home*, and the split of housing responsibilities between the Department of Finance and Services (which then included the Land and Housing Corporation) and the Department of Family and Community Services (Housing NSW). This includes both crisis and transitional accommodation.

The Asset Strategy has been approved by the two. A more detailed strategy in now under development following the reform of the Specialist Homelessness Sector.

Outsourcing maintenance

Maintenance services for 713 properties used by 143 Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) for crisis and transitional accommodation was outsourced to selected community housing providers in the last year of the Strategy. Contracts for outsourced maintenance were directly allocated to 11 community housing providers in regional NSW. Sydney was divided into SE and NE Sydney and put out to competitive tender.

Interim Crisis Accommodation Subsidy (ICAS)

The Interim Crisis Accommodation Subsidy (ICAS) provides an option for Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) to transfer their crisis accommodation leases to another provider whilst maintaining their delivery of support services to clients. In 2012, Housing NSW established ICAS which provides a subsidy to a community housing provider to support them to take on property management responsibility for any transferred crisis accommodation lease.

Develop viable business models that ensure flexibility of service delivery

Sector consolidation

The number of community housing providers reduced from 380 in June 2007 to 229 registered providers at 30 June 2013. This was predominantly a result of the introduction of registration in 2009. Many providers chose to take up options such as partnering with another provider that had already registered, merging or amalgamating with another organisation, or exiting the community housing sector altogether.

Major activity to support the viability of larger providers focused on amalgamation of two or more providers to increase the portfolio and capacity of the remaining provider. Larger providers were more able to employ specialist staff, increase their range of tenancy models and reduce back room costs.

A Provider Development Fund was made available for grants to assist with the costs of amalgamations where required, with several providers choosing to voluntarily amalgamate with each other to enhance their business capability.

Case Study 8: Growth of Bridge Housing

Bridge Housing Limited began as the South West Inner Sydney Housing Cooperative (SWISH) in 1985. It amalgamated with the Inner West Housing Association in 1993, Darlinghurst Area Community Housing Scheme in 2001, Burwood Area Community Housing in 2008 and Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Association in 2009.

In 2009, the organisation, then known as SWISH, converted from a co-operative to a company limited by guarantee, and changed its name to Bridge Housing Limited. Between 2006 and 2009 its portfolio increased from 650 to 1100 homes - since 2009 it has increased its portfolio to 1,600 properties through successful tenders.

Common Equity NSW

A decision was made jointly by Housing NSW and the co-operative sector in 2008 to adopt a new business model, which involved restructuring ARCH, the co-operative sector's peak agency into an asset holding company for its 36 co-operative members.

The new company, Common Equity NSW, was registered in March 2010 and co-operative members subsequently transferred their 351 leases to the company. This strategy has significantly facilitated the growth of the housing co-operative sector as by the end of the Strategy period, Common Equity managed over 460 co-operative housing properties – an increase in property numbers of over 30%.

Encourage organisational efficiency

Information Technology (IT)

In July 2011, Housing NSW put in place a Business Systems Grants Program to support community housing providers to develop their business management and information technology systems. Housing NSW allocated over $1m to the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to manage and administer a grant process whereby funding will be provided to a range of community housing providers, proportional to their size and reflecting their current systems. The project aims to support providers to enhance and further develop their IT and business management systems. The Grants Program runs to June 2013.

Community Housing Assistance Agreements

During the period of the Strategy, Housing NSW has developed a new streamlined contractual framework for community housing providers receiving assistance designed to reduce the number of funding agreements between individual providers and Government.

The framework was developed following changes to the Housing Act 2010 which enabled the NSW Government to enter into agreements known as Community

Housing Assistance Agreements with community housing providers. These Agreements have schedules attached listing each individual funding arrangement under a common set of terms.

Leases

In 2012, Housing NSW commenced issued new leases to community housing providers leasing properties from the Land and Housing Corporation. The new approach allows for one lease to be in place associated with the attached schedule of properties to which it applies. New leases are issued every six months, with the schedules being amended to reflect changes in arrangements.

Tripartite Deed

To support the transfer of title to community housing providers and as an assurance mechanism to protect Government interest in leveraged properties, Housing NSW has developed a Tripartite Deed that sets out the contractual relationships between Government, a community housing provider, and lenders.

This Deed is significant in managing the risks associated with leveraging and providing additional assurance to the finance sector about the recovery of funds in the event of provider failure, thereby facilitating investments.

CHIMES

In October 2010 Housing NSW launched the *Community Housing Information Management 'E' System (CHIMES)*, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, to manage information relating to community housing providers, properties and programs.

CHIMES enables Housing NSW staff to access up to date and accurate information. Community housing providers directly input their performance data online and the system generates performance reports and information about the numbers and types of properties, registration status and funding agreements. It is central to the Community Housing Contract Compliance and Performance Management Framework.

Diversify products delivered by community housing providers

Affordable housing

As set out under Theme 1 there has been significant growth in affordable housing over the period of the Strategy. In response to this, the Centre for Affordable Housing funded the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to conduct a research project into the potential for a centralised application process for affordable housing.

Through consultation with providers, the Federation found a coordinated approach based on a centralised online database of affordable housing vacancies would work best, with promotion of this to potential tenants. This work is ongoing, with costing of the potential options to implement this proposal and engagement with providers regarding ongoing management and delivery of this proposal to be done.

Private rental products

With the introduction of Housing Pathways, the role of participating community housing providers broadened to include facilitating access to a broader range of Private Rental Assistance (PRA) products including Temporary Accommodation, Rentstart, Tenancy Guarantee, Private Rental Brokerage Service, and Rentstart Bond Loan.

Fee for service

Community Housing providers are increasingly generating income through fee for service arrangements. The outsourcing by the NSW Government of crisis and transitional property management on a fee basis is one example of growth in this area but providers also have a range of local fee based arrangements – managing properties for other government agencies including local government, and for other non-government services that own properties.

Case study 9: Evolve Housing's fee for service capability

Evolve has strategically planned for growth outside of current government funding programs by creating a separate unit within the business to focus on fee for service. This currently has two arms:

1. Construction Project Management - for not for profit companies and government agencies, managing projects from site selection and purchase through to final construction and defect liability. Following handover, Evolve can also then act as the property manager for the long term on a fee for service basis.
2. 600 NRAS incentives have been secured on behalf of private developers and Evolve will manage these properties for a ten year period on a fee for service basis.

PFF Scorecard by theme and strategy

1.	**Growth**	√√
	Facilitate investment in community housing by providers	√√
	Invest funding in community housing supply	√√
	Expand community housing through non-government investment in community housing	√√
	Expand partnerships delivering community housing	√√
2.	**Diverse and flexible responses**	√
	Access to housing meeting a range of needs	√
	Respond to the needs of particular population groups	√
	Recognise tenants' different life stages and preferences	√
	Support specific geographical or regional responses	√
	Respond to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	√
3.	**Stronger communities**	√
	Social and economic participation by tenants in their communities	√
	Encourage community development activities by community housing providers	√
	Contribute to local and regional economic development	√
4.	**Capacity and confidence**	√√
	Manage risk through regulation	√√
	Building confidence in the community housing sector	√√
	Develop a community housing sector development strategy	√√
	Target resources by strengthening the research base	√
	Prepare partners to work with community housing providers	√
5.	**Viability and Sustainability**	√√
	Increase the funds available by developing alterative rent models	√√
	Support best uses of the subsidy stream for community housing	√√
	Improve maintenance management	√√
	Develop viable business models that ensure flexibility of service delivery	√
	Encourage organisational efficiency	√
	Diversify the level of fee for service work by community housing providers	√

Key

√   met objectives
√√   exceeded objectives

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