

## **Achieving housing goals using community business partnerships**

### **Presenters:**

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### **Abstract**

Community business partnerships can prove an effective mechanism to help provide housing for low income families. One NSW-based partnership provides an excellent model that could be applied in other sectors and other states.

The Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership (the Partnership) is a group of prominent Australians from the community and business sectors appointed by the Prime Minister to advise and assist the Government on initiatives to develop and promote a culture of corporate and social responsibility.

The Partnership operates on the premise that communities are stronger and more cohesive when individuals, not-for-profit organisations, governments and business all work together – each offering its own set of unique skills and experience.

The Partnership is supported by a secretariat within the Department of Family and Community Services.

In 1999 the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Community Business Partnerships (the Awards) were established as a key initiative of the Partnership to promote the concept of community business partnerships and to recognise those who have worked to develop such partnerships.

One of the partnerships recognised through the Awards is the partnership between **PMI Mortgage Insurance Ltd with Habitat for Humanity Australia**

PMI Mortgage Insurance (PMI) creates home ownership opportunities through the provision of credit enhancement to financial institutions in Australia. Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) is a housing organisation that builds simple and affordable houses in partnership with the working poor. Together they are working together to build homes for disadvantaged families in Australia and New Zealand.

PMI have provided financial support to Habitat for Humanity to build homes. It has also been able to provide volunteer labour from the PMI team and their customer base. PMI staff participate in 10-12 build days with 8 – 12 staff involved in each. The partnership is promoted through PMI communications to customers and it has contributed public relations expertise to assist the promotion of Habitat for Humanity. Among PMI's other contributions are provision of management help and advice, marketing expertise and access to board rooms and meeting rooms. PMI also provide a director for the Habitat

Australia board. PMI has also encouraged its own clients to become involved with Habitat and this has led to the ANZ Bank also supporting the organisation.

Habitat contributes the administrative support to plan and schedule the build days. It provides on-site safety training and qualified building supervision. A quarterly newsletter on the latest Habitat news and events is provided to PMI and other sponsors every quarter. PMI also have the opportunity to contribute articles to this newsletter. Habitat provides a network of community contacts and the opportunity for PMI staff to volunteer and contribute to the community in a meaningful way.

The collaboration between the two has not only benefited the families who have been able to own a home of their own but it has also benefited both the community organisation and the business.

In the paper it is proposed to explore the concept of community business partnerships, their application to the housing sector and the way in which the partnership between PMI and Habitat for Humanity could be used as a model to develop partnerships in the sector.

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