

Co-op Connect

Promoting the housing co-operative model



SEEKING NEW MEMBERS

Two of our member housing co-operatives – the Subiaco-Leederville Housing Collective (SLHC) in Perth’s northern suburbs, and ARCH in Bunbury – are seeking new members to join their waiting lists.

SLHC comprises six dwellings spread throughout the suburbs of West Leederville, North Perth, Yokine and Dianella.

ARCH is a small complex of eight two-bedroom villas, all occupied by people over 50.

Housing Authority community housing eligibility criteria apply, and applicants must be prepared to participate in co-op meetings and management.

Contact us for more information or an application form.

UPDATE ON OUR GROWTH PROJECT

In the previous issue of Co-op Connect, we outlined an exciting potential growth opportunity for WA’s housing co-operative sector that we’d been working on.

In case you missed it, the City of Fremantle had called for expressions of interest in presenting a demonstration affordable housing project for the Fremantle CBD, based on the *baugruppe* (German for ‘building group’) model.

We at Co-operation Housing – in collaboration with sustainable housing developer Eugenie Stockmann, housing co-operatives specialist Dr Elizabeth Cheong, architect Sid Thoo and development manager Anthony Rizzacasa – developed a submission based jointly on the *baugruppe* and contemporary housing co-operative model. True to the co-operative values, our project offers not just affordability but economic, environmental and social sustainability as well as a sense of community, belonging and connectedness.

We submitted our project to the City of Fremantle, and it was selected to progress to stage two of the selection process.

We have now been advised by the City of Fremantle that “a cooperative housing development at 7 Quarry St is probably feasible and the City is keen to progress to the next stage of the process”, which will be confirmed around the end of April.

We take this as very positive news, and look forward to hearing more. We’ll keep you posted through Co-op Connect. For now, fingers crossed!

What is a *baugruppe*, anyway?

A *baugruppe* is basically a co-operative formed by a group of likeminded people who then work with an architect and/or a builder to develop their homes. This model is affordable because it eliminates the developer’s margin, and allows the future owners to design their homes to meet their needs and budgets.

The model emerged in the early 1990s as an alternative to standard housing development, and has proven very popular. The model we are proposing to the City of Fremantle will combine the best aspects of a *baugruppe* with those of the co-operative model, offering affordability, sustainability and community.



ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

At the end of last year we held our AGM for 2016, a very successful event at which we reflected on our co-operative achievements of the past year and looked forward to building on them in the year ahead.

We also presented our Annual Report for the 2015–16 financial year, which summarises our activities and achievements over the period. The Annual Report is now up on our website and printed copies are also available – please contact us if you'd like one.



Image above courtesy of the Community Newspaper Group

One of Co-operation Housing's key objectives is to grow Western Australia's housing co-operative sector. Highlights of 2016, as presented at the AGM and in the Annual Report, included the following two growth successes.

For a full year now we have been managing an 11-unit affordable housing complex for seniors (pictured above right), owned by the City of Fremantle, with the long-term goal of transitioning the complex to the co-operative model.

We have already begun to embed the international principles of co-operation into its operations. Vacant units have been filled with tenants familiar with and willing to live according to the international co-operative principles, and this has already seen the beginnings of a shift in the culture of the complex.

Residents have become increasingly engaged in meetings as we have begun inviting them to participate more actively in the decisions that affect them. So far we have worked with them to review and update their Residence Rules, to establish eligibility criteria for incoming tenants and to establish common gardens.

This has been an excellent opportunity to demonstrate to the City of Fremantle and to the broader community the many benefits of the co-operative model over other models of affordable housing provision.

Our other major growth activity of the past year has been the development of the demonstration affordable housing project discussed overleaf, based jointly on the *baugruppe* and contemporary housing co-operative models.

Both of these projects are excellent opportunities for us to promote the great potential of the co-operative model to address the current shortage of affordable, sustainable housing in Australia while also providing social benefits.

It seems that the time has come – and not a moment too soon! – for the co-operative model to enjoy a welcome resurgence in the housing sector.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Each of our member housing co-operatives is now entitled to 12 hours per year of fee-for-service work from us, as part of their included membership benefits.

This is in addition to their existing member benefits, which include support with compliance and reporting; policy and governance; finance; advocacy and representation; rent-setting, eligibility and tenancy management; training, information and networking; capacity development; and growth and promotion.

It's just another way we're supporting our members.

Co-operation Housing

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