

Support and Accommodation Assistance Review Preliminary Findings - Regional Workshops Summary Notes

KPMG has been engaged by the Department of Health and Human Services to undertake the Support and Accommodation Assistance Review (**SAAR**) to consider and redesign or further improve aspects of the support and accommodation assistance service systems in Tasmania.

To inform the SAAR, KPMG facilitated three regional workshops, attended by service providers who are funded to deliver support and accommodation assistance services in Tasmania (the **Sector**). A list of funded services is provided as an attachment to this document.

Workshops were held as follows:

- 20th September 2011, Burnie Arts and Function Centre, Burnie
- 21st September 2011, Grand Chancellor Hotel, Launceston
- 22nd September 2011, Department of Health and Human Services, Hobart

At the workshops, findings from the initial stages of the SAAR were presented by KPMG for feedback by the Sector. These findings were documented in the SAAR Discussion Paper, which was also provided for consideration by workshop participants.

These notes summarise discussions and feedback provided by Sector participants at the regional workshops and should be considered in the context of the findings presented in the Discussion Paper.

These summary notes provide a summary of discussions and feedback from Support and Accommodation Assistance Review (SAAR) workshops. These summary notes have been provided in addition to the work undertaken under the terms of KPMG's contract dated 21 June 2011. The contents of these summary notes do not represent KPMG's views, comments, opinions or findings, which will only be contained in our final written report. No warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is given in relation to the statements, representations made by, and the information and documentation provided by stakeholders consulted during the SAAR. Other than our responsibility to DHHS, neither KPMG nor any member or employee of KPMG undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party on these summary notes. Any reliance placed is that party's sole responsibility.

Summary of participant feedback

Risk factors impacting on demand

- Increased demand for Support and Accommodation Assistance (SAA) from people who only require assistance due to inability to afford accommodation – this has an impact on services’ ability to respond to clients with more complex needs.
- Young people aged under 16 years are presenting to shelters and increasingly are entering the SAA system.
- Also a lack of suitable exit points for young people under 18 years - including challenges in accessing suitable transitional accommodation support.
- High rate of secondary homelessness by young people – problems accessing suitable accommodation.
- Young people aged 18-25 exiting justice system – need for more early intervention to prevent homelessness.
- People with disability requiring home modifications.
- People with disability requiring long-term specialist support.
- Ageing population.
- People with personal debts – anecdotally, providers report they are observing that the size of personal debt is increasing.
- Need to acknowledge the impact that structural risk factors (e.g. changes in income, employment, housing market, housing stock) have on demand for services and on exit points.
- Women with children in out-of-home care face particular challenges (unable to afford housing without parenting payment/child support, but unable to get children back until they have secure housing).

Identified areas for improvement

- Lack of exit points means crisis accommodation periods frequently go beyond 6 weeks. Improving exit points requires a broader focus to be taken on affordable housing supply, across the social housing system and the private housing market.
- Overall, there is a need for more intensive case management, and the sector has evolved organically to meet that need. Although it was acknowledged that many services had taken on an expanded case management role that they were not necessarily funded for, it was generally considered that this was positive for clients.
- The burden of compliance on service providers needs to be considered and addressed. Requirements to monitor and report on services are increasing. Compliance is particularly challenging in single worker shelters.

- Funding increases are no longer linked to CPI indexation, resulting in declining funding levels.
- Concerns were raised about ensuring that women experiencing domestic violence (DV) who require accommodation are not subsumed into a wider homelessness group as these clients require a specialist response. It was suggested that DV specific services could be addressed through a whole of government response.
- Recognised that a lot of good work and cross-sectoral collaboration and planning between the sector and mainstream service providers was occurring, related to the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan – there may be scope for more of this work, which contributes to early intervention and prevention as well as services integration. There was a view expressed that mainstream agencies should work to improve collaboration and integration within existing resources, so that it is cost-neutral to the system.
- The importance of “continuous improvement” in the sector is widely supported and acknowledged to be currently happening.

Suggested outcomes

- The outcomes need to explicitly recognise the need for affordable housing . Outcomes statements should include ‘*affordable*’ in each of the ‘*accommodation*’ statements.
- Change ‘*accommodation*’ to ‘*home*’.
- Individual outcomes should reflect desire to remain in community and support system network, and the need for tailored and flexible responses.
- Government outcome could be stronger and embody a commitment to a sustainable and effective SAA system (i.e. government will commit to...). The outcomes (or principles) could reflect a commitment that any efficiencies in cost savings will be reinvested in the system.
- Community outcome reads as a motherhood statement – wording could be revised.
- Support for Federal and State policy reforms is a driver of change.
- Consider aligning outcomes to homelessness charter work in terms of recognising rights to housing.
- Some participants suggested that an aspirational statement be included about the role of SAA services in helping clients improve their situation and transition to independence.

Suggested principles

- Principle 1 – reconsider ‘*empowerment*’ terminology as it means different things to

different people / services.

- Principle 6 – service integration is not a gap for SHS providers; it is mainstream services that need to improve.
- Principle 9 – change ‘*administrative requirements*’ to ‘*compliance requirements*’.
- Principle 9 – consider how to better define ‘*value for money*’.
- Principles should apply across government – not only the SAA sector.
- Principles should also reflect the need to base the sector on evidence based practice.

Suggested client groups

- Workshop participants broadly agreed with the target client groups identified in the discussion paper and considered the definition to reflect current practice.
- Some concerns were raised about whether the fourth element of the defined client group was too broad and how it could be more tightly defined to reflect the ‘core business’ of the sector. This included acknowledgement of the importance of integration and linkages with other sectors to ‘pick up’ clients.

Discussion around practice examples

It was generally commented that the examples provided were not evidence based and that there are examples of good practice already existing in Tasmania that were not reflected in the Discussion Paper.

Central access points

- Single access point model was not supported by workshop participants.
- Other centralised access point models were not discussed in detail.

Separation of tenancy and case management

- No ‘*one size fits all*’ approach – the current arrangement where providers determine arrangements for separating these roles was generally supported.
- There was a view expressed that evidence to support separation across different organisations is unclear.

Earlier intervention and prevention

- Recognition of the large number of casual contacts to services for information and advice and the importance that these contact play as an early intervention/prevention measure (noting however that there is little data on outcomes from casual contacts).
- More support for people to maintain their private rental tenancies is needed.
- Participants stated that mainstream services need to take a more active role in

identifying and addressing the risk factors for homelessness.

Integrated service responses

- Continue/expand collaboration and planning processes with mainstream agencies associated with the draft homelessness plan.
- Consider costs and benefits of integrated responses.

Improving the service model in the future

- Strong view that access points are not the problem and that the current multiple entry points model is effective. Exit points, funding levels and engagement of mainstream services were identified as the key problems.
- There are gaps in the current system that can be addressed, but there is not perceived to be the need for significant change. It was commented that key gaps (demand for accommodation and exit points from emergency accommodation) could not be addressed without additional investment in the sector.
- Extensive redesign of the ICOS model was not considered necessary or desirable by many workshop participants. There could be some 'tweaking' of the service model to include newer services (i.e. PRSS and PRTSS).
- There could be more emphasis on transitional support (i.e. floating support across accommodation types), rather than transitional accommodation.
- Promote more and better partnerships with mainstream agencies, and educate them to identify homelessness risks earlier. Could also identify consider how assessments by other sectors identify risk factors for homelessness and how 'systems' could be updated to promote earlier intervention (e.g. flags for homelessness in databases for other sectors).
- Need to encourage a whole of Government response to address homelessness and to more broadly address demand and issues with exit points.

Improving the range and type of SAA services and programs in the future

- Youth service responses need to be updated (i.e. it is not appropriate to have shelters for young people with such a wide age range; need for more specialised transitional support).
- Family mediation for young people.
- Access to housing for young people aged 15-17 years.
- Specialised service response for older single women at risk of homelessness is required.
- Assistance for CALD clients to access existing services (support for interpreting services) and increased responsibility of mainstream services to support CALD

<p>clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with real estate agents to provide wraparound support and address private rental discrimination. • Expansion of DTs and CTs supported – but this alone does not address exit points problem.
<p>Other comments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current timeframes for crisis accommodation (6 weeks) and transitional support (3 months) are frequently not adhered to because they no longer reflect the needs of the client group, which is more complex than it was when the current model was designed, and because they do not reflect best practice case management which often requires a longer support period. • Options for a new model should consider the impact of any redirected funding on existing services and clients. • Options for a new model should take into account regional public housing waiting list data, vacancy rates, income groups and housing stress prevalence if possible.

Next Steps

These comments will be considered as part of the next stage of the SAAR, which involves development of options for the future service model.

The options will be discussed with the SAA and mainstream sectors in November 2011.

Funded Support and Accommodation Assistance Services

The following services are funded to delivery support and accommodation assistance services in Tasmania and were invited to attend the regional workshops.

Service name	Service provider
ACCESS – North ACCESS – South ACCESS – Northwest	Anglicare
Colony Outreach Support Service – Eastern Shore Colony Outreach Support Service - Hobart	Colony 47
West Coast Crisis Accommodation & Referral Service	West Coast Council
Wyndarra Housing Outreach	Wyndarra

Service name	Service provider
Oakleigh House	The Salvation Army
Bethlehem House	Bethlehem House
Launceston City Mission - Housing Services	Launceston City Mission
Launceston Women's Shelter	Launceston Women's Shelter
Warrawee Women's Shelter	Warrawee
Hobart Women's Shelter	Hobart Women's Shelter
Jireh House	Jireh House
McCombe House	The Salvation Army
Youth Futures	Youth Futures
Youthcare	Anglicare
Burnie Youth Accommodation Service	Community Connections
Youth & Family Focus Accommodation Services	Youth & Family Focus
Karinya Young Women's Service	Karinya
Annie Kenney Young Women's Refuge	Centacare
Relationship Abuse of an Intimate Nature	Anglicare
Huon Domestic Violence Service	Geeveston Committee
Laurel House	Northern Sexual Assault Group
Hobart Sexual Assault Support Service	Sexual Assault Support Service
Prisoner's Transitional Support Project	The Salvation Army
Mara House	Colony 47
LAUNCH - Youth Accommodation Services Tas	YASTas

Service name	Service provider
Centacare Transitional Support Service – North Centacare Transitional Support Service - South	Centacare
Salvation Army Supported Housing	The Salvation Army
Hobart City Mission Transitional Support	Hobart City Mission
Private Rental Support Scheme	Colony 47 and Anglicare
Private Rental Tenancy Support Service	Centacare