

MINUTES OF MEETING held on the 6th July 2011
(Meeting held City West Lotteries House, West Perth–

Item 1 Attendance

Present:

Joy Smith	The Salvation Army Morley
June Brown	City of Stirling
Bridget Little	CARAD
Heidi Gregory	Centrecare Mirrabooka
Jenny Lydon	Salvation Army Perth CSS
Heather George	Centrelink
Mira Chalklen	King Edward Memorial Hospital
Sharon Patterson	Princess Margaret Hospital
Felicity Bankman	Princess Margaret Hospital
Frank Pellisey	SVDP
Bill Cosentino	UCW Creditcare
Kate White	SVDP WA
Iris Bennett	JewishCare
Manelka Fernando	GCLC
David Marshall	FAHCSIA
Uta Conway	FAHCSIA
Halina Szunejko	WA Association of Polish Women
Joanna Harper	Anglicare WA
Lucy Reynolds	Lotterywest
Olga Ramasamy	Australian Asian Association
Pauline Edwards	Lotterywest
Bill Toon	The Big Issue
Johanna Notley	Yanchep Emergency Food Relief
Muletambo	Jacaranda Community Centre Inc
Jaswinder	Jacaranda Community Centre Inc
Lyndsey Fitzgerald	Jacaranda Community Centre Inc
Bronwyn Chapman	Southcare Inc
Sue-Anne Young	SVDP

Apologies: Doreen Rossiter – Leeming Hampers

Chair: Sharon Patterson

Minutes: Tamara Kendall (WACOSS)

Item 2 Minutes of the May Forum 2011

Amendments: None.

- Bernie has the PowerPoint presentation from the Fines Enforcement Registry if anyone wants a copy.
- Reminder from Lotterywest re the ER application deadline of 18th July.

Motion: The May minutes accepted. (Minutes are sent out and also published on WACOSS website).

Moved: Kate White **Seconded:** Bill Cosentino - Minutes Accepted

Item 3 Business Arising from the Minutes

None

Item 4 Presentation by Gillian Murphy – Department of Immigration & Citizenship

Gillian explained that the new Humanitarian Settlement Service has been running since 4th April 2011. It will run for three years with an option for a further three years. There have been some major changes and different modules are now provided. They are not mandatory but most entrants like to do the orientation modules.

There are seven core competencies and most clients should complete them within 6 – 12 months. They are Finding Information and Accessing Services, Making an Appointment, Transport, Money Management, Tenancy Issues, Employment and Education, Australian Law.

Every 12 months organisations can apply for a grant from the Settlement Grants Program (SGP). Gillian can provide further information about grants and the organisations involved in the process.

The three agencies in Perth providing services under the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) Case Management Contractors grants are:

North of the river and North WA

- PVS Workfind (HSS Case Management)
- MSCWA Inc (Accommodation)

South of the river and South WA

- Communicare Inc.

Where accommodation is being found for people through the service it must be appropriate and close to suitable community resources such as schools and migrant services and within a manageable price range. This can be a challenge. For example entrants on an 866 visa are often single men and affordable single-occupancy accommodation is rare. Properties are 'head leased' by the providers/contractors.

Other types of services have also been included to deliver the objectives of this service including Local Area Coordination (LAC) and a new Case Management system, which includes coordination of meetings with agencies, local government, Centrelink etc.

Groups and organisations can express interest in attending LAC meetings. The first LACs are in the process of being organised. Some volunteer programs are running but not all the providers have the capacity to do these in-house. Communicare have volunteers, while PVS are still working on their volunteer program framework.

The six components of the Case Management system include:

1. Needs Assessment (pre and post-arrival assessments) - a Case Management Plan and a Youth Sub Plan for all 15-25 year olds, whether arriving as part of a family unit or not.
2. Transit Assistance - meeting all referred people upon arrival and assisting them with overnight accommodation and immediate necessities, including emergency medical attention.

3. Reception – property induction and initial provisions, including culturally appropriate food and hygiene items to last approximately 7 days.
4. Registrations (with Centrelink, Medicare, schools, banks etc) and an orientation program, covering a wide range of topics.
5. Health services – all entrants receive a full check and immunisation package.
6. Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) - this program has been re-tendered with slight changes to class sizes and composition of classes. Those eligible must hold a permanent visa, have little or no English and have been in Australia less than 12 months. Children under 18 are eligible if they are not attending school.

Access to the AMEP is extended to some temporary visa holders as specified in the legislative requirements. It is available for up to 510 hours, or until the person attains functional English, whichever comes first. Registration for classes should be within six months of the date their visa commences and classes started within one year. They have five years to complete the classes. These timeframes may be extended in particular circumstances.

The Orientation module offers support and ongoing settlement/social help, information about the Settlement Grants Program, Migrant Resource Centres, Local Councils, Government Programs, Community Service Organisations and Religious/Spiritual Organisations.

Quality Assurance is a high priority for the service, including spot checks on files, housing checks and client contact visits.

Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors (UHMs - children under 18yrs of age without guardians) are eligible for HSS services on a needs basis. There are 15 individuals in this category in WA.

ASeTTS are providing longer term counselling to clients, rather than the previously offered short term program (PASTT). This has been found to be less disruptive for clients, who, under previous arrangements, were being referred to other services for further sessions, when they had already built up a relationship of trust with a counsellor at the first service.

Gillian said that this new program had been designed to prevent duplication of services. Discussion followed on the allocation of cases to areas of Australia. All cases are initially handled by Canberra and then once a link is identified by the individual (a family member, friend etc) the entrant, where possible, is located to that area.

For further information visit www.immi.gov.au or contact – 131 881

PowerPoint slides of Gillian's presentation are available – email bernie@wacoss.org.au

Item 5 Morning tea

Item 6 Presentation by Bridget Little - CARAD

Bridget said that clients to their service tend to be those who have finished settlement programs but still require further support. CARAD takes referrals from other organisations and self-referrals.

They provide a Critical Case Management service when there is nowhere else for the person to go. For example, it may take several months for asylum seekers, who have applied onshore, to be accepted for financial support.

Access to resources and support will depend on how, where and when individuals arrive and apply for asylum. Some entrants will have access to Medicare, work rights and financial support, while others will not. CARAD can provide a very small amount of assistance, but will often link with other agencies in providing the necessary resources.

CARAD can access some donated houses and provide very limited temporary accommodation. Red Cross can also support people with medical and police clearances.

CARAD relies primarily on donations and are currently supporting 11 families, half of whom have children. It is likely there will be an increase in people requiring ER services as more people will probably arrive from places such as Sierra Leone and possibly Libya.

Some GPs will treat children without a Medicare card. Dental assistance may be possible through the Dental Foundation.

Bridget is leaving CARAD, and her replacement is due to start in August. Bridget was thanked for her input into the ER Forum and members wished her well in her new role with RUAH.

Item 7 Utilities update

AlintaCare

Lyndsey from Jacaranda Community Centre reported on the AlintaCare scheme over the past financial year and advised that the number of successful applications for AlintaCare was down due to 120 rejections:

- the account was not 2 weeks overdue
- the applicant had already applied during the past year
- the account was in credit
- the account had already been sent to the bill collectors and no request had been made by the agency to have it sent back to Alinta

Jacaranda could have taken many more applications and more people assisted had these types of issues been checked before the applications were sent in. Lindsey also suggested that it may be useful to note on the form the correct account balance and who at Alinta had been contacted.

Bills were the highest from September to November and Jacaranda is considering trialing a process where higher payment amounts could be made for very large bills i.e. \$1,600 to \$3,000.

There is an increasing number of applications from single people and disability pensioners. Jacaranda would like to have statistics on the children in households applying for AlintaCare and also those on disability pensions.

This would be useful in persuading Alinta to keep funding the scheme because of these groups' particularly needs for access hot water and hot food.

Tracey coordinates the AlintaCare scheme and is happy to take calls and emails. If forms cannot be faxed they can be scanned and emailed to info@jacarandacc.org.au.

Power Assist

Brian from SVDP was unable to attend today. Bernie advised that there were 675 successful Synergy applications during 2010/11, while a further 307 had been rejected, mainly due to the lack of funding. Horizon accounts had gone up on average over 50% and the Horizon Power fund was expended by the end of April.

Bernie said that flowcharts for AlintaCare and Power Assist had been updated and that copies are available from WACOSS. He will be emailing electronic copies out as well.

Item 8 Information Sharing

Princess Margaret Hospital

Sharon said a high number of people from refugee backgrounds are coming through their services. Felicity introduced herself as a student on placement with Sharon at PMH.

King Edward Memorial Hospital

Mira said she is currently very busy.

WA Association of Polish Women

Halina is waiting for final confirmation of their ER funds.

JewishCare WA

Iris said that her service provides support for local and migrant Jewish community members.

Gosnells Community Legal Centre

Manelka advised that they had already received \$95,000 of HUGS applications for the first six months of this year.

Lotterywest

Lucy reminded everyone that the ER grant round will be closing on 18th July, so make sure your applications are in by then.. She said that Lotterywest does require copies of documents such as constitutions etc this time, but will not need them next time unless they change.

She apologised to people who may have struggled with online applications and said they were working on these problems. Applications can be emailed or printed out and mailed if the online process doesn't work.

Pauline said that she is helping with ER grant round funding.

SVDP

Kate said that they have seen an increase in requests for support around utilities and rental associated debts. Calls have been coming in at a slightly slower pace, but still higher than last year.

Sue-Anne advised that she is as busy as ever.

Frank said that he works on a UNHCR program called 'Here and There' where they take refugees on outings.

Salvation Army

Jenny from Perth CSS said that their financial counselling service is booked up for weeks ahead. They are currently seeing many single refugees.

Joy from the Morley branch advised that their Financial Counsellor still had a little room left and currently was not fully booked.

City of Stirling Financial Counselling

June has noticed an increase in single adult men losing their jobs and in financial crisis.

Centrelink

Heather said that from July Centrelink will be a section of the Department of Human Services, so email addresses have changed to humanservices.gov.au. Although the Department's name and governance has changed it is still business as usual.

Anglicare

Joanna said they are very positive about the new three year contract with FaHCSIA and are busy putting ideas into action and being creative within the contract guidelines. In regard to the Telstra vouchers, Anglicare is processing them and they will be out in the next couple of weeks.

Centrecare Mirrabooka

Heidi said they are busy and there is a waiting list, but it is not prohibitively long. They also offer a private rental advocacy service.

FAHCSIA

Uta advised that all funding offers are being sent out. It is now a three year agreement and looks slightly different, so please read the document carefully to ensure the content is understood. Don't hesitate to contact FaHCSIA if there are any queries or other issues. The first payment will be made after the agreement is signed and returned.

The data report date is the 18th August, but don't panic as an electronic Smart Form will be sent soon for completion. Reporting information is similar but with a few changes.

Southcare Inc.

Bronwyn said that this was her first visit to the ER Forum. They provide a Financial Counselling service and have an ER walk-in service five days a week.

Jacaranda Community Centre

Lyndsey advised that Jacaranda continues to receive DCP and FaHCSIA funding for their six Financial Counsellors. They also receive funding from the Law Society for work with Aboriginal youth going through the court system. This is Statewide.

Their new building is almost finished, with new sections opening soon. They will be running the Family Support Program again this year. This week staff and clients have been involved with the NAIDOC celebrations.

Big Issue

Bill advised that he had brought free copies of the Big Issue to share with Forum members as they are celebrating their 15 year anniversary.

Yanchep Two Rocks

Johanna reminded the group that they are unable to take referrals from outside their area. The organisation is run through volunteers and donations and inappropriate referrals put an unnecessary burden on their phone contact person.

Australian Asian Association

Olga said that they had just received their three year funding agreement from FaHCSIA. They also provide age care services and their Gosnells centre will be opening at the end of July.

Item 9 WACOSS ER Update

Bernie said he had nothing else to report, mainly working on utility scheme issues and reports.

Item 10 General Business

Sharon at PMH has nominated Sue Ash for Social Worker of the year. If anyone would like to provide further feedback or additions to this nomination please speak to Sharon or Bernie.

Thanks to the presenters, Gillian and Bridget, and today's Chair, Sharon.

Item 11 Next ER Forum

The next ER Forum will take place on 3rd August 2011 at City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth.

Chair: TBA

Enquiries: Bernie Fisher at WACOSS 9420 7222 or bernie@wacoss.org.au