

National Housing Conference 2008



NSW Housing and Human Services Accord Framework

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Introduction

- A new approach to human services delivery for the disadvantaged and vulnerable
- 2 key paradigms:
 - client focus
 - inter-agency collaboration



Housing NSW

- Assisted over 430,000 people
- Received more than 630,000 calls to our Housing Contact Centre
- Employs over 2,200 staff in 85 offices across NSW
- Manages more than 146,000 properties for the social housing sector, including:
 - 127,600 public housing properties
 - 14,300 community housing properties
 - 4,300 Aboriginal Housing properties



Why Is There a Role for Government?

- Even up the playing field for the disadvantaged
- Importance of housing to support non-housing outcomes also dependent on government effort (eg. education, health, employment, reduced recidivism)



Challenges for Housing NSW

- “Wicked problems” (Rittel and Weber 1973)
- Common across the sector in all states and territories
 - ageing stock
 - escalating costs
 - falling revenue
 - demographic change
 - housing clustered in estates



The Government's Response

- Support to sustain tenancies has become key given targeting of assistance
- Need to better engage other agencies to partner with us to provide that support
- Move away from existing opportunistic approach to partnership development



Our Organisation's Highest Priority

- Those on low incomes who need support services to help them live independently
- Those with problems securing affordable housing that is suitable for their needs in the private rental market
- Frail, aged people
- People with a disability or mental illness
- Young people lacking family support
- Homeless people



The Housing and Human Services Accord

- Benefits:
 - build on existing arrangements for partnerships
 - opportunity to be more strategic
 - apply local lessons systematically
- Client with complex housing need will be provided with suitable housing and a guarantee of support to sustain their tenancy
- Government commitment



Partners

- Aboriginal Housing Office
- Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care
- Attorney General's Department
- Department of Community Services
- Department of Corrective Services
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Housing
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- NSW Health
- NSW Police Force

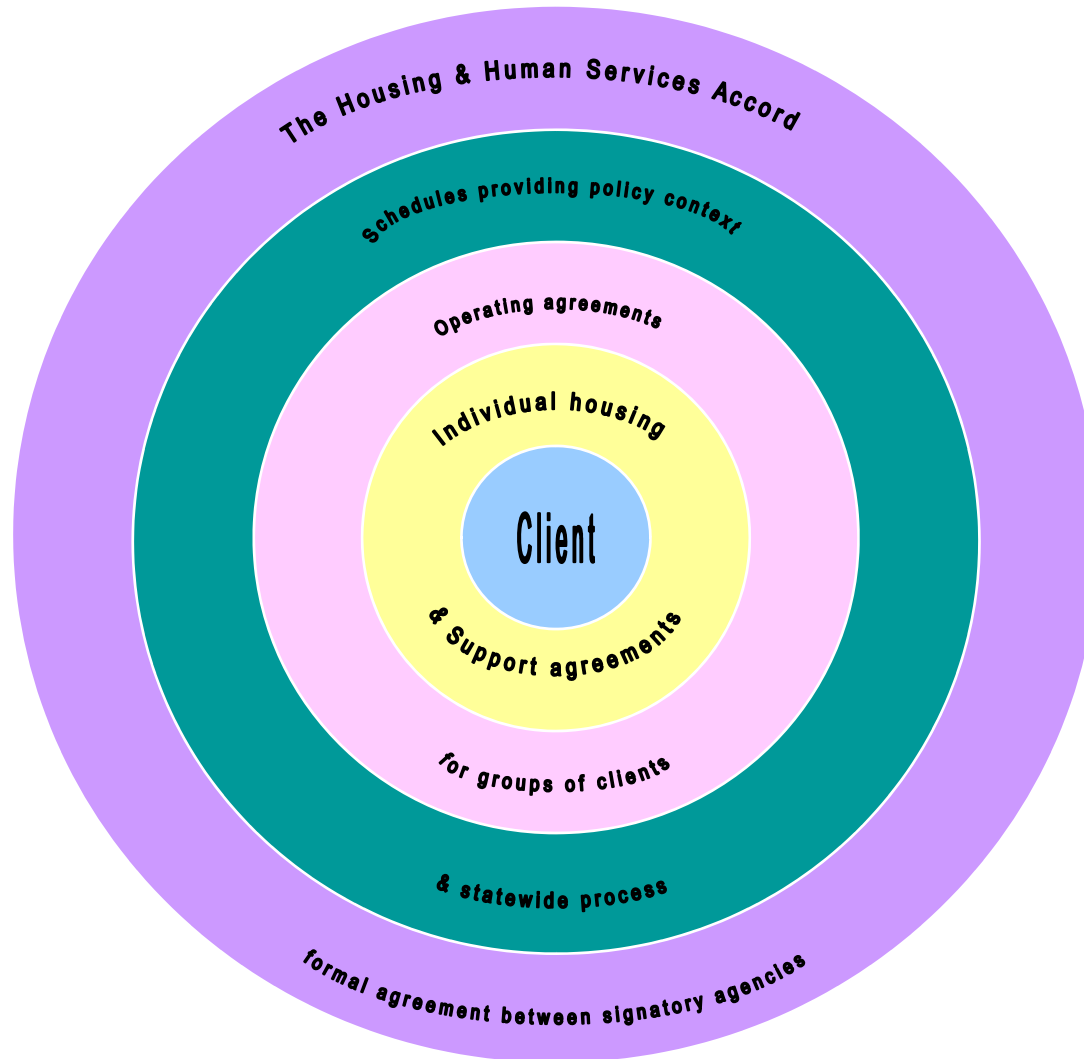


Underlying Principles

- Stable housing assist clients with complex needs to live independently
- Support services are critical
- Collaboration is a cornerstone
- Respect of client confidentiality
- Cultural sensitivity



How Does It Work?





Implementation

- Development of business processes to give effect to the Accord
- Trial Accord projects to provide evidence on tenant outcomes and types of partnerships that lead to better outcomes



Challenges – Cultural Change

- External and internal change required
- How to do this?
 - Selling the message about the importance of stable housing
 - Champions
 - Project team expertise
 - Consultation and involvement
 - Shared access trials – win/win
 - Joint assessment framework
 - Role clarification



Challenges - Staff and Training

- Support staff to develop new skills or build on existing skills
- Divisional Accord Coordinator positions
- Training



Other Challenges

- Levels of Aboriginal disadvantaged compared with non-Aboriginal disadvantage
- IT systems
- Equity issues
- Measuring outcomes



Conclusion

The more we learn about the factors shaping mobility, achievement and well-being, the clearer it becomes that services that genuinely engage with the particular needs of users are more effective in creating positive outcomes.

Tom Bentley and James Wilsden, 2003.