



28th May 2014

Select Committee on Social Public And Affordable Housing

Via email: socialhousing@parliament.nsw.gov.au

**Response to supplementary questions from
NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on Social Public and
Affordable Housing**

- 1. Is it possible to identify what proportion of funds would be required or what percentage of overall would be necessary to provide support services for wrap around social support services for those in social housing and homeless circumstances.*

Whilst we believe this is entirely possible, it would be a very complex exercise and would require a research project to investigate thoroughly. To accurately identify the total funds required, and the percentage needed to provide wrap-around services, will require thorough investigation including consultation with multiple stakeholders.

Bringing the model into fruition would also require a Coordinator to resource stakeholders to come together in an integrated manner through the development of a strategic integrated case management approach. It should be noted that a precedent does exist for an integrated case-management project – the Southern Suburbs Integrated Case Management project which was piloted for three years in the Illawarra. This project was funded by NSW Family and Community Services, but was not physically co-located with the clients.

It is important to note that any model developed would require long term sustainable funding.

- 2. What are the emergency housing needs for the region for youth, women, elderly or any other category?*

The region needs emergency housing which is adaptable to the needs of the client group. e.g. a ground floor location with modifications for frail aged or people with a disability.

Emergency housing should be well located, close to services and amenities, with access to public transport. Emergency housing must be safe and secure, and should also be integrated into community thus enabling residents to develop social supports and to enjoy the health and mental health benefits which social and community connections intrinsically provide.

Emergency housing should also be available across the region so people can choose a location close to their own community, or can choose to move away if preferable – for example if they are escaping violence and would feel unsafe in their current community.

3. Are you able to define the cost of the ‘Barb the Builder’ project? and any cost benefit analysis?

The ‘Barb the Builder’ project was a remarkably inexpensive project to deliver, largely because the coordination was undertaken by our partner organisation, South East Women and Children’s Services Incorporated (SEWACS), free of charge. SEWACS organised the participants and venue, recruited and engaged the female carpenter, and arranged transport and refreshments.

Program Structure

- One three hour session per week for six weeks
- Sessions facilitated by a female qualified carpenter
- Healthy lunch included
- Transport provided
- Participants receive basic toolkit as incentive to complete the program, and to equip them to undertake minor repairs in the future

Cost

Female carpenter @ \$55 per hour x 3 hours for 6 weeks	\$ 990
Lunch	\$ 600
Tools/materials - includes basic toolkit for project participants	\$ 700
Total	\$ 2,290

Clearly the benefits from the program exceed the monetary savings on repairs for housing providers, and include intrinsic benefits such as improved social cohesion, increased individual capacity, building social support networks, and modelling independence and self-reliance to the next generation.

In order to prepare a cost-benefit analysis, we have calculated the economic value of the repairs which can now be undertaken by the tenant, thereby delivering savings to the housing provider.

The costings below are based on information from a social housing provider.

Plasterer to repair hole in gyprock (includes materials)	\$ 190
Plumber to repair faulty washer (includes call out fee, labour, and materials)	\$ 130
Painting – 1 room (includes materials)	\$ 300
Flyscreen repair (includes call out fee, labour, and materials)	\$ 120
Sub-total	\$ 740
Multiply by number project participants (10)	
Total Savings Per Annum	\$ 7,400

Note: This estimate is based on one of each event over the year, however, it is entirely likely that one or more participants may undertake more than one of each type of repair over the course of a year, thereby increasing the overall benefit value.

4. *Are there any substance or gambling residential rehabilitation services in the region? If so, do they have limitations on clients? Eg, no children or total abstinence? Is there any evidence on the demand for such services?*

The Illawarra region has three residential rehabilitation services, all focussing on substance abuse. There is no residential rehabilitation service for gambling abuse in the region.

The capacity for residential rehabilitation for substance abuse is as follows:

Kedesh Rehabilitation Services
Location: Unanderra & Berkeley

Kedesh Rehabilitation Services offers a 20-bed medium-term residential treatment facility. The service caters for male and female clients aged 16 years and above with an alcohol or other drug problem. Clients with co-existing mental health and dependency issues (co-morbidity) are also welcome.

Oolong House
Location: Nowra

Oolong House provides residential treatment to men with alcohol and other issues. Catering for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men, this organisation uses culturally appropriate residential treatment in order to

strengthen mental health in the long term. Oolong House offers a 20 bed, 16-week residential treatment course, followed by a 'half-way house' and activity programs involving mentors and other health workers.

Watershed Drug and Alcohol Recovery Centre

Location: Berkeley

Watershed Drug and Alcohol Recovery Centre offers a 14-bed, four week residential treatment facility for male and female clients aged 16 years and above with an alcohol or other drug problem.

Watershed is the only residential facility which has the capacity for clients to detox, and five of their fourteen-bed capacity can be allocated to clients who require detox before treatment.

Demand for residential rehabilitation services for addiction to alcohol and other drugs exceeds availability by around 3:1. For example, Watershed receives approximately 600 referrals or requests for service each year, but their capacity is around 200 clients per annum.

We would also note that Watershed also operated the only purpose-built Sobering Up Centre in NSW, but media reports today indicate the Centre will be closed effective 30 June 2014. It is a loss to the region if this facility is to close, as in addition to the two nights per week it is funded for Sobering Up, 15 people use the facility during the day for drug and alcohol related rehabilitation programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on social, public and affordable housing, and for your interest in our submission and evidence. We would be happy to discuss our comments or recommendations in more detail if required.

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