

Clarke, Pamela

Subject: FW: WANADA / WAAMH Written Submission to An Inquiry into the Adequacy and Future Directions of Social Housing in Western Australia

Attachments: WANADAWAAMHCCDJSCSocialHousingInquirySubmissionDec10.pdf

From: Deanne Ferris [mailto:deanne.ferris@wanada.org.au]

Sent: Friday, 10 December 2010 4:59 PM

To: Standing Committee, Community Development & Justice

Cc: Jill Rundle; Stephen Hall

Subject: WANADA / WAAMH Written Submission to An Inquiry into the Adequacy and Future Directions of Social Housing in Western Australia

Dear Dr Gordon,

The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) and the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) have prepared a joint submission to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee's Inquiry into the Adequacy and Future Directions of Social Housing in Western Australia. Our written submission is attached.

WANADA Executive Director Ms Jill Rundle and WAAMH Executive Director Mr Stephen Hall welcome questions and any invitation to give an oral submission to the inquiry.

Regards,

Deanne

Deanne Ferris
Communications Officer
WANADA

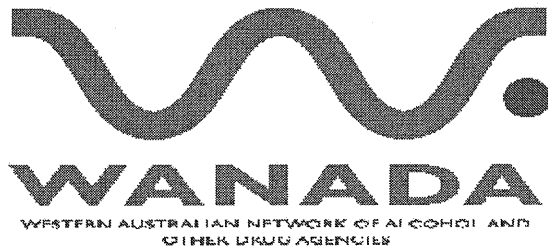
WANADA has moved - please update your contacts -
Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies
Postal Address: WANADA, PO Box 8048, Perth WA 6849
Telephone: (08) 6365 6365
Fax: (08) 9328 1682
E-mail: deanne.ferris@wanada.org.au
Web: <http://www.wanada.org.au>

I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country and its waters. I wish to pay my respect to Elders past and present and extend this to all Aboriginal people seeing this message.



Please note: This message is confidential and meant only for the intended recipient unless otherwise stated. If the e-mail has been sent to you in error, please let us know and then delete it. The views expressed are those of the individual sender and not necessarily those of WANADA. If you do not wish to receive updates from WANADA, please let us know and we will update our contact lists.

04/01/2011



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

**An Inquiry into the adequacy and future directions of social housing in Western
Australia**

JOINT WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies

Western Australian Association for Mental Health

10 December 2010

Introduction

The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) is the peak body for the alcohol and other drug service sector in Western Australia, offering advocacy and support to 90 member agencies, including metropolitan, regional, remote and Indigenous organisations.

The Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) is the peak mental health representative body in Western Australia for non-government not-for-profit agencies. WAAMH's role as the peak body is to support the development of the community-based mental health sector, provide systemic advocacy and representation, and influence public opinion for the benefit of people with mental illness and their carers.

WANADA and WAAMH wish to submit evidence to this inquiry in relation to the impact of public housing need on specific groups, in particular people who are undergoing or who have undergone treatment for problems related to alcohol and other drugs and mental health. Of particular concern within this specific group are women with children, prisoners on release, and people who have co-occurring alcohol and other drug, mental health and other complex needs.

An individual needs adequate, stable accommodation in order to address alcohol and other drug and mental health issues. Stable and adequate accommodation is therefore of particular importance to people who are affected by mental health and alcohol and other drug issues and who wish to address these issues and/or maintain their current health and wellbeing.

Issues Identified by the Mental Health and Alcohol and other Drug Sectors in Relation to Our Consumers and Social Housing

- The lack of available affordable housing in Western Australia impacts on the whole community, its health and wellbeing;
- People with mental health and/or alcohol and other drug issues often find it more difficult to maintain stable accommodation due to factors that may include stigma and discrimination, ill health, financial difficulties, criminal records, and domestic violence;
- People undergoing treatment for mental health or alcohol and other drug problems in residential settings find it difficult to maintain tenancy during the period of their treatment;
- People who have completed residential treatment - including women with children - face the challenge of accessing stable accommodation at the completion of their program. Despite support from services this can be difficult and can extend their time in the residential setting, adding to demand;
- People who seek treatment in non-residential settings and who have no fixed address find it difficult to engage fully in the treatment while they face the more pressing issue of homelessness;
- Housing providers, including the Department of Housing, community housing and private owners sometimes have unrealistic expectations of tenants who undergo treatment for alcohol and other drug issues in regards to a misunderstanding of the likelihood of relapse as a part of their recovery;
- Housing or accommodation offered to people with alcohol and other drug and/or mental health issues may not be appropriate, for example if the accommodation is remote from required amenities and transport or if the environment poses a negative impact on recovery or wellbeing;
- For people who have complex needs and are accessing multiple services concurrently, coordination between services can improve efficient access to housing.

Recommendations

- That funding for dedicated housing support workers, to enable access and maintenance of adequate and stable accommodation, is ongoing and extended in all regions specifically to support people who access alcohol and other drug or mental health services.
- That social housing continues to be allocated for specific groups including people with alcohol and other drug and mental health issues who access treatment.
- That coordination occurs across sectors and services to achieve the best results for individuals and families who access social housing.
- That placement of people in social housing considers their needs in regards to health, wellbeing, safety, amenities and transport.

Treatment for alcohol and other drug and mental health issues is effective and does contribute to the stabilisation and future contribution of individuals and families within communities.

Enquiries or Clarification

WANADA and WAAMH welcome enquiries from the Western Australian Legislative Assembly's Community Development and Justice Standing Committee on the issues and recommendations outlined in our submission to the Inquiry. Please contact either Ms Jill Rundle (WANADA) or Mr Stephen Hall (WAAMH) for further information.

Jill Rundle

Executive Director
Western Australian Network of Alcohol and
other Drug Agencies
PO Box 8048, Perth WA 6849
T: (08) 6365 6365
F: (08) 9328 1682
E: <mailto:jill.rundle@wanada.org.au>
W: <http://www.wanada.org.au>

Stephen Hall

Executive Director
WA Association for Mental Health
2 Delhi Street, West Perth WA 6005
T: 08 9420 7277 F: 08 9420 7280
E: shall@waamh.org.au
W: <http://www.waamh.org.au>