

Wishing Everyone all
the very best for the
holiday
season.



Looking Ahead

February 2009

- World Cancer Day 4th
- Australian Organ Donor Awareness Week 17th -24th

Inaugural Victorian Homelessness Conference

19th Nov 2008

The conference was held at the Darebin Art Centre at Preston with over 400 representatives of the homelessness sector involved. Speakers included the Honourable Richard Wynne-Minister for Housing and Local Governments and Associate Professor David Mackenzie from the Institute for Social Research.

It was interesting to note that the H. Richard Wynne opened the conference stating that he is aware that the homelessness sector is underpaid, under resourced and over worked. While this is great as an acknowledgement there was no follow up on how this sector will be paid appropriately and how the sector will be adequately resourced with more workers to address the overwork statement.

There was various discussion groups covering topics including:

- * The Victorian Homeless Strategy Scorecard - Measuring Progress;
- * Service System Redevelopment And Opening Doors
- * Future Of Specific Housing Models For People Experiencing Homelessness.

A paper will be drawn that will encompass the conference and all discussion groups and this will be dispersed to all conference participants. It is hoped that this will encourage further actions and discussions within the sector to improve responses to homelessness as well as address workforce issues.

Living and Life Skills Workshops

For the past few months, EYA has been coordinating Living and Life Skills workshops, a series of workshops for clients in the Step Ahead Program properties as well as other youth clients within WAYSS and the partnership agencies. The youth team workers are facilitating the majority of the current round of workshops, which commenced in November, and will continue in December. Workshops that have been held already include 'The Net', 'Young Women's Sexual Health', 'An Awesome Cooking/Budgets Course', 'Budgeting', 'U Lil' Beauty Course', and 'Handy Skills'. Workshops that will be held in December include 'Share Accommodation/Renting Stuff' (05/12/08 - 10.00 a.m.), 'Conflict is not a Dirty Word' (15/12/08 - 2.00 p.m.), 'Male Sexual Health' (to be announced), and 'Fire Safety' (to be announced). For further information, please contact the duty worker at EYA

Keeping It Together Program

Keeping It Together is free program for women being facilitated by Casey North Community Information and Support Service. Early next year, a six-week program will be run in the Casey area covering assertiveness strategies, positive conflict resolution, healthy communication, understanding and coping with anger, improving self-esteem and self-care, and preventing social isolation. Additionally, two one-day seminars will be held in December 2008, the first covering self care, improving self esteem, and preventing social isolation, and the second covering conflict resolution and anger management. The one-day seminars will be held at Hampton Park Baptist Church on Thursday 04/12/08 and 11/12/08 between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. and repeated at Casey North Community Information and Support Service on Friday 05/12/08 and 12/12/08 between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. For bookings and for further information, please contact Vicki at Casey North Community Information and Support Service on 9705 6699.

The Family Violence Protection Act 2008.

To better protect the community from family violence and make those responsible more accountable for their actions, the Victorian Government has introduced new laws to cover all types of family violence and a wide range of family and family-like relationships.

Under the new laws, the definition of family and family-like relationships has been expanded and will include:

- > married couples
- > de facto couples
- > couples in civil unions
- > parents and children.
- > relatives
- > gay and lesbian relationships
- > persons with a disability who are in a family-like relationship with their carer

The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* which was passed by Parliament on the 12th of September will also broaden the definition of family violence to include economic and emotional abuse, as well as other types of threatening and controlling behaviour. It will also give the police more power to enable them to provide a faster and more effective response. Other benefits include a more flexible approach to tenancy arrangements enabling victims to remain in their homes if they desire and a less intrusive court system to encourage greater reporting by victims.

The Victorian Government has launched a statewide communication campaign to coincide with the commencement of the new legislation including a campaign website www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au

PROGRAM PROFILES

WAYSS has 12 programs servicing the needs of homeless people and victims of family violence. Each newsletter we will profile three of those programs. Detailed information can be found on the WAYSS website



Domestic Violence Outreach Program

WAYSS Family/Domestic Violence Outreach Program provides a case management approach based on individualised support plans. Support may include information, advocacy or referral to appropriate services including legal, court support networks and crisis accommodation options.

Subject to a safety assessment, workers are able to meet with women in a variety of locations and the program has access to transitional housing options.

A Family Violence Outreach Program Case Worker can discuss options, assist to establish safety plans, and discuss issues of concern. In providing the most effective support, the Case Worker will ensure that the client is fully informed about the choices available to them.

Housing Services

WAYSS Housing Services can provide advocacy, information and referral to residents in the Dandenong, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula areas.

This includes referral to crisis accommodation services, transitional support services and long-term housing options in both public and private rental.

Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) may also be available to private tenants to provide limited financial assistance with rent arrears or rent in advance to enable tenants to maintain existing housing or to establish new housing.

CHAP Program

The introduction of CHAP is making a change to the way accommodation services are accessed. In the past there has been the need for clients to retell their story to each agency providing assistance. Clients can now give their consent to have relevant information made available to the most appropriate accommodation services.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Emergency Relief in Cardinia

The emergency relief provider for the Cardinia shire is the 4 C's (Cardinia Combined Churches Caring Inc.) located at 1 Main Street, Pakenham. Emergency relief is available at the 4 C's between 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, with appointments for emergency relief being held between 10.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. In some circumstances, crisis payments can be provided for gas, electricity, water, and Telstra home telephone accounts, as well as train tickets for transport assistance. There is a limited amount of food vouchers available, as well as a limited amount of petrol vouchers for medical appointments or job interviews. The service also has access to a firewood supplier. To receive assistance, clients must live in the Cardinia shire, and proof of residence must be provided at each visit. For further information, please contact the 4 C's on 5941 2268.

Victoria in Bloom

Organised by the Department of Human Services, Office of Housing, the *Victoria In Bloom* garden competition is open to tenants living in public and community-managed housing across Victoria. The competition recognises and rewards the hard work of gardeners who develop and care for their gardens, either at home or in public spaces.

In 2008, the competition specifically acknowledged the efforts of tenants caring for their gardens under drought conditions and water restrictions.

The Southern Region judging for Victoria in Bloom was conducted recently with a variety of "water wise" categories. There was a cross section of winners from the Outer Southern catchment.

All regional winners will be considered for the state-wide awards in December.

Useful Contacts

WAYSS Family
Violence Crisis Service
ah 0400 503 338

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Mornington Peninsula
Domestic Violence
Service 5971 9454

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Hanover - Dandenong
"Bob's Place"
Crisis Accommodation,
Housing Support and
Family Focus
9792 0750

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Office of Housing

- Dandenong
9767 8777
- Frankston
9784 3200

Links



WAYSS
www.wayssltd.org.au

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The Association of
Neighbourhood Houses
& Learning Centres Inc.
www.anhlc.asn.au

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Hanover Welfare
Services
www.hanover.org.au

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Homelessness Australia
www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Just a Thought

"We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty"

Mother Teresa

