



## **Homeless Connect Perth 2011**

### **CHARTER**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Homeless Connect Perth project brings together local government, state government, federal government, businesses and community groups to provide free services to homeless people for a day.

The fourth Homeless Connect project in Perth, Homeless Connect Perth 2011, will be held on Wednesday 16 November at Russell Square and the Hellenic Centre Parker Street Northbridge.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The significance of homelessness throughout Australia and its impact on capital cities together with the success of the 2006 Brisbane Homeless Connect event was the catalyst for the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors resolving to make Homeless Connect a national project. Homeless Connect Australia being established to give every City, Town and Community the opportunity to join the Homeless Connect Australia Program and work to helping the homeless take a step on the path out of homelessness.

The City of Perth resolved to fund and implement the staging of Homeless Connect in Perth in 2008 as part of the national program.

The City of Perth and Volunteering WA have successfully collaborated to bring Homeless Connect to Perth. Both organisations were looking at the feasibility of running the program in Perth and found strong support in the service sector to implement Homeless Connect Perth.

The most recent and third Homeless Connect Perth event was implemented on Wednesday 17 November 2010 at Russell Square and the Hellenic Community Centre, Parker Street, Northbridge.

The event attracted an estimated 600 homeless and otherwise disadvantaged guests that were able to connect with a wide range of service providers in a "one stop shop" environment offering assistance with housing, medical and dental issues, legal issues, mental health and addiction issues, employment, recreation opportunities, identification issues, electoral enrolment and other services. Personal care services were also offered including showers, haircuts, massage, clothes, craft activities, physical training, book giveaway, entertainment and catering (meals and refreshments were provided through the day). Sixty eight service providers from government, not-for-profit sector, business and individuals set up the successful "one stop shop" of services with the support of 150 volunteers on the day.

## Summary of Highlights of the 2010 Event

Some of the highlights include:

- Over 600 persons who were homeless, without secure accommodation or at risk of being homeless attended the day.
- Over 15% of all guests were Indigenous.
- Sixty eight service providers with approximately 200 service provider staff set up a “one stop shop” to provide assistance and support to homeless people attending the event.
- The service providers included Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies, community homelessness support and accommodation agencies, community health agencies, legal and health practitioners, businesses, professional associations and education and art groups. The breakdown of service providers attending event was as follows:
  - 38 human service not-for-profit agencies;
  - 12 State Government agencies;
  - 10 businesses and individuals;
  - 6 Australian Government agencies; and
  - 2 Local Government agencies.
- 150 volunteers welcomed and supported the Homeless Connect guests on the day.
- Another 65 volunteers assisted with the pre event activities including collecting and sorting donated items.
- It was estimated that over 3,000 instances of support were provided to individual guests. Other examples of support service provided on the day include:
  - Over 800 meals
  - 120 haircuts provided
  - The combined Dental Health Services and National Dental Foundation WA team saw 59 guests and performed 130 procedures. Estimated value of all total treatments provided on the day was \$11,760.
  - Medical services provided by State Health Services and Perth Primary Care Network Street provided:
    - 58 Medical consultations
    - 30 Public Health Nurse Immunisations
    - 15 Podiatrist consultations
  - Centrelink managed to assist 90 guests with enquiries.
  - 46 cases of information and assistance regarding taxation and electoral enrolment were provided by the Australian Taxation Office and the Electoral Commission
  - The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages helped 57 guests acquire birth certificates and marriage certificates.
  - Department of Housing assisted 76 guests.
  - The RUAH Homeless Day Centre (corner of John and Shenton Streets), set up as Beauty Central, received over 380 guests for showers, beauty treatments, hairdressing, massage and photo portraits.
  - 4.5 x 4 tonne truckloads of donated clothes, food, books and toys were distributed on the day (including a 1/2 truck load of donated food from the Greek Orthodox Church parish priest).

### Homeless Connect Perth 2008 – 2010: Summary over the years

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Number of Homeless guests attended (estimated)	350	500	600
Number of Service Providers attended	51	61	68
Estimated instances of service support for the day	Over 2,000	Over 3,000	Over 3,000
Estimated value of Volunteer hours to support the event	\$43,362	\$56,082	\$61,285
Total number of Volunteer hours to implement the event	1,800	2,328	2,544
Total cost of the event	\$147,000	\$168,967	\$191,925
Estimated value of in kind contribution from business and community	\$87,000	\$95,722	\$108,223

Homeless Connect Perth is a result of collaboration between the City of Perth, Volunteering WA, over 60 service providers and a large number of volunteers. The Homeless Connect Reference Group consists of City of Perth, Volunteering WA representatives and service providers within the government and community sectors that provide ongoing support to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. All known service providers supporting the homeless are invited to be a part of the reference group.

Working collaboratively to implement the Homeless Connect Perth Project provides opportunity to develop and build relationships and partnerships with agencies to better deal with homelessness issues in the inner city area.

Affordable housing and homelessness are primarily the responsibility of the Commonwealth and State governments. However, the City of Perth seeks to complement them through civic leadership and facilitating partnerships that address the issue in Perth.

It is expected that around 600 homeless people will attend Homeless Connect Perth 2011.

#### **NUMBER OF HOMELESS PERSONS IN PERTH**

The 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data identified 13,391 in Western Australia as being persons who were homeless with 8,704 of that number being in the Perth metropolitan area.

Data extrapolated from the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and Supported Accommodation Assistance Program estimates there were 767 rough sleepers on census night in the Perth metropolitan area. (Source: *The Road Home. A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness, Commonwealth of Australian, 2008*).

The 2006 census data identified in the City of Perth local government area a total of 235 people were living in an improvised home, tent or in other “rough” accommodation with 111 of those people being in the Perth CBD and 124 people outside the inner city area.

Perth, like all other major cities attracts a disproportionate number of homeless persons, particularly rough sleepers. These people sleep in parks

and reserves, open spaces and vacant buildings in the inner city area. Consequently homelessness is an important issue for the capital city.

The Homeless Connect Perth project is not limited to the City of Perth but would include homeless from outside the City's geographical boundary.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS CONNECT**

The program is characterised by:

- \* Respect for the homeless guests
- \* Large-scale involvement of volunteers
- \* Integrated services on the day.

### **WHAT IS HOMELESS CONNECT**

Homeless Connect Perth is based on the proven effective model for addressing homelessness by providing a one-stop-shop model of service provision to homeless people. The Homeless Connect model was developed in San Francisco in 2004 and is now duplicated in more than 200 cities in the United States, Canada and Australia (Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart, Gold Coast).

Brisbane City Council piloted Australia's first Homeless Connect in November 2006 where volunteers assisted homeless people to connect with service providers offering assistance with housing, medical issues, legal issues, mental health and addiction issues, employment, recreation opportunities, identification issues, electoral enrolment and other services.

### **THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF THE PROJECT IS 'CONNECTION'**

1. Connection between homeless people and service providers.
2. Connection between homeless people and volunteers willing to take the time to listen to their stories.
3. Connection between a range of services.
4. Connection between government and community.

### **MISSION**

The mission of Homeless Connect Perth is to rally support and create lasting solutions for homeless people within Perth.

### **THE GOALS OF HOMELESS CONNECT**

1. Improve access to services and housing for homeless persons in Perth.
2. Engage and increase the collaborative involvement of homeless consumers, business, non-profit community, and individual volunteers to work together to create solutions to homelessness.
3. To improve the system of care by creating opportunities for collaboration and sharing of best practices among Perth's homeless provider community.
4. Leverage private, corporate and foundation money and in-kind support to augment efforts to increase housing options and build service capacity for homeless persons in Perth.

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF HOMELESS CONNECT PERTH**

1. To consolidate available services and connect homeless individuals to benefits, care, counselling and other services which can assist in

- immediate and practical ways and can lead to pathways to shelters, social/affordable housing and self sufficiency.
2. To demonstrate civic leadership by bringing together a community coalition of government, business, not-for-profit and non government organisations to homeless people.
  3. To better connect the various services in the homelessness sector with each other.
  4. To raise awareness and inform the broader community of homeless issues.

#### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES INCLUDE**

1. Immediate results for homeless people including accommodation, medical attention, legal assistance and counselling.
2. An opportunity for businesses and residents to provide practical help to homeless people.
3. An opportunity for service providers to collaborate around the needs of actual individuals requiring assistance.
4. Social inclusion of those most disadvantaged.
5. Engagement of volunteers.

#### **THE PROJECT HAS BOTH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM BENEFITS**

1. Connecting homeless people to the benefits and services that they immediately need.
2. Offering pathways to housing options and self-sufficiency.
3. Bringing Perth's fragmented access to homelessness services together in one spot and delivering seamless solutions.
4. Better understanding of homelessness issues in the wider community.

#### **HOMELESS CONNECT PERTH WEB PAGES**

The following web pages provide information about Homeless Connect Perth:

<http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/homelessconnect>

<http://homelessconnect.volunteeringwa.org.au>

#### **HOMELESS CONNECT AUSTRALIA WEB PAGE**

Homeless Connect Australia, an initiative of the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, has been established to give every City, Town and Community the opportunity to join the Homeless Connect Australia Program and work to helping the homeless take a step on the path out of homelessness.

For information about what is happening across Australia the following link provides information about Homeless Connect Australia:

<http://www.homelessconnect.com.au>