

HACC & Homelessness in Yarra

Coordinating Services for Better Outcomes

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HACC & Homelessness in Yarra

In June 2009 I had the opportunity to participate as HomeGround Services' representative in some fantastic training offered by the Office For Disability on Disability Action Plans (DAP). A DAP is a plan by which organisations devise and implement actions to ensure that facilities, services and programs do not exclude people with a disability or treat them less favourably than other people. It involves the production of an effective planning document as a result of a consultative process over one to two years and a commitment to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Section 38 of the Victorian Disability Act 2006 requires public sector bodies to develop DAPs and the Victorian Government encourages all organisations receiving public funding to complete a DAP as well.

Creating the DAP involves reviewing current practices with a view to reducing barriers to participation for people with a disability. The four outcome areas the DAP will address are:

1. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
2. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
3. Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
4. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons

The Yarra HACC and Homelessness Newsletter will provide:

- * **information about services** in the Yarra area working on homelessness so you get to know what's available for your clients and so you can make more effective referrals;
- * articles on each **specific theme**;
- * articles featuring the work of a **local agency** and a **local worker**;
- * **news and events updates**, including about the Forum on 18 November 2009;
- * **policy updates** on homelessness and related topics; and
- * **City of Yarra** updates.

HomeGround's Disability Action Plan

by *Kylie Moore*



with a disability

Diversity is one of HomeGround's core values: "Drawing on the power of people's differences is of equal value as gaining strength from their similarities."

HomeGround has committed to creating a

DAP as part of its 2010-2013 Human Resources Strategy. The final version will be publicly available and lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

I chair HomeGround's Disability Advisory Group. We are planning to complete our DAP by December 2011. It's a job I feel passionately about, both as a HomeGround employee and someone with personal experience of disability.

I'm keen to network with other organisations in our sector who are also working on a DAP or are interested in starting this process. More information on DAPS can be found at the Office For Disability website at www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au/disability_action_plans.htm. I can be contacted at kyliem@homeground.org.au.

Newsletter Evaluation Survey

Look out for the HACC and Homelessness in Yarra Newsletter *Evaluation Survey*, coming your way by email over the next few weeks. Please take a few minutes to fill in the survey. This information will be used to report back to NCMPCP about the value of the newsletter. Note that the June edition is the final funded edition. Thanks for your interest and support for the newsletter.

*Ruth Gordon,
Resolve Community Consulting*

Acquired Brain Injury Services Melbourne Citymission

Tom Worsnop, Manager.

**HACC &
Homelessness
in Yarra**

Melbourne Citymission operates a range of ABI case management and allied services, targeted at different groups of people with an ABI:

- for those with severe and complex injuries who are often (even after the latest five year national program by State and Commonwealth Governments) about to enter nursing home ('Residential Aged Care' (RAC) is now the favoured term),
- to those in primary and secondary homelessness, who have somehow fallen through the cracks of our disability and community services systems;
- family based support for children and young people with an ABI;
- support projects, like 'Neighbour-Rings' in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne, and the 'Compass Clubhouse' that supports people with an ABI 'doing it for themselves',

There are a range of consequences that are commonly associated with acquired brain injury (ABI) – physical and sensory impairments; behavioural emotional and cognitive difficulties, as well as family breakdown and a loss of social support. If there is one overwhelming practical challenge facing people after an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI), it is finding a place to live.

Housing is the number one issue that specialist ABI case management services at Melbourne Citymission are asked to assist with, when we receive referrals for our services. An overall lack of options to meet demand for appropriate accommodation, contributes to an increased risk of



ABI Zoo Trip

homelessness for people with an ABI.

Best outcomes for people with an ABI are achieved in an environment that is encouraging, is filled with suitable therapeutic activities, and responds to new and returning capacities as they occur. High numbers of people with an ABI live in pension level Supported Residential Services (SRSs) and aged care nursing homes. In a sad twist of fate, the prison system has now also become a de facto residential solution for many people with an ABI.

There is a lack of research about the connection between ABI and homelessness, and the long term housing needs of individuals with ABI. Better data collection is an essential step to develop an appropriate and realistic service response. Rationing of meagre housing resources continues to be the reality.

For more information, phone 9487 9206.

NEWS

National and State Social Housing Updates

The Federal Government recently released an progress report on various the Homelessness White Paper initiatives. Details can be found at www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/social_housing/Pages/default.aspx . Victorian updates can be found at www.housing.vic.gov.au/housing-and-community-partnerships/funding-initiatives .

New Referral Form for Inner East Mental Health Services Association

The new referral form for Inner East Mental Health Services Association sites is available by ringing 94170605 or from the website www.iemhsa.com.au .

HACC & Homelessness in Yarra

What is your current role?

I have been a member of the Yarra Council's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) since 2004. All DAC members live in the City of Yarra and all, except one carer, have a disability. We advise Council and advocate on issues arising in Yarra that affect people with disabilities, including giving presentations to Council and a number of subcommittees. I am also a member of several other networks and advocacy organisations including International Women with Disabilities and the director of Victorian Women's Disability Network.

How did you get into this role?

I had a few personal issues and I spoke to someone I knew in Aged and Disability Services in Council. I was asked if I was interested in joining the DAC. I was presented to the Committee and accepted as a member.

What are the key issues around disability and public and marginalised housing in Yarra?

I have lived in public housing for 30 years, including ten years bringing up children as a single mother in a high-rise estate. Now I have a unit. There is a reasonable amount of security when you are in public housing but it is so hard to get in nowadays. Maintenance and accessibility modifications are major issues for people with a disability in public housing. People don't know what's available and how to get things done. Maintenance problems are huge in Yarra with the aging housing stock. We even presented to the Minister for Housing, Richard Wynne, about problems with the paths in the area. This still took a few months to be fixed. There are different waiting times for different sorts of repairs and maintenance, with urgent repairs taking precedent and other repairs taking as long as a few months. It would be better if you could drop in to see a housing officer when you need to rather than

Meet...

Marg Bayly

Disability Advisory Committee Member

having to make an appointment.

People tend not to make a fuss but even if you have a disability or you are homeless, you need to make sure you can access what is available. People who are homeless often have complex issues that need flexibility from the OOH.

What does service coordination mean to you?

If they all get their act together it would be a blessing for tenants! They need to listen to tenants. We are thankful to have public housing but we are people and we need a



basic quality of life. If we complain, it's because there is a problem that needs attention.

How can we solve homelessness for people with a disability in Yarra?

The Government needs to act on substandard accommodation. Empty buildings could be converted for temporary accommodation whilst people are waiting for permanent accommodation. The DAC meets monthly and observers are welcome. Contact Marta Rokicki, Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Officer, Ph. 9205 5435, Email Marta.Rokicki@yarracity.vic.gov.au for more information.

Yarra HACC & Homelessness Forum 2009

Report is available at

<http://www.homeground.org.au/page-8-100-2ndYarraHACCandHomelessnessForum.htm>

2010 Newsletters:

June — Indigenous Service Coordination

Difference is More

Community feedback is sought on Council's draft **Disability Action Plan "Difference is More"** throughout May. The draft Plan proposes actions Council could take to reduce barriers to participation for people with a disability and their carers. Specifically, it addresses how Council can improve access to buildings and parks and along roads and footpaths, and enhance its services and communication. It also explores ways to reduce discrimination and raise disability awareness.

Feedback is required by Monday 31 May, with copies of the draft Plan available at the Collingwood and Richmond town halls, Yarra's libraries and at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/Consultation. Large print, audiotape, CD, Braille, easy English and translated versions of the draft Plan can also be provided. To access the Plan in one of these accessible formats, for more information, or to submit your comments, contact Marta Rokicki, Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Officer on 9205 5435 or marta.rokicki@yarracity.vic.gov.au.



People with a Disability – Homelessness and Housing

There is little data and research on disability and homelessness and therefore the issue is not often addressed in a policy sense. This article provides a brief overview of the findings of some relevant reports on this issue. This information is taken from the *HACC and Homelessness in the North West Metropolitan Region Project, Final Report*, by Resolve Community Consulting for the Council to Homeless Persons. The report is available at: www.chp.org.au/public_library/items/2009/11/00249-upload-00001.pdf

Data from the main homelessness program – SAAP (the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program) showed that in the North West Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 40% of SAAP support periods for people aged over 45 were for people on the Disability Support Pension (DSP) compared to 15% of people in all age groups receiving SAAP support in 2007/08, Resolve Community Consulting, 2009:56).

The reports examined for the project found that:

- SAAP 'disability' clients were more likely to be male, older and from an Australian-born non-Indigenous background than SAAP 'non-disability' clients;
- The 'disability' client group received specialist services less often than the 'non-disability' client group, suggesting that SAAP may not always be able to cater for the specialised needs of homeless people with a disability.
- overall, the 'disability' client group were more likely to come from and exit to a rooming house, hostel, hotel or caravan than the 'non-disability' client group and were less likely to come from and exit to private rental accommodation;
- The 'disability' client group were far more likely to live alone both before and after support than the 'non-disability' client group;
- As with the 'non-disability' client group, the 'disability' client group reported more positive housing outcomes the longer they were supported.
- when compared with the general population, households where one or more persons were affected by a disability were more likely have lower incomes and higher levels of housing stress and more likely to be private or public tenants than home owners.
- People with a psychiatric disability were more likely to have a variable housing career than those affected by other disabilities with the episodic nature of mental illness resulting in periods in and out of different housing tenures including homelessness. And were more likely report periods of homelessness, and periods living in caravan parks or other insecure accommodation.
- mentioned Although no submissions to the 2009 National Disability Strategy Consultations Process homelessness, more than 32% of the submissions mentioned housing difficulties, demonstrating the extent of housing problems faced by people with disabilities.
- Concerns raised in the consultations included the lack of supports for people in private and public accommodation as well as the lack of housing choice for this group. The lack of appropriate housing was found to severely compromise quality of life for this target group and had led to abuse for some.
- Encouraging a diversification of housing and support models which supported independent living was seen as the main response to the issues raised in the consultations.

Yarra Service Directory

ALERT - Assessment Liaison & Early Referral Team

St Vincent's Hospital, Ph. 92882211
Pager 204. Sites at St Vincent's Hospital,
North Richmond Community Health Centre,
North Yarra Community Health

ARBIAS - Alcohol Related Brain Injury Australian Services

27 Hope Street, Brunswick, Ph. 8388 1222
www.arbias.org.au

CHP - Council to Homeless Persons

2 Stanley Street, Collingwood, Ph.9419 8699,
Homelessness Advocacy Service,
Free Call: 1800 066 256 www.chp.org.au

Clarendon Community Mental Health Service

52 Albert Street, East Melbourne,
Ph. 9417 5696
St Vincents Mental Health Triage (24/7)
Ph. 1300 558 862

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services

117 Johnston Street, Collingwood
Ph: 03 9419 5477 www.goodshepvic.org.au

HomeGround

68 Oxford Street, Collingwood
Ph. 9417-2500 Freecall: 1800 048 325
www.homeground.org.au

Jesuit Social Services - Connexions

1 Langridge Street, Collingwood
Ph. 9415 8700 www.jss.org.au
**NCMPCP - North Central Metro Primary
Care Partnership**, Ph. 9480 3044
www.ncmpcp.org.au

North West Aged Care Assessment Service (ACAS)

Poplar Road, Parkville, Ph. 8387 2129

NYCH - North Yarra Community Health, Allied Health Outreach Team

Sites: 75 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
365 Hoddle Street, Collingwood
622 Lygon Street, North Carlton
Next Door 350 Smith Street, Collingwood
Ph. 9411 3555
www.nych.org.au

RDNS HPP Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program

113 Rosslyn Street, West Melbourne,
HPP Main Office, Ph. 83270700
at NYCH, Ph. 9411 3500 www.rdns.com.au

Salvation Army Crossroads Youth & Family Services, Youth Housing & Support

12 Tranmere Street, North Fitzroy,
41 Mater Street, Collingwood, Ph. 9489 1122

Sister Francesca Healy Cottage (The Cottage)

80 Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy, Ph. 9288 2413

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre

251 High Street, Preston, Ph. 94960200,
www.spectrumvic.org.au

Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre

54-62 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, Ph. 8413 8413
24/7 counselling & information
Direct Line: 1800 888 236
24/7 clinical advisory service,
DACAS: 1800 812 804
www.turningpoint.org.au

VAHS - Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, HACC and Allied Health Services

186 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, Ph. 9419 3000,
**Smith Street Indigenous Outreach Support
Program** Ph. 0413 045 532 www.vahs.org.au

Yarra City Council, Aged and Disability Services Branch (HACC)

Collingwood Town Hall, Ph. 9205 5555
www.yarracity.vic.gov.au

Yarra Community Housing

297 Napier Street, Fitzroy, Ph. 9419 0009
www.ych.org.au

Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network

Ph. 9205 5094

Yarra Service, Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs)

6-8 Otter Street, Collingwood, Ph. 9417 0605

YSAS - Youth Substance Abuse Service

Level 1, 131 Johnston Street, Fitzroy
Ph. 9415 8881 YSASline: 1800 014 446
(24 hour toll free service) www.ysas.org.au

*If you would like your service details to be included in future newsletters
or if you would like to update your service information:
Please email Ruth at resolvecc@optusnet.com.au*