

# **Regional Taskforce on Homelessness: incorporating Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009, 2pm-5pm held in the Pasadena Room, Penrith Council**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

**Attendance:** Indeana Black (NCAH -Adult Homelessness network), Stuart Duncan (SWAHS), Paula Webber (Centrelink), Michael Laing (Hawkesbury Council), Robynne Cole (Community Services), Deborah Dare (Community Services), Stephanie Oatley (NCAH - Youth Homelessness network), Natasha McDermott (Blacktown Council), Richard Eastmead (Business Representative), Mary Waterford (Western Sydney Community Forum), Robert Hamilton (United Way Sydney), Cr Karen McKeowen (Penrith Council), Margaret Malkovic (Housing NSW), Felicity Reynolds (Chairperson – Mercy Foundation), Nick Sabel (Wentworth Community Housing)

**Observers:** Madeleine Pusic (Centrelink) Stephanie Brennan (NCAH), Erich Weller, Vesna Kapetanovic, Katerina Tehija (Penrith Council), John DeVoy (Probation & Parole),

**Apologies:** Robynne Cole (Community Services), Alison Shearer (Housing NSW), Erich Weller, Vesna Kapetanovic, Katerina Tehija (Penrith Council), Louisiana Griffin (Homelessness consumer), Michael Vassili (Blacktown Council), Janet Mays (Blue Mountains Council), Cr Liz Jeremy (Blacktown Council) Wendy Maybury (Aboriginal representative), FAHCSIA

**Chair:** Felicity Reynolds

**Minutes:** Eamon Waterford

Felicity welcomed the taskforce, and then Councillor Karen McKeowen gave the Acknowledgement of Country.

Last meeting's minutes were accepted, with the following amendments: Michael Collins is Michael Collina and Bethany Pade is Payde.

Acceptance was moved by Mary Waterford, seconded by Indeana Back.

### **4. Business Arising**

#### **a. Street Count Working Party**

Stephanie Brennan reported back on the progress of the Street Count Working Party, which is planned to occur on the same night in all 4 LGAs (February 15<sup>th</sup> 2010).

Representatives from the councils explained their participation, with transport, plain clothes private security in Blacktown and receiving advice from police/local service providers as to where the likely 'hot-spots' are.

Train services need to be contacted to ensure that people are counted at the same time.

Stephanie then explained the database/website that will be run of volunteers for the count.

**ACTION ARISING:** Stephanie B will send out notes on the database and sign-up information. She will provide numbers that will be needed to cover all the areas. It was pointed out that the flyer states Monday, when in fact it will be held Tuesday morning (post-Monday night).

**b. Housing TA (Temporary Accommodation ) data**

Margaret Malkovic (Housing NSW) gave some information on the occurrence of Temporary Accommodation in the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas. As an overflow from the SAAPS service, there is increasing demand, with the budget for TA being stretched. After discussion on the impact of TA on homelessness, Felicity Reynolds stated that she would draft a letter to the Minister raising some of the issues identified by the group in regards to TA.

**ACTION ARISING:** Felicity Reynolds to draft a letter to the Minister raising some of the issues identified by the group in regards to TA concerns.

**c. Summary of initiatives by Stephanie Brennan – This was moved to after break as it would form part of a presentation.**

**d. NCAH facilitation of Asset Audit template.**

Michael Laing passed a copy of the Asset Audit undertaken by Hawkesbury Council around. The Taskforce agreed that this was a good model, with the added heading of Land Resources, and that the 4 LGAs are invited to use this model to produce similar Audits. Moved: Stephanie Oatley, Seconded: Mary Waterford.

**ACTION ARISING:** Stephanie to circulate Michale Laing's example of an Asset Audit for the other Council reps to use and bring back to the next meeting.

**5. General Business**

**a. Richard Eastmead: Penrith Valley Fund.**

Richard outlined the process of starting the Penrith Valley Fund with local press and media outlets. Its primary focus is homelessness. It has been successful at concurrently raising significant funds and raising community awareness, vital to achieve long-term change. The replication of this connection between media and business was discussed, whether such a program would work in other LGAs.

Richard stated that he would be willing to talk to other LGAs in order to encourage connections.

The Homeless Connect event that was run in Newcastle was discussed, which involved bringing many service providers together (Centrelink, Rentstart, Vinnies etc.) on a single day. The length of time and cost to organise such an event was raised as a concern, and that it may be more appropriate for the Nepean area on a smaller scale. This will be discussed next year.

**b. Nick Sabel: Phil Koperberg's Taskforce**

Nick reported back on the process and potential outcomes of the Interagency Taskforce being headed by Phil Koperberg, State Member for the Blue Mountains. It is time-limited, with a 8 month period before reporting back to State Government. Meetings of the Taskforce have been fluid, but have aimed at identifying where overlaps and gaps exist in the current

structure. It will produce a series of outcomes, one which will be the endorsement of the Nepean Regional Taskforce.

As a standing item there will be a report from Phil Koperberg's taskforce representatives to this meeting.

**ACTION ARISING:** Agenda for next meeting to include report back from Phil Koperberg's Taskforce.

**c. Stephanie Brennan: Development of the Nepean Wentworth Supportive Housing service update.**

Stephanie gave a report on Supportive Housing models and how they work. This included information on the work of Common Ground, who have had great success in combating homelessness. By creating beautiful buildings that house a social mix of the most vulnerable, chronically homeless and low-income residents, with an emphasis on attractive common spaces and activities, combined with 24-hour support staff; they have successfully reduced primary homelessness in cities in which they are established.

In the Nepean elements of the successful models that have had results overseas can be adapted to our particular environment. A consortium of homelessness services have been formed to establish a Supportive Housing service that aims to provide permanent supportive housing. Each LGA in the region will have Project 40 established which will aim to target the 40 most vulnerable homeless people in each area. To help target those with the highest vulnerabilities a Vulnerability Index is being developed to use as a tool. It is hoped that support funding can be attracted and will commence if we are successful in July 2010 when the National Partnership on Homelessness funding comes online. A copy of the presentation will be forwarded with these minutes.

**6. Timeframe and Work Plan**

The Work Plan is starting to come together, with

- A Street Count
- An LGA asset audit
- Business/Media/Community funds being established across the LGAs.

When the 10 year plan to end homelessness is finalised, it will be put to all relevant stakeholders: Local, State and non-government.

**ACTION ARISING:** Felicity Reynolds will email copies of relevant (similar demographics and geography) examples of 10 year homelessness plans from North-American cities.

**7. Other Business**

Felicity Reynolds tabled a Private Members Business letter from David Bradbury MP (Lindsay) to Federal Parliament regarding Homelessness in Australia.

**ACTION ARISING:** Stephanie Brennan will provide the Taskforce with PDF copies of the latest Parity magazine forwarded to her by Felicity.

**The next meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010, 2pm-5pm in the Pasadena Room, Penrith City Council.**  
**Subsequent meetings are scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010.**