

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 6 November 2013

Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street, East Perth
Meeting commenced at 9:00am

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting:

Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Mr Richard Aspinall	Department of Social Services
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Dr Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Astrid Kalders	Department of Corrective Services
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Trina Whitton	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Apologies

Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare

2. Minutes of meeting held on 2 October 2013

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 2 October 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Homelessness and Offenders, Department of Corrective Services

Ms Kalders provided a brief overview of the paper provided prior to the meeting *Homelessness and Offenders*. Discussion ensued including the following issues:

- Complexities in accessing housing and the provision of required support for ex-offenders, with a particular focus on sex offenders.
- Complex challenges facing ex-offenders in re-entering the community.
- Demand on the housing and support services offered by the Department of Corrective Services exceeds what the Department is able to provide on its own.
- Across agency collaboration to support people with complex needs is occurring and is required on an increased and on-going basis.
- Increased understanding is required of the risks associated with not finding suitable accommodation for this cohort. Ex-offenders accommodated with support are less likely to re-offend.

Ms Kalders agreed to provide additional information on the history of the current programs, including the Re-Entry program, program name changes and to what extent NPAH contributed to these programs.

Ms Errey advised that the Department of Housing is able to provide data on the length of time ex-offenders remain in public housing, when they have been referred through a recognised program.

Action:

- Ms Kalders to provide a brief historical overview of the changes to programs/program names.
- Ms Kalders and Ms Errey to work together to better understand ex-offenders public housing outcomes and demands for housing.

3.2 2015 Conference - update

Ms Gregory advised that she has had preliminary discussions with several Peak organisations, including WACOSS and Shelter, regarding the potential to host a joint conference for the homelessness sector in 2014. Other Peaks to be approached include the Women's Council and YACWA. The potential to seek funding from other sources such as LotteryWest was also discussed.

Ms Williams advised that the Department of Commerce has just awarded the tender for the new Central Resource Unit (CRU) to Tenancy WA Inc. It is understood that they host a conference each year and may be interested in participating in a partnership arrangement for a 2014/2015 conference. Ms Gregory agreed to follow up on this suggestion.

Action: Ms Gregory to facilitate a meeting with Peak organisations, including Tenancy WA, to progress this item.

4. WACH priority areas

4.1 & 4.2 State and Regional Plans

Ms Whitton advised that she attended a homeless forum held by Subiaco Council recently to present on the State and Regional Plans. The forum was arranged to discuss the increasing number of rough sleepers in the area. The City of Perth, homelessness services and community representatives also attended. While the number of homeless person is small, they have increased from 4 to 10 over the last 12 months.

There was discussion regarding the postponement of regional workshops. It was reiterated that the current environment of uncertainty regarding funding is not conducive to planning the way forward or consulting with the sector on future arrangements. Services are again in a position where retention of staff and the ability to commit to on-going support for clients is becoming difficult, due to uncertain NPAH funding beyond June 2014.

Regions are continuing to utilise their existing forums to keep homelessness on the agenda, three regions have requested attendance and participation from the Homelessness Team in these forums. Joondalup, Peel and Geraldton have requested support to progress the development of their plans before the end of this year and a staff member from CPFS Head Office will attend each meeting. Members generally agreed that moving forward with future planning and sector consultations may be better placed in April/May next year, when decisions regarding funding should be known.

4.3 Sector Consultation - consultative framework

The Chair is scheduled to meet with the Parliamentary Secretary next week and will be able to provide more information at the next meeting regarding the priority areas.

4.4 Policy, advice to the Minister, dissemination of information
Deferred.

5. General Business

5.1 Family and Domestic Violence Reform

Ms Collins tabled a draft document providing a snap shot of the proposed *Perth Metropolitan Domestic Violence Service System*. A brief overview was provided including reasons for the current reform.

The Domestic Violence Service System Project built on the interim report and was undertaken by the Department in consultation with the Women's Council. The Review outlined recommendations for a formalised 24/7 emergency response in the metropolitan area for women and children requiring a crisis response, this model would guide an integrated and responsive system.

An important component of this approach is that four specialist 24/7 emergency response services will take a lead coordination and facilitation role across the Perth metropolitan area and will be the key referral points for the Western Australian Police Service, Crisis Care Unit and the new Homeless Referral Service and provide better access to services.

A forum is scheduled on 25 November for the metropolitan FDV services seeking advice and feedback from the sector on the proposed model.

Action: A progress report on this reform to be provided to Council early in the New Year.
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5.2 Commission of Audit and new departmental arrangements

Mr Aspinall provided an overview of the changes to the mechanics of the Commonwealth government and the Commission of Audit. He will forward relevant documents, including the terms of reference for the Commission of Audit, for members information.

Key focus areas include:

- Education - Truancy
- Workforce participation
- Safe Communities

It was noted that the Commission of Audit is reviewing each program holistically, including what may have occurred had the programs not been in place.

Action: Mr Aspinall to provide documents on the Commission of Audit to be circulated to members.

5.3 Other business

5.3.1 Housing Conference in Adelaide

The Hon Kevin Andrews, MP, Minister for Social Services provided a speech at the conference, this was tabled for members information.

Discussion ensued on the collection and use of high quality data as supporting evidence for the ongoing funding of programs.

5.3.2 Council Membership

The Chair informed that the Minister is currently reviewing the Council membership. He said that the current membership will conclude at the end of 2013 and that the new Council is likely to commence after March 2014.

5.3.3 Change in Appointment

Mr Aspinall informed members that he has been appointed as State Manager for the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet and that he will not maintain a role on the Council beyond the current period.

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 4 December, 2013 at 9am.