

## **Conference to highlight secure housing as the ‘first domino’ for good mental health**

WA’s peak body for community mental health, the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), and tenant advocacy body Tenancy WA, are pleased to jointly present for the first time the WA Tenancy Conference, to be held from November 27-29, 2017.

With a focus this year on mental health and its close association with housing security, the conference will explore issues related to housing affordability and safe and appropriate housing as a fundamental human right.

It will see up to 500 individual tenants and sector professionals, including health and community workers, advocates and solicitors, from across WA gather over three days, each with a different focus:

### **Tenants' Day, Monday, November 27**

Welcoming tenants, mental health consumers and carers, and all community members and attended by Hon. Roger Cook MLA, Deputy Premier, Minister for Health and Mental Health

### **Sector Conference: Tuesday, November 28**

Emerging issues, collaboration and information about housing, tenancy and mental health issues. Opened by WA's Minister for Housing, Veterans Issues and Youth, the Hon. Peter Tinley, speakers will include widely published and globally recognised thought leader and pioneer of social and policy reform Charles Waldegrave, and Julia Knapton, Acting Assistant Commissioner Policy Planning and Strategy at the Mental Health Commission WA, who will talk about the Commission’s upcoming *Accommodation and Support Strategy*.

### **Professional Development Day: Wednesday, November 29**

Specialist training for anyone working in housing, health and community services sectors.

Kate Davis, Principal Solicitor at Tenancy WA, said the conference’s tagline “The First Domino” perfectly described the impact of housing on the lives of Western Australians.

“Secure, affordable housing is the basic foundation we all need in our lives, before other issues can be addressed. Housing really is the first domino,” Ms Davis said. She said she hoped the conference highlighted the many challenges tenants faced in light of the current crisis in affordable accommodation in our State and also shed light on work being done in law and policy reform to address these.

WAAMH CEO Rod Astbury echoed these sentiments: “Secure housing and support keeps people living well in the community, prevents escalation to the need for acute services, and is a crucial component of successful recovery”.

“Bringing together tenants, advocacy groups, service providers and Government for this conference makes it a powerhouse of collaboration and will galvanise all our efforts to ensure this basic human right is met for all Western Australians,” Mr Astbury said.

### **Finale event and fundraiser: ‘Home Truths: An Evening with Michael Leunig’**

Providing some lighter moments at the conclusion of the conference will be the finale event “Home Truths: An Evening with Michael Leunig” on Saturday, December 2 at Subiaco Function Centre.

Known for his piercing and quirky social commentary via his internationally-renowned cartoons often related to mental health, homelessness and the pace of modern life, Leunig will provide an evening of heart-lifting entertainment and reflection to raise funds for mental health and affordable housing in WA.

The evening can also be complemented by an optional three-course meal for just \$24.

### **WA Tenancy Conference: important information**

- The conference will run from November 27-29 at the Bendat Community Centre, Wembley
- More information and registrations at: [tenancyconferencewa.org.au](http://tenancyconferencewa.org.au)
- Bookings for ‘Home Truths: An Evening with Michael Leunig’ can be made at <https://www.tenancyconferencewa.org.au/michael-leunig>
- Fact sheets for people experiencing tenancy issues can be found at <http://www.tenancywa.org.au/fact-sheets>
- With thanks to conference sponsors: [Ruah Community Services](#), [Foundation Housing](#) and [Government of Western Australia, North Metropolitan Health Service, Mental Health](#)

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