

**ASN Statement of Intent:
Australian Government Tender of
NRCP Respite Services Programs**

Tuesday 29 March 2005

Background

In January 2005, the Community Care Branch wrote to providers advising that the Minister has decided to call for tenders for management of all NRCP funded programs. The tendering of the NRCP services is intended to facilitate the adoption of common arrangements across community care programs and is part of the Australian Government's reform process as outlined last year in 'The Way Forward'. The NRCP tenders were advertised on 5 March, with 1 April 2005 as the closing date for tender submissions. Despite the very short time frame, the Community Care Branch hopes to have this process complete with new funding agreements in place by 1 July 2005.

On Monday 7th March the ASN convened a meeting of NRCP Service Providers in the West at Carers Links West /Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre, in Footscray. Participants were invited to share information and to consider some common issues in preparation for the tendering process.

This Statement of Intent is a result of the agreement and commitment of Western Area Service Providers to adopt a collaborative response to the provision of NRCP services.

The Statement of Intent

In seeking the best outcomes for our consumers and the communities we serve, Service Providers in the West agree that the respite service system needs to be adequate, flexible and responsive to the needs of clients, carers and their families. Whilst seeking to improve and streamline service provision, and to eradicate any fragmentation and duplication within the current system, it is important to recognise that the diversity of communities require a range of service responses based on the principles of:

- Strategic planning for streamlined coverage;
- Excellent Collaboration and coordination of service;
- Innovation for flexible response;
- Continuity & stability of services for care recipients;
- Strong established relationships underpinned by good communication;
- Evaluation and quality assurance systems.

In endorsing this Statement of Intent, the ASN and providers of respite services in the West will continue to work in partnership to provide and maintain a diverse range of excellent, accessible, affordable, flexible and innovative respite services delivered in accordance with these principles.

The Role of the ASN

Since 1992, the Aged Services Network Western Region (ASN) has facilitated consultation and planning for aged services in the Western Area of the North and Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne (NWMR). The Network is funded for this role by the DHS, and auspiced by the Council on the Ageing Victoria. The ASN has a current membership of around 580 service providers representing all aged service providers in the Western region, including for-profit and not-for profit, including those that receive funding from the Australian Government. The municipalities included in WMR are: Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melton and Wyndham.

The ASN is committed to contributing to the planning processes of government on behalf of its members to highlight the current and future needs of citizens in the Western region for community support, health and aged care. The ASN is well positioned to facilitate strategic planning for Respite Services in the West.

- As an independent body, the ASN has resolved to facilitate an annual NRCP regional review, to look at coverage trends, changing community needs and patterns of demand, and to evaluate the quality of services including consultation with consumers.

Respite Services in the West

The ASN and Service Providers support the objectives of the Australian Government's reforms aimed at simplifying the complex community care system for clients. However, we understand that in the West, the needs of the community are complex and diverse, and this is reflected in the development of the service response. We also recognize that services currently offering respite support are embedded in a system, which is functioning with a high level of integrated service coordination and established collaborative relationships between providers. The model of service delivery currently practiced in the West includes:

- **Strategic planning for streamlined coverage;**
Examples include:
 - The ASN facilitates Regional HACC Planning, and consultation and planning for Residential Care and CACPs;
 - Strategic Partnerships for Municipal Public Health Plans and Community Health Plans;
 - Development of the WMR CALD Aged Care Strategic Plan 2003-2008, and implementation of Western Area Culturally Equitable Gateways Strategy (CEGS). (Primary Care Partnerships, Ethnic Services Network and ASN participate);
 - Joint Strategic Planning undertaken by Maribyrnong, Brimbank and Melton Councils: *The Ageing Well Strategy*.
- **Excellent Collaboration and coordination of service;**
Common Arrangements already in place include a range of service coordination protocols and tools developed in the context of the Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs), such as:
 - Best Practice Manual
 - Service Coordination Tool Templates (*SCoTT Tools*);
 - E-Referrals;
- **Established strong relationships** between service providers including:
 - Strong Regional Networks: Aged Services Network; Primary Care Partnerships; WR Local Government Aged & Disability Managers; Ethnic Services Network; Western Region Disability Network;

- Coordination of Respite Vacancies, information exchange and identification and consideration of emerging issues through the through the Western Aged Respite Network (WARN);
 - Established ongoing coordination of services, and ongoing joint provision of respite through formalised arrangements and Memoranda of Understandings between service providers;
 - Strong relationships with residential care providers (eg the Hobsons Bay Residential Care providers Network), and the ACASs that serve the region.
- **Innovation** for flexible response:
 - The West's providers of NRCP services have a proven track record of developing a range of innovative models and practices including services that are culturally appropriate, flexible to clients' and carers' needs, Examples include services which build on and extend the capacity of the existing service system to respond to client and carers needs and aspirations, such as the overnight services operated by MELBACC (Melton) and Hobsons Bay City Council in domestic-scale settings, and the Multi-cultural CACPs and PAGS.
 - **Continuity** & stability of services for care recipients:
 - The established Carer Respite Centre serves the West as a respite resource centre that undertakes coordination of waiting lists and priority of access with general support and agreement of respite services, including those funded by the NRCP. The Local Governments are major service providers and service provision is based on strong ongoing knowledge of local needs and collaboration with community members, and trust.

The ASN emphasises to all levels of government that the Western Metropolitan Region strives to provide aged care and residential care services from a position of relative socio-economic disadvantage, and with great diversity of population and community need. It is therefore most appropriate for the ASN to be seeking to support our members and service providers imbedded in the communities that they serve, to develop an enhanced capacity for delivery of care, in particular culturally appropriate respite care utilising models of good practice that can be replicated across our region.

Providers of Respite Services in the West consistently provide services that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of individuals, and support family, carers and older persons with special needs and:

- Have a history of working closely with CALD communities in the West, and for advocating vigorously to ensure the needs of diverse communities are equitably met with accessible, culturally appropriate and excellent services;
- Support a skilled and professional workforce that are understanding of the needs of older people with complex care requirements, including those with special needs, and especially those from CALD communities;
- Provide effective and innovative models of respite care provision that is strongly supported by the ASN.

The ASN will continue to work in partnership with all service providers in the West who are willing to collaborate within the framework of this Statement of Intent.