



13th of April, 2015

Via email: CHSP@dss.gov.au

Submission – Commonwealth Home Support Programme – Good Practice Guide for Restorative Care Approaches.

The Illawarra Forum is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the Illawarra and the Shoalhaven. We support community organisations, promote expertise and innovation in community development, foster industry development and advocate for social justice.

For more than twenty years, the Illawarra Forum has taken a leadership role in the local community services sector, which is a major employment sector in the region, and currently consists of more than 300 organisations in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas of New South Wales.

The Illawarra Forum works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region including:

- Home and community care services;
- People with disability;
- Individuals and families with multiple layers of social and financial disadvantage;
- Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault ;
- Youth work programs;
- Social housing and homelessness services;
- Community health services, including mental health and drug/alcohol services;
- Community legal centre services; and
- Community development and community capacity building programs.

The Illawarra Forum currently auspices the NSW HACC Development Officer, the HACC Development Officers (DO) Illawarra and Southern Highlands, Aboriginal Development Officer (DO), Multicultural Access Project (MAP) Officer and the HACC Training and Development Project. These positions are jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) and NSW Department Family and Community Services; Ageing Disability and Home Care (FACS – ADHC) in a ratio of 68%:32% respectively. These positions provide significant sector support and development to the Home and Community Care (HACC) funded organisations in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands regions through:

- Improving the capacity of organisations to deliver high quality services to the target group
- Demonstrating leadership and providing professional advice and guidance
- Providing access to quality training to improve delivery of services
- Providing strategic advice and information
- Assistance with interpretation of Government policy and development of policies to assist implementation of practice
- Provide assistance with regional planning and identification of unmet needs to be fed into government planning frameworks.

As part of our remit in sector support and development and as a membership-based peak body, the Illawarra Forum supports and represents a number of other organisations in the delivery of their own sector support and development activities. Collaborative practices with local government-based Ageing and Disability Workers, other Multicultural Development Workers and the non-output

Dementia Advisory Service (DAS) workers are critical to the fabric of a successful and resilient HACC sector in the Illawarra and Southern Highlands.

This response takes into account our overall involvement in sector support and development in the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) as both a provider and as a representative of providers. The Illawarra Forum consulted with members and service providers to develop this response.

General Comments

The Illawarra Forum is very happy that DSS has taken this client-centred approach in the Good Practice Guide. The commitment from DSS to consumer choice, reablement, enablement etc. has grown exponentially and represents a huge cultural change in our industry. This requires further workforce development and upskilling to assist workers and organisations to adjust and adapt to this new culture. Sector support and development will be required to build the capacity of organisations to ensure implementation and understanding of the concepts of wellness, reablement and restorative practices and can confidently move forward in this framework. This will require organisation culture change, staff training and provision resources.

Whilst we support the focus on restorative practices, the Illawarra Forum is concerned about the availability of appropriate allied health services in our region. It has been noted that over the years allied health funding has been allocated on a region-by-region basis through Ageing Disability and Home Care's Triennial Planning Framework. Therefore if a service type was not identified as a priority it may not have been allocated as a priority in growth funding rounds. This means that some regions will be well-resourced with allied health service types where others will be found lacking. This will have an impact on a client's ability to access appropriate restorative supports and therefore will be disadvantaged. It will also have an impact on ongoing funding as the focus of restorative practices according to the Good Practice Guide is for people who have "*...potential to make a functional gain.*" Without access to allied health professionals under CHSP, these clients will require a higher level of support which will create further financial burden on the program and ongoing health issues for the individual.

There is confusion in this document about the process involving the environmental assessments for home modifications. Firstly there isn't clarity on whether it is the responsibility of the RAS assessors or the OT assessors within services to complete the environmental assessment for a home modification. Secondly it is not clear whether the information garnered from the assessment goes back to the RAS or My Aged Care prior to service going ahead.

Recommendations:

- **Implement consumer-directed, goal-focused training and support to CHSP providers through the network of sector support and development workers**
- **Undertake a mapping exercise on allied health providers under the current HACC program and prioritise allied health in future growth funding rounds where gaps in service occur**
- **Provide further advice to the sector regarding the process involved in OT assessment for home modifications.**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Commonwealth Home Support Programme – Good Practice Guide for Restorative Care Approaches.

For further information about this submission, please contact me at simone@illawarraforum.org.au or by phone on 02 4256 4333

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simone Stuart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Simone" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Stuart".

Simone Stuart
Acting CEO
Illawarra Forum Inc

