

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 1 July 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
Ms Emma Colombera	Department of Housing
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Maureen Lewis	Mental Health Commission
Dr Robyn Martin	Curtin University
Ms Anne Moore	The Lucy Saw Centre/ Women's Council for Family and Domestic Violence 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
Ms Andrea Martin	Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Apologies

Ms Helen Grinbergs	Department of Social Services
Mr Daniel Morrison	Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Services

Acknowledgement to Country made by the Chair.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 June 2015

The minutes from the Western Australian Council on Homelessness meeting held on 3 June 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

Business Arising

3.1 Queensland Wait list – overview

Deferred to August.

3.2 NPAH Agreement – update

Mr Glew advised the Premier signed off on the Agreement late on Friday. As two year extensions could not be progressed until the Agreement had been signed, services were offered a one month extension to allow time for this to occur, given the current contracts expired on 30 June 2015.

Changes to contracts are now underway, working with the relevant CEOs. It is hoped that the Project Plan will be signed off by the Minister next week. Information regarding the SACS payments is also being disseminated. The Commonwealth is providing back payments. It was requested that the Chair and Dr Martin be provided with copies of the correspondence that has been sent to services.

Action: Relevant correspondence to be forwarded to the Chair and Dr Martin.

3.3 Reform of the Federation– draft discussion paper

Ms Martin disseminated an extract from the discussion paper outlining the three options presented by the Commonwealth regarding housing and homelessness. It was noted that this is a draft paper and may change before release seeking submissions, however some preliminary discussion is useful to initiate thinking and forward planning processes for responses.

Discussion ensued on each option:

Option 1

- Believed to be the Commonwealth preferred option.
- Provides support in the form of rent assistance, via a concession regardless of the type of accommodation - public, community or private.
- Appears to be more equitable but fails to acknowledge that some people require more assistance than others.
- Support will not be provided based on level of need.

Option 2

- Drafted by the Department of Housing, with significant amendments by the Commonwealth.
- Social housing and homelessness services to continue to be funded jointly by the States and Territories and the Commonwealth.
- Improved cooperation and collaboration between the levels of government.
- Joint national priorities and reforms.

Option 3

- Drafted by the Tasmanian Government.
- View that Options 1 and 2 are not addressing reform adequately.
- Commonwealth not involved.
- States/territories to take full responsibilities including CRA.

Members expressed concern that issues of affordability are not considered and disappointment that what should have been an opportunity for positive reform has become a way to realign funding and responsibility.

The Department of Housing is presenting a strong argument that a discussion cannot be held about roles and responsibilities separate to the funding discussion. Initially the Tax Reform was intended to occur simultaneously, however this has lagged behind. The Department of Housing is developing a comprehensive response with a focus on people and policy.

Members are encouraged to begin developing a response. The Department of Housing would welcome further discussion and are engaging with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and other interested parties. It is anticipated that the submissions will be due by December 2015/January 2016. It is intended that the White Paper would be released approximately one year after that. Members discussed the potential to host a Roundtable meeting to discuss the issues to formulate a comprehensive response.

Action: WACH to determine best course of action for the Council at the next meeting.

3.4 Homelessness issues - Local Government sector perspective

Ms Burges distributed a paper *Local Government and Homelessness – A Snap Shot*. This is an initial overview, as comments are still being received by the sector. The process of collecting the information has been useful in raising awareness and initiating/maintaining thinking regarding homelessness. Members appreciated the report and its value to the work of the Council. It was requested, if possible, that the next report include Rockingham, Joondalup, Fremantle and Perth.

Ms Burges advised that the 2015 WA Local Government Convention & Trade Exhibition will be held Wednesday, 5 August - Friday, 7 August 2015, at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre (PCEC). Discussion ensued on means to raise awareness of homelessness at this conference. It is being held during Homeless Persons' Week. Ideas included inviting the YACWA photography exhibition to display work in the foyer; invite Big Issue sellers to sell the publication at the PCEC during the conference.

4. WACH Priority Areas

4.1 State and Regional Plans

Ms Martin advised that, based on feedback received, a new draft is being developed and will be available for discussion by the August meeting.

4.2 Sector Consultation

Members discussed the potential for a Roundtable meeting to discuss the Green Paper. This will be determined with the decision regarding the Councils response to the Green Paper at the next meeting.

4.3 Policy advice to the Minister.

Letter with Minutes to the Minister to highlight the paper provided by WALGA today and the plan to host a Roundtable meeting to discuss the Green Paper, with the view to providing a submission.

4.3.1 Aboriginal Homelessness Working Group

The group has not met since the last update provided.

5. General Business

5.1 Other Business

Ruah Community Services is involved in the 50 Lives 50 Homes Campaign, via Micah Projects, linking with Registry Week. Ms Gregory will provide an information paper before the next WACH meeting.

Ms Lewis agreed to provide an update of the Mental Health 10 Year Plan at the next meeting. Ms Lewis advised that today, the Mental Health and the Drug and Alcohol Office merged, to form the restructured Mental Health Commission.

Mr Glew advised that the Leadership and Partnership (L&P) Forum is focusing on *regional reform* this year. Mr Graeme Searle is the nominated leader of the reform project and will be invited to present at the L&P Forum. Mr Ian Carter, Anglicare, will lead the afternoon session focussing on *Learnings from Place-based Initiatives*. WACH members will be invited to attend. It is scheduled for 22 September 2015.

Actions:

- Ms Gregory to provide an information paper on the work Ruah is undertaking.
- Ms Lewis to provide an update on the Mental Health 10 year Plan at the August meeting.
- WACH member to be invited to the L&P Forum.

6. Next Meeting

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:35am. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 August, 2015 at 9am.