

**Nepean Regional Taskforce on
Homelessness
Wednesday 25th August, 2010 2-4.30pm
@ Penrith City Council
Library Theatre**



Chair: Felicity Reynolds **Minutes:** Tracey Gray

Following welcome by Felicity and introductions, Vesna Kapetanovic acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on behalf of Penrith City Council.

Apologies: Natasha Mc Dermott(Blacktown City Council), Blue Mountains Council representatives, Robynne Cole(Community services), Trevor Clark(Consumer Advocate), Councillor Karen McKeown(Penrith City Council), Madeleine Pusic(Centrelink)

Acceptance of Last Meetings Minutes Nick Sabel moved to accept the minutes of the meeting held 30th June 2010, seconded Indeana Black.

Business Arising:

Before discussion on the Actions arising from the previous meeting, Felicity acknowledged the great events for the funding announcement and official launch of Project 40 as a funded service. Steph will distribute links to media coverage of the event. Felicity said that it was great to have Federal and State ministers, local MPs, Councillors present; and especially from a range of different political parties. Congratulations must go to the Federal and State Governments, the Taskforce and Wentworth Community Housing for funding this important initiative. Also since the last Taskforce meeting, Steph has resigned from her position at Marist Youth Care and is currently employed on a three month temporary basis by Wentworth Community Housing to oversee the establishment of Project 40. Karen Brown has also been employed as Project 40 Coordinator for Penrith/Blacktown; Tiffany will continue to work Part time on Project 40 Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury. All positions will undergo recruitment processes in the next few months. Steph advised that she will continue to convene Nepean Campaign against Homelessness and will call a meeting soon to progress the campaign and continue to develop the transition plan for an election process next year.

Action Arising 1: Rough Sleepers protocol to be included in Ten Year Plan

Action Arising 2: Felicity has had additional contact with Minister Terenzini's policy advisor since the launch about arranging another meeting. Felicity asked Vesna to check with Councillor McKeown if she has made any headway in arranging a meeting.

Action Arising 3: Asset audit document tabled. The four Council officers meet regularly and so can update as necessary. Steph asked if the document could be put on NCAH website, Vesna will check.

Felicity moved a motion of appreciation to all four Councils in recognition of the work and resources to collate this document and suggested a letter be sent to the General Managers of each Council acknowledging their contribution, seconded by Paula Webber. Audit to be included in Ten Year Plan.

Action Arising 4: Karen Brown (Project 40) and Clare O'Rance (Student, Wentworth Community Housing) distributed draft copies of Homelessness Info Card.

Feedback or suggestions to be emailed to karenb@wentworth.org.au.

Karen will liaise with Vesna from Penrith City Council for review by Council's Homelessness Sub-Committee.

Feedback given during the meeting included:

- Some contacts need qualification or more specific details i.e. some operated 24/7, others limited hours of operation;
- Clarify region/area covered

Karen to distribute electronically once amendments made, specifying time frame to provide additional feedback.

Action Arising 5: Hub involved participation by a number of Government and non-Government services- Centrelink, Medicare, Australian Hearing, Hawkesbury Council, Churches, St Vincent de Paul, Wentworth Community Housing, Housing NSW, Project 40, TAFE etc. There were a number of stalls with services offered on the day. Aim was to connect with rough sleepers, give them what they need and then offer housing assistance.

Advertising was through word of mouth and flyers to existing partners, targeting those clients that they are aware of rough sleeping.

Church hall was packed by 9am. Bonds donated underwear and will continue to donate on a monthly basis. Other services available included food, food vouchers, hair cuts, swags (courtesy of The Good Guys), hearing tests, Medicare updates, Women's Cottage and Nurreen-hygiene packs for women, San Miguel had also facilitated collection of generic hygiene packs.

It is estimated that about 50 clients presented on the day. A few clients came from the Caravan Park and Peppercorn Services bus was used to provide transport on the day.

Some outcomes of the day include that two clients have picked up referrals through a GP to have hearing assessed formally. Wentworth Community Housing, Windsor office report an increase in application. Other agencies/workers report that clients are still talking about it, describe it as being like Christmas, and they didn't feel patronised. Overall a positive experience and an opportunity to develop relationships.

However some gaps have been identified. It wasn't a 'good space' for women. Most of those who attended were men. It is important that relationships are developed with Wilberforce Caravan park. A better concept of the demographic at the Caravan Park could be ascertained from Roy from Centrelink with a view to providing outreach, possibly a separate hub for women. The next hub will be in early November. Space was an issue, so considering other venues. Lee and Tiffany are checking these out. Hubs in other LGAs will be arranged soon, possibly Penrith next.

Congratulations to all involved. Tracey has hard copy of Hawkesbury Gazette article, she will pass on to Steph Brennan for distribution.

Action Arising 6: Steph redistributed information on ten year plans at previous Taskforce meeting. Further discussion on consultation process in General Business.

Action Arising 7: Steph Oatley and Louie not present.

Action Arising 8: Felicity recommended people access this report if they haven't already. Link in Agenda and previous meeting minutes.

Action Arising 9: Sub Committee have met about Shower proposal. Planning still in progress as have made contact with PCYC due to their involvement with the Community Kitchen. Next meeting is scheduled for 14th September. PCYC are already in process of lodging submission for Community Building Partnerships funding for another maintenance issue and don't want to compete at this stage. Currently rough sleepers can access showers at Penrith Pool. The Women's Health Centre in Katoomba have also developed a proposal for a shower for women under Community Building Partnership funding.

In the Hawkesbury there was a facility across the River used by rough sleepers but this has been vandalised and Council had initially decided not to repair. However after discussions between the rough sleepers and Michael from Council, they hope to get this functioning again.

Action Arising 10: Steph will follow up getting this information distributed.

General Business:

Plan for Consultation

It is proposed that the Taskforce endorse consultation in each local government area, following the model which will be used in the Blue Mountains.

A forum will be held at Blue Mountains Council on Wednesday 17th November (Flyer to be attached). Morning will be educative and provide services with a Toolkit for assisting homeless clients including the Info card discussed earlier. Scenarios will be discussed to show how clients can present and identify strategies. The afternoon will be a planning/consultation session for Council officers, Service managers and so on.

Every Interagency will be given opportunity to make submissions to the Taskforce, in an educative, collaborative context.

The Taskforce' role is to identify key questions that each LGA can address, areas that the Taskforce wants input.

Some stakeholders will be directly involved in arranging Forums.

It is proposed that we evaluate the process used following the Blue Mountains Forum and that Consultations in the remaining LGAs be held in February 2011.

Other Business:

- **Mercy Foundation “Grants to End Homelessness”** Expressions of Interest close 30th September. A few projects locally have received funding in earlier rounds: BMYASS- Project 40 support; and NYAS

Look at the questions: What is it that is being done to end homelessness? Is it sustainable?

Mercy Foundation are also putting together “Welcome Home” kits includes linen, cutlery and so on. Laura (Consumer rep) will write something up to show the things she believes should be in kit.

Paula will send link to Steph regarding Ross Divett Foundation

See Separate Document for Ten Year Plan Needs/Issues/Solutions

Based on these discussions it was suggested that some speakers be arranged for future Taskforce meetings.

Mary Waterford will contact Mary Perkins from Shelter. Paula Webber will contact Corrective Services about a presentation.

Next Meetings:

Wednesday 29th September, 2010 2-4.30pm Passadena Room, Penrith City Council

Wednesday 27th October, 2010 Penrith Library Theatrette

Wednesday 24th November, 2010 Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre

Reconvene then in 2011.