

Youth Homelessness and Drugs

Anex Conference
Melbourne

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www.chp.org.au

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS



Council to Homeless Persons

- State peak body for homelessness established in 1972
- Represents individuals and organisations with a stake in homelessness
- Our vision is an inclusive society committed to eliminating homelessness through national and state policy development, systemic and individual advocacy

The Road Home

A New Approach to Reducing Homelessness

Australian Government, December 2008

- The Road Home released in December 2008. The first time a federal government has articulated a commitment to addressing homelessness
- The new National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) has been developed through COAG and replaces the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. It combines funds under the former Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and Crisis Accommodation Programs, renamed under the NAHA. SAAP technically replaced from 1st January 2009.
- New National Partnership Agreements with new funding will sit under the NAHA. National Partnerships were signed off in
- mid-2009.

White Paper Vision

- Halve overall homelessness by 2020 – reduced by 20% by 2013
- 25% increase in the number of YHP or those at risk in housing, family, school and/or work
- 50% increase in the number of homeless children or those at risk in education and receiving support

Three strategies

■ 1. Turning off the tap:

- Prevention and early intervention focusing on transition points
- Policy of “no exits into homelessness from state or institutional care” including child protection and youth justice systems, hospitals, mental health and AOD programs
- Additional services for up to 9,000 YP aged 12-18 at risk of homelessness via Reconnect program
- Centrelink social workers to work directly with YP under 18 years who apply for YA Unreasonable to Live at Home and their families

Three strategies cont'd

- **2. Improving and expanding services:**
 - Services should operate so there are no “wrong doors” for people who are homeless
 - Mainstream services as “first to know” agencies have a responsibility to identify homelessness and respond
 - Improved collaboration with specialist homelessness services, including case mix pilots for complex needs clients
 - Workforce development strategy – a sufficient, skilled workforce to work with clients to end homelessness

Three strategies cont'd

- **3. Breaking the cycle:**
 - Specialist models of supported accommodation, including Foyer-like models
 - Services should be funded to work with clients for as long as they need to maintain their housing
 - Assertive outreach programs for rough sleepers including those in rural and remote areas

National Partnership Agreement

Responses for young homeless Victorians

- New 10 year plan for Victoria announced in May '09
- Continue Youth Homelessness Action Plan Stage 2 2006-2010 themes
- Strengthen youth refuge services: increased funding base and new service delivery model with specialist support teams (therapeutic)
- Regional Youth Homelessness Dual Diagnosis response: including better co-ordinated homelessness and clinical AOD/mental health services
- Establishment of a Victorian Foyer-like model of supported housing with a focus on EET

Some issues to consider moving forward

- Recognise that young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are not homogenous and move along different pathways into, through and out of homelessness
- Flexible housing and support programs, including those for substance users/former users, to prevent the movement of young people back into homelessness, recognising levels of complexity and changing support needs over time
- Continue to provide brokerage services in recognition of the impacts of poverty and low-income living

Young Homeless People's Views

- “I can’t get help unless I’m a druggie. I just ended up sleeping in my friend’s car again.” Female, 16 years
- “The police don’t understand why you get drunk in public. You do it to forget what’s happening to you” Female 17 years
- “I don’t have the knowledge of the political speak to get the help I need. I’m only 18 and it’s not a publicly known service. I guarantee I’d still be homeless and on the streets if I didn’t have the good youth worker that I have.” Male 18 years

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www.chp.org.au

2009 CHP Youth Conference
28th October at the MCG

www.chpevents.org.au

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