



Western LASN Meeting

Friday 8th March 2024

Chair: Rhonda Collins

Meeting notes: Sarah Langmore

Present:

Patricia Richard – Salvation Army Housing Service

Kylie Smith – MCM Housing

Roxana Viojo, Aaron Tan – Melton Housing; Amy Grant,

Cheryl McKinley, Demi Porter, Stephanie Pottier, Lee Viergever, Emma Pullen, Marcella Acone - Salvation Army

Karol Josevska, Hannah Barker – Good Shepherd

Phillipa Dwyer – McAuley

Ailsa Gibson-Sheridan– Kids First

Kate Ogilvie – Women’s Housing Ltd

Christine Stapleton – Housing for the Aged Action Group

Halime Aldemir – Children’s Resource Coordination Program

Gary Humphrey – Hope Street Youth & Family Services

Danny Tilkeridis – VincentCare

Ellena Gill – Western Integrated Family Violence Committee

Gemma Jewers– MCM

Shannon Abbott-Zanatta; Angelina Sotudy – VACCA

Colleen Keefe – Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women’s Service

Ciara Placentino – Motel Coordination Project/McAuley

Rebecca Cleaver – Wombat Housing Support Service

Lesley Murray – Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Rhonda Collins – Latitude Directions for Young People

Sarah Langmore – Western Homelessness Network

Apologies: Finn N – GenWest; Rachael Toseland – Unison; Janet Jukes – Refuge Victoria; Justin Bennett – VincentCare; Ralph Salera, Chloe Lynch – Salvation Army; Tarryn Chapman – Western Integrated Family Violence Committee; Malia O’Brien – Asylum Seekers Resource Centre; Gerda Zimmerman – Caroline Chisolm Society; Kelina Attard – Bolton Clarke; Katrina Hedges – Oz Child; Rachanna S Pillay (DJCS); Deb Gorsuch – Uniting Wyndham

Meeting notes

1. Count of voting members present: 13

2. Welcome from Brimbank Wellbeing and Aquatic Centre

Representatives from the Centre provided an overview of the Centre. They are very keen to connect with marginalised communities and have employed someone from the Good Shepherd Youth Team. The Team is exploring options for assisting young people experiencing homelessness.

1. Matters Arising from the last WLASN meeting

Agreements:

- ✓ To run a session of the Collaborative Practice training, targeted to leaders in WLASN services.
- ✓ To organise a practitioner forum with Three Sides of the Coin and IPC Health for March 2024.
- ✓ To participate in a review of the Housing and Support Partnership Agreement with the NLASN.
- ✓ That the Western Homelessness Network will be a signatory to the Statement of Solidarity with First Nations Communities.

Actions:

- **SAFY services** to commence use of e-referral. **To be discussed next meeting.**
- **LASN members** to check whether their services are using e-referral and contact Sarah if there are barriers. **ONGOING.**
- **WLASN services** to contact Sarah if they have staff and/or consumers who would like to participate in University of Queensland research into inclusion of the consumer voice in advocacy/policy development.
- **WLASN members** to forward any comments on the WLASN response to the Housing Statement to Sarah by Friday 15th December 2023. **DONE.**
- **Sarah** to circulate the draft letter to the Area Directors re: delays in property maintenance for Victim Survivors of family violence. **LASN members** to forward comments by Friday 15th December. **DONE.**
- **LASN members** to let Ciara moteldatabase@mcauley.com.au know if they would like to participate in the Motel Coordination database training on 13th December.
- **Rhonda Collins** and **Amy Grady** to participate in a small working group to plan a process for review of the Housing and Support Partnership Agreement. **DONE.**
- **Amber** will forward some comments on the Innovation Technology Working Group. **DONE.**
- **Amber** will forward information about a tech consultant. **DONE.**
- **Sarah** to include a request for funding for a tech consultant in the end of year report to DFFH. **Working Group has opted to wait until the project is further developed.**
- **LASN services** to send Sarah an indication of how long current pending VHR applications have been awaiting approval. **DONE.**
- **Sarah** to follow up on VHR approval delays with Homes Victoria. **DONE.**
- **Unison** to present at the Family Services Alliance forum on homelessness and pregnancy in March.
- **Sarah** to send information about the Family Services Alliance forum to Amber. **DONE.**

2. Environmental scan and updates

2.1. Environmental scan

ERO

Homelessness Australia has confirmed today that the Federal Government has agreed not to cut \$78M in ERO funding from the Homelessness Sector and also confirmed that this funding has been rolled into base homelessness funding attached to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement – so we shouldn't have to fight for it again.

Government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness

The Victorian Government has released its response to the **Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness: Department of Families Fairness and Housing Victoria | Victorian Government Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria – final report** (dffh.vic.gov.au) and [government-response-to-the-inquiry-into-homelessness-in-victoria.pdf](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/~/media/parliament/vic/government-response-to-the-inquiry-into-homelessness-in-victoria.pdf) ([parliament.vic.gov.au](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au)). Of the 51 recommendations, 45 are supported by the Victorian Government; a further four are under review and two are not supported.

Homes Victoria have drafted new **Homelessness Guidelines and Conditions of Funding** and will be undertaking a consultation with the Sector on the content. In the first instance, Homes Victoria is seeking advice from CHP about a consultation approach. The Networkers have suggested that each LASN holds a meeting to review the draft Guidelines and to provide shared comments. The new Guidelines are likely to be released early in the new financial year.

Sarah requested that Homes Victoria consider including a consultation with the LASNs in the consultation strategy, so that LASNs can review the draft Guidelines and submit a response.

AGREED: To either hold a LASN discussion about the draft Homelessness Guidelines at a LASN meeting, or to convene a special meeting, if the consultation timelines don't fit in with LASN meeting times.

The release of the Homelessness Guidelines will also link to the release of new **Homelessness Activity codes**. Homes Victoria is also likely to be undertaking a consultation on the new Activity codes.

2.2. DFFH -Lesley Murray

Homes First

The State provided \$48 million for Homes First initiative using a revised service model of the Homelessness to a Home (H2H) program.

The Call for Submissions for Homes First closed on 6 February 2024. Services are expected to commence early in 2024-25.

The Program will operate in eight areas, both metropolitan and regional:

- Hume Merri-bek
- Outer Eastern Melbourne
- Brimbank Melton
- Loddon
- Inner Gippsland
- Goulburn
- Ovens Murray
- Wimmera South West.

The new **Ministerial Homelessness Reform Guidance Group** will commence shortly.

Melbourne City Mission is launching a big build project today – funded through the **Youth Capital Round**.

Public Housing Tower re-locations: work is happening in the background in relation to VHR and allocations. The majority of people in that process have completed a authority to re-locate.

2.3. Steering Group

• Welcome City of Melbourne, Oz Child and Youth Justice, Western Metro area to the WLASN

The Steering Group is very pleased to welcome the City of Melbourne as a voting LASN member and Oz Child and Youth Justice, Western Metro area, as associate members of the LASN. It is wonderful to be able to collaborate with these services.

• Steering Group election

Nominations were called on 29th February 2024 for three of the general positions on the LASN. The Steering Group will advise the outcomes of this process at the LASN meeting. Kylie Smith, Jodye Lyons and Stacey Hill have been elected to the Steering Group.

• LASN Chairs meeting with CHP

The first meeting between the Chairs of the LASNs across Victoria and Deborah di Natale, CEO of Council to Homeless Persons was held in December 2023. The meeting was very positive and was a great opportunity for Chairs to share information about their regions and LASNs. The meeting provided the opportunity for the LASNs to improve their connection with CHP. Deb, CEO, CHP is very interested in hearing from the LASNs.

- **Western MP Homelessness Working Group meeting with Minister Shing**

Katie Hall MP, State Member for Footscray, organised a meeting between Hon Harriet Shing MP, State Minister for Housing and the WLASN. Rhonda, Deb, Rebecca and Sarah attended on behalf of the Steering Group.

Briefing notes for the meeting are on the website: [Advocacy \(nwhn.net.au\)](http://Advocacy(nwhn.net.au)). The Minister was generous with her time and is clearly very knowledgeable about the state of the housing crisis.

The meeting was scheduled with very short notice. The Minister was very impressive and extremely well informed. The Minister was passionate about the issues that she was discussing and was very generous with her time.

The Minister was not prepared to engage with discussion about the need for more public housing.

2.4. Victorian Homelessness Network update

The Victorian Homelessness Network is the Network of all the nine regional homelessness networks. The aim of the VHN is to work together on any issues of shared concern across the State and to take a leadership role in assisting the Regional Homelessness Networks/LASNs. Homes Victoria, Council to Homeless Persons, CHIA Vic and Safe and Equal provide updates at each VHN meeting. The VHN is currently still trying to establish a shared understanding and workplan.

Participation in the VHN has highlighted how differently each of the Regional Homelessness Networks work and has made it very clear that we are extremely lucky in the West to have a very strong network of skilled and strategic members.

The **Housing at Parliament campaign** will continue this year. The event on the steps of Parliament will be held on Wednesday 31st July. See attached Houses at Parliament LASN Update and key messages document.

Each region is looking for four marshals for the event, who will be allowed to 'marshal'. They won't be rolling out houses, but will have a role in crowd control, supporting the Minister, meeting local MPs. We will need a first aider in that group. There will be a marshal meeting beforehand.

Action:

LASN members to:

- Consider whether their agencies can fold origami houses and display them in Homelessness Week
- Provide community awareness kits (to be circulated in mid April) to local community agencies and schools, asking if they will fold houses and create their own displays for Homelessness Week.
- Consider whether they have a staff member who can allocate a 'marshal' to assist with the event at Parliament.

2.5. Network update

- **Roundtable with Settlement Services**

The Roundtable meeting with Settlement Services in the West is to be held on 30th April. So far Salvation Army Housing Services and Caroline Chisolm have confirmed attendance. Uniting Wyndham, Wombat, Unison and the Salvation Army Western Metro are also likely to attend.

The meeting will discuss ways in which the two sectors can build an improved shared understanding and opportunities to collaborate. Settlement Services would particularly like to hear from housing providers.

Action: LASN members to let Sarah know if they would like to participate in a Roundtable with Settlement Services on 30th April.

- **Orientation for new/allied workers**

The next Orientation is:

Thursday 18th April 2024, 10am – 1pm on zoom

Register at: <https://events.humanitix.com/orientation-to-the-homelessness-system-in-melbourne-s-west-april-2024>

- **Three sides of the coin/Gambler's help practitioner forum**

The first WLASN Practitioner Forum since the pandemic will be from 11 – 2 on Wednesday 20th March at IPC Health. The forum will focus on understanding and responding to people with harmful gambling. The last half hour will be an opportunity for practitioners to get to know each other and to discuss future forums.

The forum was very well received by the Eastern Homelessness Network. Sarah has circulated a flyer and link to registrations: <https://events.humanitix.com/whn-practitioner-forum-understanding-and-responding-to-gambling-harm-in-the-west>

Action: LASN members to circulate the flyer for the Practitioner Forum on 20th March to colleagues.

- **Co-op housing information session**

Sarah is organising a one hour online information sessions for Practitioners, to be held in April or May.

- **WLASN members' page**

We now have a password protected page on the NWHNs' website: [Log In \(nwhn.net.au\)](https://nwhn.net.au). The password is: WLASN. You can pass the links on to anyone employed in a WLASN service. The member page will include our key documents, LASN meeting notes, key dates. Hopefully it will be a useful page to direct new staff to.

Action: LASN members to provide colleagues with the link to the Member's page on the NWHN website.

- **Disposal of client files in SHIP**

In 2023 the WLASN, thanks to Rebecca Cleaver, raised a concern with Homes Victoria about the lack of capacity for deletion of client files after 7 years (or whatever the period required to retain the client file – this varies depending on client circumstance). Homes Victoria has been pursuing this with the AIHW since and have now received a response:

Infoxchange have just finished developing functionality to remove access to client records. While I am not sure that all the information is actually deleted from the system, the personally identified data is removed and any remaining client information cannot be accessed via SHIP.

2.6. North and West Regional Children's Resource Program – March 2024

Program Update:

On the 7th of February both Clare and Michelle provided training at the Intro to homelessness in partnership with CHP. There were 28 practitioners in the room from across the state, but several were attending from the North West metro areas.

We will also be assisting our CRC in Loddon Mallee with Intro to Homelessness. This is in partnership with CHP.

Halime was on a panel to speak on behalf of infants, children and young people on the impacts of homelessness and education for the Darebin City Families, Youth and Children Strategy stakeholder summit. It was well attended approx. 80 people in the room from different agencies across the North.

Halime has been asked to provide training to JUNO and WOMBAT on the child safe standards. This has been Locked in for early March.

Clare will be presenting at Launch Housing on the role of the North West Regional Children's Resource Program (NWRCRP) and the importance of working with and supporting children.

Highlights (Positive Outcomes) of the month

The first Childrens Network meeting had 14 practitioners attend. The CNM had Sharon from State School Relief attend as a guest presenter. The network is the biggest that it has been for years.

Challenges of the month:

The CRC continues to promote its resources and training within existing partnerships to strengthen the sector's capacity in responding to children. There are competing priorities within these partnerships which means keeping children on the radar is an ongoing challenge.

Our DFFH rep is on secondment for 5-6 months. We will have someone in her place during this time. However, it does make is hard when you try to explain who you are, your role, what you have been doing etc when the relationship you had with your representative was strong and the knowledge is there.

The statewide is working on a series of Feedback forms so that infants, children and young people have a voice within the system. These forms were trialled throughout the state and lots of critical feedback was provided, meaning that the forms will likely need a complete redraft.

Grants and Funding updates: `

The Homeless Childrens Brokerage program has officially closed for the NW region. At the time of writing this we have spent \$48,000 in brokerage funds. (Funding we have allocated for this financial year). There have been 95 brokerage applications to date.

Resources: We have heaps of tools/resources to distribute. Please let your staff know. They can contact us on email NWRCRP@merri.org.au . We can arrange a time to collect the resources from the Broadmeadows office. We also have a **Statewide website "now live"**. Please access the website and our practitioner's toolkit via my signature in the emails.

2.7. Western Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC)

- WIFVC launched 2024 'Working in the West' Communities of Practice earlier in February, the summary is now live on our website: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:AP:f9bea181-4a41-4293-8755-527848f3c882>
- MARAM Collaborative practice training has begun for 2024, please see links for dates and to book in: <https://wifvc.org.au/maram-training> . Last year we discussed holding a specialised Collaborative Practice Session for the LASN. WIFVC heard yesterday that the session will be reviewed. Wait to see what comes out of the review.
- Secondary consultation practice forums will be launching by next term, we will send information through when available.

2.8. Working Group reports

- **Youth Working Group update**

Orygen attended the meeting this week to talk about the revamped Homelessness Youth Dual Diagnosis program and the other programs that have been directed to them following the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Members of the Youth Working Group completed a 'mapping' survey. The Working Group will agenda discussions about some of the findings at each of the next Working Group meetings. The first three discussions will be:

- Culturally responsive/sensitive practice
- Innovative service provision
- Access.

The Group finalised updated Terms of Reference for LASN sign off.

VOTE: Does your agency endorse the updated Youth Working Group Terms of Reference? (Attachment 1)?
13 in favour – the vote carried.

- **AP/THM update**

The access point services have started presenting data at the AP/THM meeting, to provide information for the LASNs about the current trends at the access points.

- **Innovation Technology Working Group**

This Working Group has met three times and is working well. The response to the survey initiated by the Working Group was poor. The Working Group will view some good practice examples at its next meeting.

The Working Group might refer some ideas back to the LASN for small table discussions to prompt LASN thinking. Schedule for April LASN.

Great innovative responses have come up in other working groups, that weren't raised in the Working Group survey. The Working Group is interested in:

- Examples of great innovations from other Sectors; and
- Ideas for innovation that would assist clients or homelessness workers.

Action: People with information about great innovations or ideas, please email Lesley or Sarah.

- **Western Houses at Parliament Working Group proposal**

The Western HAP Working Group has met twice. The Working Group will assist the LASN to participate in the Houses at Parliament campaign.

Proposal: That the WLASN hold a joint event to kick off Homelessness Week. The ideas are:

- To hold the event in Brimbank (the area of greatest need), preferably in front of the Council buildings
- To hold the event on Sunday 4th or Monday 5th August
- To have a food truck, children's activities, an MP to launch, a call for donations and to invite other services to create a stall.

Discussion:

- Coming together shows the power of the whole LASN
- Easier for larger agencies to participate
- Want to engage local community – only some agencies are in Brimbank
- IT feels like another event to work on – everyone is so stretched. We could focus on HAP event.
- Can be difficult for the small agencies to organise something locally. When there is a shared event, a smaller agency can release one person – rather than the whole team have to organise a local event.

- Melton is already thinking about a local event. Worked on an event with Brimbank but it was very large. Over time workers dropped off because of the large workload.
- Could we hold municipal events, bringing local groups together?
- Latitude will build on Houses at Parliament, focussing on engaging local services and developing a local fact sheet.
- A small agency such as Good Shepherd would like to work with other agencies.
- Sundays are not an option.
- Any agency can set up in front of a Council, to encourage people to fold houses and discuss it.

Vote: Does your agency support the proposal to hold a joint WLASN Homelessness Week event to kick off Homelessness Week?

Outcome: The vote postponed until next meeting. The vote at the next LASN meeting might be 'would you agency participate in a joint WLASN Homelessness Week event.'

Action: LASN agencies to discuss their participation in the Houses at Parliament campaign and whether or not the agency would support a joint LASN event in Homelessness Week (see discussion in the WLASN meeting notes).

- **Homelessness/Family Violence Working Group update**

Ciara provided quick view of the emergency accommodation database. Members of the Working Group have been using a shared booking form, which is making bookings less confusing for some of the hoteliers and provides a level of protection for homelessness and family violence agencies (see attached).

Action: LASN agencies that would like to sign up to the Motel Coordination Database, can contact Ciara at: Motel Mapping Database <moteldatabase@mcauley.org.au>

3. Discussion items

3.1. Consumer survey 2023

About 100 of the anticipated 500 surveys were received. Nearly 50 of these were organised by Salvation Army Open Door and Flagstaff. The Consumer Participation Working Group will draft a report of the findings and will develop recommendations for LASN discussion at the April meeting. Attendance at the three information sessions was low and only one agency asked for a presentation at their staff meeting.

Discussion: Do LASN members have any feedback about the survey?

- There are too many surveys – workers are asking clients to complete several surveys.
- The aim is 1 per worker or 5 per team.
- Based on worker feedback, the survey was opened for three times as long. Admittedly the timing over Dec – March was poor.
- The aim of the survey is to give consumers a voice.
- If we could afford vouchers for participation, we would be likely to get more participation.
- Why is it not a priority for workers?
- Workers are so time poor in all the work they are trying to do with consumers.
- Consumers are dealing with more and more complex issues. Often consumers are not in the headspace to participate. How do we engage consumers better?
- The point of crisis is a very difficult point to ask consumers to participate in a survey.
- Need people to be ready – could we organise focus groups?
- We could write out a prompts sheet for workers, including a range of introductory statements they can use.

- It's difficult for workers to engage with the survey with a feeling of hope and trust that it will make a difference.
- ACCOs particularly may not feel that their voices are being heard in the bureaucracy.
- The client voice is a strong focus in government at present.
- Since the pandemic the complexities people are experience are very heightened.
- Timing of the survey was an issue.
- Utilising the access point waiting room.
- Voucher or something
- More surveys came from services providing accommodation, suggesting that it is easier for consumers to participate if they have greater stability.
- Should we look at a focus group with an impartial provider? We tried to set some focus groups last year to support the 'Nothing About Us Without Us' project...
- Can we keep the survey open all year so that consumers can access it through a QR code whenever suits them?
- Can we include in the context for the collated survey that consumers are feeling more and more removed from decision making/resources/a voice?

Actions:

- ✓ **LASN members** to forward feedback from their teams to Sarah to pass on to the CPWG by 3rd April.
- ✓ **Sarah** to forward LASN feedback on the consumer survey to the Consumer Participation Working Group.

3.2. Practice Guide Working Group update

This working group has met twice and has worked on a format for the Practice Manual and undertaken an overview of a draft update. Members of the Working Group will be writing components of the Manual.

Discussion: The Working Group asked the LASN to discuss the section on Supported Referral Services. (Attachment 3) to determine:

- Whether the description of the model is still appropriate; and
- Whether the list of Supported Referral Services is still accurate.

Outcome: LASN agencies need more time to discuss the Supported Referral model within their teams, so the discussion is held over for the next LASN meeting.

Action: **LASN services** to discuss the Supported Referral Service model (Attachment 1), for discussion at the next LASN meeting. Do services remember that Supported Referral Services form part of our service system? Is the list of Supported Referrals Services named still current? Do any other agencies want to register a component of their work as Supported Referrals?

3.3. Housing and Support Partnership Agreement amendments

The NLASN has initiated a review of the Housing and Support Partnership Agreement, which guides the roles of tenancy, support and tenants in THM tenancies. Rhonda, Amy and Sarah will be attending the meeting and all THM and access point services have been invited.

Discussion: Are there components of the Agreement that LASN members would like to make recommendations on?

Action: **Any LASN member** who has ideas about how sections of the Housing and Support Partnership Agreement should be redeveloped should contact Rhonda (rhonda.collins@latitudedirections.org.au) or (amy.grady@salvationarmy.org.au)

3.4. Amendments to the WLASN Terms of Reference

Each year a call for nominations to the half the election positions on the WLASN Steering Group is circulated in February. This year the call will be for three nominations from WLASN support services.

In preparing for the election, the Steering Group identified that the current WLASN Terms of Reference do not reflect the decision, made in 2023, to allocate a standing position to both access point services and both THM services in the West. Nor do the Terms of Reference provide sufficient information on the role of proxies to Steering Group members. In addition, the Steering Group has shaped a better understanding of their role over the past year. For instance, we have established an expectation that Steering Group members will facilitate small group discussions at LASN meetings.

The draft updated section of the Terms of Reference (Attachment 4) was circulated for LASN comment on 26th February. The agencies that responded reported no issues with the updates, so the draft update is now tabled for a vote.

Vote: Does your agency support the updates to the Steering Group section of the WLASN Terms of Reference?

Endorsed: 13 votes

3.5. E-referral and VMS check in

Homes Victoria has advised that the requirement to use both e-referral and the Vacancy Management System will be included in the new Homelessness Guidelines and Conditions of Funding.

Discussion: How are agencies tracking with use of both functions?

Outcome: Held over for next meeting.

Action: LASN members to discuss how use of e-referral and the VMS are going in their teams.

3.6. Introduction to Malia O'Brien, Asylum Seekers Resource Centre

Malia O'Brien will attend the next WLASN meeting.

3.7. Victorian Government Housing Statement consultation

The Victorian Government has initiated a consultation following release of the Housing Statement. The Government has advised that, over the next few months 60 pop-up community events will be held across Melbourne and regional and rural Victoria while an online program will also be held to ensure we reach all Victorians – young people, culturally and linguistically diverse, people living with a disability, those at risk of homelessness, renters and home owners.

- You can find more information about the consultation here and sign up for updates here: [Developing a new plan for Victoria | Engage Victoria](#)
- You can view a briefing from the Minister here: [Roundtable and webinar presentations | Developing a new plan for Victoria | Engage Victoria](#)

Discussion: draft response to the consultation:

Sarah provided the beginnings of a response to the Government on the Victorian Housing Statement – for LASN discussions. The LASN also has the option of uploading a submission.

Outcome: Due to lack of time at the LASN meeting, discussion of the Victorian Housing Statement consultation was referred to the Steering Group.

Action: WLASN agencies to sign up for updates to the Victorian Housing Statement consultation: [Developing a new plan for Victoria | Engage Victoria](#)

3.8. VEC Council election update

The Victorian Electoral Commission is preparing for Council elections. There is a Team focussed on assisting people in prison and people who are experiencing homelessness to vote.

The Team generally provides a mobile unit, to assist people to register to vote and then usually provides a mobile unit to assist people to vote. However, Council elections will be postal. Enrolments to vote close on 30th August 2024 and voting occurs throughout October.

There is a No Fixed Address form for people experiencing homelessness to register for voting:

https://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Special_Category/no-fixed-address.htm and:

https://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/pdf/forms/no-fixed-address/er016nfaw-vic-2019.pdf?v=1.3

People can list an agency address as their address. The intent is that, if people sign up with this form, they will not receive a fine for not voting.

The VEC is interested in opportunities to assist people experiencing homelessness to register to vote and is interested in suggestions about how they can assist people to vote. For instance, last year the VEC ran a BBQ at St Marys House of Welcome – to share information about voting. They will also be running a pilot with the Consumer Advisory Group of Sacred Heart Mission to talk about how they can best assist people with lived experience about voting.

The VEC will be offering Mobile Enrolment Outreach from August 1 to August 28 and are considering offering two days of Outreach in each Region.

Discussion:

Is it feasible for the LASN to either organise some visits from the mobile unit to key points around the West and for LASN agencies to print out copies of the 'No fixed address' form, to fill out with clients between now and August?

- LASN suggested sites for a VEC outreach team: Tin Shed - Tuesdays, Melton South Community Centre – Fridays, Uniting Wyndham (ER site)

Actions:

- ✓ **Melton Housing** to discuss hosting a VEC outreach team with the Rough Sleeper group.
- ✓ **LASN agencies** to print out copies of the 'No fixed address' form to assist clients experiencing homelessness to register to vote and to avoid fines.

3.9. Key issues and trends for DFFH/MP updates

Held over for next LASN.

3.10. Service updates/Other business

- **Women's Housing Ltd St Albans update**

Kate advised that Women's Housing Ltd's new build in St Albans is open for tenants. It is a 53 unit property with a combination of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. There are possibly still 3 x 2 b/r units available. They have been seeking tenants for some time. If you have a query contact rentalmanagement@womenshousing.com.au. People need to have a VHR application in.

A new Truganina build is close to finished – there are still some 2 b/r vacancies in the property. The service ask that people apply and then will be interviewed. This is also a mix of 1, 2 and 3 b/r. It is in the middle of a big development.

New builds are also underway in the South West: Winchelsea, Warnambool, Hamilton – builds coming on line.

- **MCM Housing** is opening its first build this afternoon: a 6 self contained room rooming house in Werribee. The is the first completed build of the youth capital grant funding round. There will be workers onsite. MCM housing also has 6 head leased apartments that are also supported. This Initiative was established before Kylie's role at MCM Housing. MCM will be providing support for up to 56 tenancies over a 4 year period. Tenants are from MCM youth refuges. There are ongoing discussions about how wide to open for referrals for future accommodation. The support is largely philanthropically funded.

- **Home Time youth homelessness campaign**

This campaign is due to be launched shortly. It is a call to action to fix Australia's housing system for young people. Analysis has identified that the needs of young people are not being specifically addressed in policy. Campaign organisers are asking for agencies to sign up to the campaign.

Asks include:

- Develop and maintain a pool of 15,000 tenancies specifically for young people.
- Linked support services to assist young people to transition to independence
- Address the private rental gap for landlords offering tenancies to young people by providing a rental subsidy to address the gap.

A campaign website will be launched shortly.

- **Wombat – maintenance issues**

Staff have raised several cases recently about extremely serious maintenance issues with public housing. HAAG has also found that the maintenance of public housing properties are getting worse. Wombat has developed a template identifying when maintenance requests are made, what the issues are. The service will collect the data over the next few months. Wombat will bring the data to the LASN and forward it to Homes Vic.

Would other agencies like to similarly collect the data and join the advocacy?

Discussion:

- It is time consuming for staff to be reporting/following up issues.
- Some vacant tenancies are lasting 12 months.
- We need to advocate to Homes Vic to call the maintenance company to account. Provide them with training about working with community agencies.
- Some contractors have stolen from properties, presented drug affected.
- The THM services are experiencing the same issues. Patricia has been cc'ing the APPS officer with issues.
- Electrical certificates are provided but the work is not checked.

AGREED: That LASN agencies will collect data on public/community/THM maintenance issues for three months (from Monday 18th March to Friday 14th June) and will then send a collation to Homes Victoria.

Actions:

- ✓ **LASN agencies** to record public/community/THM maintenance issues on the template provided by Wombat, between Monday 18th March and Friday 14th June.
- ✓ **Rebecca** will share the maintenance template developed by Wombat.
- ✓ **Lesley** will raise the issues of liability issues related to property maintenance in Brimbank/Melton with Homes Victoria.

Attachment 1: Supported Referral excerpt from LASN Practice Guide

Supported Referral Services

The *Opening Doors* Framework requires that LASNs establish identifiable access points to the homelessness service system. However, not all consumers are in a position to contact an access point directly. The WLASN has established some support services as 'supported referral services' to contribute to the accessibility of the service system.

The Supported Referral Services actively outreach to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, operating as a first point of contact for people who may be geographically and/or culturally isolated and who may not yet feel ready to contact an access point service.

Supported Referral Services offer short term engagement to either assist clients to divert from the homelessness service system or to provide a supported referral service to the relevant access point for those clients seeking access to homelessness services.

The LASN developed two criteria to be used to determine whether a homelessness support service would be a supported referral service for clients:

- **Isolation** – where the homelessness support service currently assists clients who are geographically or culturally isolated, and
- **Assertive Outreach** – where the homelessness support services, due to current pathways or specificity of target group, responds to people before they enter the homeless service system by assertively outreaching to people who are homeless.

Homelessness support services nominated by the WLASN to be Supported Referral Services continue to register their case management support vacancies on the Vacancy Management System and receive referrals from the access points for these support vacancies.

The **functions and features** of Supported Referral Services are:

- provision of assertive outreach to people who are homeless who may not yet feel able to access the resources of the homelessness service system;
- to be open to clients for initial engagement – particularly those who are culturally and/or geographically isolated;
- provide clients with information about the resources of the homelessness service system and the processes for accessing these resources;
- assist clients to access the access point services by either:
- providing telephone access with privacy to enable the clients for whom physically presenting at an access point is challenging, to undertake a telephone assessment with the access point
- assistance to physically attend the access point (tram tickets, taxi vouchers, a lift)
- engage with the client until they feel able to access an Access Point
- advertise their own service vacancies on the VMS;
- take referrals from access point services for their advertised vacancies.

The **features** of Supported Referral Services are:

- that they are physically accessible to clients who are geographically and/or culturally isolated;
- that they are accessible to clients during business hours;
- capacity to assist clients to access the access points i.e. space to enable telephone access with privacy to enable client to undertake a telephone assessment with the access point, capacity to drive clients to an access point and support them at the access point; public transport tickets to assist the clients to travel to an access point.

Supported Referral Services in the WLASN are:

- Latitude Directions for Young People (young people and people sleeping rough in Hobsons Bay)
- City of Melbourne
- Bolton Clarke (rooming houses)
- CoHealth (Honeyhush Caravan Park)
- Hope Street First Response Youth Outreach Melton
- Maribyrnong Youth Accommodation Program?
- Uniting Wyndham? (Honeyhush, rooming houses. Salvation Army lunch, Werribee)
- Iramoo?
- WRAP?
- Salvation Army Youth Services (location?)
- Wombat