

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 4 September 2013

Department for Child Protection
189 Royal Street, East Perth
Meeting commenced at 9:00am

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the Parliamentary Secretary, Ms Andrea Mitchell and members to the meeting:

Present

Mr Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Dr Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Astrid Kalders	Department of Corrective Services
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Mr Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Ms Nanette Williams	Pilbara Community Legal Service

In attendance

Ms Jenni Vartan	Foundation Housing
Ms Maureen Flynn	Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Ms Sandra Flanagan	Department for Child Protection and Family Support

Apologies

Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission

2. Minutes of meeting held on 14 August 2013

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 14 August 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings, with one minor amendment to item 6.1.

3. Parliamentary Secretary, Ms Andrea Mitchell, MLA

Ms Mitchell thanked the Council for the opportunity to attend this meeting. She acknowledged the importance of this committee tackling the issues of homelessness in this State.

The Chair provided an overview of the Council and the challenges ahead.

Members discussed the following:

- The value of building on the State Plan for Homelessness beyond the principles to provide a blue print for future directions.
- Housing affordability. Many families are gainfully employed but are still unable to access affordable housing due to the exceptionally high costs of purchasing and renting in the private sector.

- Emerging issues including the rising cost of living and overcrowding.
- The need to identify the triggers for homelessness and the role other governments can play in alleviating the issues. For example, the role of Landcorp in the release of affordable land for low and medium cost housing.
- How can the range of government departments which impact homelessness in some way work together to bring about better outcomes for the community?
- Youth homelessness.
- The cost of homelessness to the community when support is not available/accessed.
- Appropriate designs for Aboriginal housing.
- Employment, education, training requirements and how they interrelate with homelessness.
- Social enterprise/private enterprise investment in homelessness – new means of accessing funding. This has the potential to solve some of the funding issues but will require conversations with government around tax and finance for this type of investment to attract private business.
- Housing issues in the Pilbara – often when clients lose their public housing tenancy due to a rise in income, they end up leaving the region as private housing is unattainable, even when employed full time. This situation has led to public housing residents rejecting employment opportunities so they can keep their home and therefore remain in the Pilbara.
- Issues regarding people who have been detained by Corrective Services exiting to homelessness.
- Family and domestic violence - one of the key drivers of homelessness. Keeping women and children in homelessness for long periods of time.
- Single older women in homelessness is an emerging issue.
- Safe at Home has been a successful program helping to keep women and children safe in their home – which is funded through the NAPH program. It is not known if this will be funded beyond June 2014.
- The importance of innovation in the sector.
- The changes to the way the ABS collect data.

The Chair queried the means of initiating higher level conversation across government, particularly the Department of Housing. Homelessness is not isolated to one department, but requires effort and change across a number of departments. Additionally, it is important to progress the conversations regarding the future of the NAPH programs. This affects the whole sector and the uncertainty experienced through 2012 to early 2013 must not be repeated.

Members were assured that the conversations are progressing and it is the intention of government to reach an outcome as soon as possible.

The Chair thanked Ms Mitchell for attending the meeting.

4. Mental Health Services – Development of a plan for a comprehensive optimal mix of mental health services

Deferred to September meeting.

5. WACH priority areas

Deferred to the next meeting.

6. Other business

6.1 Future discussion for WACH

The Chair asked members for comment on the issues they would like to discuss with the Minister and/or for future discussion at WACH.

The following issues were raised:

- State Plan – possibility of the next State Plan to incorporate more detail than the principles, eg inclusion of detailed to guide the future directions for funding.
- Raising the public profile of the Council, eg hosting sector-wide forums/conferences with a focus on homelessness.
- Means for WACH to influence other departments to become part of the solution to alleviating homelessness.
- When the Minister considers the next Council, should the Council continue to operate as it has been, or should there be some changes to the functions/terms of reference?
- Each member is able to take a leadership role in regards to the issues discussed at WACH. This includes the government representatives who are able to take issues discussed at WACH back to their departments for action or further discussion.
- The Council is an advisory committee to the Minister, what is the mandate to take issues to other audiences? Does WACH have the mandate to write directly to local governments, other departments etc?
- For the Council to undertake a greater amount of work, the time and effort of that work must be considered. The Council meets for 1.5 hours per month, thus has little time allocated to engage in additional work.
- How can WACH transfer the conversations held during the WACH meetings in to practical implementation?
- Two missing elements at present –no research/documented evidence to guide future funding decisions. The second missing element is if WACH is to influence the policy conversation – is the Council providing that level of impetus?

6.2 Inner City Review – update.

The working group met this week to develop a list of proposed actions for WACH. These will be provided to members with the minutes.

It was noted that, while the recommendations in the Inner City report are valuable, there is no evidence that they are more or less important the challenges of other groups within the sector. Research is required to determine gaps/need/challenges across the whole sector.

<p>Action: the recommendations for action to be disseminated with the minutes and confirmation sought regarding the appropriate actions for WACH to undertake.</p>

6.3 Consultation Framework

The Chair reported that Ms Errey advised that she has been unable to locate the consultation framework as discussed at the previous meeting.

The Chair will meet with Mr Pietropiccolo before the next meeting to begin developing a consultation process for WACH. Mr Pietropiccolo will coordinate the meeting.

6.4 FaHCSIA meeting with relief providers

Mr Aspinall reported that FaHCSIA recently met with relief providers in Perth and invited the Immigration Department to attend to provide a presentation on new arrivals and the

impact this has on support services and housing. Mr Aspinall will provide a copy of the presentation for circulation to members.

Action:

- Mr Pietropiccolo to coordinate a meeting with the Chair regarding the development of a consultation framework.
- Mr Aspinall to provide a copy of the presentation by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for dissemination 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 2 October, 2013 at 9am.