



# Shelter WA Update

## May 2008

### Housing Crisis Committee for CaLD Communities Releases Report

The Joint Community Sector report, ***Gaps in Housing and Support Services for Humanitarian Entrants*** was launched on Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of May at the Edmund Rice Centre Mirrabooka. Margaret Quirk, local MLA for Girrawheen and Minister for Corrective Services attended the launch and accepted the report. The report outlines difficulties for newly arrived refugees and humanitarian entrants from CaLD communities and includes recommendations for consideration.

The Consultation Forum that gathered information for the report was held on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2008 with a wide range of participants working in migrant services. Thirty-four (34) participants from twenty-eight (28) agencies participated in the consultation forum. In addition 9 observers, moderators and guest speakers were present. It was shown that the difficulties for recently arrived humanitarian community members in accessing and maintaining housing is increasing with time and is exacerbated by the current high demand for rental housing, related low vacancy rates and increasing rents.

The high cost of private rents in WA combined with a scarcity of affordable public and community housing is impacting low-income earners who are increasingly at risk of homelessness. For people from CaLD backgrounds and those newly arriving to Western Australia from war-torn countries with personal experiences of torture and trauma, stress and uncertainty in securing and maintaining appropriate and affordable housing can be particularly detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing.

Participants from the Consultation Forum stressed that the current housing crisis is greatly affecting CaLD clients. Some key issues that arose from the Consultation forum were: the preparation of humanitarian clients before arriving, gaps and limitations of initial settlement programs and issues of barriers to access to private rental housing and the need for support in maintaining a tenancy were of high importance to the participants. HCCCaLD recommends an increase in tenancy education programmes and extra support in housing and financial support.

The report (Gaps in Housing and Support for Humanitarian Communities) is available on Shelter WA's website here:

[http://www.shelterwa.org.au/publications/papers\\_reports/2008/Gaps\\_in\\_Housing\\_and\\_Support\\_for\\_Humanitarian\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.shelterwa.org.au/publications/papers_reports/2008/Gaps_in_Housing_and_Support_for_Humanitarian_Communities.pdf)



HCCCaLD Consultation Forum in February, where the experiences of community workers and their suggestions for system improvements were recorded to form the Joint Sector Report.



## **Ethic Disabled Carers "Have Your Say" Accommodation Workshop**

The Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC) will be holding a workshop for people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background who are either currently accessing accommodation services, or are looking at accessing accommodation services.

The workshop will enable participants to:

1. Learn about their rights when accessing services
2. Learn about the different types of accommodation services
3. Have some understanding about Power of Attorney and Inheritance Laws, where the beneficiary is a person with a disability.
4. Enable people to share their experiences when accessing accommodation services

**When: Thursday 22nd May**

**Time: 10:00am – 2:30 pm**

**Where: Nulsen Haven Training Room, 28 Burton St, Cannington**

Outcomes from the workshop will be explored on EDAC's radio program EthnicAbility, which airs every Tuesday, 11:30-noon (95.3 6EBA FM World Radio)

For more information or to register, contact: Maranda Ali on 9388 7455 or email [maranda@edac.org.au](mailto:maranda@edac.org.au)

## **Philip Mangano Public Lecture - The *Hidden Costs of Homelessness***

The Mental Illness Fellowship of WA (MIFWA) hosted a Free Public Lecture on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May with Mr Philip Mangano, United States Director, Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Philip Mangano brings to his role more than 25 years of experience in the issue of homelessness, both in public policy and solution-oriented programs. In line with Schizophrenia Awareness Week Mr Mangano is in Perth to talk about the real financial costs of homelessness, not in moral, ethical or social terms but in the broader impact of allowing people to '**randomly rebound through other sectors including health, justice and corrections**'.

Applying a purely business model to the costs of homelessness, Mr Mangano identified that in many US States and Cities, a small number of homeless people, regularly collected by Ambulances, presenting to Hospital Emergency Departments, Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health systems, regular police involvement in the justice system including periods of incarceration, and receiving homeless services can cost the community up to \$1M per year each when the cost of each of these systems is factored in. These 'frequent flyers' are easily identified by local Police, Ambulance drivers and triage nurses in Emergency Departments. The US Interagency Council now boasts 49 of the 50 American States forming bi-partisan government, non-government local partnerships to end homelessness.

Shelter WA, together with CHCWA and the Mental Health Division made presentations to the Public Forum. For more information or to access Mr Mangano's or other presentations contact the Mental Illness Fellowship at [www.mifwa.org.au](http://www.mifwa.org.au) or phone 9228 0200.

A recent paper by Murdoch University's Paul Flatau of the Housing and Urban Research Institute of WA identifies the cost-effectiveness of providing homelessness services. To see this positioning paper, go to:

[http://ahuriwa.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/AHURI\\_Positioning\\_Paper\\_No92\\_Effectiveness\\_and\\_cost\\_effectiveness\\_of\\_homelessness.pdf](http://ahuriwa.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/AHURI_Positioning_Paper_No92_Effectiveness_and_cost_effectiveness_of_homelessness.pdf)

The Shelter WA presentation will be available on our website soon



## Connect Groups and the Homeless Connect Project

Connect Groups (formerly Western Institute of Self Help Organisations), together with Volunteering WA, are collectively working on bringing the Homeless Connect project to Perth. The project model hinges on a one day, one-stop-shop model of service provision to homeless people. It was developed in San Francisco in 2004 and is now being held in over 130 cities in the US, Canada, Puerto Rico and Australia.

Workers in the field often report that the administrative burden and time-consuming nature of accessing Medicare entitlement for clients, establishing Centrelink benefits, dealing with the legal system on behalf of clients, banking institutions, accessing verification of identity documents, and dealing with utilities and other service providers that are not co-located is intensive and fraught with delay that creates more barriers for people without a stable address. The Homeless Connect project provides immediate results for homeless people including enabling registration for accommodation, medical attention, legal assistance and counselling, and gives an opportunity for service providers to collaborate around the needs of people requiring assistance, offers social inclusion opportunity and raises public awareness of homelessness.

The day is run as a one-stop-shop outreach of organisations working with and for homeless people but can also include free personal services like eye and hearing tests, haircuts, massages, clothing, shoes, craft activities, fitness, book giveaways, library memberships, entertainment and catering. See information about the US Homelessness Connect Projects and a toolkit here: <http://www.ich.gov/slocal/NationalProjectHomelessConnectPromo.html>

### The first Perth event is planned for November 2008.

The Connect Group, (WISH) is now at the final stage of their re-branding and as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations they will be launching the final reveal. The Hon Sue Ellery MLC Minister for Communities will officially launch the re-developed website and new publicity materials.

### Connect Group Workshops and Networking Events 2008

"The Human Face in the Media" - 28 May 1-4pm

"Starting an Online Support Group" - September, Day and Time (TBA)

"Basic Bookkeeping for Groups" - October, Day and Time (TBA)

"Working with Health Professionals" Networking Tea - November, Day and Time (TBA)

To register your interest, contact Priscilla, Community Development Officer at

[cdo@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:cdo@connectgroups.org.au) or call 9228 4488.

## Mission Australia and Houses for the Homeless Campaign

Mission Australia is one of the oldest organisations delivering welfare in Australia, with a history from the 1850's. Formed in the new millennium 2000, with the amalgamation of all City Missions including Perth City Mission, each year Mission Australia helps around 5,000 people with accommodation and housing support and prevents another 40,000 people from becoming homeless. In the Houses for Homeless campaign, [realestate.com.au](http://realestate.com.au) partnered with Mission Australia to raise both funds and awareness of the plight of homeless people in Australia.

For each person that visits [housesforthehomeless.com.au](http://housesforthehomeless.com.au) <http://www.realestate.com.au> donates \$1 to Mission Australia, up to a total of \$100,000. One hundred per cent of every dollar raised goes directly toward helping house the homeless through Mission Australia's programs that include training, housing, education support, food furniture and clothing services.

Visit the website to view the campaign, look at Mission Australia's programs or make your own personal donation. <http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/index.php> .



## Young People Stuck in Homelessness and Corrections Systems

The situation for WA's young people charged with indictable offenses, incarcerated or held in remand facilities is at crisis point. A general lack of affordable housing, rehabilitation facilities and supported accommodation in Western Australia is seriously affecting at-risk youths and a revolving door picture of youths offending, coming in contact with the justice system, being incarcerated for lengthy periods or being released without supervision or support, inadequately dealt with and remaining at risk of homelessness or actually homeless means that these young people are becoming increasingly frustrated, angry and disillusioned and are repeatedly let down.

Outcare, WA's agency working with people leaving prison, reports that many young people are forced to remain in detention and remand facilities for increasing lengths of time while waitlisted for housing and support services to secure their release. More are finding that their only housing option is to remain in or return to prison.

A large number of young people in the juvenile justice system have been removed from their families and placed in 'the care of state', however problems of a disconnected system between the Department of Child Protection and the Department for Corrections means that these young people are doubly disadvantaged by the lack of holistic and person centred service models, and a lack of pathways and non-existent transitions between leaving corrections facilities, school and further education or training.

Recent media attention on the high workload of Community Corrections Officers, Court Officers and Magistrates frustration with young people attending court without an adult advocate, without court reports or a lack of crucial information in court reports, means that these people are having to re-appear, are failing to appear and are being held for lengthy periods in harmful environments that only serve to increase their social exclusion and further heighten barriers to participation and their eventual rehabilitation.

Shelter WA, together with Outcare's Youth Services Team Manager Sam Mesiti and the Youth Affairs Council of WA will be organising a forum next month to explore with Youth Workers, Juvenile Justice Officers, Child Protection Workers, Youth Accommodation Providers, non-government service providers and other interested parties how to address the gaps in the system and ensure that our disconnected young people are getting every opportunity to re-join community following an episode of offending.

To find out about Outcare please visit their website:

<http://www.outcare.com.au/home.html>

Promotion of the upcoming Forum will commence shortly.

