

MINUTES OF THE HOMELESSNESS TASKFORCE SHOALHAVEN

Meeting Date: Monday, 24 September 2018
Location: Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra
Time: 4.03pm

The following members were present:

Clr Amanda Findley - Chairperson
Clr Joanna Gash
Clr Patricia White
Clr Annette Aldrick
Clr Nina Cheyne
Clr Mark Kitchener
Penni Wildi - Waminda
Wendy Woodward – Nowra Show Society
Lesley Labka - SAHSSI
Rev Matthew Wilson – Uniting Church Nowra
Patricia David – Unions Shoalhaven
Peter Dover - SALT
Ashleigh Hudson – SALT
Grant Johnson – Southern Cross Community Housing
Nicky Sloan – Community Industry Group

Also present:

Gordon Clark – Manager, Strategic Planning
Colin Wood – Manager, Building & Compliance
Stephen Dunshea – Director, Finance Corporate & Community Services
Cathy Campbell – Senior Community Development Officer
Melissa Andrews – Community Development Officer
Kylie Rayner – University of Wollongong on placement

Apologies / Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Clr Levett and Wendi Hobbs.

Carried by consent

Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That the Minutes of the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven held on Monday 30 July 2018 be confirmed.

CARRIED

Declarations of Interest

Nil

The Chair gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

Updates

Clr White had undertaken a volunteer shift at Safe Shelter. She found it a well organised and run facility.

Grant Johnson is the new General Manager, Housing Services at Southern Cross Community Housing. They have been very busy, working on the management transfer of social housing buildings as well as their private rentals.

Nicky Sloane, CEO of Community Industry Group, explained that former Taskforce member Donna Brotherson had left when the housing service went to tender; unfortunately CI Group will probably not be delivering that program any more. Nonetheless housing issues remain important in their advocacy, especially following the Communities Plus development in Wollongong.

Clr Alldrick had attended the opening of Safe Shelter, and also commended running of the facility.

Lesley Labka reported that SAHSSI is at capacity.

CrI Cheyne is continuing with her Safe Shelter link work, offering mentoring and support.

Pat David of Unions Shoalhaven also acknowledged the opening of Safe Shelter.

Clr Findley is continuing advocacy with Pru Goward MP. She also met with the Premier, Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning & Housing, and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure at an ISJO meeting last week, where she gave briefings on affordable housing, in particular proposals for Bomaderry, and work with Southern Cross Community Housing.

Ashleigh Hudson reported that SALT has been busy. They have been providing 130 meals per week (lunches) through the SALTbox program.

Penni Wildi reported that Waminda is also very busy.

Peter Dover reported that Safe Shelter has been open nearly three months, providing just under 700 bed nights to 56 people. It has been running at capacity for the last two months. Those clients who have left (apart from a very small number who had to be evicted) have been given referrals elsewhere. Support for the project from the community remains strong, with numerous people coming each week to offer and give support.

Matt Wilson agreed the work of Shelter is excellent but more volunteers and funding are still needed.

Colin Wood reported that development certificates for Safe Shelter are in process. He has been investigating options for converting buses and reusing shipping containers, and has determined that the latter may be the better option as they can be better insulated and converted to a higher standard.

Gordon Clark's area has finalised the zoning for the homeless shelter, and has prepared briefing papers on affordable housing, the Bomaderry site and Southern Cross. He has been in contact with offers for Social and Affordable Housing (SAHF) phase 2. Southern Cross has not been shortlisted to develop a proposal under the program.

Cathy Campbell has been working with Jessica Rippon and Melissa Andrews on the communications strategy, and with Kylie Rayner (UoW student on placement) on the launch of an Anti-Poverty research project.

Stephen Dunshea has been catching up on the Community Development team's work.

Melissa Andrews has been updating the Taskforce's Actions list, working on the communications plan, the Prosperity in the Park annual event on 9 October, the Children's Week calendar, and the Homelessness Interagency group to improve systems/processes.

Clr Findley acknowledged the work of Colin Wood, Gordon Clark and their teams, adding they have done a remarkable job. Gordon recently won a Local Government NSW Planning Award, Excellence in Leadership, for outstanding personal contribution to issues of affordable housing.

She tabled a letter from Pru Goward MP, State Minister for Social Housing among other portfolios, responding to Council's correspondence about affordable housing opportunities in the Shoalhaven. A response will be drafted. The Taskforce later confirmed its endorsement of making contact with the Director of Community Housing and Pathways, as suggested at the end of the letter.

REPORTS

HT18.14 Australia Day - Nominations

HPERM Ref:
D18/323161

Taskforce members were asked to distribute information about the Australia Day Awards nominations around their networks. This is an opportunity to recognise people who do great work but without recognition.

As potential nominees, Clr Cheyne noted that Grand Pacific Health have been very helpful in supporting many of the Safe Shelter clients; also Homeless Hub.

Melissa Andrews announced that the Children's Week Awards are also open at www.nswchildrensweek.org.au/awards

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven:

1. Receive the Australia Day Nominations report for information; and
2. Actively promote the Australia Day Nominations.

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven:

1. Receive the Australia Day Nominations report for information; and
2. Actively promote the Australia Day and Children's Week Nominations.

CARRIED

HT18.15 Ongoing Actions

**HPERM Ref:
D18/290841**

4. Transport for NSW Second Life Project

Peter Dover has been looking at Transport for NSW's offer of buses for conversion, with Gordon Clark, and a proposal has been submitted. The difficulty remains whether suitable land can be found. None had been found that was completely suitable until recently, when a six-acre plot in Hillcrest Avenue became available, owned by the Church of Christ. Peter had referred the land to Gordon and Colin to assess its suitability, and they confirmed it could be zoned appropriately. Peter met with representatives of the Church, who confirmed they do not need it for an additional aged care facility. A proposal is being made for three to five years' usage to set up the infrastructure. However, converted buses could look unsightly and require expensive insulation and refurbishment, and are not ideal. The housing needs to be more robust. They are therefore now looking at shipping container and demountable options that can be connected to services but are still removable at low cost.

There should be more information from the Church within the next four weeks. If the project works well it may be possible to purchase the land or engage an ongoing lease. The plan is to set up a community centre to facilitate bringing services. The existing Safe Shelter is great for crisis accommodation, but transitional accommodation offering private zones and independence is needed.

Council approval has been secured to extend the fenceline at 134 Kinghorne Street (Safe Shelter) to allow the establishment of community gardens for people using the service to work in, to give them something to do and help them gain skills.

Clr Findley has spoken with Anthony Body from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet office, who is still working with Transport for NSW to try to obtain some land. This has not advanced further and he will keep us apprised of any developments. Clr Findley asked the Taskforce for a consensus on whether the bus proposal should not be pursued at this time, and instead concentrate on some other more manageable solution.

Wendy Woodward felt that converted buses could still be useful for the future, for example to accommodate young people at the beaches during the summer. She preferred not to close the door on the bus idea. Peter Dover reiterated that bus conversion is onerous and not cheap.

Gordon Clark said that the previous Taskforce meeting had endorsed a Memorandum of Understanding with Amoveo, a manufacturer of modular buildings, and Southern Cross Community Housing (Action Table item 5). Many different housing models are available. He is not against the use of buses in principle but the problems remain of finding appropriate land where buses will fit into the landscape, and the fact that buses are better suited to a metropolitan context. Asked about the timeframes for container/tiny homes, Gordon clarified that Amoveo are offering off-the-shelf products. This option is potentially quicker than a bus retrofit. Melissa Andrews added that containers can also be made more accessible, and are in this respect a better option than buses.

It was agreed to leave item 4 in the Action Table.

It was agreed to remove item 5 as this has been completed. It was proposed that Amoveo be invited to attend the next meeting of the Taskforce and give a presentation on their model.

2. Health Representatives

Clr Cheyne said that current practice of volunteers providing health assistance and piecemeal case management is not a sustainable model, and suggested approaching the State Member about funding for a dedicated role. These health needs can be very complex and require the intervention of a case worker / manager. Melissa confirmed she has received no response from either of the contacts for this action. Roslyn Poole is back with the Homelessness Mental Health program now.

Lesley Labka spoke about the creation of a new funded specialist homeless service to look after chronic homelessness. She recommended the tiny homes model be tied in with the Housing First model: from crisis to permanent/stable accommodation with case management. Adequate housing should be coupled with adequate support services. Nicky Sloan added the Housing First model

resembles more a house than a series of bedrooms, and this needs to be taken into account when designing the layout.

Gordon Clark described a presentation from the 2018 Affordable Housing Conference which he will circulate with the minutes of this meeting.

It was agreed to retain item 2 in the Action Table, and to establish a working party to progress the Health issue.

3. Statistics

Clr Findley clarified the original intention had been to receive statistics quarterly so they can be forwarded to the State Member as part of our advocacy. The statistics can be gathered annually and an annual report produced. This can be aligned with the Anti-Poverty report / statistics. A letter from Shoalhaven every three months to the State continues to build the story.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the Homelessness Taskforce receive this report for information.

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That

1. The Homelessness Taskforce receive this report for information.
2. A Health Access Working Group be formed to consider how to connect people to health services and consider a model for case management.
3. Amoveo be invited to attend the next Taskforce meeting to give a presentation on their model.

CARRIED

HT18.17 Communications Strategy

Melissa Andrews tabled the draft Communications Plan, just completed. She drew attention to the Communication Action Plan at the end of the document, which sets out a large number of strategies. At this stage it is not clear who will action them. The Community Development team have limited capacity/budget but are happy to assist. It will be advisable to determine costings, to help Council apply for funding.

It was agreed that Taskforce members send comments by email to Melissa by 15 October. The Working Party will go through the responses and prioritise the actions.

Action: Melissa to email Taskforce instructions.

Recommended (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That Taskforce members email comments on the Communications Plan to Melissa Andrews by 15 October.

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That Taskforce members email comments on the Communications Plan to Melissa Andrews by 15 October.

CARRIED

HT18.16 Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven - Alternate Representation

**HPERM Ref:
D18/308247**

Patricia David explained that she had sought clarification on role of alternate. She is satisfied that Council staff have answered her question via this report. The Taskforce agreed to the procedures.

Recommendation (Item to be determined under delegated authority)

That the request from the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven with respect to appointing a delegate member for representatives who are absent be noted.

RESOLVED (By Consent)

That the request from the Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven with respect to appointing a delegate member for representatives who are absent be noted.

CARRIED

There being no further business, the meeting concluded, the time being 5.04pm.

Clr Amanda Findley
CHAIRPERSON