



Living Skills Pilot Project Reference Group

Terms of Reference

December 2010

This document outlines the background, purpose, membership and governance structure for the Reference Group to the Living Skills Pilot Project (the Project).

Background

In 2008/9 the Youth Coalition undertook the *Living Skills and Youth Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme Consultation Project* engaging Justin Barker to undertake research into the living skills training needs of young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. This project involved consultation with workers in the then Youth SAAP services sector as well as young people accessing services.

Dr Barker found that, 'the breadth of the conceptualisations of 'living skills' includes a wide range of practices that vary from merely providing a cookbook or cleaning products to intensive one-on-one training or support. The diverse range of conceptions of 'living skills' exist in part due to the range of people included under the banner of 'homeless youth'. However, whilst it is important to include a wide range of practices that are relevant to a diverse spectrum of young people experiencing homelessness, the lack of conceptual clarity can have a negative impact in practice.'

The ACT Youth Homelessness and Housing Sector has identified that living skills is an ongoing challenge faced by both young people and the sector and has been raised on numerous occasions in various forums. Challenges include:

- Lack of clarity;
- Lack of resources;
- Lack of understanding;
- Lack of training; and,
- Lack of continuity.

In November 2010 the ACT Department of Disability, Housing, and Community Services engaged the Youth Coalition of the ACT to undertake the Living Skills Pilot Project. The Institute of Child Protection Studies has been engaged to provide support to develop the evaluation framework and provide critical feedback to the Project.

Project Aim

The Living Skills Toolkit Pilot Project is a five tiered action research based project aimed at developing a sustainable method of embedding living skills development for young people in the youth housing and homelessness, and broader youth services sector in the ACT.

Project Outcomes

The outcomes of the Project will be:

- A comprehensive report analysing existing models and delivery of Living Skills training to young people in the youth housing and homelessness and broader youth sector in the ACT and other jurisdictions;
- Engagement of youth housing and homelessness, and other youth services in the development of the package and a commitment to delivery;
- A toolkit for the delivery of Living Skills training to young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, trialled in the youth housing and homelessness, and other youth services sector in the ACT;
- A process and impact evaluation of the Project and toolkit; and,
- Recommendations on future implementation and sustainability of the toolkit.

Purpose

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide strategic guidance, identify priorities, and support the consultation process for the Project. This includes:

- Overseeing the Project workplan;
- Identification of key priorities to be progressed by the Project;
- Assist the design and facilitation of the consultation process;
- Providing feedback on the literature/model review;
- Ensure the recommendations from the *Living Skills and Youth Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme Consultation Project* are addressed by the Project; and,
- Finalise the recommendations of the Project.

Membership

Membership of the Reference Group will be small and include representation from:

- The Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum;
- The Youth Centres Network;
- Social Housing and Homelessness, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, ACT Government;
- Young people with experience of the homelessness service system;
- The academic field; and,
- Youth Coalition of the ACT.

Members will attend 7 monthly meetings of the Reference Group and participate in other activities and working groups where appropriate.

Governance Structure

The Youth Coalition will provide chairing responsibilities and secretariat support to the Reference Group, including:

- Chairing meetings;
- Providing a venue for meetings;
- Developing agendas for Reference Group meetings;
- Developing minutes for Reference Group meetings; and,

- Updating when necessary the Reference Group Workplan and Terms of Reference.

Decision Making

Quorum for Reference Group meetings is 4 organisational members, which must include the Youth Coalition as the Chair and Secretariat for the Group. Where possible, decisions will be made through informed consensus, with a majority vote as a final option. Where time allows, decision-making can also occur through email.

More Information

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