

Just Change Newsletter, June 2010

Dear Just Change supporters,

We hope that 2010 has started well for you. As usual we are keeping busy and it looks like 2010 will be a productive year for us.

We would like to say a big thank you to all of our supporters, particularly the Just Change advisory group. With your support we have been able to complete a major milestone: the completion of our pilot project.

The Just Change Pilot: Complete!

The pilot project provided free energy efficiency upgrades and education to 10 low-income households. In return, landlords signed a commitment not to raise rent for 12 months. Just Change conducted research with tenants, landlords, and real estate agents. The pilot project report can be downloaded from our website www.justchangeaustralia.org

Some of the key findings of the pilot project were:

- providing energy efficiency is a low cost, effective way to improve health and comfort while reducing energy use
- there is sufficient funding available for retrofits ensuring that they are not expensive
- levels of knowledge about energy efficiency and available funding are generally low
- low-income renters are unlikely to benefit from this funding without assistance in navigating the process of getting landlord consent.

The service provided by Just Change was rated very highly by tenants, landlords, and real estate agents. This reflects the charm and persistence of our brilliant team of house managers- thanks to all of you.

Just Change has been asked to present the pilot findings to lots of conferences, government and environment groups. If you know of a group who would benefit from a Just Change presentation, please [contact us](#).

The evaluation report can be downloaded from our website: www.justchangeaustralia.org

A limited number of hard copies have been printed. Please email us if you need a hard copy of the report.

Green Start: Yet to start

In December 2009, the Federal Government announced the [Green Start program](#), a \$130 million initiative to help improve the energy and water efficiency of low income and disadvantaged households. We were extremely pleased with this new focus on retrofits for low-income households because low-income households are most vulnerable when energy and water prices increase, and are least likely to access existing rebate programs.

Just Change was involved in a consortium with several other Victorian organisations tendering for the Green Start program. Our role was to ensure that low-income renters did not miss out on the benefits of the program.

Unfortunately, the commencement of the Green Start program has been delayed by the federal Environment Department. Many organisations that were keen to provide energy efficiency upgrades for low-income households will now delay their efforts until this uncertainty is resolved.

Media attention

Just Change has been featured in several publications recently, including an interview with Dougal McInnes in the December edition of [Estate Agent](#), published by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria. And keep an eye out for us in the next edition of [G magazine](#). Just Change spokesperson Michaela Lang was interviewed on 3CR, you can listen to a podcast of the interview [here](#).

What next?

Just Change will work to deliver on a number of new areas that progress findings of the pilot. We plan to continue providing assistance for low income renters through expanding on the previous pilot. The Just Change team is working on a proposal that if successful would target three local government areas in Victoria. Details are currently being finalised.

Just Change is pursuing the opportunity to provide information sessions to Property Managers, after being invited to do so by the REIV later in 2010. The sessions will provide information about green retrofits, the upcoming requirement to report the energy performance of a home before it can be rented or sold, and ways that real estate agents can 'sell' the benefits of sustainable homes. The content of these sessions was guided from interactions with agents at the Managers Conference held on May 12 which Just Change was been invited to.

Responding to the feedback from tenants that were unable or ineligible to participate in the pilot, we will attempt to produce a short DVD providing a do it yourself guide for low-income renters. The DVD will focus on changes that don't require landlord approval.

Changing of the Guard

With Kati Thompson moving to Sweden for a Masters in Sustainability, Dougal McInnes going to Geneva to continue his work with Cool NRG, and Bonnie Learmonth heading to the Department of Environment Water Heritage and the Arts in Canberra, we now have a new board.

The current board is:

- Michaela Lang – President
- Kathryn Bowen - Vice President
- Imogen Schoots – Secretary
- Alex Smith – Treasurer
- Roland Dillon -Immediate Past President
- Tony Kung

The current board would like to thank past board members for their time and continuing contributions to Just Change. It's great to see them spreading out and changing the world! We also congratulate Kathryn on the pending arrival of her first child.

The current board is also looking for additional members, particularly with social and welfare expertise. Knowledge of residential based sustainability would also be valuable. Please contact Michaela to find out more on 0422 147 466 or email justchangeorg@gmail.com

New address

Please note our new mailing address: 1/224 Inkerman St, St Kilda East, VIC, 3183

Wishing you the best for an energy efficient 2010!

The Just Change Team – Michaela, Kathryn, Imogen, Alex, Tony and Roland.