

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING

Friday 10 June 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
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Mr Greg Cash	Department of Housing
W/Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Ms Heather Harker	Department of Corrective Services
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Ross Kyrwood	Mission Australia
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Julie Waylen	Department for Child Protection

In attendance

Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
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Apologies

Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

2. Minutes of meeting held 13 May 2011

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 13 May 2011 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. GUEST SPEAKER: PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Ms Rebecca Brown, Executive Director, Cabinet and Policy, Office of the Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The Chair welcomed Ms Brown to the meeting and members were introduced.

Ms Brown provided a comprehensive overview of the Partnership Forum including the following:

- The focus of the Forum is to improve outcomes and provide opportunities for all Western Australians, particularly those who are disadvantaged, in crisis and/or at risk.

- Working towards sustainable funding and contracts, promote innovation and building capacity.
- State agreements address the State component only.
- Contracts based on Strategic Implementation Plans – outcome based.
- Emphasis on a relationship based environment.
- Partnership Policy involving open and transparent communication; better outcomes for Western Australians; building the relationship between the public sector and the not for profit sector.
- Establishment of a central unit in government to support not for profit organisations working collaboratively. Eighteen million dollars has been allocated to support the implementation of reforms.
- Proposed establishment of an independent peer review process recognising the wealth of experience within the sector to drive these reforms.
- Simplification of contract terms and conditions. Aim to reduce the administrative burden.
- Governance and oversight is on-going throughout the roll out of the reforms.
- The proposed central unit will provide quarterly reports to the Partnership Forum. The Partnership Forum will report to the Premier.
- Additional grants will be available including *Social Innovation Grants* and the *Community Development Investment Fund*.
- Self-directed services – recommended by the EAC as part of a process of ensuring an ongoing shift in the policy and planning around the development of services to better focus on the needs of clients. A forum will be held on 10 August to generate thinking and discussion on this topic.
- The diversity of contracts across Western Australia and resulting complexities with acquittal processes. The funding will be administered as a price adjustment. There is no one price to fit all.
- The public sector is well informed about the reforms and new processes.
- It was queried how it will be managed where organisations have multiple funding sources and not all are subject to the increase in funds. Ms Brown advised that while it is not prescribed that the money will go to increasing salaries, there is an expectation that this will be the case.
- From the government perspective the means of evaluating the outcomes from the increase in funding is essentially about the workforce – it is a means to an outcome – quality improvement through improved staff retention etc.

Members agreed that these reforms would be/have been well received. Concerns regarding the complexities around homelessness and sustainability were discussed focusing on funding issues. Members expressed concern that the interim decision by Fair Work Australia has slowed the process towards sustainability.

Members expressed concern that with the additional funding there would be an expectation that additional services or outputs would be achieved. Ms Brown advised that it will be very clear that the money is intended to better pay employees not for additional services. The same clear letter will go to all relevant organisations, CEO's, Contract Managers etc.

It was noted that Specialist Homelessness Services are not yet ready to proceed, so they will not be receiving the letter initially.

The Chair thanked Ms Brown for her attendance and for providing a thorough presentation.

4. GUEST SPEAKER: JOB SERVICES AUSTRALIA (9:45am)

Ms Joanna Tokarczyk, Team Leader, Employment and Participation, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

The Chair welcomed Ms Tokarczyk and Ms Trish Evans, also from DEEWR, to the meeting.

Ms Evans provided an overview of Job Services Australia (JSA).

The focus of the Australian Government's national employment system is to meet the labour market related needs of:

- Job seekers, especially the most vulnerable;
- Employers and industry; and
- The wider community.

There are 14 JSA providers in Western Australia, throughout metropolitan and regional locations. They provide a range of specialist services for client groups including indigenous and culturally-linguistically diverse clients; and also for people with mental health problems and disabilities.

JSA has seen a 10% increase in employment placements from previous arrangements. Increased targeting of disadvantaged job seekers has resulted in significantly improved outcomes for those people.

Additional issues discussed included:

- Clients are asked to tick a box regarding homelessness, however this is not compulsory. It is not filtered down to the type of homelessness.
- Each JSA service provider must be robust in their delivery of services given the diverse ranges of clients.
- JSA providers must have good connections with the community to facilitate appropriate referrals.
- Job seekers are essentially linked to one JSA provider, however, if they relocate they are able to link into a new provider and still access funding where required.

The Chair thanked Ms Tokarczyk and Ms Evans for their informative presentation.

5. Business Arising

5.1 Specialist Homelessness Services Collection - update

Deferred to next meeting.

5.2 National Quality Framework – update

Deferred to next meeting.

6. UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

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

Deferred to next meeting.

7. Development of Regional Plans to reduce homelessness

Deferred to next meeting.

8. Future Agenda Items

- Impact of the Modern Award, Federal Equal Pay process
- Tenancy Rights.
- Government departments - homelessness programs.
- Housing issues re Mining Companies.
- Accommodation design for homeless people/families.
- Links between specialist homelessness services and health services.

9. General business

Nil

9.1 Other business

Mr Aspinall provided a paper on the Budget 2011-2012 Homelessness Highlights.

10. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 10:40am.

The next meeting will be held on July 8, 2011 at 9am.