

Western Australian Council on Homelessness

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday 7 November 2012

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 Stanley Jeyaraj	Independent Chair
Mr Richard Aspinall	FaHCSIA
Ms Genevieve Errey	Department of Housing
Professor Paul Flatau	University of Western Australia
Ms Kathleen Gregory	Foundation Housing
Ms Kedy Kristal	Pat Giles Centre
Mr Ross Kyrwood	YMCA
Ms Judi Morris	Mental Health Commission
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 Tony Pietropiccolo	Centrecare
Mr James Hunter	Drug and Alcohol Office
Mr Steve Glew	Department for Child Protection
Mr Ian Giles	Department of Corrective Services

2. Minutes of meeting held on 3 October 2012

The minutes of the WA Council on Homelessness meeting held on 3 October 2012 were confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. **Guest Speaker** – Role of local government in homelessness, Ms Jodie Holbrook, WALGA
WALGA deferred to early next year.

4. Business Arising

4.1 WACH Future Directions

The Chair thanked members for their input into the work plan to date.

The Chair opened discussion on the work plan and the following points were raised:

- It was suggested that the Work Plan focus on higher level strategic initiatives with minimal operational tasks.

- Drivers to be included– what can the Council do? To be included on a future agenda.
- Integration – public engagement, what is the client experience? To be included on future agenda.
- Reflect on work being undertaken by the Department, where relevant. For example, the Inner City and Domestic Violence projects. This is considered essential background information for the development of the next State Plan.
- The regional plans are an excellent avenue to give people a voice.
- The Remote Indigenous Housing committee (FaHCSIA) split meetings into strategic/policy and operational. This was considered for WACH, however it was determined that WACH is strategic rather than operational.
- The State Plan is the priority for WACH, other work will stem from this.
- Measureable targets are essential.
- Provision of advice to the Minister a priority.

The Chair asked for nominations to participate on a working group to finalise the work plan. Ms Errey, Ms Gregory and the Chair agreed to participate. It is expected this will be successfully achieved in one two hour meeting.

Members agreed to send detailed information to Ms Flanagan prior to the working group meeting to enable a revised version to be available for discussion at the meeting.

Action: Members to forward Ms Flanagan suggestions for the work plan, and a meeting to be scheduled to take place prior to the next meeting of the WACH. Agenda items, as noted above to be added to appropriate future agendas.

4.2 Parity

Ms Flynn advised that the Western Australian edition of Parity is progressing well. A large number of high quality articles have been received and an official launch is being organised. All WACH members will receive an invitation to attend.

4.3 DV Service System Project

The Chair welcomed Ms Collins to the meeting.

Ms Collins provided the following information:

- Strategic planning for the sector has taken place over the past few years culminating in a clear 'map' of the sector.
- There is currently no priority funding and there are serious gaps in service provision. For example, there are limited services available to large families and those with older boys. Improved building design may alleviate some of these issues.
- Beginning in December, workshops have been scheduled with the sector to look at the 'maps' and develop a plan for the future.
- The sector and peak organisations are all fully engaged in this process.
- Simultaneously, a homelessness referral centre is being established. A full assessment will be undertaken at this centre and an appropriate referral will be made.
- Victoria has shared their experiences and learnings with WA to provide a starting point for discussions.
- It was queried if there would be a willingness to enable a shift in contract arrangements to meet the current and future needs of the sector. The Department advised that this is being reviewed as part of the process and the Department is open to new, improved arrangements.
- Members commented on the potential for this process to be utilised by other sectors, such as youth, where there may be benefits in changed behaviour and improved contracts.

- The report is not yet available. Ms Collins will determine if WACH will have access to the report once finalised.
- The overarching information will be available to WACH.

Action: WACH to be updated on the outcomes of the research once finalised.

The Chair thanked Ms Collins for her presentation.

4.4 Office of the Auditor General

Ms Flynn discussed the report by the Auditor General on the Implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in Western Australia which had been forwarded to members prior to the meeting. Ms Flynn advised that the department is pleased with the report.

It was queried how services will transition clients while waiting on a decision regarding the on-going funding of NPAH services. It was advised that the Department has a communication strategy in place, keeping services updated with information on the negotiations and contract implications given the lack of certainty regarding funding. Concern was expressed that the sector is assuming this is the end of funding for those programs. Members agreed that while it may be the end of NPAH, a new program may follow. It is the Department's preference, and that of the other States and Territories, that the NPAH funding be rolled into the NAHA.

Members discussed inviting a philanthropist, and other funding sources, to a meeting to discuss/identify a range of funding options that may not be widely sought/known.

A member queried if there was any way to know what was happening with the negotiations as anxiety will continue to rise? The Chair queried the risk management that has been undertaken to manage any delay in funding?

It was advised that meetings have been taking place between the relevant agencies at Senior Officer and Director General level to work through issues and strategies should there be a delay in funding allocation. The Department of Housing are developing improved strategies for managing the housing priority list. The Commonwealth has developed a communications strategy to keep the sector informed of developments.

Ms Flynn advised that the COAG Select Council on Housing and Homelessness is scheduled to meet next week, more information may be available after that meeting. While the future of NPAH is uncertain, there has been no indication that there will be no money. WA is working closely with Treasury to ensure they are well informed. It was advised that the negotiations are proceeding and they are looking for a solution to moving forward not shutting the door on homelessness.

Action: invite a philanthropist, and other funding sources, to a meeting to discuss/identify a range of funding options.

5. General Business

5.1 Outcome of Chairs meeting with Minister McSweeney - Proxies and member absences

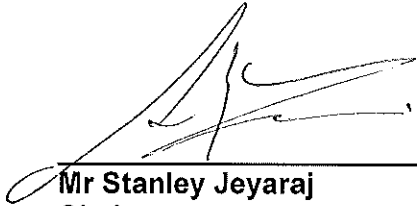
The Chair advised that the Minister had indicated that after three months of absence from WACH meetings it is reasonable for on-going membership to be questioned.

- 5.2 Department of Housing – data re sustained tenancies
Research by Rosemary Cant is currently being finalised. Once completed the report will be provided to DCP and WACH.

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 December, 2012 at 9am.

Signed



Mr Stanley Jeyaraj
Chairperson

5/12/12

Date