

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING

Wednesday 4 July 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 Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre

In attendance

Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Anna Paris	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection

Apologies

Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service
Ms Heather Harker	Department of Corrective Services
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare

2. Minutes of meeting held 8 June 2012

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 8 June 2012 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Business Arising

3.1 National Quality Framework

Ms Flynn distributed the two Charters, Options 1 and 2 regarding the Homelessness Charter of Rights and the Principles for Clients Complaints Handling, as previously emailed to members.

Ms Flynn advised that the NQF will include a Homelessness Charter of Rights to be adopted by both government and non-government agencies. The Select Council on Homelessness have agreed to consider both Options. Option 1 has been developed by

FaHCSIA and Option 2 by DCP. Ms Flynn asked members to consider what the impact would be on their service or government agency if the options were implemented.

Members discussed both options, and provided the following feedback:

- The two options are quite different, aimed at different target groups. Option 1 provides high level principles, while Option 2 is more client centred, providing principles for working at the operational level.
- Members agreed that the principles contained in both options are sound and both options were viable, with amendments.
- Members noted that Option 2 contained some statements that services may not be prepared to agree to as they may not be achievable. For example, *You will be provided with opportunities to take an active role in the decision making process of our service.*
- Concern was expressed that the current Charters focus significantly on the rights of the clients, but do not clearly express or identify client responsibilities.
- Members noted that the choice should not be one or the other, but that the Options complement each other.
- Ms Flynn advised it is anticipated that only one Charter will be adopted Nationally, but that WA could decide to have a Charter, such as Option 2, to complement Option 1, should Option 1 be adopted.
- The Charter developed in Tasmania is a larger document incorporating higher level, overarching principles as well as the operational level principles. Developing a similar Option was suggested.
- DCP noted that Option 1 did not fully reflect the intent as outlined through the NQF consultations.
- Ms Flynn advised that a working group consisting of 24 government and non-government representatives has been established to provide input into the review of the WA SAAP Service Standards. This work will complement the NQF. Ms Flynn will keep WACH members updated with the progress and outcomes of this working group.
- Government representatives suggested that it would be useful for agencies to review their own Charters before considering adopting another at the operational level.

In summary, members were satisfied with Option 1 and agreed that Option 2 required broader discussion out of session with specialist homelessness services.

Ms Flynn briefly discussed the paper on *Nationally Consistent Approach to Client Complaints Handling*. These are overarching principles with the view to States developing their own complaints handling mechanisms. DCP has an established mechanism already in place which is incorporated into contract management. Members agreed that the proposed principles are sufficient.

4. Future Directions of WACH

Item to be deferred to the next meeting due to the number of apologies at this meeting.

Members made the following suggestions for discussion at the next meeting:

- Reports by government departments at the Council meetings.
- Regional initiatives and issues including integration at the local levels.
- National agenda.
- Development of a Business Plan to drive the WACH agenda.
- Service gap regarding local governments.

5. Update from Department of Housing

Ms Errey questioned the level of reporting required by the Department of Housing compared to other government departments. Members agreed to place this item on the list for future directions of WACH for further discussion.

6. General Business

6.1 Recognition of Mr Tony Pietropiccolo AM

The Chair acknowledged and congratulated Mr Pietropiccolo on his appointment as a member of the Order of Australia, the highest recognition for outstanding achievement and service to the community services sector.

7. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:05am. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 August, 2012 at 9am. The Chair asked that this meeting be extended to two hours to enable sufficient time to work through the development of a Business Plan.