

**Parramatta Homelessness Interagency Minutes, 18 June 2020**

**Online Zoom Meeting**

**10am – 12pm**

**Chairperson: Deb Ireson, Evolve Housing**

**Minutes: Tarina Rubis / Tanya Owen**

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>1. Welcome &amp; Acknowledgment of Country</b>	Deb Ireson welcomed everyone and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land, the Darug people, and paid respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present.
<b>2. Welcome &amp; Introduction</b>	Refer to final page (Introductions held later on the Agenda)
<b>3. Previous Minutes</b>	February 2020 Meeting Minutes confirmed
<b>4. Business Arising</b>	N/A
<b>5. Guest Speaker</b> Digby Hughes – Homelessness NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together Home, housing first funding announcement – aiming to house 200 people. More details to come as only just announced. Homelessness NSW will be hosting a webinar the following Wednesday with the Minister Gareth Ward speaking, as well as further information from DCJ. Details to be forwarded to the Interagency.</li> <li>• Allowing for 2 years wrap around support – some may not need but for others this may not be sufficient and will require support for longer.</li> <li>• Housing to be provided through community housing providers.</li> <li>• Homelessness NSW is calling for more social housing stock to address current shortage and increasing demand.</li> <li>• Working with NCOSS and ACOSS to keep jobseeker and jobkeeper payments – not to wind back too soon. Otherwise expect to face massive problems.</li> <li>• Also               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ advocating for buying back poker machine licenses – to reduce gambling opportunities/remove damaging activities from the economy.</li> <li>○ Considering AirBnB affects on rental rates.</li> <li>○ Bank foreclosures – pushing for Government to have a conversation with Banks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6. Guest Speaker</b> Simone Halaby – Department of Communities & Justice - Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simone provided a presentation</li> <li>• Presentation covered summaries of Temporary Accommodation (TA) assistance rates/demographics, and COVID-19 responses of the Department, and information on SHS services and DCJ rental support products.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TA –bed capacity is reduced because properties aren’t able to sign share leases - so might have capacity for more people but are occupied by single people.</li> <li>• Currently no limit on number of people who can access the support products – people can access so long as they fulfil the eligibility criteria.</li> <li>• Regarding rental arrears, Rent Start (bond loan) is an option to explore.</li> <li>• Simone asked to provide another update at the August meeting of the Interagency.</li> <li>• <b>Action: Simone’s presentation to be shared with Members following the meeting.</b></li> <li>• Contact details for Simone can be obtained by contacting Tanya.</li> <li>• The Generous &amp; Grateful provide goods for setting up homes, but services need to be registered as partners with the organisation to access for clients as they don’t reassess clients: <a href="https://www.generousandgrateful.com.au/">https://www.generousandgrateful.com.au/</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Government/Service Updates</b></p>	<p><b>a) City of Parramatta, Tarina Rubis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held meeting prior week with local emergency relief services – reported some drop in usual clients, but an increase in new clients, primary those unable to access government supports. Food and material aid were reported to not be a primary current issue with resources available, but addressing and supporting people in rental arrears has become the biggest concern, particularly long term rental arrears. There is no capacity to assist in long-term. Discussed social housing as a longer-term need, with Vinnies starting a campaign on this. They have drawn up a letter template for members and volunteers of their organisation, and were happy to share this with the Interagency. There are concerns about what will happen in September when COVID-19 welfare support is due to end.</li> <li>• <b>Action: The social housing campaign letter template from Vinnies will be shared with the Interagency following the meeting.</b></li> <li>• Deb Ireson – only asking for Social Housing is problematic. Some people may not need this – issue may be only a COVID crises related issue. Need to address support for people who little or no income.</li> <li>• Tanya Owen clarified that more social housing was not proposed as the only solution at the meeting, but a significant issue that needs addressing.</li> <li>• Simone Halaby – Rent Start can be used to assist with rental arrears, but people must be permanent residents or citizens to access this. Australia has been making a number of changes to Visa arrangements because of COVID. SHS has some limited capacity to assist those affected by DFV with TA, as do not have same eligibility criteria. There has been no talk of mortgage assistance within the Department.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was suggested that how solutions for more complex cases have been found for cases could be shared more regularly by the Interagency than every 2 months, but Deb Ireson indicated that solutions are usually only short term assistance, not long terms solutions.</li> <li>• Anjali Roberts, JRS: Sydney Alliance housing advocacy group – is calling for asylum seekers to be included in the government’s COVID response, but also broadening eligibility criterial for rental support products to include people on temporary visas and asylum seekers. Solution is a different one to social housing. JRS really relies on community for assistance of these people.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Jesuit Refugee Service, Anjali Roberts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service has experienced 3 fold increase in referrals. Now delivering foodbank to about 700 people per week.</li> <li>• 40% of people who got work through their support program have lost jobs</li> <li>• One of the biggest issues is rental arrears. Have increased emergency relief fund (doubled), mostly going to rental arrears. Temporary migrants being referred has increased who are not eligible for services are wanting to go home, but are unable to due to lack of flights.</li> <li>• Homelessness is affected by Federal Government policy and decisions. Looking at overseas experiences and responses, such as time limits on processing, with increased pressure to stay within timeframes – and are advocating for this in Australia.</li> <li>• Continuing research with asylum seekers on housing and homelessness - personal perceptions and their ideas of solutions. Looking for people to join an advisory committee – housing sector/connections to migrant communities/ those with First Nations background.</li> </ul> <p><b>c) DCJ Housing, Heather Burke</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assertive Outreach Team in Parramatta has been going for a couple of weeks with different services. Adhoc trips as well as scheduled assertive outreach. Have permanently housed 3 rough sleepers since 1 May. Numbers of rough sleepers appear to be low and believe due to CBD construction, COVID and cold. Still a couple of people who decline assistance.</li> <li>• Mini hubs with NSW Health, including Parramatta Mission, as well as visits to TA facilities for flu vaccines (&gt;225).</li> </ul>
<b>8. Strategic Issues</b>	<b>Not discussed, but made note to keep temporary migrants/asylum seekers on the agenda.</b>

<b>9. Other Business</b>	<p><b>a) Future Guest Speakers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simone Halaby, DCJ Housing, to be invited to speak again for another update at the August meeting</li><li>• New Department of Human Services Centrelink rep be invited to speak at the August meeting, focusing on COVID services and impacts.</li></ul> <p><b>c) Future Meeting Venues</b></p> <p>- TBC – may need to be another online meeting, depending on Government social distancing requirements.</p>
<b>10. Next Meeting</b>	<p>Meeting closed at 11:45am</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Next meeting: August 20, 2020, 10:00am – 12:00pm</b></p>

Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency/Service</b>	<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Laurie Besant	Parramatta Mission	Y	
Heather Burke	DCJ Housing	Y	
Simone Halaby	DCJ Housing	Y	
Digby Hughes	Homelessness NSW	Y	
Deb Ireson	Evolve Housing	Y	
Kiara	Women's Justice Network, student	Y	
Ben Leauanae	Hume Community Housing	Y	
Gary Mason	Parramatta Mission – Hope Hostel	Y	
Juliana Misiloi	Vinnies Men2Hom	Y	
Tanya Owen	City of Parramatta	Y	
Carmen Platt	The Generous and Grateful	Y	
Anjali Roberts	Jesuit Refugee Service	Y	
Tarina Rubis	City of Parramatta	Y	
Anne Seward	Women's Justice Network	Y	
Indri Windyasari	Parramatta Mission	Y	
Florida Yap	Bridge Housing	Y	