

Tangentyere Council

Indigenous Case Management Service

Homelessness

Financial Exclusion

ICMS Target Client Group

- Homeless people
- Those at risk of homelessness
- People engaging in antisocial behavior
- Public drinkers
- Illegal campers
- Released Prisoners
- People escaping domestic or family violence
- Visitors to town from remote communities

Categories of Support

1. Photo Identification- Tangentyere Card
2. Return to Country
3. Accommodation Support
4. Case Management
5. Advocacy
6. Referral

Photo Identification- Challenges

1. Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Act 2006 has impelled banks to implement stricter identity verification processes.
2. Clients face financial exclusion due to a lack of identification.
3. Identification processes for drivers licenses and proof of age cards are difficult for many individuals.
4. Inconsistent identity verification processes practiced by Government Agencies.
5. Unregistered births and interstate applications.

Tangentyere ID Card- Process

- Individuals provide demographic information and
- 1 piece of secondary identification plus a birth certificate/ extract or
- 2 pieces of secondary identification and
- The ICMS applies on the person's behalf for a birth certificate/ extract
- The Tangentyere Card can on be issued once the ICMS has 2 identification documents including a birth certificate (or other primary document).

Outcomes

- 3582 people have been issued with Tangentyere Cards. The majority (2307) are from remote communities.
- The majority of cards have been issued to people from the Town Camps, MacDonnell Shire, Central Desert Shire, APY Lands (SA) and Ngaanyatjarra Shire (WA).
- The Tangentyere Card is accepted by Westpac, ACCU, National Bank, ANZ, NT Police, public transport providers, liquor outlets and Centrelink.
- The ICMS is still negotiating for its recognition by Commonwealth Bank and the MVR.

Points to consider

- Alice Springs is a major service centre (approx 66% of ID clients are remote)
- Central Australia includes the APY Lands (SA) and Ngaanyatjarra Shire (WA)
- Information needs to be obtained respectfully.
- Nomenclature can be complex.
- Commonwealth Agencies have flexible identity verification. Details (e.g. DOB) can vary between agencies, financial institutions and BDM.

Homelessness

- Complex issue- The ICMS assists people that can be defined as being:
- Primary homeless- people who are sleeping rough (e.g. Todd River, Charles Creek, Billy Goat Hill etc)
- Secondary homeless- people residing in overcrowded town camp houses and/ or individuals staying with family in Territory Housing dwellings etc
- Tertiary homeless- people residing in medium term supported accommodation (e.g. Ayiparinya etc)
- Primary homeless people are increasingly described as 'illegal campers'. It is the experience of the ICMS that the majority of 'illegal campers' have applied for Territory Housing.

Sleeping Rough

- Illegal Camping gains significant attention in the media. According to an article by the Centralian Advocate the ASTC has had contact with 431 males and 337 females during April.
- The 2006 census reported that 144 people were sleeping rough in NT regional centres during August 2006 (including Alice Springs).
- Day Patrol suggests the actual number of individuals sleeping rough over this period is closer to 150 individuals.
- Illegal Campers suffer from negative stereotyping.

Sleeping Rough- continued

- Day Patrol has regular contact with people engaged in 'illegal camping' and has noted the following:
- Stable numbers of long term 'Illegal Campers'. The majority of whom await public housing.
- Remote visitors and other individuals periodically augment these numbers.
- Visitor numbers appear to fluctuate seasonally, the cold weather sees decreasing numbers of illegal campers.
- Visitor numbers increase in response to events such as community football matches and the Show etc

Sleeping Rough- ICMS Perspective

- People are frequently discharged from hospital to 'sleep rough'.
- Patients from remote communities are discharged to transitional accommodation (and assisted with transport).
- Short-term accommodation services in Alice Springs are generally at or near capacity.
- Anglican Lodge (40 beds) has closed. Anglicare is to manage a new facility at 107 Bloomfield Street.
- The NTER has increased demand for short term accommodation, e.g. group bookings for remote residents to consult visiting medical Specialists etc

Urban Drift- Push and Pull

Gaps in service delivery:

- Medical
- Employment
- Education and Training
- Financial Services
- Retail
- Service Providers
- Secondary schooling
- Housing

Dialysis

- Significant numbers of people from remote communities require dialysis.
- All people requiring dialysis are forced to relocate to Alice Springs.
- Currently Kintore is the only community with a nurse to support dialysis.
- Limited resources for dialysis patients to learn self care.
- Self dialysis isn't appropriate for everyone (even where available).
- Self dialysis requires a clean room, clean water and storage for consumables.

Dialysis- continued

- The result of this lack of service provision is that many people are forced to relocate.
- The majority of 'medical' accommodation is at or near capacity. Services providing accommodation to people who are 'homeless' or 'transient' is in turn impacted.
- Where individuals have access to dialysis in their home community their medical prognosis is verifiably improved.
- Alice Springs renal clinics are struggling with patient numbers. The ICMS has observed that patients from the APY Lands have been relocated to Adelaide. In addition patients have reported delays in treatment.

Public Housing

Housing wait times are as follows:

- 1 bedroom: 30 months (Pensioner)
- 1 bedroom: 59 months
- 2 bedroom: 36 months
- 3 bedroom: 49 months
- 4 bedroom: 68 months (quoted)

Public Housing Stocks

- 972 dwellings, includes industry dwellings
- 27 unit facility (107 Bloomfield) to become SAAP facility
- 1 bedroom: 265
- 2 bedroom: 272
- 3 bedroom: 391
- 4 bedroom: 41
- 6 bedroom: 3

Town Camp- dwellings

Total Dwellings: 191 (2004)

- 2 bedroom- 31
- 3 bedroom- 91
- 4 bedroom- 68
- 5 bedroom- 1
- 13 additional dwellings (2004- present)

Town Camp- demographics

1. 204 dwellings
2. ~1950 residents (9.5/ dwelling) (Foster et al, 2005)
3. Service population ~3300 people (16/ dwelling) (Foster et al, 2005)
4. The service population reinforces the lack of short term accommodation.

Public Housing Targets

According to DLGH Annual report 07/08

- Target for 'new households' compared with actual 'new households' assisted show a 70% success rate across the NT.
- Medium and longer term tenancies are increasing.
- Target for 'new households' assisted with 'bond assistance' compared with actual 'new households' assisted with bond assistance showed a 75% success rate.
- Private rental rates have increased markedly and overall housing affordability has decreased.
- 520 households were assisted with public housing across the Territory in 2007/2008.

End Notes

- *Breaking the cycle: people who become homeless will move quickly through the crisis system to stable housing with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur.*
- In contrast to this statement demand exceeds capacity, the homeless struggle to access short term accommodation, individuals don't readily acquire stable accommodation. Many return to 'sleeping rough' or to overcrowded dwellings.
- Services are frustrated by a lack of outcomes for their clients. This in turn can lead to a high turnover of practitioners.

End Notes- continued

- Alice Springs needs to be seen as the service centre for Central Australia. This region includes the MacDonnell Shire, Central Desert Shire, Barkly Shire (Southern), APY Lands, Ngaanyatjarra Shire. This recognition requires strategies to support visitors from remote communities (transport strategy and appropriate accommodation).
- Research should be conducted as 'Action Research' as appropriate accommodation is needed at present.
- Remote communities require greater resourcing to address the issue of 'urban drift'. People should be able to access the resources required to make their communities viable places.

End Notes- continued

- Appropriate models should be explored for short, medium and longer term housing options.
- It should be noted that many people who do achieve stable accommodation have great difficulty maintaining accommodation due to a lack of experience and due to the inherent levels of homelessness amongst their family members. Case management doesn't stop when homelessness is addressed. Greater funding is required for ongoing case management support services.

References

- Foster D, Mitchell J, Ulrik J, & Williams R. *Population and Mobility in the Town Camps of Alice Springs*. A report prepared by Tangentyere Council Research Unit. Alice Springs: Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, 2005.
- Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport 2007/2008 Annual Report

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