



# Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 – 2014

*Greater Western Sydney*





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**The development of Regional Homelessness Actions Plans has been funded by the Australian Government and the NSW Government through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness**

# 1 REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLANS - OVERVIEW

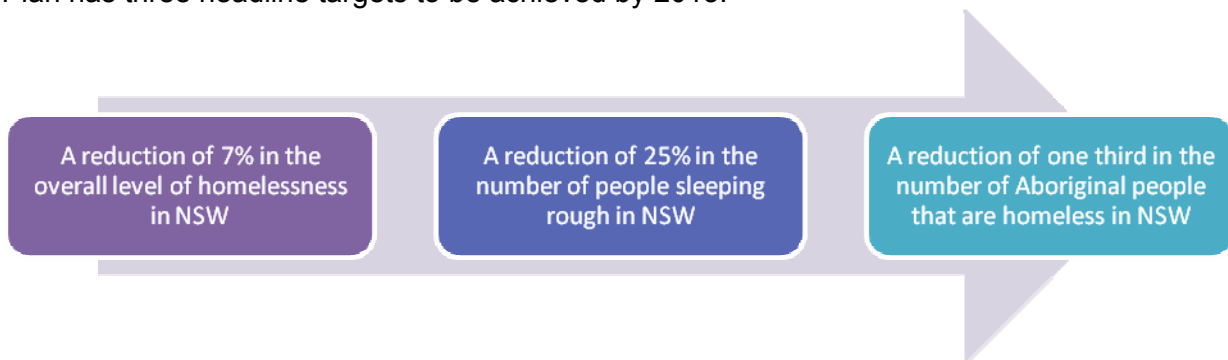
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Regional Homelessness Action Plans (RHAP) are the regional implementation mechanism for the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan*. The *NSW Homelessness Action Plan* sets the direction for state-wide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan is based around three strategic directions:

1. **Preventing homelessness: to ensure that people never become homeless**
2. **Responding effectively to homelessness: to ensure that people who are homeless do not become entrenched in the system**
3. **Breaking the cycle: to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again**

Consistent with the National Partnership on Homelessness, the NSW Homelessness Action Plan has three headline targets to be achieved by 2013:



Actions to address homelessness take account of different forms of homelessness:

- *Primary homelessness*. Primary homelessness applies when a person lives on the street, sleeps in parks, squats in derelict buildings, or uses cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.
- *Secondary homelessness*. Secondary homelessness is used to describe people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. Secondary homelessness applies to people using emergency accommodation, youth refuges or women's refuges, people residing temporarily with relatives or with friends (because they have no accommodation of their own), and people using boarding houses on an occasional or intermittent basis (up to 12 weeks).

- *Tertiary homelessness.* Tertiary homelessness is used to describe people who live in premises where they don't have the security of a lease guaranteeing them accommodation, nor access to basic private facilities (such as a private bathroom, kitchen or living space). It can include people living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis (more than 13 weeks) or in caravan parks.

Through the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan* and *Regional Homelessness Action Plans* the NSW Government will realign existing effort, increasing the focus of the service system on prevention and early intervention and long-term accommodation and support.

The RHAP should be read in conjunction with:

- *The NSW Homelessness Action Plan*
- *Regional Homelessness Action Plan Planning Framework*
- *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*
- *National Partnership on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan 2009-2013.*

## **2 SCOPE OF REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLANS**

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan identifies a number of strategies and actions aimed at implementing reform directions in relation to preventing homelessness and moving responses to homelessness towards a greater emphasis on long term housing with support rather than crisis accommodation. A key aim of Regional Homelessness Action Plans is to translate these reform directions into action at the regional level.

Experience suggests that the most effective homelessness plans combine approaches to addressing systemic issues while also supporting place-based initiatives that take account of local homelessness needs. Best practice in the national and international context also suggests that the most effective responses to homelessness involve a collaborative local plan – a framework that guides community-wide efforts to prevent homelessness, provide appropriate support to people who become homeless and stop people from re-entering the homeless system.

Regional Homelessness Actions Plans have been developed to identify effective ways of working locally to respond to local homelessness issues. Regional Homelessness Actions Plans also include local level implementation mechanisms for State-level policy responses to support reform of the homelessness service system as well as regionally-specific projects that reflect the characteristics of local homelessness, informed by evidence about successful strategies.

Regional Homelessness Actions Plans have been developed in the NSW Regional Coordination Program (RCP) regions. There are ten Regional Homelessness Action Plans in NSW, one in each of the nine Regional Coordination Program Regions, with two plans for Western region – Riverina/Murray and Western NSW. RHAPs have been developed in:

1. Central Coast
2. Coastal Sydney
3. Greater Western Sydney
4. Hunter
5. Illawarra
6. New England/North West
7. North Coast
8. South East
9. Riverina/Murray
10. Western NSW

Regional Homelessness Action Plans cover a four year period, 2010-2014.

## 2.1 REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

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Regional Homelessness Action Plans aim to:

1. Identify actions for implementation at the regional level that reflect the principles and reform directions of the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan*
2. Ensure that identified actions reflect the particular characteristics of homelessness in the region and build on successful local strategies and partnerships
3. Identify regional projects for funding under the National Partnership on Homelessness for 2010-2013.

Regional Homelessness Action Plans also aim to play a number of other roles:

- Supporting the implementation of local priorities and actions
- Facilitating regional service reform and more integrated service system responses
- Providing a process to document effective local approaches to add to the evidence base
- Providing a tool to collect regional homelessness data and descriptions of the service system
- Building cross sector and cross agency cooperation in responding to homelessness and contributing to raising the profile of homelessness as a central concern for the community

## 2.2 REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN WORKSHOPS

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In NSW no one agency is responsible for delivering responses to homelessness, rather a wide range of agencies and services are part of the homelessness service system including:

- **Specialist homelessness services** with expertise in providing crisis and ongoing support services to homeless people.
- **Specialist services** providing support for people with particular issues such as mental health issues or drug and alcohol issues or disability.
- **Mainstream services** used by everyone in the community and provided predominantly by government agencies.
- **Non-Government organisations** such as charities, religious organisations and not-for-profit organisations who provide more generalised support to homeless clients.

To support the regional planning process, representatives from across the homelessness service system were invited to participate in Regional Homelessness Action Planning Workshops. An electronic submission process was also available for stakeholders who were unable to attend workshops. Consumers of homelessness services have also played a significant role through the workshops and indirect input through homelessness services.

Workshops were held in each of the RCP regions, with two workshops held in Western region. Four Aboriginal specific workshops were held in:

- Coastal Sydney
- Greater Western Sydney
- North Coast
- Western NSW

The workshops focused on identifying:

- priority homelessness target groups in the region
- issues and gaps in the regional service system within a homelessness reform context
- existing effective responses and initiatives to homelessness in the region that could be expanded or duplicated
- key strategic actions and partnerships to support reform directions at the regional level
- potential projects for funding under years 2 to 4 of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

The workshop outcomes and comments received through the submission process were key inputs into the development of the Regional Homelessness Action Plan. Plans will be further refined by Regional Homelessness Committees, over the four year implementation period.

## **2.3 REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEES**

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Regional Homelessness Committees have been established to support the development and implementation of Regional Homelessness Action Plans. Regional Homelessness Committees will operate for the duration of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

Regional Homelessness Committees will act as a point of referral for existing local homelessness committees and interagency groups on systemic issues and the process for collaborative reform of the homelessness service system.. Local committees and groups will also provide advice and information to Regional Homelessness Committees on local service provision and emerging issues.

Regional Homelessness Committees are chaired by Housing NSW and include representation from government, the non-government sector and the broader community. Regional Homelessness Committees will report to the NSW Homelessness Interagency Committee on the implementation of Regional Homelessness Action Plans. This role will include the identification of systemic issues that require consideration and action at regional and central policy levels.

The NSW Homelessness Interagency Committee is a State-level multi government agency group chaired by Housing NSW. It includes the key agencies in the Human Services, Justice and Attorney General's, Health, Education and Premier and Cabinet Departments. The Committee reports to the Justice and Human Services Chief Executive Officers Group and is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan and the National Partnership on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan.

## **2.4 GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE**

The Greater Western Sydney Regional Homelessness Committee includes representatives from the following agencies and organisations:

- Auburn Diversity Services
- Consumer Representatives
- Department of Human Services – Community Services
- Department of Human Services – Housing NSW
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Legal Aid
- Liverpool Youth Refuge
- Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) – Campbelltown City Council
- Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness
- NSW Federation of Housing Associations – Argyle Community Housing
- NSW Women’s Refuge Movement
- Outer Western Sydney Aboriginal Advisory Board (Housing NSW)
- Parramatta Homelessness Coalition – Community Services and Parramatta Mission
- Sydney South West Area Health Service
- Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation
- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) – Parramatta City and Penrith City Councils

## **2.5 GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN FORMAT**

The Greater Western Sydney (GWS) Regional Homelessness Action Plan draws together the outcomes of planning workshops held in the South West and Western areas of the GWS region. Analysis of the workshop outcomes and GWS submissions found a high degree of alignment in the issues raised and priority areas for action for the region as a whole. As a single Regional Homelessness Committee will be overseeing implementation of the GWS Plan, discussion relating to service system gaps, key target groups and priority areas for action has been integrated into one plan for the GWS region. Where differences were identified between the sub-regions, these have been noted.

While there was consistency in relation to issues raised, there are differences in the homelessness profile data between Western Sydney and South West Sydney which have potential implications for service responses. Section 3 following, presents the data separately for the South Western and Western sub-regions. Section 3.4 summarises the differences and their implications between the regional profiles.

## **3. GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY HOMELESSNESS PROFILE**

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The information in this section is presented with the Western Sydney Region overview first followed by the South West Sydney overview.

### **WESTERN SYDNEY**

#### **3.1 OVERVIEW**

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The Western Sydney region consists of 8 LGAs:

- Auburn
- Baulkham Hills
- Blacktown
- Blue Mountains
- Hawkesbury
- Holroyd
- Parramatta
- Penrith

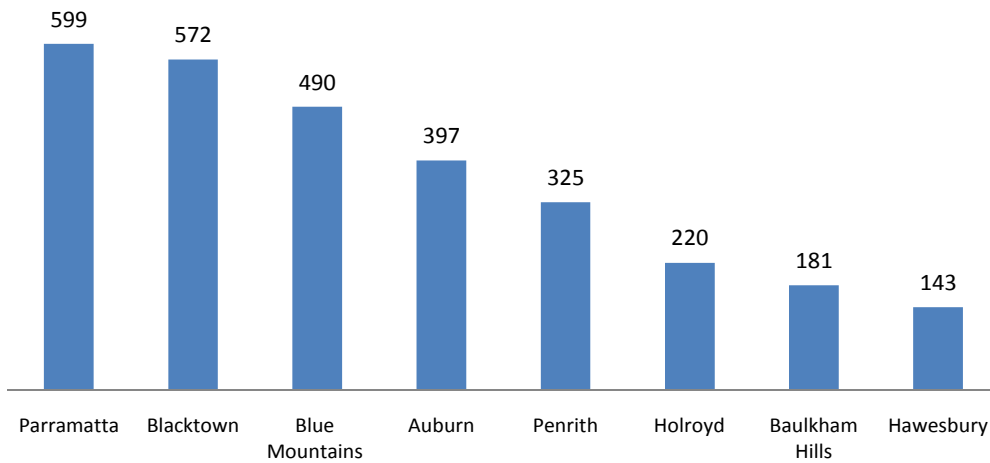
At the 2006 Census Western Sydney had a population of 881531 persons. The 2006 Census counted 3274 people as homeless in Western Sydney including 171 Indigenous homeless (excluding marginal residents of caravan parks – see s 3.2 below). Western Sydney accounted for 12% of the homeless population in 2006.

The 2006 Census counted 599 homeless households<sup>1</sup> in Parramatta LGA, 572 in Blacktown, 490 in Blue Mountains and 397 in Auburn and smaller numbers in other LGAs as shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing NSW has prepared estimates of the number of homeless households based on ABS Census 2006 data which aggregates data on the basis of the number of homeless persons. The total number of homeless households is less than the total number of homeless persons.

**FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS BY LGA WESTERN SYDNEY**



*Source: Housing NSW – estimate of homeless households by LGA based on 2006 Census*

The rate of homelessness in Western Sydney in 2006 was 37 persons per 10,000 persons compared to 42 per 10,000 persons for NSW as a whole.

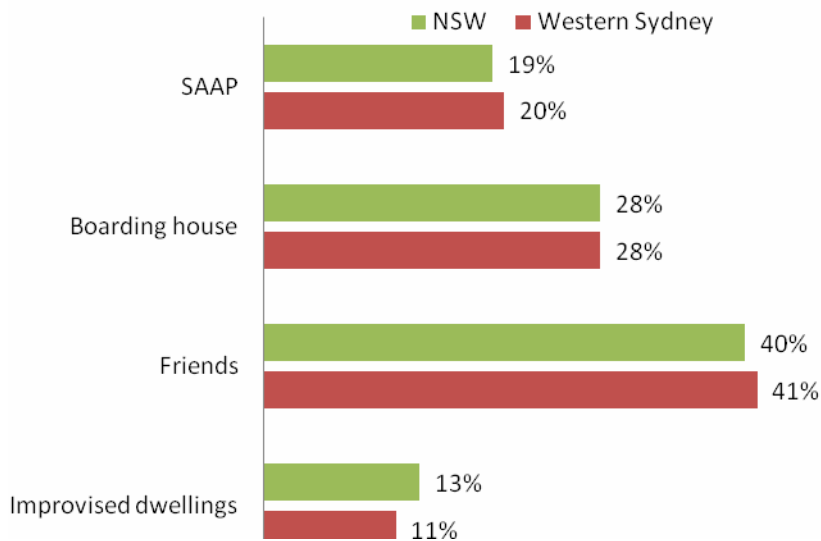
### 3.2 TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS

The 2006 Census includes the following categories in the definition of homeless:

<b>Improved dwellings</b>	Sheds, tents, humpies, derelict buildings and people sleeping rough in parks, cars and public places
<b>Friends</b>	People staying with friends and relatives on a temporary basis, sometimes referred to as “couch surfers”
<b>Boarding houses</b>	Single room accommodation without a private bathroom or kitchen or security of tenure
<b>SAAP</b>	Services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program including emergency shelters, hostels and refuges

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of these types of homelessness in Western Sydney at the 2006 Census based on the number of homeless persons in each type.

FIGURE 2 TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS WESTERN SYDNEY



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra. Data has been aggregated into the RCP Western Sydney region

Western Sydney has a similar distribution of types of homelessness as NSW as a whole. Western Sydney has slightly higher percentages of homeless people in SAAP and staying with friends and a slightly lower proportion in improvised dwellings.

There were 324 marginal caravan park renters in Western Sydney counted in the 2006 Census which was 6% of the total number of marginal renters in NSW. Marginal caravan park residents are defined by the ABS as people renting caravans as their usual address with non one in the household having full time work. Marginal caravan park residents are not generally included in the definition of homeless because of difficulties in distinguishing between people who choose to live in caravans and those who are forced to do so by circumstances. If marginal caravan park renters were included in the definition of homeless, they would account for 10%<sup>2</sup> of homeless people in Western Sydney.

### 3.3 INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

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AIHW analysis<sup>3</sup> indicates that in 2006 9% of Indigenous homeless people were located in Western Sydney. In Western Sydney the rate of Indigenous homeless is 60 per 10,000 persons compared to 36 per 10,000 persons for non Indigenous.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

Indigenous homeless people are much more likely to be in SAAP accommodation than non Indigenous. Forty one per cent of Indigenous homeless in Western Sydney were in SAAP accommodation compared to 15% of non Indigenous. Indigenous homeless were also more likely to be in improvised dwellings than non Indigenous at 12% compared to 8%..<sup>4</sup>

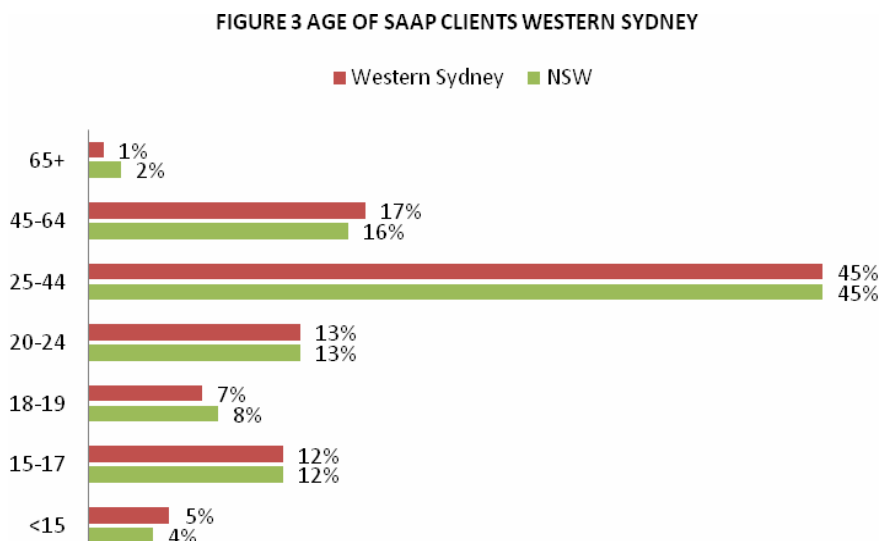
Western Sydney had a lower proportion of Indigenous SAAP clients compared to NSW as a whole. Eight per cent of SAAP clients were Indigenous compared to the state average of 15%.

### 3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SAAP CLIENTS

About 19% of people defined as homeless use SAAP services. The following tables compare data on SAAP clients in Western Sydney with NSW as a whole based on the SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008.<sup>5</sup>

#### Age of SAAP clients

Figure 3 below compares the ages of SAAP clients in Western Sydney with SAAP clients in NSW as a whole.



Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the Western Sydney RCP region

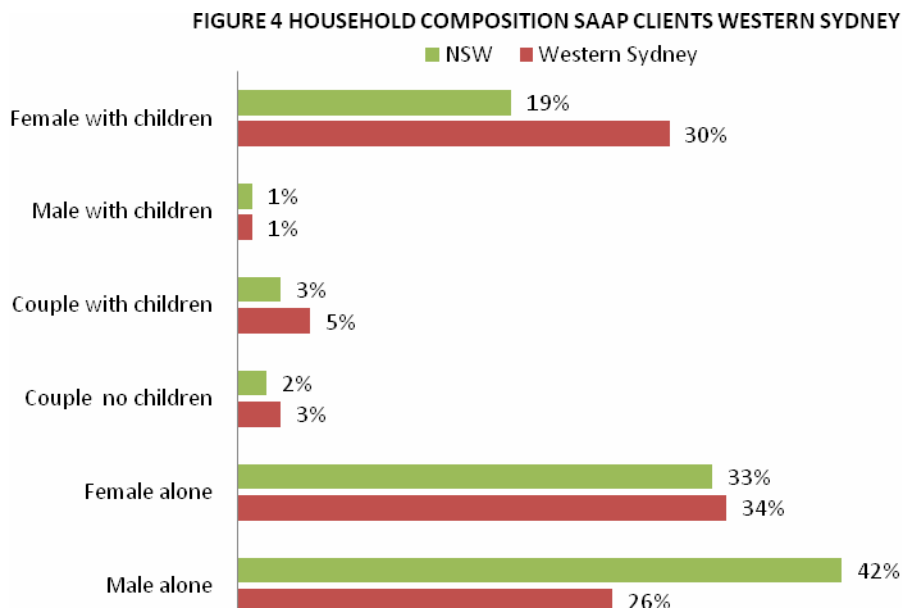
Western Sydney has similar age demographics to NSW as a whole with the exception of a slightly higher proportion of homeless aged under 15 and 45 and over.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

<sup>5</sup> SAAP NDCA data is generally aggregated by Community Services NSW regions. For this plan data was re-aggregated according to RCP regions.

### Household composition of SAAP clients

Figure 4 below compares the household composition of SAAP clients in Western Sydney with SAAP clients for NSW as a whole.



Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the Western Sydney RCP region

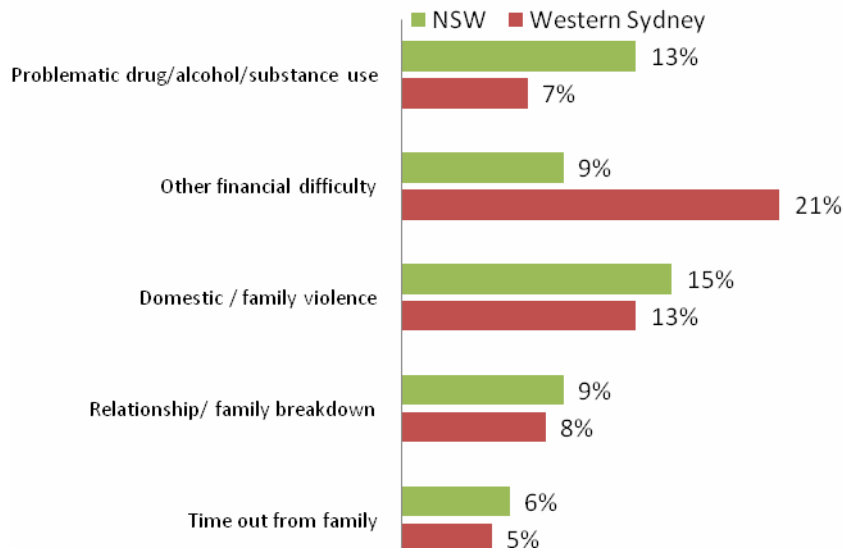
As shown above, 30% of SAAP clients in Western Sydney are single females with children compared to 19% for NSW as a whole. There is also a greater proportion of females alone and couples with and without children than state averages.

### Main reasons for seeking SAAP assistance

Figure 5 below shows the top five reasons for seeking SAAP assistance in Western Sydney compared to NSW as whole.

As shown, the primary reason for seeking SAAP assistance in Western Sydney is financial difficulty followed by domestic and family violence. Financial difficulty was recorded as the main reason for 21% of SAAP clients in Western Sydney compared to 9% for the state as a whole. Domestic violence was cited in 13% of cases.

FIGURE 5 TOP 5 REASONS FOR SEEKING SAAP ASSISTANCE WESTERN SYDNEY

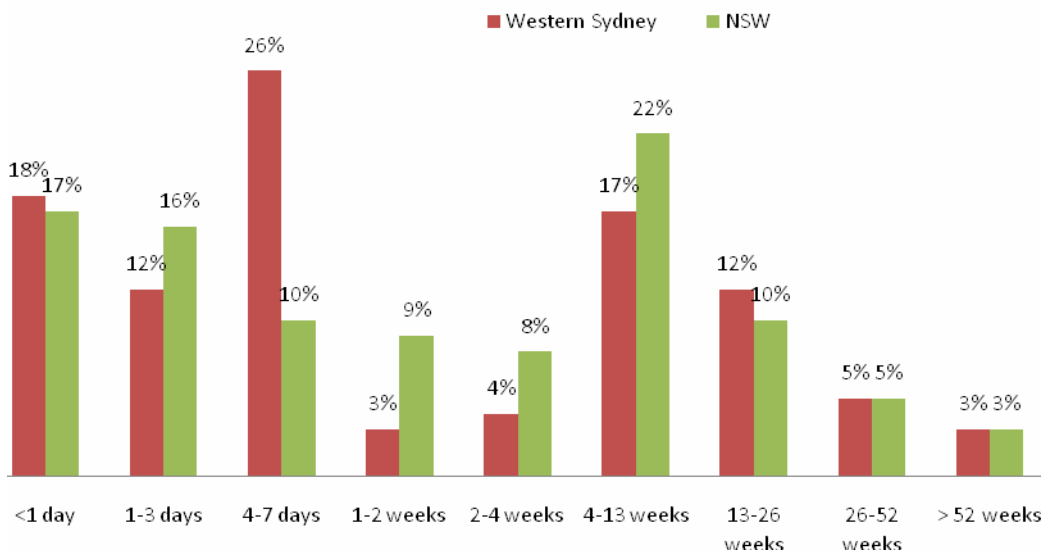


Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the Western Sydney RCP region

### Length of support period by SAAP services

Figure 6 below compares the length of support period for SAAP clients in Western Sydney with NSW as a whole.

FIGURE 6 LENGTH OF SAAP SUPPORT PERIOD WESTERN SYDNEY



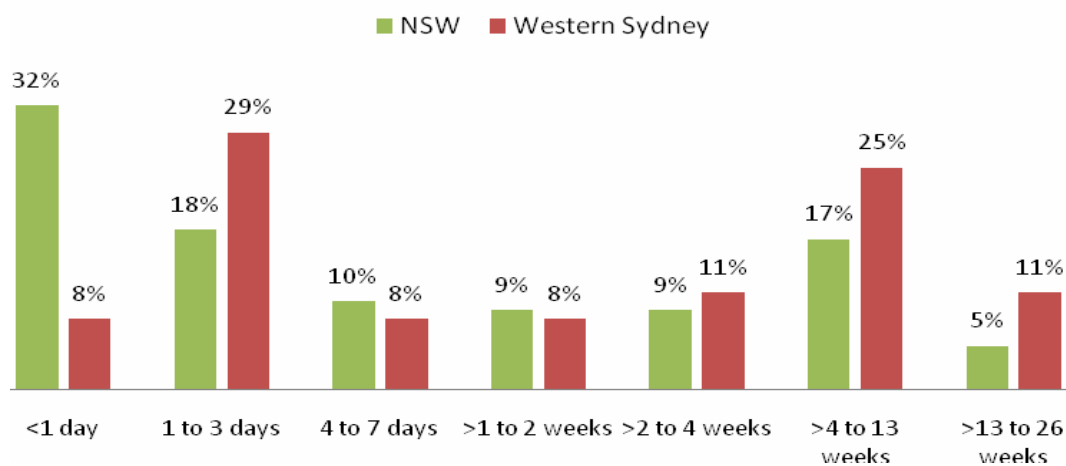
Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the Western Sydney RCP region

SAAP clients in Western Sydney tend to use services for shorter periods compared to state averages. Twenty six per cent of SAAP clients in Western Sydney receive services for 4 to 7 days compared to 10% for NSW as a whole while 17% receive services for 4 to 7 weeks compared to 22% for NSW as a whole.

**Length of SAAP accommodation<sup>6</sup>**

As shown in Figure 7 below, people using SAAP accommodation in Western Sydney generally stay for longer periods of time compared to as NSW as whole. Twenty nine per cent of SAAP clients in Western Sydney stay for 3 -7 days compared to 18% for NSW as a whole while 25% stay for between 4 and 14 days compared to 17% for NSW as a whole.

**FIGURE 7 LENGTH OF SAAP ACCOMMODATION WESTERN SYDNEY**



Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the Western Sydney RCP region

<sup>6</sup> Based on closed support periods

## SOUTH WEST SYDNEY

### 3.5 OVERVIEW

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The South West Sydney region consists of six LGAs:

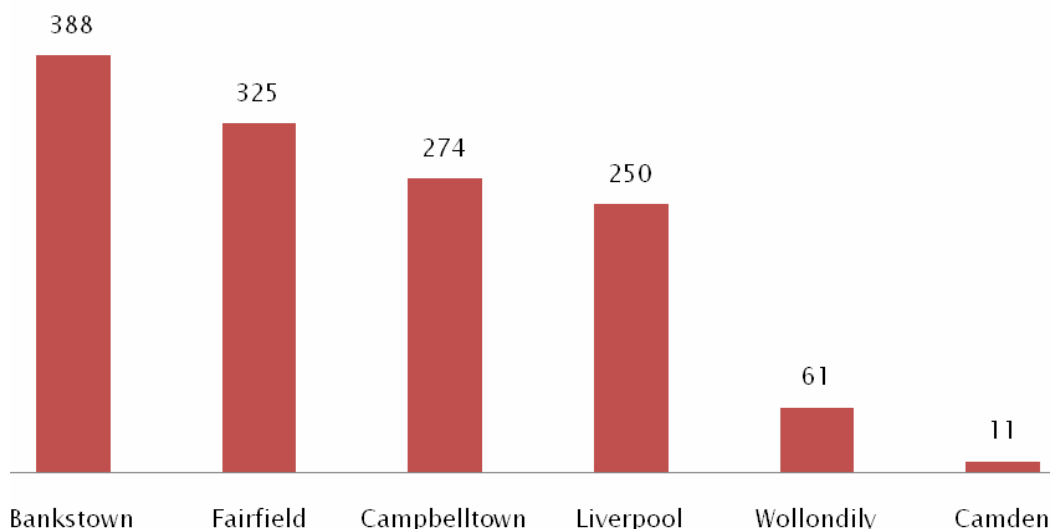
Bankstown  
Campbelltown  
Liverpool

Camden  
Fairfield  
Wollondilly

At the 2006 Census South West Sydney had a population of 878,010 persons. The 2006 Census counted 1774 people as homeless in South West Sydney including 91 Indigenous homeless (excluding marginal residents of caravan parks – see s. 3.6 below). South West Sydney accounted for 6% of the homeless population in 2006.

The 2006 Census data counted 388 homeless households<sup>7</sup> in Bankstown which was 29% of the regional total and 325 homeless households in Fairfield which was 25% of the total. Campbelltown recorded 21% of the total number of homeless households and Liverpool 19% as shown in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS BY LGA SOUTH WEST SYDNEY



Source: Housing NSW – estimate of homeless households by LGA based on 2006 Census

The rate of homelessness in South West Sydney in 2006 was 20 persons per 10,000 persons compared to 42 per 10,000 persons for NSW as a whole.

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<sup>7</sup> Housing NSW has prepared estimates of the number of homeless households based on ABS Census 2006 data which aggregates data on the basis of the number of homeless persons. The total number of homeless households is less than the total number of homeless persons.

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of the types of homelessness in South West Sydney at the 2006 Census based on the number of homeless persons in each type.

**FIGURE 2: TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS SOUTH WEST SYDNEY**



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra. Data has been aggregate into the RCP South West Sydney region

As shown above, South West Sydney has a greater proportion of homeless people staying with friends and family (54%) compared with the State average (40%) and a greater proportion of homeless people in SAAP services at 24% compared to the State average of 19%.

There were 267 marginal caravan park renters in South West Sydney counted in the 2006 Census which was 5% of the total number of marginal renters in NSW. Marginal caravan park residents are defined by the ABS as people renting caravans as their usual address with non one in the household having full time work. Marginal caravan park residents are not generally included in the definition of homeless because of difficulties in distinguishing between people who choose to live in caravans and those who are forced to do so by circumstances. If marginal caravan park renters were included in the definition of homeless, they would account for 13%<sup>8</sup> of homeless people in South West Sydney.

### 3.6 INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

AIHW analysis<sup>9</sup> indicates that in 2006 5% of Indigenous homeless people were located in South West Sydney. In South West Sydney the rate of Indigenous homeless is 75 per 10,000 persons compared to 21 per 10,000 persons for non Indigenous.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

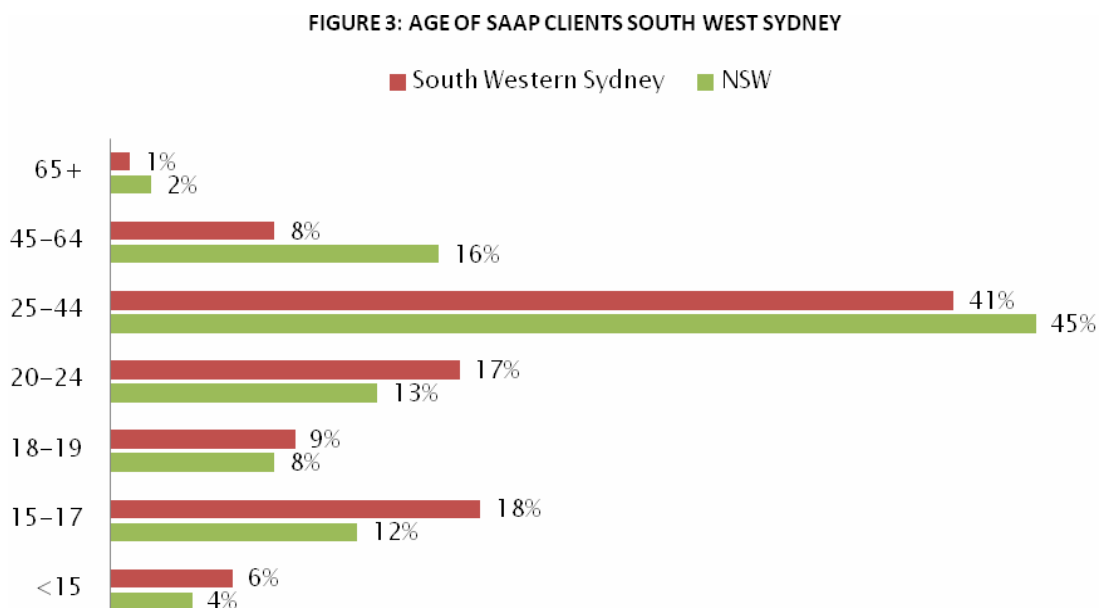
Indigenous homeless people are much more likely to be in SAAP accommodation - 59% were in SAAP accommodation compared to 24% for non Indigenous homeless.<sup>10</sup> Eight per cent of SAAP clients in South West Sydney are Aboriginal compared to the State average of 15%.

### 3.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF SAAP CLIENTS

About 19% of people defined as homeless use SAAP services. The following tables compare data on SAAP clients in South West with NSW as a whole based on the SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008.<sup>11</sup>

#### Age of SAAP clients

Figure 3 below compares the ages of SAAP clients in South West with SAAP clients in NSW as a whole. South West Sydney has a younger SAAP client demographic than the State average. Twenty four per cent of SAAP clients in South West Sydney are aged 17 or younger compared to 16% for NSW as a whole and 26% of SAAP clients in South West Sydney are aged between 18-24 years compared 21% for NSW as a whole.



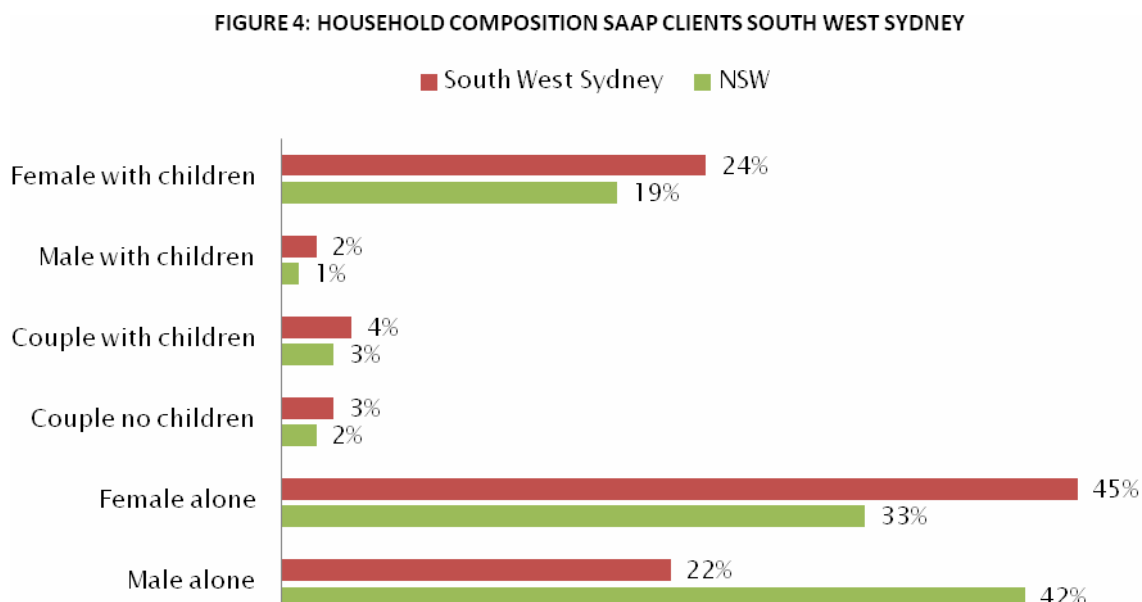
Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the South West Sydney RCP region

<sup>10</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *Counting the Homeless*, 2009 Canberra

<sup>11</sup> SAAP NDCA data is generally aggregated by Community Services NSW regions. For this plan data was re-aggregated according to RCP regions.

### Household composition of SAAP clients

Figure 4 below compares the household composition of SAAP clients in South West Sydney with SAAP clients for NSW as a whole.



Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the South West Sydney RCP region

South West Sydney has a much greater proportion of single women alone at 45% compared to the state average of 33%. South West Sydney also has a higher proportion of single women with children at 24% compared to the state average of 19%. The rate of males alone is much lower in South West Sydney at 22% compared to the state average of 42%. There is some support for view that SAAP demand is directly related to SAAP service supply e.g. SWS has a greater % of SAAP services for youth and women and subsequently assists more women and youth than the state average. While HNSW provides more TA (temporary Accommodation assistance) to single men in this area which reflects the fact that there are few SAAP services for single men.

### Main reasons for seeking SAAP assistance

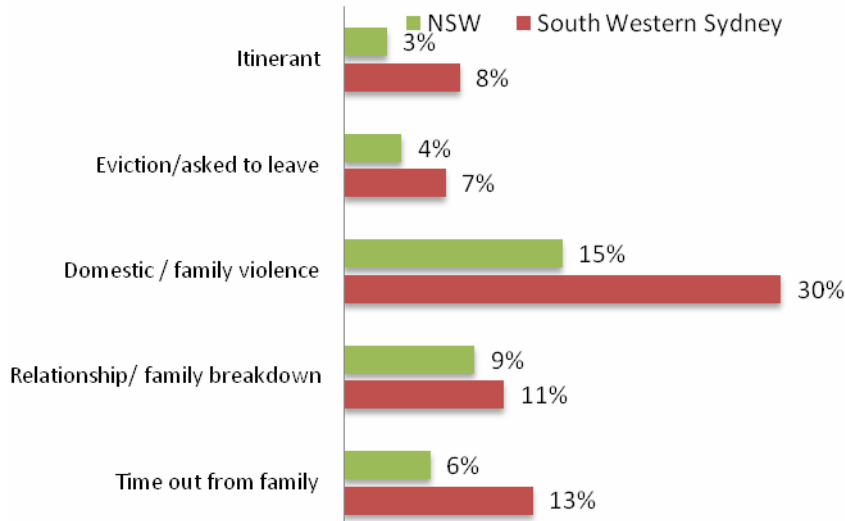
Figure 5 below shows the top five reasons for seeking SAAP assistance in South West Sydney compared to NSW as whole.

The overall primary reason for seeking assistance in South West Sydney is domestic violence at 30% compared to the State average of 15%. Combined with “time out from family” and “relationship breakdown” these family-related reasons represent 54% of the main reason for seeking assistance in South West Sydney.

Eviction and itinerancy are also among the top reasons for seeking assistance in South West Sydney. Eviction was the main reason for seeking assistance in South West Sydney in 7% of

cases compared to 4% for NSW as a whole and itinerancy in 8% of cases compared to 3% for the state as a whole.

FIGURE 5: TOP 5 REASONS FOR SEEKING SAAP ASSISTANCE SOUTH WEST SYDNEY

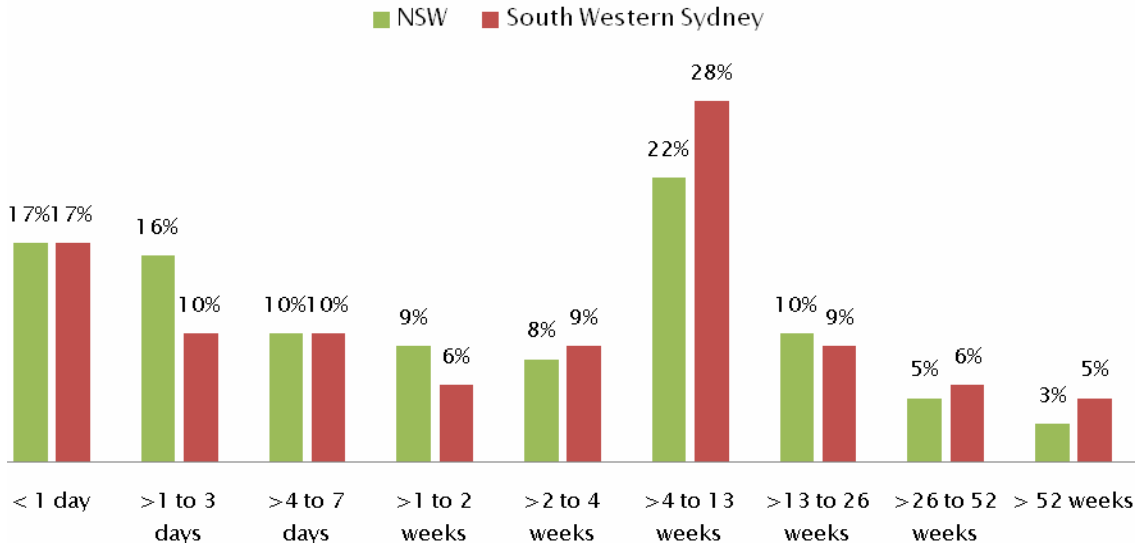


Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the South West Sydney RCP region

### ***Length of support period by SAAP services***

As shown in Figure 6, the pattern of usage of SAAP services by homeless people in South West Sydney is reasonably similar to NSW as a whole with the exception of people using SAAP services for 4-13 weeks. Twenty eight percent of SAAP clients in South West Sydney use services for 4-13 weeks compared to the state average of 22%.

FIGURE 6: LENGTH OF SAAP SUPPORT PERIOD SOUTH WEST SYDNEY



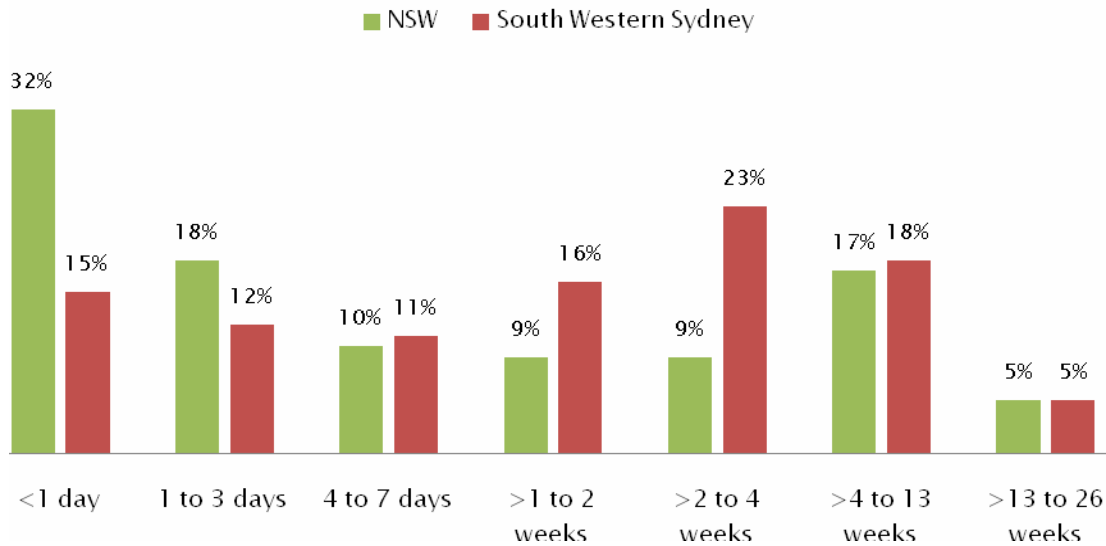
Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the South West Sydney RCP region

### **Length of SAAP accommodation<sup>12</sup>**

As shown in Figure 7 below, people using SAAP accommodation in South West Sydney appear to stay for longer periods than the state average. Twenty three per cent of SAAP clients in South West Sydney are accommodated for 2-4 weeks compared to 9% of the State total. Sixteen per cent of SAAP clients in South West Sydney are accommodated for 1-2 weeks compared to 9% of the State total.

<sup>12</sup> Based on closed support periods

FIGURE 7 LENGTH OF SAAP ACCOMMODATION SOUTH WEST SYDNEY



Source: SAAP National Data Collection June to December 2008. Data has been aggregated into the South West Sydney RCP region

### 3.8 DATA COMPARISON BETWEEN SOUTH WEST SYDNEY AND WESTERN SYDNEY

The data analysis indicates some differences in the homelessness profile between South West and Western Sydney. Western Sydney has a higher proportion of homeless people in improvised dwellings (11%) compared to South West Sydney (8%) and also in boarding houses - 28% in Western Sydney compared to 14% in South West. In contrast South West Sydney has a higher proportion of homeless people in SAAP services (24% compared to 20% in Western Sydney) and staying with friends (54% compared to 41% in Western Sydney).

Western Sydney has almost twice as many Indigenous homeless as South West Sydney.

Homeless people using SAAP services in South West Sydney are younger than those in Western Sydney and there is a higher proportion of single females in South West Sydney (45%) compared to Western Sydney (34%). Western Sydney has a higher proportion of SAAP clients aged 25+ years – 63% compared to 50% in South West Sydney. As stated earlier there is a view in the homelessness sector that demand and supply in SAAP services is directly related i.e. there is demonstrable demand for the type of services that already exists but an unexpressed demand for services that don't exist. E.g. services for single men.

People using SAAP services in Western Sydney stay for shorter periods than in South West Sydney.

The main reason for seeking SAAP assistance in Western Sydney is financial difficulty while in South West Sydney it is domestic violence.

These differences suggest that strategies to address homelessness between Western Sydney and South West Sydney may need to vary slightly. For example, Western Sydney may need to have greater emphasis on rough sleepers, Aboriginal homeless and outreach to boarding houses residents while strategies in South West Sydney may need to include a greater emphasis on exiting people from SAAP services. Strategies in South West Sydney may need to include an emphasis on younger homeless people and single women including those escaping domestic violence while in Western Sydney, a greater focus may be required on strategies to sustain tenancies threatened by financial difficulty.

## 4 HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM STRENGTHS, ISSUES AND GAPS

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The South West, Western and Aboriginal regional homelessness workshop was attended by a total of 111 representatives from local agencies and services with a role to play in preventing and responding to homelessness. A list of organisations and agencies who attended the workshop is included at Appendix 1.

The workshop identified key target groups as well as the role of local and state-wide responses to homelessness as outlined below.

### 4.1 TARGET GROUPS

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Target groups identified through the workshop reflect those groups with high levels of demand for support services as well as groups who were harder to reach or where service system gaps prevented effective responses to homelessness.

Target groups that were common across the Greater Western Sydney region include:

- Indigenous homeless
- Young homeless
- People at risk of homelessness through termination of tenancy including through financial difficulty
- Single females and females with children who are homeless, particularly those escaping domestic violence
- People exiting institutions, in particular prisons
- Tenants with complex needs, including drug and alcohol and mental health issues
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities

Based on discussion at the workshop and the data analysis, key target groups are:

- Indigenous homeless
- People at risk of homelessness through termination of tenancy
- Young homeless
- Women and children escaping domestic violence
- People exiting institutions, in particular prisons

## 4.2 LOCAL RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

Local responses to homelessness include a range of SAAP funded projects as well as initiatives focused on strengthening service relationships and improved service coordination. These projects and initiatives are outlined below. State wide initiatives that have local benefits in relation to homelessness are also outlined.

### Overview of Greater Western Sydney SAAP Funded Projects

There are currently 95 SAAP funded projects in the Greater Western Sydney Region<sup>13</sup> across 14 LGAs. Forty three per cent of services in the Greater Western Sydney region are targeted towards young people and 22% are targeted towards women with/without children escaping domestic violence. There are almost twice as many services supporting single men (13%) as there are for single women (8%). Six services support families (6%). The majority of services are in Parramatta (16%) followed by Blacktown and Penrith LGAs (12% each).

Forty six per cent of SAAP services in Parramatta support single men. The majority of services for young people (61%) are located in Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Fairfield, Liverpool and Penrith and the greatest number of services supporting women with/without children escaping domestic violence are located in Blacktown (18%). Almost half the services targeting single women are in the Campbelltown LGA (43%).

The distribution of SAAP services according to target group is shown in the Table below.

#### *Distribution of SAAP funded projects according to target group in Greater Western Sydney*

Service type	No. of services	%
Women and women with children escaping domestic violence	22	23
Young people	41	43
Single men	13	14
Families including single parent families	6	6
Single women	7	8
Case management	2	2
Youth Social Justice Strategy	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

NB: The percentages shown above relate to the number of projects not the distribution of funding to target groups  
Source: *Community Services NSW 2010*, SAAP funded services have been aggregated into the Greater Western Sydney RCP region

### Other models and approaches

Workshop participants identified a number of existing models and approaches to address homelessness in Greater Western Sydney that reflect homelessness reform objectives. These include the following examples:

<sup>13</sup> Data on the distribution of SAAP funded services in NSW was supplied by Community Services NSW. This data was aggregated into the RCP regions.

### *The Michael Project*

A philanthropic project run by Mission Australia which aims to improve the social inclusion of homeless adult men through enhanced, timely and integrated services. A research project is underway to assess its effectiveness.

### *Wentworth Community Housing and Blue CHP*

Development of Housing First models with a focus on providing affordable housing stock

### *Miller Campus – Live and Learn Accommodation*

The Live N Learn Miller Campus which opened in 2003 was the first Australian Foyer adaptation and one of Foyer UK's first international variants. Refined over five years the Live N Learn Campus program offers skills development and stable accommodation in self contained campus style units to a resident community of up to 30 young people.

### *Domestic Violence Support Western Sydney*

This program involves a consortium of the Greater Western Sydney Group of Women's Services (all members of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement) with the Lead Agency Wimlah Women and Children's Refuge. It is funded for 3 years (until 31 December 2012). This program seeks to prevent homelessness by providing wraparound support for 10 complex needs and 20 low needs women and children escaping domestic violence using a partnership model.

## **Interagencies and networks**

Interagencies and network meetings were seen by workshop participants as supporting better coordination of the homelessness service system. Some examples of these mechanisms include:

### *Nepean Taskforce and Campaign Against Homelessness*

The Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness (NCAH) was founded in 2007. The NCAH represents homelessness and community housing organisations in the Nepean region of Western Sydney working together to end homelessness.

### *Parramatta Mens' Homelessness Coalition and Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Group*

The partnership arrangements developed through the Parramatta Coalition and Parramatta Region Homelessness Interagency Group have improved access to services for homeless people in the area and led to a more coordinated approach to service delivery.

### *Blacktown Affordable Housing and Homelessness Taskforce*

This taskforce is led by Blacktown Council and has been meeting for 12 months to analyse and address the issues in the Blacktown LGA regarding the demand for both affordable housing and services for homeless people. A range of Government and non-Government agencies are represented on the Taskforce.

Other examples:

- Western Sydney Community Forum
- Regional Homelessness Taskforce incorporating Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith LGAs
- Western Sydney Group of women's domestic violence services
- Western Sydney Housing Task Force (SWS)
- Youth Accommodation Interagency Nepean

### **4.3 STATE WIDE PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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Addressing homelessness requires a range of strategies and approaches. State-wide programs and partnerships have been developed over time to provide responses to particular target groups such as people with mental illness or to provide particular forms of support such as financial assistance. Each of these programs and partnerships support the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

The workshop and submissions highlighted the following examples of existing programs and partnerships:

#### **Accommodation and support**

##### *The NSW Housing and Human Services Accord Agreement*

The NSW Housing and Human Services Accord Agreement was developed as a shared policy commitment by NSW Housing and NSW Human Services Agencies to help mutual clients with complex needs to live independently and maintain their tenancies including people with disabilities, people with mental health problems and vulnerable families needing access to secure housing.

##### *The Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI)*

HASI is a partnership program funded by the NSW Government that facilitates access to long term housing linked to specialist support for people with mental illness. HASI was identified by workshop participants as a model that represented an effective cross-agency response that could potentially be expanded locally.

##### *Housing NSW Temporary Accommodation*

The Temporary Accommodation program provides short term accommodation in low cost hotels, motels and caravan parks for people who are experiencing a housing crisis.

##### *Private Rental Brokerage Service (PRBS) and Tenancy Guarantee*

The Private Rental Brokerage Service helps people who have support arrangements in place, to find and sustain accommodation in the private rental market. People who have a physical or mental illness, drug or alcohol problems, a physical or intellectual disability or other complex needs may be eligible for this service. The Tenancy Guarantee a surety issued to

agents/landlords against damage or arrears to encourage them to grant tenancies to people who might otherwise be denied access to the private rental market.

#### *National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)*

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) is an Australian Government initiative to stimulate the supply of new affordable rental dwellings by up to 50 000 by June 2012. Subsidies will be used to increase the supply of affordable rental dwellings. Dwellings will be rented for 20% below market rents.

#### *A Place To Call Home*

A Place To Call Home is a joint initiative by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments which assists homeless people to move directly into permanent housing. They receive tenancy and other support services for the first 12 months to help them address the issues that led to homelessness, and reintegrate with the broader community.

#### *The Network of Women and Children's Refuges*

Women's and children's refuges across the State provides emergency accommodation and support to women and children experiencing homelessness for a variety of reasons.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

#### *Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV)*

SHLV supports women and children to stay safely in their home when ending a violent relationship. Through supporting women who choose to stay in their home the project will assess safety needs, seek to improve social, health, economic and legal outcomes for families and promote accountability for offenders of violence.

#### *The Anti Social Behaviour Pilot Program (ASBP)*

The ASBP Project is intended to improve case coordination across ASBP Participating Agencies and management of complex cases and crisis cases involving children, young people and families. This Program was seen to represent a successful model for effective cross-sector collaboration.

#### *Keep Them Safe*

Keep Them Safe is a five-year cross agency Action Plan that aims to re-shape the way family and community services are delivered in NSW to improve the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. Keep Them Safe includes actions to enhance the universal service system, improve early intervention services, better protect children at risk, and strengthen partnerships with non-government organisations (NGOs) in the delivery of community services. Strategies and protocols put in place at the local level as part of Keep Them Safe were seen by workshop participants as successful in strengthening joint planning and collaborative responses.

#### *Headspace*

Established in 2006 under the Federal Government's Promoting Mental Health – Youth Mental Health initiative, headspace is Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation. The headspace mission is to deliver improvements in the mental health, social wellbeing and economic participation of young Australians aged 12-25. It aims to be the focal point for youth mental health issues across the country.

### *CommuniCare 5000*

CommuniCare 5000 is a program funded under the Mental Health Community Based Program – a Commonwealth Government initiative to support individuals, families, carers and communities who are affected by mental health issues. Using a case management approach, this program provides flexible support tailored to the needs of families, individuals and carers using targeted brokerage funding.

### *Reconnect*

Reconnect is an initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs as a community based early intervention program for young people aged 12 to 18 years, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Reconnect uses family focused early intervention strategies to help the young person achieve family reconciliation and improve their level of engagement with work, education, training and the community.

### *Brighter Futures*

Delivered by 14 lead agencies across NSW and Community Services caseworkers, the Brighter Futures program helps connect families to the services they need by providing targeted support. The program aims to build the resilience of families and children that are at risk.

### *Getting It Together*

This project is administered by the Department of Human Services - Community Services and funded by Health NSW. This program targets homeless young people with alcohol and drug use issues.

## **Financial assistance**

### *Crisis Payments available through Centrelink*

Crisis Payments assist people experiencing severe financial hardship because of extreme circumstance such as domestic violence or a natural disaster, release from goal or psychiatric confinement, or new arrivals to Australia on a qualifying humanitarian visa.

### *Rentstart (Housing NSW)*

Rentstart provides financial assistance for people who have found private rental accommodation but need financial assistance to meet bond payments and in some cases, advance rent.

### *Start Safely (Housing NSW)*

Start Safely provides time limited financial assistance to assist women and children escaping domestic violence to access appropriate and affordable housing in the private rental market. The project provides financial until the client's situation is stabilised following leaving violence. The subsidy is linked to an integrated support program, other existing private rent assistance products and domestic violence services.

### *Other*

There are other sources of financial assistance to help homeless people access emergency or longer term accommodation. For example, many of the projects listed in section 4.3 include a financial assistance component.

#### 4.4 SERVICE SYSTEM ISSUES AND GAPS

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The regional homelessness workshop and submission process identified the following homelessness service system issues and gaps:

##### Service Coordination

- Further improve collaboration and integration between specialist and mainstream service providers in the GWS region with a particular focus on strengthening linkages between Health, Housing and specialist homelessness services and between police and specialist homelessness services.
- Improved referral practices and integrated service pathways are needed to provide a more holistic approach to homelessness prevention and effective responses to homelessness. A lack of integration between local agencies to support the needs of homeless women and children was identified as a specific issue in the region.
- Improved coordination and shared case management approaches are needed to support people moving into permanent accommodation from homelessness, and to ensure relevant supports are provided to assist people sustain their tenancies.
- Uniform approaches to identifying and responding to accommodation issues are needed. Practical responses and referral pathways need to be developed incorporating all relevant services in the region.
- Current homelessness service provision and prevention initiatives operate primarily within working hours. There is a need to expand after hours homelessness resources across the Greater Western Sydney region.
- Access to legal advice was identified as an important component of homelessness prevention. Improving the accessibility of appropriate legal services for people at risk of homelessness was identified as an issue for the GWS region.
- Communication between government and non-government agencies around homelessness prevention services and education materials available to support prevention initiatives needs to improve.

##### Institutional Exits

- Appropriate responses need to be developed and adopted for those who are exiting prison, particularly for those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or who are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.
- Early discharge planning including access to support services is needed to develop the service system network and exit pathways for people leaving correctional facilities, especially for those with chronic and complex needs.
- A multi-disciplinary approach providing flexible, diverse, in-house and practical support is needed for young people exiting care/institutions. Individual care plans are needed which can be supported 24 hours.

## **Domestic Violence**

- Women and children escaping domestic violence continue to be a high needs group in the Greater Western Sydney area.
- There is a significant gap in appropriate emergency accommodation for women with children escaping domestic violence situations and limited exit housing once the client is ready to leave crisis housing. However, projects like Staying Home Leaving Violence are providing an alternative.
- Service responses to women and children escaping domestic violence are often uncoordinated and fragmented making it difficult to navigate a pathway that does not present a risk of homelessness.

## **Access to Affordable and Appropriate Long-Term Housing**

- There is a shortage of affordable housing across the region. Population growth in the region, particularly from newly arrived migrants and refugees has not been matched with increased housing availability.
- There is a lack of appropriate accommodation options with secure tenure for single men exiting SAAP funded accommodation services.
- Issues relating to poor rental history need to be addressed in conjunction with education on sustaining future tenancies.
- Access to appropriate long-term housing includes the need for additional services providing accommodation with support particularly for people who have experienced chronic homelessness.
- There are insufficient affordable accommodation options for families or single people and private rental is increasingly challenging to secure.
- There are limited housing and resources available to support the housing needs of refugees and migrant families.

## **Preventing Homelessness**

- Early intervention and prevention approaches in the Greater Western Sydney region need to be strengthened.
- Many homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless are lacking in independent living skills and need services that provide support to help them secure and retain their tenancies.
- The number of tenants facing eviction issues present challenges for Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Services. It was suggested that research could be undertaken into a pre-Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal protocol to provide support for people at risk of losing tenancy through eviction, based on the UK model. The model includes a set of standards and minimum actions required by a social housing provider prior to submitting a case for hearing by a tenancy tribunal.

## Aboriginal Homelessness

- Better coordination of Aboriginal housing services is needed. This includes greater community involvement in developing targeted education campaigns promoting relevant services.
- More appropriate early intervention strategies, linked with ongoing support are needed for Aboriginal people, particularly for those with complex needs such as drug and alcohol, mental health, domestic violence and exiting prison issues.
- Prevention and early intervention needs to focus on providing effective assistance to Aboriginal women with children with appropriate Aboriginal community management.
- There is a gap in emergency accommodation for Aboriginal people in the Greater Western Sydney region in relation to men's "cooling off" houses and women's "safe houses".
- Specific issues to do with stolen generation victims including lack of family identification and support need to be addressed.
- Outreach clinics providing legal advice to homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless need to be expanded. This includes improving access to Indigenous focused tenancy advice and advocacy services.

## Youth Homelessness

- There is a gap in case management for young people who require support. Homelessness impacts on young people's education, family and social networks.
- There is a shortage of youth specific housing stock and limited tenancy support services available to assist young homeless people.
- There is a need to develop specific homelessness responses and services for young pregnant/parenting women. Mainstream housing providers need to better recognise and respond to the special needs of young women who are experiencing violence.
- Better service planning to support children and young people in institutional care is needed with programs to teach living and life skills.

## CALD Homelessness

- In GWS Region there are a significant number of different cultural and language based groups each of whom face different barriers and challenges regarding securing accommodation of any kind.
- Cultural and language differences can impact significantly on the capacity of these groups to negotiate with the SAAP sector, accommodation providers and support providers.
- Cultural issues can add a layer of complexity to being homeless such as the need to escape domestic violence in the face of cultural pressures to remain with the family.

- In some cultures there is pressure to accept responsibility for members of one's own community arriving from overseas (i.e. sponsorship), triggering homelessness when these support relationships break down.
- Cultural groups can tend to settle in 'known' areas (i.e. where members of that culture are already living) even when culturally and linguistically appropriate support is not always available.
- The GWS Regional Homelessness Committee has a specific CALD representative in response to these issues.

### **Complex Needs including Mental Illness**

- There is a shortage of accommodation options for adult single men with complex needs, particularly those with drug and alcohol, mental illness or trauma issues.
- There is a need for increased specialist health services for homeless people including those needing mental health, detox and drug and alcohol support.
- Assertive outreach is needed for rough sleepers with chronic and complex needs who are not currently engaging with the service system.

## 5. PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION 2010-2014

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Taking into account all the factors listed in sections 2 – 4, the Regional Homelessness Committee has decided to focus on four (4) priority areas for action for the period 2010-2014.

The four priorities for the Greater Western Sydney region are:

1. Access to long term affordable housing
2. Young people
3. Permanent supported housing for people exiting Institutions
4. Sustaining tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal tenants

These priority areas aim to give effect to homelessness reform directions and targets set out in the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

### 5.1 Access to Long term and Affordable Housing

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Research has shown that providing housing to homeless people has far reaching cost and social benefits.

#### *Housing makes a difference - What the research<sup>14</sup> says*

- According to AHURI research programs to assist homeless people, including providing appropriate housing, can result in direct cost-savings to government, and provide broader benefits to the individual and the community.
- Providing long-term permanent housing has been found to have greater success than transitional models in achieving sustainable outcomes in ending the homelessness cycle.
- There is evidence that people who are homeless are at greater risk of developing drug and alcohol dependence.

### 5.2 Young People

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Young people are identified as one of the key target groups of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

#### *Youth homelessness - what the research says*

- Experiencing homelessness under 18 is a significant risk for longer term homelessness
- Assertive school welfare programs with strong links to community agencies can help prevent homelessness in school children

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<sup>14</sup> Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute *Evidence to Inform NSW Homelessness Action Plan Priorities 2009-10*, May 2009

- Young people without complex needs may benefit from secure accommodation integrated with support to maintain ties with mainstream education and employment, and develop independent living skills and confidence, for example as provided by Foyer models
- Intensive support for independent living programs may be more appropriate for early intervention with young people that have complex needs
- Post-housing support to young people is needed to enable them to maintain connection with education, training and employment

### **5.3 Permanent supported housing for people exiting institutions**

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Preventing exits into homelessness from institutional care settings requires effective case coordination and discharge planning to ensure people receive access to appropriate support services and secure long-term accommodation.

#### **Exiting institutions - *what the research says***

- Coordination and planning prior to an institutional exit are critical to ensure that housing needs are considered and options explored
- Comprehensive support to address the range of issues and challenges faced by the individual is required pre/during/after institutionalisation.
- Support to access housing is critical to an effective preventative response.

### **5.4 Sustaining tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal tenants**

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Workshop participants identified the need for intensive tenancy support services focused on reducing evictions by working preventatively with clients to help sustain tenancies in all tenures across Greater Western Sydney Region.

Aboriginal people were identified as a key target group requiring intensive tenancy support and the development of flexible services to respond to Aboriginal homelessness was a high priority.

Other target groups highlighted as priorities for tenancy support included families escaping domestic violence, young people, single homeless males and rough sleepers transitioning to long-term housing with support.

Participants at the workshop strongly supported looking at Aboriginal specific strategies as well as well as other clients with complex and cultural needs and those experiencing domestic violence. One specific recommendation from the workshop was the appointment of Aboriginal community housing workers.

Financial management, education and counselling programmes and 'triggers' to facilitate the participation of individuals in education programmes needed to be developed for the region.

#### ***What the research says***

- Actions to prevent the breakdown of Indigenous social housing tenancies can prevent homelessness.

- Social housing administrative processes can negatively and unnecessarily impact on the success of Indigenous tenancies.
- Building a trusting support relationship takes time; six months may be a minimum threshold for establishing relationship based support. More than 20 contacts and around 12 months may be a threshold for achieving improved housing and employment related outcomes. It is preferable that these contacts take place in the context of stabilised long-term housing.

## 6. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS PRIORITY ISSUES

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Actions under this plan focus on the four priority areas:

- Access to long term affordable Housing
- Young people
- Permanent supported housing for people exiting institutions
- Sustaining tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal tenants

State-wide action on implementing service system reform will be undertaken in parallel to regional actions. This work will support regional efforts and aid in further developing regional plans.

### 6.1 ACCESS TO LONG-TERM AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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Key actions identified to focus on long term housing in Greater Western Sydney are the projects funded under the National Partnership on Homelessness<sup>15</sup>:

- **Long term accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence**
- **Project 40**

#### **Long term accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence (Western Sydney)**

The project aims to improve women and children's safety and reduce the time women and children who have experienced domestic violence spend in SAAP services. Components of the project include access to long term housing assistance including social housing, rental subsidies, tenancy guarantees and the Private Rental Brokerage Scheme. The project provides linkages to appropriate support services the Staying Home Leaving Violence project in Mt Druitt. Estimated client numbers: 30 families

#### **Project 40 (Nepean)**

2006 Census data and NDCA data indicates that Western Sydney has a higher proportion of homeless families, including single women with children than the rest of NSW. Western Sydney also has a significant number of Aboriginal homeless people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities who are homeless. This project involves the integration of homelessness specialist services and community housing to create one entry point and one pool of resources for homeless families.

The project aims to reconfigure the specialist homelessness sector in the Nepean area to shift current service delivery towards Housing First models (long term accommodation with support). The project will create one entry point into a Housing First program to streamline processes and establish a pool of existing and new resources (including the full spectrum of accommodation

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<sup>15</sup> National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan 2009-2013, Years 2 – 4

options and services) which can be matched to clients. This will eliminate the need for clients to navigate around a complex service system to seek support and accommodation – all services/responses will be wrapped around the client at one entry point. Funding will be used for support packages for clients.

The initiative will assist in the reform of the homelessness service system in the region by supporting the shift by homelessness specialist and other services from crisis responses to a focus on implementing a co-ordinated Housing First approaches to homelessness in the Nepean area. Estimated client numbers: 37 families over three years

### **Additional Areas for Action**

- In partnership with specialist services identify appropriate accommodation options and opportunities through the stimulus package for housing for all population groups including for those who are ageing, have a disability or mental illness.
- Engage Local Government in identifying housing supply and development opportunities, for example through local land and environment planning regulations
- Strengthen linkages and assessment processes between mainstream and specialist services and facilitate client access to housing and information about the range of services and housing options available.
- Providing support to people housed under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package social housing program to enable them to sustain their tenancies.

## **6.2 YOUNG PEOPLE**

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Key actions identified to focus on long term housing in Greater Western Sydney are the projects funded under the National Partnership on Homelessness<sup>16</sup>:

- **Nepean Youth Homelessness Project Enhancement**
- **South West Sydney Youth Hub project**
- **Transition program for Aboriginal people**
- **Young people in contact with the Juvenile Justice system who are homeless**

### **The Nepean Youth Homelessness Project**

Through the Nepean Youth Homelessness Project social housing and a package of intensive support is provided to 10 young people with high needs who are rough sleeping and/or experiencing chronic homelessness. An additional 14 young people at risk of homelessness are assisted with brokered interventions which aim to stabilise their housing, improve their health and social outcomes and increase their access to education, training and employment.

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<sup>16</sup> National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan 2009-2013, Years 2 – 4

### **South West Sydney Youth Hub project**

This project facilitates access to long term accommodation for 45 young people with lower needs as well as young people exiting correctional facilities. The project provides on-site accommodation and support services including links to education, training and employment. Scatter site accommodation is available for young people with high needs. This project builds on the achievements of the NSW Miller Campus (Foyer Model).

### **Transition program for Aboriginal people**

The project aims to prevent homelessness, particularly Indigenous homelessness by assisting Aboriginal young people aged between 10-18 years in contact with the justice system to transition to independent living. The project works with Aboriginal young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, subject to supervision by Juvenile Justice and at risk of incarceration. It aims to provide a range of accommodation and support services to maximise the opportunity for Aboriginal young people to access and successfully complete bail periods, promote positive community reintegration of Aboriginal young people leaving custody, as well as assist Aboriginal young people on community based orders who become homeless and are at risk of entering custody. The project assists 24 Aboriginal young people.

### **Young people in contact with the Juvenile Justice system who are homeless**

SAAP NDCA data indicates that South Western Sydney SAAP clients are significantly younger than the NSW average. This project will provide intensive support and accommodation to young people with complex needs exiting Juvenile Justice custody or at risk of entering custody while on community based orders due to homelessness. Priority will be given to Aboriginal young people and young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. Support will include the provision of long term accommodation, intensive support and a focus on supporting young people to access education and employment and reduce recidivism. The project will also focus on ensuring cross-agency collaboration to improve discharge planning policies and accommodation support processes for the target client group. The project will support the South Western Sydney Youth Hub initiative. Estimated client numbers: 38

### **Additional Areas for Action**

- Support young people who are homeless or a risk of homelessness to maintain connection with family, education, training and employment
- Ensure staff from mainstream and specialist support services identify young homeless people, assess their needs and make appropriate referrals
- Development of a state wide policy framework for homeless young people which takes into account the additional shared responsibility for young people across agencies and the duty of care. It could cover issues such as associated with school and child protection etc.

## 6.3 PERMANENT SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR PEOPLE EXITING INSTITUTIONS

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Key actions identified to focus on long term housing in Greater Western Sydney are the projects funded under the National Partnership on Homelessness<sup>17</sup>:

- **Targeted housing and support for people exiting prisons**
- **People refused bail on basis of homelessness**

### **Targeted housing and support for people exiting prisons**

This project aims to prevent homelessness and reduce recidivism by providing long term support and accommodation to 20 people exiting prisons, with a focus on preventing exits into rough sleeping and SAAP services. The project builds on the outcomes of the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord Dillwynia Shared Access Trial.

### **People refused bail on basis of homelessness**

This project aims to reduce the significant proportion of people entering correctional facilities because they are homeless by identifying accommodation options. Research indicates that a significant proportion of people are refused bail because of homelessness, the majority of whom do not receive a custodial sentence. Project officer positions have been established in order to seek and obtain accommodation for eligible remandees held at Correctional Centres in Western Sydney. The project will assist 150 people.

### **Additional Areas for Action**

- Develop and implement discharge planning procedures identifying transitional or permanent accommodation for people exiting institutional care.
- Facilitate coordinated discharge planning and access to housing with support for young people leaving corrections and institutional care arrangements
- Provide housing and support to young people leaving care or exiting correctional systems
- Facilitate access for Aboriginal young people leaving care or exiting correctional facilities to employment and pre-employment programs

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<sup>17</sup> National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan 2009-2013, Years 2 – 4

## **6.4 SUSTAINING TENANCIES WITH A FOCUS ON ABORIGINAL TENANTS**

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### **Areas for Action**

- Strengthen mainstream services to develop discharge plans for Aboriginal people through consultation with specialist Aboriginal services where possible
- Work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations and services to increase the provision of culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Develop relationships between community housing providers and Aboriginal organisations to improve access to social housing and tenancy support for Aboriginal people
- Target the employment of identified Aboriginal workers for community housing providers.

## 7. GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN SUMMARY ACTIONS

This section summarises agreed actions for priority areas to be implemented over the four year period to 2014. A number of actions are in addition to or build on those identified in the NSW Homelessness Action Plan. It is noted that the agreed actions are an initial response to the issues identified in this Plan. Actions will be further developed and refined over time.

<b>Priority Focus Area (1): Access to long term and affordable housing</b>					
<b>NSW Priorities</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the supply and improve the condition of affordable social housing</li> <li>Provide models of accommodation with support that are suitable for different target groups</li> </ul>					
Action	Lead Agency	Partners	Milestones		
			6 months	1 year	3 years
<p><b>1.1 Long term accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence (Western Sydney) National Partnership on Homelessness project.</b></p> <p>The project aims to improve women and children's safety and reduce the time women and children who have experienced domestic violence spend in SAAP services through access to long term housing assistance. Estimated client numbers: 30 families<sup>18</sup></p>	Community Services Housing NSW	Department of Premier and Cabinet (Office for Women's Policy) NSW Health	Project implementation	Monitor operation	Evaluate effectiveness of project

<sup>18</sup> For National Partnership on Homelessness projects, the number of clients refers to the number to be assisted at any one time based on a full 12 months of operation

1.2 Implement <b>Project 40</b> in the Nepean region ( <i>National Partnership on Homelessness project</i> ). This project involves the integration of homelessness specialist services and community housing to create one entry point and one pool of resources for homeless families. Estimated client numbers: 37 families over three years	Housing NSW	Wentworth Community Housing Nepean Regional Homelessness Taskforce	Develop project specification  Conduct service provider selection process	Monitor implementation	Evaluate effectiveness of project
1.3 Deliver 40% of housing allocations under NBESP social housing program to homeless people	Housing NSW	Community housing providers	Establish allocation monitoring system	Review allocations	
1.4 Reshape the provision of Temporary Accommodation to improve support and private rental brokerage	Human Services		Scope project		

<b>Priority Focus Area (2): Young People</b>					
<b>NSW Priorities</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support young people to maintain connection with education, training and employment</li> <li>• Ensure staff from mainstream and specialist support services identify young homeless people, assess their needs and make appropriate referrals</li> <li>• Reconcile young people with their families, where possible</li> </ul>					
Action	Lead Agency	Partners	Milestones		
			6 months	1 year	3 years
<b>2.1 Nepean Youth Homelessness Project Enhancement</b> <i>National Partnership on Homelessness project</i> . Social housing and a package of intensive young people with high needs who are rough sleeping and/or experiencing chronic homelessness. Estimated client numbers: 24	Housing NSW		Project implementation	Monitor operation	Evaluate effectiveness of project

<p><b>2.2 South West Sydney Youth Hub project</b> <i>National Partnership on Homelessness project.</i> This project facilitates access to long term accommodation for young people with lower needs as well as young people exiting correctional facilities. The project provides on-site accommodation and support services including links to education, training and employment. Estimated client numbers: 45</p>	<p>Housing NSW Community Services</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice Mission Australia</p>	<p>Project implementation</p>	<p>Monitor operation</p>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness of project</p>
<p><b>2.3 Transition program for Aboriginal people</b> <i>National Partnership on Homelessness project.</i> The project aims to prevent homelessness, particularly Indigenous homelessness, by assisting Aboriginal young people aged between 10-18 years in contact with the justice system to transition to independent living. Estimated client numbers: 24</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice</p>	<p>Community Services</p>	<p>Project implementation</p>	<p>Monitor operation</p>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness of project</p>
<p><b>2.4 Young people in contact with the Juvenile Justice system who are homeless</b> <i>National Partnership on Homelessness project.</i> This project will provide intensive support and accommodation to young people with complex needs exiting Juvenile Justice custody or at risk of entering custody while on community based orders due to homelessness. Estimated client numbers: 38 over three years</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice</p>	<p>Ageing, Disability &amp; Home Care Community Services</p>	<p>Develop project specification  Conduct service provider selection process</p>	<p>Monitor implementation</p>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness of project</p>

Priority Focus Area (3): Provide Permanent Support Housing for people exiting institutions					
<b>NSW Priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource the development of discharge/case plans at point of entry that lead to appropriate, long-term accommodation for people leaving care, custody or health facilities</li> <li>Provide accommodation and support, where relevant, to people leaving care, custody or health facilities</li> </ul>					
Action	Lead Agency	Partners	Milestones		
			6 months	1 year	3 years
<b>3.1 Targeted Housing and Support for ex-Prisoners</b> ( <i>National partnership on Homelessness project</i> ) This project aims to prevent homelessness and reduce recidivism by providing long term support and accommodation to people exiting prisons, with a focus on preventing exits into rough sleeping and SAAP services. Estimated client numbers: 20	Corrective Services	Housing NSW Western Sydney Area Health Service , CRC	Project implementation	Monitor operation	Evaluate effectiveness of project
<b>3.2 People refused bail on basis of homelessness</b> ( <i>National partnership on Homelessness project</i> ) This project aims to reduce the significant proportion of people entering correctional facilities because they are homeless by identifying accommodation options. Estimated client numbers: 150	Corrective Services		Project implementation	Monitor operation	Evaluate effectiveness of project

<b>Priority Focus Area (4): Sustaining Tenancies with a focus on Aboriginal Tenants</b>					
<b>NSW Priorities</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Make services more accessible and responsive to Aboriginal people</i></li> </ul> <i>Recognise and respond to the needs of specific target groups including Aboriginal people</i>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Milestones</b>		
			<b>6 months</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>4.1</b> Development of private rental tenancy facilitation and brokerage models with an Aboriginal specific focus	Human Services	Aboriginal NGOs	Scope project		
<b>4.2</b> Encourage employment of identified Aboriginal Housing Workers in Community Housing Organisations	Community housing providers	Federation of Housing Associations Aboriginal NGOs	Develop sustainable employment model	Support implementation	Evaluate effectiveness of model
<b>4.3</b> Develop a voluntary pre-CTT protocol for community housing providers prior to commencing proceedings to terminate tenancies	Community housing providers	AHO	Scope project		

## 8. Reporting and Accountability

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The NSW Homelessness Action Plan includes a commitment to establish a governance mechanism to oversee the implementation of the Plan that promotes partnerships between all levels of government, the non-government sector, consumer groups and the broader community, including the business sector.

Since that time, a governance framework has been established to oversee the implementation of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan. This framework recognises that effective governance for whole of Government and whole of community planning and delivery of the projects and initiatives under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan requires accountability, consultation and relationships, and that the strength of the overall governance structure relies on the effectiveness of each of these mechanisms.

The governance framework under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan comprises:

- Regional Homelessness Committees
- Regional Manager Clusters
- Homelessness Interagency Committee
- Justice & Human Services Chief Executive Officers Committee
- NSW Premier's Council on Homelessness.

Regional Homelessness Committees, chaired by Housing NSW, are required to report on the implementation of the Regional Homelessness Action Plans to Regional Manager Clusters and the NSW Homelessness Interagency Committee. Progress against the Regional Homelessness Action Plans is reported on an annual basis through the NSW State Plan.

Regional Homelessness Committees are also responsible for ensuring that relevant stakeholders within the region are aware of and have an opportunity to provide input into the ongoing development and implementation of the Regional Homelessness Action Plans.

## APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

### Western Sydney ATSI Regional Homelessness Action Plan Workshop 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Rooty Hill

Organisations attending, or invited to attend the regional homelessness action plan workshop:

ORGANISATION
Aboriginal Corporation for Homeless and Rehabilitation Community Services
Aboriginal Housing Office
Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney
Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer
Aboriginal Probation and Parole - Blacktown Office
Blacktown Council & Western Sydney Koori Interagency
Blue Mountains Aboriginal Resource Centre
Butucarbin Aboriginal Corporation
Cawarra Womens Refuge
Centrelink
Corrective Services Probation and Parole - Aboriginal Unit
Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Department of Education
Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council
Gilgai Aboriginal Centre
Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenants Service
Hebersham Aboriginal Service HAYS
Homelessness Unit - Housing NSW
Housing NSW
Justice and Attorney General - Aboriginal Community Justice Group
Kari Aboriginal Resources Inc
Link Up
Marrin Weejali Drug and Alcohol Centre
Merana Aboriginal Community Association for the Hawkesbury
Mid West HNSW Aboriginal Advisory
Mission Australia
Mt Druitt Court House
Mt Druitt Housing NSW Aboriginal Advisory Committee
Naghmi Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation
NSW Police
NCOSS
NSW Health - Sydney West Area Health Service Aboriginal Unit
Penrith City Council
Shelter

South Penrith Youth Service (SPYNS)
South West Sydney Area Health Service Aboriginal Unit
South West Sydney Koori Interagency
Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council
Thawaral Aboriginal Corporation
Western Sydney Community Aboriginal Corporation
Wish Campbelltown Family Support Service

**South West Sydney Regional Homelessness Action Plan Workshop  
10<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Liverpool**

Organisations attending, or invited to attend the regional homelessness action plan workshop:

<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Argyle Community Housing Ltd
Bankstown City Council - Community Planning & Development
Centrelink
Community Services - Communities and Early Years Division
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre
Homelessness NSW – Housing NSW
Housing NSW
Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – Housing and Homelessness
Junction Works
Liverpool City Council – Community Planning
Liverpool City Council - Social Planning
Liverpool Youth Refuge
Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative Ltd
Macarthur Legal Centre
Macarthur Ozanam Centre, Family Service & Men's Service
Marcia Women Refuge
Mission Australia - WSSS
Mission Australia Adult Accommodation Operations
NSW Policy - Domestic & family Violence
Support Services for Women Inc
Sydney South West Area Health Service
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Women's Refuge Movement
Youth off the Streets

**Western Sydney – Regional Homelessness Action Plan Workshop  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Blacktown**

Organisations attending, or invited to attend the regional homelessness action plan workshop:

<b>ORGANISATION</b>
Adele Dundas House
Affordable Housing
Alice's Cottages
Anglicare
Auburn Diversity Services
Barnados
Blacktown City Council
Blacktown Taskforce and Regional taskforce on Homelessness
Blue Mountains Council
Burnside
Centacare Catholic
Churches Housing
Community Resource Network
Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
Department of Community Services
Department of Education
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Fusion Accommodation & Support Service
Hawkesbury City Council
Holroyd City Council
Housing NSW
Housing NSW – Homelessness Unit
HPLS
Immigrant Women
Jessie Street Domestic Violence Service
Juvenile Justice
MacKillop Family Services - Eddy's Out West
Macquarie Legal Centre
Marist Youth Care
MDAA

Mercy Foundation
Mission Australia
Muslim Women's Support Centre
Nepean Campaign Against Homelessness
Nepean Youth Homelessness Coalition Reference Group
Nepean Youth Services
NSW Health
NSW Health - Mental Health
NSW Police
Pam's Place
Parramatta City Council
Parramatta Homelessness Interagency
Parramatta Mission
Penrith City Council
Penrith Women's Refuge
Richmond Fellowship NSW
Saints Care Ltd -Youth Support & Brokerage
San Miguel Family Life Centre
Sector Connect
St Michael's Family Centre
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors
The Hills Shire Council
The WASH House
Wentworth Community Housing
Wesley Dalmar
Western Sydney Community Forum
YAIN





Department of Human Services  
Housing NSW

July 2010