

Annual Report 2007 ~ 2008



Homelessness SA: Homelessness is everyone's concern



Special points of interest:

- * Report from our Chair
- * NYCH Update
- * Homelessness SA activities and events
- * Our membership
- * Our board
- * Report from our Editor

Report from the Chair

Often Chairperson's reports commence with an overview of achievements and then the thanks to everyone who has contributed. This report will be different, as I am going to commence and end with thanks.

Thanks to all the Board Members who have given up their time in their busy working lives to attend meetings, organise forums and contribute to the work of Homelessness SA. Thanks in particular go to our consumer reps on the Board who keep us on our toes, keep us real and keep us in tune with the mood on the streets and the people they know.

Thank you to Jo Wickes who has kept the media alert and focussed on our issues. Thank you to David Norman who has done a brilliant job as Treasurer. A special thank you must go to Margo Johnson who gives the utmost in dedicated support to our Board. Thank you also to Shelter SA who, as part of our protocol with them, share Margo with us for Board support.

Special thanks go to all the wonderful speakers and facilitators who have presented

at our forums. Thanks to everyone who got up early to post flags for the Youth Homelessness Week. Thank you to all the Board Members and Homelessness SA members who contributed to the Homelessness conference.

Thanks also to DFC for funding one of our consumer reps and SAAP workers to attend the conference.

Thank you to all of you who are working on the indigenous workers conference. And thank you also to those on our Board who represent Homelessness SA at local and national peaks, or participate on our Board as representatives of peaks.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Green and White Papers on Homelessness.

Thanks also to Maughan Church who hosted our Memorial for the Homeless Service, and the South Australian Council of Churches for their promotion of our work and the needs of the homeless.

Thank you to everyone who works with the homeless, who, in spite of difficult times, stretched resources and challenging



workloads, continue to promote the need for people to be treated with dignity and advocate for their rights for a home.

Finally, thank you to all the homeless people we have ever met and are still to meet. It is because of you, your stories, your lives and your courage that we exist. We must never forget you in our work; you are why we are here. Help us to keep you utmost in our minds in all that Homelessness SA strives to be.

Thanks, its been a pleasure.

Sally Langton

Outgoing Chair
Homelessness SA



Next year Youth Homelessness Matters Day falls on April 1, Homelessness SA looks forward to your support at this event. Just remember, Youth Homelessness Matters – It's No Joke.

NYCH Update

In April this year Homelessness SA launched their Youth Homelessness Matters Campaign, a national campaign aimed at raising awareness about youth homelessness.

Young people become homeless because of a range of reasons including family breakdown, mental health issues, violence and abuse. Many of these young people are still in school, we all know how hard was to do our own homework, but imagine being 16, trying to stay in school and not having a safe place to call home.

In the long term young people who are homeless may have less access to training and education opportunities, experience health issues including mental health pressures and may be excluded from other opportunities that we take for granted.

Sometime youth homelessness is not visual. Young people may be

couch-surfing, staying in SAAP accommodation and sometime staying in unsafe relationships to have somewhere to stay that evening. Many people are shocked to hear there are over 2,000 young people who are homeless in South Australia.

The "Youth Homelessness Matters" campaign in Adelaide aimed to raise awareness in the community that youth homelessness is a real issue, by planting houses in the parklands to represent the number of homeless students in South Australia. Over 4 days, a team of dedicated volunteers planted (and packed) up the display.

It was interesting just to hear the stories of the volunteers, the people walking passed who asked them what it was all about, children who had come to help, a young person volunteering with her Mum shaking her head when

her Mum explained to her that young people her age had nowhere to stay that night. We also learnt a bit about where each of us worked and began conversations that planted the seeds for stronger working relationships between the agencies present.

A very special thankyou to all who helped plan the event and to those who volunteered their time in the early morning greyness of Adelaide in April!

Next year Youth Homelessness Matters Day falls on April 1, Homelessness SA looks forward to your support at this event. Just remember, Youth Homelessness Matters – It's No Joke.

Kara Piltz

NYCH Representative for Homelessness SA



Our Board Members and attendance at meetings

Chair: Sally Langton (UNITY) 8/8

Deputy Chair: Gilian Cordell (FAIRS) 6/8

Treasurer: David Norman (Community Representative) 8/8

Editor: Wendy Malycha (St John's Youth Services) 5/8

Media Spokesperson: Jo Wickes (Magdalene Centre) 5/8

Secretary: Margo Johnson (Shelter SA) 8/8

Homelessness SA representative to Shelter

SA: Gillian Anderson (SYG) 2/8

Shelter SA representative to Homelessness

SA: Daniel Clements (Mission Australia) 2/5

Kara Piltz (Centacare) and NYCH Representative 7/8

Desi Alexandridis (Centacare) and Coalition Representative 4/8

Shorty Stephenson (Community Representative) 5/6

Marija Podnieks (Byron Place) 4/8

Our membership

Homelessness SA seek to engage with all those working with homeless and marginalized groups in South Australia. Our current network consists of over 150 regional and metropolitan based services while our formal membership for the 2007–2008 period consisted of 30 organisational members and 14 individual members.

Organisational members:

Aboriginal Family Support Services	St John's Youth Services Inc
Adelaide Day Centre for Homeless Persons	St Joseph's Family Care Centre
Anglican Community Care	St Vincent de Paul
AIDS Council of SA	Salvation Army Ingle Farm
Baptist Community Services	Salvation Army Towards Independence Program
Calvary Lutheran Family Support Services	Scots Church
Centacare	Shelter SA
Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Southern Domestic Violence Service
Housing SA	South East Regional Domestic Violence Services Inc
Housing Spectrum	The Women's Housing Association
Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation Service	UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide Inc
Northern Domestic Violence Service	UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide
Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services SA	UnitingCare Wesley Port Pirie
Ranges Youth Centre	Young Women's and Children's Support Services

Individual Members:

Bill Peterson
Cathy Mallyon
David Norman
Elizabeth Trickett
Jayne Wrigley
John Kelly
Lauren Novak
Lyn Bell
Margaret Reagen
Pamela Shepherd
Pam Simmons
Peter Burke
Sally Langton
Theresa Ann Walker

Our network:

30 formal organisational members

14 formal individual members

Over 150 regional and metropolitan based homeless and support services



From our Editor

As the Publications Editor for Homelessness SA during 2007/08 Homelessness SA, I am pleased to be able to report that we produced two Newsletters timed to coincide with General Forums, and an Annual General Report. For an organisation that has no recurrent funding, no paid employees, and a very limited budget this is a great achievement.

The first newsletter for the year was the Winter 2007 edition, which featured a story on single parents and homelessness as the cover story. Other articles from Homelessness SA members covered such varied topics as the *Homeless Right to Vote Campaign* as the Federal election loomed nearer.

It was an opportunity for homeless people to have a say about who represents them in Federal Government, which is responsible for policies and programs in areas including homelessness, housing, health care, human rights, anti-discrimination, social security and income support. Homeless people were advised that they do not need to have a home or a fixed residential address to enrol and vote in a Federal election, and those homeless people that enrolled and exercised their right to vote have contributed to the government having placed housing and homelessness at the forefront of their agenda.

The Winter 2007 edition also featured comment on the *Affordable Housing Bill* and its potential impact on low income people, and an update on the issue of *AGL accounts for SAAP services* with Housing SA Supported Tenancy properties. There

were a raft of articles from the coal front on services to homeless people from the adult, families and adolescent sectors. Space was provided for the address given at the *Memorial Service for homeless people who have died*, an annual event organised by Homelessness SA.

The second newsletter was the Autumn 2008 edition, the first after the election of the new Australian government. The cover story was penned by *Chairperson Sally Langton*, who wrote of the new opportunities that a change of government provided, and asked us "How long will this window of opportunity last where we can have some influence in the development of policy and plans for the people we work with and indeed our whole community?"

The new Prime Minister directed new members of Parliament to visit homeless services, and one article reflected on a *Visit by Senator Ursula Stevens* to an inner city crisis service for young men. Five young men met with the senator, and the article noted that "Between them, they had a staggering 40 years experience of homelessness - and the average age of the group was 19!"

Other articles covered topics as diverse as training for employers in the sector on the new *DHW&S responsibilities* and on *Employee assistance information*, papers from the quarterly members' forum covering a range of innovative family, adolescent and women's programs, and an article on *Women Leaving*

Prison.

A pictorial section covered the activities of Homelessness SA members for the Youth Homelessness Campaign, with images of 1,018 plastic houses planted in public parks across the metropolitan area to demonstrate the numbers of homeless students, just part of the growing number of homeless young people

There was a story on the *Legal Clinic Review* that found "A key impact of the Housing Legal Clinic appears to be that it opens the way for clients to get on top of seemingly insurmountable problems and begin taking control of their lives", and information about a new group the *Nile United Youth*. To the delight of the Editor, and many long term readers of our newsletters, this newsletter featured the return of the *Black Duck* after a year and a half to regale us with his continuing saga with his mates at Centrelink.

My thanks to all the people who have contributed to the newsletter this year. Everyone is busy, and everyone in the sector is committed to alleviating homelessness in our community, but you have gone that little bit further to promote the rights of those who experience the isolation of homelessness everyday. It is in this knowledge that I give special thanks to Jo Wickes at the Magdalene Centre, and Bill Manallack from the Welfare Rights Centre, who share the podium as the most consistent contributors for the third year in a row. Without them every newsletter would be diminished.

Wendy Malycha

Editor



Events and Activities for 2007 ~ 2008

The Homelessness SA board have again been extremely busy this year with an AGM, three forums, and the Memorial Service for those who have died while homeless. Homelessness SA also participated in the NYCH Youth Homeless Matters Campaign and had a stall at the Homelessness Australia Conference in May, 2008.



Our first forum: *Focus on Families and Homelessness* drew on local knowledge and experiences regarding family homelessness. This included the lack of emergency accommodation for families and the impact homelessness can have on families (particularly given the introduction of Welfare to Work).

The *True Stories* forum followed the 2007 AGM and focused on reviewing the reality of housing and homelessness in real terms with real life experiences from staff at SAAP services and others working with homeless and marginalised groups.

In April the Homelessness SA Board presented *The Homeless Factory*. The title of this forum was somewhat tongue in cheek and highlighted the impact that

the lack of exit points had on vulnerable groups. This forum focused on three such groups: those exiting prison, people with a disability and refugees, (often without adequate identification) who were unable to access the simplest of supports without an advocate to support them. This meant that agencies are working that much harder and more intensively with individuals and families to override bureaucratic red tape.

The *Memorial Service* for those who have died while homeless is traditionally held on the shortest day and longest night of the year. Always moving, this years event was held in the Maughan Uniting Church and was well attended by the local community, and staff from homeless support services.

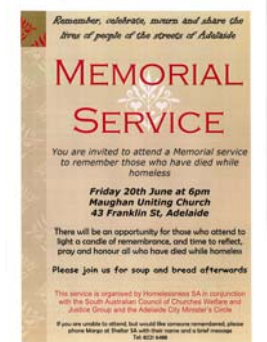
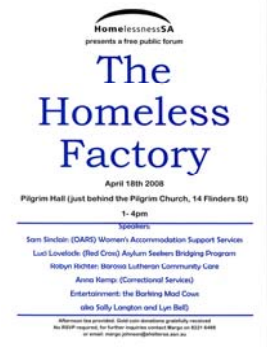
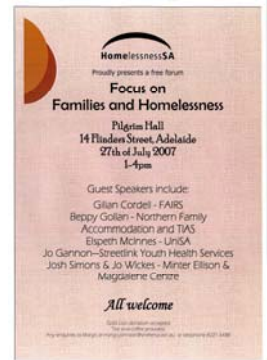


Our final forum for the year was entitled, *When there is nothing left to give*. In 2005, an ACOSS Report highlighted that 28,000 South Australians in need were turned away from services because the services were already operating at capacity and needed to ration access. The forum grew out of discussions concerning the lack of exit points



and the inability of support services to meet the increasing demands of not only homeless people but low income groups. In other words, homelessness doesn't just have an impact on those experiencing it, but also staff morale in the services designed to support them. Slightly different from previous events, the workshop aimed to offer skills and techniques to those working in the homeless services to better cope with the stress of the current affordable housing crisis.

The Homelessness SA Board would like to publicly acknowledge and thank all who have taken the time to present at our events and in doing so, raise greater awareness of the realities of homelessness and its impact on our fellow South Australians. We would also like to thank all who have attended these events and become a part of our growing network.



Homelessness SA

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Homelessness is everyone's concern.



Homelessness SA's Mission:

The mission of Homelessness SA is to undertake advocacy, networking and community education on homelessness in South Australia.

Want to get involved?

You are invited to:

- become a member
- Attend our forums and interactive events
- Contribute articles for our newsletter
- Nominate for our board

Contact Margo on 8221 6488 or email: margo.johnson@sheltersa.asn.au and we can send you out our membership form.

Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services Update

The Coalition was fortunate enough, with Ministerial assistance, to be able to send three representatives to Canada to what is believed to be the first international conference for women's shelters. These women representing: CALD (Milenka Vasekova of Migrant Women's Support and Accommodation Service), Metropolitan and Indigenous services (Megan Hughes of Southern DV Service) and Ninko Kurtangga Patpangga Service, and country services (Ele Wilde from Riverland DV Service).

The topics covered during the conference were those that concern us all, Children Exposed to Family Violence, High and Complex Needs, Shelter Best Practice, Online Resources, Partnerships, Women's Support Services Data Management, Indigenous Women's Issues Overview of Shelter Work, Perpetrator Work, and Workplace were some of the headings. They have returned with renewed enthusiasm and very willing to share their experiences.

It is hoped that there will be presentations in the very near future so anyone interested in hearing more are encouraged to contact the Coalition Chair Vicki Lachlan at Women's Housing Association or any member service to express interest.

Gilian Cordell

Coalition Representative

Advocacy and Education

Advocacy and education are two key priorities for Homelessness SA. We have embraced this strategy to ensure that homeless and marginalised people in South Australia are considered carefully in all policy decisions in South Australia. We will continue to educate, advocate, question and challenge people across South Australia relentlessly.

The past year has been a very busy one in terms of the role of advocacy and education for Homelessness SA. We have been working with all forms of media including radio, television and print to respond to policies and announcements that impact on homelessness in South Australia.

Key issues this year have included

- state government decision to reduce public housing stock by 8000 properties.
- consultations for the

federal government's green paper on homelessness

- housing affordability and homelessness
- rough sleepers being "moved on" in the city's parklands
- levels of youth homelessness
- deaths of homeless people in Adelaide

Over 200 separate media stories have been run on homelessness this year that have included the views and advocacy of Homelessness SA. We have spoken at secondary schools and private colleges throughout the year to inspire and educate the leaders of tomorrow, planted hundreds of "houses" throughout the city to acknowledge and raise awareness of National Youth Homelessness and we held an annual service for people who have

died while homeless in South Australia- an event that draws larger numbers of participants each year.

In June 2007 the national Homelessness Conference was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Over 1000 people attended and heard speakers from numerous innovative projects around Australia as well as the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Executive Director of US Interagency Council on Homelessness, Philip Mangano, social entrepreneur Nick Francis and Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith.

Homelessness SA through our representation on the national Council to Homeless Persons played an integral part in the format and speakers at the conference and this was the main body of work we undertook this year.

Jo Wickes

Media Spokesperson for Homelessness SA