

# Western Australian Council on Homelessness

## MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 2 March 2016

Department for Child Protection and Family Support  
189 Royal Street, East Perth  
Meeting commenced at 9:04am

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

#### Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Anne Moore	The Lucy Saw Centre/Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence
Mr Don Tunnickliffe	Swan Emergency Accommodation
Ms Julie Yusop	Albany Youth Support Association

#### In attendance

Ms Pippa Monger	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Andrea Martin	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Irina Cattalini	Western Australian Council of Social Services

#### Apologies

Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Janine Kingston	Housing Authority
Ms Maureen Lewis	Mental Health Commission
Mr Daniel Morrison	Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Services
Dr Robyn Martin	Curtin University
Ms Ricky Burges	Western Australian Local Government Association

Mr Glew arrived at 9.16am.

Mr Jeyaraj left the meeting at 9:47am.

Acknowledgement to Country made by the Chair.

### 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 December 2015

The minutes from the Western Australian Council on Homelessness meeting held on 10 February 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

### 3. Guest Speaker – Ms Irina Cattalini, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Council of Social Services

The Chair provided background information on the forums WACH are undertaking with homelessness service providers to forward key information back to the Minister and inviting peak bodies to WACH meetings to gain an understanding of who WACH should be engaging with in the homelessness sector.

Ms Cattalini provided the following information about WACOSS work in the homelessness sector:

- WACOSS is part of a national network of Council of Social Services (COSS) in each state and have three collective major policy priorities:
  - issues around poverty (particularly child poverty);
  - civil society and strategic sector policy; and
  - housing and homelessness.
- Working around the NAHA and NPAH contributing advocacy into the Federal and State levels of Government. Active around trying to secure long term funding around the NPAH.
- As reviews of NPAH have shown that WA is performing more positively, WACOSS has been looking at benefits of a bilateral agreement as opposed to a national partnership agreement, this has only been in the form of conversations with key stakeholders (including other COSS's).
- Partnering with Shelter to put letters to Federal members in WA to highlight the need for secure homelessness funding in WA and implications of the Commonwealth fixed funding level which may result in cuts to services in WA.
- Responded to the federation processes in regard to housing and homelessness. Advocating for certainty of funding to homelessness irrespective of the mechanism for providing funding.
- Advocating for legislative community service guarantees, ACOSS has released papers if members want more detail. There should be guarantee around some community services similar to government services (for example, education and hospitals).
- WACOSS currently discussing with members regarding whether a position on government structure reform should be put forward. WACOSS has written to the Premier stating that consultation should occur before announcing structural reforms.
- Affordable housing – appropriate tax settings, working with Housing Authority (Housing) around appropriate tenancy supports and co-designing a new tenancy support model, strategies around increasing the supply of stock.
- Principles for co-design – needs to be local, collaborative across government agencies and community services sector, right accountability for outcomes, good data to inform outcomes.
- Biggest issue with homelessness right now is certainty of funding.

Discussion following the presentation:

- Recent announcement of 11 vocational training colleges to be cut down to five could be a sign of what is to come with structural government agency changes.
- WACOSS doesn't have a view on the position of homelessness if there is a re-arrangement in government or department/s, the role of WACOSS is to represent the views of the stakeholders whatever the external circumstances present. Some states have attempted to amalgamate into human services departments which include housing and homelessness, with differing degrees of effectiveness.
- More concentration of funding going into services after people are homeless as opposed to early intervention. Majority of the Department's early intervention funding is homelessness. Safe at Home is a good example of an effective early intervention program to prevent homelessness.
- Homelessness service providers can provide good advice to Housing regarding the Tenancy Support program to identify the most vulnerable groups.
- Shelter WA is a self-appointed peak for homelessness but only receive funding to provide peak support for housing. WACOSS is not currently resourced to provide peak support for homelessness specifically but does provide a leadership role for advocacy. If require WACOSS can provide more but would need to be resourced adequately.

- Request for WACOSS to consider aboriginal homelessness issues in their agenda. Irina will be in the Pilbara and Kimberley with the Regional Services Reform Unit. Housing has been identified as a primary issue, homelessness has not but unsure if this is because it is viewed as part of the same mix. Irina will seek the views of Aboriginal members with regard to the extent this should be pushed on the agenda.
- Target for specialist homelessness services (SHS) initially was 11 per cent of SHS clients to be Aboriginal, however in WA currently 40 per cent of clients accessing SHS are Aboriginal.
- One point for the Minister: State needs to maintain funding for homelessness and keep pushing Commonwealth for long term funding stability, including entering into a bilateral agreement if agreement cannot be reached with other States.

#### **4. Business Arising**

##### **4.1 Comparison of 2014 and 2015 data re Three Strikes Policy**

Deferred.

ACTION: The Chair to write to the Minister regarding poor government representation at WACH meetings.

##### **4.2 Mental Health Plan – Letter to Minister**

Letter was sent to the Minister as discussed at the last meeting.

ACTION: Ms Monger to send a copy of the letter to WACH members.

##### **4.3 NGO Forum Update**

NGO Forum is scheduled for Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016, 2.30pm – 4.30pm at the Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service.

11 representatives from nine organisations have RSVP'd with Nanette Williams from Pilbara Community Legal Service providing a written response as she is unable to attend. This includes representatives from both Aboriginal organisations and other organisations providing homelessness services to Aboriginal people. In addition, there are also six WACH members attending.

Action: Ms Monger to send a follow up email to those organisations that have not responded.

##### **4.4 Meeting with Peak bodies update**

Mr Glew advised a meeting was held with WACOSS, Shelter WA and Community Employers Western Australia with the WACH Chairperson also attending. The discussion included:

- overview of current intergovernmental relations;
- SACS and lack of indexation included in fixed funding;
- correspondence provided the services last year that forewarned of the possible need to go through a similar process to reduce services and plan to work with the sector on this;
- paper on principles to guide this process to be provided to attendees;
- try to reduce impact on regional and remote areas and look for some streamlining that may be enabled in those areas; and
- need for the peaks to undertake active advocacy.

#### **5. WACH Priority Areas**

##### **5.1 State Plans and Regional Plans**

State Plan (Snapshot paper) is still with Corporate Communications regarding photos or data snapshots to complete the paper. The paper needs to be signed by the Minister as promptly as possible.

Planning for regional forums has commenced. Will be going out to regional areas but still planning how to undertake forums in the metro area (eg via corridors). Keen to utilise any existing networks. A survey will also be undertaken with service providers leading up to the forums.

## **6. General Business**

### **6.1 Other Business**

The Director General, Ms Emma White had planned to attend this meeting, but the Chair advised that there was no specific agenda item for her to address so she thankfully declined. Ms White will be attending the Minister's Homelessness meeting in Brisbane at the end of March and The Hon.Christian Porter MP, Commonwealth Minister for Social Services will also be attending.

Foyer Foundation Conference – commitment to the idea of foyers but no commitment with funding. Victoria about to procure its 11<sup>th</sup> foyer and NSW procuring its 3<sup>rd</sup> foyer but the total size of their foyers equals the WA Foyer Oxford. Foyers do not address all issues for homelessness and youth, it targets those at a certain point in the continuum.

ANROWS Conference – WA doing much better in regard to government collaboration with the sector.

Recent media response about refuges – need to build on the things that are positive and working as well as discussing the things that are not working. The impact of media responses that concentrate on hopelessness can make the women accessing the service feel hopeless or less inclined to access services.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The meeting was closed at 10:37am.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 April, 2016 at 9am.