

Rotary Homeless Hub
Expert Reference Group 10/06/21
Shelter WA in Moore Street, East Perth

Present

| Homelessness Alliance Representatives | Rotarians |
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| John Berger - WA Alliance to End Homelessness, CEO | |
| Phillipa Boldy (via Zoom) Anglicare WA, Director of Services | Ken Mullin Rotary Heirisson, Homeless Hub Chair |
| Paul Flatau (via Zoom) UWA, Director of Social Impact | Graham Peden Rotary Perth, Past District Governor 9455 |
| Michelle McKenzie Shelter WA, CEO | Warwick Smith Rotary Heirisson, Assistant Governor |
| Debra Zanella RUAH Community Services, CEO | David Motta Rotary Osborne Park, My Home secretary |

Introduction

A handout (attached) was distributed outlining the proposed agenda for the meeting and introducing Rotary. Rotary members stressed the autonomy of Rotary Clubs, limited financial resources of the Clubs but good network of contacts with schools and business leaders. Rotary wants to focus the attention on the areas where it can achieve the most within its means, and have identified Prevention and Housing as the most important areas.

Homelessness Prevention

- The State and Federal governments are getting their act together on Housing - Prevention is the area most in need of attention
- The Alliance's Outcomes Assessment Framework (subject of the next Pulse meeting) has a lot on Prevention
- Prevention and early intervention should be considered together
- Prevention is a very diverse area with very dispersed needs, requiring a multitude of widely varying approaches; it was suggested Rotary needed to focus on a particular subset
- Half of the adult homeless people have experienced homelessness in their youth. Also, 50% of homeless people are now younger than 18. Given their links with Schools, perhaps youth homelessness is where Rotary should focus.
- Youth homelessness has precursors in Youth Justice, Child Protection and Family Domestic Violence which all overlap. A recent study in Victoria showed the high inter-connection between Youth Justice and Youth Homelessness
- Young people who are shunted from home to home, couch surfing, do not recognize they are homeless for about two years
- In terms of existing programs that address homelessness in young people, Anglicare has some good programs, including Foyer Oxford
- There are also Youth Refuges and Youth Connect programs to change family dysfunction and reconnect with school psychologists and youth homeless services
- This is one of the few areas that the Commonwealth Govt funds. The Federal Reconnect program is a community based early intervention and prevention program for young people aged 12-18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families
- School psychologists are often not aware of what programs exist; schools have limited resources and are often not interested; identification of children at risk is a problem
- The Geelong Project focuses on systemic integration of connected youth homeless services (drug & alcohol, law enforcement) with schools

- Working with young people at risk could involve engaging them in activities that particularly interest them e.g. working with cars, which provide thrills, transport and home. Perhaps Rotary could set up a social enterprise to make this happen.

Housing

- The housing needs of each group are very diverse and need to be understood - housing needs to address the specific requirements of the cohort
- Rotary should focus on a particular sub-set of homeless people
- The media focuses its attention on rough sleepers, which are consequently relatively over catered for
- Older women and rough sleeping women have much worse outcomes than men but do not get the same attention. Perhaps Rotary should focus on housing older women.
- Also being aware of where they are in their journey of change.
- Rotary could assist in the housing area by establishing new models through pilot projects or seed funding to demonstrate the efficacy of projects like My Home and 50 Lives 50 Homes
- However, piloting and prototyping should be based on evidence. It was important Rotary work with experts to address the needs of the target audience and link in with providers working in the area.
- Canada and Scotland have been very innovative in providing low-income housing
- A number of people with interesting housing and architectural ideas are coming to Perth for Homelessness Week
- This includes Robert Pradolin from 'Housing All Australians' HAA – Housing All Australians which converts buildings into affordable housing. In 2017, City of Perth did a report on what buildings can be re-purposed for affordable housing. The Unlock Housing Campaign was flagged. This is an area with which Rotary may be able to assist.
- It is a good idea to seek input from YACWA (Youth Affairs Council of WA) into housing design
- It is worth looking at Square One Villages in the USA - <https://www.squareonevillages.org>.
- Connect Victoria Park <https://www.connectvictoriapark.org> specialises in providing housing for older people
- Rotary could target specific collectives and co-ops dedicated to addressing housing. Co-ops are immature in WA at this stage, although there are some interesting examples of them in country areas - e.g. Just Home Margaret River Inc <https://www.justhome.org>.

Community Awareness

- With its broad reach across WA, Rotary can assist as a community influencer. There will be opportunities to do this during Homelessness Week.
- George Booth from the Fremantle Club has been very good at raising community funds

Census Accuracy of Homeless People

- The census count has not been very accurate – e.g. it does not get a direct count of couch surfing people, only an estimate by inference; people sleeping in cars don't want to be counted and are often missed; homeless people often don't want to be identified. Additional sources of data are needed.
- Lisa Kazalac is working with the ABS endeavouring to improve the data
- Caseworkers and people with lived experience are needed – 'eyes on the street'

Conclusion

The areas where Rotary might make an impact on homelessness are:

- Prevention & early intervention – particularly with youth homelessness
- Picking the right cohort for housing e.g. women over 50
- Supporting innovative housing trials with seed funding
- Raising community awareness

Proposed Structure of Expert Reference Group Meeting 10th June

What we want out of the meeting

- Guidance as to what projects we might embrace
- How we might integrate into the overall state and Alliance strategies

What is Rotary

- Rotary in WA has over 100 Clubs and over 2,600 members
- There are 2 Districts (North & South) in WA each with a governance structure (Governor and Asst Governors) – co-ordination
- Rotary is dedicated to community service in the context of a friendly Club environment
- Clubs are autonomous
- Clubs do a wide range of projects, supported by fund-raising activities
- Major themes - Homelessness, FDV, Health, Youth, International
- There are some District projects eg NYSF, Australian Rotary Health
- Not much national organization
- Rotary International has global reach – eg polio vaccination campaign

What Rotary has to offer

- A high integrity brand
- 'Service above Self' ethic
- Extensive social and business networks
- A widespread community organisation that can perform a valuable role as a community influencer

Current Projects

- **Prevention:** Our strategy – mentoring people at risk, 12 Buckets
- **Housing:** My Home, Tiny Homes – Perth, Tiny Homes – Bunbury, Emplace initiative, Common Ground Facility
- **Support for the Homeless:** 'Passages' Drop-in Centre; Medical Recovery Centre; support for food, clothing & laundry services; support for medical & dental services
- **Community Awareness:** Eye Contact Photographic Exhibition

Open Discussion