

# The Low Cost Accommodation Support News

Community Connections Program | Older Persons High Rise | Housing Support for the Aged | SRS Service Coordination & Support

## Autumn 2008

Welcome to the seventh edition of the *Low Cost Accommodation Support News*, a newsletter for program managers, workers, and regional staff involved in the four Low Cost Accommodation Support programs funded through the Aged Care Branch of DHS.

### In this newsletter:

- Homelessness – back on the policy agenda
- ACOSS national Conference 2008
- Victorian Population Health Survey
- SRS Legislative Review
- SAVVI – A personal story
- Wintringham – Providing supported housing to the elderly homeless
- Project 'living sculptures'

### Homelessness: A New Approach

In January this year, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Minister for Housing, Tanya Plibersek announced that the Australian Government would seek community input on ways to address homelessness over the next decade. A white paper is to be released in September this year that will set out the Australian Government's approach and action plan on homelessness. The key components of this approach are;

- Preventing homelessness
- Improving service support
- Creating better access to secure long term housing and
- Stopping the cycle of homelessness

The Australian Government has produced a summary report titled Homelessness: A New Approach which can be found by clicking on the following link.

[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/housing/homelessness\\_newapproach.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/housing/homelessness_newapproach.htm)

To oversee the development of this new approach, an expert steering group has been appointed, chaired by Tony Nicholson, Executive Director Brotherhood of St Lawrence. The Government has also commissioned an initial green paper on homelessness that will take into consideration, ideas, and views and promote discussion by the community as to how Australia should address homelessness over the next decade.

For further information on homelessness:  
Council to homeless persons (Victoria)

[www.chp.org.au](http://www.chp.org.au)

Homelessness Australia

<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au>

### ACOSS National Conference

The ACOSS national conference was held in Melbourne this year on April 9 & 10 and was titled "Taking steps for a fair go for all – social inclusion policies and practices".

The aim of this conference was to examine the policies and practices that reduce social exclusion and to find ways to improve the lives of people affected by poverty and inequality.

Day one of the conference saw an impressive array of speakers from overseas and from within Australia. Dan Finn, from the Centre for Social and Economic Inclusion and Professor of Social Policy at the University of Portsmouth was the keynote speaker on day one. Dan spoke about the work of the Social Inclusion Unit that operated during the time of the Blair Government in the UK.



The second day of the conference featured all day workshops where participants discussed four questions across nine different specific areas.

The four questions were:

- What are the strengths of the social inclusion agenda?
- Who is excluded? How and why are people excluded?
- What are the goals, benchmarks and targets for the Commonwealth government to implement?
- What broad strategies might be adopted to achieve this and what data is needed to measure progress?

For further information about the ACOSS conference see the ACOSS website. [www.acoss.com.au](http://www.acoss.com.au)

### **Victorian Population Health Survey 2006**

The **Victorian Population Health Survey 2006** has been released, providing the latest snapshot of health and lifestyle behaviours, including how the state rates on physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption, fruit and vegetable intake, obesity, asthma and diabetes prevalence.

This annual population health survey is conducted by the Health Intelligence Unit in the Office of the Chief Health Officer.

The survey findings ensure public health programs are relevant and responsive to current and emerging health issues.

This year a fact sheet for each of the department's regions will accompany the report.

The fact sheets present a snapshot of the findings from the 2006 survey and compare regional estimates with the overall state estimates for self-rated health, overweight and obesity, health checks for blood pressure and cholesterol, smoking levels, fruit and vegetable consumption, alcohol intake and physical activity.



### **The SAVVI Program –A Personal Story**

The following article was written by Adrian Jones (Centacare Ballarat) who is the Partnership Manager for Grampians region cluster that works with SRS involved in the SAVVI program. Adrian has been involved with the SAVVI program since January this year however prior to this worked as the Community Connections team leader since the inception of the program.

Adrian's involvement with the following SRS goes back to 2000 through his work with the Community Connection program and for many years before that through different jobs within the Grampians region.

The SRS which is the focus of this story has provided support and accommodation to 21 male residents at any one time. Of the current residents, all have a psychiatric illness, including 4 with a dual diagnosis.

#### **Bobs story**

"Two of the residents have lived at this SRS for more than 20 years. This story refers to a man who will be known as Bob. I have known Bob for over 20 years.

Bob is a man in his late 60's who has a psychiatric illness, Intellectual disability and a past history of substance abuse. Bob has lived at the SRS since the death of his mother. He is a quiet man who rarely leaves the SRS due to heightened anxiety.

The last day Bob left the SRS was one day in 2003 when the Community Connection program purchased two push bikes for the SRS. Bob hopped on one of the bikes and peddled down the street for a hundred metres or so then came back saying "this is a good bike".

SAVVI provides funds through facility cost relief to assist the SRS business to improve its viability. A small amount of this funding is available for maintenance and repairs. It was decided that replacement of carpet outside of the main resident accommodation area and TV area would be a great use of some of the funds.

I visited the SRS to catch up with the proprietor about their application for the upcoming increment in funding which coincided with the carpet layer finishing off the installation of the floor coverings.

When I got out of my car, Bob came up to me (a usual occurrence) however this time he was particularly excited. He began to tell me about the new carpet that was being installed and insisted that I come and have a look; he grabbed my arm and led the way.

Bob went on to show me where the new carpet was threadbare before and seemed to be aware of all the bumps and imperfections in the old floor coverings. Bob and I were joined by the Proprietor and the three of us spent the next 20 minutes inspecting the new carpet.



Bob told us that the old carpet was put down in 1992, a long time before the current proprietor purchased the business. Bob was very excited about the new carpet outside his room telling me how it looks so much cleaner now."

### **Wintringham – Providing appropriate supported housing to the elderly homeless**

*(The following is an extract from a recent article wintringham wrote for Parity)*

Kate Rice – Community housing & Support Manager

Dr Alice Rota- Bartelink – Research Manager

Wintringham is a social justice welfare company providing specialized housing and support to frail aged homeless men and women over the age of fifty. This marginalized group of people has remained as the Company's single focus since it began in 1989. Today Wintringham assists some 800 people each night, supported by 300 staff. Wintringham provides a full range of non-clinical and non-institutional style services with specialized care strategies that are inventive, flexible, open minded and importantly, non punitive. They include 4 Residential Aged Care Facilities, 140 Housing Units, 2 Rooming Houses, over 400 Community Aged Care & EACH Dementia Packages, extensive cross regional Housing and Outreach Services, and a dedicated and specialized Recreation Program.

Wintringham designs and builds its own housing and whether it is residential care or housing units, we stand firm in the belief that it provides a secure and permanent home for all its clients.

Eligibility and access to our programs and facilities is monitored closely to ensure those with the highest level of need, those who are homeless and those who are socially or financially disadvantaged are given the utmost priority of access.

The company is quite different from most aged care and homeless service providers in that it is regarded as a housing provider in which high quality aged care services are provided. All Wintringham Programs aim to assist isolated elderly homeless people in accessing the mainstream aged care system especially when there are issues around premature aging exacerbated by the homeless lifestyle.

Wintringham's housing program has recently undergone a redevelopment and now boasts the unique feature in that every housing site has specialist housing and outreach support available to all its residents. For example, Wintringham's largest site in Williamstown housing 60 tenants has

an on-site housing support office staffed by a Housing Support Worker as well as an on-site Community Aged Care Packages Case Manager.

The focus of housing support is to sustain long-term tenancies and link clients into their local communities. A central focus in client's care plans address the issues that led to clients becoming homeless and preventing recurrence. The staff who work in these programs have highly developed skills in managing mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, acquired brain injury and challenging behaviours.

The problem remains that elderly homeless people are still experiencing difficulty accessing mainstream services. Even through strong relationships have been built within the industry and Wintringham's philosophy is well recognized, it is often a daily battle to advocate for the rights of Wintringham clients. Through its history of working with the elderly poor the company has recognised that the provision of housing is not in itself always sufficient to ensure that vulnerable people do not become homeless. Due to the complex characteristics of the client population, the provision of appropriate support services frequently extends well beyond the requirements of mainstream aged care services.

### **Review of the Regulation of Supported Residential Services in Victoria, 2008**

The Victorian Government is reviewing the laws that regulate SRS and we would like to hear your views.

#### **What is the review of SRS about?**

The Victorian Government regulates SRS through the Health Services Act 1988 and the Health Services (Supported Residential Services) Regulations 2001.

The government wants to be sure that the legislation and regulations continue to provide protections for residents.

It has produced a public Discussion Paper and an easy-to-understand leaflet. Both have information and issues about SRS. Both have 20 questions about SRS regulation to respond to.

All SRS Proprietors will be sent a copy of the Discussion Paper and the leaflet. The documents will also be made available to residents, families and service providers.

*Tell us what you think?*

## Steps and dates in the review

**May 2008:** Discussion paper released.

**July 2008:** Public forums conducted.

**1 August 2008:** Written submissions close.

**September- November 2008:** Consultation with key stakeholders.

**2009:** Reform options finalised for Ministerial consideration.

**2009 onwards:** Bill to Parliament (subject to Cabinet endorsement) and implementation.

***We would like to hear your views***

### How to put forward your views

We encourage you to read the Discussion Paper before putting forward your views.

#### Write a response

Answer some or all of the 20 questions. A template is available on the SRS website. You can still write a response without answering the questions.

Mail, email or fax us your written comments.

#### Participate in a public forum

Details of dates and locations will be put on the website, and will also be sent out with the Discussion Paper.

*If you want to attend a forum please register via the SRS website or phone us on:*  
**1800 079 537**

### For more information

#### Telephone:

1800 079 537 (free call\*)  
to speak to the Project Team.

**Fax:** 03) 9096 9163

#### Website:

[www.health.vic.gov.au/srs](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/srs)

#### Email us at:

[srslegislationreview@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:srslegislationreview@dhs.vic.gov.au)

#### Mail a written response:

SRS Legislation Review, Aged Care Branch,  
DHS, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne, Vic 3001.

\* Free call not available from mobile phones.

## Project 'Living Sculptures'

Corry Dolman (St Lawrence Community Programs)

### Presentation Day - Thursday, 24th April 2008

After nearly 2 years of hard work, the mosaic art work was finished and ready to be presented to the Supported Accommodation Service (SRS) 'Cottisfield' in Grovedale, where our clients live.



After a successful application for funding to the City of Greater Geelong in July 2006, our St Lawrence Community Reconnections Program received an arts grant of \$3300.

The Gordon—Institute of Tafe offered to make the frame work and supported us with the project. Melinda Flood (DHS) took the initiative of the project as the art teacher.

In partnership with the residents of Cottisfield, Department of Human Services, City of Greater Geelong, The Gordon and St Lawrence a beautiful mosaic table and 2 chairs were ready to be named 'The Living Sculptures' and presented to Cottisfield.

Cr Peter McMullin holds the Council portfolio for Arts, Culture and Heritage and represented the City of Greater Geelong at the presentation.

Shirley Spiteri, Head of School of the Gordon spoke at the presentation as well as Shirley Schliefert, a resident of Cottisfield.

It was a beautiful day and after Michael Bartlett cut the ribbon around the art work, the residents took ownership of the table and chairs.

### The making of the 'Living Sculptures'

Our clients started from scratch with the project. Firstly, they made drawings of patterns and then smashed and cut the tiles to fit the patterns.

The next step was to fit the completed patterns on tables and chairs. After the grouting, a layer of varnish was applied to complete the project.

The sculptures provided a sense of ownership to our clients and personalized their home environment.

## Residents at Cottisfield SRS



**Living Sculptures'**

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### Useful Information

Need help with implementing the MDS V2.01?

Contact the HACC Help desk on Ph: 9096 7255

E-mail – [haccmds@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:haccmds@dhs.vic.gov.au)

**Victorian HACC Website** <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc>

**Low Cost Accommodation Support Programs Webpage**  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/services/lowcost/index.htm>

**Office of Housing Website**  
[www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au)

### Contacts

If you have a story, event or a program you would like to share with colleagues from other Low Cost Accommodation Support Programs please let us know and it can be included in the next edition of this newsletter (word limit 500 words or less).

All correspondence to Shane McDonald at Department of Human Services, SRS & Accommodation Support Unit, Level 12, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000.

Ph: 9096 7227

Email: [shane.mcdonald@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:shane.mcdonald@dhs.vic.gov.au)

### Meeting dates for Managers 2008

Community Connection program &  
Housing Support for the Aged program

- Wednesday 16 July (11.00 – 1.00)

OP Hi Rise Support program

- Wednesday 6 August (10.30- 12.00)

SRS Service Co-ordination & Support program –

- Wednesday 2 July (10.30-11.30)

- Statewide Forum 2008  
November 25 & 26