

parity



A Call for Contributions – June/July 2018



The June/July 2018 “Homelessness and Social Housing Workforce Development” joint edition of *Parity* and HousingWorks

This joint edition of *Parity* and HousingWorks is sponsored by The Infoxchange, Swinburne University of Technology and the Australasian Housing Institute.

Introduction

The issue of workforce development has been squarely on the agenda of the homelessness and social housing sectors since the 2008 Homelessness White Paper, *The Road Home*, identified workforce development as a key national priority in policy responses to homelessness.

Since then there has been a great deal of work and research in identifying the key issues in the development of the homelessness and social housing sectors and their workforce. (1)

The Victorian government, for example, is currently developing a ten-year Community Services Industry Plan (2) to respond to the challenges arising from the multiple reforms taking place in the community services sector. The Community Services Industry Plan is supported by the development of specific plans in the family violence, youth and family, community housing and homelessness sectors. A key element of these industry plans is prioritising workforce development. Similarly, the New South Wales government has funded the development of a Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy (2017-2020) and other states also have workforce development as a key policy focus.

Workforce development is a broad concept that covers a range of related activities that extend well beyond training, including ways to attract, retain and skill the workforce to meet both current and future sector and industry needs. Workforce development also incorporates the element of the establishment of capability frameworks that focus on the ‘the knowledge, skills and abilities required (by individuals) to perform their roles efficiently and effectively’. (3) Workforce development can also incorporate training and professional development strategies at the sector and the individual and organisational levels to ensure that sector workers have the necessary training and skills to provide high quality services.

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The essential premise underpinning homelessness and social housing sector workforce development is that achieving successful outcomes for those seeking assistance from homelessness and social housing services is in large measure dependent on the knowledge and skills of those delivering these services. Towards this end, improved training and skills development will facilitate homeless and social housing sector workers delivering better outcomes for their clients. The focus on the future skills needed by the workforce is particularly important given our changing understandings of the complex nature and character of the causes and consequences of homelessness and thus the changing demands that are, and will continue to be, made on the homeless and social housing sector workforce.

While arguably all human services industries are subject to the ongoing imperatives of professionalisation, the questions and issues related to the qualifications, specialised knowledge and skills training required of workers in the homelessness and social housing sector workforce, remain open and contested.

In order to open up the above issues for discussion, this edition of *Parity* and *HousingWorks* will examine the issues relevant to the development of both the current and the future homelessness and social housing sector's workforce.

Chapter 1: Background and Context, Policy and Research

- How and why has homelessness and social housing sector workforce development become a significant issue?
- What have been some of the major policy and research studies that have created the context for the discussion of homelessness and social housing sector workforce development? What are their key findings?
- What have been some of the changes in the homelessness and social housing sectors that have led to the present focus of workforce development? For example, the development and implementation of national and state and territory homelessness strategies; the establishment of the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) sector; the continuing growth of community housing and the requirement for community housing providers to house more people experiencing homelessness; the movement towards the adoption of Housing First and rapid-rehousing strategies; the growth of assertive outreach approaches, etc.
- What have been government policy responses to both homelessness and social housing sector industry development and workforce development?
- Do homelessness sector and social housing industry plans, and homelessness and social housing sector workforce development proposals, differ across jurisdictions (state/territory and nationally)? For example, how does the New South Wales Homelessness Industry and Workforce Development Strategy 2017-2020 compare with other proposals and strategies elsewhere?
- What can be learned from international examples of workforce development strategies?

Chapter 2: Current Issues for the Homelessness and Social Housing Sector Workforce

- What are the key issues facing the homelessness and social housing sector workforce in their various roles in providing assistance to those experiencing homelessness?
- Do these issues differ for different parts of the wider homelessness and social housing sectors, for example, SHSs, the DV sector and the youth homelessness sector, public and community housing?
- How is workforce training and development currently delivered and provided?
- How have the training and development needs and requirements of the homelessness sector and social housing workforce been identified?
- What are the current key industrial relations issues for the homelessness and social housing sector workforce? For example, changes in working and employment conditions and tenure arrangements affecting job security.
- How are the issues of workforce (staff) retention and turnover currently addressed?
- To what extent are workforce development issues constrained by the resources and funding available to the homelessness and social sectors?
- What are some examples of both innovation and excellence in workforce development processes and strategies?

Chapter 3: Meeting the Requirements of the Homelessness and Social Housing Sector Workforce in the Future

- What are the key drivers of homelessness and social housing sector workforce development?
- What are some of the challenges facing the homeless sector and social housing workforce (and indeed the homeless and social housing sectors) because of other social policy changes such as the NDIS and CDC, mental health service reform etc? Homeless and social housing sector workers really need to be across so many different policy arenas and deal with their impacts on individuals and services. The NDIS, for example, is changing many service delivery and funding structures.
- How does our changing understanding of the complex nature and character of homelessness, and thus the changing service responses to homelessness, impact on the future training and development needs of the homelessness and social housing sector workforce?
- What are the key components of a workforce training strategy that would meet the future requirements of the homelessness and social housing sectors?
- How would homelessness sector and social housing workforce development strategies address the issues of staff retention and turnover and the issues of career paths and professional development for sector workers?
- Research has clearly indicated that the homelessness sector workforce is one of the most gendered in any industry with women making up the vast majority of

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the workforce. How will future homelessness sector industry plans, and workforce development strategies, reflect this reality?

- What qualifications should be expected and required of future homelessness and social housing sector workers?
- What are the qualifications and certification requirements for the differing range and types of practitioners in the homelessness and social housing sector workforce?
- What are some examples of innovation and excellence in workforce development strategies that focus on the future needs and requirements of both the industry and the workforce?

Chapter 4: Opinion

This chapter will be devoted to giving industry and sector leaders the chance to give their views on the priorities for homelessness and social housing sector workforce development.

Endnotes

1. This work includes the 2012 “Developing an Effective Homelessness Workforce” by Bill Martin, Rhonda Phillips and Ning Xiang at the Institute for Social Science Research at the University of Queensland and the 2013 “Workforce Training for the Homelessness Sector” by Angela Spinney from Swinburne University to mention just two influential pieces of research. More recently the examination and discussion of homelessness sector workforce development has been informed by work done in different jurisdictions, for example the 2017 New South Wales Government’s Homelessness Sector Development Project, produced as a partnership between Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW and Yfoundations and similarly, the VCOSS Community Services Industry Plan Discussion Paper have helped frame the current discourse of homelessness sector workforce development.
2. VCOSS Community Services Industry Plan Discussion Paper.
3. From the Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework.

Contributing to June/July 2018 “Homelessness and Social Housing Workforce Development” joint edition of *Parity* and *HousingWorks*

Deadline: All contributions need to be submitted by COB Friday July 12th 2018.

Submissions: Contributions should be submitted as Word attachments to an email addressed to parity@chp.org.au AHI Members can submit their contributions to: kelly.badewitz@housinginstitute.org if they prefer.

Word length: Contributions can be up to 1600 words. This equates to a double page spread in *Parity*. Single page articles can be up to 800 words in length. Contributions of a greater length should be discussed with the *Parity* Editor.

Artwork: Contributors are invited to submit the artwork they would like to accompany their article. Inclusion is dependent on the space being available. If artwork is not provided and is required, it will be selected by the *Parity* Editor.

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Questions: If you have any questions at all about contributing to this edition please contact the *Parity* Editor by email parity@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6201 or Kelly Badewitz, Executive Officer, Australasian Housing Institute, email: kelly.badewitz@housinginstitute.org, or ring 02 6494 7566 or 0427 952 690.

Referencing

NB: Due to space considerations, contributors are encouraged to use endnotes when referencing their articles. All works that are cited or referred to in an article should be referenced.

For example:

1. Johnson G, Kuehnle D, Parkinson S, Sesa S and Tseng Y 2014, 'Resolving long-term homelessness: A randomised controlled trial examining the 36 month costs, benefits and social outcomes from the Journey to Social Inclusion pilot program', Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda.
2. Parkinson S 2012, 'The Journey to Social Inclusion Project in Practice- A process evaluation of the first 18 months', AHURI Research Centre, RMIT University, Melbourne, p. 19.

CHP does not encourage contributors to list a bibliography of references used in the development of an article but are not cited in the article. There is simply insufficient space for the inclusion of extensive bibliographies.

Content

By providing your contribution, you confirm and agree that (except where you have referenced or cited any other's work) the contribution is your original work and has not been copied from any other source."

Use of content

If your contribution is accepted, it will be published by or on CHP's/AHI's behalf in an edition of the *Parity*/HousingWorks magazine. *Parity*/HousingWorks is available in hard copy and online. Online copies of back editions of *Parity* can be found on:

<http://search.informit.com.au/browseJournalTitle;res=IELHSS;issn=1032-6170>

Assistance

Feedback, input and assistance can be provided with drafts if required. If prospective contributors have any questions at all they should contact the *Parity* Editor, parity@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6200 or 03 8415 6201 or 0466 619 582.

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