



## Homelessness Taskforce Shoalhaven

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 17 June, 2019  
**Location:** Jervis Bay Rooms, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

## Minutes Attachments

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### The RE-BOOT Intensive Community Reiteration Service

Salt Care aims to change the growth of homelessness (approx. 20% per year), and know that to do that requires innovation. Based on that, Salt Care doesn't just want to provide crisis accommodation, it wants to create real change in the lives of the chronically homeless. We want to provide a safe environment within which these people can manage and address their barriers to become contributing members of the community.

Salt Care's vision is for no one to be standing outside of the circle. Salt Care stands in solidarity with those who require dignity and respect, and demonstrate a different way of living through our actions. We locate ourselves with the poor and the powerless and provide them with a voice. We stand right next to the disposable, so that we can stop them and their lives from being thrown away.

#### The Project...

*Providing holistic, wrap around supports as part of a 12 month live-in accommodation and assistance service, to ensure the effective transition of extremely at risk homeless people transitioning back into the community.*

Salt Care will lead a consortium of local partners to deliver an innovative transition support service for extremely at risk, long term homeless people, transitioning back into the community. This will include provision of intensive wrap around supports to people with serious mental health, health and co-morbidity issues as well as people returning to the community post detention. This service will provide a complete wrap around support service incorporating secure accommodation for 12 months, individualised mentoring, training and skill development, volunteer work, and a range of direct employment supports. This program delivery model has been designed with a range of partners with expertise in working with homeless people, long term homeless people and those with co-morbidity issues to ensure participants can successfully transition back into the community, and move into sustainable employment.

A major focus of the service will involve individualised mentoring, psychotherapy, trauma counselling and therapies aimed at assisting the participants to manage their barriers.

Our employment support service delivery model is centred on an employer demand led approach, focused on available jobs (locally), industry specific training, and intensive work readiness preparation to ensure candidates are successfully matched to available roles. This involves engaging participants in a range of personal development activities, coaching sessions, mentoring, and non-vocational activities; alongside targeted industry training, work placements, experiential learning and intensive post placement support.



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Salt Care will, as well as providing direct accommodation and homelessness service support, facilitate non-vocational activities, wrap-around case management support and manage referrals to services to address non-vocational barriers. Whilst engaged in these supports, participants will take part in work readiness and experiential learning programs, work placements, industry training, preparing them for employment delivered by our service partners.

#### **Accommodation and wrap around support**

The greatest risk to the successful transition of people returning to the community post detention, and the factor most relevant to recidivism, is homelessness. This model will ensure 20 participants have secure accommodation and wrap around service support for 12 months, allowing for a supported and effective transition into mainstream accommodation.

#### **Employment and training**

The second most relevant factor to reducing recidivism or the likelihood that someone will return to incarceration, is employment. Employment provides people with purpose, focus, motivation, a social network, financial incentives and freedom. Without employment, long term homeless people are highly likely to re-offend.

As part of an Employer Feedback session hosted by service partner Workways in May 2018, 15 large scale Employers stated that what they wanted from Employment Services providers was simple - to employ people who have the right attitude and the capacity to do the job they needed filled. The Employers stated that they were happy to train people "on the job" to assist them to develop industry specific skills, but that the most important factor, was their enthusiasm and that they were the "right fit" for the business.

For this reason, in order to ensure that participants have the right attitude, motivation and skills required to effectively transition into employment, each participant will take part in a range of individualised activities including mentoring, structured training, volunteer work, domestic and skill development training, and paid work. This will increase the likelihood of a successful transition, and significantly reduce the chance of recidivism.



## Standing together; Erasing the Margins



Salt Re-Boot is an initiative uniquely designed for homeless persons exiting drug detoxification programs. Re-Boot is unique in that it incorporates multiple core lifestyle elements within the context of one therapeutic community. Salt Care's desire is to assist those who have made a significant step forward to continue their development in circumstances that promote health

and wellbeing. This is crucial. To this aim Re-boot offers each participant one year of supported accommodation, paid employment, life skills training and meaningful membership within the wider Salt community. Salt Care has drawn inspiration from one of the most successful social re-entry programs in the USA and has invested significant resources into the training of its initial team.



**Target: 260 People  
sleeping rough**

- 20 Participants
- 12 Months
- 1 Therapeutic Community





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### The Service Delivery Model

It is increasingly being recognised by the community sector and Government that approaches to working with people experiencing disadvantage (or those who are 'at risk') need to move away from welfare based crisis management services. For this reason, Salt Care and consortium partners adopt an *Advantaged Thinking* approach to service delivery. A deficit approach defines people by their problems and subsequently builds services based on managing them, while *Advantaged Thinking* focuses on identifying, developing and, most importantly, investing in the skills, capabilities and assets of these people so they can establish independent and sustainable lives. This approach activates their rights and responsibilities to themselves, their community and the overall economy by embedding reciprocity and mutual accountability in the program.

*Advantage Thinking* adopts a holistic approach incorporating non-vocational supports including individualised mentoring, psychotherapy, trauma counselling and therapies, as well as case management to assist participants to manage and address their personal barriers to community reiteration and employment.

This approach places a strong emphasis on learning through practical skill development. This includes building specific employability skills that match the expectations and needs of employers; and strengthening the networks of participants to help them more easily make the transition into the world of work. For this reason, the project service design is based on an understanding of the necessity of both a supply and demand approach to moving people into work – by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, confidence, skills, experience and qualifications (supply), as well as actively working with Employers to understand their needs, identify vacancies and open up pathways into the labour market (demand).

It also involves ensuring that participants know about and have access to supports that can assist them to address the unique challenges of long term homelessness; and educating Employers to understand the support needs of job seekers returning to or entering the job market, so that these workplaces can provide amenable and sustainable jobs.

The Service Delivery Model is also designed to be responsive and adaptable to local needs and conditions, by:

1. **Building local Community ownership**
  - **Enabling the local community to inform and guide the project** through a Community of Practice (steering committee) that builds on existing networks with local organisations
  - **Networking to maximise outcomes for participants** to build relationships with local businesses so they can develop work-ready skills and capabilities through direct workplace experiences. This enables job seekers to build their own "Address Book" of formal and informal professional relationships, increasing their chance of finding and sustaining employment
2. **Investing in the job seeker's strengths and skills using:**
  - *Advantaged thinking* - focusing on self-agency and goal-oriented action rather than deficit-focused welfare approaches
  - Strengths-based assessments to identify the job seeker's strengths and skills to build and expand upon



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- Addressing vocational and non-vocational barriers at the same time by engaging job seekers in a range of vocational experiential learning activities, work readiness supports, literacy and numeracy and employability skill development in practical, authentic and meaningful projects and experiences; intensive case management to address barriers, and participation in a range of life skills and non-vocational group work activities.
- Career coaching and individualised mentoring to progress their plan and develop respectful and productive relationships with employers
- Positive psychology to improve engagement

### 3. Adapting best practice to the local context

- **international evidence** from OECD, ILO, Eurofound and World Bank literature showing that unemployment must be addressed from both supply and demand perspectives; that service providers can't address the issue alone - effort and commitment from the whole community is essential to success
- **experience in implementing international best practice:** key elements of this include vocational guidance, personal plans, developing networks, skill building through experiential learning and access to real work opportunities

#### Employer engagement

We engage local employers by offering:

- Work ready participants who have been equipped to meet their local workforce needs, and actively seeking employer input on service design to ensure program rigour
- A work experience program tailored to the employer to allow them to 'try before they buy' and ensures the job seeker is the right fit
- A comprehensive post-placement support program with practical interventions

#### Expected Outcomes

This project simplifies the relationship between the participants, local service providers and employers by providing a complete, wrap around support service. This includes service partners delivering their services and the required supports in the accommodation centre, with the participants receiving individualised wrap around care based on their individual needs.

The project aims to house 20 long term homeless people for 12 months. During this time, the participants are provided with an individual transition plan which will ensure that they have everything they need to successfully reintegrate back into the community, and employment.

#### Evidence of the model

International and Australian literature shows that employment prospects for ex-prisoners and long term homeless people are quite grim, that employment is a key element of successful reintegration, and that unemployment is often associated with re-offending. The Re-boot program provides direct accommodation, therapeutic and employment assistance through a combination of one on one and group based vocational training; while simultaneously engaging participants in intensive case management and non-vocational activities aimed at addressing barriers. Some of the assumptions underlying the program include: need for long-term support; likelihood of slow and intermittent



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progress; need for basic skill development in relation to pre-employment preparation; and need for other services such as housing, health services, and personal support.

Based on this, it is a given that these job seekers require a much higher level of support and intervention than mainstream job seekers, and even other disadvantaged groups; and often take much longer to prepare for employment. In order to provide a realistic estimate of job placements for this group, it has therefore been assumed that approximately 25 percent of the total number of participants engaged in the service will achieve sustainable employment lasting 26 weeks.

#### **People with a severe mental health disability**

Mental illness is more prevalent than many people realise. Around 45% of Australians aged between 16 and 85 will experience a mental illness at some point in their life, while one in five Australian adults will experience a mental illness in any given year. (ABS-2007)

People with a mental illness (PwMI) experience great difficulty in finding jobs and performing well in the workplace. The employment gap between people who have mental health problems and those who do not is about 20 percentage points and PwMI are also three times more likely to be unemployed than those who have no mental health problems. *Mental Health And Work: Australia © Oecd 2015*. Unemployment can exacerbate existing mental illness – this was most visible during the global financial crisis when Australia's economic growth slowed and unemployment and underemployment increased. Suicide rates among the unemployed rose 22% during the crisis compared to their rates prior to the crisis. *Economically inactive, unemployed and employed suicides in Australia by age and sex over a 10-year period: what was the impact of the 2007 economic recession? -2014*

We know from research that people with a mental illness want work and see employment as feasible and important to their recovery, yet despite this a large proportion of PwMI are failing to secure competitive employment or sustain it once there. Some PwMI end up in a catch 22 scenario where difficulties in job seeking exacerbate mental health issues and this in turn might make it difficult to apply for jobs. In addition, mental illness often combines with a range of other issues such as limited education, substance abuse, criminal records, physical health, and homelessness which further impedes movement into competitive employment.

The Re-boot program aims to provide a safe and stable environment for people with a severe mental health disability, who require intensive supports to be able to take back control of their lives, and start moving towards community reiteration.

#### **Ex-Offenders**

State government figures obtained by The Saturday Age reveal the recidivism rate for 2013-2014 is at a 10-year high of 40 per cent, up from a low of 34 per cent four years ago. Services that support



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long term homeless people and those at risk of incarceration (including those on Community Corrections Orders) are oversubscribed and unable to meet the demand on their services.

Prisoner numbers have grown almost 40 per cent from 4350 in June 2009 to 6454 on January 2016. The government's forecast prison population for June 2015 is 7169. Budget figures show that operational spending on corrections for 2014-2015 will exceed \$1 billion for the first time, almost twice the outlay in 2009-2010, and increase outstripping almost every other area of government spending.

According to the report on Government Services 2016 Council of Australian Governments (COAG), there were 6,219 prisoners in the Victorian prison system on 30 June 2015. This represents an increase of 68.4 per cent on the 30 June 2005 figure of 3,692. Of the prisoners who were released in 2012-13, 44.1% had returned to prison under sentence within two years of release.

Similarly, there were 12,373 offenders on Community Corrections orders on 30 June 2016 (Corrections Victoria). Interestingly, the Council of Australian Governments reports that net operating expenditure per prisoner per day in NSW in 2014-15 was \$297.34, while net operating expenditure per Community Corrections offender per day in 2014-15 was \$25.68.

Many offenders have education and skill levels well below the Australian average and are more likely to be unemployed, which has an impact on their health, ability to find housing and the chances of them re-offending. The introduction of programs that address both non-vocational and vocational barriers concurrently and which assist long term homeless people to transition into employment; offers opportunities for offenders to reduce this disadvantage, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful re-integration into the community and reducing the risk of reoffending.

A Queensland study, based on over 1,800 people who returned to custody within three years, was undertaken of the links between prisoners' participation in VET programs and their chances of returning to prison. It found that 32 percent of prisoners who did not participate in VET before their initial release returned to custody within two years, while only 23 percent of VET participants returned (Callan & Gardner 2007).

According to the Institute of Criminology, key principles to ensuring programs can effectively address recidivism include:

- Holistic strategies for addressing a range of dynamic risk factors to reduce re-offending
- Using best practice models for managing people on Community Corrections Orders or who are at risk of incarceration alongside of providing intensive supports for long term homeless people
- Development of early intervention strategies to reduce the costs associated with the correctional system and the economic impact of re-offending
- Inclusion of education and training, literacy and numeracy programs and skills development programs to support reduced recidivism
- Inclusion of intensive case management
- A focus on employment
- Increasing community confidence, including that of employers.



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There is evidence to show positive impacts of these types of intensive transitional support services on a range of post-release outcomes and that these services have the potential to reduce recidivism. To be successful, good practice features identified for transitional support services also include holistic and individualised approaches focused on prisoner needs, multi-disciplinary and collaborative service delivery, integrated service delivery, continuity of support, release planning from an early stage, long-term post-release support, and a case managed approach.

The RE-BOOT program has been modelled on these proven approaches, taking a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to service delivery; and including strong, experienced partners with specific specialisations to ensure that job seekers have access to the very best supports available.