

THE HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT INITIATIVE

The Mental Health Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) is a major initiative of the NSW Government Action Plan: Framework for Housing and Accommodation Support for People with Mental Health Problems and Disorders, and has been developed in partnership with the NSW Department of Health and Housing and non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the mental health area.

This project aims to strengthen the partnerships between Area Health Services, non-government organizations, the Department of Housing and consumers and carers.

\$5million has been allocated to the non-government sector for supported accommodation and The Richmond Fellowship of NSW, NEAMI and New Horizons have been awarded tenders. For each tender awarded, the NGOs will work in partnership with a designated Area Health Service (AHS) and community housing association. The role of the AHSs is to deliver clinical support and clinical rehabilitation, while community housing associations are to provide housing and tenancy management. The NGOs will provide ongoing support to assist clients with independent living.

The establishment of services in areas where there are no or few high support accommodation support services currently available is a major focus of this initiative. This project aims to strengthen the partnerships between Area Health Services, non-government organizations, the Department of Housing and consumers and carers.

The project is for the provision of 100 places across NSW identified in a needs analysis process by the Centre for Mental Health. Richmond Fellowship will work in partnership with Far West, Greater Murray, New England, Western Sydney and Wentworth AHSs. NEAMI will work in South Eastern Sydney, South Western Sydney and Illawarra AHSs. Finally, New Horizons will provide accommodation support in the Central Coast AHS.

The number of individuals who will be supported are as follows:

Sutherland or St George Areas	8
Wyong LGA	8
Penrith LGA or Lower Blue Mountains	15
Blacktown & Parramatta LGAs	12
Campbelltown LGA, Blacktown & Liverpool & Fairfield LGAs	21
Tamworth LGA	10
Wagga Wagga LGA	10
Broken Hill LGA	8
Northern part Wollongong LGA	8

HASI is aimed at assisting people with high support needs. Frequently these individuals will have spent significant amounts of time in mental health inpatient units and have had difficulty maintaining tenancy. The concept of the project is based on the premise that with appropriate support, consumers and high needs clients will be able to live independently.

The progress and outcomes of the HASI Project will be followed with great interest. MHCC has a position on the Advisory Committee for the project and will update members on the experience of those involved particularly in relation to the partnership approach taken in the project design and the experience of consumers participating in the initiative.