



PERTH SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE

Everyone needs a home, a place where they feel safe and supported with opportunities for learning, employment and independence.

Background

- A range of new supported accommodation for people with a mental illness was approved as part of the Western Australia (WA) Mental Health Strategy 2004-2007.
- The Strategy is specifically focussed on strengthening capacity, improving access, keeping people well in the community and creating a more sustainable mental health system for future generations of Western Australians.
- The Perth Supported Accommodation Facility for homeless people is one of the new programs that will increase the range and number of supported community accommodation.
- One in five Australians experience mental illness in their lifetime. It is estimated that up to 85% of homeless people are also dealing with a mental illness (Mental Health Council of Australia, 2006).
- Programs that provide stable accommodation with individualised care and support lead to greater physical and mental wellbeing; increased community participation, employment and education opportunities; more engagement with other services, such as GPs; decreased hospitalisation; and better relationships with families. They also have greater success in moving people into permanent housing stability.

Perth Supported Accommodation for the Homeless

- The Perth Supported Accommodation Facility will provide transitional accommodation (up to 12 months) and support for up to 34 people.
- The service model encompasses elements from successful interstate and overseas programs. This includes a focus on individual development and skills building to assist people to reach their highest level of recovery and independence. This is achieved through the provision of:
 - Stable and secure accommodation;
 - Individualised psychosocial and clinical support;
 - Help with finding employment, training or education and the development of life skills to make this possible; and
 - Help with finding permanent accommodation and ongoing support.
- The Perth Supported Accommodation Facility is being built on vacant land in Moore Street. The site has excellent community access, is close to public transport and near other support services.
- The building will include 28 single rooms, two double rooms, two disabled access rooms, a dedicated staff facility and onsite parking.

Residents

- The facility is open to men and women aged between 18 -65 who have a mental illness and who are experiencing homelessness.
- Residents who will benefit from this accommodation and support will be identified through a network of health agencies, local GPs and community organisations. They will be referred to the Area Mental Health Service, which will clinically assess each individual for suitability.



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- Residents will be supported in social, physical, vocational and recreational activities; volunteer opportunities; the development of daily living skills, such as budgeting, food purchasing and cooking, housekeeping, laundry, personal hygiene and transportation; and to manage their illness, such as managing stress, relaxation, and medication management.

Management and staff

- The Perth Supported Accommodation Facility will be managed by a not-for-profit non-government organisation (NGO) specialising in the provision of supported accommodation and psychosocial support and rehabilitation.
- NGOs have been successfully providing similar services in the mental health sector for more than 30 years.
- The NGO will provide individualised care programs and 24-hour 7-days week onsite support, will be responsible for the maintenance of the facility and will be the ongoing contact point for their community.
- Residents will receive ongoing clinical support through the Area Mental Health Service and will be linked in with other clinical services, when appropriate. General health needs will be met by local general practitioners and other primary health services. After hours mental health support is available through the Mental Health Emergency Response Line and the Community Emergency Response Team.
- The NGO will link with other services to assist residents to find long-term accommodation and participate in community, education, training, employment and recreational activities.
- There will be formal monitoring of the accommodation service by both the Department of Health's Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and Licensing and Standards Review Unit. External monitoring is undertaken by the Council of Official Visitors. The NGO Operator must also comply with the *WA Service Standards for Non-Government Providers of Community Health Services (2005)*.

Community briefing

Ahead of the formal planning approvals process, the DoH undertook a comprehensive community information program to inform people about the Perth Supported Accommodation Facility. The information program included discussions with the City of Perth, Members of Parliament, community groups and associations, key health and other service providers and neighbours.

A public meeting was held on 2 November 2006 at the Central TAFE, Royal St, East Perth.

Project Status

The Perth Supported Accommodation Facility has been approved by the City of Perth and the WA Planning Commission. In July 2008, the Department of Housing and Works appointed JM & ED Moore to build the homes. The estimated date for completion of construction is January 2010. A tender for a NGO Operator will be called in early 2009.

Further information

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