

SENSES FOUNDATION

Accommodation Services

Annual Report

2008-2009

Accommodation Service ~ Strategic Plan

Accommodation Services has contributed to the development of the new Strategic Plan 2009 - 2014 and is in the process of operationalising the strategic objectives. The shift in emphasis in Senses now being a provider of services to people with disabilities with a unique service for people who are deafblind is a significant change. This was important as the majority of clients in this division are not deafblind.

Strategic Objectives

These objectives now drive all aspects of Accommodation Service which is determined to be:

- recognised as a leader in service delivery and feedback from the sector suggests we are currently gaining respect in this regard.
- seen as a preferred service provider and has a policy to grow services to ensure sustainability.
- regarded as a specialist for its unique deafblind expertise.
- respected for its ethical, honest, safe and accountable service delivery.
- an effective, open and user friendly communicator
- valued by the Disability Service Commission, the community and others.

These important objectives are gradually being incorporated into all aspects of the service as too are the Values adopted by Senses Foundation during the planning process. Staff are introduced and exposed to the principles which govern our behaviour and performance as an organisation at the initial orientation.

Service Overview

Over the past financial year the SWIMS client data base shows that Senses Foundation provided a total of 56,636 actual hours of direct client support to a total of 50 clients who have been supported in our accommodation services over this period. Included in these hours are those contracted to the private sector when staff shortages necessitated this action.

The number of clients in supported accommodation is marginally above the opening figure at the commencement of the period. This was due to Senses taking on three new clients with individual funding and the commencement of a permanent service for an individual who was previously provided with ongoing respite under a Guardianship Order. During the same period there was the unfortunate death of a client due to natural causes who resided privately and supported by our community services.

The actual hours delivered on a house and individual client basis compared to Disability Service Commission contracted hours per unit are detailed below.

Service	DSC Contract Hours	Total Hours Delivered	Variation	Clients
	Full Year	Full Year		
Abrolhos Loop	9,133.00	11,074.97	1,941.97	4
Ashfield	1,357.00	1,764.28	407.28	6
Community Living	1,284.00	1,770.08	486.08	9
Coode St	2,077.00	2,368.13	291.13	2
Holder St	13,011.00	13,111.65	100.65	7
Hollet Road	1,697.00	2,327.25	630.25	3
Hudson St	1,697.00	2,017.83	320.83	3
Verbena Cr.	1,697.00	2,378.38	681.38	3
Walcott St	3,427.00	2,376.53	-1,050.47	4
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) BP	1,008.00	870.1	-137.9	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) HT	111	78.42	-32.58	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) JB	1,296.00	1,296.48	0.48	1

ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) MM	7,072.00	7,077.23	5.23	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) PR	1,697.00	1,703.00	6	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) RJ	1,196.00	1,195.52	-0.48	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) SM	1,331.00	1,336.98	5.98	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) SW	2,860.00	3,054.78	194.78	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) TD	944	342.13	-601.87	1
ASF (Accommodation Support Funding) WD	426	492.62	66.62	1
Totals	53,321.00	56,636.36	3,315.36	51

- * Community Living - One client moved out of temporary accommodation at the Holder Street group home and into a Foundation Housing unit in Kenwick and is included in these figures. Also includes one client died in June 09.
- * Hollett Street – Closure of Valentine avenue in March 09.
- * New services – the commencement of individually funded services for HT, BP & TD
- * Abrolhos Loop - Commencement of a permanent accommodation service for a client under a Guardianship Order.

Service Growth

Over the past three years Senses has used many strategies to ensure sustainability and viability of the Accommodation Service Program. Actual hours delivered in 2007/2008 were 41,545 in compared to 56,636.36 in the current financial year. This represents growth in individually funded clients which contributes to the sustainability of the organisation by way of extra funds. Of these 15% is retained by Senses to meet non direct service expenses and contribute to corporate infrastructure costs. The majority of funds go to meet the costs of direct support services to clients.

Over the past twelve months there have been a number of changes to the service structure including the setting up of a third Area (C). This was required to service the increase in clients particularly in the Southern suburbs. Unfortunately the Area (A) Coordinator position was made redundant due to financial pressures. This resulted in the creation of a Joint Service Supervisor position and appointment of a person to oversee the two 24 hour houses.

Accommodation Services has constantly revised rosters to ensure that only essential services are provided for each of the houses. This has been particularly relevant in particular the 24 hour houses where there was scope to rationalise hours. Care has been taken to see the quality of services for clients was not compromised.

The increase in clients and the demand for better services has put pressure on the existing coordination and management team. This has resulted in an additional part time Assistant Manager being appointed who has taken on specific projects such as the new roster system and other operational projects. This appointee will in time alleviate some of the overall pressures and contribute to continuous improvement of services.

Partners In Change

Partners in Change is a training package for Support staff developed by Heather Simmons and Chris Kerr for Perth Home Care Services (PHCS) covering values and skills for working in person centered ways. PHCS and Senses teamed up to deliver the training package to one team from each organization over an 8 week period, to be followed up by some on the job coaching. Staff of both organizations reported great satisfaction with the training program, and the opportunity to take some time out as a team to reflect on their practice. There were significant challenges in delivering the coaching component, with changes in personnel, workloads and organizational structures resulting in a lack of consistency in this follow up. Person Centered practice remains a challenge for organizations and while significant inroads have been made at Senses there is still much room for improvement.

The Foundation has successfully tendered for and Quality Service Improvement Grant for the 2009/10 financial year to further this work within the Accommodation Service

Client Level of Support

The level of support to client varies according to the abilities of the individuals. A number of clients within accommodation services continue to require full time support and reside in one of the two twenty four hour community homes. The program continues to provide support based on the individual and focuses on the needs of the person in order for them to remain living as independent as possible. This is so whether that be in a high support environment or one with minimal or drop in support. This assistance is provided over a range of areas including personal care, transport, mobility, communication, mealtime management, budgeting and general day to day living skills, all depending on the person's skills and abilities.

A vacancy still remains at the Verbena group home and has been flagged with the Disability Services Commission. To date, there have been no potential clients suitable for an accommodation service within this home. Senses has retained this option as a 'fall back' position for respite purposes and also to accommodate any one of our client population currently in the high cost private rental market.

New Clients

Accommodation Services has been approached throughout the year by a number of prospective clients requiring a new service or transfer to our accommodation service. These clients have individual funding and have been referred by members of the community or from the Commission. Individual needs assessments were conducted on all of these clients to determine eligibility. As there were no vacancies or housing opportunities available during the year these could not be accommodated. The new clients that were accepted into Senses already had existing or individual accommodation through the Department of Housing and/or were negotiated with Foundation Housing.

Client 1.

In July 2009 Senses Foundation provided a new accommodation service for a young quadriplegic man with individual funding through the YIPRAC program conducted by the Commission. Support has been provided to this person who lives in Willagee and this service has been extremely demanding and problematic since inception. Over the past 12 months

Senses has had difficulty providing a sustainable option due to anti social behaviours including the misuse of alcohol and drugs. This has prevented Senses from retaining suitable staff willing to work in this high risk environment. Although this service still remains extremely difficult to manage, some progress has been made with the assistance of a new Coordinator has been able to stabilise the service over recent months. Senses Foundation continues to manage this person's cycle of anti social behaviour as it occurs and it looking at other models of care and alternative approaches to cope with the situation.

Client 2.

In August 2009 Senses Foundation took over the permanent accommodation service of a young man who is deafblind and who was previously provided with regular respite on a regular basis at one of the 24 hour group homes. The State Administrative Tribunal become involved and appointed a Guardian and assigned the Public Trustee to be responsible for the client's welfare and financial issues under a Tribunal Order. Although problematic in the first instance, this person has flourished in all areas of his daily living, in particular the ability to now walk nearly unaided and an increase in a healthy body weight since being in the care of Senses.

Client 3.

The Foundation continues to provide accommodation support to a woman living in the Willagee area. This person's service was highly problematic for the first 6 months due to a difficulty in retaining suitable staff willing to work with her anti social behaviours. Over the past 6 months this service has also stabilised primarily due to the positive impact of consistent and experienced staff.



Accommodation Services has worked hard to find a balance between this person's needs and pressure from the Commission to reduce the cost of her supports. Senses has managed to defend the need for an acceptable level of funds and for this person's service to be relatively unaffected even though the direct

support hours had to be dramatically reduced. The Commission has supported requests for funding to be retained above a benchmark figure in order to allow the person to remain living independently. This marginal reduction in funding/hours has been introduced with as minimal an impact as is possible on current services. This person continues to face many physical barriers in daily life and we have been working with Specialist Services to access appropriate equipment and new technologies to improve the quality of life for this person. This service has come a long way in the past 12 months.

Client 4.

In April 2009 Senses provided an emergency accommodation service for a young man who was taken from his family home under a Guardianship Order issued by the State Administrative Tribunal. Senses was asked by the Office of Public Advocate to provide emergency accommodation while awaiting the outcome of criminal proceeding against the mother. This is scheduled to be decided by the Courts later in July 09 and she is expected to be incarcerated. Senses will continue to provide an accommodation service for this person on an interim basis at one of the 24 hour group homes until the future of his family situation is resolved.

This case is more complex in that this new client has a twin sibling and a younger brother all of whom have disabilities. Senses has been chosen as the preferred service provider and is planning to take up this challenge at short notice.

Client 5

Accommodation options have also begun in this year for two individuals who live independently in their Department of Housing homes and have approved individual funding. These services have been set up and function effectively and to the client's satisfaction to date with minimal support. One of these clients has Muscular Dystrophy and will require increased support as his condition deteriorates and his needs increase.

Area Structure Review

The position of Coordinator Area (A) remained vacant for many months as a result of the financial constraints this year. This vacant Coordinator position was abolished until the situation improves. However senior management supported the need for existing coordination of the twenty four hour homes and the position of Joint Supervisor was created. This position was filled on a cost neutral basis by taking part in the rosters. It has proved successful and is providing the support and coordination required between these two homes.

In October 2008 the structure of Accommodation Services was again reviewed to cope with the additional clients in Willagee and other areas and also the plan for the prospects of further clients in the Southern metropolitan corridor. At this time it was decided to commence the establishment of a third part time Coordinator Area (C). The appointee currently oversees the services of two clients in the Willagee, one in Southern River and another new client in Dianella. The current structure has scope for expansion and allows for continued growth.

Individual Service Planning

Accommodation Service continues to provide an Individual Service Plan for seven clients who are individually funded through the Disability Aged Care program. Although this program initially set up as a trial for aged care within the disability sector has formally ceased, funds continue for the support of those clients initially approved.

The new "Partners in Change" training conducted by Perth Home Care and Mike House from Senses Foundation has had a positive response and the first step in improving the way we work with people with disabilities in the Accommodation setting. The clients at Holder Street where specific training was provided have benefited and their individual service plans amended accordingly.

Client Achievements

Remarkable improvements in skills and abilities including mobility have been seen in a number of clients but particularly in respect of a deafblind person who now resides permanently at the Abrolhos Loop group home. This person who initially was under nourished

and was dependent on a wheel chair for mobility is now at a healthier weight, can eat and drink with less support and now is able to walk nearly unaided without the use of his wheel chair at times. The staff working with this client have been instrumental in the progression of the personal development of this client.

Another client moved into his new purpose built home in Southern River in March 2009 after residing at the Quadriplegic Centre for over 8 years. This has been a very huge accomplishment for him and this new service to date has been extremely successful. This has made a significant difference to this person's life. He is provided with 7 hours of support per day and now gets to live a very meaningful life. He takes pride in his home including his garden and pets. This person has moved out of institutional care and into the community where he now feels valued with the opportunity to engage with other people and develop real relationships. Accommodation Service feels very privileged to be part of his service



One client from Abrolhos Loop went on a dream holiday this year to Darwin. He was accompanied by a direct support worker who he chose personally and they both had a



wonderful time. They caught the Indian Pacific to Adelaide and then travelled on the ‘Ghan’ through the red centre up to Darwin. This opportunity brought both excitement and meaning to this person’s life.

Another success story relates to client approved for housing under the Community Disability Housing Program who moved into a unit in Kewdale in December 2008 after living temporarily in the Holder Street group home while awaiting this opportunity. This is the first time in her life she had lived by herself. She is coping well, has near full time employment and is provided with minimal support by Accommodation Services during the week. She is extremely happy with her new home and is doing exceptionally well living independently in the community.

One client who lost his private accommodation and was initially forced to move back home with his parents has been successful in securing a Homeswest apartment in Glendalough and continues to live independently. Accommodation Service continues to provide support to this person on a weekly basis.

On Sunday the 28th of June Scott Hooson (accommodation support client) left Perth with



volunteer Kevin for a week of fun and adventure. After arriving in Melbourne an hour earlier than planned these two set off to see Melbourne and do as much as they could. Some of the adventures Scott got up to included were a ride on the puffing Billy railway, a visit to the Melbourne zoo, the old Melbourne goal to learn about the life of Ned Kelly. Scott said a trip up the Eureka tower was one of Scott favourite things to do; being 93 stories high was a first for him. A river cruise on the Yarra River led up to the ultimate event; watching the West Coast Eagles play the Melbourne

footy club at the MCG. Along with a lot of walking and shopping Scott had a wonderful trip with Kevin and is saving his pennies so he can go on another big trip soon.

In October 08 a client with vision impairment purchased his own two bedroom unit in Dianella with his own personal funds. He continues to live independently with Senses providing minimal support as required.

Enhancing Citizenship

In July 07 the Disability Service Commission called for submissions offering a Grant to accommodation service providers interested in exploring ways to enhance citizenship opportunities of people with disabilities. The Commission was concerned that people it was set up to support were not being given equal opportunity to play a role in society. They were also not being accepted by the community as people with a lot to contribute given the same chance as others.

This concern was shared by Senses Accommodation Services which is an approved agency with the Commission. A partnership was entered into with the agency People with Disabilities Inc. in order to maximize its chances of winning a Grant. This joint submission was successful with a Grant being made to the Foundation in August 07.

There were a number of objectives to the project all of which were aimed at improving the opportunities for these people to become involved in citizenship activities and to increase their self esteem, understanding and confidence. There were also specific objectives for the service provider as well as for community agencies that became involved.

A joint Project Management Group was established and a project officer appointed. The clients, their families and direct support worker were informed about the project. All clients in supported accommodation were invited to express an interest. The fourteen people who applied were included and the project got underway.

The First Stage was the education and training phase. This consisted of a series of specially designed sessions to introduce clients to the concept of 'citizenship' and give them knowledge, skills and confidence to explore opportunities. These sessions which covered a range of topics were friendly and interactive and were held in a community setting over a three month period.

The Second Stage was designed to build on the knowledge and experiences learnt from the intensive training. The aim of this phase was to work with individuals to refine their goals and

desires for life experiences. It was also to help them identify possibilities to get involve and to put into practice their new found knowledge, confidence and improved feeling of self worth. The focus was on identifying opportunities and supporting the person to make contact with a wide range of community organisations. They were encouraged to promote themselves in seeking opportunities and to ultimately find a successful placement. This stage was aimed at increasing their participation in the civic, cultural and political life of the community.

The final report outlines the structure adopted to manage the project and provides full details of the training material used. It also gives a profile of each participant and shows the extent to which each person was immersed into the concept of 'citizenship'. The report maps the goals of each person and tracks them through to the respective opportunities identified and records the steps taken towards a successful placement. In terms of outcomes the participants met with varying degrees of success. Some were delighted with the prospects of being accepted into a citizenship role whilst a couple elected to complete the course but in the end chose not to pursue or look for opportunities.



A number of barriers to people with disabilities being given equal opportunities are noted in the report and ways suggested that these might be reduced in time with continued education of all parties.

The report highlights a number of citizenship activities in which most people participated and the significant contribution made by the individuals towards the Future Directions 2025 planning process of the Disability Service Commission. The report also makes suggestions for the future inclusion of 'citizenship' goals in the mainstream activities of clients and importantly in the individual service plans of people with disabilities in all supported accommodation services.

Standards Monitoring

During the year external monitoring by independent consultants appointed by the Commission was completed in respect of Abrolhos, Valentine and Walcott street services. There were no 'Required Actions' with only a few opportunities for improvements identified and all have been addressed. There were a number of internal reviews conducted during the year including Holder and Verbena. These have proved to be very useful in addressing important operational issues not observed by management.

Family Meetings

Family meetings were held at Abrolhos, Holder, Valentine and Walcott Street homes during this period. At other houses it was decided to speak directly with families as it was difficult for members to visit the houses. As a matter of course families are given a procedure currently being reviewed and asked to let Senses have some comments as to its appropriateness according to a parents perspective.

These meetings provided an opportunity to brief families on developments and for the members to give feedback on areas of improvement or concern. Family meeting were held at Valentine to discuss the construction of a new house and to liaise with the Architect and Foundation Housing responsible for the project. In this way families as well as clients will have input into the design and schedule of finishes.

Replacement of Physical Facilities

During this period there have been a number of changes to premises within the Accommodation Services Program.

- One client in December 2008 moved from a privately rented unit into a DH&W unit after being on the waitlist for some time.
- One client moved out of short term accommodation at the Holder Street group home into a Foundation Housing unit in Belmont through the Disability Community Housing

Program, (DCHP). This client's transition out on her own has been successful and is provided with minimal support during the week. She makes all her own choices in regards to her daily living.

- At the end of 2008 one client was forced to move out of his privately rented accommodation and was given no choice but to move in with his family. Early this year this person moved into a DH&W unit after being on the waitlist for some time.
- The clients at the Valentine Avenue group home still wait for their new home to be built through the Department of Housing and Works. This 4 bedroom home has reached lock up stage by 30th June 2009 and is due for practical completion before the end of this year. The Valentine Avenue lease expired in April 09 which resulted in a temporary move to a house in Hollett Street Morley.
- A number of potential accommodation units were inspected to locate a suitable unit for a client approved under the CDHP Program. This person has rented private facilities for a number of years and has been approved as a priority for 'spot' purchase from monies under the Government's Stimulus Package.

Negotiations had commenced towards the end of this financial year for Senses to hand over responsibility for maintenance, repairs and rental arrangements of its Department of Housing properties to be out sourced to Uniting Care West. This is an approved housing provider with the Department of Housing and understands the disability sector and has the skills and resources to better provide these services. This has the approval of the Commission and support of the Department of Housing.

Combined Application Process

At the beginning of this period a total of 20 cap applications were automatically submitted including a number of the Community clients now living independently for whom the current level of funding is inadequate. None of these were approved during the year. An additional two new applications were submitted during this period for specific accommodation support

funding. These applications were successful resulting in the commencement of permanent accommodation support services for these two individuals.

Of these people one was provided with 'respite' support previously under a Guardianship Order whereas now with accommodation support funding Senses is able to provide a permanent living arrangement in one of the Abrolhos 24 hour house.

At the commencement of April 09 DSC Funding round a number of CAP applications were withdrawn for a number of individuals as the Commission would not have seen these individuals as a priority for funding. The changing needs of these people with disabilities were reappraised and an alternative source of support is to be explored.

Accommodation Services is currently applying for alternative funding through the Community Living Plan for an individual who is provided with minimal support during the week and requires additional support to engage and participate in his local community.

Events

Disability Sector Support Worker Awards

Two direct support workers were nominated for the Disability Sector Support Worker Awards and attended together with other senior staff a Gala dinner at the Burswood on Friday 20th February 09. This event was conducted by the National Disability Service. Although these two support workers did not receive awards this event allowed accommodation services to acknowledge the valuable work of these employees and to express appreciation of their valued role within the organisation.

Minister's Lifelong Achievement Award

In May 09 a nomination was submitted for one of our client's father to be recognised in the National Disability Awards. This program is conducted by the Federal Government and specifically acknowledges people who have made a significant contribution to the community to improve the lives of people with disabilities. This parent has been nominated under this

Award category which recognises people who have demonstrated a sustained and extraordinary commitment to reshaping the lives of these people over a lifetime.

Budgetary Performance

The final figures to the close of this financial year on 30th June 09 indicate a significant overspending in Cost Centre 610 Accommodation Services. This has been known for months and to some extent is offset by underspending in Cost Centres 920 Aged Care and the individual funding of client JB. The majority of the clients supported by these funds are cared for at Abrolhos and actual wages and other costs being charged to the wrong classification accounts for the majority of this shortfall.

There are other savings in the overall accommodation service program where the contracted hours have been provided but there are monitory surpluses. These funds should be available to contribute to any marginal deficit on the bottom line

Garry Parker Manager, Jodi Perkin Assistant Manager

Accommodation Services

15th July 2009