

Newcastle and Hunter Homelessness Interagency Network Meeting – 9th July 2015

Attending: Maria Malcolm (Nova), Fiona Edwards (Nova), Tanya Rowney (Nova), Mel Eason (Matthew Talbot), Loreen Smith (Matthew Talbot), Roemary Pillay (Jenny's Place), Kylie Pack (Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service), Joel Shakespeare (Samaritans SHS), Roslyn Cook (Homeless Persons Legal Service)

Chair: Maria Malcolm and Fiona Edwards

Minute Taker: Fiona Edwards

Coordinated by: Astrid Gearin

Apologies: Astrid Gearin

Acknowledge Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet.

Minutes and actions of previous meeting: accepted.

- **Hunter Homeless Connect Day:**

Tanya Rowney gave a brief update on the preparations for Hunter Homeless Connect Day

- **This Way Home:**

Lack of usage of TA units discussed. All agreed burdensome terms and conditions for case workers prohibits uptake of TA units. Fiona Edwards stated Compass and Partner Agencies are aware of the problems and are addressing them.

- Mel Eason raised suggestion of a casual pool of trained caseworkers to be used collectively by sector with their details to be kept in CIMS. Discussion of pros and cons followed.
- Discussion around new tabs in CIMS and concerns around the data focus of CIMS.
- Discussion around Link 2 Home including the problem of Link 2 Home sending referrals to agencies despite agencies having no availability. Feedback to be given to Mary Sullivan of GSH Evaluation Committee.
- Discussion around boarding houses including the quick turnaround at Aaron Buman boarding houses at Carrington and Adamstown; problems with boarding house managers accepting referrals then evicting clients after receiving FACS Housing bond money; drug and alcohol issues effecting success of tenancies; the need to keep healthy relationships with boarding house managers and owners and the need for greater communication with them from services; HTAAS getting complaints from boarders about unfair treatment and evictions; discussion around Neami helping with boarding house clients and mental health issues; agreement that boarding house owners should be invited to future NHHIN meetings.
- Discussion around mental health issues for clients including clients without acute mental health issues unable to access mental health services when they or their carers feel they are becoming unwell; the need or more engagement by mental health services to support workers working with clients with these issues; Rosemary Pillay stated Jenny's Place now has an agreement with the Mater Mental Health Team; agreement around inviting the Community Mental Health Team to attend future NHHIN meetings.

- Discussion around Centrelink becoming user unfriendly with nearly all services now only accessible via computer and the difficulties this presents for clients including the fact many do not own computers or smart phones or know how to use them; Rosemary Pillay stated Jenny's Place applied to Telstra for free phones for women experiencing DV and received several free smart phones.
- Discussion around asking council to change Vagrance Group name to a more respectful name. Mel Eason to follow up with council at next council meeting.
- Mel Eason suggested training sessions for workers and information sessions for clients (through Homeless Persons Legal Service) could be held in the renovated Matthew Talbot Centre in future.

Meeting closed 12.00pm