

# HOMELESS IN HOLROYD



A report on homelessness and its impact on the community



**Holroyd City**  
*Built Around People*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*Homelessness is an issue which is high on the agenda of both Federal and State Governments in 2008.*

Holroyd City Council has prepared this report into Homelessness in order to identify the extent of the problem, to review the services currently being provided to homeless people, and to assist with the development of policies which are in alignment with Federal and State initiatives.

Agencies within and adjacent to the Holroyd LGA have identified an increase in the total number of referrals of homeless people, which is attributed to financial reasons such as inability to meet property rental or mortgage repayment commitments. At the same time, the services report an increase in the proportion of clients who present with complex problems such as mental health issues. Census data shows an increasing number of families with children recorded as being homeless.

The report outlines strategies which have been identified to assist Holroyd Council and the community to tackle Homelessness.

These include:

- ▶ Working with existing services to develop more resources for homeless people
- ▶ Advocacy on housing affordability
- ▶ Tackling discrimination in the private rental market
- ▶ Lobbying for brokerage funds for the Cumberland area
- ▶ Raising awareness of services and referral within all Holroyd and Parramatta agencies
- ▶ Implementing relevant initiatives from the Federal Governments *White Paper*.



# BACKGROUND

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Homelessness in the Holroyd Local Government area has been identified as a whole of community issue through a number of consultations and forums leading to its inclusion in the 2005 – 2009 *Holroyd Social Plan* and the 2006 – 2010 *Holroyd City Health Plan*.

Holroyd City Council is concerned about the issue of Homelessness in the area and wishes to further investigate these issues in order to support the development of strategies in partnership with other providers and levels of Government.

In 2001, Council adopted a *Model Policy* on Homelessness. This model recognises that Homelessness is a social justice issue and that there are a number of appropriate roles for Council to pursue. The model was referred to the City Health Plan steering committee for further development of local policies and procedures.

The *City Health Plan 2006 - 2010* includes a strategy which seeks to reduce Homelessness by supporting approaches that focus on its prevention and by working within the framework of the *Western Sydney Plan against Homelessness*. Council has supported local agencies through grant funding.

Holroyd's *Social Plan 2005 - 2009* includes strategies to develop an affordable housing policy and to increase accommodation options for the community. This paper is in response to those strategies.

In February 2008, the Federal Government released the *Green Paper*, a document which identified the current state of play and inform the development of a framework to move towards reducing Homelessness. In September 2008, the Premier of NSW, the Hon Nathan Rees, identified Homelessness as an area of focus, announcing his Government's commitment to the *Common Ground* model.

This report is timely and will work to align Council policy with the development of National and State Initiatives aimed at reducing and addressing Homelessness in Holroyd.

## ***Previous Reports***

In September 2001, Council received a report commissioned by Western Sydney Housing Information and Referral Network (WESTHIRN) into *Youth Homelessness in Holroyd*. The report documented the services and assistance available, the current situation with young people and Homelessness, and recommended a number of strategies. These included:

- the provision of shower facilities within youth centres in Holroyd
- the need for food services for homeless people to be provided in Holroyd
- the need for more funding to Holroyd Community Aid and Information Service (HCAIS) for material assistance and to Holroyd Youth Service for food parcels
- the need for a local brokerage service.

Since 2001, showers have been installed in Merrylands Youth Centre and have been included in the plans for the new Guildford Youth Centre. The provision of food to homeless people in Parramatta has continued, however this has not been implemented in Holroyd. HCAIS receives funding for material assistance, and food parcels are no longer available at Merrylands Youth centre due to a lack of funding. A brokerage program has not been funded for the Cumberland area.

# DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

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For the purposes of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme Act 1994 (SAAP Act 1994), a homeless person is defined as “one who does not have adequate access to safe and secure housing.”

*According to Chamberlain and Mackenzie (1992), Homelessness can be broken into three categories:*

- 1. Primary Homelessness** includes all people without conventional accommodation, such as people living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings, or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.
- 2. Secondary Homelessness** includes people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. It includes all people staying in emergency or transitional accommodation provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.
- 3. Tertiary Homelessness** refers to people who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis who do not have accommodation with separate bedroom, kitchen, bathroom or security of tenure.



# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE HOLROYD LGA

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## *Holroyd Agencies*

Agencies were asked to identify the issues around Homelessness in the area. All agencies identified an increasing number of requests for assistance and a change in the needs of clients. Agencies are now seeing clients with increasingly complex problems and mental health issues.

Within Holroyd, agencies were asked if they were aware of 'rough sleepers' in the Local Government Area. One agency identified 'rough sleepers' on their premises and Stockland Merrylands identified ongoing issues with homeless men who sleep on site at night. Both the Police and Council Rangers noted that homeless people were not visible in Holroyd.

Agencies were asked about the characteristics of the clients they are seeing. They identified an increase in people at risk of Homelessness due to increasing rent payments and mortgage defaults. Agencies outside of Holroyd reported an increase in the number of families seeking assistance due to landlords defaulting on mortgages.

According to Moody's Credit Agency the Liverpool and Parramatta areas were the two top areas for mortgage default in the March 2008 quarter. Liverpool had the highest delinquency rate with 1.43%, followed by Parramatta with 1.21%. Holroyd is located between these two areas.

Youth agencies outside Holroyd noted an increase in unaccompanied refugee young people seeking assistance. Anglicare Street Outreach noted that since 2006 approximately 25% of their clients are from the Holroyd area.

Statistical analysis of Homelessness in Holroyd is not possible as it is difficult to quantify numbers of actual homeless people. However a broad picture of Homelessness can be provided through Census data and available reports.

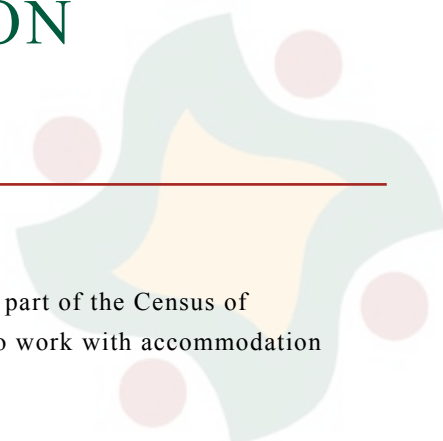
## *Homelessness in Parramatta*

In 2007, Parramatta Council and Housing NSW commissioned a report into Homelessness in Parramatta. The report was completed by Econometrics whose brief was to estimate the numbers of homeless people and at the same time clarify who they are. At the 2006 census, 170 people were identified as homeless and the majority of them were single males. Service provider estimates and data from the Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) identified between 200 – 300 people at any one time being homeless in the Parramatta area.

Service providers identified a lack of medium and long term accommodation, especially for women with a large number of children. There was also a lack of services that cater for women with teenage sons. An emerging issue is the need for support for people with mental health issues, as they are over represented in the statistics.

Service providers who assist homeless people advised that 70% of referrals were from males and the majority of service users are males aged between 15 - 34 years.

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE HOLROYD LGA



## *ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006*

The ABS has completed extensive work in identifying homeless people as part of the Census of Population and Housing. In the 2006 Census, field workers were trained to work with accommodation services to find and interview homeless people.

The ABS *Counting the Homeless* Reports 2001 and 2006 showed that nationally 99,900 people were homeless in 2001 and 104,976 people were homeless in 2006, a 4.8% increase. Table 1 shows where they were on Census night.

**Table 1: Accommodation Type on Census Night**

| Accommodation                      | 2001          | %          | 2006           | %          |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Boarding Houses                    | 22,877        | 23         | 21,596         | 21         |
| SAAP Accommodation                 | 14,251        | 14         | 19,849         | 19         |
| Friends and Relatives              | 48,614        | 49         | 46,856         | 45         |
| Improvised Dwellings,<br>Sleepouts | 14,158        | 14         | 16,375         | 15         |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>99,900</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>104,676</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Counting the Homeless 2001, 2006, ABS, Australian Census Analytical Program

**Table 1** shows an increase in overall Homelessness between 2001 and 2006 with less people sleeping in boarding houses, and with friends and relatives. More people are being accommodated by SAAP and are 'sleeping rough'.

**Table 2: Homeless Single Person, Couple and Family Households**

| Accommodation        | 2001          | %          | 2006          | %          |
|----------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Single Person        | 58,116        | 78         | 57,182        | 76         |
| Couple Only          | 9,420         | 13         | 10,160        | 14         |
| Family with Children | 6,745         | 9          | 7,483         | 10         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>74,281</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>74,825</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001 and 2006; SAAP Client Collection, 2001 and 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students, 2001 and 2006.

**Table 2** shows 74,825 households, compared with 74,281 in 2001. The 2006 figure shows 7,483 homeless families with children. These families represented 26,790 people (10,608 parents and 16,182 children). Families made up 10% of all homeless households, but they included one-quarter (26%) of the homeless population.

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE HOLROYD LGA



*Table 3: Age Breakdown of the Homeless Population 2006*

| Accommodation | 2006            | %          |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Under 12      | 12, 133         | 12         |
| 12 – 18 years | 21, 940         | 21         |
| 19 – 24 years | 10, 504         | 10         |
| 25 – 34 years | 15, 804         | 15         |
| 35 – 44 years | 13, 981         | 13         |
| 45 – 54 years | 10, 708         | 10         |
| 65 or older   | 7, 400          | 7          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>104, 676</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, SAAP Client Collection and National Census of Homeless School Students, 2006

In 2006, 58% of homeless people were under 35 and 42% were aged 35 or older. Most children under 12 were accompanying their parents whereas teenagers aged 12-18 were generally living on their own.

*Table 4: Changes in the Composition of the Homeless Population*

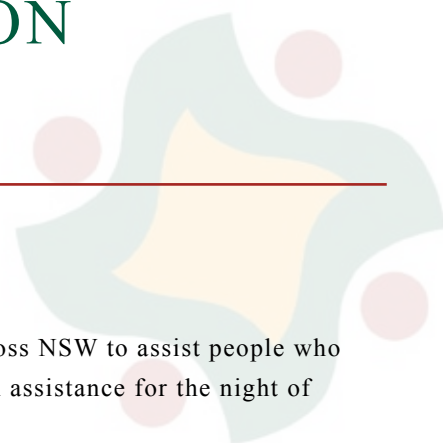
|                                  | 2001           | 2006           | % Change   |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| Families with Children           | 22, 944        | 26, 790        | 16.8       |
| Youth Aged 12 – 18               | 22, 600        | 17, 891        | -20.8      |
| Adults (singles and couple only) | 54, 356        | 59, 995        | 10.4       |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>99, 900</b> | <b>104,676</b> | <b>4.8</b> |

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 2001 and 2006; SAAP Client Collection, 2001 and 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students, 2001 and 2006.

Although the National number of homeless people increased from 99,900 in 2001 to 104,676 in 2006, at both Censuses the rate of Homelessness remained static at 53 per 10,000 of the population.

Since 2001, an increase in Early Intervention services targeting homeless and at risk youth has had a significant impact. The number of young people becoming homeless has decreased by 21% and it is thought this may reduce future Homelessness by this group.

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE HOLROYD LGA



## *Homeless Persons Information Centre*

The Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) receives calls from across NSW to assist people who are homeless. In 2005/2006 they received 27,133 calls for accommodation assistance for the night of the call. This was an increase on 2004/2005 of 1,849 calls.

Of the callers to HPIC 17,290 self-reported having a mental health problem as a contributing factor to their being homeless. 4,168 callers reported drug and alcohol as a contributing factor, and 6,182 cited family breakdown.

## *Housing Tenure*

Housing tenure has changed in Holroyd since the 2001 census. Table 5 shows that more people are purchasing in 2006 than in 2001 (an increase of 3,047) and less people own outright (a reduction of 2,453). An additional 1,077 people are renting in 2006 compared with 2001.

*Table 5: Housing Tenure*

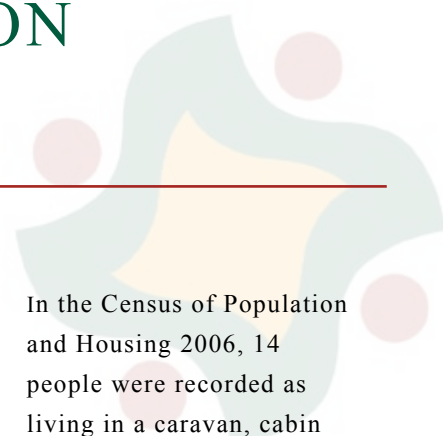
|                      | 2006          |              | 2001          |              | Change<br>2001 – 2006 |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|                      | Number        | %            | Number        | %            |                       |
| Owned                | 9,793         | 30.2         | 12,246        | 39.8         | -2,453                |
| Being Purchased      | 8,908         | 27.5         | 5,861         | 19.0         | 3,047                 |
| Renting – Govt       | 2,076         | 6.4          | 2,112         | 6.9          | -36                   |
| Renting – Other      | 8,765         | 27.1         | 7,728         | 25.1         | 1,307                 |
| Renting – Not stated | 199           | 0.6          | 123           | 0.4          | 76                    |
| <b>Renting Total</b> | <b>11,040</b> | <b>34.1</b>  | <b>9,963</b>  | <b>32.4</b>  | <b>1,077</b>          |
| Other tenure type    | 190           | 0.6          | 835           | 2.7          | -645                  |
| Not stated           | 2,457         | 7.6          | 1,865         | 6.1          | 592                   |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>32,388</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>30,770</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>1,618</b>          |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006, 2001,

## *Costs of Housing*

Of those purchasing their homes 34.5% of households were paying high mortgage repayments, (\$2,000 per month or more) and 16.5% were paying low repayments (less than \$950 per month). Table 6 shows the monthly housing loan repayments for Holroyd.

# STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE HOLROYD LGA



**Table 6: Monthly Housing Loan Repayments 2006**

| Monthly Payment    | Number       | %            |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| \$1 to \$249       | 131          | 1.5          |
| \$250 to \$399     | 122          | 1.4          |
| \$400 to \$549     | 282          | 3.2          |
| \$550 to \$749     | 408          | 4.6          |
| \$750 to \$949     | 517          | 5.8          |
| \$950 to \$1,199   | 833          | 9.4          |
| \$1,200 to \$1,399 | 758          | 8.5          |
| \$1,400 to \$1,599 | 772          | 8.7          |
| \$1,600 to \$1,999 | 1,392        | 15.6         |
| \$2,000 to \$2,999 | 2,312        | 26.0         |
| \$3,000 and over   | 753          | 8.5          |
| Not Stated         | 628          | 7.0          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>8,908</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

In the Census of Population and Housing 2006, 14 people were recorded as living in a caravan, cabin or houseboat. This is an increase of 10 people from 2001. Under the definitions of Homelessness, living in a caravan would be regarded as Tertiary Homelessness.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2006.

## Renting

Holroyd has an increasing rental population. In 2006 1,037 more people were renting than in 2001. In the 2006 census 1.3% of households were paying high rental payments (\$450 per week or more), and 19.6% were paying low rental payments (less than \$140 per week).

Since 2007, rents have increased significantly. Table 7 compares rents from June 2007 to June 2008. This information is from Housing NSW's Rental Report.

**Table 7: Median Rent (\$ per Week) by Quarter for Holroyd LGA**

| Holroyd                          | June 07 | Sep 07 | Dec 07 | Mar 08 | June 08 | Increase June 07 – June 08 | % Increase |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|----------------------------|------------|
| All Dwellings – One Bedroom      | 160     | 183    | 180    | 200    | 185     | 25                         | 13.5       |
| All Dwellings – Two Bedrooms     | 260     | 260    | 270    | 280    | 290     | 30                         | 10.3       |
| All Dwellings – Three Bedrooms   | 300     | 300    | 325    | 320    | 350     | 50                         | 14.2       |
| All Dwellings – Four+ Bedroom    | 350     | 420    | 400    | 420    | 450     | 100                        | 22.2       |
| Separate Houses – Two Bedrooms   | 260     | 253    | 280    | 290    | 280     | 20                         | 7.1        |
| Separate Houses – Three Bedrooms | 290     | 290    | 310    | 320    | 330     | 40                         | 12.1       |
| Flats/Units – One Bedroom        | 165     | 183    | 193    | 200    | 180     | 15                         | 8.3        |
| Flats/Units – Two Bedrooms       | 255     | 260    | 270    | 270    | 290     | 35                         | 12         |

Source: Housing NSW Rent Report, June 2007 - June 2008 Quarters

The rental report showed that rents in the Holroyd LGA have increased on average by 12.5% between June 2007 and June 2008. Rents on a one bedroom dwelling increased from \$160 per week in June 2007 to \$185 per week in June 2008 representing a 13.5% increase. Rents on a four bedroom dwelling have increased from \$350 per week in June 2007 to \$450 per week in June 2008 representing an increase of 22.2%. Across all properties rents have increased on average by \$40 per week.

# ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN HOLROYD

The project identified all funded and other accommodation services in Holroyd and its surrounds. An extensive Resource Directory to assist service providers in addressing Homelessness has been distributed separate to this report.

Table 8 summarises services available within Holroyd and adjacent to Holroyd. It is important to note that whilst some services have their offices outside of Holroyd they may provide medium – long term accommodation within Holroyd.

**Table 8: Accommodation Services in or Adjacent to Holroyd**

| Service Type                        | Holroyd  | Servicing Holroyd but based outside the LGA   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Crisis Accommodation                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pendle Hill Crisis Centre</li> <li>• Our Lady of the Way</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parrahouse</li> <li>• Hope Hostel</li> <li>• Pingara House</li> <li>• Centacare Crisis Accommodation Program</li> </ul>  |
| Medium – Long Term Accommodation    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pendle Hill Crisis Centre</li> <li>• Koopartoo</li> <li>• Macintosh House</li> <li>• Holroyd Accommodation through Cooperative Housing (HATCH)</li> <li>• Affordable Community Housing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Housing for Youth (WHY)</li> <li>• Grandview Lodge</li> <li>• Carramar</li> <li>• Adele House</li> <li>• Thelma Brown Cottage</li> <li>• Cardinal Freeman</li> <li>• Men’s Accommodation and Referral Service (Mars )</li> <li>• Barnardo’s Youth and Family</li> <li>• Fusion</li> <li>• Fairfield Youth Accommodation Service (FYAS)</li> <li>• Marist Youth Care</li> <li>• Hume Community Housing</li> </ul> |
| Support Services for Homeless Youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holroyd Youth Services – Housing Support Worker</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglicare Youth Services – Street Outreach</li> <li>• Newly Arrived Youth Support Services (NYASS) based at Granville Multicultural Community Centre– (GMCC)</li> </ul>  |

In recent times there have been a number of changes in the way some services are provided and funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The *White Paper* may result in more changes.

Pendle Hill Crisis Centre provides crisis accommodation for women and families for up to 3 months. They also provide medium term accommodation for families for up to 2 years. The Stepping Stone Community delivers the ‘Stepping Stone’ program which provides dinner on Wednesdays and lunch on Sundays in Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta. They have on-site basic needs assistance such as showers and laundry.

Our Lady of the Way is an unfunded refuge for women provided by St Vincent De Paul.

Koopartoo and Parrahouse are part of Parramatta Mission’s accommodation services and are part of the Mission’s continuum of care from crisis through to long term accommodation. Parramatta Mission has grown significantly in its provision of accommodation services, and in addition to providing crisis accommodation and medium term accommodation funded through SAAP, is now the largest

# ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN HOLROYD

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accommodation provider in the local area. They are also funded through the Department of Health and Housing NSW through the Health and Support Initiatives (HASI) Scheme, to provide supported housing for clients with a diagnosed mental illness. They run accommodation services in Liverpool and Miller for young people involved with the drug court.

Macintosh House is part of the Youth off the Streets continuum of care. The refuge provides assistance to young people who have had drug and alcohol issues. They also run Dunlea, an alcohol and other drug service for young people who have problematic levels of drug and alcohol use.

Holroyd Youth Services provides accommodation through Holroyd Accommodation through Cooperative Housing (HATCH) as well as auspice a Youth Housing Support Worker. They have recently commenced a basic need service where they provide showers, laundry and food to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Western Suburbs Community Housing has recently amalgamated with Cumberland Housing to form the Affordable Community Housing Cooperative. In partnership with the Office of Community Housing, they provide low cost accommodation across the region.

Western Housing for Youth, Hume Community Housing and Carramar provide accommodation for clients in Holroyd, although they are based outside the LGA.

Hope Hostel, Cardinal Freeman and Kendall House are part of the Parramatta Homeless Men's Coalition and provide support for men from crisis through to independent living. Funds are provided for support services such as Meals Plus and shower and laundry facilities at Parramatta Mission. Men usually enter the program through Hope Hostel where they stay for up to three months and then move to Cardinal Freeman for medium term accommodation. The final stage in the continuum is Men's Accommodation and Referral service (MARS) run by Mission Australia. They provide brokerage assistance as well as semi-supported independent living and assist clients to move to independent living.

Anglicare Street Outreach provides assistance to young people across the region and is based in Parramatta. They work with youth workers in Holroyd and provide assistance to young people from the Holroyd area.

Marist Youth Care manages Minahan, Freehills and St Vincents Adolescent Care. They provide a range of accommodation and family support services across the region and have offices in Westmead and Blacktown. They now provide a central referral number for all their services which ensures the best assessment and placement for the young person.

Housing NSW provides a range of services to assist homeless people. As well as providing public housing they have a number of programs running from their Parramatta office to assist people to find accommodation. The Private Rental Brokerage Officer can assist people to look for private rental accommodation. The Tenancy Facilitation Worker assists people to look for private rental accommodation and gives advice on how to present themselves. Housing NSW also provides a Tenancy Guarantee which is available for people who have difficulty accessing private rental due to their previous rental history. Housing NSW provides a \$1,000 guarantee to landlords against rent in addition to the bond being paid. Housing NSW can accommodate people overnight in motels and have a partnership with Pingara House which provides crisis accommodation.

# REFERRAL PATHS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

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Information on services provided and referral paths was discussed with agencies providing services to homeless people in Holroyd and adjacent areas. The stakeholders' forum also discussed the issue. Most agencies are aware of the available services to which homeless people can be referred, but inappropriate referrals do occur from time to time. This can put pressure on agencies and clients.

Anglicare currently maintain two referral documents for agencies, *Basic Needs and Support Agencies* and *Free and Low Cost Meals*. These are essential resources and are well utilised across the sector.

## ***Emergency Aid***

HCAIS provides emergency assistance within Holroyd. Over \$145,000 per annum is provided to HCAIS to assist the community with energy vouchers and food parcels. Telstra also provide phone vouchers which are administered by HCAIS.

St Vincent De Paul provides emergency assistance and food parcels.

Located near Holroyd, Granville Multicultural Community Centre provides energy assistance. Parramatta Community Services provides food vouchers and the Salvation Army provides food and energy bill assistance.

## ***Showers and Laundry Programs for Homeless Persons***

Holroyd Youth Services in Merrylands provides showers and laundry once a week for homeless young people. Wentworthville Youth Services will begin to provide showers and laundry assistance once weekly for homeless young people starting in 2009.

The 'Stepping Stone' program in Pendle Hill provides showers and laundry assistance.

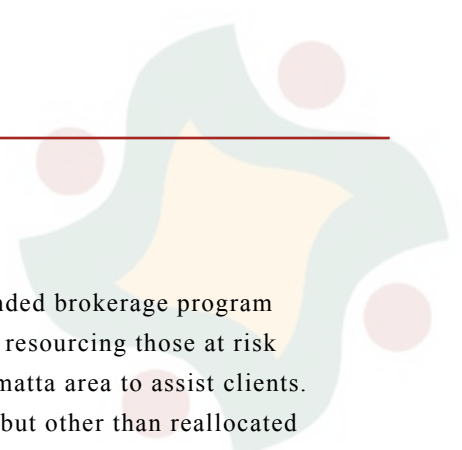
Adjacent to Holroyd, High Street Youth Health Centre provides showers, laundry and food assistance to homeless young people.

## ***Meals***

There is a network of services that provide meals to homeless people across 7 locations in the Parramatta Central Business District. Breakfast and lunch is provided daily at Meals Plus during the week and dinner is provided at Prince Alfred Park. Agencies such as Stepping Stone, Parramatta Mission, Parramatta Baptist Church, Jesus Cares 4U, Urban Kitchen, St Vinnie's Van, Food from the Heart and Pizza Guy provide the meals. Anglicare maintain the list of where meals are available. All meals except the lunches provided by Meals Plus are free.

# REFERRAL PATHS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

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## ***Brokerage Funding***

One of the issues mentioned by services was the lack of an adequately funded brokerage program for the Cumberland area to assist support and accommodation agencies in resourcing those at risk of Homelessness. Agencies ‘creatively’ access services outside the Parramatta area to assist clients. Brokerage is funded in Fairfield, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown and Penrith but other than reallocated funding through the Mars project, has not been provided specifically for the area.

## ***Working Collectively by Agencies***

The Parramatta Men’s Homeless Coalition is an example of how agencies can work collectively to address issues of Homelessness. Holroyd has insufficient homeless services to develop such a coalition.

However, there are other ways agencies can work collectively. The section on strategies will explore this further.



# LITERATURE ON HOMELESSNESS

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*There are many reports and studies completed on Homelessness.*

The *Homelessness Clearinghouse* is a website for sharing information and good practice solutions for the Homelessness service sector in Australia. It includes current news and events, extensive information about good practice, research and data. It is located at <http://www.homelessnessinfo.net.au/>.

The *Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)* is a national research organisation, specialising in housing and urban research and policy. Its website contains many reports around Homelessness and housing affordability. It is located at <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/>.

Wesley Mission, Mission Australia and the City Of Sydney have all conducted research and run pilot programs into housing. Their websites have extensive information on Homelessness.

**They are located at:**

- ▶ [www.missionaustralia.com.au/](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/)
- ▶ [www.wesleymission.org.au/](http://www.wesleymission.org.au/)
- ▶ [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Community/HomelessnessServices/](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Community/HomelessnessServices/)

All of these organisations research and develop strategies to address the needs of homeless people.

*More than a Bed – Sydney’s Homeless Speak Out* is a report compiled by Wesley Mission which was released in July 2008. It explores the pathways and exacerbating factors in relation to Homelessness. The report found that the housing crisis was the number one cause for Homelessness. Respondents in the survey experienced multiple factors which contributed to their Homelessness. Drug abuse was the most frequent, followed by mental illness and alcohol abuse.

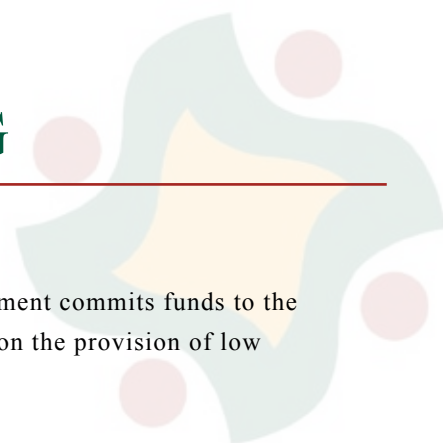
## ***Federal Government Green Paper***

In February 2008, the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, announced that his Government would be developing a National Homelessness Strategy. The process involved releasing a *Green Paper* which formed the basis for consultations to develop the *White Paper*. The *Green Paper* documented the current situation for homeless people and outlined the services available. It set future directions to reduce Homelessness over the longer term. A more efficient and affordable housing market is needed. Crisis services need to offer a gateway to safe, appropriate accommodation and a pathway to social and economic participation.



# CURRENT FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR HOUSING

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## *Commonwealth Government Programs*

**Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA)** – The Federal Government commits funds to the CSHA. This has fallen by 30% in real terms since 1996. This has impacted on the provision of low income housing across the nation.

Provision of **Commonwealth Rent Assistance** - The Government has spent \$2.2 billion per annum over the last decade. This has had no impact on increasing the supply of affordable housing but assists low income earners in private rental.

**National Rental Affordability Scheme** – This will provide incentives for institutional investors to build 50,000 new affordable rental dwellings for rent at 20% below market rents by 2011- 2012.

**A Place to Call Home** - The Federal Government will invest \$150 million over five years to establish up to 600 new houses and units across the country for families and individuals who are homeless. NSW will receive 155 new homes.

The **Housing Affordability Fund** will invest up to \$512 million over five years to lower the cost of building new homes.

The Fund's focus is on proposals that improve the supply of new housing and make housing more affordable for home buyers entering the market. It will address two significant barriers to the supply of housing:

- Holding costs incurred by developers as a result of long planning and approval waiting times
- Infrastructure costs, such as water, sewerage, transport, and open space

The Fund will target Greenfield and infill developments where high dwelling demand currently exists or is forecast.

The Government has a new initiative which commenced in October 2008. **First Home Savers Accounts** will be available from banking institutions. They are superannuation-style, low-tax savings accounts to help first homebuyers save a deposit for home-purchase.



# CURRENT FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS FOR HOUSING

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## ***State Government Programs***

The State Government provides accommodation through Housing NSW. It is a partner with the Commonwealth in the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Housing NSW has developed private market housing services to help people eligible for community housing to rent privately where this is appropriate. Some of the products that have been developed to support this are the **Tenancy Guarantee Program, My Place** and **Rentstart**.

Housing NSW is redeveloping public housing estates through its *Reshaping Public Housing* policy or strategy.

The **Office of Community Housing** manages a number of programs:

- **Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP)** provides the capital component of general accommodation for general and supported community housing.
- **Community Housing Leasing Program (CHLP)** provides subsidies to headlease properties from the private rental market to provide affordable long term housing.
- **Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)** assists people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless and are in crisis. Properties are purchased, headleased, renovated, or upgraded and allocated to non-Government organisations to manage.

Services for homeless people are provided through the **Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)**.

The **Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI)** provides community based accommodation, where individual support is provided to assist clients to live in their own homes. HASI is a joint initiative between Housing NSW and the Centre for Mental Health.

The **Centre for Affordable Housing** is a business unit of Housing NSW, which works with State and Local Government, non-profit organisations, and private companies to generate creative responses to declining housing affordability.

The **Mortgage Assistance Scheme** provides short-term help for people experiencing temporary difficulties with their home loan repayments because of an unavoidable change in circumstances. This may include unemployment, accident, illness or other crisis. The assistance is paid directly to the home lender to take the stress off families.

The **NSW Government ‘State Plan’** identifies a target of 640,000 new dwellings in the greater metropolitan region over the next 25 years to 2031. 445,000 will be in existing urban areas and 195,000 will be in green field locations. Of these 445,000 dwellings 29% are proposed for Western Sydney.

**Housing NSW** is developing a Homelessness strategic framework. It will focus on:

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Assessment and Crisis Response
- Long-term Accommodation and Community Support

# PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

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On a local level, a stakeholder's forum was held in August 2008 to look at issues of Homelessness as well as identify some sustainable solutions. 16 people attended representing 11 agencies.

Participants felt that it was important to acknowledge that all 3 levels of Homelessness exist in Holroyd.

This forum assisted in consolidating the strategies for addressing Homelessness in the Holroyd area.



# STRATEGIES

Strategies have been developed to assist both Council and the community to address the issues identified around Homelessness. In drafting these strategies Council is mindful that its role is to support and resource community agencies to bring about the necessary change. Although some strategies will lie with Council responsibility, others need to be further developed by the community sector. A number of the issues identified in the report are quite complex and require a holistic range of strategies to address them.

It is important to acknowledge the role State and Federal Government policies and priorities have on how successfully Council and the community may be able to implement change. For example Affordable Housing is currently being looked at by both State and Federal Governments and this will have an effect on Local Government. Until such time as changes are made, Council can only prepare to implement Affordable Housing policies. The Federal Government's *White Paper* will be released later this year and may result in changes to services for homeless people. It is essential that the housing service providers and Council are informed and well positioned to prepare for any changes.

Council coordinates a number of grant programs through which they fund community organisations. Community organisations assisting homeless people should consider applications for funding to council that assist homeless people move out of the cycle of Homelessness. Furniture and equipment, educational support, programs that assist people in developing living skills and increase opportunities to live independently are all projects that are considered a priority for funding and will assist the community services sector to address Homelessness.

**Table 9: Strategies**

| Tasks to achieve  | Who   | Key Milestones   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>1. To increase the supply of Affordable Housing in the area</b>  |   |  |
| Council to develop strategies to increase Affordable Housing as part of the Residential Development Strategy. | Council's Strategic Planning Section  | Adopted policies as part of the Residential Development Strategy, leading to an increase in Affordable Housing opportunities |
| Council to review Affordable Housing Kit  | Council's Strategic Planning Section  | Kit reviewed   |
| <b>2. To develop more resources for homeless people through existing services</b>                             |   |  |
| Youth centres to run support services for young people who are homeless or 'at risk' of Homelessness.         | Council's Youth Services Team   | Centres to collect evidence on number of users   |
| Youth Services to work across Holroyd to ensure needs are met for Homeless Youth                              | Council's Youth Services Team Leader to work in collaboration with local youth agencies to ensure local needs are met and future needs identified | Services working together  |

# STRATEGIES

Table 9 (continued): Strategies

| Tasks to achieve   | Who  | Key Milestones   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>3. To raise with all levels of Government the issue of rising rents and mortgage costs in the local area</b>  |  |  |
| Distribute report to Local, State and Federal Government representatives   | Council staff  | Report distributed and acknowledged  |
| Promote availability of the Mortgage Assistance Scheme   | Council to promote the scheme on a local level   | Awareness of Mortgage Assistance Scheme in the local area raised   |
| <b>4. To address discrimination in the private rental market</b>   |  |  |
| Council to investigate adopting the Auburn Multilingual Tenancy Project in the Holroyd LGA   | Holroyd and Parramatta Council's Homelessness Forum Steering Group to look at developing a tenancy project across the local region | Tenancy Project developed and funding sought   |
| <b>5. To ensure that it is acknowledged that Holroyd homeless people access Parramatta based services</b>  |  |  |
| Funding data bases within Council to be reviewed to ensure all homeless services covering Holroyd and Parramatta are invited to apply for funding                          | Council's Community Projects Officer   | Parramatta housing organisations accessing Holroyd clients are eligible to receive funding from Holroyd City Council funding programs for projects that assist the Holroyd Community |
| <b>6. To lobby for a brokerage fund to be established in the Cumberland (Auburn, Holroyd, Parramatta) area</b>   |  |  |
| Holroyd, Parramatta and Auburn Council's to work together to invite all housing and other providers to a forum to discuss the need for Cumberland based brokerage funding. | Council to initiate a meeting with both Parramatta and Auburn Councils   | Meeting held   |
| Develop an Action Plan for addressing the need for brokerage funding for the area  | Working party to develop Action Plan   | Action Plan completed, lobbying successful and brokerage funds made available  |
| <b>7. To ensure Holroyd and Parramatta based services are informed of the services available</b>   |  |  |
| Distribute Homeless Resource Directory to all services in Holroyd and Parramatta   | Council to distribute hard copy and place on website   | Directory distributed to all agencies and on Website   |
| Establish links with Parramatta Homelessness Forum to work collectively with them around this issue  | Council to develop links with Homelessness Forum to ensure Holroyd issues are heard  | Participation with Parramatta Homelessness Forum   |
| <b>8. To ensure the Federal Government's <i>White Paper</i> (to be released late 2008) is responded to, and Holroyd benefits from any new initiatives</b>                  |  |  |
| Council to monitor release of <i>White Paper</i> and act accordingly   | Council's Community Services Section   | <i>White Paper</i> read and strategies developed if required   |

# CONCLUSION

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This report has documented what services and activities are available within Holroyd and its surrounds to assist people who are homeless. In addition, it has attempted to quantify homeless people within Holroyd through collating and analysing the available data, and consulting with local agencies assisting homeless people.

Rising rents and mortgages and the economic downturn are contributing factors for increasing numbers of people at risk of becoming homeless. Services are all experiencing higher demands for assistance. If the cost of housing continues to increase, then it is expected these numbers will too.

Holroyd City Council and the Holroyd community need to work together to develop sustainable strategies to assist the community and ensure the homeless population does not increase.

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