

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Friday 8 April 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 (departed at 9:40)	FaHCSIA
Mr Greg Cash	Department of Housing
Dr Paul Flatau (arrived 9:30)	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew (departed at 9:40)	Department for Child Protection
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Heather Harker	Department for Corrective Services
Mr James Hunter (proxy)	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Ross Kyrwood (arrived 9:30)	Mission Australia
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare

In attendance

Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
Ms Benita Cattalini	FaHCSIA

Apologies

Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Ms Julie Waylen	Department for Child Protection
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

The Chair advised that Ms Brown, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, is unable to attend the meeting this morning and welcomed Ms Cattalini, Branch Manager, Housing and Infrastructure (WA), FaHCSIA, to the meeting.

2. Guest Speaker: Partnership Forum

Ms Brown, Executive Director, Cabinet and Policy, Office of the Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

3. Minutes of meeting held 11 March 2011

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 11 March 2011 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

4. Business Arising

4.1 NPAH Forum

In addition to outlining the information provided in the agenda paper provided prior to the meeting, Ms Flynn detailed the Forum agenda, particularly the evaluation session. The evaluators will seek appointments with Council members who are not able to attend the Forum.

The Chair has agreed to facilitate the Forum, there are now over 200 registrations.

The Chair thanked Ms Flynn and her team for the time and effort that has gone into developing such a comprehensive and informative sector Forum.

Action: A letter, formally acknowledging Ms Flynn and her team regarding the Forum to be prepared.

4.2 Specialist Homelessness Services Collection – update

Ms Flynn briefly outlined the paper provided prior to the meeting and advised that the new Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) will commence on 1 July 2011. Training is beginning on 1 May 2011. Given the tight timeframe for implementation and training it has been proposed that a 'soft' start date be applied enabling a staggered implementation.

4.3 National Quality Framework - update

Ms Flynn advised that the consultations had taken place last month, the outcomes of which will assist in formulating the preferred option of a National Quality Framework (NQF). Mr Michael King, Accord West, had provided a presentation on the NQF from the sectors perspective. The agenda paper disseminated prior to the meeting provides further detail.

The following additional issues were raised:

- Issues of building capacity.
- Concerns regarding quality accreditation control, specifically where agencies are not government funded.
- Concerns that if risk management is not incorporated, quality improvement may not occur.
- Concerns regarding the increased administration and financial burden on agencies.
- Possible unintended policy consequences.
- All comments provided via the surveys and submissions are being incorporated into the report.
- Members agreed to prepare a submission to FaHCSIA on the NQF incorporating the concerns as above.

Action: Ms Flanagan to prepare a submission detailing the issues discussed.

5. Update from the Department of Housing

Mr Cash advised that the State Affordable Housing Strategy will be released in May.

Members queried the development of the new *three strikes policy on antisocial behaviour*. Discussion ensued including concerns raised by Council members:

- The Minister and Cabinet are of the view that harder measures are required to deal with antisocial behaviour.
- Department of Housing is meeting with other Departments to work through strategies required to deal with the consequences.
- The Policy could result in increased homelessness.
- Those affected will predictably be those who are the least able to cope with tenancy requirements, eviction and reestablishment.
- The strategies in place to deal with the outcomes of the Policy?
- The Policy will impact on a number of portfolios (eg health, mental health services, prisons, police). Need to delay the launch until there is a greater understanding by agencies required to play a role.
- The Policy will predictably result in increased cost to the government and the tax payer. Research undertaken in 2008 by AHURI provides a guide on the costs of homelessness.
- There is currently no data available to formulate an accurate prediction about the increased rate of evictions.
- Appeal process – how do evictees appeal if they are unsupported and homeless?
- Where will the evicted people go?
- Increased effort required by NPAH services to provide support to prevent eviction once warnings have been given.
- Non-government housing providers will be adversely affected as evicted persons will impact their housing supply.
- The Three Strikes Policy appears to be contrary to the mandate to reduce homelessness.
- Recommended that a letter be prepared to Minister McSweeney asking her to request the Minister for Housing to develop a strategy to deal with the outcomes of the Policy.
- Housing Minister Buswell has been requested to attend a Council meeting in the near future to discuss the State Affordable Housing Strategy. It was agreed that this new Policy be included for discussion with Minister Buswell when he attends the Council meeting.

<p>Action: A letter to the Minister to be prepared identifying the cost of this action. Mr Kyrwood and Ms Gregory will provide comment.</p>
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6. Development of Regional Plans to reduce homelessness

Ms Flynn advised that the development of the regional plans is progressing well. The Country Contract Managers and District Directors are now involved in the process.

7. Guest Speaker - Ms Cattalini: Links between WACH and the Joint Steering Committee on Remote Indigenous Housing (FaHCSIA)

Ms Cattalini advised that discussions have already taken place with representatives from the Department for Child Protection, the Department of Housing and the Chair.

Ms Cattalini noted that her role is to implement the roll out of the NPA for Indigenous Housing, addressing homelessness and overcrowding issues. Ms Cattalini discussed the agenda paper titled *Links between WACH and the Joint Steering Committee on Remote Indigenous Housing*. The following discussion ensued:

- The Department for Indigenous Affairs has completed a comprehensive survey, discovering where some of the Indigenous people in regional centres are coming from, why they are coming into the centres, what their aspirations are (regarding where they want to live long term) and identifying homelessness.
- This has been a good opportunity, for FaHCSIA, together with the Department for Indigenous Affairs, to identify these people, and assist with the future planning for expenditure for the NPA for Indigenous Housing. It will enable funding to be guided towards placing houses (and people) back into communities subject to that being the aspiration.
- It was suggested that a progress report from the Joint Steering Committee on Remote Indigenous Housing be provided annually to the Council.
- Issues of people travelling to a centre with the intention of a short stay but becoming stranded (lack of transport). Others moved to the particular centre because they were homeless and need access to support.
- Issues with large shifts of people when there is a death in a community.
- Concerns regarding the long term viability of some of the communities.
- Changing needs.
- Possibilities of the provision of camping facilities and support for short stay visitors around Boulder Camp and Silver City (Goldfields). Information around this work can also be provided to the Council for advice and information.
- Also undertaking a comprehensive household survey in Broome, including every Indigenous household, classified by place of origin, aspirations for the future to obtain a clear sense of what their long term housing needs will be.
- Drawing strong links between the Department of Housing, Indigenous Affairs and other relevant partners.

The Chair thanked Ms Cattalini for her informative presentation.

Action: Council to request the Minister to contact her colleagues Ministers Buswell and Collier requesting that they consider the recommendations made by the Department of Indigenous Affairs.
JSC to provide an Annual Report to the Council on progress regarding the Indigenous homelessness (via the reporting process with/to DCP).

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.

- Impact of the change from Job Network to Job Services Australia.
- Guest speaker from EAC Homelessness Task Group.
- Links between specialist homelessness services and health services.

9. General business

9.1 Cabinet re-appointment of Chair, Hon Kay Hallahan AO and appointment of FaHCSIA representative, Mr Richard Aspinall

Members were advised that the re-appointment of Chair, Hon Kay Hallahan AO and the appointment of FaHCSIA representative, Mr Richard Aspinall have been formally endorsed by Cabinet.

9.2 Other business

9.2.1 Updated Fact Sheet

Ms Flynn distributed the updated Fact Sheet – Homelessness National Partnership Agreement: Western Australian Initiatives Information Update, which now includes all new initiatives.

10. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 10:35am.

The next meeting will be held on May 13, 2011 at 9am.