

**D O M E S T I C
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N S W**



Homelessness NSW

NSW HOMELESSNESS INDUSTRY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-2020

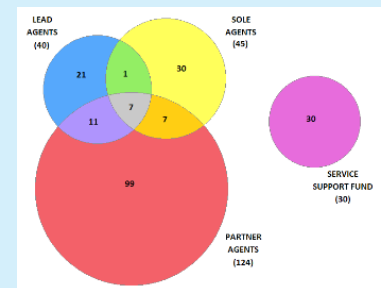
**The Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy is funded by the
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BACKGROUND TO THE SHS SECTOR IN NSW

Evidence shows that the NSW homelessness sector continues to assist increasing numbers of people in need of housing, in a context of declining housing affordability and a shortage of social housing. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in its Specialist Homelessness Services 2015/2016 report¹, identified that NSW homelessness services supported approximately 69,715 service users in 2015/2016, an increase of 35% from 2013-14 figures. In 2016/17, SHSs were contracted to provide support to 57,000 service users, meaning that services are supporting 20% more service users above their contract obligations. The data also reveal a 39% increase in people seeking accommodation support from homelessness services since 2013-2014. Significantly, homelessness service providers were unable to provide accommodation assistance for over 34% (n-15,241) of those who sought it. This demonstrates that the SHS sector is providing services to highly vulnerable people in a context of high demand and limited outcomes in terms of long term accommodation.

The NSW homelessness sector is comprised of a complicated array of funded organisations. Some organisations have single package funding only, while others deliver multiple packages. The sector can be divided into:

- 40 Lead and 124 Partner agents
- 30 organisations receiving Service Support Funds
- 45 Sole agents
- 21 organisations receiving Homelessness Youth Assistance Program funds²



The main function of many SHS providers is crisis refuge, followed by intensive responses for service users with complex needs and transitional accommodation, although in reality most SHS providers have multiple main functions.

SHS providers serve a wide variety of service users, key amongst these being: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; women and children experiencing or escaping domestic or family violence; single women; families; people experiencing mental health issues; people with drug and alcohol issues; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; rough sleepers; unaccompanied young people between 16 and 24 years; people leaving custody; and single men³.

The size of SHS providers varies greatly. A third of SHSs employ 10 or fewer staff, half of SHSs employ 18 or fewer staff, and a quarter employ more than 50 staff⁴. Just over half of SHS providers reported a growth in staff numbers over the 12 months to February 2017⁵.

The average age of SHS staff is 44 years, with the majority of workers aged between 36 and 55 years⁶. Female workers make up 83% of the homelessness workforce, with 14% identifying as male and 2% as non-binary or other⁷. Only 13% of SHS staff identify as being from a culturally or linguistically diverse (CALD) background and 9% identify as of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) descent⁸. A sizable

1 AIHW <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/homelessness/specialist-homelessness-services-2015-16/>>

2 Industry Partnership, NSW Homelessness Staff Survey of Workforce Issues, Homelessness NSW, Sydney, 2017, p.5

3 Ibid.

4 Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), Workforce Issues in Specialist Homelessness Services, University of NSW, Sydney, 2017, p. 12

5 Ibid. p. 15

6 Industry Partnership, p. 6

7 Ibid. p. 7

8 Ibid. pp.6-7

proportion (22%) of SHS staff have themselves at one time been homeless⁹. SHS providers employ roughly equal numbers of full and part time workers¹⁰. In terms of work contracts, 47% of staff have a permanent position, 29% are on a fixed term contract (higher than 18% for the entire community sector) and 24% are employed on a casual basis (on par with national figures)¹¹.

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy to be implemented from July 2017 to June 2020. The Strategy comprises the following components:

- background to the SHS Sector in NSW
- purpose of the Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy
- methodology for the development of the Strategy
- goals and activities of the Strategy
- timeframe, budget and management
- monitoring and evaluation
- summary of strategies and deliverables.

The Strategy is designed to build on and extend the achievements of the Sector Development Project conducted over the past three years by the three NSW homelessness peaks, Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW and Yfoundations. The Industry Partnership (IP) is committed to improving outcomes for homeless people in a context of limited affordable housing and increasing pressures on services and workers.

In 2014, the three homelessness peaks entered into a joint working arrangement to coordinate sector development and support to SHS providers delivering specialist, youth and domestic and family violence services. The IP's Sector Development Project for 2014-2017 was evaluated by ARTD Consultants in 2016. The evaluation found that the project was on track. SHS providers were aware of most Sector Development Project activities, generating strong participation overall and generally high levels of satisfaction. Sector feedback indicated that IP communications could be improved but also noted that this was happening already. Feedback indicated that the IP was responsive to emerging issues for the sector which sometimes made it more difficult to prioritise strategic issues. In closing, the evaluator identified nine points for the IP to consider when renewing the Sector Development Project for the next three years (see boxed text).

9 ibid. p. 7

10 SPRC, p. 12

11 ibid.

ARTD 2017, SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT EVALUATION¹²

Sharing specialist expertise

1. Promoting consistency in quality through practice guidelines—investigate how to do this most effectively to maximise impact across the sector
2. Identifying and sustaining specialist projects—investigate how best to support the commencement and sustainability of specialist projects in the future

Building networks and contributing to collaborations

3. Leveraging opportunities to contribute to homelessness prevention efforts—prioritise those likely to have the greatest impact
4. Facilitating local partnerships/ networks—investigate how best to support arrangements/ infrastructure so that partnerships become embedded

Improving organisational capacity to manage and govern in the contemporary service environment

5. Supporting organisations' capacities to learn, adapt and succeed—consider how to strengthen peer networks and investigate the most appropriate supports so that the sector is prepared for and proactive around change
6. Investigating sector-wide forms of support that are appropriate to the contemporary service environment—investigate the need for a whole-of sector approach to governance and risk management, and approaches to the QAS that provide more strongly validated evidence of quality

Opportunities for workforce professionalisation

7. Optimising support around professionalisation—consider the mix and resourcing of activities to build career pathways
8. Integrating workforce development with a sector-wide skills/ training plan—collaborating with FACS-led work

Continuing to build evidence around capability

9. Filling evidence-gaps and supporting data development—consider emerging information needs and how to support inter-sectoral collaborations with agencies around the use and management of homelessness data

PURPOSE OF THE NSW HOMELESSNESS INDUSTRY AND WORKFORCE STRATEGY

In this next phase of the homelessness Sector Development Project, the IP seeks to respond to four critical issues facing the sector:

- To provide quality services to service users that are trauma informed, sustainable and demonstrate good practice
- To provide service users with integrated services coordinated at local, district and state levels, that are accessible from multiple points of entry (i.e. embodies a 'no wrong door' approach)
- To work towards standardised, measurable outcomes for service users to assess the effectiveness of the sector
- To ensure a highly skilled, motivated and stable homelessness workforce.

In responding to these issues, the IP is guided by the findings of the ARTD evaluation and other consultation processes as indicated in the following Methodology section.

12 ARTD Consultants Evaluation of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy, final report, Sydney 2017

METHODOLOGY

Development of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy 2017-2020 has been informed by a review of desktop research and consultation with a range of stakeholders.

Desktop research:

- ARTD Consultants Evaluation of the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy, final report 2017
- IP workforce survey of 331 SHS staff, February 2017
- Social Policy Research Centre workforce survey of CEOs and HR managers from 72 SHS services, February 2017
- Analysis of AIHW trends

Consultation:

- Feedback through Lead Agents Network meetings (November 2016, March 2017)
- Feedback through SSF and Sole Agents meetings (December 2016, March 2017)
- Feedback from sector reference groups (Homelessness Outcomes Implementation Group; Service user Survey Reference Group; Workforce Development Reference Group; Aboriginal Homelessness Reference Group)
- Requests from the sector for support during the Quality Assurance Scheme process
- Feedback meeting with Quality Assessors (March 2017)
- Evaluation feedback from training and workshops (e.g. Complaints; Recontracting; Service User Representation training)
- Meetings with partner organisations
- Meetings with government agencies
- Service user consultation through the ARTD evaluation.

GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

The desktop review and consultation processes have served to inform the development of four goals for the NSW Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy 2017-2020. These are:

1. To equip services to engage in continuous quality improvement and good practice, within a trauma informed framework
2. To provide avenues for effective service integration through networking, collaboration and coordination
3. To support services and staff to demonstrate service delivery outcomes, using agreed indicators and measurement tools
4. To apply an integrated learning and development framework to make systemic improvements in workforce capability, and promote career pathways within and outside of the industry.

Activities to address these goals and the issues that have informed them are elaborated in the following pages.

GOAL 1 – SERVICE QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND GOOD PRACTICE

SHS QUALITY STANDARDS AND SERVICE SUSTAINABILITY

It is essential that SHS providers are equipped to deliver quality services, which are accessible, sustainable and well governed. To this end, the NSW Government has introduced a Quality Assurance System (QAS), based on the Homelessness National Quality Framework. The QAS comprises eight standards governing: service user rights; service access; service user participation; service outcomes; coordination of the service system; governance; internal systems; and human resource management.

SHS providers are required to undertake a self-assessment against these standards, from which they can develop and implement a Quality Improvement Plan. Completing the self-assessment is an SHS contractual requirement.

To assist SHS providers to meet these standards, the IP has provided tailored support to the sector over the past three years, including:

- design of an online portal for conducting self-assessments and 100 paid subscriptions for access to the portal for organisations with an annual income of less than \$5million
- an equivalence table mapping existing accreditation (e.g. for Out of Home Care Standards) against the NSW SHS standards
- customised assistance on service quality
- training on service quality, Joint Working Agreements, and recontracting
- resources on governance and cultural competency
- financial support for independent assessment and implementation of Quality Action Plans.

As the SHS standards do not form part of an accredited system, SHS providers are obliged to undertake a significant amount of work with no formal recognition of compliance via accreditation. There is also no way for providers to independently benchmark themselves against each other or the standards themselves. A self-assessment process presents a half-way system towards quality and sustainability that provides no assurance that services are in fact compliant with the standards. SHS providers and independent consultants contracted to conduct guided self-assessments have made numerous calls for an accredited system to be brought in. ARTD Consultants, which conducted the independent evaluation of the Sector Development Project, similarly identified a need for a formally accredited system to ensure quality service delivery.

Recognising this gap, in the 2017-2020 period the IP will continue to advocate for the development and introduction of an accredited system for the SHS quality standards. A move to accreditation will involve the IP working with FACS in year 1 to review implementation of the existing SHS Standards and to examine existing accreditation options in other sectors that may be adapted to support the establishment of an accredited system. Beyond year 1, the IP will liaise with FACS around the implementation and rollout of an accreditation system. The IP will continue to provide information and support to the sector around the QAS.

In the meantime, to continue support for services to meet the current standards, the IP will extend existing paid subscriptions to the online portal for 100 small organisations (<\$5mill) until 30 June 2018. The IP will commission the development of a 'Sustainability Health Check' tool for SHS providers and deliver two targeted workshops on meeting the SHS standards for smaller organisations. The IP will also provide external tailored support to lead and partner agencies experiencing difficulty in their joint working arrangements, assisting them to engage in a functional partnership. Beyond July 2018, the IP will seek to transition responsibility for support for the SHS standards implementation to FACS, as is more appropriate. The IP will continue to support SHS providers in ensuring that they meet the standards.

Promotion of Good Practice

Homelessness is complex and identifying the most effective solutions requires a holistic trauma informed response. SHS staff work across broad population groups. Service users frequently present with diverse issues and needs requiring SHS staff to be cognisant of issues concerning trauma, mental health, alcohol and drugs, domestic and family violence, child protection, physical health and disability, as well as housing issues. It is essential, then, for the sector and individual staff to be guided by good practice in addressing complex issues for service users within a framework of trauma informed care. This may be through formal and informal methods of practice support and reflexive practice. It is also critical that organisations and SHS staff work collaboratively and share information so as to work within a shared knowledge framework. Testing and building knowledge about good practice enables staff and organisations to develop their skills and expertise. Providing mechanisms for peer review, as well as documenting and recognising good practice enables SHS staff to share knowledge and refine their approaches.

In 2014, FACS produced *SHS Practice Guidelines*¹³ to build practice models that underpin homelessness service delivery. The guidelines establish criteria for the following practice areas and core responses:

- Trauma informed care (practice model)
- Service user centred approach (practice model)
- Prevention and early intervention (core response)
- Rapid re-housing (core response)
- Crisis and transition responses (core response)
- Intensive responses for service users with complex needs (core response).

While efforts to support practice are already evident in the sector (see boxed text below), organisations and SHS staff have voiced a need for additional avenues to support good practice, particularly for more isolated workers such as rural and Aboriginal staff.

In the 2017 IP SHS sector survey, 90% of SHS staff indicated they have access to some form of practice support. This is principally as clinical supervision (52%) but also: phone support/guidance (31%); mentoring (20%); role models (16%); buddying (13%); Communities of Practice (11%); and shadowing other workers (10%) (p.14). Other support is provided as inhouse supervision, debriefing with colleagues, use of Employee Assistance Program or external supervision.

To date the IP has promoted good practice through:

- Delivery of cross sector masterclasses on practice issues
- Provision of resources on specialised responses (e.g. Rainbow Tick and Transgender guidance; CHAP Aboriginal Cultural Competency Standards)
- Development of good practice guidelines in assertive outreach to rough sleepers; responding to domestic and family violence and homelessness; responding to young people who are homeless
- Commissioning guidance on constructing a good practice database for the sector
- Delivery of training and resources to SHS staff and service users on service user representation.

In 2017/18, the IP will launch three specialist good practice guidelines, accompanied by training regarding implementation. The IP intends to repeat and extend cross sector masterclasses (most likely with Community Housing Providers) on sector identified topics in years 2 and 3 of the new strategy. The IP will promote the documentation of good practice. It will also investigate options for establishing an SHS online platform for information sharing (e.g. policy and procedures), peer review and support of good practice (e.g. hosting a good practice database).

13 http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/327996/GHSHPracticeGuidelines.pdf

In support of SHS Standards 1, around promoting client rights, and 3, around client participation, the IP will continue to support service user representation and advocacy through the delivery of training and resources for both SHS providers and service users.

GOAL 1: TO SUPPORT SHS PROVIDERS TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE SERVICE QUALITY AND TO BUILD THEIR MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY.

ACTIVITIES:

- S1.1.1** Extend BNG portal subscriptions to 30/06/2018 for 100 organisations <\$5mill
- S1.1.2** Develop sustainability 'health check' tools for small SHS providers
- S1.1.3** Deliver 2 QAS Standards Workshops for small SHS providers
- S1.1.4** Provide tailored support to SHS providers to strengthen the functioning of Joint Working Agreements
- S1.1.5** Liaise with FACS around the introduction of a QAS accreditation/compliance auditing system
- S1.2.1** Publish Good Practice Guidelines & deliver training
- S1.2.2** Repeat and extend masterclasses on sector identified topics
- S1.3.1** Document and share good practice and policies
- S1.4.1** Provide structural support for consumer advocacy

Goal 2 - Service integration

The evidence base identifies that preventing and addressing homelessness can only be achieved through effective collaboration and partnership across SHS providers, other organisations and networks which respond to homelessness and related sectors. Mainstream agencies have also accorded high priority to working collaboratively at state, district and local levels.

Despite the divisions created between organisations resulting from the Going Home Staying Home reforms, the sector is moving to a more collaborative space, accompanied by SHS calls for greater coordination and opportunities for networking. There remains, however, more work to be done in promoting collaboration between SHS providers, and between homelessness and other sectors.

In the 2017 IP SHS Workforce Survey, SHS managerial staff and staff with service user contact both identified a need for training in collaboration skills. Respondents identified a need for training to focus on trauma informed care and support (64%), service user-centred working and work with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTQI) populations. Many respondents identified establishing Communities of Practice as a sector priority (51%) (p.15)

To this end, the IP has sought to provide avenues for networking, collaboration and coordination within homelessness and across sectors. The purpose of this work has been to provide an integrated service system for service users, aimed at delivering a trauma informed response that upholds the No Wrong Door approach and seeks to prevent entry into homelessness. The work of the IP to date has consisted of a number of activities that it intends to refine and extend in the new Strategy.

To date, the IP has organised separate biannual network meetings for lead agents, sole agents and SSF organisations. In addition to these, FACS has organised a biannual CEOs forum for the sector. To facilitate greater cross sector communication, networking and feedback between staff across the sector, the IP proposes in 2017-2018 to organise a biannual networking meeting for CEOs and other staff of SSF organisations and leads and sole agents. The Network Meeting will encompass information exchange, training. It will be followed by a day devoted to Communities of Practice.

NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION TO DELIVER SPECIALISED RESPONSES

SHS providers and other key stakeholder have identified the importance of specialised responses for particularly vulnerable groups, including Aboriginal people, youth, people leaving custody, rough sleepers and people affected by domestic and family violence. The IP aims to foster networking and collaboration processes in order to facilitate specialised responses to these groups.

One means of promoting networking and collaboration is through the community of practice model. Communities of practice¹⁴ are groups of people who come together to share and integrate different practitioner knowledge and experience, along with findings from the research literature, to support the development of creative solutions and knowledge about responses to different service user groups. Discussion is aimed at facilitating self-reflection and providing space for peer feedback on work undertaken. This model is already being employed in the sector, sometimes internally within an organisation, sometimes collaboratively across services.

In 2017-2018, the IP will convene and support seven additional communities of practice focussing on: (i) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; (ii) people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; (iii) LGBTQI people; (iv) people affected by domestic and family violence; (v) assertive outreach to rough sleepers; (vi) young people; and (vii) outcomes. IP assistance will include provision of operational guidance, financial support and coordination for each group to hold at least three face to face meetings a year. The purpose of this effort is to encourage SHS staff and organisations to share their expertise and knowledge, and review practice to achieve greater consistency in the quality of specialist responses to diverse needs.

One population group to receive increased focus in the 2017-2020 SHS Workforce and Industry Development Strategy is Aboriginal people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Evidence from the Inner City Sydney Registry Week conducted from 30 November – 2 December 2015, AIHW's Specialist Homelessness Services 2014-15 Report (9th report) and service data indicate increasing levels of homelessness amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in NSW and Inner City Sydney. The FACS NSW Foundations for change- Homelessness in NSW discussion paper acknowledged the systemic and generational disadvantage that has led to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being disproportionately represented amongst the homelessness population. The discussion paper points to a lack of 'culturally appropriate, affordable housing' as a major cause, emphasising that 'homelessness services for Aboriginal people must be culturally competent and, where possible, delivered by specialist Aboriginal services'.

In response, in 2017 the IP invited SHS providers and staff to signal their interest to engage in a reference group to address Aboriginal homelessness. There were 27 nominations from the sector. In 2017-2018, the IP will work with this group and the Federation of Housing Associations to develop a SHS sector strategy to address Aboriginal homelessness. Initial actions for the strategy will comprise:

- Convening a forum to inform the development of an Aboriginal workforce plan that responds to support needs
- Rolling out CHAP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency training across the sector
- Establishing a Community of Practice on addressing Aboriginal homelessness
- Documenting and recognising good practice through entries on the sector good practice database, establishing champions and sector awards
- Funding an Aboriginal homelessness panel at the 2017 AbSec conference.

14 Toolkit: Developing a Community of Practice – Using Communities of Practice to improve frontline collaborative responses to multiple needs and exclusions. Revolving Doors Agency & King's College London 2013

GOAL 2: TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE NETWORKING, COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN SHS PROVIDERS AND RELATED SERVICES

ACTIVITIES:

S2.1.1 Convene biannual two-day NSW Homelessness Network Conference for CEOs and other SHS staff of Service Support Fund organisations, Lead and Sole Agents

S2.2.1 Establish and support seven Communities of Practice for specialised responses

S2.3.1 Develop and implement a strategy to address Aboriginal homelessness and build capacity of Aboriginal staff and staff with Aboriginal service users

Goal 3 to support services and staff to demonstrate service delivery outcomes, using agreed indicators and measurement tools

To ensure that the SHS sector is making a difference to service users of homelessness services, it is critical to establish agreed outcomes and to measure progress towards these. A major focus of the *Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2017-2020* will be on service user outcomes measurement. This focus will build on and extend the three pieces of outcomes work conducted under the previous strategy:

1. establishing a shared outcomes framework across the sector
2. designing an annual client survey to be implemented across the sector
3. testing of the Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach and RBA scorecard tool to measure outcomes.

The NSW Government has recently developed a Human Services Outcomes Framework and has made a commitment to review options for implementing commissioning for outcomes within the SHS Program. During 2017–2020, the *Industry and Workforce Development Strategy* will support the SHS sector to develop its capacity in understanding and implementing outcomes measurement and participating in the FACS led work on outcomes.

The IP is committed to establishing a shared outcomes framework across the sector that is high-quality, relevant and useful. This requires identifying outcomes that matter, indicators that can best demonstrate whether outcomes are being achieved (i.e. are valid, relevant, useful and applicable) and tools that can accurately measure progress. At present, measurement of work in the SHS sector focuses on outputs rather than outcomes. In response, the IP partnered with the Federation of Housing Associations to commission the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) to investigate and consult with services on key outcome domains for the housing and homelessness sectors. The aim of this work was to identify matched indicators and deliver a shared outcomes framework for housing and homelessness. In 2017-18, the IP will work with CSI to finalise the databank of outcome indicators and provide guidance to the sector as to how to use it, e.g. when designing evaluations, service user feedback forms or other data collection processes.

In order to measure service user satisfaction with outcomes resulting from SHS support, the IP has contracted the Federation to lead the development of a client survey that could be administered sector wide on an annual basis. The client survey was developed and tested in consultation with a sector reference group. In 2017-18, the IP will coordinate (voluntary) implementation of the client survey by SHS providers. The IP will provide administrative support for the implementation of the survey across the sector including dissemination of information and targeted promotion of the survey to SHS providers. The Federation will collate and analyse the results of the survey and make the results publicly available in a Smart Report. This process will be assessed as to its viability in conducting an annual sector wide survey. The client survey is expected to provide valuable information on service user perspectives about outcomes. However, it presents only one perspective (e.g. excludes practitioner perspectives and observations) and would be collected only once a year. Thus, other tools to gather information on outcomes may also be needed.

In 2015, the IP established a sector reference group of six SHS providers to investigate a tool for gathering

outcomes data. The group elected to test the Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach and RBA scorecard tool. This saw the initiation of a one year trial led by Fams.¹⁵ The trial sought to gain agreement on a small number of outcome indicators and questions, design an electronic RBA scorecard tool, and to collect and analyse quarterly data for individual services and across the group for 1 year. Going forward into 2017/18, the IP's provision of subsidised subscriptions for services to use the FAMS RBA scorecard beyond the trial will not be financially sustainable. Additionally, there are some shortcomings of this methodology for measuring outcomes. That is, in terms of differences in the data collection process between services and the scorecard's simplification of data collected. While there are important learnings to be taken from the trial, the IP is interested in pursuing other outcomes measurement tools.

The sector will need support to measure progress on indicators from the outcomes databank. The selection of appropriate resources is complicated. A standardised approach for the sector is needed, one that is simple to use and that does not draw too heavily on the financial and human resources of SHS providers. The IP is also mindful that organisations may be already required by funders of services other than SHS to use certain outcomes measurement methodologies (e.g. SocialSuite or Outcomes Star). In 2017/18, the IP will consult with FACS, CSI and SHS providers to identify ways of supporting the sector to utilise the outcome indicators databank and building its capacity to use it.

GOAL 3 – SERVICE OUTCOMES

To support SHS providers and networks to demonstrate their service delivery outcomes.

Activities:

S3.1.1 Finalise a homelessness and housing outcome indicators databank, with guidance on its application by SHS providers

S3.1.2 Implement an annual client satisfaction survey, sector wide

S3.1.3 Develop universal and feasible outcomes measurement and management tools.

¹⁵ Fams is a peak body supporting service delivery by non-government, not-for-profit organisations working with vulnerable children, young people, families and communities.

Goal 4 Workforce development

CAREER PATHWAYS

To maintain a sustainable and diverse workforce, the homelessness sector needs to offer a vibrant and attractive place to work. The 2017 workforce survey found that the majority of SHS staff are committed to community work and the service user group, and are generally satisfied with their job. However, deteriorating changes in employment conditions are impacting on job security in the sector and opportunities for career advancement are limited, reinforcing previous calls for the development of additional career pathways.

2017 IP SHS WORKFORCE SURVEY FOUND:

- The large majority of SHS staff were initially attracted to sector because of a desire to help others and give something back to the community (67%), and because they enjoy working with the service user group (47%) (p.8).
- The large majority of staff are satisfied with their work, agreeing somewhat or strongly that: their work gives them a feeling of accomplishment; they have tools and resources to do their job well; they feel supported by their manager and workplace; and their job makes good use of their skills and abilities (p.9).
- Since 2013, there has been a substantial shift from full time employment to part time employment across the sector, and a shift towards more short term and casual contracts, of significant concern for a sector in which women make up the large majority of staff.
- Only 40% of SHS staff indicated that they had opportunities for career advancement within their organisation, 37% had no opportunities and 23% were unsure as to whether there were any or not (p.10).
- Only 40% of SHS staff wanted to remain with their current employer for the next three years, 10% want to be working elsewhere within the sector, 15% want to move outside of the sector and 6% want to retire (p.10).

It is critical that SHS staff are highly skilled and able to respond to the demands of service users. They also need to be prepared for changes and challenges facing the sector, such as increases in demand, increasing numbers of service users with complex needs and the introduction of commissioning for outcomes, among others.

Under the previous strategy, the IP commissioned the preparation of a Workforce Development Plan for implementation from 2017 to 2020. Consultants drafting the plan have been guided by a sector reference group and drew on priorities identified by SHS staff in the 2017, 2015 and 2013 workforce surveys. Four key aspects of this plan that are related to career pathways are set out below.

SHS provider feedback in sector network meetings, the ARTD evaluation of the Sector Development Project and feedback from independent QAS Assessors have all pointed to a need to build a shared values system and vision for the homelessness sector to align service goals and approaches. The ARTD evaluation also recommended that a Statement of Commitment between FACS Housing and the SHS sector be re-initiated to improve local collaboration. In response to these calls, the IP has commissioned the development of a *Sector Capability Statement* in consultation with the sector. The purpose of the Capability Statement is to articulate the mission, values, capacities and approaches of the SHS sector. It includes the sector's distinguishing features, relevant quality standards and capabilities. In 2017-18, the IP will promote the Sector Capability Statement and FACS/SHS Statement of Commitment to foster local collaboration. The Statement of Commitment will also be extended to the community housing sector.

A *Sector Capability Framework* articulates a list of desirable skills and behaviours matched to particular job roles and work contexts. For example, a capability framework was developed for all community services in the state of Victoria in 2013, setting out:

- 4 levels within each position (CEO, Manager/Supervisor/Lead Practitioner, Advanced Practitioner, Practitioner)

- 9 streams for capabilities (e.g. community and interagency relations, professionalism, communication, leadership and team work)
- 14 personal attributes (creative and innovative, determined, positive, self-disciplined, etc).

These levels, capability streams and personal attributes were not mandatory and were intended to be tailored to individual organisations and workforces, as well as different sectors. They were used by organisations in selection criteria when designing job descriptions, in performance appraisal and training program design, as well as by individual workers to support their own career planning. The IP will investigate this and other models of sector capability frameworks and consult with the SHS sector with regards to their adaptation to the NSW location and context. An agreed framework would then be promoted throughout the sector, with a view to making it available online with training support.

A *Staff Exchange Program* is being negotiated between the SHS and the Community Housing Provider (CHP) sectors. Employees in these two sectors work towards a common purpose of facilitating safe and secure accommodation for service users experiencing housing stress and/or homelessness. While SHSs and CHPs have collaborated in service user advocacy and strategic management, operational staff have limited knowledge of the work practices of the other sector. A staff exchange program is aimed at strengthening sector capability through increased collaboration and knowledge sharing. This model has been negotiated between the IP and Federation of Housing Associations and will be trialled with one service from each sector in year 1. The trial will be assessed to review the benefits and value add. The model will be subsequently refined and facilitated across both sectors, with at least six services engaging in staff exchange across the three years. The IP will collaborate with the Federation to coordinate participation and monitor implementation.

The 2017 IP SHS workforce survey identified a need for additional clinical expertise or support to assist staff to improve service delivery to service users, and to provide an avenue for career advancement. A *Senior Practitioner Role* position within SHS organisations has been identified as a means of lending expertise to operational staff to improve service user outcomes, support employees and support application of trauma informed care principles. Such a role could also support the appropriate recruitment and training of staff. The role would complement the range of practice support currently available. The consultants for the workforce plan have prepared guidance on establishing a Senior Practitioner Role for services and in 2017-18, the IP will promote the creation of these positions in the sector. The Senior Practitioner Role will link to the Capability Framework. Its implementation will be reviewed to assess its benefit to SHS services and staff.

Integrated Learning and Development

The homelessness workforce needs an integrated strategy for the delivery of industry based skills training and professional development. The strategy should not be limited to training but include a broad range of learning methods such as mentoring, coaching, shadowing, staff exchange, peer assisted learning and recognition of prior learning.

Encouragingly, the SHS sector is relatively well educated and skilled. Around 50% of SHS staff have completed a university qualification.¹⁶ SHS staff are highly engaged in professional development, spending 9 days on average per year on professional development, compared with 6.5 days for workers across the entire NSW community sector.¹⁷ In the 12 months leading up to the IP SHS workforce survey in February 2017, 92% of staff had taken up learning/skills development opportunities in the workplace or elsewhere.¹⁸ Despite this, SHS staff have identified training gaps and priorities, as indicated in the table below.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 7

¹⁷ SPRC 2017, p. 3

¹⁸ Industry Partnership, p. 11

NSW HOMELESSNESS STAFF SURVEY OF WORKFORCE ISSUES 2017

TRAINING PRIORITIES FOR STAFF WITH SERVICE USER CONTACT	TRAINING PRIORITIES FOR MANAGERIAL STAFF:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with specific populations (e.g. ATSI, CALD, LGBTQI, youth, mental health, alcohol and other drug issues, complex needs) • Trauma informed care skills • Case work skills • Self-care skills • Collaboration/organisational relationships skills • Work management • Assessing risk and safety planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational development (client participation, collaboration, evaluation, measuring outcomes, networking) • HR (clinical supervision, conflict resolution, recruitment, staff development, workforce planning) • Business (business strategy, communications, financial planning & budgeting, fund raising, property management) • Management skills (change management, governance, leadership, time management, risk management) • Self-care (dealing with vicarious trauma, managing appropriate relationship, stress management) • Interpersonal communication (crisis management, facilitation, team building) • Legal skills (relevant legislation, service standards and guidelines, duty of care requirements and law of negligence)
TRAINING NEEDS IDENTIFIED THROUGH NETWORK MEETINGS, EVALUATION AND OTHER PROCESSES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and accredited training • Training on trauma informed care and support • Training on the implementation of SHS standards (particularly for smaller organisations) • Training for organisations and service users on service user representation and participation • Training on data management and the use of CIMS • Repeating units of competency around five SHS skill sets • Training on tenancy rights, private rental and social housing legislation (the Residential Tenancies Act 2010) • Training on providing support for victims of domestic and family violence (e.g. in relation to migration law). 	

In delivering the training program for 2017-2020, the Industry and Workforce Strategy will be guided by key principles identified by SHS staff. These were articulated in the sector survey for the evaluation of the IP Sector Development Project.¹⁹

PRINCIPLES FOR TRAINING IDENTIFIED BY SHS STAFF

- Training should be aligned with the NSW SHS Capability Framework
- Training should be customised to the SHS sector, delivered by trainers with expertise in homelessness and housing.
- The learning and development program should include a mix of high-level specialist training and basic/ induction training to build quality and consistency in a sustainable manner for new workers to the sector.
- Training should be adaptive to allow scope for training to evolve with emerging communities and needs – especially around the needs and safety of children, new migrant groups, and working with people with disability.
- Options for delivery of training should be provided at low or no cost e.g. through RTOs with Smart and Skilled funding.
- Training should be delivered in flexible ways for those in rural and remote locations (e.g. online options).
- Waiting times for places in training should be minimised wherever possible.

These principles and training priorities will inform the development of an integrated and customised learning and development framework, to be negotiated with the FACS Learning and Development Unit. Of particular concern in development of the framework will be delivering customised training aimed at different levels of experience and knowledge, specialisation for emerging communities and needs, and options for flexible delivery that link with the principles of a capability framework. Training will continue to be delivered by a range of providers, for example:

- FACS Learning and Development and other government agencies
- Federation of Housing Associations
- ECAV
- CCWT
- PIAC
- consultants and other providers commissioned by the Industry Partnership.

The previous Strategy identified a need to recognise skills and experience gained on the job. In response, 100 places were made available for staff to undertake formal recognition of prior learning (RPL) with TAFE. This opportunity has resulted in 91 staff attaining a Diploma of Community Services, 5 staff attaining a Certificate IV in Community Services and 97 staff overall receiving a Statement of Attainment in Homelessness. While there was a strong take up of this opportunity, there were at least 14 withdrawals and TAFE staff were required to exert considerable effort to support some of those undertaking their RPL to complete required courses. Going forward, the new *Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy* will provide a limited RPL opportunity, making available 10 places in 2017 – 2018 for completion of a Certificate IV or Diploma. The main focus of the learning and development strategy will be on providing training opportunities to as many SHS staff as possible, through an integrated learning and development framework that links to a capability framework.

Sector recognition

Sector feedback has indicated an appetite for recognition of effective practice and leadership in delivering homelessness services. *Sector awards* provide a way to recognise good practice service models. A number of government and non-government sectors use an awards process to recognise and celebrate significant achievement, and to inspire organisations to strive for excellence in the delivery of services. These include NSW Public Sector Awards, NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing, Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards, Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) awards, The Mental Health Services

Awards, FEANTSA Ending Homelessness Awards and HESTA Community Sector Awards. Recognition of this kind can play an important role in motivating innovation in meeting community needs.

The IP has commissioned the development of guidance in establishing an awards process for the SHS sector. In 2017-18, the IP will work with the sector to set up an awards process, with a view to holding the first ceremony at the *2018 NSW Homelessness Conference*. Nominations for awards could then be included in the good practice database, where initiatives meet good practice criteria.

GOAL 4 TO APPLY AN INTEGRATED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO MAKE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENTS IN WORKFORCE CAPABILITY, AND PROMOTE CAREER PATHWAYS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF THE INDUSTRY

Activities:

S4.1.1 Promote a sector capability statement & FaCS/SHS Statement of Commitment

S4.1.2 Consult with FACS and the SHS sector to develop and roll out a capability framework

S4.2.1 Coordinate with CHPs to facilitate a staff exchange program

S4.2.2 Promote application of a Senior Practitioner Role within the sector

S4.3.1 Work with FACS and other training providers to develop and deliver a customised, integrated training program focussed on prioritised subject areas, aligned with a capability framework

S4.3.2 Fund 10 places for Recognition of Prior Learning, to be delivered by TAFE

S4.4.1 Implement a sector awards process to recognise good practice

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The *Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy* will be subjected to continuous monitoring and evaluation over the course of the three years. The evaluation will employ an action research approach to respond to and integrate findings of the evaluation progressively. The IP will look to engage an external consultant in the first few months of the new Strategy, to commence as soon as possible.

A5.1.1 Commission an evaluation of the Industry and Workforce Development Strategy

TIMEFRAME AND MANAGEMENT

The *Homelessness Industry and Workforce Strategy* will be implemented during the three years from July 2017 to June 2020.

The three industry peaks, led by Homelessness NSW, will manage the implementation of the Strategy.

GOAL 1 SERVICE QUALITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND GOOD PRACTICE: To support SHS providers to continuously improve service quality and to build their management and organisational capacity

STRATEGY	DELIVERABLES	DATE
S1.1.1 Extend BNG portal subscriptions to 30/06/2018 for 100 organisations <\$5mill, to support continuous quality improvement	Subsidised access to BNG portal services for up to 100 services to 30/06/2018	June 2018
S1.1.2 Develop sustainability 'health check' tools for small SHS providers to support continuous quality improvement	Development of practical tools available free to SHS organisations available on the sector development website and BNG portal	December 2017
S1.1.3 Deliver QAS Standards workshops for small SHS providers	Delivery of 2 tailored quality assurance training to support small SHS providers	April 2018
S1.1.4 Provide tailored support to SHS providers to strengthen the functioning of Joint Working Agreements	Provision of tailored support for individual agreements through the JWA Support Service	June 2018
S1.1.5 Liaise with FaCS around the introduction of a QAS accreditation/ compliance auditing system	Provision of information and support to the sector	Ongoing
S1.2.1 Publish Good Practice Guidelines for Assertive Outreach to Rough Sleepers, Domestic Violence Prevention and Working with Youth, and deliver training about these and monitor implementation	Publication of good practice guidelines and delivery of a series of training webinars Sector wide monitoring conducted through Communities of Practice	April 2018 ongoing
S1.2.2 Repeat and extend masterclasses to SHS organisations on sector identified topics	Delivery of masterclasses in specific skills	June 2020
S1.3.1 Document and share good practice within the homelessness sector	Circulation of a template to document good practice within the sector and creation of a searchable online database	March 2018
S1.4.1 Provide structural support for consumer advocacy	Development and testing of tools to support consumer engagement Delivery of service user and staff training in consumer engagement	November 2017 June 2018

GOAL 2 SERVICE INTEGRATION: To facilitate effective networking, collaboration and coordination between SHS providers and related services

STRATEGY	DELIVERABLES	DATE
S2.1.1 Convene biannual NSW Homelessness Network Meeting for CEOs and other SHS staff of Service Support Fund organisations, Lead and Sole Agents	Convening of biannual network meetings	ongoing
S2.2.1 Establish and support 7 Communities of Practice for specialised responses: 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 2. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds 3. LGBTQI+ people 4. People affected by domestic and family violence 5. Assertive outreach for rough sleepers 6. Young people 7. Outcomes	Convening and support for 7 Communities of Practice, with meetings held at least three times a year	ongoing
S2.3.1 Develop and implement a strategy to address Aboriginal homelessness and build the capacity of Aboriginal staff and staff with Aboriginal service users 1. Convene an Addressing Aboriginal homelessness forum 2. Develop an Addressing Aboriginal Homelessness Strategy 3. Convene a reference group to oversee the strategy's implementation 4. Deliver CHAP Aboriginal Cultural Competency Standards training to the sector 5. Implement Aboriginal workforce development plan	Forum held with sector staff Strategy developed from priorities identified by Forum participants Reference Group convened, to meet 4 times per year SHS staff trained and deliver CHAP training across the sector Implementation of workforce development strategies	August 2017 October 2017 November 2017 December 2018 June 2020

GOAL 3 SERVICE OUTCOMES: To support SHS providers and networks to demonstrate their service delivery outcomes

STRATEGY	DELIVERABLES	DATE
S3.1.1 Finalise a homelessness and housing outcome indicators databank, with guidance on its application by SHS providers	Outcome indicators databank finalised and available online	December 2017
S3.1.2 Implement an annual client satisfaction survey, sector wide	Implementation of a sector wide client satisfaction survey and circulation of findings	April 2018
S3.1.3 Develop universal and feasible outcomes measurement and management tools	Application of universal tools to collect data on client outcomes Support for sector to undertake data collection and analysis	June 2020

GOAL 4 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: To support systemic improvements in industry and workforce capability

STRATEGY	DELIVERABLES	DATE
S4.1.1 Promote a sector capability statement & FaCS/SHS Statement of Commitment	Production of a capability statement and statement of commitment for adoption by the sector Capability statement is annually reviewed	October 2017 June 2020
S4.1.2 Consult with FaCS, SHS sector to develop and roll out a capability framework	Development of capability framework that aligns with a training and professional development program	June 2018
S4.2.1 Coordinate with CHPs to facilitate a staff exchange program	Trial of a staff exchange with one SHS and CHP organisation 5 SHS organisations engage in an exchange program; program outcomes are captured to inform process	December 2017 June 2018
S4.2.2 Promote application of a Senior Practitioner Role within the sector	A Senior Practitioner Role is trialled in 3 services, with guidance and process are reviewed The Senior Practitioner Role is assessed for its contribution to practice and revised accordingly	June 2018
S4.3.1 Work with FACS and other training providers to develop and deliver a customised, integrated training program focussed on prioritised subject areas, aligned with a capability framework	Current training and priorities are reviewed A training program is developed and mapped to capability framework Delivery of professional development opportunities Training needs monitored.	Ongoing
S4.3.2 Fund 10 places for Recognition of Prior Learning	10 eligible workers fast tracked for RPL	June 2018
S4.4.1 Implement a sector awards process to recognise good practice	Sector awards process established and awards distributed annually	Ongoing
A5.1.1 Commission an evaluation of the Industry and Workforce Development Strategy	Implementation of an action research evaluation and review of Industry Strategy	June 2020

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Homelessness Sector Development Project, a partnership between Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW and Yfoundations