

**Nepean Regional Taskforce on
Homelessness
Wednesday 26th May 2010 3-5.30pm
@ Penrith City Council**



Present: Indeana Black (NCAH -Adult Homelessness network), Robynne Cole(Community Services), Paula Webber (Centrelink), Michael Laing (Hawkesbury Council), Mary Waterford (Western Sydney Community Forum), Cr Karen McKeown (Penrith Council), Nick Sabel(Wentworth Community Housing), Michael Vassili(Blacktown City Council), Robert Lester (Deerubbin LALC), Trevor Clark(Homeless Advisor), Ken Hamilton(Homeless Voice), Margaret Maljkovic(Housing NSW), Graham Pringle, Richard Eastmead(The Good Guys), Felicity Reynolds(Mercy Foundation), Steph Oatley(BMYASS), Louisiana Griffen(Homeless Consumer)

Observers: Stephanie Brennan, Tracey Gray, Eamon Waterford (NCAH), Erich Weller, Vesna Kapetanovic (Penrith City Council), Katerina Tahija(Penrith City Council), Leanne Armstrong(NYHS)

Guest: Mike Fish, Public Space Liaison Officer, City of Sydney

Apologies:

Chair: Felicity Reynolds

Minutes: Tracey Gray

Felicity welcomed everyone to meeting and introductions were made. Acknowledgement of traditional owners of the land was made by Councillor Karen McKeown on behalf of Penrith City Council.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held 21st April, 2010 were accepted by Mary Waterford, seconded Karen McKeown.

Guest Speaker: Mike Fish

Mike gave an overview of his role.

He aims to be responsive and respectful to homeless people.

He has developed good relationships with people on the streets and conversely the street people assist him to keep the city safer and cleaner.

Mike was in charge of the Cleansing department prior to this role developing. He is responsible for coordinating city services- Street and public space cleaning, trimming trees etc. He works closely with Police, ngos- they work in harmony to help their mutual clients, the street people.

Mike has found that if people are involved in solving problems, achieve better results. It is essential that he is punctual and follows through on any promises and while he may not know who to contact for a particular issue- it is important that he knows who to contact to find out who to contact. Mike said that the time he has spent

developing relationships has led to cost savings, not just for Council but also for Police, services etc. Mike trains Council cleansing staff, rangers etc n the job- they observe what he does.

ACTION: It was agreed that Council reps will negotiate with City of Sydney for the Cleansing Team Leaders/Managers to visit Mike and observe what he does.

Business Arising:

a) Felicity was to draft letter to Minister Borger regarding temporary accommodation (TA).

Still not completed but give change of Minister provides opportunity to meet with new Minister

Action Arising: Councillor Karen McKeown to facilitate a meeting of Felicity and the new Minister for Housing.

b) Asset Audit

Action Arising: Update at next meeting

c) Homeless Persons Protocol

Prioritise in next few weeks.

Action Arising: Vesna Kapetanovic to convene meeting as soon as practicable. Councillor Karen McKeown recommended also refer to Penrith City Council Safety Committee.

d) Training

Information distributed.

Action Arising: Steph, Felicity and Tracey will adapt for use once Regional Protocol developed

e) Ten Year Plans

Felicity has developed draft plan for Hornsby. This could be used as a template for Nepean plan. Felicity will remove Hornsby specific information and email to Steph for distribution. Taskforce members to provide feedback prior to next Taskforce meeting.

f) Homelessness Hub

Since discussion at last meeting, visited Woolloomooloo Hub and have also had Street Count. Will discuss further in Street Count report/recommendations.

General Business:

Street Count

Eamon acknowledged the contributions of many but specifically Leanne Armstrong, Tiffany Stonestreet, Ken Hamilton and Trevor Clark.

It wasn't possible to count all areas.

Count gave us valuable info for future counts.

Key points:

- Need to devote more time and energy to building relationships with advisors.

- Need to improve training of volunteers especially in regard to “spotting” rough sleepers.
- Too many volunteers in some groups- this can be intimidating for rough sleepers.
- Work needs to be done on Police attitude regarding “moving people on”. - This was widespread not just one particular area.

Concerns raised about Appendix Three representation of data. Steph and Eamon explained that they are working with UWS to develop report/final analysis. Raw data and comparisons will be included in this report. This report will also provide breakdown of rough sleepers, services etc. Any concerns/comments/questions about draft report to be emailed to Steph Brennan.

NB Report remains confidential at this stage.

Steph made a presentation to Eamon for his work on Street Count on behalf of Taskforce and Eamon presented certificates to many of the Taskforce that participated. Felicity moved to accept the Draft Report into the First Nepean Street Count, seconded Karen McKeown.

Karen also acknowledged the obvious rapport Leanne Armstrong has with the Homeless Advisors.

Recommendations:

1. Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for Woolloomooloo is not for distribution but to be used to develop Nepean plan. On page 7(Section 5.4 Specific outputs) City of Sydney describe working to develop effective outreach. This provides a blue print for our plan.

Felicity and Steph B seeks permission to proceed to develop this plan. This is endorsed by Taskforce.

2. Amend this point regarding Project 40 to state “subject to resources”.
3. Recommendation endorsed by Taskforce.
4. Recommendation endorsed by Taskforce, moved Louisiana, seconded Mary.

General Business item C deferred till next meeting.

d) In August 2010, a combined Forum- facilitated by MCRN, and other non SAAP funded Blue Mountains Services in partnership with Blue Mountains Council will hold a forum to provide information and training on what to do if a homeless person visits a service. A further planning meeting for the Forum will be held next week.

e) Blue Mountains Council and other Council officers have identified some sources of research funding and will meet with UWS next week.

f) Vital Youth Service Networks in Blacktown and Penrith etc- especially some key workers who have worked with NCAH are assisting to develop a Forum on Research into Youth Homelessness and also showcase innovations in Youth Service delivery. It will be informative and include case studies but will also be capacity-building. YAIN is coordinating in collaboration with other Youth networks.

g) Homeless Development Worker- YAIN/NCAH Convener position.

Lots of things happening that have implications for structures that currently operate and those that will operate in the future. Steph’s position/role being reviewed but in the meantime can continue with current work plan but at the same time is developing transition plan if she does have to discontinue her

convener/facilitation role. It was agreed that this will be developed in consultation with the Taskforce.

Action:

1. Steph to present work plan including transition plan to next Taskforce meeting on 30th June 2010 but will continue current activities until position review completed.

2. Felicity moved on behalf of Taskforce to express their appreciation to Marist Youth Care for their flexibility and vision to use the Youth Homelessness Development position to resource the region, the Taskforce and achieve outcomes from homelessness initiatives through drawing together government, non- government and business representatives. Seconded Richard East mead and endorsed by Taskforce.

h) Meeting with NSW Shadow Housing Minister

A meeting was held yesterday with Greg Pearce Member for Illawarra, NSW Shadow Minister for Housing. Nick gave an overview of the meeting. It was agreed by those that attended that he seemed to have a good knowledge of the issues and was supportive of the directions the Nepean hope to take through Project 40. He recognised the need for more affordable housing and the need to adopt a strategic approach.

It is proposed that Greg Pearce be invited to observe a future Regional Taskforce meeting. It was agreed that we should also invite new Housing minister but to separate meetings.

Action: Both the new NSW Minister for Housing and the shadow Minister for Housing (Greg Pearce) be invited to attend separate future meetings of the Nepean Regional Taskforce on Homelessness.

i) Community Placements Initiative

Louie has developed this proposal. Steph will email an electronic copy to all members of the Taskforce for discussion at next Regional Taskforce meeting to be attended by Louie. Louie indicated that if she was unavailable for next Taskforce meeting In June, Steph Oatley can talk to the matter.

Other Business:

Felicity will share some of her observations from her recent overseas trip at the next Taskforce meeting.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 30th June, 2010 2-5pm, Pasadena Room, Penrith City Council, High Street Penrith

