

2nd ACT HOMELESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT JULY 2005 - JUNE 2006

Attachment 2

THEME FOUR

THEME 4		SUPPORTING AND DRIVING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE		
Objective 4.1		<i>Undertake program evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure service quality and effectiveness</i>		
		<i>Lead Agency</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Partners</i>
4.1.1	Building on local national and international experience, investigate and enhance current service standards for the homelessness service sector.	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: Raising the Standard sets external benchmarks for homelessness services to work towards., the implementation of the Service Guarantee will progress to the development of the service standard.				
4.1.2	Building on the performance management and outcome framework, develop and implement a strategy to promote continuous improvement and development across the homelessness service system.	DHCS	June 05 (ongoing)	ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: This work is on-going, and forms part of the sub-sector funding planning undertaken by DHCS annually. Continuous improvement in homelessness services is also supported by SAAP Fora, sub-sector networks, and quality improvement tools and training such as "Raising the standard". The development of Funding Agreement Management Plans (FAMPS) by contract managers and the implementation of the plans incorporates ensuring agencies usnig Raising the Standard. the use of data from the Report on government Services (RoGS) to inform policy decisions in relation to budget and sector reform that leads to more efficient service delivery and continuous improvement. (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services)				
4.1.3	Establish a resourcing strategy and timetable for reviewing the Raising the Standard framework to ensure the continued appropriateness of the standards for the homelessness sector.	DHCS	(December 05)	DoT, ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: In June 2006 DDHCS began a mapping exercise to map all local and national standards in human service delivery, including disability, community housing and raising the standard, with a view to consistency and an improvement in service delivery. For further reporting in the 2006-7 report.				
4.1.4	Provide funding to: expand the SAAP resourcing and development service; resource SAAP services; coordinate and facilitate training and networking opportunities; and enhance the sector's capacity to effectively respond to the needs of all people eligible for SAAP services.	DHCS	June 04 (ongoing)	SAAP sector
Progress Report: DHCS provided funding to the ACT Council of Social Services in 04/05 and 05/06 to provide resourcing and support assistance to supported accommodation, through the facilitation of training and networking opportunities to enhance the sector's capacity to effectively respond to the needs of all people eligible for SAAP services (DHCS SAAP). The Department has been unable to determine the quantum of training and networking functions delivered by ACTCOSS, and has reduced funding except for the functions of the indigenous workers. The organisation of training will be undertaken by SHHS. the Department convened the Women's Roundtable to explore the sector's capacity to effectively respond to the needs of women. Ongoing SAAP forums provide training and networking opportunities for the sector.				

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4.1.5	Establish benchmarks to guide performance assessment and performance improvement across the service sector.	DHCS	(June 06)	ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: CONSOLIDATED WITH ACTION 4.1.2 Benchmarking is a part of the continuous improvement strategy to be implemented through Action 4.1.2. Mapping exercise above will assist in defining appropriate benchmark standards. ROGS data was used by DDHCS in 2006 to compare national average costs and client outcomes with ACT costs for services and client outcomes, with a view to improved efficiency and outcomes. This work will continue in 2006-7.				
4.1.6	Provide governance support and training to service providers to ensure the sustainability of organisations to provide support to people who are at risk of homelessness or those who are homeless.	DHCS	(June 06)	SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - ACTCOSS is funded to provide this training under the Community Service Program.				
4.1.7	Integrate learnings from innovative initiatives and effective practice into the service system.	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - Housing ACT implemented the recommendations of the Applicant Support Project, the Preallocation Case Conferencing Project and the Review of Gateway Services in June 2006, which have reformed support, assessment and allocation services for housing applicants and tenants. The department is committed to the implementation of a public housing tenant participation framework. In 2005-6 the Joint Champions group was re instituted and met 8 weekly. In addition 4 regional tenant forums were held on issues of concern to tenants. The department has established a range of ongoing mechanisms designed to integrate learning and innovation into the service system, including the Pathways projects and SAAP fora. Through the six-weekly ACT SAAP and ACT Youth SAAP fora services are provided with an opportunity to receive updates on new initiatives and services funded by the department, as well as discuss issues and ideas of interest and concern to the group. The SAAP fora has initiated a range of activities including the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with Mental Health ACT.(DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services)				
4.1.8	Identify criteria for, and establish ongoing awards for, the development of innovative and creative solutions to homelessness and related issues in the ACT.	DHCS	(June 06)	ACT Health, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
Progress Report: For discussion at SAAP forums in 2007.				
Objective 4.2	Undertake research to enhance evidence based decision making and service development			
4.2.1	Establish a research program building on current evidence to inform, monitor and drive the implementation of integrated and coordinated service responses for people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless. As the first stage of that research program, scope the research requirements and determine the research agenda for: (i) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and children; (ii) Refugees on protection visas; and (iii) Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.	DHCS	(December-04) (ongoing)	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations

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<p>Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - The establishment of a research program in relation to ii) Refugees on protection visas will be informed by the Office of Multicultural Affairs' practical experience of providing short term accommodation to refugees and by OMA's facilitation of regular meetings of the 'Refugee Coordination Group' (ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs). SHHS and the ACT Homelessness Committee has prioritised research into children and young peoples experience of homelessness. SHHS engaged the Australian Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU) to undertake research on <i>Children's Experience of Homelessness</i>, the Final Report is due to be provided to the department in January 2007, and will include a recourse manual for children's workers. The ACT contributes to the National SAAP research agenda through participation in the Coordination and Development Committee (CAD).</p>				
4.2.2	Ensure findings from research programs for people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless are embedded into policies and the service delivery framework.	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
<p>Progress Report: Learnings from research associated with the Turnaround Program, assisting young people with high and complex needs, as part of OCYFS's response to this client group, are incorporated into a best practice guide for services, and form the basis of a protocol for services working young people who are part of the Turnaround program. SHHS engaged the Australian Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU) to undertake research on Children's Experience of Homelessness, the Final Report is due in January 2007, and will include a recourse manual for children's workers.</p>				
4.2.3	In conjunction with the Council on the Ageing (COTA), convene a working party of key stakeholders to determine the needs of older people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.	DHCS	July 05 (December 05) (June 05)	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
<p>Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - Representatives of The ACT Homelessness Committee (AHC) met with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (MACA) in early 2006 to outline the Homelessness Strategy and seek advice on the needs of older people experiencing homelessness. MACA did not see the need for a new committee but agreed to provide advice to the AHC on an "as needs" basis. In addition, the Director of Housing ACT will meet with the Accommodation subcommittee of the MACA in September 2006 to provide information on older persons accommodation in public housing.</p>				
4.2.4	As part of the response to young people, undertake research to review the current supported accommodation models in the ACT for young people between the ages of 12-15 and 16 -19 years of age who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. This project will consider the needs of young people who: (i) have experienced family breakdown; (ii) may not be able to return home; (iii) have a disability and/or a mental illness and/or exhibit self harming or violent behaviours; (iv) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; (v) are in contact with youth justice and/or family services; and (vi) may identify as gay, lesbian or transgender or intersex. The projects will focus separately on the needs of women and men to identify the particular needs of both groups and from that determine suitable responses to the identified needs.	DHCS	July 05	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations

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Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - The McKenzie Review of Youth SAAP in 2004 and follow up research undertaken by the Youth Coalition informed the development of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan, which was developed by the Youth Homelessness working Group of the AHC in 2005-6, with the collaboration of the Youth Policy Forum. The Action Plan will be considered by the AHC in December 2006, for implementation in 2007.

4.2.5	Investigate the value of establishing meaningful ACT sample sizes in ongoing ABS research and data collection projects to inform planning activities at a service system level.	DHCS	(December 05)	Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DET,
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Progress Report:

4.2.6	Ensure that SAAP data collection strategies take into account accompanying children to aid future planning.	DHCS	December 04 (ongoing)	SAAP sector
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Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - The SAAP National Data Collection (NDC) collates data collected from accompanying children in its core data set. (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services).

Objective 4.3 *Develop and implement a workforce planning strategy, and maintain a high level of skill and capability in the sector*

4.3.1	Develop a 5-10 year workforce blueprint for the homelessness sector that: (i) Identifies current and future skill requirements; (ii) Assesses current workforce capacity; (iii) Determines training and development requirements; (iv) Identifies potential future workforce supply; (v) Develops recruitment strategies, staff retention and succession planning; and (vi) Formulates strategies to address future requirements. This plan will be reviewed bi-annually.	DHCS	June 05 (December 05)	ACT Health DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: Development of a workforce plan will commence as part of the development of a joint operational framework (Objective 1.1.1). (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services) (iii) A comprehensive training needs analysis has been compiled throughout the year. This has been done through site visits and compiling feedback from evaluation forms at training provided through the ARSSC Project. This has been combined with requests for ACTCOSS seminars and the ACTCOSS Sector Development team has progressed to identifying potential partners and topics for the provision of professional development / training opportunities and seminars for the sector in 2005/06. (ACTCOSS)

4.3.2	Develop an integrated training strategy for the homelessness sector including: (i) The establishment of a common induction strategy for new staff to the sector; (ii) Development and delivery of accredited training across all agencies including case management; and (iii) Development and implementation of training programs that build the skills of workers in client focussed approaches and in the achievement of client outcomes.	DHCS	(June 06)	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: (i) An options paper has been drawn up by ACTCOSS to explore the development of an accredited induction package. This required partnering with a Registered Training Organisation. (ii) Six broad topics, encompassing the majority of requests from the sector, were identified for training/professional development in 2005/06, including case management. All training provided will be accredited.

4.3.3	Enhance skills amongst service providers for provision of culturally appropriate support to people from diverse backgrounds [i].	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: ACT Health through Mental Health ACT offers CALD training (full day with external provider) to the mental health sector, including accommodation providers. (ACT Health). This is captured in the Service Guarantee. SHHS continues to fund ACTCOSS indigenous workers to provide training and support to services to ensure they provide culturally appropriate support to people from diverse backgrounds.

4.3.4	Develop capacity amongst service providers to provide culturally sensitive and accessible service response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, DET, JACS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: **ACTION COMPLETED** - ACTCOSS in conjunction with Lowana Young Women's Service provided "culturally appropriate service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" training to 86 service providers on nine occasions last year. (ACTCOSS/ DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services). Housing ACT provid training for all staff on culturally appropriate service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is captured in the Service Guarantee. SHHS continues to fund ACTCOSS indigenous workers to provide training and support to services to ensure they provide culturally appropriate support to people from diverse backgrounds.

4.3.5	Develop strategies to ensure that contracted services assisting children have workers who are trained and resourced to provide child specific responses.	DHCS	Ongoing	DET, SAAP sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: **ACTION COMPLETED** - ACT Health has a Child Protection Training and Education Program that assists ACT Health staff understand their obligations under the Children and Young People Act and the ACT Health Child Protection Policy. ACT Health is currently investigating ways to include provisions within NGO service agreements to ensure that contracted services adhere to the principles of the ACT Health Child Protection Policy. When this has occurred, access to the ACT Health Child Protection Training and Education Program will be available to NGO staff to ensure they understand their child protection obligations. (ACT Health). It is a contractual requirement that services employ appropriately quaified or experienced staff in SAAP agencies. The four new family services funded through the 2003-04 Responding to Homelessness Initiative, have funding for, and have employed dedicated children's workers to appropriately support accompanying children who are experiencing or transitioning from homelessness (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services).

4.3.6	Develop strategies to ensure that support workers, working with people in housing stress and those at risk of homelessness, have a sound knowledge of the ACT Residential Tenancies Act 1997.	DHCS	Ongoing	SAAP sector and other community organisations
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Progress Report: ACTION COMPLETED - The ACT Residential Tenancies Act was amended with changes becoming effective on 8 March 2005. Following the passage of the amendments in the Legislative Assembly the ACTCOSS conducted information sessions and training on the changes to the Act, as well as assisting services to develop draft occupancy and tenancy agreements. The majority of SAAP services attended these sessions and continue to receive ongoing offers of individual support and training (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services). Housing ACT officers have undergone training in relation to the amendments to the RTA which came into effect in March 2005, and the further amendments which come into effect in 2006.(Housing ACT)

ACT Health managed funding agreements with non-government organisations include a clause requiring them to prepare and implement a written child protection policy that reflects the requirements under the Children and Young People Act 1999. ACT Health has a Child Protection Training and Education Program that assists ACT Health staff understand their obligations under the Children and Young People Act and the ACT Health Child Protection Policy. NGO service providers staff will be provided with access to the ACT Health Child Protection Training and Education Program to ensure they understand their child protection obligations. (ACT Health) It is a contractual requirement that services employ appropriately qualified or experienced staff in SAAP agencies. The four new family services funded through the 2003-04 Responding to Homelessness Initiative, have funding for, and have employed dedicated children's workers to appropriately support accompanying children who are experiencing or transitioning from homelessness (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services).

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4.3.7	Identify and implement learning and development strategies to enhance the capability of service management to engage in innovative service development.	DHCS	Ongoing	SAAP sector and other community organisations
<p>Progress Report: As part of the implementation of the ACT Government's Community Sector Funding Policy funding was provided to ACTCOSS to provide service funding agreement training to community organisations signing up to the three year service funding agreement. (ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs). This work is ongoing, and forms part of the sub-sector funding planning undertaken by DHCS annually. Continuous improvement in homelessness services is also supported by SAAP Fora, sub-sector networks and quality improvement tools and training such as "Raising the standard". (DHCS Social Housing and Homelessness Services)</p>				
THEME 4	SUPPORTING AND DRIVING INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE			
Objective 4.4	Increase public awareness of homelessness in the ACT			
4.4.1	Implement a public awareness campaign on homelessness to raise awareness and to promote a common understanding of homeless people as members of the community.	DHCS	December 05 (ongoing)	Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
<p>Progress Report: ACT Shelter, AFHO and the Youth Coalition of the ACT undertook the 'Housing is a Human Right' campaign in 2006. This work will be supplemented by a launch of the Homelessness Charter in 2007.</p>				
4.4.2	Provide leadership to tackle prejudice, develop a common understanding and foster respect in all parts of the community for the experience of those who are homeless and in recognising the professional status of workers in the field.	DHCS	Ongoing	ACT Health, DET, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations
<p>Progress report. In 2005-6 DHCS promoted the positive image of SAAP services and service users through a series of positive media events and stories, often involving the Minister for Housing and the Minister Disability for Community Services. This included the launch of new services, celebration of the birthday of services such as Beryl and Toora, launches of tenant and service user community development activities, such as Community Linkages Program grants, Tenant Week, and participation in Anti Poverty Week activities.</p>				