

Forum Flash

Date: 28 July 2010

Meet the Candidates to talk about Pay Equity

The Australian Services Union together with Western Sydney Community Forum and Granville Multicultural Community Centre invite all social, community and disability workers in the Parramatta electorate to a local Candidates Forum Wednesday 11th August 3:00 - 4:00pm at The Hills Holroyd Parramatta MRC Level 4, 1 Horwood Place, Parramatta

We have invited the candidates who will be running for Parramatta in the upcoming Federal election, to address the following:

- Inadequate funding to the community sector
- Disparity of wages between non-government workers and government workers doing the same job
- The ASU's equal pay campaign
- The parties' view about WorkChoices

All community workers and supporters are welcome - please contact ASU organiser **Adrienne Vella** on 9310 4000 or adrienne@asu.org.au to RSVP and for further information.

Click here to download flyer.

'Dream or Reality?' - Affordable Housing in Western Sydney

Western Sydney Community Forum has been member of the Western Sydney Housing Coalition since its establishment. The Coalition was formed from community organisations and research bodies in order to build partnerships and explore advocacy options to improve availability of affordable, secure and appropriate housing in the region.



The Western Sydney Housing Coalition is organising the 'Dream or Reality- Affordable Housing in Western Sydney Forum' on 17th of August 2010 Casula Powerhouse Art Centre starting from 9:30am. This forum aims to **highlight the gap in housing affordability and availability facing Western Sydney** and to **develop powerful advocacy to address housing equity** in the region.

Come, hear and question housing experts from different sectors:

- Overcoming competing interests in housing: how can the system be fairer?
- Population projections for Western Sydney
- Youth homelessness
- Federal, State and Local government roles

Participate in one of the workshops to discuss and prioritise strategies.

- Housing and refugees
- Setting priorities for Affordable Housing provision in Western Sydney
- Homelessness and advocacy

You can register online on www.wscf.org.au website or can [download the registration form here](#) and e-mail the filled form to hadit@fmrc.net or fax it to 9728 6080 to the attention to Rosie. For further information please contact Western Housing Coalition's contact person Rosie Wong on 9782 6547 or 9727 0477.

Training Courses on Offer

Promoting to and Networking with Ethnic Communities

Maria Katrivesis - MDAA

This hands-on workshop will focus on the why, who and how. It will leave you with the skills and knowledge to make connections, build bridges and develop reciprocal relationships with ethnic communities that last.

Date: 5.08. 2010 Time: 9:30 - 4:30

WSCF, Level 4, 146 Marsden St, Parramatta Cost: \$35.00 members \$75.00 non members

This is the perfect one day workshop to do before you spend money on translations and then get stuck with: "How do I distribute the information? How do I let people know about my services?"

Working Safely in Private Dwellings and External Locations – for Managers/Coordinators

Bridge The Gap Training & Assessment

Date: 6 August 2010 Time: 9:30-4:30. Venue: Santa Maria Centre, 253 Great Western Highway, Lawson. Cost: \$35 members \$75 for non members.

This workshop is a full day program which has been designed to introduce or refresh managers' knowledge in the elements of OHS Risk Management and contribute to the implementation of OHS strategies and initiatives in order to ensure compliance with OHS legislation.

This interactive workshop will provide participants with opportunity to discuss and understand the delicate balance between the standards within the Disability Services Act and the obligation of the OHS Act. You will have to opportunity to explore what is reasonable practice and weigh up risks in providing a service directly or indirectly in non-vocational and community settings.

During the workshop a range of resource tools will be customized to suit your organisation, which incorporates early intervention and strengthening your safety culture.

Element of Competency_

1. Provide information to the workgroup about OHS policies & procedures
2. Implement & monitor participative arrangements for the management of OHS
3. Implement & monitor the organisation's procedures for providing OHS training
4. Implement & monitor procedures for identifying hazards and assessing risks
5. Implement & monitor the organisation's procedures for controlling risks
6. Implement & monitor the organisation's procedures for maintaining OHS records for the team

Who Should Attend:

Managers, Supervisors, coordinators, Safety Officers, OH&S Sponsors and Team Leaders

PATHWAY: Successful completion of this Unit of Competency provides learners with the partial completion of Certificate IV in OHS.

The program has been designed in compliance with the OH&S Act of NSW (2000), & the OHS Regulation of NSW (2001).

Position Vacant within WSCF

Regional Resource Worker HACCC (Food) Part time 7 day (49hrs) per fortnight

WSCF is seeking applications from suitably qualified/experienced people for the position of Home & Community Care (HACC) Development Officer (Food) 7 day/49 hours per fortnight SACS State Award Grade 4-5 (WSCF above-award rates and employee tax benefits)

Essential: Applicants MUST address all essential and desirable criteria. Please phone Debbie on 9687-9669 for an information pack.

Interview about impact of Keeping them Safe Strategy.

Interview with Mike Sheargold (Interviewed by Miguel Ferrero)

Q. What has been your career path to your current job? (brief background)

I started in Community Development in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains (Australian Assistance Plan for those with very long memories) before finding my way into what is now called Community Services for 11 years and for the past 20 years I have worked for NGO's.



During this time I have worked in Child Protection, Out of Home Care, Family Support, Disability Services, Youth Services and Juvenile Justice in just about every direct worker capacity and in policy, planning and senior management positions.

Q. What is your position within the community sector?

I split my week between Jannawi Family Centre where I am the Director; and FamS (NSW Family Services) the peak for around 300 Child and Family Services around NSW where I am the Project Manager. Jannawi has provided a Child Protection Program from the same site in Wiley Park for over 30 years so this position meshes well with my current role at FamS managing its involvement in the implementation of the *Keep Them Safe* (KTS) strategy through a Community Services funded project.

Q. What is the impact of "Keep Them Safe" strategy on the sector?

Part of our project involves providing feedback to Community Services and other KTS partners about the issues associated with KTS implementation, so we have already gathered a lot of information about initial impacts on the sector and a comprehensive progress report on our findings will be placed on the FamS website in the next few weeks. FamS however has been keen to stress that whilst KTS as a strategy will impact on the sector, both government and non government, and in large measure aims to reduce the number of reports requiring an investigation, its success cannot be assessed based on how it impacts the sector.

The primary focus on the impact of KTS must be on whether we see improved outcomes for children and families. For NSW this would mean in part seeing fewer children needing to go into Out of Home Care because fewer situations would arise where such action becomes necessary to protect a child from significant harm. It would also see a range of other improved outcomes in relation to the general health and wellbeing of children. Accordingly initial responses have been very positive about the outcomes and philosophies associated with KTS, while acknowledging that it may be some years before we can assess the impact on children and families. And not

surprisingly, in the early stages of a major change process the feedback has been very mixed about some of the initial impacts on sector.

Major issues to date have included: a marked increase in referrals to many services; many services being unable to respond to the increase in demand; uncertainty around changes in responsibilities and; uncertainty about the new information sharing provisions. All these matters are being taken up through the relevant channels and the report I mentioned earlier will provide an overview of these issues. On the positive side there are many reports of better information sharing, better collaborative practice and examples of a new willingness to share responsibility for improved child safety and wellbeing.

Q. What are the major challenges for the sector in supporting the KTS strategy?

Cultural change that is built around improved working together is at the heart of the KTS strategy. As emphasised in COAG's National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, child safety requires all sectors and parts of our community to be involved and this is the most critical message to be taken from local and international research and experience. As we have travelled around the state to hold consultations and forums we have visited communities with an established history of working together, with strong networks and a sense of shared ownership of local issues and have come away confident that KTS will only enhance their capacity to improve outcomes for local children and families.

However in other areas, relationships between the critical players can be poor or nonexistent for a range of reasons and for communities starting from such a position developing this new culture will be the major challenge. When there are insufficient resources to meet needs and even competition for scarce resources and stressful work environments, negotiating how KTS should be translated into local working relationships between agencies will be very difficult process in the absence of a past working relationship and associated trust and mutual respect.

For many FamS members historically dependent on CSGP funding and other poorly funded NGOs who generally excel at working together the message that "they need to work together better" in combination with increasing demands on their services, has certainly challenged their sense of humor. Poor resource levels (too few staff and too little time) even impacts on the capacity of some services to keep abreast of KTS changes and developments or participate in associated training and information sessions.

Q. What kind of assistance will the sector require in implementing the KTS strategy?

Well if we are talking about the broader community sector there is still a long term process required to explain the strategy and how different parts of the sector can best contribute to the KTS outcomes. A member of a specific sector will regularly stand up in a meeting and say that workers in our sector are yet to be well informed about KTS.

Parts of the broader strategy such as Family Referral Services and Intensive Case Management are yet to be rolled out fully across the state so processes need to stay in place to disseminate information about new developments. In this respect a number of excellent websites have up to date KTS information and people only need to Google "Keep Them Safe" to access comprehensive information.

Also as implementation is built on working together it is important that at an appropriate local level both formal and informal networks are established and maintained where the current absence of these undermines KTS implementation. Who does this work and how it is resourced needs to be determined, however regional positions attached to the Department of Premiers and Cabinet are in place and a capacity building role seems to be part of their responsibilities.

If the structures and systems are in place and a strong collaborative culture exists in these communities it will be the absence of essential services and resources that will be the only impediment to the KTS strategy being as successful in terms of outcomes for children and families as could be. Ideally KTS implementation will at least see a genuine broad consultative process involved in the allocation of any new resources as resource limitations are addressed over time.

Joke Spot

Do for others with no desire of returned favor. We all should plant some trees we'll never sit under.
National Tree Day – 1 August 2010

For a full copy of the WSCF HACC Flash

[Click link to HACC Flash in Flash file](#)

A Stronger Voice for Western Sydney Facebook Page: <http://www.ngo.net.au/strongervoice>