



## Addressing Aboriginal homelessness forum report

Industry Partnership of the three homelessness peaks, Domestic Violence  
NSW, Homelessness NSW and Yfoundations

2017

# Addressing Aboriginal homelessness forum report

## *Purpose of the forum*

In August 2017, the Industry Partnership (IP) of the three NSW homelessness peaks convened a state-wide 2 day forum to engage SHS services in responding to the increase in homelessness amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The purpose of the forum was to develop a sector-wide strategy to address Aboriginal homelessness that better:

1. Engages and supports Aboriginal **service users**
2. Supports **Aboriginal workers** and **workers with Aboriginal service users**
3. Coordinates **service system interventions** to prevent homelessness for Aboriginal people

## *Structure of the forum and forum report*

This report closely follows the structure of the forum. A conference program is provided at the end of the report.

### **1. ABORIGINAL CAUCUS**

The forum commenced with a meeting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SHS staff only in a caucus, to set the agenda for the rest of the forum discussion. Caucus members set about prioritising three issues for sector focus in the next three years, with regards to addressing Aboriginal homelessness. The report provides a summary of the meeting of the Caucus.

### **2. SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS)**

Taking the priority issues identified by the Caucus, the full forum of 80 SHS Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff (as well as AbSec and Community Legal Centre staff) then applied a SWOT analysis to these issues. The purpose of this session was to understand the context for Aboriginal homelessness, for service users and the sector, and to unpack the priority issues. The raw data from the SWOT analysis is provided.

### **3. DEVISING STRATEGIES FOR ACTION**

Taking into account the issues raised in the SWOT analysis, all forum participants were asked to devise strategies to address the three priority issues. Participants were asked to consider which agencies should be responsible for their implementation.

### **4. STRATEGY TO ADDRESS ABORIGINAL HOMELESSNESS**

Finally, participants were asked to prioritise strategies for sector action, which were determined by a vote. These have been compiled into a *Strategy to Address Aboriginal Homelessness* for the sector for the next three years.

## Caucus discussion – Key issues facing Aboriginal staff and services

The Caucus discussion resulted in the identification of three priority areas for sector focus over the next three years:

1. To improve engagement of and support for Aboriginal service users
2. To enhance support and professional development for Aboriginal staff and staff with Aboriginal service users
3. To improve partnerships within and outside of the SHS sector to prevent Aboriginal homelessness.

The full list of points raised during the Caucus are listed below.

### *Engagement of and support for Aboriginal service users*

#### ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION ISSUES

- The first point of call either by phone or in person makes or breaks a client
- Staff do not show compassion to clients who present with mental health issues
- Housing providers do not consistently engage with Aboriginal people who are already housed
- Sometimes staff do not help clients with alternate accommodation when the latter are barred from services (basically leaving them on the street)
- Some staff have limited communication skills in dealing with Aboriginal clients who have low literacy and numeracy skills, and knowledge in those areas
- Areas of access in services could have culturally appropriate flags and Aboriginal art

#### CLIENT SUPPORT

- Need more cultural programs to educate Aboriginal clients about sustaining a tenancy and their options for support/assistance, e.g. modify 'Rent It, Keep It' program
- Need to provide clients with a mobile phone; sometimes clients have no phone or address that services can access them by
- Clients lack some forms of ID or have no ID at all
- Need to provide an Aboriginal house for clients
- Need to provide funds for public/other transport for Aboriginal workers to meet with clients
- Need to provide food at events with clients

#### CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Non-Aboriginal staff lacking cultural awareness or understanding, and thereby being unable to build cultural relationships with clients
- Non-Aboriginal staff lacking awareness of generational trauma
- Services need to provide ongoing cultural competency training that all staff, including executives, are required to attend
- Services need to provide cultural supervision for staff
- Need more culturally appropriate settings for client engagement
- Need more cultural safety for clients

- Non-Aboriginal staff lacking real estate knowledge about transience of Aboriginal people – lack of rental history
- Cultural safety issues can raise conflict of interest issues for some staff, who are not able to work with their own people
- Aboriginal services are not consulted with regards to cultural issues when dealing with Aboriginal clients
- Need to develop cultural frameworks that incorporate the rights of sovereignty principles

#### MORE ABORIGINAL WORKERS AND SERVICES

- There are limited identified Aboriginal workers; often NGOs do not provide more than one identified Aboriginal worker, especially in small communities
- Need to identify Aboriginal workers for Aboriginal clients
- Need to increase the number of Aboriginal case workers in large services
- Need more Aboriginal staff and coordinators in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations
- Need more Aboriginal services funded long term

#### FUNDING

- Need more funding for existing and new Aboriginal services
- Need more funding for outreach services, particularly in rural communities
- Need more funding for financial assistance for clients
- Need more brokerage funding, e.g. to maintain tenancies
- Need more funding to respond to the increase in Aboriginal homelessness

#### GAPS IN SERVICE/AGENCY COORDINATION

- There is a lack of communication between FaCS and Aboriginal services
- FaCS provides limited support for Aboriginal specialist services and then pressures them
- There are no Aboriginal FaCS Community Program Officers for Aboriginal services
- Need to increase outreach programs for Aboriginal programs within the community
- Need a coordinated approach with all sectors based on a cultural accord – a strategy practice model
- Concerns about Housing NSW, regarding housing policy
- Some Aboriginal clients are unable to get approved by real estate agents, due to discrimination
- Need to prioritise rural family groups for housing

### *Support and professional development for Aboriginal staff and staff with Aboriginal service users*

#### SUPPORT FOR WORKERS

- Need to build a network of Aboriginal workers which meets regularly and strategically
- Develop Aboriginal workers meetings, including interagency meetings
- Need increase in funding to increase wages
- Funding needs to be available for allocated work cars for identified Aboriginal workers, due to high volume issues with Aboriginal clients

#### MORE ABORIGINAL WORKERS AND SERVICES

- Need more Aboriginal staff and identified positions; at least 2 Aboriginal staff per service
- Need more Aboriginal staff in coordinator roles and managers to support the front-line staff
- Need more support for Aboriginal staff
- Need more Aboriginal specialist staff within FACs, Housing NSW and SHSs

- Need more Aboriginal SHS managed services
- Need more Aboriginal leadership programs
- Need increased funding for Aboriginal specialist services to reflect the increase in Aboriginal homelessness
- Need longer term funding for services

#### GAPS IN SERVICE/AGENCY COORDINATION

- Lack of communication between FACs and Aboriginal services regarding with working Aboriginal clients
- There is no support from FACs for Aboriginal specialist services – pushing SHS
- Allow input from NSW ALC/LALCs and AMO into the homelessness space
- There are not enough Aboriginal FACS Community Program Officers

#### CLIENT SUPPORT

- Start Safely (short to medium term rental subsidy for those who have experienced domestic or family violence) that makes people look for private rental does not work; need extra housing and support
- Need to provide case management for the whole family
- Funding should include families and outcomes
- Need more Aboriginal homes
- Increase all housing providers for Aboriginal housing programs
- Increase long term and stable housing for families; not for one year only
- More flexible housing options for Aboriginal applicants
- Need targeted support for Aboriginal clients

#### CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Adopt First People principles to organisational change and reflect in policy and practice
- Workers need trauma education about elders and past events

### *Improved partnerships within and outside of the SHS sector to prevent Aboriginal homelessness*

#### GAPS IN SERVICE/AGENCY COORDINATION

- Who makes government departments (as opposed to housing providers) accountable for responding to the increase in Aboriginal homelessness?
- Needs to be more work between land councils and service providers for a more coordinated approach to homelessness
- Needs to be more service networking
- Require all services to have a regional action plan (RAP) in place to operate
- Lack of communication between FACS and Aboriginal services regarding working with Aboriginal clients
- There are not enough Aboriginal FACS Community Program Officers
- Housing NSW takes advantage of people who are vulnerable
- Need a specific housing model for Aboriginal women who had children removed by FaCS

#### SHS SERVICES

- All social housing providers should be required to deliver a percentage in accommodating Aboriginal families long term housing (how much %?)
- More funding for organisations, more crisis beds, more transitional properties

- Mainstream organisations push Aboriginal clients towards Aboriginal organisations, even though the former have the funding
- Need support from FACS for Aboriginal specialist services in Sydney, rather than promoting mainstream services
- Lack of brokerage funding available and significant hoops workers and the client has to jump through
- Need increased funding for Aboriginal specialist services to reflect the increase in Aboriginal homelessness in Sydney
- Some housing providers are more helpful than others
- There are different procedures for all housing providers: 1. Age of children who can share a room, 2. Same gender can share a bedroom up until 18 years. 3. different genders can share up until the age of 10 years.

#### CLIENT SUPPORT AND HOUSING ISSUES

- Need to establish Aboriginal education and bonding camps
- Difficult to get housing for complex clients
- There is a gap in SHS funding for singles and families
- There is a lack of accommodation for single men
- Not enough housing for large families and extended families
- Need to increase the income limit for large Aboriginal families and extended families (e.g. grandparents or aunts and uncles with nieces, nephews in care)
- Social housing provided is not suitable – need bigger houses
- Need more Temporary Accommodation (TA) nights available, TA does not cater for families
- Need affordable sustainable housing (not TA)
- Broader socio-economic issues, lack of affordable housing plus rising rent cost are contributing to homelessness
- Need to have a database of Aboriginal workers and Aboriginal services for Aboriginal clients
- Need more funding for programs, living skills, Rent It Keep It program, etc
- Housing applications take too long for homeless people and the process is complicated for clients to understand
- Inappropriate policies and procedures in housing and too many barriers for clients to face

#### SUPPORT FOR WORKERS AND SERVICES

- Aboriginal support team meetings between Aboriginal service providers
- Need more Aboriginal workers in services
- Increase funding for all services committed to working with Aboriginal clients
- Housing workers need mental health and drug and alcohol training to help understanding
- Need identified Aboriginal positions within all social housing providers



## SWOT Analysis of three identified priority issues

Taking the priority issues identified by the Caucus, the full forum of 80 SHS Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff (as well as AbSec and Community Legal Centre staff) then applied a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis to these issues. The purpose of this session was to understand the context for Aboriginal homelessness, for service users and the sector, and to unpack the priority issues.

### *Organisational Cultural Framework*

#### STRENGTHS

*Organisational governance (structure, planning and reference group) provide good guidance and accountability to make the service bicultural and safe*

- Organisational changes influence how delivery is done appropriately – makes organisation accountable and credible. Makes organisation bicultural and safe.
- Strategic plans are affected so it's an "all of organisation" approach instead of left up to individual workers
- We have a reference group who provide guidance in service delivery – strategies from head office

#### *Communication and sharing of information*

- Sharing best practice → what works and what doesn't
- 2 way communication = better understanding
- Regular conferences to share experiences and network
- Willingness and dedication to communication and inclusiveness

#### *Training & professional development*

- Strengthened skills translate to stronger client outcomes
- Traineeships to build the workforce
- Bungree has Jarwun secondments so people in high ranking jobs in their sector come on secondment 6 weeks

#### *Workers – expertise & commitment*

- Knowledge of what works and what doesn't
- Passionate workers that are flexible to accommodate working with Aboriginal clients
- Adaptable staff

#### *Policy*

- Equality – equal opportunity
- Leaving a strong "blue print" for the sector to build upon, adapt and refine to ensure the cultural best practices are met.
- Services to implement policies outlining standards/networking targets in working with indigenous services
- Review services policy which include Aboriginal framework

#### *Aboriginal knowledge and experience*

- Aboriginal employees
- Have Aboriginal advisory board alongside board and members represented on both
- The development of a RAP (Reconciliation Action Plan)
- To work together, value input of Aboriginal knowledge and build a service system that is appropriate to the needs of Aboriginal people
- Benefits of local knowledge and community.

- Aboriginal workers
- Aboriginal management; Aboriginal workers
- Community controlled
- Aboriginal governance
- Respect for cultural diversity
- Live, breathe and work it; there for communities, clients and staff

#### WEAKNESS

- Funding
- Funding
- Organisations lack of community, history and culture
- No First Peoples on management committees or staff
- No standard for cultural competency
- Resistance too hard basket letting go. Making change
- Complexity of Aboriginal culture
- Better protocols with WHS barriers for working in Aboriginal communities
- Complacency
- Limited Aboriginal Employee Base. \*Despite identified positions being advertised
- We don't get to switch off at 4.30, we live our work in our community, we are always out there
- Confirmation on Aboriginality
- Workers need sufficient time and mentoring support from Aboriginal workers
- SHS – FACs cultural focus guidelines
- REAL pathways
- SHS funding criteria

#### THREATS

- The future → how can we approach this work in a non-myopic way? It is imperative to acknowledge changes that we make are done so in consideration of future relevance → audience? Environment?
- People that don't want to listen/learn about cultural competency/ acknowledge past
- Non-Aboriginal organisations that don't make cultural change a priority
- Consortium partner not having any belief
- Differing organisation cultures within consortiums
- Fixed mindsets → inability to adapt or acknowledge the need for change
- Loss of local culture
- Funding
- FACs should be funding Aboriginal SHS leads build capacity within Aboriginal organisations
- NO communication from funders to enhance guidelines would be a barrier
- Confirmation of Aboriginality
- Burn out of workers
- Worker burn out
- Burnout
- Loss of momentum, when services are put to tender again in 2020
- Not changing
- International standards vs local standards
- This info being lost/no change happening
- Power/control
- Egos



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase ATSI self; determination = close the gap, decrease poverty, increase community self worth/esteem, land rights, rights to lead self/community, role modelling for future generations
- Joint tenders/procurement
- Set targets on procurement
- Transparent recording and reporting back to board
- Indigenous procurement at a funding level to be included in criteria
- Indigenous ways of sitting together in organisations and forums eg, circles
- Reconcile experience – don't rely just on academic ability
- Introduce a cultural inclusion framework with measurable outcomes
- To embed First Nation principles into governance documents with real strategic plans to follow on PePs
- To build good practice guidelines for working with Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness
- Opportunity to listen and put principles into action
- Comprehensive guidelines using cross cultural collaboration
- Out of sector protocols to open linkages for clients
- Worker exchange between Aboriginal service and non-Aboriginal services
- To exchange work place with non-Aboriginal SHS organisations
- Mode of delivery? How would it be possible to educate a wider audience more effectively if we gave up the paper and pen approach and utilised the arts ie. Film and tv practices (youtube, webinars, digital storytelling) to help land and aid absorption of these learnings
- Rewrite history
- Rewrite practices
- Cultural change
- Enhance and develop people/workers/managers
- FACs provide or dictate certain 'compulsory' SHS training opportunities ie. Casework, child protection etc. FACs could implement a similar strand of cultural education for SHS workers that gives them skills in working with Aboriginal clients in mainstream SHS services
- Cultural competent visually (signage, art, mission statement)
- Appropriate supervisor; culturally acceptable
- To establish baseline cultural competencies for SHS funded services, and fund the training needed to acquire this → maybe look at the whole TA misnomer and use some of this money more wisely
- Aboriginal stakeholder (ie current and former client) reference group
- Opportunities for non-Indigenous to learn off expertise of Indigenous
- Access local knowledge and resources = lower expense
- Local Aboriginal reference group involvement
- Aboriginal specific skill building and sharing
- Pathways → making it obvious where one can go to educate themselves to improve cultural competency → one specific website/resource to help pool knowledge
- Staff recruitment to assist with developing a cultural competency framework
- Support for non-Aboriginal workers who predominantly work with Aboriginal people – non-Aboriginal workers could benefit from the 'two-way' communication model
- More support for non-identified workers with high percentage of Aboriginal participants

## *Cultural Support and Professional Development*

### STRENGTHS

- Identified two broad themes in terms of strengths
- Training and Professional Development
  - o Including developing numerous pathways to support Aboriginal staff to leadership positions
  - o Ensuring all staff receive cultural awareness training
  - o Utilisation of resources such as an Aboriginal advisory group and elders that support Aboriginal staff
  - o Frequent Yarn Up Groups for Aboriginal workers
- Monitoring and Inclusive practice
  - o Yarn Up Groups used to get client feedback
  - o ATSO specific accommodation, cultural programs and outreach
  - o Ensuring recognition of cultural knowledge and practice

### WEAKNESSES

- When there is no Aboriginal staff in leadership teams or when non-Aboriginal organisations do not support Aboriginal workers (lack of cultural awareness)
- When there is a lack of support available to help staff balance competing demands of the white system and needs of Aboriginal clients and communities
- When there is limited access to and retention of culturally safe, knowledgeable and experienced staff
- When there is no credit when advice and cultural knowledge is provided to non-Aboriginal organisations

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Having a system of accreditation that recognises cultural knowledge
- Funding for cultural supervision, mentoring and training built into funding structures

### THREATS

- Funding restrictions and frameworks that don't value culturally appropriate measures of success
- Lack of career pathways and support for Aboriginal workers

## *Better partnership arrangements*

### STRENGTHS

- Pooling of resources to achieve great outcomes
- Offer Aboriginal people the opportunity to move out professionally
- In a consortium model, acknowledging, working and putting into action knowledge of best practice from local Aboriginal services
- MOU- collaborate to deliver expertise with a client focus
- Our service is run by the local Aboriginal Land Council directly
- Sharing knowledge
- Equality and quality
- Respect and value Aboriginal expertise, strengths, breaking down the barriers for Aboriginal workers

- Sharing knowledge
- We have an identified indigenous position, equity prevails for all of our clients, all treated equally irrespective of what walk of life client is coming from
- Sustainability of networks and avoiding re-inventing the wheel
- When individuals are already isolated it is important to have positive role models that people can identify with
- Our organisation is recognised in the communities and broader Sydney communities
- Equality
- Having several Aboriginal identified positions
- Warm referrals for client and shared resources, better outcomes for clients
- Many hand make a lighter load
- Participation in Central Coast homelessness interagency

### WEAKNESSES

- High turnover of staff, how to fill the gaps when staff leave. Rapport with client is at risk
- Lack of cultural awareness courses and training
- Funding after it runs out
- Difficulty to measure expertise and knowledge
- Take ideas off Aboriginal people without employment opportunities
- Not whole of organisation respecting or valuing expertise
- Policies
- Higher levels of management not engaging in cultural competency training
- Better case coordination to support community
- People or organisation that don't listen and learn
- Being closed minded but they know it all
- Include cultural awareness in contracts
- Differences in guidelines between different services
- Limited Aboriginal organisations within our LGAs makes walking together limited
- Aboriginal services need to work together more collaboratively as well as non-Aboriginal services
- Partnerships need to be inclusive of client choice and support- e.g. client chooses services beneficial not always available but links to specific local mentors and elders is possible
- Making workplaces feel welcome not tokenistic
- Services follow through in promises at meetings for once
- Lack of services available in rural and remote areas
- Too many meetings

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Follow up of forums i.e. reference groups and working parties
- Kinship systems, Aboriginal workers and people. No Aboriginal families or heard of name of client family
- Smaller agencies to embed cultural comp within own protocols and culture
- Sharing the information about interagency i.e. finding the point of contact to attend meetings and events
- Better recognition of identified workers
- Cultural training workshops once per year
- Strengthen partnerships to support Aboriginal community

- More get togethers such as high teas to get to know individual families. More funding for services
- Develop a new workforce of excellent workers
- Ability to share transitional housing allocations to address community needs
- Aboriginal workers play a key role in interagency meetings
- Worker exchange between indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations for capacity building
- Mandatory training/standards in contracts
- Cross cultural learning opportunities, e.g. secondments between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services
- MOU's and alliances, organisational agreements
- Sharing expertise in the way of mentoring, cultural supervision and good practice
- Strengthen responses to stop band-aiding and start providing long term cultural appropriate solutions
- Knowledge from real life
- Strengthen knowledge and build trust with local communities
- Offer Aboriginal supervision to Aboriginal workers
- Sharing skills, e.g. Aboriginal specific and youth workers for combined wealth of knowledge
- Stability of employment
- Aboriginal conference for Aboriginal people in the sector
- The environment of presentation

#### THREATS

- Accountability for cultural competency
- Better services if experience joined forces with partnership
- Issues with trust in accessing certain services especially re confidentiality
- Tender process 2020 decimating formed partnership as seen in GSHH
- Remove complacency about competency and cultural awareness
- Staff relocation
- Mainstream funding difficult in recognition of expertise and knowledge
- Competition in the sector and competitive tendering
- Funding constraints and competitive tendering
- Funding
- Lack of Aboriginal organisations that are funded
- Peoples past trauma
- Political changes and changing government priorities- competing priorities at multiple levels of government

## Strategies for Action

Reflecting on the SWOT analysis, forum participants devise strategies to address the three priority issues for sector focus. Participants were asked to consider which agencies should be responsible for their implementation and to prioritise actions for inclusion in a sector plan to address Aboriginal homelessness. The strategies in bold are those prioritised for inclusion.

### *Cultural support and professional development*

#### SHS

- **Cultural audit/assessment – tailor the program to suit the needs of a organisation**
- **Ensuring all members of an organisation are trained in cultural awareness, including Board members, CEO, Executive, Managers, Directors etc. Include as mandatory part of core training/induction**
- **Create an Aboriginal workforce of quality & excellence (trained, prof. dev, supported, career pathways) , Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in leadership roles/positions;**
- **Have Aboriginal workers conduct client feedback sessions to get honest feedback**
- Recognition of need to attend cultural events (e.g. sorry business, NAIDOC etc.) written into job descriptions for a worker
- Acknowledge and support Aboriginal staff in their culture, educate mainstream orgs on how this looks
- Share with an organisation of what a Yarn Up Group is/how to do it
- Once a fortnight Yarn Up Group with workers/ Once a month Yarn Up Group with Elders/clients
- Establish a local Aboriginal Advisory Board/Steering Committee to be available to all staff for guidance and knowledge on community and cultural issues
- Make available positions on Boards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- More accountability for SHS services to provide effective service to Aboriginal people
- Develop person-centred historical trauma response

#### PEAKS

- **Provide consultation within the sector and with Govt about sector issues**
- **Creating pathways to build the Aboriginal workforce and qualifications, e.g. mental health sector, TAFE outreach to train Aboriginal people living in the bush. Then give them jobs where needed in the SHS**
- Advocate for higher wages, fewer hours, more training in leadership roles (trained in a cultural way)
- Act on commitments – be accountable
- Organizing and arranging leadership programs
- Support and promote quality and effective service provision by services
- Advocate for funds for cultural supervision or to provide training for people to be culturally supervised

#### MAINSTREAM

- **Create identified Aboriginal positions within supports and access Aboriginal support groups and network meetings for workers**

#### FACS

- **More support from L&D in FACS to implement cultural support and encourage professional development**
- **Respect that every region has different issues and models that will work in their communities. Fund accordingly**
- **Funding for Aboriginal organisations to provide cultural supervision and cultural accreditation, guidance, competency training to SHS and mainstream services**

### *Organisational Cultural Framework*

#### SHS

- **Fund ATSI organisations**
- **Standards- service cultural diversity**
- **Build and maintain connection to Aboriginal communities**
- **Ensure all staff board etc participate and complete cultural competency training (including volunteers)**
- **Procurement of designated identified positions as part of the tender process**
- Data capturing
- Key principles for baseline standards expand to specific positive focus (client/individual)
- Regional specific training required
- Cultural supervision offered to all Aboriginal staff
- Lack of Aboriginal culture, calls for legitimacy, ATSI management committee members
- Creating strong connections with specialist Aboriginal funded services and youth services to pool resources and case manage together
- Training of staff so that rapport with clients remains strong
- Maintain and improve networks with other staff and services
- Make sure that the office structure and atmosphere is culturally comfortable
- Burn out- connection with workers
- Utilising Aboriginal mentors for SHS services who do not have identified workers
- Organise a luncheon in different locations
- Cultural supervision for non-Aboriginal leadership staff (Aboriginal workers provide cultural mentoring)

#### PEAK

- **Set standards for cultural competency training which apply to Aboriginal and non Aboriginal services**
- **Lobby for ongoing funding for Aboriginal specific SHS. Feedback information to inter-agencies and organisations**
- **Peak body to continue to advocate change influence policy and practice. Similar to standards**
- **Develop first people principles and framework that guides policies and practices**
- **Advocate to increase appropriate housing supply, e.g. supporting Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Housing Providers to build and address Aboriginal homelessness**
- Standardize protocols for practice, cultural competency & budget
- Provide tool kits for consortium practices & include peak bodies in developing a one-direction tool kit
- Policy and strategies to assist cross boarder relationships eg getting QLD and NSW to align for clients

#### FACS

- **Embed need for Aboriginal identified positions in funding guidelines/criteria**



- **Funding criteria to include external cultural competency training; Increase designated Aboriginal support teams within SHS services**
- **Ensure sustainability of funding to avoid staff turnover and re-inventing the wheel**
- **Housing NSW to commit to addressing Aboriginal homelessness/housing needs and being flexible in order to deliver this across NSW**
- Build culturally competency practice into funding agreements that can be measured
- Deliberately target Aboriginal services to submit tenders & build their capacity to compete
- Have mandatory cultural learning pathways written into funding agreements
- Better funded cultural awareness training for workers across the board
- Strategic plans for funding/social policy, with reliable funding
- Funding to Aboriginal SHS Alliances to build capacity. Need to build on strengths for the future.
- Make available cultural awareness training run by Aboriginal specialist organisations
- Prioritise SHS + FACS relationship

#### MAINSTREAM SERVICES (NON ABORIGINAL SHS)

- **Designate Aboriginal leadership roles in non-Aboriginal organisations, management teams, boards etc.**
- **Services to take initiative to provide cultural awareness training for their staff**
- **Mainstream SHS to be aware of issues / history etc for Aboriginal community that impacts them**
- **Work in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to be part of the funding criteria (co-locations)**
- **FaCS, peaks and mainstream services to recruit Aboriginal people to managerial positions**
- Access grants for community projects: good practice models
- Aboriginal board members to provide cultural input to service and support for workers who are isolated working in mainstream SHS services
- Increase designated Aboriginal support teams within SHS services
- Have a state training body/accredited program to measure the level of cultural competency/safety
- Change language such as “case work” to create safety and build strength based trusting relationships

#### THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Overarching - Stop exploiting Aboriginal expertise and knowledge without acknowledging the value for the cultural and kinship knowledge

#### SHS

- **FACS guidelines should be consistent.**
- **Having Aboriginal identified jobs in non-Aboriginal organisations & work with Aboriginal people to develop strategies to recruit and develop job descriptions**
- More support for ATSI staff and acknowledgment of conflicting demands
- Recruitment - wide coverage in other regions for recruiting identified workers
- SHS establish advisory groups, consulting Aboriginal staff and communities
- Go bush, camping for bonding/sharing with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal services within the sector
- Cultural supervision, ie. working with Aboriginal organisation or worker
- Recognition of historical events
- More ATSI specific services across the State
- Don't make promises you can't keep – act on commitments, be accountable for your commitments

- Establish a buddy support system & mentors for Aboriginal workers
- Encouraging professional development for Aboriginal staff in SHS services
- Comprehensive induction program and identifying strengths

#### PEAKS

- **Interagency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to collaborate and work together**
- **Improvement in Corrections and Justice Health Strategies for inmates released to homelessness. E.g. more sharing of information policy changes – especially where mental health issues are present**
- Learn from past GHSH reform failures
- Arranging a conference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers

#### FACS

- **Ensuring cultural competency National Standards in Community Housing and SHS**
- **Budget for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events, brokerage, specialist workers**
- **Fund post crisis support services not available for referral of newly housed homeless or rough sleepers**
- **FaCS funding for identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff on top of generalised funding**
- Those orgs with low% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, to partner with relevant Aboriginal agencies to receive cultural competency supervision and training
- Funders to recognise quality/Aboriginal specialisation
- Interagency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers to collaborate and work together
- Ongoing resources and funding for Aboriginal-specific service provision. i.e. a specific team within FACS to advocate for this
- Traineeships and retention, advertisement, cultural supervision

#### MAINSTREAM ORGANISATIONS

- **Working from first people principles**
- Acknowledge Aboriginal expertise- written, verbal, financial

# ADDRESSING ABORIGINAL HOMELESSNESS FORUM

15 – 16 August 2017, Rydges Sydney Central, 28 Albion St, Surry Hills | NSW Homelessness Industry Partnership

DAY 1	ABORIGINAL CAUCUS <i>For SHS staff identifying as Aboriginal</i>
9:00	<b>Welcome and overview of Aboriginal caucus</b> Acknowledgement of Country Introductions, Purpose & Format for forum
9:20	<b>Key issues facing Aboriginal staff and services: Large group discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement and support for Aboriginal service users</li> <li>Support for Aboriginal staff and staff with Aboriginal service users</li> <li>Coordinated service system response to prevent Aboriginal homelessness</li> </ul>
10:45	<b>Morning tea</b>
11:00	<b>Prioritising 3 issues for sector focus: Large group discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positives and challenges for SHSs to address these</li> </ul>
DAY 1	PRIORITY ISSUES TO ADDRESS ABORIGINAL HOMELESSNESS <i>For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal SHS staff</i>
12:00	<b>Lunch</b>
1:30	<b>Welcome and scene setting</b> Welcome to Country, Introductions, Purpose & Format of forum History quiz <b>Presentations – Current state of play:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What the research tells us about Aboriginal homelessness today</li> <li>Aboriginal consumer base and cultural diversity within the sector</li> <li>SHS Statement of Apology and Commitments</li> </ul>
2:35	<b>Report back from Aboriginal caucus: Large group discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 priority issues for sector focus</li> </ul>
2:55	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
DAY 1	UNPACKING THE ISSUES
3:10	<b>Analysis of 3 priority issues: 3 Round robin discussions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats for these issues</li> </ul>
4:40	<b>Other issues: Large group discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burning questions</li> <li>Outline of next day</li> </ul>
5:00	<b>Close</b>

DAY 2	STRATEGIES FOR ACTION <i>For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal SHS staff</i>
9:00	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Day Recap: Large group discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key take away issues from yesterday</li> <li>Burning questions</li> <li>Format for today</li> </ul>
9:15	<b>‘Turning This Around’: Panel presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 Good practice examples, Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
10:05	<b>CHAP Aboriginal Cultural Competency Standards: Presentation</b>
10:20	<b>Morning tea</b>
10:35	<b>Devising strategies for action: 3 Round robin discussions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies for SHSs, peak bodies, mainstream agencies, FACS</li> </ul>
12:30	<b>Lunch</b>
1:45	<b>Review and prioritise strategies for action: Large group discussion</b>
3:00	<b>Community of Practice to address Aboriginal homelessness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for nominations</li> </ul>
3:15	<b>Afternoon tea</b>
3:30	<b>Statement of Apology and Commitments</b>
3:45	<b>Wrap Up: key outcomes of Forum and next steps</b>
4:00	<b>Thanks and close</b>

