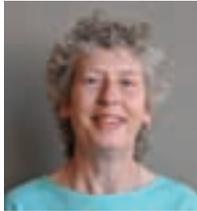


ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009

Council to
Homeless
Persons



The Key CHP Office Staff



Kathy Stuttard



Anne Cabrie



Akke Halma

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS

CHP Board Members

Michael Perusco	Chair, Sacred Heart Mission
Tony McKosker	St Mary's House of Welcome
Alan Wilson	Quantum Support Services
Jane Barnes	Salvation Army Adult Services
Maureen Buck	Waverley Emergency Accommodation Services
Dot Campbell	RDNS Homeless Persons Program
Shelley Mallett	Melbourne Citymission
Tony Keenan	Hanover Welfare Services, (Resigned March 2009)
Claire Nyblom	Melbourne Citymission, (resigned July 2009)

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Jane Lazzari	Youth Policy Officer
Trish Westmore	Acting Policy Officer
Annie Paliwal	HAS Manager
Angela Kyriakopoulos	HAS Advocate
Kerri Jackson	HAS Advocate, PESP Team Leader
Cassandra Bawden	PESP Project Worker/PESP Mentor
Sandra Milne	Project Manager, Sector Development
Diana Wolfe	Media and Communications Officer
Noel Murray	<i>Parity</i> Editor
Kathy Stuttard	Office Manager
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Artwork

Cover photograph by AJ

This photograph was part of the "Through Your Eyes" Photographic Project and Exhibition in 2008 — a joint project between the City of Sydney's Homelessness section, Pine Street Creative Arts Centre and people who are homeless in the City.

The photographs used in this edition also come from the City of Sydney Pine Street Creative Arts Centre's "Through Your Eyes" Photographic Project and Exhibition. Many thanks to Jane Hooper for all her assistance.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT MICHAEL PERUSCO

This has been a very eventful year for CHP and all those who work in the area of homelessness. The release of the Federal Governments White Paper "The Road Home" and their commitment to halving homelessness by 2020 has provided the best opportunity in Australia's history to tackle the issue in a meaningful way.

It is CHP's view that it is possible to end homelessness — it simply takes political will and the right resources and we have put this argument to both levels of Government very strongly. I am very proud of the role CHP has played in the lead up to the release of the White Paper. We demonstrated very clearly that we are a key stakeholder in the debate on homelessness at a Victorian and National level and this is only possible because of the CHP membership and the knowledge level this provides to effectively advocate for policies to end homelessness.

It is critical that we make the most of this opportunity and careful thorough planning is required to get it right. It is for this reason that we are pleased that the Victorian Government has committed to the development of a homelessness strategy for the period up to 2020.

In March 2009, the Board supported the secondment of its CEO, Deb Tsorbaris for a 4 month period to the Department of Human Services to assist in the development of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy. This secondment led to Deb's permanent appointment as Director, Housing Sector Development.

Deb has been a wonderful CEO and on behalf of the Board I thank her for her dedication and passion. Under her leadership the organisation has gone from strength to strength and is widely recognised as an influential voice across the country. We wish her all the very best in her new role and we are very pleased that a person with her level of commitment to ending homelessness has been appointed to this important role.

Deb's secondment and subsequent departure obviously put strain on the CHP team and I thank them for their outstanding effort this year. In particular, I thank David Wright-Howie for agreeing to be Acting CEO and for his leadership during this time.

I would also like to recognize the contribution of my Board colleagues

during this busy time and acknowledge Claire Nyblom and Tony Keenan who resigned during the year.

There is still much work ahead to ensure that this current political environment translates into better outcomes for people who are homeless and CHP will continue to play a key leadership role during this time.

Michael Perusco
CEO Sacred Heart Mission

Thank You

CHP would like to thank Deb Tsorbaris for her leadership, advocacy, commitment in working for policy and political change on homelessness.

Deb has made a significant contribution to debate, discussion and policy action regarding homelessness in Victoria and Australia.

Under Deb's guidance, CHP has grown to be a substantial advocacy and policy organisation.

We wish Deb well in her future work.

CHP would also like to thank Joy Pagalos who retired in November after working nearly seven years as the CHP Administrative Officer.

Joy undertook a multitude of tasks too many and too complicated to mention without which the organisation would have collapsed in a screaming heap.

Everyone at CHP wishes Joy well for her retirement and many thanks for putting up with all the demands and questions.



Deb Tsorbaris,
David Wright-Howie
and Joy Pagalos





ACTING CEO'S REPORT DAVID WRIGHT-HOWIE

In the past year there has been historic and momentous political and policy attention on homelessness. This has occurred nationally through the personal commitment of the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the Green Paper submission process, the release of Australia's first White Paper on homelessness and the initiation and implementation of key homelessness and social housing agreements with the states and territories.

Throughout 2008–09, CHP was engaged in significant national lobbying in various forms with Australian government MPs and departments. In partnership with other state and national peak bodies, CHP engaged in policy and media work to retain pressure and accountability on initial government commitments. This was important because in the lead up to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in December there was still uncertainty about the extent of the funding commitment that governments would make to homelessness. CHP's lobbying and advocacy work was greatly assisted by its Green Paper submission which was based on extensive consultation with key stakeholders. CHP has been informed that all the lobbying and advocacy work with the Australian government did have an influence in shaping the eventual agreements and commitments. CHP also attended meetings and delegations with the Victorian government, particularly with representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Office of Housing in the period prior to the COAG commitments.

As 2009 commenced, the policy focus shifted back to how the Victorian government was going to respond to targets and outcomes shaped by the Homelessness White Paper, particularly the global target of halving homelessness by 2020. The finalising of the commitments by the Australian and state and territory governments to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing also emphasised this. The funding for social and public housing through the Australian Government economic stimulus package, announced in early 2009, was also a tremendous boost to achieving both homelessness and

housing objectives. However, CHP has argued for a genuine cross-government approach to homelessness where a number of human service departments and their relevant Ministers were active and responsive to meeting homelessness targets and outcomes. Through this the objectives outlined in the Homelessness White Paper could be achieved. In Victoria, a new strategy was required which was based on substantial and high level cross-government mechanisms. In addition to this, specific policy and service delivery issues for both specialist and mainstream services needed to be addressed.

It is from this context that, in March 2009 Deb Tsorbaris accepted a secondment position in the Office of Housing and Community Building with the Department of Human Services for an initial period of 4 months. This was supported by the CHP Board. Margaret Crawford, Executive Director of the Office of Housing and Community Building was supportive of developing a new Victorian Homelessness Strategy further and asked Deb to assist in an advisory and development role. This created some change at CHP. The CHP Board appointed me to be the acting CEO during this period. This has been an important professional development experience for me.

The task of developing a new homelessness strategy in Victoria is substantial and challenging. We have an opportunity to deliver some real and long term change. It will rely on change within government but also in the homelessness and general non-government sector. The involvement of CHP and engagement with key sector stakeholders will be critical. This work has only just begun.

Major Themes, Activities and Highlights

Inaugural Victorian Homelessness Conference

On 19th November 2008, about 300 people attended the inaugural Victorian Homelessness Conference. CHP organised the conference in partnership with the homelessness service sector and through funding from the Office of Housing and Community Building in the Victorian Department of Human Services. CHP felt that it was time that Victoria had its own Conference given the size and commitment of services working with people experiencing homelessness in this state. The theme of the one-day conference was *Looking Back, Looking Forward* and the

conference program was based on evaluating and assessing the policy and program response over the past decade as well as beginning to shape a future direction for responding to homelessness in Victoria.

The Conference had three broad aims:

- 1 To deliver the first Victorian Conference, a participatory forum enabling the sector to have their views acknowledged and recorded, and to establish this as a regular two yearly conference.
- 2 To take the first steps towards a Victorian Government Homelessness Plan, to be implemented over the next decade. The conference to agree on the mechanisms and processes that should be in place for implementation.
- 3 To generate a unified sector response on the fundamentals expected in the Australian Government White Paper on homelessness and to use this to further lobby government and influence funding decisions.

Richard Wynne, Victorian Minister for Housing, Local Government and Indigenous Affairs launched the conference and took questions from the floor. Tanya Plibersek, Australian Government Minister for Housing and the Status of Women, attended the conference later in the day to present the inaugural 2008 Victorian Homelessness Awards. These awards acknowledged some of the great work being undertaken by the Victorian homelessness service sector and were a particular highlight of the conference.

Through the conference evaluation process, the general feedback about the conference was positive with most people responding that it was useful and effective. There was a strong view that the conference was a bit rushed and there needed to be more time for discussion. Some suggestions for future conferences included: fewer guest speakers, more breakout groups with smaller numbers, more research presented and discussed, conduct an action oriented session, more sessions on practice issues, have more service users attending, invite more people from outside the homelessness service sector and promote the conference more in the media.

Nisha Makin was employed as the conference coordinator and did a fantastic job. Thanks to Nisha for all her hard work. The CHP staff and PESP members also did a great job in facilitating and organising the conference.

Prominent Advocacy and Media Campaigns

In 2009, CHP has engaged in two significant advocacy and media campaigns. The 'Call this a Home?' Rooming House Campaign was

launched in July this year as a partnership between CHP, the Tenants Union of Victoria, VCOSS, HomeGround Services and St Vincent de Paul. The campaign was established to highlight the appalling conditions of people living in sub-standard private rooming houses and call for government action. The campaign called on the Victorian government to develop minimum standards for rooming houses, introduce effective registration, monitoring and enforcement, establish a licensing system, enforce compliance with serious penalties and uphold resident's rights. Many agencies and individuals supported the campaign. The campaign has led to political movement with the establishment of a Taskforce to advise the government on recommendations for change regarding rooming houses. CHP was a participant of this Taskforce. The Taskforce Report and recommendations, released in October 2009 are reflective of the campaign objectives and the Victorian government has committed to delivering on all recommendations.

Also launched in July 2009 was the Counting the Homeless 2006 Victorian Regional data. This Census data provides the number of people recorded as experiencing homelessness in regions of Victoria on Census night in 2006. CHP engaged in media advocacy work in partnership with others to promote the issue of homelessness particularly on a region by region basis. We were successful in receiving TV, radio and print coverage for the media campaign. CHP was particularly pleased that local and regional media responded with stories related to their areas.



Accreditation at CHP

Like most services in the homelessness service sector, CHP is undergoing the accreditation and continuous quality improvement process. This is an important step towards CHP improving its services for its members and stakeholders. The accreditation review will occur in late 2009. CHP staff have been working hard to document current systems and make numerous internal changes. This has been an arduous process but one that will serve CHP well in the long term.

Through the accreditation process it has been acknowledged that CHP needs to boost its administration area. The CHP Board approved for a new Office Manager to be appointed to assist with the quality improvement systems changes as well as improve the administrative functions of CHP. The appointment of this person will be crucial to CHP implementing necessary internal changes.

Strategic and Business Planning

During 2009 CHP completed its Business Plan to operationalise the strategic directions established in the Strategic Plan committed to last year. The Business Plan contains key activities, outcomes, performance measures, priorities and partners for research, policy and advocacy, youth policy, *Parity*, consumer participation, community engagement, sector development and governance and operations. It also includes a risk management summary. Thanks to Russell Fisher for his assistance with the development of this plan.

Program Areas

Media and Communications

The media and communications work at CHP has been given a tremendous boost through the work of Media Officer, Diana Wolfe. Her work has assisted CHP to gain more substantive media attention on the issue of homelessness. Diana has developed excellent media materials for National Homeless Persons Week, the CHP Conference and the Rooming House campaign. Other work has included developing homelessness reporting guidelines, organising media training for CHP staff and developing a proposal for an upgrade of the CHP website.

HAS and PESP

It has been a challenging year for the Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) particularly with staff changes and meeting accreditation requirements. Annie Paliwell and her team have done an excellent job in providing advocacy services to clients of Homelessness Assistance services

and coordinating consumer participation through the Peer Education Support Program.

HAS have responded to thousands of enquiries and complaints from service users. Many of these complaints reflect significant systemic issues particularly people living in private sub-standard rooming houses. The themes in other complaints have included discriminatory attitudes, service exclusion and breaches of privacy and confidentiality.

The Peer Education and Support Program (PESP) is an integral part to the work of CHP. PESP is a group of people who have experienced homelessness who continually inform CHP's understanding of homelessness, assist homelessness services with important service user feedback and how to engage with consumers, provide important input into government strategies and processes and assist CHP with media and public relations. For CHP, people who have experienced homelessness are an essential stakeholder and the PESP is a key expression of this.

Member of the PESP team provided excellent logistical support to the Victorian Homelessness Conference and have fed into CHP policy development, client feedback with many homelessness services and made a significant contribution to CHP media and communications campaigns. Considerable courage is needed to stand in front of TV cameras and tell some of your story and this is what some of the PESP team did this year. I thank and congratulate all the PESP team for their work.

Policy, Research and Advocacy

Once again CHP has played a prominent role in the policy, research and advocacy area. The CHP Homelessness White Paper submission is a substantial resource which has assisted CHP in many policy forums and discussions since it was completed in June 2008.

The CHP policy area played a significant role in assisting the content of the Victorian Homelessness Conference particularly the breakout workshop sessions. Other highlights from the year include:

- Analysis and information materials regarding the Counting the Homeless 2006 report;
- Policy background material for the 'Call this a Home?' Rooming House Campaign;
- Facilitating and assisting the development of the *Does Camping Count? Children and Homelessness* Research project, and
- Producing an Options Paper for the Office of Housing and Community Building on Student Placement for the Homelessness sector.

A substantial project for the policy area of CHP has been the Victorian

Homelessness Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Project. This project facilitates and funds the linking of researchers with sector agency to provide both training and workshops and develop specific, small-scale, sector research and evaluation projects. This project is new territory but is seeking to ensure that research is linked to sector agencies and to assist and support those agencies to engage in research and evaluation projects.

Training and workshops on homelessness data have commenced with further sessions regarding family violence data and evaluation to be held before the end of 2009. Several agency based research proposals to be assisted by the project are currently being considered.

Trish Westmore has stepped into the policy role at CHP and has done a tremendous job on key policy and research projects.

The focus of the youth policy work has been preparing and developing content and material for the Youth Homelessness Conference held in October this year. The Conference sought to build on the lessons from the Victorian government's Creating Connections framework and also develop ideas to respond to young people experiencing homelessness as part of the new Victorian Homelessness Strategy. The Conference included workshops on housing and support models, workforce issues, young pregnant and parenting, connecting young people with family, partnerships, leaving care.

CHP was also involved in the development and delivery of youth practice workshops across the state. These workshops enable youth practitioners to receive important practice based information and to engage in some of the key practice issues for the youth homelessness sector. CHP also gained some insights into how the delivery of practice training could be enhanced and improved.

I would like to thank Jane Lazzari for all her work this in the youth policy area. This continues to be an important position in the policy and advocacy work of CHP.

Sector Resourcing and Development

Most of the homelessness service sector has completed their accreditation review. CHP, through the great work of Sandy Milne, has played an important role in assisting and supporting agencies to do this. The accreditation process has assisted many agencies to develop mentoring and inter-agency support processes, reflect and improve service delivery practice and provided some opportunities for training and professional development. It has also highlighted some the workforce recruitment and retention issues and has overall been hard work. Some important

investment and strategic thinking will be required in the new Victorian Homelessness Strategy regarding workforce planning and support, professional development and training.

CHP has been involved in a substantial number of consultations, meetings and training sessions regarding accreditation and quality improvement with sector agencies, accreditation bodies, DHS and other peaks. CHP has particularly supported small agencies and indigenous services.

Publications and Parity

Parity is the major homelessness publication in Australia and enjoys a well established sector and public profile. Throughout this year *Parity* has continued to break some new ground especially through specific editions focused on homelessness beyond Victoria. An important edition will be launched soon regarding homelessness in New South Wales which will act as an important resource for that state and is a significant evolution in the development of *Parity*. Also, an edition regarding Early Intervention and Prevention was launched in New Zealand in March 2009 and is part of a growing relationship with our cross-Tasman neighbours.

Whilst all *Parity* editions make a great contribution to homelessness discussion and debate, some significant ones in the past year include:

- White Paper edition, launched in March 2009, focusing on contributions to the Australian Government homelessness policy development process, and
- Meeting the Needs of the Elderly Homelessness edition in August 2008 that provided information and perspectives on a target group that is often not referred to in the homelessness policy debate.
- I thank Noel Murray for his tireless work on *Parity* and other CHP publications.

Looking Ahead

CHP has much to be proud of and to build on. This year has been one which has seen significant organisational change and strategic directions will need to be reassessed and evaluated.

CHP will play an active role in the development of the new Victorian 2020 Homelessness Strategy through the provision of policy ideas and leadership but also through the facilitation of communication tools and mechanisms and engagement with key stakeholders. We will continue to partner with other peak bodies and services on important advocacy and public awareness campaigns.

David Wright-Howie
Acting CEO

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the CHP members and *Parity* subscribers for your support and involvement.

Thanks to the support and guidance of the CHP Board in a challenging time for the organisation.

Special thanks to the Office of Housing and Community Building who provide the funds for our work. Particular thanks to Margaret Crawford, Peter Lake, Dianne Godfrey, Jac Nancarrow and Mary Marshall.

And last but not least, thanks to all the staff and PESP team for their fantastic work and continued dedication.



HOMELESSNESS SECTOR DEVELOPMENT SANDY MILNE

Looking back to last year's Annual Report, it seems that so much, yet so little has changed! 2009 has been a year of consolidation for many in the homelessness sector in regard to quality and accreditation work.

Close to three quarters of the sector will have been through the accreditation review process at the time of writing. Accreditation review outcomes to date have highlighted organisational and practice strengths that include:

- a strong rights focus and a strong culture of working with people's strengths;
- a strong focus on access, equity and quality case work, and
- a strong capacity to work with community partners.

There have been sector development benefits arising from the process, such as:

- statewide sector mentoring and peer support across organisations;
- organisational and cross service reflection, discussion and improvement on service delivery and review, including consumer involvement, and
- the opportunity for training and development of employees in aspects of organisational quality.

These achievements affirm and highlight the strength and quality of work across the broad homelessness sector. Congratulations!

As noted last year, feedback to me from the overwhelming majority of the sector has been that the process has been beneficial, through opportunity to reflect and improve on organisational structures or systems to support service delivery. Ensuring quality of service is the responsibility of organisations and the framework has helped to achieve this; yet accreditation is an extra requirement. This requirement has not been achieved without considerable time, effort and resourcing by all involved. Many people have worked 'over and above' to support their organisations to achieve accreditation outcomes. This has taken a toll on all staff and services in terms of cost, time and resourcing.

While the sector generally welcomes and responds well to service system improvements and development, service accreditation requirements

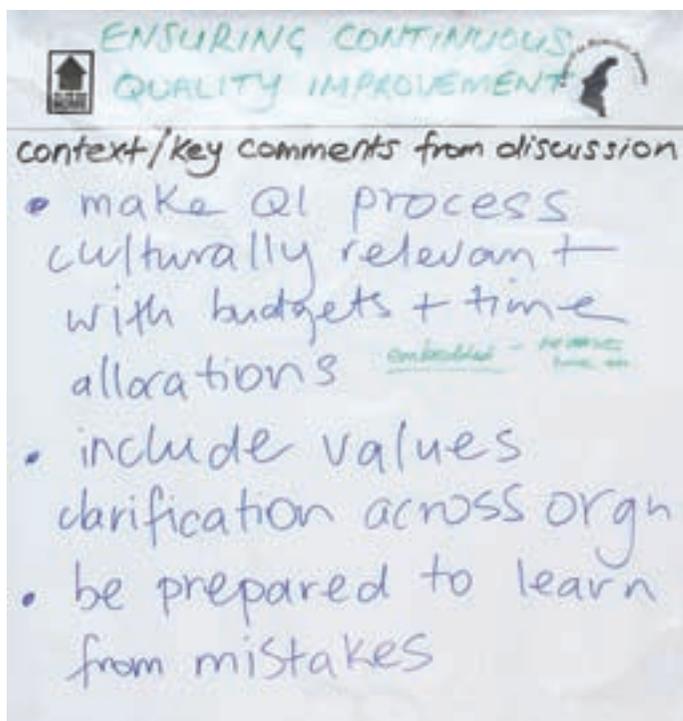
have been and will continue to be implemented in parallel with other statewide or national service system developments. This means that in many cases the same people are trying to do a number of significant pieces of developmental work while also meeting their commitments to daily service delivery, with no extra support. This is a situation that must be addressed in the Homelessness 2020 service planning, as it is simply not sustainable for organisations and their staff. We have an opportunity through our consultations to seek recognition for and properly address the dedicated project work that these improvements require as an additional cost to running a service.

I have been involved with a number of projects throughout the year, including:

- Feedback on the DHS generic standards approach.
- Feedback on the QIC review of their core standards.
- Feedback on National standards and legislation, which included:
 - Consultative processes towards the development of standards, including consumers and reference to accredited quality providers; due consideration of the approach to implementation and review — external accreditation may not be appropriate within the first few years; opportunities to develop the capacity of people in the sector through adequately funded training and peer support and review models; and a long term, planned and staged approach to the project.
- Work with the Department of Planning and Community Development, Office for the Community Sector, Workforce Capacity Building project.
- Developing training and support options to small services.
- Involvement in the Leadership Victoria Governance and Leadership training.

It has been a pleasure to again work closely with DV Vic through Deb Western in providing support, resource, training and advocacy to the sector over the past 12 months. Some of this work has involved:

- Joint CHP/DV Vic quarterly sector meetings
- Sector training
- Liaison with the Centre for Excellence



- Liaison and advocacy with the Sector Development Unit, OOH for specific sector training, resources, support or accreditation policy development
- Liaison and advocacy with QICSA

I have also continued some involvement with Indigenous services through the North West project, occasional liaison with the Loddon Mallee project and attendance at quarterly Indigenous services network meetings as CHP rep. I have thoroughly enjoyed this work and hope to continue through to successful completion of the projects.

Thank you to Deb and DV Vic, Judith at The Centre, Evie, Gail and others at QICSA and to Mary Marshall's team in the OOH for productive working relationships.

Looking forward

The next 12 months is not slowing down for the sector with the 2020 initiatives, ongoing quality requirements and many other commitments.

This position is funded to the end June 2010. To maximise opportunities for sector support I plan to further develop the CHP accreditation section of the website with new tools, training opportunities, resources and information and to focus on ways to support and resource sector/peer support and mentoring. I hope to consult with you about these pieces of work. Strategy and planning for workforce development is still uncertain, although this is an area I hope to have some involvement in early next year.

Saving the best to last, I have again thoroughly enjoyed working with people in the sector in 2009. I have particularly enjoyed being contacted at the completion of reviews and hearing your relief at that stage of the work being completed! I have really missed the earlier opportunities for regular face to face contact with people in rural areas but enjoy being able to catch up by phone or email to hear of your issues, progress and service developments.

I was on a 3 month secondment to help establish the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service in Southern region early this year. It was great that on leaving I could circulate a list of people who were willing to share their quality and accreditation expertise with others. I can now add many more people to this list.

Thank you to all of you who have been willing to support your peers in the process, I know that this happens in many ways. Thanks especially to Deb Western, Sue Yorston and Rebecca Cleaver for your support while I was away. Thanks also to my colleagues at CHP for your support in the varied work we have been involved with throughout the year.

Sandy Milne
Project Manager, Sector Development

THE INAUGURAL VICTORIAN HOMELESSNESS AWARDS



Tommy Morris accepts his award from Tanya Plibersek

CHP congratulates the winners of the 2008 Inaugural Victorian Homelessness Awards.

The CHP was honoured to host the inaugural Victorian Homelessness Awards, supported by the Department of Human Services — Office of Housing, at our conference in November.

The awards highlighted the often unacknowledged work of the sector and its unsung heroes, and were presented by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Australian Government Minister for Housing and the Status of Women.

The 23 nominations were judged by a panel of representatives from the Council to Homeless Persons, Domestic Violence Victoria, the Community Housing Federation of Victoria, Department of Human Services and the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

The judges commented: *"Many of the applications demonstrated an exceptional calibre of people going above and beyond in their commitment to people experiencing homelessness."*

"It was a difficult choice but this year's winners exemplified the cooperative spirit, boundless energy and commitment, positive outcomes, innovation and resourcefulness we were seeking."

The winners were:

Rewarding Housing Innovation — Regional Victoria

Arising out of stage two of Victoria's Youth Housing Action Plan, Mallee Accommodation and Support Program provides an innovative housing model. Believed to be the first of this type of supported accommodation, this program is vital for young homeless people in the Mallee region.

Youth Homelessness Alliance Western — Creating a better response for young homeless people

This mix of dedicated youth providers have developed a system for sharing information between services that avoids young people repeatedly having to explain their 'story' to each new service providers. The result is a comprehensive story, an improved capacity of services to respond to young people, and ultimately a feeling among young homeless people that they are making progress.

Volunteer Kitchen Hand at Ozanam House

Tommy Morris received the Volunteer award for his 26 years as a volunteer at Ozanam House, a short-term crisis accommodation and support service for homeless men. Tommy Morris' commitment and dedication is nothing short of incredible. Tommy is an integral member of the catering team at Ozanam House, where he begins his day at 6am helping to prepare the 2500+ meals for each week. He is a mentor for more than 1000 school students and volunteers the pass through Ozanam in their various community and corporate volunteer programs.

Postscript

Tommy passed away in March, and was honoured in a memorial ceremony held at Ozanam House.

Indigenous Tenants at Risk

Through her program Indigenous Tenants at Risk at the Mildura Aboriginal Co-operative, Ceciline Biles is a tireless advocate for people at risk of becoming homeless. Ceciline (or Ceno as she is known) has an ability to form strong relationships with agencies and clients, which are paramount in her receiving funding and support to help clients in their tenancies.

Brayton Accommodation & Support Program — Regional Victoria

Brayton delivers a crisis accommodation service in Shepparton. Several years in the making, its Good Lives Model builds on the basic principles of care — shelter, food and safety — and develops biological, psychological and social responses. The Brayton team's work is a great example of what can be accomplished when organisations cooperate.

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Awards honoured Beth Thomson. Beth's 30 years of service in the community sector earned her great respect, especially during her 13 years as CEO of Wombat Housing.



Victorian Indigenous Network coordinator, Dan Laws, accepts the award on behalf of Ceciline Biles



Accepting the award for Beth Thomson's lifetime achievement — Steve Maher and Diane Sergey

SENIOR POLICY OFFICER'S REPORT DAVID WRIGHT-HOWIE

Homelessness is now firmly entrenched on the political and policy agenda of both the Australian and Victorian governments. Through the Australian government's White Paper on Homelessness articulating a general policy direction and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness we have genuine targets and outcomes to work towards and be accountable for. These targets will also be assisted by several social housing agreements including the National Partnership on Social Housing, the National Affordable Housing Agreement and funding for housing contained in the Nation Building economic stimulus package.

CHP can be proud of its contribution to the national and state-wide policy discussion and development in the past year. This began in early 2008 and continued into 2009 in the lead up to and announcement of major government agreements. Our submission to the Australian Government's Green and White paper process entitled *All the Way Home: Future Directions to Address Homelessness* provided a substantive platform for further policy development. It is referred to or cited several times in the Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness which was released in December 2008. CHP also made a significant policy contribution to the Australians for Ending Homelessness campaign. This campaign, developed by state peak bodies and Homelessness Australia, was designed to keep to the pressure on the Australian government regarding their homelessness commitments. The campaign was launched in Canberra on the one year anniversary of the election of Rudd Labor government. The campaign process involved several trips to the nation's capital to visit MPs and Federal public servants.

Whilst 2008 was a year of national policy focus culminating in key Australian and state and territory government commitments and agreements, attention in 2009 has shifted back towards how the Victorian government will implement and deliver on homelessness outcomes and targets. Now the political agreements and commitments have been

made, the detailed policy work needs to begin. There is general consensus that to achieve reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness that a genuine cross-government approach, involving a number of human service Ministers and departments is required. This is the direction we are moving towards in Victoria. CHP looks forward to policy development and engaging stakeholders to assist a new Victorian plan and meet the considerable challenges and dilemmas in halving homelessness by 2020.

To progress the Victorian approach to homelessness, Deb Tsorbaris, CEO of CHP was seconded to the Office of Housing and Community Building in the Department of Human Services in March 2009. I have been in the Acting CEO role since that time. Trish Westmore was appointed to the policy position on a short term contract. I would like to thank Trish for all her work in the policy role during this year.





Trish Westmore, Acting Policy and Projects Officer

Other Major Highlights

CHP Victorian Homelessness Conference

In November 2008, CHP hosted the inaugural Victorian Homelessness Conference which was attended by about 300 people. The Conference focused on both looking at the achievements in Victoria over the past ten years as well as exploring future possibilities and initiatives. The policy work for the conference was directed at the content for the 10 workshop sessions. This included introductory and background text as well as crafting questions for facilitated discussion. The themes of these sessions were measuring the progress of the Victorian Homelessness Strategy, lessons and insights from consultation processes, learning about VHS pilot projects, service system redevelopment, sector development and continuous quality improvement, the homelessness service workforce, specific housing models for people experiencing homelessness, the focus and emphasis of support programs, early intervention and partnerships between homelessness services and mainstream services.

Counting the Homeless 2006

The Australian 'Counting the Homeless' 2006 Report produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, was released in September 2008. CHP conducted analysis of this report, provided and disseminated an information summary, produced and sent out a media release and conducted a briefing session attended by the authors of the report, Chris Chamberlain and David MacKenzie. These figures make a vital contribution to both our understanding of homelessness and the extent of homelessness in Australia and Victoria. The national figures show that the number of people who are homeless or marginally housed on any given night in Australia is about 123,000, which is similar to the previous count. However, family homelessness has increased significantly since 2001, along with homelessness experienced by single people and couples. Youth homelessness has declined substantially demonstrating some policy success with young people. However, the figures were recorded before the global financial crisis hit which, combined with a tight rental housing market, would create the conditions for increased homelessness. Also, there are always methodological challenges with the homeless count and most of these relate to undercounting. This indicates that the numbers on census night in 2006 were probably higher than those recorded. CHP has also prepared information and media strategy for the Victorian regional 'Counting the Homeless' report.

Rooming House Campaign

People living in rooming houses are a substantial part of the homeless population. Large numbers of people in Victoria are living in private, sub-standard rooming houses that are not affordable, have no security of tenure and can experience physical violence and exploitation. Over the past few years CHP and many other organisations have been informed that the number of these establishments has been increasing. In early 2009, CHP, the Tenants Union of Victoria, VCOSS, HomeGround Services and St Vincent de Paul, began developing a campaign for policy change regarding rooming houses. This media campaign, to be launched in during 2009 will highlight the conditions that residents of rooming houses are living in a push for regulatory and policy change. Specifically the campaign is calling for the development of minimum standards for rooming houses, introducing more effective registration, monitoring and enforcement, establishing a licensing system, enforcing compliance through heavy penalties for breaches and upholding residents' rights through an increase in outreach support and improved information. The development of the campaign materials has been greatly assisted by the work of students at RMIT University who attended a unique course entitled the Human Rights Studio. Through the course, marketing, public relations and media and communications students produced campaign information materials and mechanisms which were then developed by the campaign group.

Victorian Homelessness Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Project

In April 2007, CHP facilitated the first National Homelessness Research Conference. The Conference brought together key academics, public servants and community organisation representatives to discuss a range of issues related to the national development, coordination, implementation and communication of homelessness research.

Some of the general conclusions from the Conference were that:

- Homelessness research needed rejuvenation, review, strengthening and support.
- Research and knowledge gaps need to be determined and addressed.
- Greater collaboration and communication should occur between all stakeholders related and committed to homelessness research.
- More review of research design was needed.
- Whilst there are some tensions, there needed to be improved links between research and policy application.
- Consensus was needed on the ethics framework for homelessness research.

The 2007 Research Conference played an important background and context role in the formation of the Victorian Homelessness Research and Evaluation Capacity Building Project.

The project aims to facilitate and enable professional support and skill development of community agency research projects regarding homelessness through workshop and seminar training opportunities and small scale consultancies for sector based research projects.

The key objectives of the project are:

- 1 To facilitate the development and improvement of research based skills by community agency practitioners.
- 2 To assist in the endorsement and validity of some research skills used by community agencies.
- 3 To develop a mechanism to improve relationships between academics and academic institutions and community agencies working with people who are homeless.
- 4 To enable community agencies to access the expertise required to begin small research projects
- 5 To offer a formal and practical way for academic researchers to learn about and engage with community agencies working with people who are homeless.

In late 2007, the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP) Coordination and Development Committee (CAD) endorsed the project and agreed to provide funding of \$82,500 to Housing and Community Building (H&CB) in Victoria. The project is viewed as a trial which potentially could have national application.

The Victorian Office of Housing has commissioned CHP to deliver the project which is due for completion in mid 2010. Some of the workshop themes developed include understanding and applying homelessness data, family violence data and evaluation methods and approaches.

Some of the key benefits of the project include:

- The development of research skills and knowledge in Victorian Homelessness Assistance agencies
- More robust and rigorous sector based research regarding homelessness
- Enabling more sector based research projects to be undertaken
- Greater use of research skills by agencies in reporting on project and program outcomes
- Developing and improving the articulation, communication and understanding of agency practice regarding people experiencing homelessness

- Enabling mutually beneficial relationships between homelessness sector agencies and academics and research professionals.

Children and Homelessness Research

CHP is a partner with the Salvation Army, University of Melbourne, Melbourne City Mission and Family Access Network is a major independent research study and report regarding children and homelessness. The Salvation Army is the major funding contributor to the research. This research, undertaken by the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at the University of Melbourne, aims to gain insight into the homelessness experience of children accommodated in transitional support services in an urban setting. It is the first major investigation of children's perspectives on the experience of homelessness in Victoria. The research will be available in late 2009 and will make a significant contribution to the development of policy responses to family homelessness in Victoria. Special thanks to the authors of this research, Maggie Kirkman, Deborah Keys, Alina Turner and Daria Bodzak and all the organisational partners.

Future and On-going work

CHP will continue to be active in policy development regarding a new approach to homelessness in Victoria as we work together to halve homelessness by 2020. This should involve engagement with many departmental areas of the Victorian government, a range of service providers and stakeholders and philanthropy and local government.

I would like to thank all the people and organisations who have assisted the policy work of CHP this year.

David Wright-Howie
Senior Policy Officer



YOUTH POLICY JANE LAZZARI

As Youth Policy Officer (YPO) at CHP my role is primarily to support the implementation of the Victorian Youth Homelessness Action Plan Stage 2: 2006–2010, known as *Creating Connections*. The YPO position is funded by Department of Human Services, Housing and Community Building and is auspiced jointly by YACVic and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. The position is currently funded to June 2010.

The purpose of the YPO role is to advocate on behalf of young people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, as well as youth homelessness workers who work with young homeless people. Much of the work is project based under *Creating Connections*, however the role is varied and includes responding to a range of requests for information, community education and media work, writing articles, writing submissions to government, coordinating the state wide Youth Refuge Coordinators' Network and sector consultation. A range of tasks and activities have been undertaken in the last year.

The Vulnerable Youth Framework Discussion Paper was released for comment by the Office for Youth, Department of Planning and Community Development, in September 2008. The Framework is being developed as a further document building on DPCD's work in *A Fairer Victoria* (published annually).

The Discussion Paper described vulnerability and disadvantage amongst young Victorians. CHP supports a position that young people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness are amongst the most vulnerable in our communities. They include young people in targets groups already identified including CALD and Indigenous young people and young people with disabilities. We argued that young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be identified in the framework as a specific target group requiring specific interventions and program responses.

Regional consultations were held and CHP assisted with organising one specifically for the youth homelessness service sector. This was well-

attended by about 40 practitioners and HCB reps who moved into smaller groups to discuss the issues of most concern to them. While the Office for Youth recorded its own feedback from the consultation, CHP also recorded the feedback, which was incorporated into its detailed submission with recommendations. Thus far, the final Vulnerable Youth Framework has not been published. CHP looks forward to working with the Office for Youth and DPCD under White Paper and cross-sector reforms moving forward.

A key initiative under *Creating Connections* was the rollout in the first half of 2009 of a series of three practice development workshops specifically targeted at the youth homelessness service sector and generalist homelessness services who work with young people. The one-day workshop themes were: Youth-focused Practice, Pathways Approaches and Early Intervention. The workshops were developed and delivered by a consortium of services consisting of CHP, the Youth Substance Abuse Service (as the Registered Training Organisation), the Salvation Army and Melbourne Citymission. Overall the workshops were well-attended and those who participated were satisfied with both the content and the delivery. The workshops will be evaluated and it is hoped that outcomes will be incorporated into possible future practice development training.

Commencement of the process for evaluation of *Creating Connections* began in March with the appointment by Housing and Community Building of consultants KPMG. The evaluation process included file reviews and interviews with young people using homelessness services as well as workers in youth homelessness, generalist homelessness agencies and allied services. It is expected that the evaluation will be completed by November 2009. It is anticipated that a new youth homelessness strategy will be developed and CHP is strongly advocating that a youth-specific approach is continued under new State and Federal plans.

Very recently on October 28th CHP held the first Victorian Youth Conference in partnership with Housing and Community Building, DHS. Over 250 delegates attended the magnificent MCG to hear 35 speakers over the course of 10 sessions speak about youth homelessness practice in its current context and also moving forward under White Paper reforms.

Themes at the Conference included early intervention, with a keynote presentation by Dr. Phil Crane of Queensland University of Technology,



engaging with family, young people leaving care, young people who are pregnant and parenting, education and pre-employment, sustainable housing and support outcomes, workforce development and partnerships — including Foyer-like models with the private sector.

While the Conference was focused on practice in the youth homelessness service sector, CHP was mindful of including young people's voices on the day. We ran two youth forums — one in the southern metropolitan region and one in Geelong — with local services who assisted by bringing along young people who use their services to speak to us about their experiences of homelessness, the service system, and what messages they might have for government. Both forums were attended by over 15 young people who had plenty to say about their experiences, both positive and negative. They were able to clearly share what was needed to improve parts of the service system, with a majority stating that *youth-friendly services* were paramount to feeling welcome, supported and worthy of a service when they are experiencing a crisis or needing support that they cannot receive elsewhere. Quotes recorded from these Forums were printed up onto large posters displayed at the Conference, and a five-minute audio recording of the quotes was played after a presentation by a young woman by the name of Andie. Andie shared with delegates her experiences of coming out of homelessness. She now hopes to study biology at university!

Another way we engaged young people was by commissioning the Artful Dodgers Studio to design the Conference logo. The ADS provides creative and innovative spaces for young people whose lives have been affected by difficult circumstances. We were very impressed with the final result, knowing that it had been created by a young artist. We also commissioned "Royal Fam" from Footscray Arts Centre to choreograph a dance number especially for the Conference. As you can see from the photos of the day, the young men were vibrant, energetic and very skilled at their style of crumping.

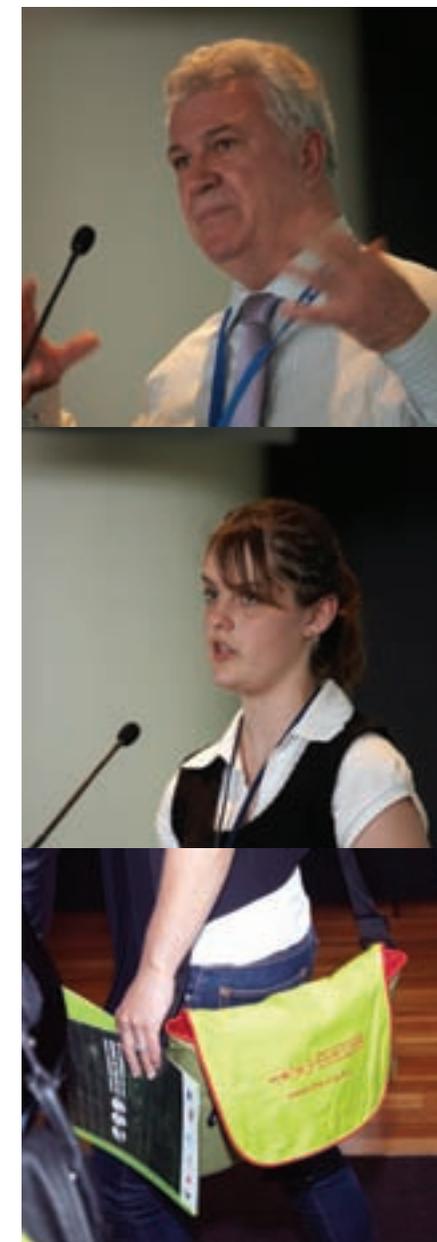
An evaluation report is being prepared and will feed into CHP's and HCB's planning for future events. A Conference Proceedings document will be released by CHP in February 2010. Speaker presentations and other information can be found at the Conference website at www.chpevents.org.au. The youth edition of *Parity* — a pre-Conference edition — can also be back-ordered by going to www.chp.org.au/parity. Sharon Osman was employed by CHP as the Youth Homelessness Conference Coordinator. Sharon did a fantastic job and on behalf of CHP I would like to thank her for all her work in making the Conference such a great success.

The National Youth Coalition for Housing (NYCH) is an incorporated youth peak homelessness body that forms one of the "councils" that work with the federal peak body for homelessness, Homelessness Australia. NYCH meets face-to-face twice a year and this year I was fortunate to attend a meeting with representatives from across the country in Alice Springs. As the Victorian representative, I got a very different perspective on homelessness, particularly as it affects young Indigenous people and their families. Tracy McNee, Manager of Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Services, kindly showed us around the town by car, indicated the town camps (which are only metres away from brand new housing), took us to visit two different services (the only refuge in Alice Springs is not Indigenous-specific however most of its clients are Indigenous) and gave us a thorough description of the issues at the local Council, State and Federal levels. Did you know that some of the state-owned housing tenanted by Indigenous people has a sign on the front fence banning the drinking of alcohol on the property? I could not imagine this occurring in Victoria. I came back to Melbourne feeling somewhat comforted that while we in Victoria don't have everything we need for young people, we are indeed more fortunate at this point in time.

As many readers would be aware, the Federal Government's White Paper on homelessness, *"The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness"* was launched in December 2008. This is a key document for change moving forward, and CHP is keen to see a continued youth-specific response to homeless in Victoria under the new National Partnership Agreement.

I look forward to the many exciting developments coming up in the next year, and particularly look forward to continuing work with those of you in the youth homelessness and mainstream service sectors who wish to better understand and address youth homelessness with CHP.

Jane Lazzari
Youth Policy Officer





HOMELESSNESS ADVOCACY SERVICE (HAS)

Homelessness Advocacy Service incorporating the Peer Education Support Program (PESP)

HAS Staff: Annie Paliwal, *Manager;*
Angela Kyriakopoulos, *Advocate;*
Kerri Jackson, *Advocate, PESP Team Leader*

PESP: Cassandra Bawden, *PESP Project Worker,*
PESP Mentor

Lauren Forrester, Alan Martin,
David Montgomery, Emily Hardy,
Sally Lowden, Erika Lodge, Simon Peavey

It has been a huge year for homelessness in Australia. For the first time homelessness has featured on the national agenda. 2008–2009 has been an important year for the Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) marking 16 years of providing a consumer focused rights based service. The HAS looks forward to opportunities to influence positive change for those affected by homelessness and will continue to be an agent for consumers to have a strong voice in shaping the developing 2020 Victorian Homelessness Strategy.

The Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) aims to secure and protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness through advocacy, effective complaint management, state wide training, community education, partnerships, and consumer participation through the Peer Education Support Program (PESP).

Complaints

HAS provides state-wide advocacy to individuals who have complaints with any of the 300+ homelessness services in Victoria that are funded through the Department of Human Services. These services include

SAAP, THM, funded rooming houses and social housing models. During 2008–09, HAS dealt with 3286 episodes of assistance including 720 complex complaints requiring follow up case work, 298 calls regarding Housing Establishment Fund referrals of individuals and families, including children, to private rooming houses.

People with complaints come to HAS through different referral channels. People are referred directly from homelessness services, through support workers, the PESP and consumers. All homelessness services are mandated to inform service users of HAS as an independent non-legal advocacy agent. Complaints raised through HAS relate to inappropriate policy application and practice. Some of the complaints can be resolved through clearing channels of communication to remove potential erroneous assumptions and failed dialogue. People who are attempting to access homelessness services while experiencing crisis often feel disempowered and not always aware of their rights. The starting point for effective advocacy is to assist in clarifying the complaint.

Our role is to ensure that the issue/s are clearly articulated, taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner in accordance with the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards, the Consumer Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, the DV VIC Code of Practise and relevant legislation. With an increase in recurring homelessness it is often the case that many of those who approach HAS will need to re-approach the service for assistance in the future. This is of particular relevance with the implementation of 'Opening Doors' and in rural and isolated areas, where 'service choices' for consumers are increasingly limited.

Our aim is to raise complaints based on the principle of continuous improvement whereby consumer feedback and complaints are welcomed as opportunities for enhanced service provision. It is imperative that people who raise complaints are confident that the process will not result in potential or perceived retaliation or service exclusion. Where legal advice is required by a complainant an appropriate referral is then made to a community legal centre, Victoria Legal Aid or other legal service provider. Where appropriate HAS then works through the relevant service's grievance procedures to seek to achieve affirmative outcomes.

Complaint Trends

There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints raised regarding alleged inappropriate Housing Establishment Funded referrals to private rooming houses. Often people do not pursue these complaints due to fear of eviction into homelessness and/or retaliation. The practice of referring people to unsafe, inappropriate and unsustainable private rooming house accommodation is emerging as major issue for the sector. Workers do not want to refer people to unregistered private rooming houses but are forced to due to lack of emergency stock. The drive to improve rooming house registration, legislation and monitoring has paid dividends over the last year. However, as long as profit is to be made from homelessness providers purchasing emergency accommodation from private rooming house operators, these transactions will continue. Future homelessness strategies should incorporate the most suitable use of HEF for short term accommodation that does not compromise people who are experiencing homelessness or the people committed to serving them.

"My 16 year old daughter and I were referred to this house in the suburbs, it was really run down. It had been converted into a rooming house. The service paid for one week rent. After that I paid the rent to this bloke, no receipt, no tenancy agreement, no contact details for repairs. He charged \$180 per week. The place is a hovel that we are forced to share with 6 other people. Every night there are fights. We are frightened to leave our room at night and I can't buy food that needs to be kept in the fridge because it will be stolen. Is this all the government can offer a family after finally having the courage to escape violence?"

The service model used by HAS is to work with consumers to empower them and to facilitate maximum participation in the process. It is an objective of HAS that consumers take up and exercise their rights within the service system and beyond, and that people affected by homelessness with complaints are empowered by the process. Effective complaint resolution procedures based on mutual respect, social inclusion and justice are the foundation of a successful advocacy service. HAS is ideally situated to provide CHP with on the ground evidence based systemic issues and trends that can be addressed on a broader policy platform.

HAS sees recurring themes in complaints as follows:

- People issued with 120 day notice to vacate on sign up of tenancy contract creating a constant sense of insecure tenure and affording services enormous power of discretion in management of tenancy
- Eviction from THM properties with no exit options

- Discrimination on the grounds of having experienced homelessness
- Service exclusion due to disability
- Service banning without appropriate referral for continued support
- Not being treated with dignity and respect
- Lack of support and appropriate referral
- Breach of privacy and confidentiality
- Punitive and patronising attitudes
- Inappropriate Housing Establishment Fund referrals to private accommodation

Some of the above complaints stem from system failures that are beyond the scope of agencies to address. Those working in the Homelessness Service Sector (HSS) are starkly aware of the lack of resources, the lack of accessible, affordable and appropriate exit options out of homelessness. However, it is imperative that while we continue to advocate for resources, it is equally important to uphold service users' rights. CHP strives in this sense to work as a sector to advocate for systemic changes. The recurring themes raised through complaints make evident the continuing need for a service like HAS to advocate for and with those affected.



Left to right: Alan Martin, Cassandra Bawden, Sally Lowden, David Montgomery and Erika Lodge. Not present: Emily Hardy and Simon Peavey.

Peer Education Support Program (PESP)

Consumer participation reflects a cultural shift in the HSS towards an increasingly meaningful involvement of people who are homeless or have experienced homelessness. Beyond participation by consumers, now confirmed by the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS) as mandatory practice in the life of agencies, lies the partnership model whereby people who are affected by homelessness contribute their direct experiences and insights to influence policy, practice and community perceptions regarding people who have experienced homelessness. The Peer

Education Support Program (PESP) is a unique program leading the way for consumer participation. Commencing as a pilot program in 2005, PESP is a team of 6 people who have experienced homelessness who are trained, managed and supported by the HAS. PESP demonstrate tangible evidence of social inclusion in the Victorian HSS.

PESP has a number of valuable functions. The team provide consumer perspectives and insights directly to CHP, the HSS, all levels of government and the community. This is done through partnership between agencies and consumers which helps bridge the traditional chasms between those people who have experienced homelessness and policy makers. PESP also provides community education to debunk negative stereotypes of homeless people, input into policy and practice, peer support, training, and advocacy for systemic changes.

PESP is managed and supported through the HAS. This includes ensuring that PESP members have the training and support required to undertake tasks such as conducting interviews and focus groups, public speaking and media interviews, reviewing program policy, the provision of advocacy and community education. Central to the PESP model is individual development plans aimed at maximising opportunities for each team member to achieve personal and vocational goals for the future.

From PESP to Project Worker Cassandra Bawden

In 2005 I became part of the original PESP team. The work I was doing was important and it made me feel appreciated. The opportunities I was given were unforgettable and I enjoyed them immensely. PESP was really making a difference in the homelessness system and our work was valued.

PESP is a fantastic model of consumer participation and not only does it benefit the homelessness system, the PESP members benefit as well. I greatly enjoyed my time with the team. We learnt a lot, achieved many goals and overcame challenges. Whenever I facilitated consumer consultations and introduced myself as independent and someone who had experienced homelessness, the participants body language seemed to relax and their responses were less guarded. This is evidenced by external service feedback on the PESP consultation. Peers working with peers fostered a level of trust, power balance and common understanding. Consumers often stated that they were encouraged and motivated by the steps that we had achieved through PESP.

I now hold the position of PESP Project Worker at CHP. I have a great sense of pride and appreciation for being given this opportunity and I enjoy my role immensely. I coordinate the development of regular Parity articles that are produced by the PESP team. These contributions are an opportunity for people who have experienced homelessness to give voice to issues that affect them. In consultation with PESP I developed and delivered a range of consumer training tools. It is incredibly satisfying to do work that is completely consumer driven and I give thanks to the HAS program for supporting this.

While it is a requirement for all homelessness services to practice consumer participation, not many services have the scope and resources to set up a model as comprehensive as PESP. Our program has the capacity, experience and expertise to work in partnership with all Victorian homelessness services in developing consumer participation models.

This is an important function presently undertaken by HAS and is expected to continue in the future.

Consultation

HAS provides advice and secondary consultation to homelessness services relating to a broad range of practice and policy issues, including internal grievance policy development, implementation of the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS) and consumer participation throughout the HSS. This is a program that is additional to the consultation undertaken by the PESP program.



Cassandra Bawden speaking at the launch of the Children and Homelessness Research

Submissions

During the year HAS/PESP contributed to CHP's submission to the Australian Government's Green and White Paper process by consulting with 70 consumers, ensuring that people who are affected by homelessness had a say in how future policy is shaped. One person attending a consultation put it this way:

"No one chooses homelessness as a career path. I accept responsibly for my situation but I don't want to be trapped in poverty. I want my child to have the same opportunities as Kevin Rudd's children to get a good job. It starts with a home but I can't afford one because the rents keep going up"

CHP's Green Paper is referred to or cited several times in the Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness which was released in December 2008.

Coronial Inquest into the deaths of Leigh Sinclair and Christopher Giorgi

Ms Sinclair and Mr Giorgi died when the Brunswick rooming house in which they were staying caught fire in 2006. At the inquest, the CHP, HPLC and TUV sought to highlight sub-standard fire safety conditions and the need for regulatory improvement, accountability and enforcement by the Victorian Government in relation to private rooming houses.

On 29 September 2009 CHP welcomed the findings of Coroner Peter White into the 2006 deaths of Ms Sinclair and Mr Giorgi. The Coroner has adopted seven out of eight recommendations put forward by the CHP, HPLC and TUV during the inquest including a recommendation that CAV undertake an educational Rooming House strategy in consultation with CHP and other key stakeholders.

Projects/Collaborations/Consultations

In 2008–09 HAS and PESP provided consultation on the development and implementation of many programs and reviews including the following;

- Salvation Army — East Care
- Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) 'Where the Heart is' community festival
- Street Smart steering group
- Kids Under Cover
- AXA Australia
- Rooming House Taskforce
- 'Call this a Home' Rooming House campaign

- City of Melbourne — Homelessness Strategy
- Tokyo Institute of Technology
- DHS *Opening Doors* post-implementation reference group and focus group facilitation
- Hanover Welfare Services Client Volunteer Project
- 3CR *Roominations*
- Regular contribution to *Parity*
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund Social Inclusion Forum

Feedback on PESP from the HSS

Hanover Education & Training Research Focus Group — April 2009

"Firstly, I would like to thank the PESP for facilitating the focus groups on Thursday. I feel that they were a great success!"

David did a fantastic job. He seemed confident and created a nice, friendly and comfortable atmosphere for our clients. He was really considerate when participants were talking and supportive of their opinions."

DHS Opening Doors 1800# PESP Consumer Consultation — May 2009

"I was hoping that you could distribute this to the PESP team, and thank them for providing such valuable information and feedback in regards to the Opening Doors 1800# we are establishing across the state for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness."

"Once again thanks so much for your assistance with the consultation, it has been very valuable for us in our decision making."

Looking Ahead

As a program of CHP, HAS will ensure that consumers have a voice in shaping the developing 2020 Victorian Homelessness Strategy. HAS will also continue with its existing programs and functions, look for opportunities to develop innovative projects, foster new and strengthened partnerships and looks forward to further advancing the rights of those who have experienced homelessness.

HAS/PESP will also continue to work with consumers and the HSS to monitor compliance with standards and legislation leading to improved service directly benefiting those affected by homelessness.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The HAS/PESP team thank all at CHP. We also greatly appreciate the support, commitment and talent of collaborators such as the Homeless Persons Legal Clinic, the Department of Justice, the DHS Complaints Management Unit, the HSS, DV VIC, Frontyard Youth Services, Ozanam House and Community Centre, HomeGround, Flagstaff Adult Services, the Regional Homelessness Networkers and all levels of Government. It is exciting to work towards a rights-based culture in this sector and beyond. After all, a culture of rights that promotes dignity, equality and respect goes beyond the formal requirements of treaties and laws and is truly the mark of a compassionate and civilised society.



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS DIANA WOLFE

Throughout 2008–09, CHP generated an unprecedented level of media interest and coverage, achieving an average of more than five stories per week in national, state and local newspapers, radio, TV and online media. In addition, the organisation continued to focus its communication efforts on advocating strongly on behalf of our constituents, providing timely and accurate information on a range of Australian and state government initiatives and Victorian-related homelessness data, and encouraging feedback and input on a range of homelessness issues.

Highlights

- Outstanding media coverage and increased public profile for CHP;
- Increased media skills and capability for CHP staff and Peer Education Support Program members, leading to stronger, more widespread and more confident media presence for CHP;
- Greater involvement by PESP members in media advocacy campaigns;
- Establishment of Homelessness Communication Professionals Network
- Inaugural Victorian Homelessness Awards, presented at the CHP; Conference in November 2008 by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Australian Government Minister for Housing and the Status of Women (see separate report in this Annual Report)
- Major media campaigns for the Call This a Home campaign for private rooming house reform and the Counting the Homeless Victorian figures

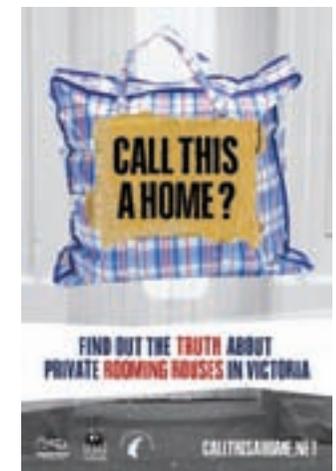
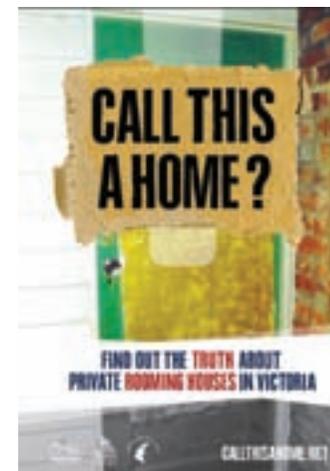
Media Relations and Coverage

CHP continued to develop strong working relationships with a number of key social affairs and news reporters, resulting in consistent, positive and balanced coverage.

Major media campaigns were run in conjunction with the CHP Homelessness Conference in November, the release of the 2006 Census data regional summaries, and the *Call This a Home* campaign for private rooming house reform.

In addition to the major campaigns, regular media releases and opinion/editorial pieces were issued as an integral part of CHP's advocacy work. These included media releases about the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program figures on child and family homelessness, responding to the Equal Opportunity Review on Homelessness, CHP's response to national Census 2006 data, Anti-poverty week, the Council of Australian Governments' announcement on homelessness funding, CHP's response to the White Paper on Homelessness, Commonwealth Social Housing Initiative, bushfire homelessness information and links, the Victorian Government's announcement on its Homelessness Strategy, and Op Ed pieces concerning homelessness and human rights and child poverty.

As a result, CHP generated (directly and in collaboration with others) more than 285 media stories — around five press, radio, TV and online media stories a week — an outstanding result for a peak body with relatively limited funds to allocate towards media activities.





PARITY 2009 NOEL MURRAY

This year has seen further progress towards the consolidation of *Parity* as a truly national homelessness publication. All the themes and issues examined and discussed were relevant nationally, and even sometimes, internationally.

However, while maintaining a strong national focus, state, regional and local concerns were all given voice and coverage. The many differences in policy, program and service response were highlighted and indeed celebrated, because homelessness and the response to homelessness is not a homogenous and undifferentiated entity. Complexity and diversity in understanding of and response to homelessness were the particular hallmarks of the contributions to *Parity* in 2009.

The national focus in 2009 commenced with the February "*White Paper*" edition.

This edition followed on logically from the successful June 2008 "*Green Paper*" edition.

The "*Green Paper*" edition demonstrated that it is possible to have a publication that is overwhelmingly critical of some aspects of what a Government is proposing without the sky falling in. As it turns out, the new Federal Government welcomed constructively critical input and indeed as "*The Road Home*" White Paper demonstrated, actually listened to it. Indeed the Federal Government sponsored both the June 2008 "*Green Paper*" and the February 2009 "*White Paper*" editions. The "*White Paper*" edition was launched by Minister Plibersek in Sydney in early March.

Fortunately, the days of pre-emptive self censorship and fear of retribution so characteristic of the relationship between the previous Federal Government and those advocating on behalf of the homeless, seem like a bad memory.

The March "*Early Intervention and Prevention*" edition had a national as well as trans-Tasman focus. The edition was the first "Australasian" edition with articles from Australia and New Zealand contributors highlighting the many similarities as well as differences in emphasis and priority. The edition was sponsored by Melbourne Citymission, Housing New Zealand,

NZ Regional Public Health and Auckland City Council and was launched at the second New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness Conference in Christchurch in early April.

The national focus well and truly returned with the April "*Renting and Homelessness*" edition. The edition discussed at length and in detail the crucial role private rental plays as a pathway out of homelessness and unfortunately sometimes a barrier to getting out of homelessness and even all too frequently, a pathway into homelessness. The sponsorship for this edition was largely organised by Shelter Australia and saw Shelter organisations and state-based Tenants Unions from Darwin to Tasmania all contribute something towards the sponsorship that made this edition possible.

The May "*From the Frontline*" edition saw a return to a "joint publication" with the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) for the first time since November 2004. This edition was sponsored by the Australian Services Union and Jobs Australia, once again demonstrating their profound concern not just with industrial and work place issues but also with workforce and industry planning issues that are at the core and at the heart of the human service response to homelessness.

A highlight of 2009 was the June "*Boarding and Rooming Houses*" edition. Whilst the issues discussed in this edition had a national relevance and focus, it was a strongly Victorian edition given the crisis in rooming house accommodation in this State. The edition was part the strong and successful "*Call This a Home*" campaign that saw the Victorian Government take some steps in the right direction to combating the unacceptable situation in private rooming houses in Victoria.

The edition was sponsored by Consumer Affairs Victoria as well as Yarra, St Kilda and South Port Community Housing and the Tenants Union of Queensland.

The edition was launched at the St Kilda Town Hall in mid July by the Minister for Consumer Affairs Tony Robinson at a CHP Sector Forum to discuss the need for action in boarding and rooming houses. The "*Raise the Standard*" forum was very well attended.

The July "*Education and Homelessness*" edition sponsored by Hanover Welfare Services focused on the nexus between education and homelessness and in particular on the many new programs and initiatives



dedicated to improving educational outcomes for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

A special thanks needs to go to Netty Horton at St Vincent Aged and Community Services who saw the rationale, logic and the value of sponsoring an edition that was devoted to giving people experiencing homelessness a “voice”. The August *“Homeless Voices”* edition raised and discussed many complex and difficult questions about the value of homelessness research and the issue of who represents and speaks for the homeless.

The September *“Youth Homelessness Conferences”* edition was a joint CHP/Youth Accommodation Association of NSW edition intended to support and resource the youth homelessness conferences held in NSW and Victoria. This edition continued the strong national focus for the year.

This focus intensified with the October *“Responding to Homelessness in NSW”* edition that was organised in close collaboration with Sue Cripps at Homelessness NSW and with the support and assistance of a strong Steering Committee made up of representatives from all the key NSW homelessness organisations.

The NSW Government through Housing NSW and Community Services need to be strongly commended and thanked for their sponsorship support for the edition and their assistance throughout the length of

the project. Likewise, Sydney City Council, Catholic Community Services, the Mercy Foundation and Shelter NSW were also pivotal in providing sponsorship and organisational support and need to be acknowledged thanked for their support and assistance.

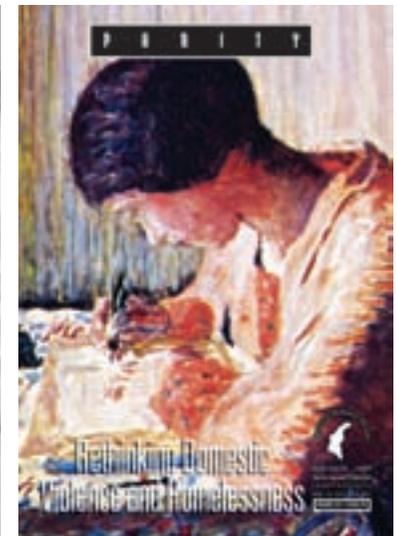
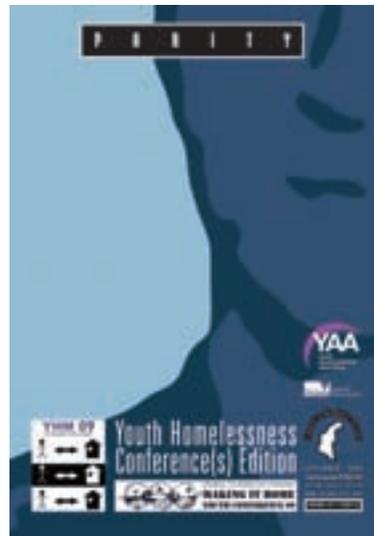
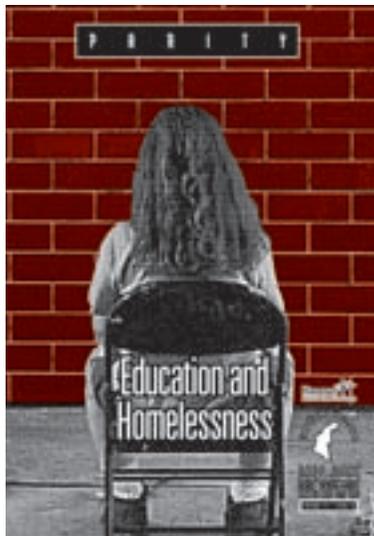
The edition was launched by the relevant NSW Government Ministers at a sector forum on November 24th held in the NSW Parliament House.

The November *“Rethinking Domestic Violence and Homelessness”* edition was a collaborative effort between CHP, DV Vic, WESNET, the NSW Women’s Refuge Movement and the Domestic Violence Resource Centre.

This edition follows on from the many editions devoted to examining and discussing women’s homelessness and domestic and family violence and homelessness that have been prepared since 1998.

Sponsorship

Once again, all the 2009 editions of *Parity* were supported by substantial sponsorship that came from many sources. Most of these sponsors have been mentioned above. This financial support of more than \$150,000 has allowed the publication of substantial and substantive resources that do justice to the issues under discussion. However, this level of sponsorship is also a strong indication of the success of CHP in working collaboratively and in partnership with both government and non-governments



organisations to provide information and resources on the key issues of homelessness and in providing a national forum where all can participate.

The Year Ahead

Without long-term forward planning *Parity* would not happen.

For this reason the planning and preparation for the year ahead always commences at the beginning of the second half of the year.

In undertaking this planning the needs and interests of all stakeholders are considered as is the need for sector partnerships and collaborations and importantly, the need for sponsorships.

Towards this end the following draft publications schedule for 2010 has been developed. Please note that this is only a draft and may be subject to change.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Parity is not possible without the support of sponsors, the great articles from contributors, the tolerance of my colleagues at CHP and the unstinting patience of the designers at Artifishal Studios and the printers at TEK PRINT who have to put up with ridiculous timelines and outrageous requests for just "one more change", please...

Proposed 2010 Parity Publications Schedule

- February: **ABI and Homelessness**
- March: **The White Paper: One Year On**
- April: **Towards a VHS Mark 2**
- May: **Homelessness and Literature**
- June: **Social Inclusion and Homelessness**
- July: **Leaving Care**
- August: **Responding to Homelessness in Queensland**
- September: **Homelessness Australia National Conference Edition**
- October: **Homelessness Legislation**
- November: **Homelessness and Dispossession**

Noel Murray
Parity Editor

TREASURER'S REPORT ALAN WILSON

The 2008–2009 financial year saw an increase in the Council's revenue of \$182,550. This increase was primarily in the area of grant income associated with the Accreditation project and consultations in relation to the Homeless White Paper. There were also modest increases in revenues associated with memberships and the conference.

The final operating result for the year ended 30 June 2009 was a surplus of \$194,046 which was a small decrease on the previous year's result.

As a result, the financial position of the Council remains strong, with total equity of \$1,639,020 as at 30th June 2009. This equity is comprised primarily of cash investments.

The strong financial position will ensure that the Council has the capacity to meet all current and future liabilities and provide the capacity to fund future initiatives, including information technology upgrades.

I would like to acknowledge the importance of the relationships that the Council has with the Department of Human Services as our principle funding provider as well as the generous support of our members, *Parity* subscribers and sponsors that ensure we remain a viable peak organisation.

I also wish to thank our CEO Deb Tsorbaris, David Wright-Howie (Acting CEO), Joy Pagolas and Akke Halma for their commitment to prudent management of our resources and to Arthur Robertson for his professional assistance and advice to the Board.

**Alan Wilson, CEO,
Quantum Support Services Inc**



PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS (a company limited by guarantee)

ABN 20005 475 007

CORE FUNDING

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Income		
Grants received and expended	1,245,797	1,091,817
Interest received	99,242	103,106
Rent	2,977	8,250
Subscriptions	79,949	71,696
Sponsorship — <i>Parity</i>	137,843	138,646
Sundry receipts	82,408	52,150
TOTAL INCOME	1,648,216	1,465,665
Less Expenditure		
Accounting and bookkeeping fees	33,010	25,887
Annual leave provision	22,833	10,700
Auditor's remuneration	6,420	10,950
Bank fees	2,672	2,300
Special project expenditure	108,164	139,427
Conference and forum expenses	47,084	9,678
Depreciation	10,654	11,335
Fringe Benefits Tax	6,369	8,151
Insurance	3,037	4,233
Interest expense	2,289	2
Legal fees	396	1,602
Library	1,731	2,428
Light & power	7,043	3,004
Long service leave provision	16,417	1,978

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Less Expenditure (continued)		
Meetings	537	2,438
Motor vehicle expenses	19,571	19,265
Equipment & vehicle lease	33,638	33,829
Other expenses	48,918	54,830
Postage	11,644	14,272
Relocation costs	—	25,380
Rent and outgoings	80,229	68,415
Salaries and wages	752,411	552,908
Software and computer expenses	10,846	16,385
Staff training	8,202	1,013
Stationery and printing	90,173	92,954
Superannuation	76,384	48,673
Telephone	22,184	19,992
Travel	15,144	48,291
Workcover	16,170	9,184
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,454,170	1,239,504
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year before Significant items	194,046	226,161
Add/Less Extraordinary Items		
Additional loss on Separation of FBV		—
Grants for capitol purposes		—
NET (LOSS)/PROFIT FOR YEAR	194,046	226,161



Council to Homeless Persons

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The Council's Homepage on the Web: www.chp.org.au

The Parity Homepage on the Web: www.chp.org.au/parity