



15 June 2018



Our Ref: GIPA18/ [REDACTED]  
Matter No: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Formal Access Application - Notice of Decision**

I refer to your Formal Access Application under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (the GIPA Act) that was transferred to the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS), where you are requesting access to the following information:

- *“Copies of all briefing papers, minutes, correspondence or other communications (being electronic or hard copy) between the Department and Minister (or other Ministerial Officers or staffers) in relation to:*
    - *How many, and the percentage of, NSW Social Housing clients are placed in temporary accommodation and housed in hotels and motels paid by NSW Housing authorities;*
    - *The Dept policy on placing NSW Social Housing clients in hotels + motels;*
    - *The process for monitoring and auditing the cost of placing NSW Housing clients in hotels and motels;*
    - *The cost of placing NSW Housing clients in hotels and motels paid by NSW Housing authorities;*
- for the annual periods beginning with the change of government on 26 March 2011, to the present.”*

Please be advised that I liaised with Housing Statewide Services within FACS, which was able to locate information that may fall within the scope of the above request. I have paginated this information, 1 to 79, inclusive.

I have carefully considered your request in view of the objectives of the GIPA Act where you have a legally enforceable right to obtain information, unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the subject information. Further, I have also considered the requirements of section 74 of the GIPA Act, which provides that an agency may delete information from a record to which access is provided if the deleted information is not relevant, or within the scope of the information applied for, or an agency has decided to refuse access to that information.

I have decided to provide you with a copy of the information requested in your access application in accordance with section 58 of the GIPA Act, with the exception of a number of pages, which contain information that is subject to an overriding public interest consideration against disclosure under the GIPA Act. The decision schedule attached lists the documents that contain information where there is an overriding public interest consideration against disclosure. In the decision schedule, (F) means that a document has been withheld in full from disclosure and (P) means that a document has been withheld in part from disclosure.

In deciding which information to withhold in full or in part, I was required to conduct a "public interest test" where the public interest considerations favouring disclosure of government information were weighed against those factors that do not favour disclosure. The following are a number of public interest factors I considered which favour disclosure of the information requested:

- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to promote open discussion of public affairs, enhance Government accountability or contribute to positive and informed debate on issues of public importance.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to inform the public about the operations of agencies and, in particular, their policies and practices for dealing with members of the public.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to ensure effective oversight of the expenditure of public funds.
- The information is personal information of the person to whom it is to be disclosed.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to reveal or substantiate that an agency (or a member of an agency) has engaged in misconduct or negligent, improper or unlawful conduct.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to advance the fair treatment of individuals in accordance with the law in their dealings with agencies.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to reveal the reason for a government decision and any background or contextual information that informed the decision.
- Disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to contribute to the administration of justice generally, including procedural fairness.

However, a number of documents have been withheld from disclosure as they contain information where a public interest factor against disclosure, outweighs the factors in favour of disclosure.

Information that has been withheld from disclosure under clause 4(c) of Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act relates to information subject to contempt. There is a conclusive presumption of an overriding public interest against disclosure of information that would, but for any immunity of the Crown, infringe the privilege of Parliament. The information subject to clause 4(c) of Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act are House Folder Notes prepared for the business of Parliament, the disclosure of which would infringe on the privilege protecting freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings.

Information that has been withheld from disclosure under clause 3(a) of the table to section 14 of the GIPA Act is information that would reveal an individual's personal information. An individual's personal information may include their identity, their contact number, their place of employment, etc. I am of the view that there is an overwhelming public interest against disclosing information that reveals an individual's personal information.

If you are aggrieved by any of the reviewable decisions in this notice of decision, you may seek a review under Part 5 of the GIPA Act, by requesting any one of the following:

- An internal review which must be lodged with the Right to Information Unit within 20 working days of this notice of decision. You must lodge your internal review at the address shown at the bottom of the first page and must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee of \$40.
- Alternatively, a request for an external review may be lodged with either the Information and Privacy Commission, or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Please note that you must lodge your request for an external review within 8 weeks of this notice of decision.

Further attached are receipts for the amounts of \$210 and \$210 respectively, which represent the fees for processing your Formal Access Application.

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact me on telephone (02) 8753 8400.

Yours sincerely



Peter Bazzo  
**Senior Right to Information Officer**  
**Right to Information Unit**  
**Department of Family and Community Services, Legal**

# Decision Schedule

ACCESS APPLICANT'S NAME	[REDACTED]	DECIDING OFFICER	Peter Bazzo
FACS REFERENCE	GIPA18/211	INTERNAL REVIEW OFFICER	

## INFORMATION THAT WAS NOT DISCLOSED

PAGE NUMBER	PUBLIC INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST DISCLOSURE					DESCRIPTION OF FOLIO / REASON FOR NON-DISCLOSURE
	Schedule 1 information	Table to Section 14 of the GIPA Act 2009				
		Clause 4(c)	Clause 1(d)	Clause 1(f)	Clause 1(g)	
13	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Briefing note which contains information that does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of this page in accordance with the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> (GIPA Act).
14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Briefing note which contains information that does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of information on the briefing note in accordance with the GIPA Act that does not fall within the scope of your access application.
15 – 16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Internal email transmission which contains information that does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of these pages in accordance with the GIPA Act.
17					P	Advice which contains information that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of this information in accordance with the GIPA Act.</li> <li>• reveals an individual's personal information.</li> </ul>
18 – 28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	List of funded Specialist Homelessness Services and factsheets which



# Decision Schedule

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		Clause 1(d)	Clause 1(f)	Clause 1(g)	Clause 3(a)	
						contain information that do not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of these pages in accordance with the GIPA Act.
29 – 70	F					House Folder Notes, the disclosure of which would, but for any immunity of the Crown, infringe the privilege of Parliament.
71 – 74	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Briefing note which contains information that does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of these pages in accordance with the GIPA Act.
76					P	Briefing note that reveals an individual's personal information.
78 – 79	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Briefing note which contains information that does not fall within the scope of your request. Therefore, I have not considered the disclosure of these pages in accordance with the GIPA Act.



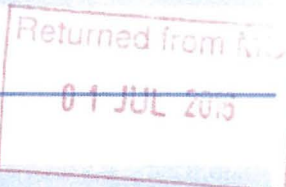
## Temporary Accommodation Program Discussion Paper

<b>Issue</b>	Katherine McKernan, CEO Homelessness NSW has sent a discussion paper to the Minister's office regarding the FACS Temporary Accommodation (TA) Program with some recommendations
<b>Key facts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper makes the following recommendations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That each FACS District do an audit of all TA and other similar programs to ascertain how each District is currently managing the TA scheme with a view to adapting successful approaches statewide;</li> <li>○ That FACS Districts discuss ideas and proposals for customising delivery of TA on a regional basis to deliver both accommodation and support; these would include a collaboration of Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs), Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and FACS Housing NSW;</li> <li>○ That TA have a dedicated budget, with each FACS District allocated an amount to adequately meet demand; and</li> <li>○ That a TA Program outcomes framework with reporting on the reasons for homelessness and housing accessed after using TA is developed and implemented.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FACS is already implementing some of these recommendations including undertaking a review of alternative TA models.</li> <li>• It is expected that the final report will available at the end of June 2016.</li> <li>• The Minister is attending the SHS CEO forum on 30 May 2016 – background information is provided in this brief on the links between SHS and TA.</li> </ul>
<b>Approval by</b>	Prior to SHS CEO forum on 30 May 2016 as the information may be relevant to questions asked on that day

### Recommendation: for information only

Deputy  
Secretary/Executive  
Director/District  
Director approval

Date 20 May 2016



### Key issues

#### Recommendation 1: Each FACS District undertake an audit of all Temporary Accommodation and similar programs

- This recommendation is supported as FACS is already well underway with a full audit and review of alternative TA models that are funded under the TA program.
- There are currently 24 alternative TA models operating across twelve FACS districts.
- FACS has engaged Sally Gaven consulting to undertake this review. Findings are expected to be available in June.
- Homelessness peaks are being consulted as part of this review.



Briefing for Deputy Secretary/Executive Director/District Director: reply to correspondence

**Recommendation 2: Each FACS District discuss ideas and proposals on a regional basis to consider both accommodation and support in partnership with SHS and CHPs.**

- This recommendation is supported as it is already planned as part of the TA review referred to above.
- The review of alternative TA models will include consultations with relevant stakeholders.
- Once draft findings are available, each FACS District will be asked to consider these in discussion with CHPs and SHS providers and other relevant stakeholders through their District Homelessness Implementation Group (DHIG) meetings.

**Recommendation 3: That TA has a dedicated budget with each FACS District allocated an amount to adequately meet demand**

- FACS already has a dedicated TA budget and each FACS District already has an allocation of TA funding which historically is demand driven. As noted below in the background, the increase in demand is driving up the budget. The pressure on the budget requires consideration in future budget processes.
- Clients are provided with the minimum amount of TA required to support them to find longer term options. Immediate assistance is provided through Link2Home, and referrals made to SHS providers or to FACS district offices for a more comprehensive assessment of the individual client needs.

**Recommendation 4: That a TA programs outcomes framework with reporting on the reasons for homelessness and housing assessed after using TA is developed and implemented**

- FACS does not support a TA programs outcome framework that is separate from the SHS program evaluation.
- However, current reporting capacity enables FACS to identify whether TA clients have been assisted with social housing or private rental products. In the last 12 months, data shows that 9% of TA clients entered social housing and 15% accessed private rental products.
- Further work on monitoring of TA outcomes should be considered in the context of the SHS evaluation strategy:
  - The [Early Review of the SHS Program](#) currently being delivered by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) will include findings on the relationship between SHS and TA as it looks at the capacity of the SHS system to respond to the immediate needs of clients, key enablers and barriers to service delivery, and how Link2home assists people experiencing homelessness. A brief has been provided to the Minister on this (HOG16/24790).
  - The Early Review includes a client survey, which will ask specifically about whether the client received emergency temporary accommodation in a motel/hotel or caravan park, whether they felt safe, and whether the accommodation was clean, well maintained and suitable. Similar information will be collected through client and service provider interviews in four place-based case studies.
  - Following the Early Review, FACS will work with the independently chaired SHS Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory Group, including Homelessness NSW, to develop the scope of an Outcomes and Economic Evaluation of the SHS Program. The [SHS Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy](#) notes that data linkage between SHS and TA would be one way to measure outcomes and pathways of clients and indicates that a cost-effectiveness analysis of the SHS Program should include consideration of the associated costs of TA. There may be value and efficiencies in developing an integrated SHS Program and TA Program outcomes framework for this evaluation.



## Background

### Purpose of TA

- The TA homelessness response was designed to meet a gap in the service system by providing a very short-term safe place to stay for homeless households without complex needs while they arranged more suitable longer term accommodation.
- It was always intended that people with complex needs requiring support would receive this via SHS services.
- However, demand has been increasing on both the TA program and the SHS program over time, resulting in difficulties of both programs meeting the needs of clients.

### TA expenditure

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 (YTD)
\$17.01m	\$26.03m	\$17.6m	\$10.36m	\$11.2m	\$13.98m	\$17.3m (forecast end FY = \$20m)

- With increasing demand on the TA budget, expenditure increased from \$17.01m in 2009/10 to \$26.03m in 2011/12.
- As a result of this, in September 2011, FACS undertook a review of how the program was operating and introduced a number of practice changes in order to better implement the TA policy including: referral to other accommodation assistance; requiring clients to attend Rent It – Keep It courses; referring clients for private rental brokerage services; and seeking a co-contribution for the cost of TA from clients who were in a financial position to do so.
- This helped to reduce expenditure but also led to some concerns from peaks and advocates that clients were being disadvantaged - response to this client service teams undertook to ensure a client centred approach was being used.
- Since 2012/13, expenditure has continued to increase – this is driven by the following:
  - Increased housing stress due to lack of affordable housing options for people on low incomes
  - Increased awareness of DV leading to more women seeking assistance
  - Lack of housing options for people with complex needs e.g. people leaving custody, people with mental health issues
  - The introduction of Link2Home in 2014 generating increased awareness of temporary accommodation as an option for homeless people
  - Ongoing media awareness and public interest in homelessness
- Expenditure is forecast to reach \$20m in 2015/16.

### Alternative TA models

- The provision of TA in motels and other low cost facilities does not provide an optimal approach to the provision of emergency accommodation as clients who are vulnerable don't have access to support.
- As a result of the above challenges, some FACS districts have sought to use part of their TA budget in a more innovative way to improve both value for money and outcomes for clients.



**Briefing for Deputy Secretary/Executive Director/District Director: reply to correspondence**

- These usually involve partnerships with NGOs who have access to suitable properties and combine accommodation with on-site support to assist clients to look for alternative accommodation.
- Housing Statewide Services has engaged Sally Gaven Consulting to review these models and provide recommendations that will inform how best to utilise the TA budget in future.
- It is noted that Jewish House is one provider of alternative TA models and they have approached FACS on numerous occasions to request a funding commitment to expand their model. FACS has advised them that due to procurement concerns this is not possible.
- It is expected that following the review of these models and determination of the best use of the TA budget, further consideration may be given to procurement approaches.

**Homelessness reforms**

- The reduced need for TA was one of the four measures of success identified in the [Going Home Staying Home Reform Plan](#). It was proposed that this would be achieved by strengthening the focus on early intervention and prevention, increasing rapid rehousing responses and improving links between the provision of TA and SHS.
- However, as demand for crisis services has continued to increase, the SHS sector has not been able to focus sufficient attention on early intervention and prevention. The lack of affordable private rental has also prevented the achievement of rapid rehousing outcomes.
- The demand on SHS and on the TA program has therefore not slowed.

**Next steps**

- The review is currently underway and it is expected that the findings will be delivered by the end of June 2016.
- An internal workshop will be convened to consider the findings followed by District based discussions.
- Further work will then be done to consider how the TA budget can be optimally used next financial year.

**Consultation and communication strategy**

- Sally Gaven consulting is consulting with all alternative TA models and FACS District staff that are associated with these. She is also consulting the homelessness peaks.
- The findings will be workshopped with internal and external stakeholders.
- Any changes to the delivery of TA following acceptance of any findings will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.
- The Homelessness Unit has been consulted in the preparation of this brief.

**Attachments**

Tab	Title
A	Discussion paper from Homelessness NSW

Briefing for Deputy Secretary/Executive Director/District Director: reply to correspondence

**Approval**

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Role	Electronic approval by	Date
Director COIP, HSS	Lynne Beven	12/05/2016
Director HSS	Sharon Gudu	12/05/16
Deputy Secretary, Southern Cluster	Paul Vevers	20/05/16

## Temporary Accommodation Program – A Review

April 2016

*This paper provides a broad overview of the Temporary Accommodation Program (TA Program) and ways in which it could be improved. Its intention is to generate discussion and develop the evidence base around alternative options for delivering this service and to garner commitment from the Department of Family and Community Services to review and improve the TA Program. Homelessness NSW is aware that further work can be undertaken to identify a range of other issues related to the TA Program as well as to identify other innovative models of service provision and welcomes any information that Specialist Homelessness Services and other service providers may have on this.*

### 1. Why undertake this work?

Demand for crisis homelessness services is increasing. Link2Home, the statewide homelessness information and referral service, receives on average 400 calls per day and has experienced three times the anticipated number of calls in the first 12 months of its operation. Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) providers are also reporting unprecedented demand for crisis accommodation services. The February 2016 City of Sydney Street Count identified 486 people experiencing homelessness on the street, whilst crisis accommodation services were 98% full. This is the highest street count since its inception in 2010.

The Temporary Accommodation (TA) program expends approximately \$14 million each year and is an important component of the homelessness crisis accommodation system in NSW. However, Homelessness NSW is not convinced that the current design and delivery of the program provides the optimal benefits for people who use the service. We felt that closer analysis of the TA program and consultation with SHS providers regarding the TA program would identify ways in which this funding and the program itself could be more effectively supporting people in need of crisis accommodation.

### 2. What is Temporary accommodation?

TA is a service provided through Housing Pathways within the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) Housing NSW under the 'Housing Act 2001' and supplements SHSs in providing short-term accommodation in "low cost motels or caravan parks" for clients to act as a 'bridge' by which clients may have somewhat secure accommodation while more permanent housing arrangements can be made. The most recent annual budget saw a \$13.98 million for 2014-2015, an apparent reduction from a previous \$28 million expenditure seen in previous years<sup>1</sup>. The length of

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<sup>1</sup> Minister Hazzard, Budget Estimates 2015-16 Family and Community Services, 31 August 2015  
[http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/8e4522afb5ef2a59ca257eb2001ca1b5/\\$FILE/Transcript%20-%2031%20August%202015%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20Family%20and%20Community%20Services%20Social%20Housing%20\(Hazzard\).pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/8e4522afb5ef2a59ca257eb2001ca1b5/$FILE/Transcript%20-%2031%20August%202015%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20Family%20and%20Community%20Services%20Social%20Housing%20(Hazzard).pdf)



accommodation is limited to 28 days in a 12-month period except in exceptional circumstances with usual allocation limited to 3 night periods at a time.

According to the FACS 2014-15 Annual Report, in 2014/15 TA provided assistance to over 17,000 households<sup>2</sup>.

Access to TA is arranged through making an application at the FACS District Housing Office, or via Link2Home, the statewide homelessness information and referral service provided by FACS. Applicants are required to demonstrate that they are searching for alternative forms of accommodation once placed in Temporary Accommodation in order to get an extension of TA and must return to the FACS Housing NSW office to apply for an extension.

As far as we are aware, there is no monitoring or reporting of housing outcomes for people accessing the TA Program and no monitoring or reporting on the support needs or reasons for homelessness of people accessing the TA Program.

### 3. Survey results

Homelessness NSW conducted a survey sent to SHS services and front-line workers across all NSW FACS districts. There were 187 respondents of which 160 made referrals to TA within their service. There were responses from across all FACS districts.

Outlined below is a snapshot of some of the issues identified via the TA survey.

#### *Type of accommodation*

According to the respondents accommodation used for TA includes motel accommodation (85%), caravan parks (40%) and pub accommodation (37%). Other forms of accommodation cited included refuges, hostels or backpacker lodges.

The appropriateness of this accommodation for the client group was identified as an issue by a majority of respondents (69%). Issues raised included safety for particular client groups such as women and children escaping domestic and family violence and young people; ability to prepare and store food and the location of the accommodation in terms of transport and access to community and other support services.

17% of providers noted that TA providers did not allow service users to prepare their own food. While others noted clients placed in TA are isolated from other support services making it difficult for their support needs to be addressed.

For example, one respondent noted a need for more consideration of location that may need to be "elevated above cost...to 'contain' homelessness within a community" especially where children were involved as well as a noted issue for young mothers and families having to travel with many belongings between HNSW and TA therefore end up giving up essential items they cannot store or transport. The distance between services and HNSW office or providers' office and accommodation was a repeated concern.

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<sup>2</sup> FACS Annual Report 2014/15 p31



### *Demand for TA*

Seventy percent of respondents believe that there were not enough TA providers to meet the demand for crisis accommodation in their District. The vast majority of respondents noted their service was attempting to meet this need (84%) above and beyond the existing crisis accommodation provided by SHSs. Many services use a combination of brokerage (69%), SHS funds (49%) and other accommodation (42%) or refuges and crisis housing as alternative accommodation (25%) to fill this void. 32% of respondents stated that demand for TA had increased since the Going Home Staying Home reforms.

### *Access to TA*

Currently, people are referred to TA if there is no crisis accommodation available in their District. There is no process of identifying which clients might be better suited to which type of accommodation according to their support needs.

We attempted to ascertain which groups of clients miss out on TA provision, with data suggesting clients with alcohol and substance abuse and mental health issues being groups that miss out. One Hunter New England District respondent cited specific incidences “where Link2Home [told] clients that they cannot help them because they are mentally unwell”. Other groups noted to be missing out included non-residents and immigrants (23%) as well as clients who have had previous issues with behaviour and aggression while in TA (14%).

A Western Sydney respondent noted that “clients don’t seem to be offered [TA] unless a worker has specifically asked for it” leading to clients being unassisted and ‘couch surfing for months’ before being assisted.

### *Exiting TA*

While most respondents referred to TA services, eighty per cent stated that there were no assessment protocols set up for clients outside of an initial Link2Home assessment and so the support needs of clients weren’t identified or followed up and no exit planning was undertaken.

A respondent noted instances where clients who had used their quota of TA nights were being “dropped off at Belmore park because they did not have any other options” and many other clients faced similar situations due to a lack of exit strategy protocols within the TA service provision or general assessment tool via Link2Home.

### *TA application processes and rules*

Centralisation of the service was also seen as a negative. A Hunter New England service stated “in the past workers had relationships with TA staff and could plead a client’s case; since it has become call centre based workers [the service] will not accept referrals from workers and often some clients are not able to call themselves”. A lack of capacity of Link2home to meet individual needs was also a regular comment.

The number of days allocated to clients at a time (63% of respondents identified this as an issue) and the limit per year (60% of respondents identified this as an issue) were major issues in assisting clients. One Hunter New England service noted “I have had times where I have secured accommodation for a future date (i.e. 8 days away); it would be extremely beneficial if approval to extend past 4 days could be granted immediately... it is a waste of our time and HNSW and Link2home time and productivity to have to call back and re-advocate after a few days”.

Almost half of respondents (41%) believe that service and provision of TA had worsened while 39% believe it has not improved since the GSH reforms.

In summary services are well aware of the shortcomings of the current system and believe that it is inhibiting their capacity to work with vulnerable clients.

#### 4. What else is happening?

Throughout the state various organisations have adapted the TA program to ensure that individuals receive more than a bed – they also receive the support required. Below are some summaries of projects either currently operating or that have operated in the recent past. This summary is by no means comprehensive, but instead provides a snapshot of different approaches.

##### **Mission Australia - Michael's Intensive Supported Housing Accord (MISHA) and Michaels Project 2007-2010**

The project aimed to provide homeless men with wrap-around support services and case management within accommodation services in order to support clients to enter more permanent housing around the Parramatta, Fairlight and Liverpool area. Wrap-around services were tailored to individual client needs ranging from health, mental, social or vocational. Michaels project state ‘with appropriate and timely support, some of the most marginalised people in our community can dramatically improve their lives’ and stability through temporary accommodation and community environment that Michaels project provided, enables people to access and benefit from services and support.

The initial project was broken up into three parts: Temporary accommodation (typically up to three months) or outreach support, assertive case management and guaranteed access to a range of specialist services and supports. Supports ranged from counselling and psychology services, dental services, barber services, computer literacy training and literacy and numeracy training among others within and around the Parramatta community. Outcomes seen from the longitudinal research conducted from the project as a result of access to services and assertive case management included lower cases of substance use and dependence, lower levels of social isolation for clients, higher self-efficacy and higher levels of quality of life within the psychological, social and environmental elements for clients. Some clients continued treatment and service access past closure of their ‘case’ due to the service being made readily available.

##### **Edward Eager Lodge – Tenancy Facilitated Temporary Accommodation**

Wesley Missions tenancy facilitated program through Edward Eager Lodge within the inner city area provides women and men individually lockable rooms in conjunction with a comprehensive support programs to clients as well as the wider community. Working on a wrap-around service model, the accommodation provides case-management, recovery groups, self-development and life skills support, counselling, church services, recreation, mental health and interagency support. On site,



the facility also employs a housing assessment worker in order to help “people make suitable choices regarding their housing”<sup>3</sup>. This project outline provides clients with appropriate support to make exit strategies as well as move onto more transitional housing. Intensive on-site support means clients are less likely to cycle back through the homelessness system and intervention and support can occur before potentially difficult and complex issues arise.

### **Vincentian House Temporary Accommodation Project and model**

The Vincentian House TA project offers tenancy-facilitated temporary accommodation for a variety of different family types, offering a site comprising of 21 self-contained ‘family units’ and wrap-around services to support clients to “transition to suitable accommodation upon exit from the program”<sup>4</sup>. The project philosophy saw the point at which TA assistance is accessed is a crucial time for early intervention and engagement as it was noted long-term clients gain a complexity of issues over the course of their homelessness. The model was found to be on average cheaper nightly compared to other inner-city TA sites though the average length of stay was much longer and long-term benefits included slowing or stopping the cycle of clients between TA provisions by addressing issues within the first stages of homelessness. Tenancy facilitator Mignon Chapel noted the current model provides saving to FaCs and Housing NSW as the service implements links to support services, informs clients of the housing process and takes strain away from FaCs offices.

The project was tailored to the needs of family with children or other ‘family complements’ and offered on-site services such as case-management, advocacy for extension on behalf of the clients, referrals to support services, child and adult learning facilities, financial counselling, relationship counselling and parenting and budgeting classes. It was noted “While a limited number of local offices have a Private Rental Brokerage Specialist who some TA clients may be referred to, most clients are not provided with any tools, resources or support to assist them in their accommodation support”<sup>5</sup>

### **SWHA 2011 – Pathways Support Trial 1**

Sydney Women’s Homelessness Alliance (SWHA) trialled a support pathway for women accessing TA through Housing NSW in order to combat issues in regards to a lack of provision in support networks or connection to Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS). The goal of the project was to reflect the success of other tenancy-facilitated inner city lodges such as ‘Edward Eagar Lodge’ in catering for a women and family demographic. Four SWHA member groups (Mathew Talbot Homeless Services, Women’s & Girls Emergency Centre Inc., Wesley Mission’s Inner West Case Management Team and Mission Australia) provided some outreach service support to clients while receiving TA assistance in the form of a one-off outreach appointment to conduct an assessment of needs in order to connect clients with SHS to access in the future if necessary. The SWHA members also collaborated together to develop a model of service, delivery protocols and capture data on clients supported and subsequent outcomes utilizing collaborative ethos of ‘Going home, Staying home’ to create relationships and stronger connection in recommendations to access SHS in the future. Information gained from outreach services meant that clients were better able to support themselves outside of assistance, improved relationships between services provided better service results through the building of relationships between SHS and even partnerships. Through this approach, the services as

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<sup>3</sup> [Wesley Mission Edward Eagar Lodge](#)

<sup>4</sup> VHTAP *ibid.* (2013), p. 4

<sup>5</sup> VHTAP *ibid.* (2013), p. 6

well were able to target a variety of different groups of clients with diverse needs including those who usually when presented to a crisis service would not receive service e.g. transgender<sup>6</sup>.

The development of partnerships between HNSW and SHS provided the client a level of emotional and practical support while allowing for practical and streamlined support and referral to a suitable service while they were in TA. An evaluation into the pathways support found the approach is more economically viable than the existing TA frame work as it was hoped that the client would only go into TA on one occasion while there needs are resolved as opposed to multiple occasions. Therefore Housing NSW would be paying for one occasion of TA. Outcomes for client were on par for more medium and transitional housing outcomes and ranged from brokerage support to leases with a community housing provider or accommodation within a boarding house.

### **Temporary Accommodation Triage project – Liverpool, Fairfield and Bankstown**

The early intervention and tenancy support services operates as a partnership between Mission Australia South Western Sydney and the HNSW Liverpool, Bankstown and Fairfield offices. The project aims to support 'first-time' homeless clients in a timely manner with case management support and sustainable levels of support services in order to maintain and transition to longer term accommodation. As noted within the project aims, TA is often the first contact clients will have with the homelessness service system and currently, TA through HNSW does not offer support services holistically, therefore clients are mostly not linked to support in order to help them transition to more sustainable housing.

Services centred on individual needs based on an assessment and case management support allows for appropriate referrals to be made to a network of other services such as counselling, legal advice, family support and financial counselling. In just over one year, 270 referrals were made and office allocation times extended to help clients move away from the cycle of homelessness and step into the TA service with support underneath them.

### **5. Other ideas?**

During discussions with SHS across the state many services advised of innovative programs they were interested in pursuing.

On the mid-North Coast two services are in discussion with a community housing provider about the possibility of head leasing a 5 bedroom property. Two rooms would be allocated to each service with the other room to be used as an office. Each service would 'temporarily' house clients and using existing resources provide drop in support to develop case plans and ensure that the clients proactively searched for alternate accommodation. It has been estimated that nearly 1,460 nights of accommodation could be provided (with support) for the same cost of 152 nights of TA (with no support).

In the New England eleven services are in discussion with the aim to develop a model that would enable clients to receive a case plan and management along with additional nights of accommodation (provided they are taking action to secure alternative accommodation). The client

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<sup>6</sup> SWHA Pathways support trial evaluation, (2011)



must also actively work with Specialist Homelessness Service that will support the client to identify and address the issues that led them to becoming homeless in the first place.

Services are interested in discussing local solutions, using local resources and understanding to develop models of TA that are more cost effective, deliver better outcomes and support services to become more sustainable.

## 6. Recommendations

Homelessness NSW believes that the TA program can and should be a vital service to ensure that people who become homeless exit homelessness as soon as possible. We know that FACS Districts are currently operating modified programs that allow them to meet clients' needs. We also know that demand for these services outstrips supply. From this we make these four recommendations.

1. That each FACS District do an audit of all TA and other similar programs to ascertain how each District is currently managing the TA scheme with a view to adapting successful approaches statewide.
2. That FACS Districts discuss ideas and proposals for customising delivery of TA on a regional basis to deliver both accommodation and support; these would include a collaboration of SHS, Community Housing Providers and FACS Housing NSW.
3. That TA have a dedicated budget, with each FACS District allocated an amount to adequately meet demand.
4. That a TA Program outcomes framework with reporting on the reasons for homelessness and housing accessed after using TA is developed and implemented.

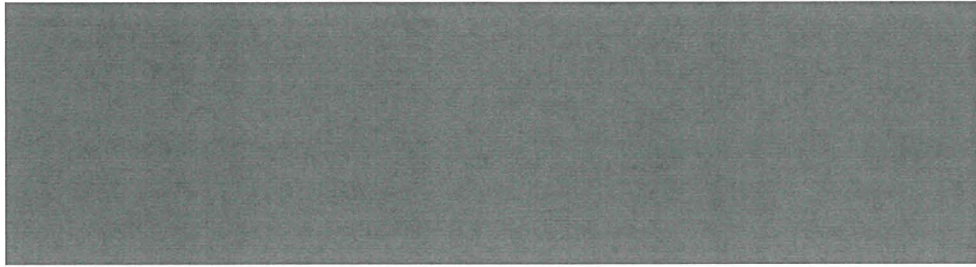
Homelessness NSW will continue to gather information around successful local options for providing TA as well as consult with the sector on alternative ways to provide support through the TA program and use this information to support FACS to make positive changes to the TA program.

*To discuss this paper or to provide further information on the TA program please contact Digby Hughes, Homelessness NSW, 9331 2004 or [digby@homelessnessnsw.org.au](mailto:digby@homelessnessnsw.org.au)*

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## Context

- Temporary Accommodation supplements Specialist Homelessness Services in providing limited term accommodation in motels or caravan parks for clients who are homeless. The intention of TA is to provide a bridge to give clients a chance to secure other accommodation, whether crisis accommodation or private rental. It is a short-term temporary measure rather than a longer-term response.
- FACS currently uses over 340 TA providers across the state to place clients.
- In 2015–16, FACS provided TA to over 21,500 clients across NSW.

**Content endorsed by: Sharon Gudu, Director Housing Statewide Services**

**Executive sponsor: Mychelle Curran, A/Deputy Secretary (Southern and Western Cluster of Districts and Housing Statewide Services)**

**Division: FACS, Housing Statewide Services**

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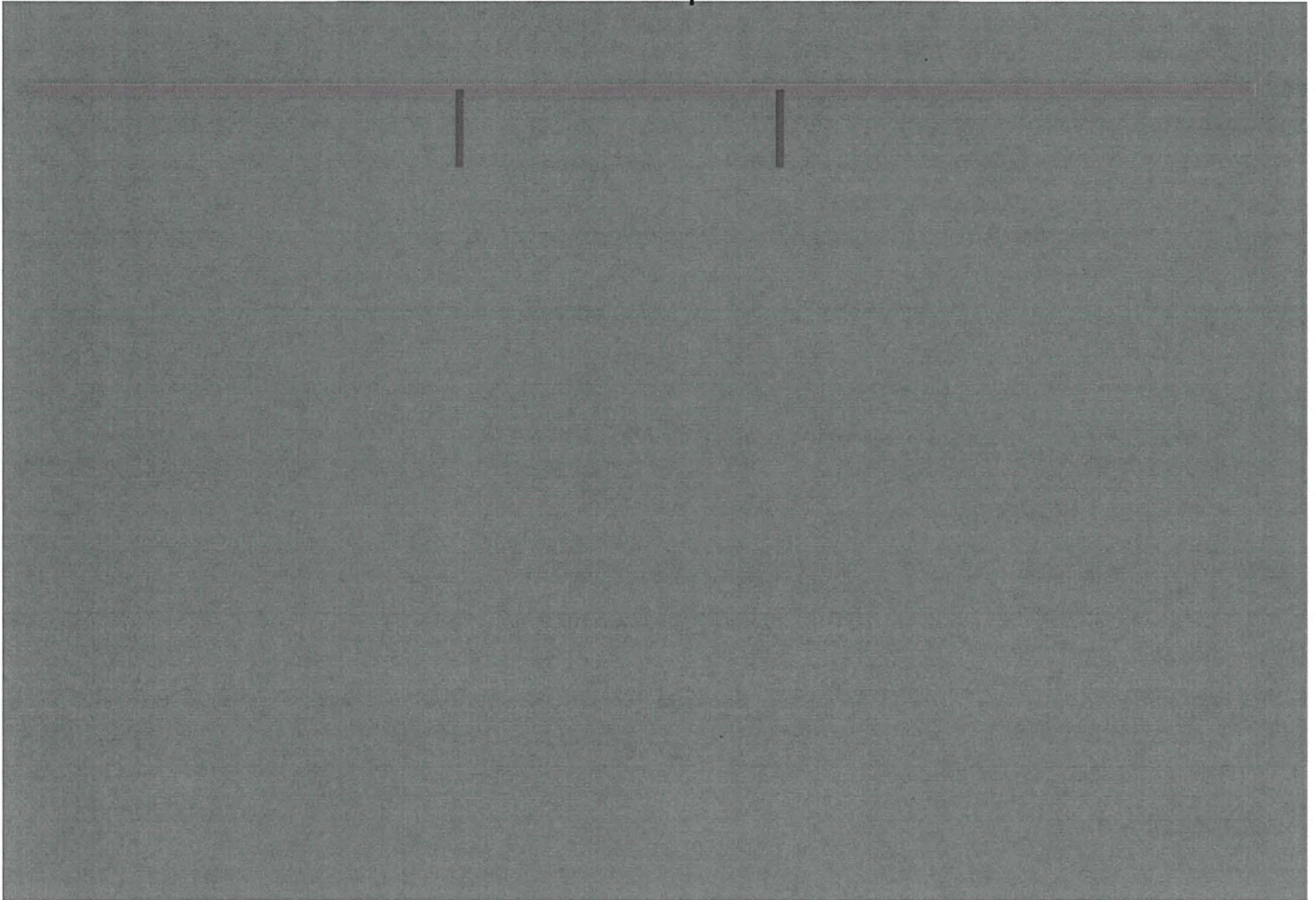
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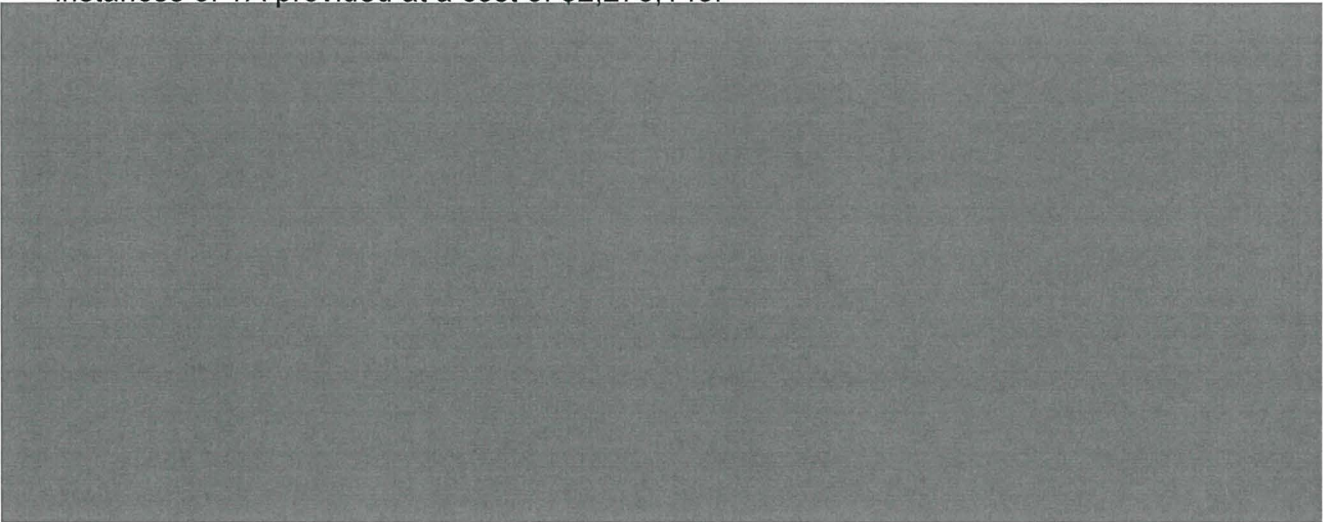


# URGENT DOT POINT ADVICE

## Minister Hazzard - MO Request for Dot Points



- HNSW advised that in the 2014/2015 financial year in the Hunter there were 10,436 instances of TA provided at a cost of \$2,276,143.



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## BRIEFING NOTE

**ISSUE:** Administration of the Temporary Accommodation policy

### BACKGROUND:

- Temporary Accommodation is a product delivered by Housing NSW for clients who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, with nowhere safe to stay.
- It is a "safety valve" to provide immediate relief for clients to allow them to find alternative accommodation.
- Housing NSW funds the cost of a short-term stay in low cost accommodation such as motels and caravan parks.
- Expenditure on Temporary Accommodation has increased fourfold since 2006/07:

2006/07	\$5.9 million
2007/08	\$9.1 million
2008/09	\$12.2 million
2009/10	\$17 million
2010/11	\$24.9 million

### CURRENT POSITION:

- The increase in demand is financially unsustainable and is due to a number of factors including:
  - Rising costs in the private rental market have made it more difficult for low income people to find affordable private rental accommodation;
  - Crisis accommodation is over stretched and Temporary Accommodation has become an adjunct to crisis accommodation;
  - The focus on homelessness in the last five years has increased and there are higher community expectations that homeless people will be assisted compared to five years ago; and
  - Inconsistent application of the Temporary Accommodation policy across Housing NSW.
- Increases in demand due to factors such as the tightening of the rental market are to be expected and can be managed within the Housing NSW budget. However, some of the increases in demand come from factors which are not directly connected with market forces.
- The number of clients assisted has increased from 9,400 households in 2006/07 to 17,500 households in 2010/11 and households have required more periods of assistance on average over this period.
- An expectation has grown among non-Government organisations which advise and advocate for homeless people that the maximum amount of Temporary Accommodation, ie 28 days per year, will be routinely provided as an entitlement, even though the policy is clear that this is the maximum amount - not an entitlement.
- Varying practices have been applied by Housing NSW local offices in the administration of the Temporary Accommodation policy.
- In light of these factors, some changes to tighten up the administration of the Temporary Accommodation policy are proposed, to seek to address what has become an inappropriate expectation that the maximum amount of Temporary Accommodation will always be provided. Further details on the proposed administrative changes are at Attachment 1.
- These measures will also ensure consistent practice across Housing NSW, in applying a requirement that any extension of Temporary Accommodation is dependent on the client actively looking for alternative accommodation.
- The proposed changes reflect the intent of the Temporary Accommodation policy and do not signal a change in its basic purpose. However, the policy has not been consistently



applied across Housing NSW and the specific requirements under the policy need to be reinforced and articulated clearly to staff.

**COMMENT:**

- It is anticipated that these administrative changes will re-focus Temporary Accommodation onto homeless people who most genuinely need it and who are actively looking for alternatives.
- Housing NSW will seek to communicate the tightening in the administration of the policy to non-Government organisations who advocate for homeless people, whilst reaffirming that there is no change in the intent of the policy.
- It is possible that some advocates will advise their clients to challenge this more consistent approach to the Temporary Accommodation policy by approaching local Members of Parliament.
- In these cases, Housing NSW will reaffirm its commitment to helping people who are homeless, who have no alternative options and who are genuinely looking for short-term and long-term accommodation, but will explain the requirement that clients in Temporary Accommodation must actively help themselves.
- The current policy is also somewhat ambiguous about whether Temporary Accommodation is available to refugees and asylum seekers. It will be made clear that all Housing NSW products are available only to citizens and permanent residents. This will cover refugees who have become permanent citizens, but not those who are in the country temporarily as these clients cannot settle into NSW permanently. Furthermore, assistance is provided to refugees under Commonwealth Government programs rather than State Government programs.
- In addition to reviewing the administration of Temporary Accommodation, Housing NSW has also been reviewing the administration of other products which are part of the suite of RentStart products, such as assistance with bonds and advance rent. Companies which are engaged by the Commonwealth Government to assist in the resettlement of refugees have been applying on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers for assistance with rental bonds and advance rent.
- Housing NSW will clarify whether these clients have permanent residency and will only provide assistance if evidence is provided.
- Housing NSW is also seeking further clarification from the Commonwealth Government on respective roles and responsibilities and is also seeking details about what services companies are contracted to provide to ensure that they are not already funded to provide assistance with rental bonds.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Minister note these clarifications in the administration of the Temporary Accommodation policy.

Paul Vevers  
Executive Director, Housing Services

20 September 2011

Chief Executive, Housing NSW

Director General

Minister

9/11/11 *[Signature]*



## ATTACHMENT 1

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ELEMENTS IN TIGHTENING UP THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY**

- It is not proposed to make any change for clients who are homeless and who are genuinely and actively looking for accommodation, except to ask them for a contribution to the cost of Temporary Accommodation where practical. Clients who are homeless and where no safe alternative accommodation is available, will continue to be assisted with Temporary Accommodation when they first approach Housing NSW for assistance. A homeless family presenting to Housing NSW for the first time will always be assisted.
- It is proposed to make it clearer to clients receiving Temporary Accommodation that it is a condition that they actively look for accommodation for the short and long-term, and prove that they have done so. Unless they can demonstrate this, Housing NSW will not continue to provide Temporary Accommodation assistance.
- It is proposed to clarify that where homeless people, particularly single people, have a short-term alternative, such as crisis accommodation or a room in a boarding house, that they should take this option while looking for long-term accommodation. This type of accommodation is often more appropriate than motel accommodation with no on-site support, and is less expensive than paying for motel or caravan park accommodation. Clients who do not accept appropriate alternative short-term accommodation, for example crisis accommodation or shared accommodation, if practical, will not continue to receive Temporary Accommodation assistance from Housing NSW.
- It is proposed that clients be asked to pay for one or more nights of accommodation where they can clearly afford to do so. This is where clients have recently been paid or have savings, recognising that clients in temporary accommodation without kitchen facilities will need to pay more for food and as such can afford less for accommodation than if they were in a rental property. It is not proposed at this stage to develop a complex set of rules about how much a client should contribute, but to allow discretion for staff to ask for a reasonable contribution.
- There is no entitlement to any specific amount of Temporary Accommodation. The upper limit is 28 days in one year although staff do have the discretion to increase this amount where a client is genuinely looking but is unable to find accommodation or has found accommodation but cannot move in for a few days.



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