

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 3 April 2013

Large Executive Conference Room, Level 2
Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street, East Perth
Meeting commenced at 9:00am

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting:

Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service
Mr Ramu Naidoo (proxy)	FaHCSIA
Mr Alan Watkins (proxy)	Department of Corrective Services

In attendance

Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection
Ms Trina Whitton	Department for Child Protection

Apologies

Dr Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Mr Ian Giles	Department of Corrective Services

2. Minutes of meeting held on 6 March 2013

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 6 March 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Future NPAH arrangements - update

Mr Glew advised that the Select Council on Homelessness met last week, there has been agreement across Australia that the transitional agreement will be signed off and cover the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014. In this time the longer term agreement will be negotiated with the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister has signed off on this agreement and this is being communicated to each jurisdiction at present. The agreement is for \$14.5 million, which includes the existing money with indexation, plus an allowance for the fair work remuneration case. There are still issues to resolve with the remuneration case,

for example the confusion around which agencies are constitutionally incorporated organisations recognised by the agreement. Members expressed concern that this will lead to a two tier system. This is an issue in WA and Queensland as we have separate Industrial Relations Commissions, the other States/Territories are incorporated under the Commonwealth. The Australian Services Union has lodged applications with the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission for the conditions in the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SACS Modern Award) to flow on to the two Awards currently covering employees in Western Australia specialist homelessness services. Any changes to the Awards will result in considerable increases in the costs of providing specialist homelessness services in Western Australia. The Union application mirrors what has been agreed at the Commonwealth level, thus if this is accepted the two systems should be very similar.

Services will be contacted in the near future regarding recontracting under the transitional agreement.

3.2 Work Plan

The Chair distributed the work plan as developed by the working group at an out of session meeting and provided an overview of the items. Members discussed the plan and made some minor changes (attached). It was agreed that this provided a sound basis from which to move forward. The Chair advised that working groups may be established to progress each agenda item. It was noted that WACH meets for limited time each month and therefore careful prioritisation of actions is required to ensure the highest priorities are addressed given the time restraints.

Work has begun on the next State Plan, which will be a standing agenda item for the WACH meetings. It was suggested that WACH advocate the development of a longer term State Plan, ideally in line with the term of government. The new plan, even in draft form, will provide guidance and support to the negotiations for future directions, beyond 2014.

Members discussed the prospect of bringing other Ministers to the table, such as Housing, and also the value of the new Minister for Child Protection also being the Minister for Mental Health.

3.3 Regional planning (FAHCSIA update to Ms Whitton)

Ms Whitton advised that this meeting has been difficult to schedule given the busy workloads of those involved. Mr Naidoo offered to organise the meeting with relevant FaHCSIA staff.

Ms Whitton advised that the regional planning is underway. It is important not to repeat what has been done or double up on anything already being undertaken. All DCP District Directors will be involved in the process as well as non-government and mainstream agencies in each region. Planning is in the early stages, it is expected that issues will be identified for each region to cover (eg emerging trends, service integration) as well issues pertinent to individual regions. It is important that tasks set/priority actions included in the plans are achievable.

Several regions highlighted the need for regional based directories in their 2011/12 regional plans. Ms Whitton tabled the directory produced by the City of Perth as an example of a regional directory of services. It is currently being determined if this is something DCP could fund for each region, if the region determines that this would be a useful tool.

Members requested a 'report card' on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done based around the last regional plans.

Members discussed the value in starting with the 'champions' in the non-government sector. Discussions are required with the key people involved in the last process to determine their views on how successful the plan was in driving change and what may need to be done in the future process to maintain momentum. It would be beneficial to work with the existing networks in the regions, as occurred in the last process. Ms Whitton advised that DCP is demining the possibility of providing funding to an NGO in each region to lead the development of the new/updated regional plans.

Members discussed the value in WACH members travelling to each region to assist in conducting the workshops.

It was queried how the State is divided into regions. Some services cross boundaries and some 'regions' have vastly different issues in different locations within the 'region'. It was suggested that we need to rethink the boundaries, particularly the Pilbara, Goldfields and the Kimberley. How can we better understand the needs across the state, more realistic divisions rather than a broad geographical breakdown. The local communities would be able to provide sound advice on this matter.

Action: Ms Flanagan to email to members the Regional Plan Progress Reports

3.4 *Affordable Housing Strategy, progress report*

Paper provided to members prior to meeting, no questions/comments.

3.5 *Journeys Home Research Report: Number 2*

Paper provided to members prior to meeting, no questions/comments.

3.6 *Lifetime and Intergenerational Experiences of Homelessness in Australia*

Paper provided to members prior to meeting, no questions/comments.

4. WACH Priority Areas

4.1 State Plans

This item was covered under item 3.2

4.2 Regional Plans

This item was covered under item 3.3

4.3 Sector Consultation

This item was covered under item 3.2

4.4 Policy, advice to the Minister, dissemination of information

This item was covered under item 3.2

5. General Business

5.1 Meeting with the Queensland Minister for Housing

The Chair advised that he met with the Queensland Minister for Housing, the Hon Tim Mander, MP, in Queensland two weeks ago. Queensland housing challenges were discussed; the Queensland public housing waitlist is three times that of WA.

5.2 Letter to Minister Morton

The Chair has sent a letter to the new Minister congratulating her on her new portfolio and asking to meet with her at her earliest convenience.

6. 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 May, 2013 at 9am.

The WACH agenda

- Housing affordability, supply and homelessness – understanding the housing system, how it fits together and how we can make it change
- Lack of integration – service delivery, agencies/government departments
- Emerging trends

Agenda Item 1 : State Plan

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide an evidence base to demonstrate the linkages between the rate of homelessness and housing affordability and supply.		
WACH advocates that these items are addressed in the State Plan as it moves forward into 2014/15.		
Advocate a longer term State Plan – aligned with the term of government.		

Agenda Item 2 : Regional Plans

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline
Strong community based planning ethos.		
Focus on people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the region (specific to local needs of each region).		
Mechanism for informing WACH (and the Minister) of issues occurring in the regions.		

Agenda Item 3 : Sector Consultation/Roundtables

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline
Expand the understanding / develop common understandings. Linking understanding of housing supply and homelessness. Links to the affordable housing agenda.		
Increase understanding to of the broader agenda and including other government and mainstream agencies. Provide better strategic policy advice to the Minister/s addressing homelessness.		
Solution focused conversation rather than a consult.		
Working towards a shared understanding between all sectors.		

**Agenda Item 4 : Influence Policy, Advise Minister,
Disseminate information to Sector**

Actions	Responsibility	Timeline
Provide the Minister with timely and strategic advice and options for dissemination of information.		
Identify opportunities/mechanisms to influence policy direction.		