

# Western Australian Council on Homelessness

## MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 4 February 2015

Department for Child Protection and Family Support  
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 Ricky Burges	Western Australian Local Government Association
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Helen Grinbergs	Department of Social Services
Dr Robyn Martin	Curtin University
Mr Daniel Morrison	Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Services
Mr Don Tunnicliffe	Swan Emergency Accommodation
Ms Julie Yusop	Albany Youth Support Association

#### In attendance

Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
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#### Apologies

Mr Eric Dillon	Mental Health Commission
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Ms Anne Moore	The Lucy Saw Centre/ Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence Services

Acknowledgement to Country made by the Chair.

### 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 December 2014

The minutes from the Western Australian Council on Homelessness meeting held on 3 December 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

### 3. Business Arising

#### 3.1 Specialist Homelessness Guidelines

Ms Martin thanked those who had provided feedback. The Guidelines are taking a little longer than anticipated due to staff and/or policy changes. Overall the process is progressing well.

#### 3.2 Homelessness Roundtable – outcomes

The Chair provided an overview of the Roundtable meeting held on 3 February 2015. The meeting was productive with open conversation.

*At this meeting Ms Melissa Perry discussed options for "Amaroo", an ex-hospital, fitted out with bed sits for singles through to groups/families; shared kitchen facilities. It was agreed that a smaller group would meet to further discuss options for collaborative use.*

*Key options discussed regarding NPAH funding included:*

- *NPAH continues at the same funding level, with limited opportunity to change programs*
- *NPAH doesn't exist 15/16*
- *NPAH continues with reduced funding*
- *Should funding be boosted in some programs and reduced in others?*

*The following key points were raised:*

- *Important to relay accurate messages to the sector in a timely manner, mindful of the issues being faced by services as a result of continued uncertainty, including staffing issues.*
- *Community housing will also be affected by flow on effects and may have to reduce investment in new properties to sustain current service delivery. This further flows on throughout the sector limiting exit points.*
- *Should NPAH not continue, sector and host agencies are not in a position to absorb the NPAH services into their remaining program areas. Furthermore, it is unlikely funding for NPAH could be sourced elsewhere, for example through philanthropic means, given the current financial pressure experienced across all sectors and industries.*
- *If NPAH does continue, there are opportunities for improvement and changes to programs to enable better investment of funds and better outcomes for clients. For example:*
  - *NPAH support workers – need to examine the capacity/workload of each type of support worker (housing accommodation, mental health, drug and alcohol and corrective services) as some may be underutilised while others have significant demand. Suggested that these be reallocated to better meet demand.*
  - *Increased flexibility required to enable service providers to target client needs, rather than being restricted to specific types of support.*
- *There is a need to balance clear direction on programs but also flexibility for organisations to respond to the needs of individuals and families.*
- *CEO's from the sector need to have the opportunity to provide feedback and input regarding needs and priorities for future funding arrangements.*
- *It is essential the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury consult with the sector and the Department regarding any changes to NPAH, and NAHA in the future.*
- *Concern that the Commonwealth Government is planning to redirect homelessness funding into a rental assistance pathway only.*
- *Need to ensure funded services have a critical mass regarding the number of employees to ensure sustainable, continuous service delivery.*

Ms Grinbergs advised that the Commonwealth Government may make a pre-budget announcement at the end of May, depending on the decision made.

Mr Glew provided an overview of the broader Partnership Forum scenario planning. This group is looking at issues including the public housing wait list, possible means of utilising the significant number of homes that remain empty for much of the year, tax incentives to create additional housing stock.

Mr Glew and the Chair are meeting with the Minister on 12 February and will provide detail on the issues raised at the Roundtable meeting.

Members discussed the impact of the Commonwealth Government ceasing to fund regional communities, which will also lead to a reduction of services in those areas.

**Action:** items above to be discussed with the Minister at the 12 February meeting.

#### **4. WACH Priority Areas**

##### **4.1 State and Regional Plans**

To be discussed at the March meeting.

##### **4.2 Sector Consultation**

Discussed under item 3.2

##### **4.3 Policy advice to the Minister.**

As discussed in item 3.2

#### **5. General Business**

##### **5.1 AIHW Annual report 2013-14**

Deferred to March meeting.

##### **5.2 Length of meeting**

A member queried extending the WACH meeting time each month. It was agreed to discuss meeting length and focus next month.

**Action:** item to be included on the next agenda.

#### **6. Guest Speaker: Jacqui Herring, Department of Housing**

Ms Herring provided a comprehensive overview of the current housing options utilised by the Department of Housing and a brief account of the current status of the Affordable Housing Strategy.

The Department of Housing is involved in several major land development projects, and have recently finished a modular, concrete 6 story building consisting of 77 apartments. The complex was put together like Lego blocks in 10 days setting a record in Perth and slashing construction time, and yielding significant cost savings. The Department will retain an interest in 14 of the apartments with eight available through the shared equity scheme.

Members queried the means, if any, of ensuring the on-selling of the affordable housing apartments to low income individuals or families at affordable housing process rather than market value, thus continuing to benefit low income people. This issue is being examined by the Department of Housing.

The Department of Housing is examining options to replace the NRAS program, which had been previously funded by the Commonwealth Government.

Ms Herring agreed to provide the PowerPoint presentation electronically for WACH members.

**Action:** Ms Herring's presentation to be distributed to members.

#### **7. Next Meeting**

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:30am. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 March, 2015 at 9am.