

**Nepean Regional Taskforce on
Homelessness
Wednesday 30th June, 2010 2-4.30pm
@ Penrith City Council**



Attendance and Apologies: See attached.

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 Teresa Luk-Leung on behalf of Penrith City Council.

Before the meeting commenced, Felicity acknowledged the exciting news that we finally have funding for Project 40, despite no official announcement yet. Special thanks to Steph Brennan, Councillor Karen McKeown, Phil Koperberg, and Paul Gibson for their efforts in finally receiving confirmation of major funding for this important initiative. Funding is \$1.8 million in total after Phil Koperberg negotiated additional money from the Premier. Phil Koperberg hopes to attend a future Taskforce meeting.

Action Arising 1: When the official announcement is made, Felicity recommends that the Taskforce distribute a media release thanking the Government for their commitment to homelessness. Felicity is happy to work on this. Felicity also called for any additional agenda items.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held 26th May, 2010 were reviewed. One amendment on page 1: " **Action Arising 1:** It was agreed that training of this kind will be included in recommendations in the Ten Year Plan."

Mary Waterford moved to accept amended minutes, seconded Indeana Black.

Business Arising:

Action 1: See above, to be included in ten year plan.

Action 2: Cr Karen McKeown and Felicity have both made contact but have had no success in arranging a meeting.

Action Arising 2: Felicity will persist in trying to make contact.

Action 3: Katerina Tahija from Penrith City Council had a student consolidate the Asset audits from all four councils into one document. Blue Mountains Council are yet to review but once completed can distribute.

Action Arising 3: Asset Audit document to be tabled at next Taskforce meeting.

Action 4: Cr McKeown not at meeting today. Discussion about development of info card based on one issued by Brisbane City Council. Steph has been working on one for Blue Mountains but will add to agenda to develop for all LGAs.

Action Arising 4: Steph, Nick and Tracey to follow up development of card. Wentworth will have a social work student starting soon, they may be able to help with developing info card appropriate for all four Nepean-Blacktown LGAs.

Action 5: Follows on from Action 4.

Action 6: Steph emailed template to Taskforce for discussion in general business.

Action 7: Steph has had ongoing IT issues, lost e-copy of Recommendations. However, Hawkesbury Hub was one of them. Roy Harb reported on progress towards first hub. The chief objective of the hub is to provide direct service to the homeless. Roy has already established out service for Centrelink at Hawkesbury Community Kitchen and also the "White Church" in the last two weeks. He has already had some great outcomes, getting clients temporary accommodation etc. The first hub is tentatively scheduled for August 6th. Schools are donating items for hygiene packs. Hawkesbury(Windsor) Centrelink are sponsoring 20 homeless people- giving them swags etc and holding a blanket drive. Leanne from NYHS has said she can help with blankets. Next Hub planning meeting 7th July at Centrelink Windsor.

It is hoped that through the hub the most vulnerable people can be connected with services and then once Project 40 funds are available, they can be housed.

Action Arising 5: Steph to distribute minutes from Hub Planning meeting to Taskforce.

Action 8: This will be discussed in General Business.

General Business

a) Funding of Supportive Housing Service(Project 40) is great news but still waiting for formal notification. Once this is received, can elaborate on specifics of how this will be rolled out.

Action Arising 6: Steph to update Taskforce on roll out of Supportive Housing Service wants funding realised.

b) Launch of Supportive Housing Service by Tanya Plibersek will be on July 28th around midday.. Initially was to be in Hawkesbury but still negotiating with Ministers office. On that day the film that Eamon and Steph have been working on since Street Count will be launched. The film includes interviews with rough sleepers about their experiences. The film runs for about 20 minutes but also producing a shorter 5 minute version. It melds the statistics and the emotional impact. It shows the generosity of people on the streets, their empowerment as advisors and the isolation, what it is like to live in squats, on the street and be lonely.

Action Arising 7: Steph to update Taskforce on arrangements for Launch by Tanya Plibersek when final arrangements made.

General Business continued:

c) Steph explained the purpose of the document she tabled regarding the transition plan for regional resourcing. All development positions are under review. It was only due to the collaboration of the workers in these positions that the Nepean has been able to get Project 40, the Consortium, the Taskforce and now the Supportive Housing Service off the ground. However, these activities has meant that multiple committees have developed and it is now time to streamline these processes. The proposal suggests ways of describing the role Steph's position has had and also how to delegate these to different activities. Steph now needs to translate that information to everyone across region.

This involves devolution of:

- Knowledge
- Tasks and Responsibilities- Steph does everything but too much for one position; so plan is to delegate tasks in certain areas to others
- Leadership of Campaign- Steph plans to convene a meeting of Nepean Campaign against Homelessness(NCAH) and propose transition plan to new structure. The new structure involves elected positions of both Convener and vice-convener with position descriptions; terms of reference for NCAH which clarifies that its' main purpose is political advocacy. Steph proposes that she continue to Convene NCAH till ready for election process in twelve months time.

It was agreed that there is a need to systematise the processes, so that if one person leaves, the work doesn't stop.

Felicity expressed gratitude to Steph for preparing this draft document. Taskforce can respond by email if they would like to but will also be tabled at next meeting for further discussion

Action Arising 8: Steph to distribute electronic copy of Proposal. Steph to meet with all the various committees impacted by the proposal to outline transition plan. Proposal to be tabled again at next Taskforce meeting for discussion and recommendations as required.

d) Felicity discussed definitions of homelessness. The following definition is used by City of Sydney as many of the homeless people they consulted didn't like the Chamberlain and McKenzie definition.

"The following definition is used along with the Chamberlain and Mackenzie definition in the City of Sydney's Homelessness Strategy 2007-2012. It was based on work done by Kraybill and was developed in conjunction with some people who are currently experiencing long term homelessness.

The First Home: the self. The characteristics of this home are physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual in nature. This home needs to be nurtured, rested, nourished and emotionally supported.

The second home: might cover any of the descriptions provided under the primary, secondary and tertiary definitions of homelessness. It is the place where we live, and it refers not only to the physical structure but to the living environment within which it is located.

This home is where we sleep, where we begin and end every day, where we store our belongings, it may be where we socialise and interact with others.

The third home: is the larger community within which our first and second homes are located. It provides context to the lives that are lived within it and how that is realised at an individual level. Here the connectivity between individuals, multiple communities, the residential, business and visitors all meet in the same place. The quality of that home is defined by the relationships of all groups within it."

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Community/HomelessnessServices/InformationKitForVolunteers/Module1/WhatIsHomelessness.asp> downloaded 9th July, 2010

The Taskforce then reviewed the draft Ten Year Plan.

Action Arising 9: Tracey and Steph to Cut and paste data into Section 2; Background.

Action Arising 10: The Kraybill definition above to be added to Section 3; Understanding Homelessness.

Eamon Waterford to contribute data on homelessness from Street Count

Additional Information on causes of homelessness e.g. domestic violence, mental health to be included in Section 3.

Action Arising 11: Steph to contact Alison Shearer about getting information from Regional HAP Implementation Committee for Section 4: Policy Background. This will also determine how we can continue to inform their ongoing planning.

Action Arising 12: Felicity to elaborate further on costs in Section 5: Costs Argument

Action Arising 13: Terms of Reference for Taskforce to be inserted in Section 6

Section 7 describes the Nepean Region.

Action Arising 14: Tracey to email Blue Mountains and Blacktown Council Representatives regarding adding definitions for their LGAs.

Mary Waterford will obtain statistics from recent ABS Count. A request has already be submitted to HPIC(Homeless Persons Information Centre) for their data.

The Regional HAP Implementation Committee already have the NDCA SAAP Unmet Demand data. Steph will request from Alison Shearer.

Eamon will cut and paste Street Count methodology into Section 7.

Section 8 Needs Statement

It was generally agreed that a lack of low cost or affordable housing options contributes to homelessness in the region. The area does have more affordable housing than other areas but the population has traditionally shifted to the region for this reason and therefore, there is insufficient stock to meet demand.

It was agreed that Taskforce must engage with Affordable housing, support Wentworth to get more and also engage with Mission Australia. Assisting people access affordable housing and strategies to increase supply need to be explored.

Discussion occurred about domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness and need to address domestic violence as an issue in general but not be seen as in isolation from homelessness.

Other needs were identified:

- Women seldom sleep rough, so their homelessness is often hidden.
- There is a lack of facilities for rough sleepers and young homeless people.
- More support for people once they are housed needs to be available. Support not just for families, women or young people but in general.
- Education about consequences of Domestic violence could facilitate prevention of homelessness
- Structural problems need to be considered.
- Ongoing community education about homelessness

Action Arising 15: Taskforce members are invited to email Felicity or Steph by July 21st with their suggestions regarding unmet needs. At next meeting further discussion and prioritisation will occur.

Section 9: Better understanding homelessness and measuring results in the Nepean

Action Arising 16: Taskforce to send feedback on tables to Felicity and Steph.

Sections 10-13 will be informed by Section 8 and completed following next Taskforce meeting.

Felicity commended the Obama administration report on homelessness to the Taskforce.

http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors_2010_FSPPpreventEndHomeless.pdf

Action Arising 17: Link to report to be distributed with minutes, please see above.

e) Louise Griffin's proposal will be held over to next taskforce meeting

Action Arising 18: Community Placements Initiative to be added to Agenda for Taskforce meeting on 28th July, 2010.

f) Vesna Kapetanovic raised the issue of the lack of shower facilities for homeless people and proposed that a subgroup of the Taskforce be formed to consider a submission for Community Building partnerships funding. Possibly the Community Kitchen may be interested in adding this to their services. It was agreed that there is a need for these facilities in most areas. Hawkesbury does have some limited facilities through their Community Kitchen.

Action Arising 19: Vesna will convene a meeting and get assistance from Leanne Armstrong, Tracey Gray and Gai Lambert(The Good Guys) to discuss the proposal. Vesna to report back at next Taskforce meeting.

g) Stuart Duncan discussed the Work and Development order trial. It is limited to 2000 individuals over two years but enables them to satisfy their court fine debts through volunteering, counselling or treatment. There are different rates depending on the type of activity undertaken.

Action Arising 20: Steph will distribute information on this project electronically.

h) Mary Waterford reported that Western Sydney Community Forum have received \$160,000 over two years for a housing facilitation project in South Western Sydney. Funding covers three day per week position but WSCF will try and resource a further day. Position will be based in Parramatta but resourcing SAAP and other homelessness services in Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool. Recruitment will begin in August.

Vulnerability Index

Steph and Felicity gave presentation on the Vulnerability Index that they recently attended training in Brisbane to observe. As the Supportive Housing Service is established would love to implement this tool. Inner City are planning to implement in August, possibly October/November in Nepean.

Steph distributed Fact Sheet on the 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign. Further information can be viewed on their Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/50lives50homes

Other Business:

- Felicity briefly shared some of her observations from her recent overseas trip. She will give a fuller presentation at next Taskforce meeting.
- Trevor advised that The BIG Issue are training some of their homeless vendors to go out to schools and educate students about homelessness.

Next Meeting: Please note change of venue!!

Wednesday 28th July, 2010 2.30-5pm at Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, High Street, Penrith.