

Peter Hamilton

From: "Peter Hamilton" <peterh@nor.com.au>
To: "Tein McDonald" <teinm@ozemail.com.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 2 April 2003 9:44 AM
Subject: LIC Insurance

Tein,

Thanks for the information. Looks good.

For your information we have adopted the term "landsharing" as one word and not two. This was adopted by Planning NSW on our recommendation for use in the "State Environmental Planning Policy No 15, -- Rural Landsharing Communities".

Regards Peter

Peter Hamilton

From: "Tein McDonald" <teinm@ozemail.com.au>
To: "Peter Hamilton" <peterh@nor.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 1 April 2003 6:53 PM
Subject: Re: re PanCom and insurance

Thanks Peter,

I have copied the content of the attachment below. But if you are away, no worries. I will just go ahead. (But this is for your info anyway.)

thanks,
 Tein

 Attachment to expression of Interest with the NCOSS Insurance Bulk
 Buying
 Scheme
 PanCom - 1/4/03.

1. Activities of the organisation

This expression of interest is being submitted by the NCOSS member, PanCom - which is an umbrella organisation for over 100 rural land sharing communities in northern New South Wales. If Pancom members were to join a group buying scheme, the insurance policies would be taken out by the individual rural land sharing communities themselves.

Aims of PanCom - the umbrella organisation

PanCom aims to: promote social interactions between rural land sharing communities; assist in dealings with local councils and government bodies; foster sustainable economic initiative and protect the environment.

Aims of individual rural land sharing communities

In each rural land sharing community has individual aims and activities - with the core business being the provision of opportunities for cooperative, environmentally sound, residential living among their members - with a strong emphasis on enhanced community interaction to achieve a range of benefits including social and community health benefits.

2 Questions relating to the organization's income and current insurance details.

Please note that on the Expression of Interest form, these questions are answered in terms of a single rural land sharing community, drawing on averages received from a recent survey. (The survey, however, collected only 25 replies to a potential total of about 90 rural land sharing communities).

3. Potential for rural land sharing communities to also purchase domestic insurance

Please note that there is potential for members of these communities to also purchase their individual domestic insurance policies through the NCOSS scheme should it offer this option. As the average for the 25 properties was approximately 9 houses, this could multiply to a considerable business for the successful company. Such group buying of both Public Liability and domestic insurance could also overcome any

perceived or real risks associated with cross-ownership of land and houses.

4. Average property and community etc sizes.

For your info, the range of the premiums currently paid by 23 respondents to a recent survey is \$284.00 to \$2333.00 per year . Other means from this survey that may assist an underwriter assessing premiums are as follows.

14.12 = average number of members per property (number = 25)

18.32 = average number of residents (including children and other non-members)

111.6 = average number of hectares

1.32 = average number of community buildings

9.2 = average number of existing houses

1.24 = average number of rentals

5. Risk management processes. All communities surveyed either had (or were prepared to develop) risk management policies and processes.

Peter Hamilton wrote:

> Tein,
 > Thanks for the update. I have been unable to open your Attachment and as I
 > will be away for the rest of the week, I am afraid I cannot comment but
 > suggest you go ahead.
 > Regards Peter

--

(Dr) Tein McDonald
 Editor, Ecological Management & Restoration
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VISIT THE WEB PAGE OF 'ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT & RESTORATION' TO LOOK AT A
 SAMPLE ISSUE. www.blackwell-science.com/emr/

*Advised Land sharing to be spelt as one word.
 Email of 2/4/03*

Peter Hamilton

From: "Tein McDonald" <teinm@ozemail.com.au>
To: "Peter Hamilton" <peterh@nor.com.au>
Sent: Monday, 17 March 2003 8:01 AM
Subject: Re: Insurance

Dear Peter,

Thank you very much for this information. It could be very valuable and I will make the enquiries. (Our postal address is P.O. 42 Woodburn 2472 ⁽¹⁾ for the form)

The findings of the recent survey have not been 'number crunched' because there were far too few questionnaires returned (only about 20). The initial findings of the questionnaire are that about half the respondents considered they had a problem (and some of those had a very serious problem). The other half did not consider they had a problem. There seemed to be no clear explanation, although some of the ones that did not have a problem had insurance through an agricultural package rather than a business package or other form. This may make some difference.

There may be potential for the topic to be raised at the Aquarius anniversary, i.e. the land sharing communities workshop planned for the 17th May. I have yet to approach the organisers of this.

If any further analysis is done, I'll definitely pass it on to you via Simon.

Many thanks for your help with the NCOSS suggestion. I'll let you know how it goes.
Tein

Peter Hamilton wrote:

Hi Tein, PANCOM is a member of NCOSS (NSW Council of Social Services). In their current journal they are seeking "Expressions of Interest" from those interested in the NCOSS development of a "Bulk Buying Insurance Scheme". If you should be interested in following up on this their contact is 66 Albion St., Surrey Hills, 2010 or FAX 9281 1968 Phone 9211 2599, Ext 104. Registration can also be made at www.ncoss.org.au/insurance In such contact reference should be made to PANCOM as an associate member. I do not have your postal address and would be obliged if you would let me have this as I can forward you a copy of the Registration Form in regard to the above. Simon Clough advises me that he has received from you findings of your recent survey in this regard. I would be obliged if you would send me a copy of this and any future findings that emerge from your survey. Thanking you and with appreciation of your efforts in this regard.

(1) Copy of form sent 18/3/03



More social housing: an election priority

by Catherine Mahony

To effectively deal with poverty and disadvantage, access to affordable, secure housing must be guaranteed. Without this basic need being met, other critical factors such as education, employment and health cannot be properly addressed. The chronic lack of social housing in New South Wales has been an issue for many years and has been consistently raised by NCOSS, other peaks, local government and regional organisations across the state.

The number of applicants on the public housing waiting list has continued to grow over the past five years. As the table below demonstrates, in the last 12 months the number of applicants on the waiting list has increased by 3,224.

While the state government's expenditure on social housing has been

"The number of applicants on the public housing waiting list has continued to grow over the past five years..."



predominately funded through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement, the anticipated decline in the Commonwealth's contribution requires a state government response that moves beyond demand management. There is an urgent need for substantially more capital investment in social

housing to meet the very high demand reflected by the numbers on the waiting list.

NCOSS has called on the government to double the amount of social housing stock over the next 10 years. In the next 12 months, and on a continuing basis for the next 10 years, this will require a 10% increase in social housing stock or an additional 12,821 units of housing per year. In the lead up to the state election we are also lobbying all candidates to support this recommendation.

Yes this does represent a major financial investment. The lack of social housing is now major problem in New South

Wales and there is no point in underestimating the real cost of addressing this need.

A sustainable future for the social housing system will require a major injection of additional funds from the state government and a long-term commitment to meeting demand. It will also require a range of strategies that consider a number of revenue streams, (land tax, stamp duty, superannuation funds) and practical incentives for the growth of community housing, including title transfer.

Need for a substantial increase in social housing assisting clients to move from homelessness to housing security is a central aim of the SAAP system. The Supported Accommodation Assistance Act (1994) describes SAAP's overall aim as being 'to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, in order to help people who are homeless to achieve the maximum degree of self-reliance and independence'.

continued on page 6

Number of applicants on the Public Housing Waiting List

Year	Number on waiting list
1996-97	94,797
1997-98	96,906
1998-99	97,037
1999-00	98,337
2000-01	101,561

Sources of Data: Department of Housing Annual Reports 1996/1997 – 1999/2000 & Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Housing Assistance data briefing No.1, Feb 2002: pg. 10.

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State Election: Updates on the community sector campaigns for social justice in the upcoming NSW election.

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Pre-School Campaign heats up

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NCOSS

The Council of Social Service of New South Wales represents more than 7000 service delivery and consumer groups through its organisational membership.

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NCOSS News

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Stephen Crowley

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There are special rates for NCOSS members.

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**NCOSS
Insurance**

Insurance Problems?

Register a No Obligation Expression of Interest with the NCOSS Insurance Bulk Buying Scheme

NCOSS is pleased to inform the NSW social services sector that we are setting up a bulk buying insurance scheme in response to the difficulties facing the sector struggling with increased premiums and in many cases an inability to obtain cover.

The Scheme is a result of funding received from NSW Treasury and is targeting non-government

organisations. To assist us gauge the level of interest in this insurance initiative and build an accurate picture of insurance issues in the social services sector, we request organisations fill in this form and fax or mail it back to NCOSS (address overleaf).

Alternatively, on-line Registration is available at www.ncoss.org.au/insurance.

Expression of Interest Registration

Organisation Name _____
Contact Name _____
Address _____
Suburb _____ Postcode _____
Telephone _____ Fax _____
Email _____

1. What are the main activities of your organisation? [please tick the primary activities only]

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aged Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual and/or Family Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Development and Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) _____ | |

- 2. Do you:** ☐ provide child care?
[tick each activity ☐ provide accommodation facilities?
your organisation ☐ administer medication?
undertakes] ☐ work with people affected by drugs and/or alcohol?
☐ provide physical activity excursions (eg horseriding, sailing, sport)?
☐ run events?

3. What was your organisation's gross income for year ending June 2002? _____

4. When do your insurance policies expire? (Month / Year) _____

5. The NSW Treasury, who provided funding for this project, has requested that we forward them details of the organisations wishing to participate in the scheme. If you permit us to pass on your organisation's name and service type, please tick this box: ☐

There are several peak bodies operating bulk buying insurance schemes in the social services sector including the Meals on Wheels Insurance Scheme. NCOSS Insurance supports cooperative working relationships between these schemes and within the social services sector as a whole. PTO

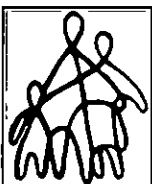
6. Who is your insurance broker? _____
7. Who is your public liability insurer? _____
8. Do you belong to a bulk buying insurance scheme? ☐ Yes ☐ No
if yes, which one? _____
9. What insurance policies are you currently insured for? *[please tick each one]*
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Liability | <input type="checkbox"/> Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Indemnity | <input type="checkbox"/> Contents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Directors and Officers Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Burglary/Theft |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company Reimbursement Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire and Specified Perils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fines and Penalties Reimbursement | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinery Breakdown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Accident (Volunteers) | <input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration of stock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please detail)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Third Party | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Owned (eg volunteers) | |
10. What was the total cost of your insurance premiums for the year 2001-2002? _____
11. What was the total cost of your insurance premiums for the year 2002-2003? _____
12. Has your organisation ever claimed on either its public liability or professional indemnity type insurances? ☐ Yes ☐ No *If yes, please provide details of which insurance you claimed on, what the claim was and for how much*

13. Have you had trouble obtaining public liability cover? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, was this due to: ☐ Increased cost of cover ☐ Refusal of cover from previous insurer
☐ Inability to obtain cover ☐ Other *(please detail)*: _____
14. Have you had difficulty obtaining any other types of insurance? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please detail type of insurance: _____
Was difficulty due to: ☐ Increased cost of cover ☐ Refusal of cover from your previous insurer
☐ Inability to obtain cover ☐ Other *(please detail)*: _____
15. How comfortable are you with your level of knowledge and ability to purchase insurance?
☐ Very comfortable ☐ Somewhat comfortable ☐ Not comfortable *(please detail the areas and type of assistance you feel could assist you to feel more comfortable)*

16. Does your organisation have insurance risk management processes in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No
17. How did you hear about the NCOSS Insurance Project? _____

Thank you for filling out this Registration Form. Your details will be entered into the Insurance database and treated as confidential. Regular updates on this project will be sent to all registered organisations. If you do not want to receive updates please tick this box. ☐

Please return to: NCOSS Insurance, Council of Social Service of NSW
66 Albion Street, Surry Hills 2010 or Fax 9281 1968
Enquiries: Phone: 9211 2599, Ext 104



Transport alliance highlights bias in Government spending

An alliance of over 80 community-based organisations launched a call for greater equity in transport concession fares at Parliament House on Monday 24 February. The current system of government subsidies for concession fares is biased in favour of inner Sydney and the eastern suburbs because it provides greater subsidies for public transport than for private buses.

This means that some people who would receive concessions on public transport receive less assistance if they live in areas serviced by private buses. These groups include people with impaired vision, apprentices and age and disability pensioners. It seems incongruous that the Government provides a lower level of subsidy to transport for people on low incomes on private buses when many disadvantaged areas are only serviced by private operators.

The information released on 24 February also sought to draw attention to the plight of people on very low incomes who miss out on concession fares on both public and private transport. Unemployed people, for example, miss out on concessions if they are receiving less than the maximum rate of payment. This cuts out people such as:

- unemployed people under the age of 21 whose parents combined income is \$27,400;
- people who have been breached by Centrelink; and
- unemployed people whose allowance is reduced due to part-time work.

The Government recognised that there were problems with this system when it announced a review of transport concessions in 1999 but some 4 years later this review is yet to be released or acted upon. The Opposition is yet to

announce its full transport policy but indications are that it is more likely to give further concessions to self-funded retirees than it is to extend concessions to people on low incomes.

A number of organisations have been active in the campaign for reform of concessions, particularly Western Sydney Community Forum, the Youth Action and Policy

"... many disadvantaged areas are only serviced by private operators."

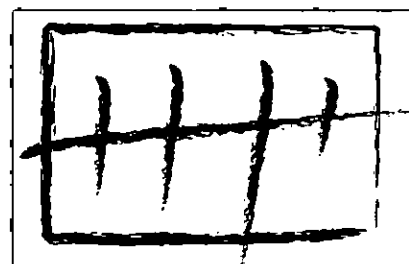
Association, the Welfare Rights Centre, the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, Burnside and the Central Coast Community Council. This coalition is determined to continue to push for a more rational and fair approach to concessions beyond the State election.

Beyond Bars launches second wave of fact sheets

The Beyond Bars Alliance, which has brought together community welfare organisations, academics and religious organisations in an attempt to shift the basis of the law and order debate, launched a second series of community education resources on 18 February.

Following on the heels of the Opposition's announcement of plans to cut down on 'gang' haircuts in prisons, the information released by Beyond Bars secured significant media attention. The fact sheets sought to demonstrate that the real victims of the law and order debate are not dangerous criminals, but some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Some of the facts highlighted included that:

- 60% of inmates are functionally illiterate;
- 44% are long term unemployed;
- 13% have an intellectual disability;
- 39% of female prisoners and 21% of male prisoners have attempted suicide; and
- the number of indigenous prisoners has increased threefold in the past 20 years.



The Alliance also sought to highlight the nature of sentences, with 80% of prisoners serving sentences of less than 12 months and over 60% serving sentences of less than 6 months. These facts challenge the popular perception that our prisons are full of violent criminals. While prisons are often violent places, the majority of inmates are not there for violent crimes.

The fact sheets launched on 18 February cover alternatives to sentencing, a cost-benefit analysis of prisons, intellectual disability, mental health and Aboriginal issues.

The fact sheets are all available from the Beyond Bars website:
www.ncoss.org.au/beyond_bars

NCOSS Updates



Proclamation of Care and Protection legislation

The new advisory committee to the Minister for Community Services has met four times and has been providing advice on proclamation of the remaining sections of the Act.



DoCS Stakeholder Forum

The Minister and Director General have instigated a new Stakeholder Forum, which will meet twice a year. The first meeting was on 30 January and covered the DoCS funding package, core funding for non-government organisations, the interaction between child protection and family law, occupational health and safety and case management issues. NCOSS has been given the role of coordinating the agenda for these meetings.



Disability funding

As was widely reported in the media, the Premier announced at the Spinal Injury Forum a package of funding for physical disability services. This includes \$10.9m over four years for a Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions Fund (for research), \$23m over four years for an additional 100 attendant care places and \$2m for a two year pilot program to improve coordination of services. \$20.4m of this funding will come from speed cameras. NCOSS had identified attendant care places as a budget priority.



Housing Election Campaign

NCOSS will not be initiating a separate campaign on housing but has instead been working with ShelterNSW on its kit and strategy. The need for a substantial increase in social housing has been included in the SAAP election kit.



Social Housing Reforms

NCOSS and the other housing peaks are currently reviewing the Departments draft operational guidelines for renewable tenancies. There is clearly potential for the new policy on Independent Living Skills assessment to intersect with the renewal or non-renewal of a tenancy.



Inquiry into Child Protection

Since the announcement of the DoCS funding the focus of work has switched to how this might be implemented. The Families Campaign

Group has reformed into a Think Tank to look at the issues for the NGO sector, with thoughts around a sector wide forum in April.



Health Related Transport

NCOSS hosted a forum on 6 December 2002 that was well attended by community transport providers. Overall the feedback on the forum was very positive, with the main focus being on the opportunities to network and share information. Attendees also indicated how pleased they were with NSW Health's obvious commitment demonstrated on the day. The first meeting of the NSW Health - Transport for Health Implementation Reference Group was held on 6 February.



Oral Health

A meeting of the Oral Health Alliance was held on 4 February, with Dr. Alan Patterson, Chief Dental Officer, conducting a presentation and answering questions raised by members. Dr Patterson will be attending the OHA meetings on a quarterly basis in order to discuss issues raised at the State Oral Health Executive and to obtain community/consumer feedback. The Oral Health Election Kit has been sent to all Oral Health Alliance members.



Mental Health

A response to the Final Report of the Select Committee has been drafted and an election statement is being developed. Consultations are starting with peak organisations in regards to the establishment of a group to move forward with the recommendations contained within the report.



Independent Living Skills Assessment Policy (ILSAP)

Changes in the Department of Housing eligibility process will now require that

those applicants, considered to have support needs, agree to an external assessment of their capacity to live independently. Due to the number of concerns raised by the sector, NCOSS convened a meeting between the Department and the sector on 30 January. The meeting was well attended by representatives from SAAP, mental health, the TAAP network and housing peaks. Ray Brincat, head of public housing operations, provided an overview of the policy and responded to questions.

The main concerns are the potential for the policy it to justify the exclusion of people with unmet support needs from public housing. While the Department has emphasised that the intention is to ensure that applicants are linked to appropriate support services, it is clear from the policy document that those who 1) refuse to consent to this assessment, and 2) refuse to access support services, will not be considered for public housing. It is still unclear what will occur if the applicant is unable to access support services because they are not available; which is the case for many people with disabilities.

As a result of the meeting, NCOSS asked the Department to develop information for applicants, support services and departmental staff on the use of the form and to provide data on the level of use of the form.



NCOSS News

NCOSS would like to welcome Jodie Little, the newest addition to our team. Jodie recently commenced as a Project Officer working on the Better Service Delivery Program implementation for the NGO human services community sector.

NCOSS HAS MEETING ROOMS FOR HIRE!

Convenient and reasonably priced, they are available seven days and evenings a week. We are at the corner of Albion and Commonwealth Streets (66 Albion St) in Surry Hills, only a ten minute walk from Central Station. Also, several buses which can be joined at Eddy Avenue stop right at the door.

There are two large meeting rooms, one up and one down, each seating 50 to 70 people. There is a kitchen on both floors, with refrigerator and microwave in the upstairs kitchen. There are heaters, fans and toilets. There is wheelchair access to rooms and toilets. The crowning glory is our lovely courtyard.

For further information, phone reception: (02) 9211-2599



Key health and community priorities require \$1 billion Budget boost

ACOSS has called for a \$1 billion package in this year's Federal Budget to meet the high level of need in the Australian community for upgraded health and community services. On releasing the ACOSS 2003 budget submission, *Piecing it together*.

The whole community and especially low-income Australians are crying out for more effective and more affordable health and community services.

ACOSS estimates that \$1 billion is needed in this year's Budget to deliver real improvements for disadvantaged groups such as older people, people with disabilities; low-income families, children living in poverty, and Indigenous people.

Key ACOSS proposals* include:

- Talking pressure off GP services by boosting community-based and allied health services such as community health centres, nursing, physio, podiatry and counselling services (\$300m).
- Better support for older people and people with disabilities to remain healthy and well in their own homes through a substantial increase in Home and Community Care (\$175m).
- Helping meet the backlog of need for accommodation and support for people with disabilities under the Commonwealth State Disability Agreement (\$140m).
- Responding to a worrying rise in mental health problems in the community by committing to a third national mental health plan — it is now estimated that more than 20% of the adult population will be affected by a mental health problem or illness in their lifetime.
- Expanding family support services for high needs groups (\$10m) and brokering a Commonwealth/State Agreement for services for children under school age (\$20m).

The full details of our health and

community services proposals are given in the ACOSS Federal Budget submission, *Piecing it Together*.

Other major recommendations for Budget 2003 are: improving income support for disadvantaged Australians (\$824m); delivering more affordable housing and better regional development (\$680m); reducing disadvantage in rural and remote communities (\$277m); promoting law and justice (\$60m); overcoming joblessness and improving education & training (\$641m — these proposals were released separately last week); reducing Indigenous disadvantage and promoting reconciliation (\$163m — previously released).

These ACOSS proposals are both achievable and affordable. They can be funded by our \$2.5 billion recommendations to close tax loopholes and end rebates that unfairly favour high income earners. Some of our key revenue-raising proposals include:

- Phasing out the Private Health Insurance Rebate - \$1 billion.
- Reducing negative gearing tax benefits & introducing affordable housing incentives - \$440m.
- Curbing artificial income splitting between spouses - \$250m.

*All recommendations are costed for the first year of their implementation.

New report shows jobless drowning in 'policy quagmire': fresh approach needed

ACOSS has released a set of 12 Budget proposals that would help the Federal Government out of a 'policy quagmire' that is entrenching joblessness in the Australian community and is directly affecting over 390,000 long-term unemployed people. On releasing *Overcoming Joblessness in Australia: 12 Budget Priorities*

New data shows that as at December 2002 the number of Australians who are reliant long-term on unemployment benefits is now over 390,000 - a rise of 8,000 in the past year and a rise of 32,000 since the Government took office in March 1996.

While there has been a modest reduction in the official overall unemployment rate since the Government took office, the official ABS data masks the real level of entrenched joblessness in the Australian community. ACOSS estimates there are more than 1.3 million unemployed or underemployed Australians who are without the paid work they need to support themselves and their families -

more than twice the official figure. The major areas where policies are failing these people are:

- The poorly-designed and under-funded 'Work for the Dole'. Two
- The absence of effective help for very disadvantaged jobseekers.
- Using the stick of harsh social security penalties and below-poverty-line payments.

New approaches are necessary if the Government is to more effectively deal with unemployment and the hardship it is causing. ACOSS proposes 12 steps to overcome unemployment in the forthcoming Budget including:

- Replacing 'Work for the Dole' with a new 'Transitional Jobs Scheme';
- Improving income support for unemployed people;
- An 'Employment Assistance Guarantee'.

Recent reports of an economic slow-down provide another reason for the Government to act now to boost assistance for the jobless and promote job creation.

Domestic Violence - the forgotten aspect of the Law and Order debate

by Catherine Mahony

It is well known that domestic violence negatively impacts in the lives of thousands of women and children each year. This crime also absorbs a substantial amount of police time and results in huge economic and social costs. Despite this, the high rate of domestic violence in NSW has so far received little attention in the lead up to the election.

Services that assist victims of domestic violence are currently stretched to the limit, while rates of domestic violence are increasing. The number of recorded incidents of domestic assault has increased by 10.2% in the last 12 months, with some the highest rates recorded in rural areas. Between March 2001 and 2002, the number of calls to the Domestic Violence Line in NSW increased by 25%.

Domestic violence intersects with a broad range of other major issues including child protection and

homelessness. According to the latest data from the SAAP National Data Collection Agency (NDCA), the main reason for seeking assistance between June 2001 and June 2002 was domestic violence (18.1%).

There were 10,300 children in NSW SAAP services during this period, of which 49.3% were aged 0-4 years and a further 41.7 percentage were aged 5-12 years. These children were usually accompanying their mothers in domestic violence refuges and had often witnessed, or been victims of, family violence.

NCOSS, in partnership with the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, has developed an Issues Kit on the current issues and major needs in relation to domestic violence. The kit has been sent to all candidates in the forthcoming State election. The NCOSS SAAP Election Issues Kit also details some of the key domestic violence issues for women's refuges. Both kits are available on the NCOSS website.

More social housing: an election priority

continued from page 1

In order to achieve greater independence, it is essential that clients leaving or 'exiting' from SAAP services are able to access housing options to meet their medium to long terms needs. Some of the options available to exiting clients include social housing (public, community and Aboriginal housing) and the private rental market. Social housing provides secure accommodation at a rebated rent for those in receipt of a pension of benefit, usually 25% of their incomes. The private rental market provides little security of tenure and the rents are often unsustainable for those on low fixed incomes. This is certainly the case

in metropolitan areas. Given that the vast majority of exiting SAAP clients are reliant on government pensions and benefits, affordability is a key issue in terms of housing options. Consequently the private rental market is often the least viable option for these people.

When a client 'exits' from a SAAP service it is often extremely difficult for them to be placed in affordable accommodation because of the long waiting list for public housing and unaffordable private rents. This is one of the key issues for SAAP workers. It is also one of the primary reasons many SAAP clients end up back in SAAP services. Without secure and affordable long term housing for exiting SAAP clients, it will not be possible to effectively address the often-cyclical nature of homelessness and disadvantage.

Review of Pricing Arrangements in Residential Aged Care

by Dinesh Wadiwel

The Commonwealth Government has commenced a Review of Pricing Arrangements in Residential Aged Care. The Review promises to be extensive with the Federal Government committing \$7.2 million to the process. The Review has kicked off with the release of a discussion paper ("The Context of the Review: Background Paper No.1") and a Call for Submissions. The deadline for submission to the Review closes on 28 March 2003.

Discussion paper No.1 provides a background to the Review, with an outline of the current environment within which residential aged care currently operates. This includes information on the recipients of services, providers, the role of government, and the pressures affecting demand for residential aged care. It is planned that during the course of the Review further discussion papers will be released, as well as a series of Issues papers, although no timeline for the release of these papers has been released.

The Review provides an opportunity for public comment on the way in which residential aged care is presently funded, highlighting present inequalities for consumers in access to and delivery of services. This is also an opportunity to convey the need for high quality, affordable residential aged care options. The NSW Aged Care Alliance is currently discussing this issue, and planning to produce a submission for the Review.

For more information, contact:

Dinesh
phone: 9211 2599 x108
email: dinesh@ncoss.org.au

SAAP Peaks put homelessness on the agenda

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Peaks Forum, convened by NCOSS, sought to inject some balance into election debate around housing with the launch of the resource *Addressing Homelessness: Supporting SAAP Services* on 20 February.

To that point in the election campaign, land taxes had been the only housing issue to attract media attention. As indicated at the launch, while land tax only affects the small number of people with extremely valuable properties, homelessness affects tens of thousands of people every year in NSW.

Speakers Narelle Clay (Southern Youth and Family Services) and Sally Steele (Women's Refuge Movement) highlighted the very real pressures facing SAAP services in the face of rising costs and increasingly complex client needs.

Motor Vehicle Insurance

by Sandra Handley

NCOSS Insurance have received several queries after the motor vehicle insurance article in the last edition of NCOSS News.

There has been some confusion around GIO's definition: "Business use means any vehicle which is registered as a business vehicle or is used for income earning purposes. Private use means any type of use other than business use." A community worker made a call to GIO requesting clarification of the phrase 'income earning' and was told at call centre level that this phrase meant if the worker received a wage. NCOSS Insurance then contacted the National Personal Motor Insurance Manager at GIO who stated that this was not the case. We asked him to put this in writing and received the following response:

"... regarding GIO's policy on 'business use' with respect to Personal Comprehensive Motor Vehicle insurance, the first point to reaffirm is that if a vehicle is registered for business use with the NSW RTA, then we would also classify the vehicle as 'business use' and charge the relevant premium.

"However, if a vehicle is registered with the NSW RTA for 'private use', but is used as a primary 'tool of trade' by the owner (eg tradesperson's vehicle, delivery van etc) we would classify this as the vehicle being primarily used for income producing purposes, and we again would classify this as 'business use', and charge the relevant premium.

"We do not regard incidental use of the vehicle in the course of work activities - such as driving to visit a client, or driving to and from the office - as business use. We would classify these situations as still being "private" use, and charge the appropriate premium.

"... the issue of whether a vehicle is used for business or private use is not an issue when deciding whether to insure a vehicle, or deciding to pay a claim. If a situation arose where "business use" premiums should have been charged instead of "private use" premiums, this would not prejudice the insurance cover, and claims would still be valid. But there may be an issue around an adjustment to the premium that should have been paid."

We have also received a written response from NRMA's Public Affairs Manager in relation to their private versus business definitions:

One of the factors NRMA Insurance uses to determine the premium is by looking at the use of a vehicle to correctly identify the risk we are insuring. In as far as the particular circumstance of your community based workers is concerned, the disclosure of business use would only be applicable if they were registered or required to be registered for GST purposes, and their Input Tax Credit (ITC) is greater than zero.

If your Service providers fall into the above category then they should disclose their vehicles as being used for business purposes and declare the appropriate percentage of ITC on their insurance policies to claim back on their business. If not, then private use would be the correct coverage for their vehicles and they would be covered under the terms and conditions of their NRMA Insurance policy.

This is an ongoing issue and one that we will raise where ever possible with underwriters and authorities. We suggest that if workers receive a different answer at a call centre level than the response that has been written in our articles, they can put a complaint into the General Insurance Enquiries and Complaints Scheme (phone: 1300 78 08 08), or alternatively, ask to speak to a Manager at the underwriting company.

NCOSS Insurance Program Update

The Bulk Buying Program is progressing well and has received more than 400 registrations from not for profits to date. We have recently requested Expressions of Interest proposals from suitable parties interested in assisting NCOSS develop and implement its bulk buying scheme. The level of interest has been high with over 30 information packages being distributed. NCOSS Insurance will be selecting a party to negotiate the parameters of the scheme by the end of March. We hope to have the Scheme up and running by May.

In the meantime - **REGISTER!** - the more registrations we receive from not for profits the better the deal we can negotiate with the Underwriter. The Registration implies *no obligation* on your behalf, it just enables us to show the level of interest we have in the scheme. (See advert on this page for registration information)

Interested in
NCOSS



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obligation Expression
of Interest now !!

web: www.ncoss.org.au/insurance
ph: 9211 2599 ext 104

The more registrations now, the better
the deal we can negotiate for you!

Drought info

The NSW Department of Agriculture is the leading agency for drought coordination in NSW. They have a comprehensive Website containing a range of information on government programs and services as well as non government support agencies.

Information on drought support services and service contact details are available through the "Support Services for Rural Families and Businesses" directory. The directory is available on the Department of Agriculture:

The contact details are:

freecall: 1800 814647

web: www.agric.nsw.gov.au

Stress Counselling Helpline

Freecall: 1800 551174

Emergency Relief Hand Book

ACOSS has recently been funded to rewrite the Relief Hand Book and distribute it to Emergency Relief agencies. Much of the work will be undertaken by State Councils of Social Service, with NCOSS to revise section 2 - 'A Guide for Workers'.

We are seeking experienced emergency relief workers to assist us in this process by commenting on the present guide - content and format - and acting as a sounding board for the rewrite. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Linda Frow at NCOSS on 9211 2599 (Ext 111) or lindaf@ncoss.org.au.

Better Service Delivery Program

by Peter Samsa

The Better Service Delivery Program (BSDP) is a project that will use information technology to improve the delivery of services by community based health and welfare service organisations and NSW Government human service Departments (DADHC, DOCS, Health, Housing, Education and Training, Aboriginal Affairs, Juvenile Justice, Women).

There are several components:

- **ServiceLink** - a comprehensive, up-to-date web-based directory of all human services in NSW.
- **ReferralLink**: a secure electronic network for the referral of client information.
- **Information Technology Allocation**: Over seven million dollars of computers, printers and internet connections will be provided to NGOs to enable them to participate in the Program.
- **HSNet**: A network for NGOs that will allow NGOs or groups of NGOs to develop private, secure intranets for sharing of information, discussion groups.
- **A Client Management System**: to allow NGOs to keep secure, computerised client records that can be used with ReferralLink
- **Computer Training**: Basic computer and internet training for staff and volunteers of participating NGOs, and more detailed training on the use of ReferralLink and ServiceLink.
- **Policy Framework**: Development of policies and protocols covering privacy, information management, exchange of clients' information, consumer relations.

It is an initial attempt to deliver a whole of sector and whole of state approach to the delivery of human services in NSW.

Applications

Applications are currently being invited from NGOs to participate in the Program and to apply for an allocation of technology, a computer and/or internet connection - Broadband where available. This is a staged process; Stage 1, coastal NSW outside Sydney has completed collecting applications; Stage 2, Western NSW and South-Western and Western Sydney, is calling for applications until the end of March, 2003; Stage 3 comprises New England and the rest of Sydney and applications will be requested April to mid May.

Trials

Trials of the ReferralLink and ServiceLink software have been running in the Upper Hunter and Gosford. The software does work and referrals are being made electronically. The reaction by NGO users has been mixed, with some NGOs keen on it, but others have found it difficult to implement effectively into their current work practices. This indicates that to maximise the benefits of the technology, resources will need to be implemented to assist NGO workers to adapt to it.

Privacy

The protection of clients' privacy is a key component of the Program. The Program has worked with the Office of the NSW Privacy Commissioner to

ensure that all relevant protections and best practice procedures are put into place. Examples of these are that a client has to provide consent so that their referral information can be transmitted, and that electronic referrals are encrypted to the relevant Australian Standard.

Next steps

The Program promises much, but there is much more work to do in letting NGOs know about it, and how it could benefit them and their clients.

For further information, contact:

Jodie Little (jodie@ncoss.org.au)
Peter Samsa (peters@ncoss.org.au)
phone: 92112599 ext 124
web: www.ncoss.org.au/bsdsp

The non-government sector wakes up to 'Governance'

by Liz Priestly

With 'governance' becoming the vogue term of the early years of this century, many non-government organisations are recognising the importance of having in place a skilled and informed board of management.

So what is governance? Governance is about having overall responsibility for the organisation including acting in a guardianship role of the organisation's mission and values. It is about protecting the integrity of the organisation, ensuring the organisation has a relevant strategic direction and long-term vision and has vitality and well-being.

Governance carries with it legal, financial, strategic and management and employment responsibilities.

As a result, many of the community training organisations have developed board orientation courses and are now marketing them to the sector.

As an example, the Centre for Community Welfare Training is running a course titled *Governance, Boards and Committees*. The course will enable participants to:

- understand recent trends in the roles of Management Committees and Boards and governance

- identify appropriate roles for management Committees and Boards
- identify the implications for the roles of EO/Manager
- understand the responsibilities of Boards and Committees including their legal and ethical responsibilities
- identify strategies for developing and supporting a Management Committee or Board
- identify strategies for reviewing the work of the Board or Management Committee

This one day course will cost approximately \$110 per person, but it can be run in house as a full board presentation for a negotiated fee.

Other organisations running similar courses include NSW Federation of Housing Associations, School of Volunteer Management, Community Child Care Co-operative and the Non-profit Governance and Management Centre who specialises in governance for not-for-profit Boards.

For more information about courses on offer and other training options contact:

Elizabeth Priestley
Management Support Unit NCROSS
phone: 9211 2599 ext 123
email: liz@ncoss.org.au
website: www.ncoss.org.au/msu

Pre-School Campaign Heats Up

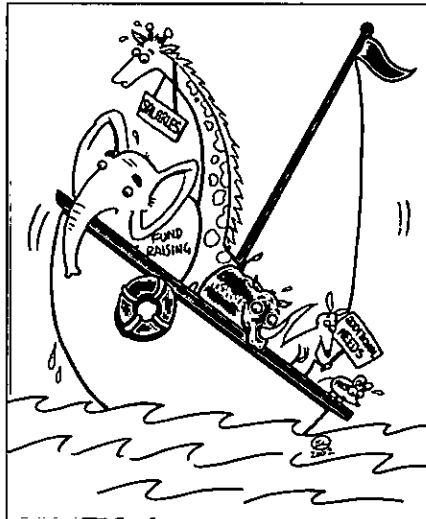
by Linda Frow

The NSW Children's Services Forum has started the year with a new push in its campaign to address affordability and viability issues for community based preschools.

All sitting members of parliament, selected media and all preschools have now received copies of a discussion paper titled *Who Sank the Boat?*, after the popular children's book by Pamela Allen. The paper is available on the NCOSS website in the election resources section. Many parents and committees have been actively following this up locally by contacting local candidates and in some cases organising public meetings following on from the successful meeting held on the Central Coast last year.

On 13 February the Minister announced and additional \$740,000 for fee relief to go to 193 preschools, most of them in rural areas. The largest increases went to the Northern, Western and Hunter Areas. At the same a review of the fee relief policy was announced. This will involve participation from the children's services sector via peak organisations.

While the \$740,000 is a welcome increase to preschool funding after quite a long drought, it is clearly inadequate to solve the overwhelming problems faced by preschools and by low income families seeking to access



them for their children. Most preschool services will still be left trying to determine how to overcome their budget shortfalls by either cuts to essentials or increases in fee levels.

However, the funding combined with the promise of a review of the fee relief policy does indicate that the government has taken notice of the letters it is continuing to receive from parents right across the state recognises the seriousness of the situation. NCOSS looks forward to the Office of Child Care and Community Services to seek a more permanent solution across the board solution of preschools and equitable affordable access for all to preschool services.

with Sandra



Regional Communities Consultative Committee

Barry Fowler, Manager of Broken Hill Community Inc was appointed to represent social services interests on the NSW Premier's Regional Communities Consultative Council in late 2002.

The Council's role is to advise Government on the broad impact of government initiatives, policies and services and advocate for changes which improve the quality of life for people living in rural and regional communities.

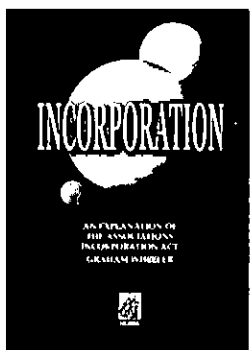
Currently, one priority area of the Council is monitoring the needs of communities through the drought and exploring the issues and supports communities may require after the drought has broken.

During February 2003, the Council will be undertaking community consultations in Nowra meeting with local people on issues relating to sustainable growth in rural and regional communities.

For more information contact:

The Office of Regional Communities
phone: 1800 801 738
Barry Fowler
email: bhcominc@pcpro.net.au

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For more information see our web-site

or contact

Linda Rhyder 9749 7666

lindar@workershealth.com.au

Balancing the Books

A series of articles from Matrix On Board to assist community-based organisations with their financial management - by Sandra Kelleher

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) - Consultation

The Occupational Health & Safety Act, 2000, stipulates a duty for employers to consult with their employees about occupational health and safety issues in the workplace. The Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2001 provides a range of choices on how consultation can occur to enable the employer and employees to establish a consultative arrangement which they believe will best ensure effective and meaningful consultation in their workplace.

WorkCover has developed a Code of Practice for OH&S Consultation. The standard is a guide to assist employers and employees to establish a consultation system in the workplace which meets the legal requirements of the Act and Regulations.

Under the Act 2000, "employers must consult with their employees to enable the employees to contribute to the making of decisions affecting their health, safety and welfare at work."

The aim of consultation is to improve the management of OH&S in the workplace to achieve a safer healthier workplace. "Meaningful and effective consultation involves drawing on the knowledge, experience and ideas of employees and encouraging their participation and input to improve the systems the employer has in place for managing OH&S." (Code of Practice)

Ideally, consultation should occur through the risk management process, when a risk is identified. Consultation must occur whenever an employee, an OH&S Representative, or a manager is aware of an issue that has health, welfare and safety implications for employees.

The Act, 2000, states that consultation must be undertaken by one or a combination of the following:

- (a) The establishment of one or more OH&S Committees,
- (b) The election of one or more OH&S Representatives;
- (c) Other arrangements agreed by the employer and employees

Effective consultation involves open communication between the employer and employees. Employees should be encouraged to:

- Ask questions
- Raise safety concerns
- Make safety recommendations
- Give feedback about safety issues
- Participate in evaluation of safety issues and systems, and
- Be a part of the problem solving and decision making processes.

A quick test to see if your workplace consultation system is effective for your employees is to ask individual employees how they have participated in OH&S recently.

For more information on OH&S Consultation, contact WorkCover Information Centre on 13 10 50 or by email:

contact@workcover.nsw.gov.au



Matrix on Board - web: www.mob.com.au email: info@mob.com.au

Cycling - an election issue

In the lead up to the March 2003 State election Bicycle NSW is calling on the NSW Government, Opposition and minor parties to pledge their support for cycling as a sustainable form of transport and recreation.

Bicycle NSW CEO, Mr Neil Tonkin acknowledged that "The NSW Government has made significant progress in improving conditions for cycling in this state over the last four years. However, the next NSW Government will need to take the shift towards sustainable transport more seriously."

Bicycle NSW are calling on all political parties to commit to taking action to actively discourage car use, for example, by continuing to increase parking restrictions in metropolitan centres; to update Bike Plan 2010, lower speed limits and establish corporate and educational cycling programs in a new policy, "Improving the State for Cycling in New South Wales".



"The list of actions outlined in our policy would make not only Sydney, but also regional and rural areas better places to live and to bring up children" said Mr Tonkin. "The recent NSW Childhood Obesity Summit highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for children to cycle for transport and recreation". Mr Tonkin further emphasised, "We will not even start to address the obesity epidemic if

conditions are not improved for cycling and walking in New South Wales".

Improving the State for Cycling in New South Wales includes recommendations in the following areas:

- A shift towards sustainable transport
- Affirmative action for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users
- The need to update Bike Plan 2010
- Increased matched funding for local government
- Making our streets quieter and safer by lowering speed limits
- Practical steps for integrating land use-transport in planning: SEPP66
- Integrated road design
- Actively discouraging car use
- The need for a Cycling to Learn program

For a copy of *Improving the State for Cycling in New South Wales*:

phone: (02) 9283 5200

website: www.bicyclensw.org.au

Why not in NCC region

Conferences and seminars

Strengthening Communities

People Place Partnerships 2

- 29-30 April 2003
- Wesley Conference Centre, Sydney

People Place Partnerships 2 is about strengthening communities and focuses on people, where they live and how they relate with each other. The conference will offer a valuable opportunity to exchange information and ideas on key initiatives and successes, and explore the lessons learnt about working in partnership with communities in community renewal and capacity building.

Registration info:

visit PPP2: www.hotelnetwork.com.au

More info:

email: ppp2@hotelnetwork.com.au
phone: (02) 9411 4666

NCOSS

Advocacy!

- 12 March 2003
- Masonic Centre, Sydney

An NCOSS Conference exploring the role of community welfare organisations in seeking changes to the policies and practices of Government.

More info:

phone: 02 9211 2599
email: info@ncoss.org.au
web: www.ncoss.org.au/conferences

Safe Communities in NSW

Building a Stronger Foundation

- 25-26 March 2003
- Citygate Sebel, Sydney

This symposium, organised by NSW SafeComm, is for anyone with an interest in safety promotion and injury prevention, including community and road safety officers, local government, health, fire, education and police services, local business and community members.

The symposium will:

- Provide a forum for sharing ideas and practical solutions to building and maintaining safe communities in NSW
- Highlight progress, innovation and opportunities for Safe Communities including 'Safety by Design', suicide prevention, hearing local governments' perspective and plans for a Foundation.
- Showcase and workshop the evaluation of the NSW Safe Comm Pilot Program, sponsored by NSW Health and the RTA.
- Stimulate and renew delegates' energy for building a Safe Communities coalition in their community.

More info:

Joanne Karcz
phone: 02 9858 7737
fax: 02 9858 7963
email: jkarcz@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
web: www.nsh.nsw.gov.au/safecomm.htm

Disability

LifeActivities International Conference on Disability

- 21-24 September 2003
- Newcastle NSW Australia

Topics will include:

- Creativity in Service Design
- Building Community Capacity
- Creative Caring / Supporting Families as Primary Carers
- Initiatives in Training and professional Development
- Beyond Disability/ Living and Dreaming

Keynote speakers will include:

- Dr Patricia A Morrissey, Commissioner for the US Department of Health & Human Sciences
- Dr Colleen Wieck, Executive Director for the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

More info:

web: www.lifeactivities.org.au/conference

If you have a conference to advertise, please contact Stephen at NCOSS:
tel: 9211 2599 ext 115
fax: (02) 9281 1968
email: stephen@ncoss.org.au



NCOSS

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 - Non-member - \$44
 - Government & Corporate**
 - NCOSS affiliate - \$55
 - Non-affiliate - \$66

For more info call Stephen - (02) 9211 2599 ext 115 or email webjobs@ncoss.org.au

http://

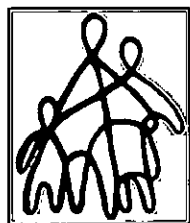
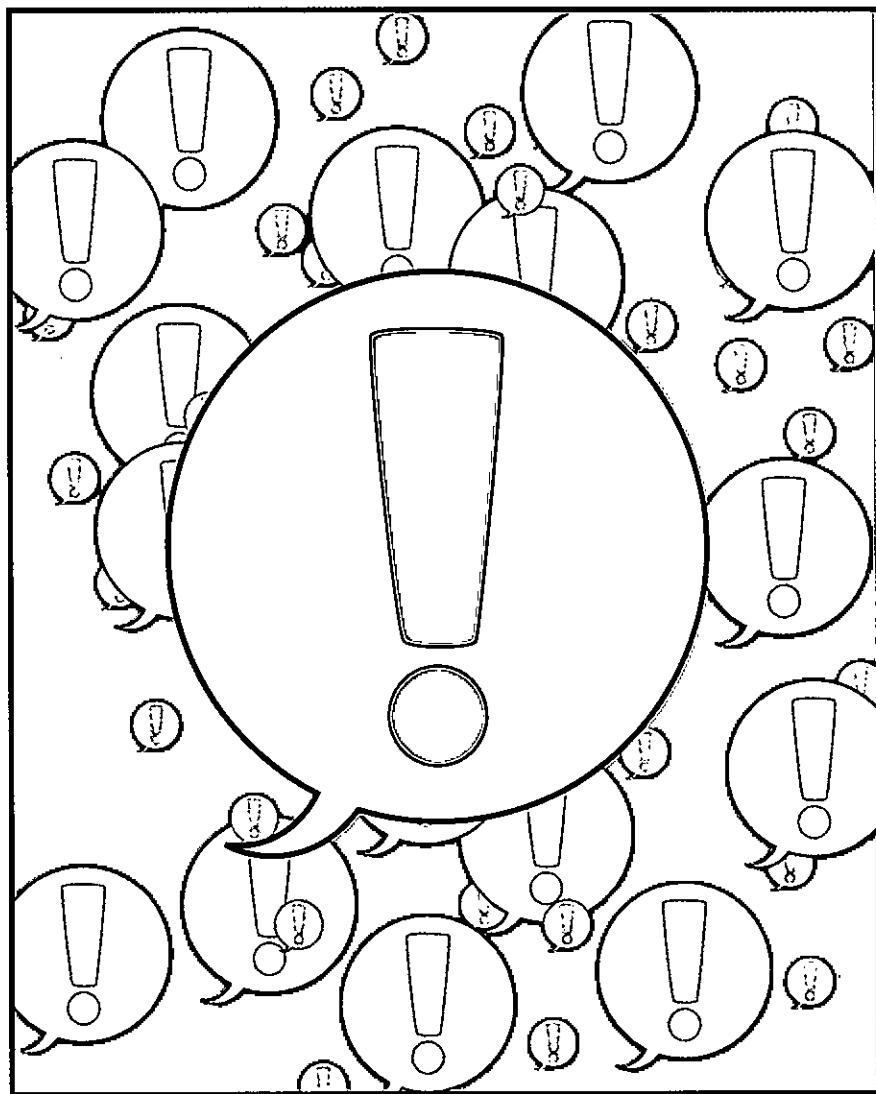
www.ncoss.org.au/jobs

NCOSS Conference

Advocacy!

Seeking changes to the policies and practices of Government is a fundamental role for community welfare organisations. This systemic advocacy role is increasingly under threat through funding pressures, economic rationalism, and changing relationships between community organisations and Government agencies.

This conference re-examines why community organisations engage in systemic advocacy, and investigates some recent union and community sector campaigns, both the wins and the ongoing battles. It considers the place of systemic advocacy in social capital debates, and whether contemporary advocacy is undertaken 'with' or 'for' consumers. It debates the role of unions in community advocacy, and whether the growth in community participation processes is helping or hindering advocacy work. It also includes practical discussions about using the media, developing strategies, and managing relationships with politicians.



NCOSS

12th March 2003
Masonic Centre, Sydney

For more information see the brochure in this issue of NCOSS News or contact:

email info@ncoss.org.au

phone 9211 2599

web www.ncoss.org.au/conferences

www.ncoss.org.au/conferences

Peter Hamilton

From: "Peter Hamilton" <peterh@nor.com.au>
To: "Tein McDonald" <teinm@ozemail.com.au>
Sent: Sunday, 16 March 2003 10:27 AM
Subject: Insurance

Hi Tein,
PANCOM is a member of NCOSS (NSW Council of Social Services). In their current journal they are seeking "Expressions of Interest" from those interested in the NCOSS development of a "Bulk Buying Insurance Scheme". If you should be interested in following up on this their contact is 66 Albion St., Surrey Hills, 2010 or FAX 9281 1968. Phone 9211 2599, Ext 104.

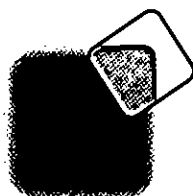
Registration can also be made at www.ncoss.org.au/insurance

In such contact reference should be made to PANCOM as an associate member.

I do not have your postal address and would be obliged if you would let me have this as I can forward you a copy of the Registration Form in regard to the above.

Simon Clough advises me that he has received from you findings of your recent survey in this regard. I would be obliged if you would send me a copy of this and any future findings that emerge from your survey.

Thanking you and with appreciation of your efforts in this regard.



Expanded role for the NSW Ombudsman in community services

From 1 December 2002, the Community Services Commission will be amalgamating with the NSW Ombudsman, which is an independent and impartial watchdog body. This means an expanded role for the Ombudsman in relation to community services in NSW.

The new arrangements offer a strong foundation for —

- promoting and protecting the rights and best interests of consumers of community services in NSW;
- assisting service providers to meet their obligations under the community welfare legislation;

The Ombudsman will carry out his new role under the *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews & Monitoring) Act* and the *Ombudsman Act*, as amended by the *Community Services Legislation Amendment Act 2002*.

A new statutory division known as the Community Services Division will be established to carry out these functions for the Ombudsman. The Division will be headed by the Community and Disability Services Commissioner as Deputy Ombudsman.

What community services will the Ombudsman cover?

Any services provided by —

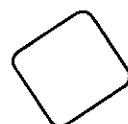
- the Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC)
- Organisations that are funded, licensed or authorised by the Minister for Community Services, Ageing and Disability Services.

Services include the exercising of statutory or other functions by service providers — such as child protection or out-of-home-care decision making.

Services that are covered include licensed boarding houses; disability day, support, respite and accommodation services; children's services; early intervention; child protection and out of home care services; homeless persons accommodation; ageing and home and community care services; neighbourhood and family support services.

What can the Ombudsman do?

- **Deal with oral and written complaints** about the conduct of a community service provider or an employee of such a service. The Ombudsman will deal with each complaint objectively but with a strong emphasis on local resolution where possible.
- **Review complaints handling systems** within services or in program areas and make recommendations for improvements.
- **Inquire into major issues** affecting consumers and services. This can be about a single service or across a program.
- **Review the situation of people in care.** A review looks into the circumstances of a child or group of children in care; or a person or group of people with disabilities in care. The Ombudsman will report to the relevant Minister, service provider and other appropriate persons on the results of the review, and can also make recommendations to improve the welfare and interests of the person or group of people.



- **Review the deaths of certain children and people with a disability in care**, including residents of licensed boarding houses, looking at the causes and patterns of death and recommending ways to improve services to reduce early or preventable deaths.
- **Coordinate Community Visitors** in their visits to licensed boarding houses, residential services for children and young people in care and accommodation services for people with a disability in full-time care. Visitors try to resolve residents' concerns at the local level, observe the conduct of the services and report to the Ombudsman and Minister.
- **Monitor, review and set standards** for the delivery of community services.
- **Educate and inform** service providers about how to improve their services to consumers, and inform consumers about their rights.
- **Promote access to advocacy support** for consumers of community services and ensure that services enable consumers to participate in decisions that affect them.

How will the Ombudsman assess standards of services and conduct?

The primary criteria are -

- the best interests of the consumer; and
- compliance with the objects, principles and provisions of the community welfare legislation.

The Ombudsman is not an advocate for individual consumers, but promotes improvements in the delivery of community services and the rights and best interests of consumers through its recommendations.

If you have any queries or comments, please call on the numbers provided below.

Contact details

Level 24 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Inquiries 9-4 Monday to Friday
or at other times by appointment

General inquiries: 02 9286 1000

Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524

Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 9264 8050

Facsimile: 02 9283 2911

Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS): 131 450
We can arrange an interpreter through TIS or you can contact TIS yourself before speaking to us.

This brochure is one of a series of information brochures produced by the NSW Ombudsman. For more information, contact the Publications Officer on 9286 1000. Feedback is welcome. Printed November 2002.