

Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum Minutes

Date: 28 July 2024

Time: 9:30-11am

Location: In person & online

Attendance

Joel Artup – WCS/Youth Coalition
Paul Sarnachi – MCCG
Josh Smith – Housing ACT
Grace Gill – Housing ACT
Hele Rose – Woden Community Services
Stacey Bright – RAW Potential
Kevin Ruddick – CIT
Dean Toussaint – CIT
Jason Leitao – MCCG
Maddie Neilsen – Onelink
Ravi Krishnamurthy
Amy Shipway – Salvation Army
Oliver Peppermint
Maryann Powell – ACU
Bryan Duke – Vinnie
Katherin Gilks – MCCG
Siobhan Cosgrave – Barnardos
Nicole Molyneux – Barnardos
Elycia Wheddon – Barnardos
Reka Marian – Barnardos
Jayden Ludwig – Barnardos
Peter Schwarz – Barnardos
Kayla Wowk – Anglicare
Nikita Adhikari – YWCA Canberra
Ell Harrison – YWCA Canberra
Regan Morris – YWCA Canberra
Denis Bridges – ACT Government
Alicia Twohill – ACT Education

Agenda Items

1. Acknowledgement of Country

Joel opened the meeting by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Owners and continuing Custodians of the lands of the ACT, and paid respect to the past, present and future Elders, families and ancestors.

2. Onelink Update

- a. Data collected over May
 - i. 1119 phone calls
 - ii. A total of 206 enquires
 - iii. 631 clients
 - iv. 132 first time clients
 - v. 113 total ATSI
 - vi. 23 first time ATSI
 - vii. 46 rough sleeper
- b. 210 DV
- c. OneLink worked with a total of 146 young people (16-25)
 - i. 31 young people were brand new clients
 - ii. On the 25/06/24 we had 80 young people waiting for some form of accommodation.

3. Guest Speakers – Josh Smith and Grace Gill – Youth Team at Housing ACT

- a. The goal of the youth team is to offer more intensive support to both applicant and tenants who fit the criteria of the youth program. This team currently has two team members, who manage youth social housing applications and tenancies, to provide a streamlined and trauma informed approach for successful youth applicants and tenants. Ideally, the youth team will support an applicant from the point of applying for Housing Assistance as their assessing officers, right through into their tenancy as their housing Managers, this is to provide continuity to the young people entering Housing ACT. They offer a more tailored support to young people, to help them achieve stability inside of the Housing ACT Program, in terms of neighbourhood relations, management of debt (in the event of rental and sundry arrears), as well as property condition noted in their bi-annual inspections. They have a smaller case load than other housing managers so that they may visit more frequently and be more accessible to our young tenants and applicants. They are not case managers but are able to make appropriate referrals as they have a developed relations with the community youth sector.
- b. **Eligibility Criteria**
 - i. 16-25 Years,
 - ii. has been placed in Out of home care by CYPS,
 - iii. Been incarcerated by the Youth Justice System or,
 - iv. are currently in or exiting a youth homelessness accommodation program.
- c. **PNR (Priority needs recommendation)** is a support letter received from a transitional accommodation provider that is intended to outline an applicant background, risk factors, ability to sustain a tenancy, and their support networks. Once a PNR is provided, an assessing officer will prepare a Multidisciplinary Panel assessment and recommendations write up. The MDP

will read both the PNR and MDP write up and decide if the applicant meets the urgent, critical and exceptional needs to be granted priority status as per PRHAP.

- d. **PNR template** can be found under the resources section of the YHHF webpage on the Youth Coalitions website here: <https://www.youthcoalition.net/youth-housing-and-homelessness-forum>
- e. **MDP (Multi-Disciplinary panel)** *an internal process where a PNR along with an MDP write up are presented to a panel consisting of a Senior director of Housing ACT as the Chair of the panel, and three panellists consisting of an Assistant director or higher, from an available business unit of housing ACT, an assistant director or higher from a separate business unit of Community Services Directorate (CSD), and a member of upper management from the community sector.
- f. **Exceptional, Urgent, and Critical Needs**
 - i. **Exceptional** - "Explain the exceptional circumstances surrounding this application that cannot be alleviated without the provision of social housing". On the PNR template there are dot points correlating to the risk factors, a paragraph or two to each risk factor applicable is all that is needed.
 - ii. **Urgent** - "Explain time constraints that can only be alleviated by the early allocation of social housing". Why is current accommodation not suitable or sustainable, what difficulties lay in the future if not housed.
 - iii. **Critical** - "Risk factors associated with the applicant/s need for housing assistance". How do the risk factors described under the heading exceptional including other risk factors not captured combine to impact the applicant's day to day life and how do they relate to their housing circumstances.
 - iv. It is crucial that a PNR shows other avenues of housing that have been exhausted, show why a person may not be able to access other affordable accommodation such as CHC, Rentwell, or Common Grounds.
- g. **When PNR is not possible** - At times a PNR is not possible, they recognise that there are significant wait times to access transitional accommodations and therefore a PNR cannot be provided. A PNR must contain information describing an applicant's ability to pay rent, maintain a property and address maintenance issues, and ability to be a good neighbour. In these circumstances, it would be recommended to write to the PNR template to all points other than ability to sustain a tenancy. The assessing officer will still need evidence that a person could sustain a tenancy, each circumstance is different. For example, if a person is couch surfing, A PNR could be a support letter from the person they are couch surfing with, describing the ways that the applicant contributes to the household, bills, groceries chores, all these actions show an ability to budget, maintain property and be a good neighbour.

4. Farewell to programs

- a. The group had a farewell to Barnardo's Friendly Landlord Service and Couch Surfing Program, along with the Ted Noffs Take Hold Program and reflected on the impact these programs have had over the years. The group celebrated the good work done throughout their years of service.