

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING

Friday 8 July 2011

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 the members to the meeting:

Present

Hon Kay Hallahan AO	Independent Chair
Ms Benita Cattalini (proxy)	FaHCSIA
Mr Greg Cash	Department of Housing
W/Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Mr Ross Kyrwood	Mission Australia
Mr Terry Preston (proxy)	Mental Health Commission
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Mr Steve Robbins (proxy)	Department of Corrective Services
Ms Julie Waylen	Department for Child Protection
Ms Nanette Williams (teleconference)	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
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Apologies

Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Heather Harker	Department of Corrective Services
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission

2. Minutes of meeting held 10 June 2011

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 10 June 2011 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Specialist Homelessness Services Collection - update

Ms Waylen discussed the briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting and advised that the new system went live on 1 July 2011. Ninety per cent of services, totalling 270 staff members have been trained to use the new system. Support will continue to be provided and additional training will be available to those who missed the first round of training. A once off grant is available for information technology to assist with data migration. Only eight agencies have not yet submitted an application for

this grant. The Department is working with these agencies to ensure they are able to access the grant where required.

Members formally congratulated Ms Waylen and her team on successfully achieving this outcome in such a tight timeframe.

3.2 Senior Officers Group update – Inner City Mental Health

Ms Waylen advised that the Inner City Mental Health project is progressing well and provided a brief overview of the briefing paper provided prior to the meeting.

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness Implementation Plan Senior Officers Group (SOG) is responsible for supporting the implementation of the WA NPAH Implementation Plan and ensuring any barriers or blockages to the success of the NPAH initiatives are addressed at the interagency SOG level. The SOG includes representatives from all key State government agencies involved with the implementation of the NPAH.

Street to Home Managers have indicated that inner city homelessness accommodation services are unable to adequately meet the needs of clients with mental illness. Through the SOG, Department of Health Mental Health representatives, a working group has been set up to clearly identify the nature of the problem and to work towards improving the services required for clients with mental illness. Mental Health and Street to Home managers are working in collaboration to develop a business plan to progress this initiative.

4. UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

4.1 *Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors for Affordable Housing*

Mr Cash provided an overview of the *Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors for Affordable Housing*. Ensuing discussion highlighted the following:

- The strategy is a 10 year directions paper, endorsed by Cabinet.
- The Strategy is an enabler, providing a policy position on delivery. This is a significant structural shift in from focusing on management of the public housing system.
- Aims to strengthen the social housing system in WA.
- Provides for an increasing supply of social housing.
- The Strategy advocates enhancing the community housing sector.
- The Strategy discusses the requirement for the development of additional exit points out of public housing.
- Better integration of homelessness through a *housing needs register* to match individual client needs to appropriate housing.
- Public and community housing are expensive options for government. Less expensive alternate options such as subsidising private rental are advocated.
- Working in collaboration with agencies to ensure the right support is available to the client.
- Benefits of individualised funding models – support and accommodation packaged together.
- An EOI process calling for the development of units for less than \$300 000 has begun. The units will be utilised in areas including mental health, disabilities and housing government workers.

- Next question to tackle is *what makes housing unaffordable?*

Members noted that with the varied programs and accommodation types, there may be unnecessary (or necessary) overlap occurring. It was suggested that the key government departments meet to discuss the programs they have, scope of delivery and systemic issues. This will provide clarity where necessary and potentially enhance integration.

Action: Meeting to be convened with Department for Child Protection, Department of Housing, Disability Services Commission, Mental Health Commission, Drug and Alcohol Office and WACH members (Mr Kyrwood and Prof Flatau) to discuss systemic issues around homelessness and housing.

5. Development of Regional Plans to reduce homelessness

Ms Waylen advised that the development of the regional plans to reduce homelessness is progressing well. Using information gathered at the consultations, regional plan discussion papers for each region have been prepared. These discussion papers will assist regions to identify at least three practical priorities to be undertaken in 2011. Grants of \$5000 have been offered to each region to engage a funded non-government agency to assist with facilitating the establishment and accomplishment of the plans.

Consultations are underway across the metropolitan area, to develop metropolitan Regional Homelessness Plans, which will occur in the second half of August and September.

6. Future Agenda Items

- International Alliance to End Homelessness Conference (Ian Carter, September 2011).
- Commissioner for Mental Health, Mr Eddie Bartnik.
- Impact of the Modern Award, Federal Equal Pay process
- Tenancy Rights.
- Government departments - homelessness programs.
- Housing issues re Mining Companies.
- Links between specialist homelessness services and health services.

7. Correspondence

Action: Prepare letter to Mr Bartnik inviting him to a WACH meeting to discuss mental health initiatives pertaining to homelessness.

8. General business

8.1 Sustainable Funding and Contracting with the Not-for-Profit Sector

Ms Waylen advised that the Department has disseminated the letters to services regarding the funding increases. Specialist homelessness services will be receiving the indexation component only at this time.

The funding increase will be rolled out in two components and will include 4% indexation in 2011-2012.

Component one:

- Where the Commonwealth contribution is less than 50%, the price adjustment will apply to the entire contract value;
- For contracts with a 50% or greater Commonwealth contribution there will be no initial price adjustment. However flexibility exists to consider these contracts going forward. An approach to these contracts will be developed after the outcome of the Fair Work Australia Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Case is released and in consultation with the Commonwealth Government; and
- Joint Commonwealth/State homelessness contracts currently in place or under review will be addressed as a matter of priority following the outcome of the Fair Work Australia Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Case, with an increased paid commensurate with the Component I price adjustment and Component II determined following consultation with the Commonwealth.

Component two:

- A second increase averaging 10% will be rolled out between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2014 as contracts are reviewed, and will be linked to the roll out of procurement reforms.

8.2 National Governance Arrangements

Ms Waylen advised that the Community and Disability Services Ministers Advisory Council has merged with the Housing Ministers Advisory Committee to form the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services. There is also a new Select Committee on Homelessness. The first meeting is scheduled for 21 October 2011, in Canberra.

8.3 Homeless Persons Week

The Chair advised members that Homeless Persons Week is scheduled for 1-7 August 2011.

8.4 2011 Census – 9 August 2011

The Chair noted that the ABS Census will take place on 9 August 2011. Information on the Census can be found at <http://abs.gov.au/Census>.

8.5 Other business

8.5.1 National Quality Framework – update

Ms Cattalini advised that the draft report will be available in July. Mr Michael King is the Western Australian representative on the National Working Group. Ms Cattalini has prepared a response to WACH based on the concerns outlined in the submission on the NQF. This will be forwarded electronically to Ms Flanagan for distribution to members.

9. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and Ms Williams for participating via teleconference. The meeting closed at 10:20am.

The next meeting will be held on 12 August, 2011 at 9am.