

# **Newcastle and Hunter Homelessness Interagency Network Meeting**

**10<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Meeting Chair: Astrid Gearin**

**Minute Taker: Fiona Edwards**

**Meeting commenced: 10.10am**

**Attendees: See PDF**

Apologies: Maria Malcolm (Nova), Nathaniel Bavinton (Newcastle City Council, Homeless Committee Working Group)

- Acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet.
- Guest speakers: Outreach Service Hub – Zed Tintor:

Develop Outreach Service Hub project for Jenny's Place. Will be in Newcastle 2 days a week to work on this project. Homelessness Services Hub (funding ENPAH). Focus on prevention strategies to reduce homelessness primarily for women and children but no wrong door approach so men will be referred.

1. Source a space in Newcastle preferably on Hunter Street, preferably rent free from council to be an access point for service providers to come together and work collaboratively. Outreach team from Jenny's Place will re-locate here. Invite Minister Pru Goward or Rosie Batty to launch. Needs access to transport, parking, disabled access. Looking for suggestions around an appropriate property. Please contact Astrid via email.
2. Develop a workshop to identify service gaps and develop referral pathways around homelessness and DV leading to homelessness. Legal services, counselling services, DVCAS, police, HNSW, Centrelink, SHS encouraged to utilise this space. Invitations will be sent for the workshop. Are there any areas in this develop?

- FaCS Housing Access and Demand: Natalie Carroll:

Still involved with outreach work with Northern Settlements, Nova, Walgar Ngurra, Marooma Rehab etc. 19 CSO's in Outreach Team. 2 specialists and 1.5 PRBS. Work with Youth Project officers and people leaving correctional facilities.

Astrid raised the fact that it is International Suicide Prevention Day – Are you ok?

Minutes and actions of the previous meeting:

- Vagrance Group has changed its name to Homeless Committee Working Group. The group started in January led by Newcastle City Council due to a lot of people camping around the foreshore. A mix of homeless people and backpackers/opportunistic campers. Council called a meeting to respond to this issue. Homeless people were offered support. To co-ordinate a coordinated and collaborative response and build pathways to appropriate services for people sleeping rough throughout the city. Need clear lines of communication with NHHIM because slightly different views on how to deal with homelessness so it would be good to get responses from NHHIM to help develop strategies.

- Problems with accessing mental health services was raised at the last meeting. There is only one point of contact (1800 number) for SHS providers. Barbara Stacy HNEMH offered to have a rep from HNEMH come to a NHHIN meeting to educate SHS providers around the language to use when talking to HNEMH about clients.
- There will be big sweeping changes next year: Community Managed Organisations from 30 June 2016 NGO Grants program will cease. They will tender for new program: Partnerships for health and won't be restricted to NGO's.
- HASSI will cease as of March to June 2016. Will be re-tendered but will be called Community Managed Living Support. Will not be in packages linked to housing. It will be broader: deal with people living at home and boarding houses as well as homeless people. They will begin to work with clients while still homeless.

THE BIG QUESTION: What is your experience with Rent Start?

- Delays e.g. client may sign a lease one day and rent start does not start until two or more days later.
- Natalie Carroll FaCS Housing Access and Demand: Rent Start have increased numbers of workers and moving to complete applications on-line. Trying to provide better access for clients. There will still be face to face contact for clients. First point of call will be phone or internet but second point of call will be face to face appointments.
- Suggestions for speaker or presentation for next meeting:
- Project and Committee Updates:

Regional Homelessness Committee – Where is the DHIG?

James Butler FaCS Housing CPO: DHIG: District Homelessness Implementation Group. Split New England and Hunter DHIGs. New England: SHS providers, health, police.

Newcastle: A different approach: SHS providers, Homelessness NSW and other peak bodies and local FaCS staff. Local matters i.e. Link to Home, discussions with FaCS Housing, Men's working group, youth working group. Implementing changes to SHS.

This information will feed up to a more over-arching group. Astrid asked if a representative from DHIG could be a regular attendee at NHHIN? James replied many SHS providers already attend both meetings. Astrid suggested we share minutes so that we are all getting the same information. Anne Fletcher to be the person to attend both local DHIG and NHHIN meetings next month.

Karen Davey FaCS Housing: Establishing an over-arching government structure to look at coordination, gaps, structure. Combined Hunter New England committee. Looking at membership and sending invitations for membership. Will nominate individual members from SHS providers to attend DHIG meetings.

This Way Home Project Report:

As at end of August TA full. Units impacted by April storms, feedback from SHS providers has resulted in clients being accepted via a SHS assessment rather than having to be known by the service for a certain amount of time.

Hunter Homeless Connect Day:

Good feedback. Better organised, more services available, ticket system for gift bags and additional blankets worked well.

New Business:

- Astrid to give boarding house resource: a small flyer listing residents rights, handed out to attendees.

Services update:

- **Geoff Capelin HTAAS:** Raised issue of certain illegal activities will in the future attract a mandatory eviction by FaCS Housing. This legislation is currently before parliament and will include drug supply, serious assaults, offences which attract a show cause under the Bail Act. Applies to entire tenancy, not just person committing offence. Hoping this will be amended. Three strikes policy for low level offending. Can appeal an eviction notice if client appeals within two weeks of receiving notice. If client misses 3 two week strikes they will be evicted with no appeal process.
- **Roslyn Cook, Homeless Legal Service:** 2 clinics up and running one at Jenny's place weekly on Wed 12-2.00pm and one at MTalbot fortnightly Tues 12-1.00pm. Can see up to 6 individual clients a week. People not eligible for Legal Aid. Criteria: Homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**Meeting closed: 11.15am**