

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 3 October 2012

Large Executive Conference Room, Level 2
Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street, East Perth
Meeting commenced at 9:00am

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting:

Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Professor Paul Flatau (arrived 9:20am)	University of Western Australia
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Hilary MacWilliam	Department of Housing
Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
Ms Benita Cattalini	FaHCSIA

Apologies

Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Mr Ian Giles	Department of Corrective Services

2. Minutes of meeting held on 1 August 2012

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 1 August 2012 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings, with one minor change substituting the word *demand* with *supply* on page 2, regarding bed vacancies.

Mr Pietropiccolo asked the Chair to seek clarification from the Minister regarding members on-going membership should they be absent for more than 3 consecutive meetings, as discussed at the August meeting. Concern was expressed that membership may be terminated if a member is absent for a lengthy period for reasons out of their control, for example overseas or illness. It was explained that the reasons for a lengthy absence would be taken into consideration before any action was taken. The Chair agreed to clarify this with the Minister.

Action: The Chair to clarify the matter above with the Minister.

3. Business Arising

3.1 WACH Future Directions

The Chair thanked members for their input into the work plan to date. An updated version of the work plan was distributed prior to the meeting, and some feedback has been received since that time. The Chair opened discussion on the work plan and the following points were raised:

- There is a mix of operational elements. How will these be measured? Qualitative and quantitative measures may be useful.
- Strategic elements – opportunities to engage other agencies.
- Provision of more targeted time lines required.
- Require tangible outcomes with time frames around these.
- Regional Plans are a high priority - including reviewing and monitoring.
- Identify key outcomes, for example, a stronger integration between the NAHA and NPAH services.
- Identification of gaps.
- Engagement of Ministers across different portfolios, to facilitate an exchange of ideas around homelessness.
- The Committee has no decision making authority but can recommend and advise. To some extent it has to be process orientated, need to clarify where the committee sits in the decision making process?

The Chair asked for nominations to participate on a working group to finalise the work plan. Ms Morris, Ms Errey, Ms Williams, Mr Hunter, Mr Aspinall and Mr Pietropiccolo all agreed to participate. It is expected this will be successfully achieved in one two hour meeting.

Members agreed to send detailed information to Ms Flanagan prior to the working group meeting to enable a revised version to be available for discussion at the meeting.

Action: Members to forward Ms Flanagan suggestions for the work plan, and a meeting to be scheduled to take place prior to the next meeting of the WACH.

3.2 National Quality Framework

Ms Flynn advised that at the August meeting of the Ministers Select Council on Housing and Homelessness they considered the National Quality Framework Charter (now called Statement of Principles) and Nationally Consistent Complaints Mechanism. The Ministers decided that they would like to see a whole package including the Standards and an option for the level of assessment/accreditation recommended. This will be discussed at the November meeting of the Select Council on Housing and Homelessness.

Ms Flynn tabled a paper on the review of the Standards. The Sector Consultation Group, which is reviewing Sector Standards is progressing well. A subset of this group is reviewing the feedback from the sector representatives to develop a set of Standards more reflective of current practice. This will also ensure WA is consistent with the National approach.

A member queried the relationship between these Standards and the work being done with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). The Commission is an overriding registry body for not-for-profit agencies. This is currently being legislated and will have an impact from 2013/14. They are two complexly separate entities, and should not impact each other, however Ms Flynn will clarify/highlight this with the FaHCSIA.

Concern was expressed that the introduction of the NQF is over burdensome for agencies for little gain. Agencies already have a number of assessment and quality assurance mechanisms.

The intent has always been that where an agency is already meeting one standard there is no need for them to meet it again for this purpose. DCP's briefings to the Minister have all included the potential for increased administrative burden on agencies that may result in reducing capacity to deliver quality services. FaHCSIA has consulted widely, however concern was expressed that the people present at the consultations may not have been the best people to offer advice as to what this may mean to an agency.

Service providers in the homelessness sector are becoming frustrated with increasing regulation and this is seen as another form of 'red tape'.

Members discussed the frustrations around multiple reporting requirements. There is a need to integrate the standards to eliminate duplication of effort, which the NQF is attempting to do, and there is also a need to integrate reporting requirements. Concern was expressed that there has been a shift from the quality of service provision to the quality of administrative processes and governance.

Members suggested that this is the type of issue that should be on the WACH agenda.

Action: Members to forward comments on the NQF to Ms Flanagan by 16 October 2012.
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3.3 Regional Plans

Ms Flanagan advised that the next progress reports for the Regional Homelessness Plans are due in November. After this time the plans will be reviewed and the process for the next phase established.

3.4 National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

Ms Flynn advised that the Annual Report has been submitted to FaHCSIA and was pleased to report that WA has exceeded all targets in terms of number of clients supported. At the last Ministers meeting, the view was strongly expressed to Minister O'Connor that clarity is required regarding the on-going funding of NPAH. No decision was made. DCP has been proactive in keeping both the Department of Treasury and Premier and Cabinet well informed about the programs. The tracking sheets provided by the non-government sector have provided rich data resulting in a clear picture for those Departments.

Concern was expressed that the lack of clarity around this decision is resulting in the loss of staff and increasing uncertainty and frustration. It was also suggested that conversations around NAHA also need to take place.

The Chair agreed to write to the Minister expressing these concerns.

Action: The Chair to write to the Minister expressing concerns as above and asking for State commitment to funding.
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4. Guest Speaker – Registry Week

Ms Robyn Fernihough, Ruah Community Services

Ms Fernihough provided an electronic copy of her presentation to be circulated to members following the meeting.

Discussion on the following ensued:

- This is a good sample population with rich information collected, it would be beneficial to utilise this information in additional ways.
- The report has been provided to the Departments of Housing and Child Protection.
- The Minister has received much of this information but has not received the report.
- Members agreed the Minister should receive a copy of the report with the minutes.
- Information in addition to that collected using the survey form has been recorded but not yet analysed.
- It would be interesting to compare Aboriginal outcomes in Perth with other states.
- Andrew Davies, the GP involved, is undertaking a parallel project. It was suggested that he be invited to provide a presentation to the Council.
- Ruah staff are to be commended on the success of this project and the 'break-through' data collected.
- It is important that this research is continued and it was agreed that further funding to support the next step in the process would be valuable.

The Chair thanked Ms Fernihough for her informative presentation and congratulated Ruah on this successful, highly beneficial project and outcome. The Chair agreed to forward the presentation/report to the Minister for her information.

Action: Ms Fernihough to forward maps; Ms Flanagan to distribute presentation to members; Dr Andrew Davies to be invited to a future meeting.

5. General Business

5.1 National Homelessness Conference – briefing

The Chair advised that the conference was well attended, approximately 800 people, largely from support services around Australia. All States made a presentation regarding NPAH funding, except for Queensland Government representatives who were unable to attend. WA was the only State that used the funding to build on existing strengths rather than establishing new services. The Chair congratulated Ms Kristal and Dr Flatau on their presentations at the conference. No decision regarding NPAH funding was announced, other than to acknowledge that consultations were on going.

Ms Flanagan to email link to presentations to members after the meeting.

Dr Flatau advised that the full results on his youth homelessness study would be available soon. This will be made available to members. He advised that WA is not currently meeting the standards in service integration. Discussion ensued around the standards, querying what makes a good standard. Services are integrating with a small number of other services, this may be the most efficient way to work?

Action: Ms Flanagan to email link to presentations to members after the meeting.

5.2 Homelessness Bill

No further response.

5.3 Other Business

5.3.1 Proxies on WACH

The Chair noted that the Cabinet endorsement of the Council does not include proxies. A member may bring an officer with them to the meeting, but not as a proxy. The Chair agreed to discuss with the Minister how to handle this. The Chair will clarify this issue with members at the next meeting.

Action: Chair to discuss issue of proxies with the Minister.

5.3.2 Key Highlights - 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2012

Ms Errey distributed the *Key Highlights - 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2012: Implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy 2010 - 2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing* for member's information.

5.3.3 Opening of the Short Stay Accommodation in Kalgoorlie.

Mr Aspinall advised members that the Short Stay Accommodation in Kalgoorlie has now opened. It will give Indigenous people from the Eastern Goldfields region a safe place to stay when visiting Kalgoorlie. There have been a number of joint players involved and it will be managed by the Red Cross.

6. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:40am. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 November, 2012 at 9am.