

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 6 February 2013

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

Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Hilary MacWilliam	Department of Housing
Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection

Apologies

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
Mr Ian Giles	Department of Corrective Services

2. Minutes of meeting held on 5 December 2012

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 5 December 2012 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. Business Arising

3.1 Parity

Ms Flynn advised that the WA edition of Parity has been completed and officially launched. This edition is a remarkable testament to the work undertaken in WA. Ms Flynn thanked all contributors with special mention to Dr Flatau as one of the guest editors of the edition. Copies were distributed to members.

3.2 Future NPAH arrangements

Mr Glew advised that given the change in the Commonwealth Minister, an agreement regarding the transitional arrangements was unable to be reached prior to the WA government caretaker period. Negotiations are progressing and will be finalised as soon as

possible. Mr Aspinall advised that the new Parliamentary Secretary for Homelessness and Social Housing is based in Western Australia.

3.3 Big Builds Project

Dr Flatau advised that the Big Builds project is progressing. The non-government service providers involved have commenced discussions to select a project leader and the research organisation to prepare the submission to Lotterywest seeking funding. A key aim of the research will be to examine the impact of the builds on the internal and external communities and the agency. It is anticipated that the Department for Child Protection and the Department of Housing will provide in kind support to the research.

Dr Flatau also advised that he is in negotiations with AHURI for a grant to look at sustained tenancies.

4. General Business

4.1 Report from the WACH Future Directions Working Group

The A/Chair advised that the Working Group met and the minutes from that meeting will be distributed with the draft minutes to this meeting.

The following points were raised and identified for further consideration:

- Membership of WACH, potential to call on experts when required.
- How to better provide relevant information to the Minister.
- Advocacy role of WACH.
- Successes and remaining challenges in the homelessness space. For example, there are fewer rough sleepers but still significant issues in overcrowding, supply and affordability of houses. The significant influx of people to WA, affecting affordability issues.
- Expansion of the shared equity programs and other practical items on the Department of Housing's agenda.
- State Plan – proposed approach is move forward using the regional plans as a spring board for the forward planning process.
- Roundtable discussions and who might be involved, particularly in terms of housing affordability and supply.
- Understanding the cohorts of homelessness.
- Members to note that a State Roundtable on Affordable Housing has been established and will continue to meet.
- Importance of identifying people at the “tipping point”.
- Department of Housing projects on the horizon, currently being built or to be built, for example by the middle of next year there will be a significant increase in NRAS properties available.
- One benefit of WACH is the broad perspective around the table, this is unique. This is an ideal conduit for information. A regular communiqué to be considered. How do we create an impact? How do we translate discussions at WACH meetings to the sector? Broader than the specialist homelessness sector.
- The planning process and consultation with the Department for Child Protection regarding State and Regional Plans is a key action for WACH. These processes may initiate broader discussions, forums and other forms of communication.
- Developing a good understanding of the emerging issues and how best to tackle them. Multiple viewpoints can be gained through WACH.
- Difficulties in proposing policy directions that encroach on other/multiple government departments. How do we assess the effectiveness of others policies? If something is identified as not working, it should be tabled for discussion at WACH.

- Importance of including a public communication strategy around the development of the next State Plan.
- The current State Plan has proved to be a useful, well received document.
- Feedback from the OAG needs to be considered when developing the next state and regional plans.

Action: A/Chair to provide a copy of the minutes from the working group to be distributed with the minutes from this meeting.

4.2 State and Regional Plans – next steps

Mr Glew advised that Ms Whitton will be available to attend the next WACH meeting to discuss and obtain feedback on the current State and Regional plans and future directions. It was advised that members re-read the State Plan prior to the next meeting. Members were provided with a copy for this purpose. What should the primary aim or objective be?

Members queried the name of the State Plan, should it be signed off by the Minister for Child Protection or more broadly, by other Ministers to show a commitment by the State, rather than the homelessness sector.

Mr Glew advised that there are several factors that will impact the development of the State Plan over the next 12 months. One is the NAHA and the review and the NPAH and the negotiations for the new agreement, and the amount of money that will be put forward for the new agreement. These are all unknown at this stage. Remuneration case – how much money will the Commonwealth give to this?

It is envisaged that the review of the State Plan will take place over the course of 2013.

Members discussed the importance of creating a worthwhile integrated response continuing the work of the regional plans. As this has had a significant impact in the past it should be considered how this can be incorporated into the new Plan, for example, if we are looking at overcrowding – what would be the integrated response? It was noted that through Nation Building, there was a huge influx of social housing, and integrated services were established to place people out of transitional or crisis housing. This has now come to an end as all accommodation has been filled, thus there is a supply issue impacting the established integrated system. Members discussed the lack of exit point accommodation and the impact this has on existing services and service integration.

Members agreed that this discussion is important as it increases understanding of the blockages at exit points. It was noted that there are broader aspects and opportunities to examine, Ms McWilliam stated that regular updates on the Affordable Housing Strategy would add significant value to these discussions.

Actions:

- Members to review the State Plan prior to the next meeting for discussion on the development of the next State Plan.
- Department of Housing to provide regular update on the Affordable housing Strategy to WACH.

4.3 Other Business

- 4.3.1 Victorian OAG report has been released and the Queensland report will be released next week. Ms Flanagan to circulate to members.

Action: Victorian and Queensland OAG reports on NPAH to be circulated to members.

5. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:30am. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 March, 2013 at 9am.