

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Friday 11 November 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 members to the meeting:

Present

Hon Kay Hallahan AO	Independent Chair
Ms Benita Cattalini	FaHCSIA
W/Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Heather Harker	Department of Corrective Services
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Helen Miskell	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
Ms Elizabeth Cook	FaHCSIA

Apologies

Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Mr Greg Cash	Department of Housing

Ms Benita Cattalini advised, subject to Council members agreeing, that Ms Elizabeth Cook would in future accompany Mr Richard Aspinall to Council meetings to ensure that information to and from WACH is appropriately and expeditiously dealt with, given the extremely busy nature of Mr Aspinall's work.

Resolution: Members resolved that Ms Cook would be welcome to attend WACH meetings as an observer, accompanying Mr Aspinall, State Manager, FaHCSIA. Council members indicated that this arrangement and recognition of the importance of the Council's role was very much appreciated.

2. Minutes of meeting held 14 October 2011

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 14 October 2011 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Guest Speaker – MR ANTHONY COLLIER and MS ADELE STEWART

- Street to Home and CHOGM response

The Chair welcomed Ms Adele Stewart, UnitingCare West and Mr Anthony Collier, Mobile Clinical Outreach Team (MCOT) to the meeting.

Ms Stewart apologised for not disseminating a paper to members and advised that she would provide one, via Ms Flanagan, following the meeting.

Ms Stewart and Mr Collier provided detail on the Street to Home program and the CHOGM response. Discussion ensued on the following:

- The additional services provided during the CHOGM weekend provided valuable insights into the needs of homeless people sleeping rough in the inner city and the gaps in service delivery.
- Collaboration of all the agencies has been a significant leap forward in terms of the way agencies work together in meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged.
- Mental health response through MCOT has made a significant difference – extremely beneficial to clients who wouldn't normally access mental health or mainstream services.
- Inner city - working with a core group of people, predominantly Aboriginal people with complex needs, including substance abuse issues, resulting in anti-social behaviours negatively impacting on accessing suitable accommodation. Establishment of a day centre is an option for this group, requires investigation. Engagement of drug and alcohol services would benefit this group.
- How do we best respond to the needs of this group and manage the safety of staff?
- *The Sisters Place* in Fremantle - good example of how it can work– they go out to collect Aboriginal women from the streets and accommodate them over night – based on trust and respect where they leave their 'drug' gear at the door and collect on the way out. This service is run by volunteers.
- Issue for hospitals in finding accommodation for women exiting hospital, concern that hospitals are avoiding admitting people knowing that this will be an issue.
- A change in the location of Tranby House has resulted in an increase in Aboriginal people accessing Tranby House – now about 50%. Numbers can fluctuate due to a range of factors such as visitors to Perth for a funeral.
- Complex issues can be addressed through Street to Home where there is recognition of issues/conditions. For example acquired brain injury resulting from drug use is not broadly recognised as a condition requiring treatment.
- Noongar Patrol provided with small grant to assist people to return home.
- Constraint of Street to Home – gap in the type of housing required.
- People are better able to make decisions once they have had two or three nights sleep in a safe environment. These people may not be ready for longer term planning, care plans etc. – they just need a safe place to sleep. It can take approximately six weeks before they are able to deal with longer term planning.
- Mental health perspective – need to develop a relationship of trust. Finding that a boarding house/hostel environment is preferred over independent living.
- Swan Valley Noongar Camp site is an example of well designed, culturally appropriate accommodation. The location would be appropriate for many who feel displaced in the city. While the Camp may have been problematic for a range of reasons, the design could be reviewed/considered for future developments.

- There has been funding allocated for the development of a new acute homelessness night shelter in the Perth inner city area. This shelter is being developed by St Vincent de Paul in consultation with Aboriginal people. All involved are very concerned that it meets the needs of the client group, including the design. Client group – people who have no other options and/or don't want to access other options. It would be ideal for Mental Health staff to work on site to develop relationships with clients enabling better outcomes.

Action:

- Ms Flanagan to disseminate paper/s provided by Ms Stewart following the meeting.
- Letter to the Minister advising of the apparent change in hospital admission policy regarding homeless patients and requesting the Minister take this matter up with the Minister for Health.

The Chair thanked Ms Stewart and Mr Collier for the valuable information and the stimulating discussion on the issues.

4. BUSINESS ARISING

4.1 Inner City Homelessness Responses – project

Ms Miskell disseminated the proposed project brief and discussion ensued.

It is proposed to undertake a project to describe the current service system including the impact of influences; investigate the current service requirements and make recommendations regarding the changes required to ensure an appropriate service mix to provide timely responses and a seamless referral process.

New building projects are underway which will provide expanded accommodation options for people experiencing homelessness. There will be 177 new beds in total.

Funding has been allocated for the development of a new acute homeless night shelter in the Perth inner city area, as discussed during agenda item 3 above.

Importance of design was discussed further, particularly relating to two new projects being developed in Karratha. Ms Miskell invited comment from members regarding the design of these new builds.

The Haymarket Foundation was provided as an example of a facility designed to provide integrated services to homeless clients. The Haymarket Foundation Clinic's prime objective is the provision of medical services to the homeless and disadvantaged people of Sydney. Quality medical care is provided to clients who present with medical problems which result from mental illness, drug & alcohol dependencies, and lifestyle. Additional services provided include a secondary needle and syringe programme, showers, toilets, mail collection, vitamins and referral to welfare and drug and alcohol services.

Members discussed the importance of bringing the relevant parties together to facilitate solutions, thereby stimulating action, and the benefits of enabling flexibility within services to broaden client groups where possible.

Mr Flatau advised the meeting of a survey he is undertaking involving every service between Perth and Armadale including homelessness, drug and alcohol and mental health, regarding integrated care/service delivery. Speaking to both services and clients – asking what are their needs and are they being met? In an integrated

service system, wherever they enter the system they should be receiving the support required. An aim of the survey is to test the extent to which this is occurring.

Members expressed concern that there is an increasing cohort of young females and migrant women entering the system as victims of abuse. Also of concern is the increasing number of Aboriginal women seeking assistance as a result of sexual assault mainly by non-aboriginal males. These women are most often reluctant to report the assault to Police and to press charges.

Action: Members to provide comment to Ms Miskell regarding design principles by the next meeting.

4.2 Proposed Homelessness Conference - incorporating NPAH and NAHA services

Discussion deferred to the next meeting. Ms Flanagan to email a request for a WACH member to be a representative on the Conference Working Group to provide advice regarding the conference program, workshop presenters and topics and the key note speaker.

Action: Ms Flanagan to email members requesting nominations for a representative for the Conference Working Group.

5. UPDATE FROM DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Deferred to next meeting due to the absence of Department of Housing representative who was an apology for the meeting.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL PLANS TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

Ms MacWilliam provided a paper outlining the regional homelessness plan process and summarising the priorities for action for each region, highlighting the following:

Summary of priorities for action:

- Develop a working group to carry out the priority actions
- A new hostel or increased accommodation facilities
- Better coordination to develop a collaborative
- Service Directory/ Website
- More services
- Community 'Connect' events for homeless people
- One Stop Shop = 3 of 15 regions
- Further consultation in the region
- Early intervention/prevention
- Local model for moving people along the housing continuum
- Specific effort to include the views of homeless people

Next Steps

- Sign off of local plans by local government and non-government agencies. This is designed so that there is not just one opportunity to sign off. If a required agency is not present at the official signing, they are able to sign at a later date. Some regions will be hosting events to launch the plans, while others are opting to take to the next Human Services Managers' Group meeting for sign off and implementation.
- Commencement of local project management groups.

- Biannual meetings between local and non-government sector coinciding at HSMG meeting.
- Reporting progress every 6 months to Human Service Managers' Groups (HSMG) and then reporting to WACH.

Reporting Schedule

- May 2012 first progress report due from each region
- November 2012 second progress report due
- 2012 progress review of plans and NPAH Evaluation will provide feedback and advice
- 2013 Revision of State and Regional Plans

Ms MacWilliam discussed the potential to develop a web-based directory of services including an advanced search mechanism for use by services in accessing required information about other services predominantly for referral purposes. In the interim all districts have been advised to encourage non government service deliverers to register their agency details on the WACOSS online Community Service Directory.

The Chair acknowledged Ms MacWilliam's good work on the regional plans and congratulated her on the excellent, well managed process and facilitation at workshops. Mr Glew announced that Ms MacWilliam is leaving the Department in early December to embark on a two year secondment to the Department of Housing, working on the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Members congratulated Ms MacWilliam and offered their best wishes, noting that Ms MacWilliam will be continuing her role to reduce homelessness in her new position.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- The outcome of the Fair Work Australia Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Case to be discussed at a future meeting.
- Social Innovation Grants – Ruah has received a grant involving an employment program. Mr Francis Lynch, CEO, Ruah to be invited to a meeting to provide an overview.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

8.1 2012 meeting dates

Action: Ms Flanagan to circulate proposed meeting dates for 2012.
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8.2 Other Business

Nil

9. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and the meeting closed at 10:37am.

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