



SAAP V CAMPAIGN KIT

Why this campaign?

The SAAP V Campaign Kit has been developed in response to the SAAP V Agreement and the failure of the Commonwealth Government to provide extra funds to assist with the viability issues for services in NSW.

This is a joint campaign initiative by the New South Wales Council for Social Services (NCOSS) and the SAAP peaks: Homelessness NSW.ACT, the Youth Accommodation Association and the Women's Refuge Resource Centre. The aim of this kit is to highlight the impacts of this agreement on services and ultimately the clients and homeless people in NSW. This kit will provide the sector with up to date information and the tools to assist in organising your own local campaigns, as well as lobbying at a federal level for a more equitable response to SAAP funding.

What does this kit include?

- Useful facts and figures from the NDCA SAAP statistics for 2004-2005
- Information on rebutting myths around SAAP V funding
- Media contacts
- Contact details for the Hon John Cobb, Minister for Community
- Images for campaign use
- Pro forma letters to the Federal Minister for individual concerned citizens and service providers

What can I do?

Sign the individual citizen's and/or service provider statements and send it to your local Federal member
Initiate SAAP V campaigns in your local area through the use of local media such as print, radio and television

We would like to hear about what is happening in your area. NCOSS will be tracking responses to the letters, media releases and activities that occur on a local level. We are also keen to hear about newsworthy statistics or case studies that assist in this campaign.

For further information contact your peak or visit their websites:

NCOSS - Tel: 9211 2599 or www.ncoss.org.au

HomelessnessNSW.ACT - Tel: 9319 7111 or www.homelessnessnsw.org.au

Youth Accommodation Association - Tel: 9698 5833 or www.yaa.com.au

Women's Refuge Resource Centre - Tel: 9698 9777 or www.wrrc.org.au

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Useful Facts & Figures

These statistics relate to those people seeking support from SAAP services in NSW¹

- **In 2004-2005 there were 386 SAAP agencies in NSW**
 - 24,150 clients were supported during these 12 months
 - There were 41,350 support periods provided to homeless persons across NSW
 - 55% of SAAP clients were female
 - 45% of SAAP clients were male
- **Domestic Violence is the largest main reason cited for seeking assistance from a SAAP agency in NSW**
 - Domestic violence was identified as the main reason for seeking assistance in 18% of support periods
 - Refuges for women escaping domestic violence provided 9000 support periods, more than half of which were to women with children
- **Females aged between 20-24 are the largest client group of SAAP agencies in NSW by age and gender.**
- **19,600 children and young people sought assistance through SAAP services**
 - 10,750 children accompanied their parents to NSW SAAP agencies during 2004-2005
 - 46.4% of children accompanying a parent or guardian were aged between 0-4
 - 8,850 clients of NSW SAAP agencies were under 24 years of age
 - Family breakdown was cited by 20% of females alone under 25 and 14% of males alone under 25 as their main reason for seeking assistance
- **Drug, alcohol and/or substance abuse was the largest main reason cited by single men over 25 years for seeking assistance from SAAP (28%)**
- **17.2%, or approximately 1 in 6 NSW SAAP clients, identified as Indigenous Australians**

¹ This information was extracted from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Data Collections Annual Report 2004-2005, supplementary tables for New South Wales. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

SAAP V – Rebutting the myths

Hasn't the Commonwealth allocated extra funds under the new agreement to address the concerns of the sector?

There has been much claim and counterclaim about how much is being allocated to SAAP V and by whom.

The signed agreement clearly shows that Commonwealth base funding for SAAP in NSW remains static (apart from indexation) for the five year term of the agreement. This means that nothing is proposed to address the very real service viability issues identified in the national evaluation of SAAP IV.

As well none of the SAAP V innovation funding for pilot projects is earmarked for NSW until year 4 of the agreement.

Isn't the Commonwealth trying to implement new service models to improve the effectiveness of SAAP?

The sector rightly expects that changes to SAAP reflect the findings of the national evaluation of the program that was commissioned by the Commonwealth and completed in May 2004. This evaluation was conducted by Erebus Consulting Partners and looked at the program's effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness and client satisfaction levels².

Essentially the evaluation provides a range of options for reform, depending on the extent of desired program change and increase in government spending. Importantly none of the options envisage that significant change in service delivery for homeless people can flow from a static or modestly increased budget.

One proposed option, option 1a, was that the program be maintained at its present level of funding and program design³. Under this option there would be no change in either service capacity or delivery models, and the service viability crisis would not be addressed.

The next option, option 1b, proposed that the program continue largely in its present form but with an increase in funding of at least 15% to sustain service viability⁴. The evaluation said that this option would not entail any significant change in either service delivery approaches or capacity levels.

A further option, option 2, was that the program is continued largely in its present form but with substantially increased funding to enable new ways of working, address service

² National Evaluation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP IV): Final Report, (the National Evaluation), Erebus Consulting Partners, May 2004.

³ National Evaluation p. 190.

⁴ National Evaluation p. 194.

viability and expand service capacity⁵. The evaluation said that an increase of about 35-40% over current funding levels would be required to implement this option⁶.

The most radical option, option 3, proposed reaffirming SAAP as a transitional crisis accommodation and support program but incrementally repositioning it within a broader plan which aims to provide a more comprehensive response to homelessness⁷. Significantly the evaluation noted that this was the most expensive option, requiring additional funding even greater than the 35-40% required for option 2. However, it accepted that option 2 could be used as a preliminary step in an overall plan for transition towards option 3.

It is concerning that some of the justification presented in the evaluation report in favour of option 3 is used as a justification for the Commonwealth's approach to SAAP V, without acknowledging the additional resources identified as being required to go down this path.

Isn't it up to the States and Territories to accept responsibility for services for the homeless?

It is not true to say that the States and Territories are primarily responsible for services for the homeless.

Over the 20 year life of the SAAP program it has been accepted that services for the homeless are a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth and the States, funded as far as possible on a dollar for dollar basis. Nothing has changed to alter this responsibility.

The NSW Government already meets more than 50% of the cost of funding SAAP services in this State. If the funding allocation to NSW is increased by the Commonwealth, the sector expects the State Government to match any such increase on a dollar for dollar basis.

How can the Federal Government afford to spend up to 40% more on SAAP?

The existing Budget for SAAP is not large compared to many other government programs. The allocation for NSW in 2005/06 is \$111.2 million⁸, shared between the Commonwealth and NSW Governments.

To increase funding by 15% to address service viability concerns would cost about \$16.7 million a year, with the Commonwealth share being less than \$8.4 million.

⁵ *National Evaluation* p. 195.

⁶ Executive Summary of the National Evaluation p.9.

⁷ *National Evaluation* pp. 197-198.

⁸ 'Budgeted Expenditure by Program (table)', *Community Services Budget 2005/06*, NSW Department of Community Services, May 2005 p.4.

If option 2 proposed by the national evaluation were accepted in full the extra funding required in NSW would be an additional 20-25%, or a maximum of \$27.8 million a year. The Commonwealth share of this would be less than \$14 million a year.

In total therefore our bid is for the Commonwealth to provide less than \$23 million a year extra to expand the SAAP budget by 35-40%.

To put this figure in context, the revised estimate for total Commonwealth spending in 2005-06 is \$207.0 billion, with a projected underlying cash balance (budget surplus) of \$11.5 billion. Further surpluses of at least \$9 billion are projected for each of the next 3 years⁹.

From this it can be seen that the state of the Commonwealth Budget presents no obstacle at all to properly funding SAAP in NSW.

Isn't the high number of repeat clients an indication that SAAP is not really helping the homeless?

Official data shows that less than 25% of SAAP clients in NSW return to a SAAP service within a year¹⁰.

In any event repeat use of SAAP services should not be viewed as a failure of service providers or of the program itself. While one of the goals of SAAP is to assist clients to live independently, this can be difficult to achieve in the case of the chronically homeless or those with restricted access to other support services. As noted in the national evaluation of SAAP IV, the majority of high repeat clients tend to be single men, especially those aged 25 and over, who have been sleeping rough or were previously living in a rooming house or hostel¹¹. A good number of these would have alcohol or other drug dependence issues or a mental health problem.

The other situation where there is an observable level of repeat use is Indigenous women escaping from domestic and family violence¹². Indigenous women sometimes use refuges as a preventative measure and are not intending to leave the relationship with their partners. They go to a refuge or safe house when there is 'trouble brewing' and return home when things calm down.

⁹ 'Australian Government general government sector budget aggregates' (Table 5) *Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2005-06* Commonwealth Treasurer December 2005 p. 17.

¹⁰ *Report on Government Services 2006* Productivity Commission January 2006 Table 15A.188.

¹¹ *National Evaluation* pp 78-81.

¹² *National Evaluation* p.191.

Contact Details for Hon John Cobb MP Minister for Community Services

Ministerial office:

Mail: Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6277 7900

Fax: (02) 6273 0434

Email: John.Cobb.MP@aph.gov.au

Electorate Offices:

Mr Cobb's electorate of Parkes includes the towns/cities of Barmedman, Broken Hill, Cobar, Condobolin, Forbes, Grenfell, Hillston, Ivanhoe, Lake Cargelligo, Menindee, Narromine, Nevertire, Nyngan, Parkes, Peak Hill, Tibooburra, Trangie, West Wyalong, and Wilcannia.

Dubbo Office:

Location/Postal Address:

3-153, Brisbane Street

Dubbo NSW 2830

Tel: (02) 6882 0999

Fax: (02) 6882 9935

Email: John.Cobb.MP@aph.gov.au

Broken Hill Office:

Location:

2 Brookfield House

275 Argent Street

Broken Hill NSW 2880

Postal Address:

PO Box 443

Broken Hill NSW 2880

Tel: (08) 8087 7649

Fax: (08) 8087 7605

Email: John.Cobb.MP@aph.gov.au

Media Contacts

- Media support for our campaign is vital. Local services can do much to help by raising the issue of SAAP funding via local newspapers, radio and TV. Please pass on any newsclips or online stories to your SAAP peak, or NCOSS.
- Below are some key agenda setters. Why not ask them when they last looked at the issue of homelessness. Tell them about our campaign. Seek their support.

Alan Jones @ 2GB weekdays from 5.30 am

There are 3 ways to contact the Alan Jones program:

1. online via the contact facility
http://2gb.com/index.php?option=com_contact&task=view&contact_id=2&Itemid=3
2. by phone on the talkback line: Within NSW 131 873 (local call charge), or
3. by fax: 02 8570 0219

ABC local radio Sydney

The easiest way to provide feedback and story ideas is via the online feedback facility at <http://abc.net.au/sydney/contact.htm> You then need to select the appropriate program – such as

- Breakfast with Sarah MacDonald
- **Mornings with Virginia Trioli (recommended)**
- Afternoons with James Valentine

Alternatively you can contact them via mail, phone, SMS or fax as follows:

Mail: ABC Sydney, GPO Box 9994, Sydney, NSW, 2001

Phone: General Enquiries: 02 8333 1234, Talkback ONLY: 1300 222 702 (local call charge)

SMS: 199 22 702 (generally \$0.25 per message)

Fax: 02 8333 1203

Sunrise – 6 am to 9 am weekdays on the 7 Network

They have an online feedback and story suggestion facility at

http://seven.com.au/sunrise/form_contactus

Alternatively you can contact them by mail, fax or telephone as follows:

Mail: Sunrise, Channel 7, PO Box 777, Pyrmont NSW 2007.

Fax: 02 8777 7757

Telephone: 02 8777 7777

SMS: 1997 7772 (Charged at 55c per message)

All story submissions should be directed to the Supervising Producer, Yoko Shimizu.

Life Matters ABC Radio National Monday to Friday at 9 am

They have an online feedback facility at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/lm/email.htm>

Alternatively you can contact them by mail or phone as follows:

Post: Life Matters, GPO Box 9994, Sydney, NSW 2001

Phone: 02 9333 1433