

DHHS Reforms- Update from Housing Tasmania

The Department of Health and Human Services has initiated a reform of the way that it does its business within the 'Get Fit' program. As part of this program there are a number of principles and processes to improve decision-making and organisational arrangements that will enable the Department to better deliver its services, and to improve quality and effectiveness of services to its clients.

To this effect, new organisational arrangements involve the movement to 'Groups':

- Acute Health Services
- Community Health Services
- Human Services
- Shared Services

Within Human Services, there will be four Business Units:

- Children and Families
- Youth Justice
- Disability Services
- Housing Tasmania

The main change is associated with programs located within Children and Families and the Community Health Services Group which will move from a state-wide structure to an integrated regional model.

Within the Human Services Group Youth Justice will become a separate Business Unit. The Gambling Bureau and management of the family support and Neighbourhood House programs will remain within Children and Families while the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) will move to Housing Tasmania.

The movement of SAAP to Housing Tasmania is aimed to provide a closer alignment to the Crisis Accommodation Program and consolidate a range of tenancy support programs. It provides the opportunity to develop a continuum of service from homelessness, through emergency accommodation, transitional accommodation into more long term secure accommodation. It is acknowledged that SAAP is much more than an accommodation program and that a clear purpose and focus of SAAP relates to preventing homelessness and supporting people who have a range of support needs. A major focus under the current SAAP Bilateral Agreement is on early intervention and prevention strategies, the provision of better assistance to people who have support needs and improving the quality of service delivery.

Housing Tasmania will take on responsibility for SAAP from the 1 September. Shortly after this time Mercia Bresnehan, Executive Director Housing Tasmania would like to be able to meet with SAAP service providers to learn more about the delivery of the program on the ground.

- June 2006