

**MIDWEST
REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS
PLAN 2011 – 2012**



INTRODUCTION

A Regional Homelessness Workshop was held at Lotteries House in Geraldton on 16 August 2011. Its purpose was to build on the Midwest 2010 workshop's discussion paper and the broad themes and changes that have occurred with funding to address homelessness under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) and the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) see appendix 5.

The 2011 workshop brought together approximately 30 representatives from a broad range of government agencies and non-government service providers. The direction of the workshop was to review all issues that contribute to homelessness from a local and Midwest perspective, with a focus on identifying priority actions to address identified homelessness issues. It is intended that these actions will be carried out in the next 12 months.

A four stage process was used, with workshop participants forming into 5 groups to discuss the topics presented.

Stage I – In 5 small groups, participants discussed “What is working well”; “What are we worried about”; and “What needs to happen” on four key areas:-

- HEALTH AND WELL BEING
- CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY, FAMILY AND FRIENDS
- EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- HOUSING OPTIONS

The issues and ideas raised in Stage I provided the basis for prioritising actions in subsequent stages.

Stage II – Workshop participants used green stickers to indicate four key priority actions from the issues raised in Stage I.

Stage III – In a third process workshop participants then used red stickers to indicate two key priority actions that could be carried out in the next 12 months.

From stages II and III it was possible to determine the consensus on which top three actions would be worked on over the next 12 months.

Stage IV – Workshop participants provided further comment on the priority actions and suggested which agencies should be involved to progress each item. It was agreed that a fourth enabling priority would be to commit to regional level meetings to discuss progress in achieving the priority actions of the Regional Homelessness Plan.

Overall agreement was reached on four priority actions for the Midwest Regional Homelessness Plan:

Regional Interagency Meeting;
Services For Men;
One Stop Shop;
New Hostel

REGIONAL INTERAGENCY MEETING

A regular monthly meeting of agency and service representatives would work together to achieve an integrated service and community response to the homelessness agenda. The Centrelink Homelessness Reference Group is already running and can be utilised as people like. In addition, the group would engage with and attend Midwest Human Services Manager's Group meetings, at least biannually, to discuss and ensure ongoing support and progress on the Regional Homelessness Plan. The monthly regional interagency meeting should involve the Department for Child Protection, Centrelink, Department of Corrective Services including Youth Justice Services, Geraldton Resource Centre, Chrysalis Support Services, Midwest Men's Health, Department of Housing with invitations being extended to all accommodation and casework programmes, general employment and training agencies, generic services responding to homeless people and private real estate agents.

SERVICES FOR MEN

A range of services need to be maintained and increased in the Midwest region, namely:

- WA Country Health's Pit Stop - a mechanical health package for men
- Counselling
- Anger Management
- Grief and loss
- Conflict Management
- Life Skills
- Social Support
- Advocacy
- Place for men to come in and attend and have a chat and a coffee and remains confidential

Housing access is an area where men may be marginalised requiring wrap around or referral services for men, including hostel accommodation programs targeting domestic violence that include redress of anger management, drug and alcohol, and mental health issues. The importance of keeping families together if they become homeless was highlighted.

Agencies involved in identifying the opportunities for bringing these sorts of services for men into effect include but are not limited to; Mission Australia, Midwest Men's Health, Centre Care, Fusion Australia, Department for Child Protection, Starick Services (Family and Domestic Violence Case Management and Coordination Service (CMCS)), Geraldton Resource Centre and Chrysalis Support Services.

ONE STOP SHOP

Support was prevalent for the development of a 'One stop shop' where homeless people could access showers, food, clothing, phones and computers, as well as tents or swags. A system of active referrals or a 'no wrong door' approach could either link clients with the range of services they need, or the range of services could be located in one location. Opportunities exist for the community to obtain funding to support this approach through eg Lotterywest or Royalties for Regions. Sound collaboration between agencies would be necessary to achieve the above outcomes, aided by volunteers to assist in distributing information, combined with emergency relief.

It was suggested that agency participation should include nominations from Youth Justice Services, accommodation services, Centre Care, Geraldton Resource Centre,

Midwest Men's Health and Chrysalis Support Services amongst other relevant services and supports.

NEW HOSTEL

A new hostel specifically for children 11-14 years of age was prioritised with a particular focus on responding to the needs of boys over 13 who are not permitted to stay with their mothers in refuges after they have become homeless due to family and domestic violence. A dedicated reference group working closely to engage support for this initiative would include the Department for Child Protection, the Mid-West Human Services Manager's Group and Youth Justice Services, with the express support of the non-government sector.

MID-WEST REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS PLAN 2011-2012

PRIORITY ACTIONS	TASKS	DURATION (How long will it take)	START AND FINISH	AGENCY and RESOURCE-Human or financial
1. REGIONAL INTERAGENCY MEETING	Regular monthly meeting of agency and service representatives would work together to achieve an integrated service response to the homelessness agenda.	1.5 hours per month	October to October and reviewed for ongoing schedule to complete the priority actions of the Regional Homelessness Plan.	Department for Child Protection, Centrelink, Department of Corrective Services including Youth Justice Services, Geraldton Resource Centre, Chrysalis Support Services, Midwest Men's Health, Department of Housing with invitations being extended to all accommodation and casework programmes, general employment and training agencies, generic services responding to homeless people and private real estate agents.
2. SERVICES FOR MEN	Develop an audit and the work breakdown of tasks for projects to configure and deliver a range of services for men in the Mid-West in relation to: counselling, anger management, grief and loss workshops, conflict management, life skills workshops and a place to go and have a chat. Housing access for marginalised men using wrap around or referral services, including hostel accommodation programs targeting domestic violence, redress of anger management, drug and alcohol.	Agenda item for the regional interagency with relevant agencies attending	October to October	Agencies involved in identifying the opportunities for bringing these sorts of services for men into effect include but are not limited to; Mission Australia, Midwest Men's Health, Centre Care, Fusion Australia, Department for Child Protection, STARICK Services (Family and Domestic Violence Case Management and Coordination Service (CMCS)), Geraldton Resource Centre, Chrysalis Support Services.

<p>3. ONE STOP SHOP</p>	<p>The development of a 'One stop shop' where homeless people could access showers, food, clothing, phones and computers, as well as tents or swags. A system of active referrals or a 'no wrong door' approach to link clients with the range of services the need, or relocation of the range of services in one location. Funding for non-government to approach Lotterywest, Royalties for Regions, other. Sound collaboration between agencies would be necessary to achieve the above outcomes aided by volunteers to assist in distributing information, combined with emergency relief.</p>	<p>Focus groups Workshop Draft proposal Regional interagency group to oversee and presentation and assistance of Mid-West Human Service Managers' Group</p>	<p>October 2011 to April 2012</p>	<p>Should include nominations from Youth Justice Services, accommodation services, Centre Care, Geraldton Resource Centre, Midwest Men's Health and Chrysalis Support Services amongst other relevant services and supports.</p>
<p>4. NEW HOSTEL</p>	<p>Draft a proposal for a new hostel specifically for children 11-14 years of age was prioritised with a particular focus on responding to the needs of boys over 13 who are not permitted to stay with their mothers in refuges after they have become homeless due to family and domestic violence.</p>	<p>Project group</p>	<p>October 2011 to May</p>	<p>A dedicated reference group working closely to engage support for this initiative would include the Department for Child Protection, the Mid-West Human Services Manager's Group and Youth Justice Services with the vital input and support of the non-government sector.</p>