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# Executive Summary

The Inner City Youth at Risk (ICYAR) project was a partnership project which was managed by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Child, Youth, Women and Families Health portfolio. This portfolio provides strategic leadership for local services in children's health, early parenting, youth health, women's health, homelessness health, domestic violence, and the health needs of families. The project drew together 21 government and non-government organisations to target and respond to young people (12-25 years) experiencing homelessness and/or risk of homelessness in the inner city.

This is the third report on the ICYAR project written by researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW. Previous research on the project outcomes found that the project was reaching its target group of highly disadvantaged young people. In the two year period from July 2010, 487 clients were provided with 1,145 instances of brokerage funding, and during this time a high proportion of ICYAR clients experienced unstable accommodation and multiple presenting issues. While the project is no longer funded, this report outlines the development and implementation of the ICYAR service delivery model for replication in other areas.

This report draws on a review of the literature and interviews with ICYAR stakeholders.

## Findings from the literature

The literature indicates that young people who become homeless often have high support needs, with coexisting emotional and behavioural issues, substance abuse and physical health problems. The review also found several characteristics of effective models of integrated service delivery for young people with very high support needs.

During interviews conducted for this project, stakeholders indicated that the ICYAR model has these characteristics, including strong leadership, clear lines of responsibility, effective communication, strong planning and monitoring mechanisms, and good working relationships.

## Key elements of the ICYAR service model

The key elements to the ICYAR *structure* are:

- Steering Committee, which is responsible for the overall project governance and providing high level strategic support to the project;
- Outreach Coordination Committee, which considers applications for brokerage funding and enables an informal assessment and case coordination function; and
- Project Coordinator position responsible for maintaining and managing the partnership, administering brokerage, supporting effective collaborations between diverse stakeholders, data collection and management

To duplicate the successes of ICYAR, it is essential to ensure that the committees have effective membership and the coordinator has specific skills and expertise.

The key ICYAR *activities* are outreach sweeps, brokerage funding, coordinated case management, long-term housing, and sector development activities.

*Outreach sweeps* are conducted on a quarterly basis to gather standardised data on the demographic characteristics and service use of young people in the areas.

*Brokerage funding* provides goods and services to clients that would otherwise be unavailable. Brokerage is managed in four tiers:

- Up to \$500 can be provided to a partner agency to meet a young person's crisis/emergency costs
- Up to \$5,000 can be used to support a case plan for a young person receiving case management
- Up to \$35,000 is available to provide wrap around services to clients in high need supported housing tenancies case managed by ICYAR services
- Up to \$20,000 can be provided to initiate a project if two or more organisations in the area identify a gap in service delivery and develop a targeted response to address that gap.

For the ICYAR project, the sweeps, outreach and brokerage program data were recorded in a central data base, which enabled the project to monitor outcomes.

*Coordinated case management:* ICYAR strengthens the quality of case management provided by partner organisations. It does not provide case management directly. This is regarded as key to its success: rather than duplicating the services provided by partner agencies, ICYAR provides a coordinating role across service provision agencies.

For the ICYAR project, *long-term housing* was provided through supported housing packages for high needs young people. These packages were provided in partnership with St George Community Housing and Metro Community Housing and tenanted by the most vulnerable young people in the area.

*Sector development activities:* partner agencies developed a number of new projects including clinics for young people outside the school system to receive the Human Papillomavirus

(HPV) vaccine; the development of a responsive website with maps, phone numbers and other information to assist young people to find accommodation, health and other services; and facilities tours that offer orientation training for new staff in all the agencies.

## Replicating the service model

The views of ICYAR stakeholders provide an overview of key principles and steps to take in replicating the model elsewhere.

### Key principles

- Utilise the existing service network
- The lead agency should not deliver services or receive brokerage
- Brokerage funds should purchase services, not fund positions
- Decision making needs to be joint with all partner agencies involved

### Key steps and processes

- Ensure sufficient time for planning: up to 6 months before commencing
- Conduct service mapping
- Establish a Steering Committee with key decision makers
- Employ a skilled, experienced coordinator
- Establish an Outreach Coordination Committee consisting of key decision makers from organisations that work with the target group
- Ensure representation from agencies with strengths in case management
- Develop service memorandum of understanding and joint case management protocols
- Include adequate brokerage funds as part of the service model
- Maintain data on brokerage expenditure

# 1. Introduction

The Inner City Youth at Risk (ICYAR) project was a partnership project which was led by South East Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD). It drew together 21 government and non-government organisations to target and respond to young people (12-25 years) experiencing homelessness and/or risk of homelessness in the inner city. While the project is no longer funded, this report outlines the development and implementation of the ICYAR service delivery model for replication in other areas<sup>1</sup>.

This is the third report on the ICYAR project written by researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW (SPRC). Previous research on the project outcomes found that the project was reaching its target group of highly disadvantaged young people. In fact, analysis of the ICYAR database for the period 1st July 2010-30th June 2012 found that during that time: 1145 instances of brokerage were provided to 487 clients, including 190 food vouchers, 157 housing set-up costs, 142 instances of emergency accommodation and 116 contributions towards education and vocation (Eastman and valentine, 2012). A high proportion of ICYAR clients experienced unstable accommodation and multiple presenting issues.

## 1.1 Method

This report is designed to provide:

- qualitative data on project partners' experience of working within the ICYAR model;
- perceptions of the critical success factors and limitations of the ICYAR model; and

- an overview of how to establish a project such as this in any other geographical location.

In addition, we conducted a review of relevant evidence-based and current literature relating to young people with complex needs. The literature review covers youth homelessness issues, youth health issues (including primary health, mental health, drug and alcohol) and any context issues for young people in the areas specific to the inner city of Sydney. It also covers barriers to service utilisation by young people that are caused by service fragmentation and evidence on the potential of multi-agency working to address fragmentation.

The report draws on qualitative and quantitative data from previous research on ICYAR (Eastman et al., 2013; Eastman and valentine, 2012; Petersen and Janssen, 2007).

For this report, we also conducted interviews with nine ICYAR partner agency representatives, the Project Coordinator, the SESLHD Youth Health Coordinator and another stakeholder closely involved in establishing the project. Six of these interviews were arranged and conducted through ICYAR and interviewees consented to their use for this report. The remaining three interviews were conducted by the SPRC. Interviews with partner agencies included both agencies participating in the Steering Committee and agencies participating in the Outreach Coordination Committee.

Ethics approval to undertake the project was obtained from the UNSW Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel on 9 October 2013 and from the SESLHD Northern Network Human Research Ethics Committee on 12 November 2013.

<sup>1</sup> For this reason, references to the ICYAR project in inner Sydney are in the past tense as that project is finished; however references to the service model are in the present tense

## 2. How It Works

The history of the inner Sydney ICYAR project is important to the development of the service model. The project was initially set up as the Kings Cross Youth at Risk Project, following a review of youth services in the inner city, which identified that services were erratic and poorly coordinated, and risked young people becoming long-term homeless.

Work to establish what is now ICYAR started in 2001 when four organisations working with young people in Kings Cross were asked by the NSW government to work together to develop a joint project. A Steering Committee was established to oversee the project and review youth services in the Kings Cross area. It commissioned an independent consultant, Edwina Deakin, to map and review services for young people at risk (12–25 years) operating in the broader Kings Cross area. The resulting report, completed in 2004, found that service provision was erratic and coordination between agencies in the area was poor.

The review proposed a number of joint measures between existing providers including the establishment of a coordination committee, the introduction of outreach sweeps and the establishment of a brokerage fund. Appendix C details the history of the project.

The project grew over time, and eventually 21 organisations were involved (see Appendix A). This growth was driven by the benefits a large and diverse partnership offers clients and partner organisations.

### **Benefits for clients:**

- Client choice: because ICYAR provides case management through partner agencies, clients can continue to work with their case manager if they have one, or can be provided a choice of agency.
- Tailored support: clients can receive support from multiple agencies who together can work outside their usual parameters of individual service delivery to address the individual needs of the young person.
- Coordinated services: ICYAR's core strength is multi-agency service delivery in which agencies work together in a coordinated way creating a streamlined process for clients.

### **Benefits for agencies:**

- Peer support/review and shared expertise
- Opportunities for joint training and skills development
- Multi-agency service delivery and case coordination, which improves the quality of support they provide and maximises the impact of existing resources
- Access to brokerage funds to enhance and extend existing services
- For social housing providers: streamlined application and assessment process with one point of referral instead of multiple agencies; provision of flexible, ongoing support to clients placed by the project.



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## 2.1 Structure

The key elements to the ICYAR structure are the Steering Committee, Outreach Coordination (OC) Committee, and Project Coordinator position. To duplicate the successes of ICYAR, it is essential to ensure that the committees have effective membership and the coordinator specific skills and expertise.

A key element of the structure is that the lead agency is based outside the direct service system. This means that the roles of the coordinating and service delivery organisations are always clear and distinct.

The Steering Committee provides strategic planning, governance, and oversight of the partnership; and identifies systemic problems and opportunities in service delivery. It is therefore critical that members have sufficient seniority and expertise to inform the strategic direction and review of the partnership, and to make decisions.

The OC Committee has operational responsibilities for the partnership, including assessing and approving brokerage applications (and recommending decisions for larger applications, Figure 1). It is therefore critical that members work closely with clients and know the services that are available in the area. Appendix A lists the terms of reference of both committees.

The Project Coordinator works with both committees and must have expertise in youth services, health, homelessness policy and planning as well as service coordination.

### Steering Committee

For the ICYAR project, governance was through a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from SESLHD, including its Youth Health Coordinator and the Kirketon Road Centre, Family and Community Services, Oasis Youth Support Network run by the Salvation Army, the Kings Cross Local Area Command (NSW Police), City of Sydney, Yfoundations, St George Community Housing and Juvenile Justice.

To ensure effective operations, the committee must meet regularly. In inner Sydney it met monthly, for example. It is responsible for the

overall project governance and providing high level strategic support to the project. Decisions made by this committee include those regarding ICYAR membership, policies and finances. The Steering Committee also considers issues impacting on young people at risk and the homelessness sector more broadly.

In addition, the Steering Committee is responsible for final decisions about brokerage applications that involve high expenditure outside the general costs and for decisions about brokerage that involve providing additional staffing hours to support clients (Figure 1). This function recognises a potential for conflict at the OC Committee level in deciding which agencies can increase their staffing hours or receive larger amounts of funds.

The Steering Committee also works to maintain joint decision-making and ensure one agency cannot dominate or lead the project in a direction that was not agreed. If day to day matters that would normally be dealt with by the OC Committee (see below) need to be elevated, the Steering Committee deals with these. Early in the project, the Steering Committee was also assessing referrals through ICYAR for long term housing with St George Community Housing. Later, this was done by the OC Committee.

### Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator was based in the inner city to work across the 21 partner agencies to implement the provision of brokerage, supported community housing, coordinated case management, joint service planning, data collection, and administration of the project. The position reported to the SESLHD Youth Health Coordinator and the Steering Committee.

When interviewed for this research, ICYAR partners emphasised the importance of the coordinator's role in resourcing the model, and the importance of the coordinator position being located outside the service system, and therefore bringing an independent perspective. The Coordinator ensures the stable functioning of the project by:

- recruiting relevant organisations to ICYAR and explaining and promoting its work;
- ensuring and streamlining information sharing and communication, thus enabling



relationships between diverse organisations which would otherwise be more time consuming;

- administering the brokerage and making sure there is joint agreement on how money is spent;
- negotiating in cases of disagreement;
- ensuring that all young people are being appropriately assisted, including transferring them to a different agency or bringing in additional assistance where appropriate;
- assisting new partners or new staff to become involved and well oriented to the range of participating agencies;
- managing the response to issues that occur in the ICYAR properties (in partnership with Community Housing providers);
- being responsible for data collection and reporting; and
- monitoring and developing the project.

The Coordinator needs to have a good understanding of young people's needs and the youth sector, as well as skills to work with diverse people and organisations and bring them together to meet joint goals. The Coordinator also needs strong negotiation skills to be able to raise difficult issues with partners to resolve these issues, and the ability to develop creative solutions.

### **The Outreach Coordination Committee**

The Outreach Coordination (OC) Committee for the inner Sydney project was formed in 2005, and consisted of the Project Coordinator and the government and non-government service providers who work directly with young people in the Kings Cross area. Initially the Steering Committee had proposed that only organisations that participated in outreach be a part of the OC Committee, but in order to achieve ICYAR's goals, there was a need for organisations which provide a full range of responses. Membership was therefore expanded to include other key services, in particular those offering case management. The group also included other diverse services such as Shopfront youth legal service, alcohol and other drugs services, crisis services, and adult support agencies for clients with complex needs. The participation of government agencies, especially SESLHD

and Juvenile Justice, is very important to the functioning of the OC Committee: a group made up only of non-government organisations could not achieve as much and would risk replicating the work of other interagency groups.

In the service model, the OC Committee has two primary roles. It considers applications for brokerage, and enables an informal assessment and case coordination function. Participating services discuss the needs of clients and potential clients of services, including those who are 'service hopping' and those who are new to the area. OC Committee members discuss how they can best support new and potential clients, and whether brokerage funding would be useful. The services in contact with young people ask them to provide written consent for this collaborative planning to occur. Young people give permission for their information to be shared in this setting, and they also have the right to nominate agencies they do not want to have access to their information.

OC Committee members identify which service/s already have contact with the young person; who could offer case management; and who might offer other assistance, for example, showers, food, and support in specific areas such as physical and mental health, sex work, injecting drug use, and parenting. Usually one organisation is assigned as the lead agency by the OC Committee to assist the young person although in many instances one organisation could provide the primary assistance, with others also providing some services in a coordinated way. Young people are supported to engage in ongoing assistance with a key worker rather than visiting multiple agencies.

OC Committee meetings are also an opportunity for services to discuss the ongoing support needs of those clients who are living in ICYAR's long term housing (see Section 2.2.4), and how these support needs can be met through service coordination and referrals.

OC Committee meetings are also an opportunity to share information and discuss common issues between services, including service initiatives and training opportunities.

When interviewed for this research, stakeholders from the ICYAR project said that the OC Committee was responsible for improved

coordination between providers. This took time to achieve, but as the organisations shared information and developed trusting working relationships, OC Committee members came to understand the extent to which problems with service coordination were adversely affecting assistance to young people, and became fully committed to working together.

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## 2.2 Strategies and activities

The service model's key activities of outreach sweeps and data collection, brokerage funding, coordinated case management, long-term housing, sector development activities, and the collection and management of data, are all linked to ICYAR's core functions: planning and delivering coordinated services and housing to highly vulnerable young people.

- Outreach sweeps inform service planning by gathering information on the number of young people in the area and their service needs.
- Data from outreach sweeps and clients informs planning by providing standardised information over time.
- Brokerage funding enhances service delivery by providing goods and services to clients that would otherwise be unavailable. Brokerage also facilitates service coordination through joint decision making and by allowing staff from different agencies to share their knowledge of services and skills.
- Brokerage funding also enables rapid responses in crises because of the capacity to approve and process brokerage quickly and to have access to emergency funds when needed, including after hours.
- Sector development activities build networks across agencies and ensure sustained engagement with the partnership.

### 2.2.1 Joint outreach sweeps and data collection

Joint outreach sweeps are conducted on a quarterly basis to gather standardised data. They commenced in part as a response to the findings of the Edwina Deakin report that led to the establishment of the ICYAR Project. This report found that there were widely differing estimates of the number of young people in the

Kings Cross area, and a lack of data about the numbers and needs of these young people. The data collection process started from the commencement of the former Kings Cross Youth at Risk Project, and produced data covering a nine-year period.

Data is collected to monitor the number of young people coming into the area. Data is also collected from the clients in the project who might be accessing either emergency or case managed support. The data includes demographic information and tracks young people through ICYAR showing case plans and how funds are spent. It shows the cost of supporting a young person and any changes in their support needs over time. Detailed local data of this type is not available from other sources, so this dataset is a very useful resource in identifying needs and service gaps.

For the ICYAR project, sweeps were initially conducted on the last Saturday night of each month, but from 2009 were conducted quarterly due to financial and human resource constraints. Sweeps were also conducted on rotating weeknights each quarter to capture data from Monday to Friday. On the nights of the outreach sweeps, four experienced outreach workers from participating agencies and the ICYAR coordinator surveyed young people on the streets of Kings Cross and surrounding areas. They worked from 6pm to midnight on weeknights, and from 8pm to 2am on Saturdays. The area covered by the sweeps was identified and reviewed through consultation with outreach providers. This total area was divided into two sections, with a team of two workers surveying each area.

The outreach workers walked in pairs around the area in order to conduct a brief survey with young people assessed as potentially experiencing a risk factor, such as appearing to be drug affected or sleeping rough. They did not seek to interview young people visiting the area to party or go to strip clubs. The survey collected information about the number of vulnerable young people in the area, their age, gender, cultural background, usual suburb, income and employment status, reasons for being in the area, accommodation on the night, time since stable accommodation, and use of services (Appendix B).

## 2.2.2 Brokerage funding

A brokerage fund was attached to the ICYAR Project and, as described above, was allocated through the OC and Steering Committees (Figure 1). The brokerage fund originally received \$200,000 over a 2-year period of brokerage, which was increased to \$400,000 per year. This increase was consistent with the additional services offered by ICYAR.

Brokerage funding enables services to enhance their work and supports initiatives that respond to the unmet needs of the target group. This is achieved through a process of assessing individual needs, identifying service gaps at the local level, and developing a tailored response to these issues. Initiatives can include a range of interventions such as provision of social housing, assistance with other accommodation, food, medical and vocational needs to support young people at risk. Brokerage can also be used to support programs which build capacity in the service system and lead to improved inter-sectoral responses.

Throughout the project, approximately 11 brokerage applications were made each day. The amount of spending, however, varied depending on the number of young people in the area and the needs of those young people at the time.

There are four tiers of brokerage:

- Emergency brokerage enables an organisation to apply for up to \$500 to support a young person at risk. This does not need approval by the OC Committee but can be approved as needed by the manager from the service where the young person has sought assistance. It could cover items such as emergency accommodation, transport for a young person in crisis, or obtaining identification documents. This funding also operates as a bridge to support young people to start accepting case management from services as further financial assistance is dependent on receiving case management.
- A young person receiving case management may be allocated up to \$5,000 in brokerage. This could be in one application, e.g., for housing setup, or several applications for smaller amounts over a period of time. A service needs to prepare a support plan for

the client and an application for this funding. The coordinator circulates the application to OC Committee members and it can be approved on the basis of agreement by five members. This process also provides an opportunity for OCC members to make suggestions about alternative assistance or resources for the young person.

- Supported housing brokerage is a nominal amount of up to \$35,000, which is available to provide wrap around services to clients with high needs in supported housing tenancies case managed by ICYAR services (described below). These funds can be used to purchase goods or services such as furniture, whitegoods or resources to support their health, education or employment outcomes. Funds can also be used to increase the number of staff hours from a support service's usual allocation per client to an increased level required by a high needs client; e.g., funds paid to an organisation can be used to backfill the case manager's position while they are supporting the young person. These funds are allocated according to a case plan and application process that is ongoing throughout the young person's support. Staff support hours are paid and approved monthly depending on the changing needs of the client. The benefits of coordinated service delivery has meant that no client of the project has required access to the full amount of funding available to them to address their support needs.
- Project brokerage is available where two or more organisations in the area identify a gap in service delivery, and consequently want to initiate a project that fills that gap or addresses that need. The organisations can apply for brokerage funds of up to \$20,000 to put a project in place which enhances ICYAR and service delivery in the area. The development of a responsive website that functions as a mobile youth services directory (see Section 2.2.5) is an example of an initiative developed through project brokerage.

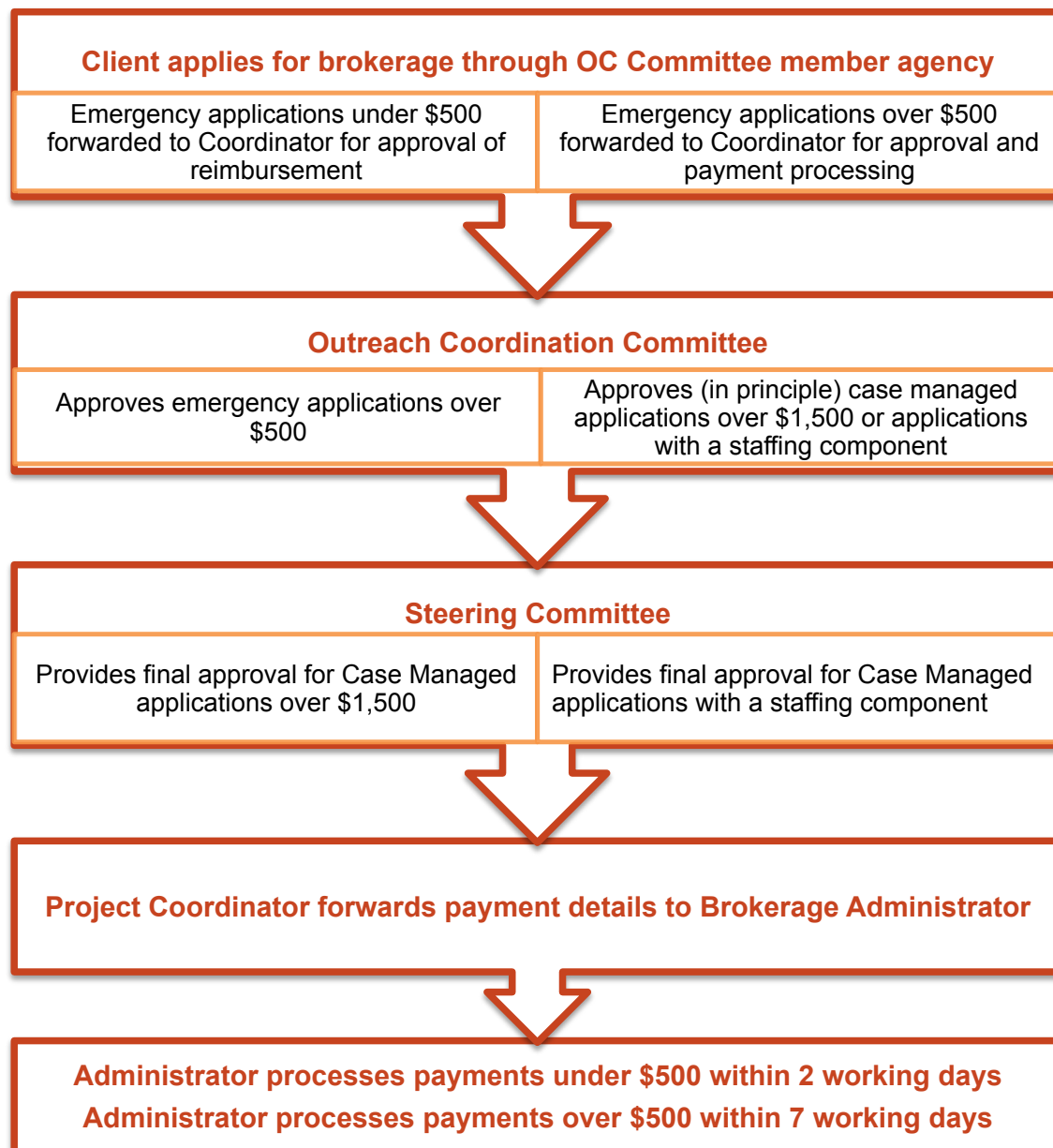
The coordinator manages the brokerage applications, which involves checking details and coordinating approvals from at least five of the OC Committee members. Unless the application

is complex and therefore requiring the OC Committee to make the decision in a meeting, the application is submitted electronically. The case manager who made the initial application is subsequently informed of the outcome by the Project Coordinator (Figure 1).

Brokerage funding is provided within specific guidelines, which are part of an overall protocol (Appendix B):

- a. Brokerage is to be seen as a tool in the provision of intensive support, whereby the brokerage funds will be readily available to the client to purchase services, material, and resources that will help in their empowerment.
- b. No young person is to be given money directly; the service provider must purchase the resources required.
- c. Brokerage should not be used to purchase resources readily available through existing avenues.
- d. The utilisation of brokerage will be tailored to address the particular needs of the individual being considered.
- e. Accommodation placement accessed via brokerage should be assessed based on the individual client's age, exposure and experience, and only to be used if there is no other option available.

**Figure 1:** Brokerage approval process





- f. Brokerage used for emergency accommodation is only a short-term option until the client is accepted into supported or private rental accommodation. The ongoing affordability of the accommodation is to be considered.
- g. Brokerage used for groceries is not to include alcohol or cigarettes. Only vouchers will be provided.
- h. Access to brokerage is limited to organisations who participate in the OC Committee and for items or interventions not covered by existing services at this time.

ICYAR partner agencies emphasised that brokerage both assists young people and encourages and sustains the participation of services.

Over the life of the ICYAR Project, brokerage funding came from several government sources, including crime prevention, health, local government and homelessness funding. The amount of funding required in different locations would depend on the size of the community and the numbers of young people to be assisted. Interviewees suggested that other possible sources of funding for brokerage could include philanthropic foundations and major businesses (particularly in smaller towns). In smaller communities it is possible that other agencies such as schools and Police and Citizens Youth clubs could be involved, which may influence the areas of government that could be approached.

The supported housing component of the ICYAR project was based on a housing first model, so the first priority with brokerage was to stabilise accommodation, and then to address other needs such as physical and mental health, and drug and alcohol issues. Case management was always client-centred, but individual organisations negotiated with clients to ensure that brokerage expenditure was consistent with these priorities.

Brokerage benefits young people both directly and by improving the work of services. Being able to provide bond assistance and purchase new furniture and household items quickly enables young people to move in to their homes faster and has enabled staff to spend more time providing structured support to ensure young

people make a successful transition to housing. Services also reported that brokerage enabled the process of stabilising and moving forward to happen more quickly, and that having better quality furnishings and more reliable whitegoods contributed to more sustainable outcomes for clients. Overall, this meant that services were able to support an increasing number of young people.

Brokerage can also streamline case coordination. If the young person's first service provider cannot provide everything they need, the service provider can access services offered by another agency through brokerage.

Brokerage also contributes to the strength and cohesiveness of the partnership because it provides an incentive for organisations to become involved. Brokerage is beneficial to organisations because it is not limited by the set criteria of other government funding programs regarding, for example, client age, time limited access to services, identified issues to be addressed.

The brokerage program has also maintained a central data base on the young people who access brokerage. This enables ICYAR to track these young people over time and monitor outcomes.

Some organisations actively participate in ICYAR but require only very small amounts of brokerage. This indicates that the benefits of collaborating through ICYAR are broader than only the access to brokerage funds.

### 2.2.3 Coordinated case management

ICYAR does not provide case management directly; rather, it strengthens the quality of case management provided by partner organisations.

When working with young people, one agency assumes the lead role and coordinates the other services involved. This could involve, for example, a service that provides case management coordination with other services providing legal, health, and educational services. The strong relationships that have been formed between ICYAR services assist coordinated case management to work well and allow young people choices and options.

Information sharing between services also means that at times agencies that are not the lead for an individual client may be able to opportunistically intervene with that client. This can happen when clients disengage or are difficult to contact and is the result of a commitment from partner services to work with clients across a range of settings.

## 2.2.4 Long term supported housing

In 2010, 10 supported housing packages for high needs young people were funded under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan and NSW Homelessness Action Plan. These packages were provided in partnership with St George Community Housing and tenanted by the most vulnerable young people in the area who have experienced homelessness along with a number of other health and social issues.

St George Community Housing provides the tenancy management, which includes provision of support and advocacy for clients. St George Community Housing recognises that these young tenants may not initially have all of the knowledge and skills to maintain a tenancy, and therefore works with them to ensure they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as a tenant. They also work to develop a positive relationship of trust so that there is a good basis to deal with any tenancy issues that arise. An ICYAR partner agency provides case management to each client while other partners generally provide specialist assistance such as legal or disability support. This partnership is crucial in assisting young people to maintain long term tenancies, and there is a high level of communication between the organisations involved, particularly if the young person's behaviour is an identified risk to the tenancy.

Additional properties were sourced through Metro Community Housing for the project and were specifically targeted to young Aboriginal people.

OC Committee member organisations nominate young people for vacancies in these properties, and the OC Committee bases decisions on the current vulnerability of applicants so that those in the most need gain access to properties (Appendix B 6.4). The brokerage provided

for young people in these properties enables intensive support to be provided to establish stability.

Young people moving to these properties are considered permanently housed. The properties have a low turnover and ICYAR agencies provide ongoing support. A small number of clients have subsequently moved to independent accommodation or into a general tenancy arrangement where they are not required to have support to continue living in their property.

Many clients will continue to need support into the future, when they are no longer eligible to access youth services. In order to address this issue, agencies that work with an adult population are also key to the ICYAR service model and were key to the ICYAR project. Examples include New Horizons and Neami, organisations that provide adult mental health support services.

Interviewees for this project stated that having long-term housing had a very positive effect on clients who need intensive support. They noted that many of these clients could not sustain tenancies without intensive support and would likely be in the corrective services system or the health system if they were not housed through ICYAR. They noted that while the brokerage allocated to these young people was high, the cost should be viewed in this context, and that having ongoing ICYAR housing and support was a highly effective approach to assisting them. In addition, the majority did not use the full funds available.

## 2.2.5 Sector development initiatives

ICYAR partner agencies established a number of new projects that develop the youth sector and its ability to respond to the needs of young people at risk.

These projects include:

- Clinics for young people outside the school system to access the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. While there is a national school-based vaccination program for HPV, many vulnerable young people have not had access to this;

- The development of a responsive website that functions on both desktop and mobile devices as a directory of services. This website includes, for example, maps and phone numbers to assist young people to easily find accommodation, health and other services. This project recognises that many young people already use mobile devices as a key source of information;
- A range of resources, which all the agencies can access, have been purchased. These include, for example, car seats for babies which agencies can use when transporting young parents;
- Facilities Tours run twice a year to offer orientation training for new staff of all the agencies. These tours were an investment of time and resources into engaging staff. Up to 22 workers from ICYAR services visited 10 services in a day. These tours enabled new staff to the concept of working together and provided information about other agencies. Orientation DVDs featuring an overview of partner agencies were produced and shown to staff as an orientation tool and to clients as an engagement strategy.



## 3. Replicating the Inner City Youth at Risk model

In this section we have summarised the views of ICYAR stakeholders to provide an overview of steps to take in replicating the model elsewhere.

### 3.1 Essential elements

- Ensure sufficient time for planning and engagement prior to commencing any activity: allow up to 6 months *before* commencing.
- Conduct service mapping to identify what is currently provided and any gaps or duplication in services for young people at risk.
- Establish a Steering Committee with key decision makers from relevant government and non-government agencies.
- Employ a coordinator who has a broad range of skills in youth services, case management, health and/or homelessness, and well developed negotiation skills.
- Establish an OC Committee consisting of key decision makers from organisations that work with the target group. Ensure the committee includes specialist youth services, specialist homelessness services, early intervention services, housing providers, and health services. These services will review and jointly approve applications from partners for brokerage funds.
- Led by the coordinator, both committees should establish terms of reference, brokerage procedures and outreach sweep protocols.
- Ensure representation from agencies with strengths in case management.
- Ensure representation from agencies of sufficient size to change staffing FTE on a temporary basis as needed.
- Develop service memorandum of understanding, protocols for young peoples' access to services, confidentiality and consent policies, and joint case management protocols.
- Include adequate brokerage funds as part of the service model. This funding allows for rapid responses to client needs and provide an incentive for agencies to become involved in the partnership.
- Ensure brokerage guidelines are flexible and transparent, and allow for timely release of funds.
- Maintain data on brokerage expenditure by category, outcomes achieved, and the demographics of young people accessing the program. Disseminate information to all project partners and key stakeholders to inform future service delivery.

### 3.2 Key principles

- Utilise the existing service network rather than establishing and building a new service.
- The coordinator should work from an independent agency who does not benefit directly from access to brokerage funds.
- Brokerage funds can be used flexibly to purchase a broad range of services and to extend support, and should not be used to set up new housing or support worker positions.
- Ensure the brokerage guidelines allow for flexibility and immediate availability of funds.
- Decision making needs to be joint with all partner agencies involved.

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### 3.3 The service environment

The ICYAR model is premised on having some diversity of services offering different types of assistance to ensure a range of expertise. ICYAR's local area has a high level of services including: case management, alternate education programs, driving programs, young parents programs, crisis accommodation, the medically supervised injecting centre, a youth legal service, welfare and drop in services, adult care coordination services, juvenile justice, and a service for young people of diverse genders, sexualities, and sexes. While other localities do not have the same number and diversity of services found in inner Sydney, this does not necessarily mean that the model could not be adapted. In areas where there are much smaller numbers of formal services, for example in rural or regional areas, there may be other strengths such as a very high level of willingness to work together, and draw together skills from within services and the local community more broadly. One ICYAR participant suggested that the lack of legal services for young people in some areas would be challenging as this is a vital service for the target group. Another participant thought that the ICYAR model could potentially be even more useful where services were more spread out than where they were in close proximity, and that where fewer services were available, there would be a greater need to rely on each other. There would, however, be more challenges for clients accessing services across greater distances.

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### 3.4 Project Coordinator position

Interviewees stated that the coordinator position was vital to the operation of ICYAR, and that the activities undertaken by ICYAR would not happen without the work of the coordinator. During the life of the ICYAR project, the coordinator's role was a busy full-time position. It may be that in a small community, a project assisting fewer young people and involving fewer organisations could operate with a part-time coordinator, at least initially.

Participants emphasised that the coordinator position needs to be from a neutral agency, external to the participating services. This enables the Coordinator to negotiate between

participating services in order to help them form positive working relationships so that no individual organisation dominates or benefits more from collaboration but the focus remains on ensuring the best outcomes for young people.

The person selected for the position needs to have skills and expertise to coordinate and to get along well with others, and to negotiate relationships and outcomes for the project.

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### 3.5 Establishing committees and partnerships

Interviewees stressed that having all the key services represented on the Steering Committee and OC Committee was important. This means being clear about the roles of each committee and selecting appropriately; not excluding less skilled organisations; and ensuring each organisation selects the right representative to attend. Representatives need to have sufficient authority to represent the organisation, which often means members need to be at management level.

However, in the early phases of a project, smaller committees may be more effective than those that engage all key services. For example, when the ICYAR project commenced, housing providers were not represented on the committees, and this changed over time, as the project developed.

The ICYAR project's experience in establishing committees and partnerships was that it took time for each organisation to move beyond what some participants referred to as 'territory' [Int\_8] or 'ownership of clients' [Int\_7]. The first step had been to identify the joint work being done by organisations and consider how they could enhance that work. One interviewee recounted how, in an early OC Committee meeting, it became apparent that some young people were accessing multiple agencies without their knowledge, and that this realisation had been key in organisations understanding how important it was for them to collaborate.

Interviewees said that ICYAR worked well because of a shared understanding between the partners that they are all trying to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. The extra time and work that services contribute

is offset by the benefits to their clients by being involved. Interviewees said that if services viewed ICYAR as a way to access funds for their services, the model would not work. Partners need to come together with the agreement that funds are provided to support young people's needs. The work of establishing the model therefore involves a focus on relationship building and trust. Interviewees mentioned that this process was assisted by, for example, socialising at Christmas or meeting for a coffee to build good relationships. This made it easier to discuss difficult issues. Interviewees also noted that the high level of commitment was evident from the fact that committee members prioritise the meetings and attend consistently.

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### **3.6 Operational, financial and sustainability issues of the service model**

ICYAR addresses issues of lack of coordination in services for vulnerable young people, including services being 'siloesd' or unaware of the work of other agencies; young people being passed between services with no service taking responsibility, having to retell their story, not developing trusting relationships,

and overall, receiving inadequate help. Its structure addresses issues that sometimes cause poor outcomes in projects involving joint working arrangements (Section 8.5), such as poor communication and information sharing, ambiguity of role demarcation and responsibility, lack of resources, failure to deal with staff turnover and training needs, problems with participation, and issues relating to program fidelity and compliance. While the model may need adapting in other communities, the key features are sound and provide a strong basis for developing similar projects.

The primary challenge facing a service model of this type is the uncertainty of ongoing funding for the project and for the services involved. The ICYAR project, including the coordinator position, was funded through a series of short-term arrangements, the shortest of which was three months. Because it does not provide services or case-management directly, the service model does not always fit funding priorities. The ICYAR project benefited from a highly committed and skilled coordinator, but insecure funding does make it more difficult in general to attract and retain quality staff. Equally, the funding for individual services is also often precarious.

## 4. Client journeys and outcomes

ICYAR provides a means for agencies to adapt their response so that young people are assisted to access the services they need in a coordinated way with 'no wrong door'. ICYAR members report that this wrap-around availability of services enabled young people with very high support needs to gain very positive outcomes.

In particular, from 2010-2012, the retention rate in ICYAR housing was 80% (Eastman and valentine, 2012: 29). ICYAR participants who were interviewed noted that this comprised a major achievement because these young people had not had stable accommodation for a significant period, if at all, and many had alcohol and other drug use and/or mental health problems. In addition, because of their young age, many had not previously managed their own tenancies. ICYAR has also housed other young people through community housing or private rental properties. ICYAR brokerage has assisted young people to access and remain in housing.

Young people also received brokerage assistance in other key areas that support positive outcomes, including education and vocational activities, health needs, baby needs, and legal support (Eastman and valentine, 2012). Some young people who came to inner city Sydney from other areas were assisted to return home.

Partner agencies interviewed for this report commented on the positive impact that ICYAR has had on client journeys and outcomes:

... [in the past] we were finding that a lot of *clients were going from service to service to meet their needs but no one was communicating about it. So given we can talk about the clients the committee has meant that we get the service that's most suited to*

*them and make sure we're not doubling up ... It's been amazing to see the positive effect that having long-term housing can have on a client ... [Int\_9]*

*In the past when organisations weren't working well together, if a young person went to an organisation and they didn't like it or didn't like the workers and left that service there wasn't really any opportunity for that organisation to refer them to another service. Whereas now with all those orgs around the table through ICYAR and with young people giving consent to share information between those orgs we are able to ensure that young people will receive support in one form or another rather than being sent away or banned. [Int\_3]*

*Over the 8 years that ICYAR had operated we've had young people resolve crises, move into houses, in TAFE, a supported housing client has applied for funds to go to university next year to study welfare which is wonderful considering where that client was 5 years ago. The project has brought all of these organisations together and is actively making them work together I think egos and agendas are something we leave out of the room when we meet ... [Int\_3]*

### 4.1.1 Case Studies

Two illustrative case studies were provided by the ICYAR project providing examples of the work made possible by the ICYAR service model.

#### Alice

Alice arrived in Sydney from rural NSW with her mother. Alice has been homeless for some years and has long history of sexual exploitation, mental health issues, family breakdown, experiences of extreme physical violence from

others, and alcohol and poly drug misuse. She had fallen through the gaps of many services due to her ongoing issues, and Alice's engagement with services was not sustained for long periods of time.

Alice became known to the ICYAR committee when she engaged off and on with some of the services, including The Crossing. She then engaged in long-term intensive case management and was nominated for an ICYAR supported housing property through St George Community Housing as well as other wrap-around services from the committee which included:

- Drug and Alcohol assistance from Kirketon Road Centre & the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre
- Clothing and drop-in at the youth space at Wayside Chapel
- Referral for immediate furniture and white goods from Oasis, the Salvation Army
- Legal Support from Shopfront Legal Services
- Health screening through the Kirketon Road Centre
- Funding from ICYAR for housing set-up (2 weeks rent, bond and furniture), medical needs, groceries, extended support from Case Workers, clothing, and TAFE enrolment fees and materials.

The collaboration of ICYAR partner agencies led to improved support for Alice through the sharing of information and coordination of assistance across agencies that had specific expertise. Direct assistance was also provided by a range of local services who were available to assist her while her Case Manager was on leave.

### **Sarah**

Sarah left home at 13 years due to abuse and domestic violence. She disengaged from mainstream school and presented at an ICYAR partner agency after a period of rough sleeping and stays in refuges. She had two pregnancies and births (the second when she was engaged with ICYAR) and both children were removed from her care. Sarah had a history of alcohol abuse, physical health problems, involvement with the legal system, unaddressed mental health issues, difficulties

with anger management, violent relationships, and transient and unsuccessful tenancies. Sarah was identified as a client having high and complex needs and received coordinated case management through ICYAR at the age of 20. Services provided included:

- referral to the Shopfront Legal Service
- a tenancy in an ICYAR Supported Housing property and intensive wrap-around case management support provided by Oasis Youth Support Network
- brokerage to provide new furniture and white goods for the unit
- brokerage to purchase items required to prepare for her second child
- referral to the Oasis Young Parents Program to assist with building parenting skills with the goal of having her first child restored and keeping her second child in her care.

Sarah gained some stability once she was in her new accommodation, but after the removal of her second child, her alcohol abuse increased, and her mental health declined. She spent a short period in custody, struggled with reintegration into the community and was admitted to hospital, requiring additional support from her case manager. While in hospital, ICYAR brokerage protected her tenancy from being placed at risk due to rental arrears incurred when she was unable to report to Centrelink.

Sarah received a suspended sentence relating to previous offences, and subsequently began to make some positive changes in her life. She completed a number of short courses, obtained supported employment in landscape and maintenance and has been working consistently for over 12 months. She has maintained regular contact with her children and continues to work towards her goal of having more contact. Sarah has also been engaging with her counsellor weekly for almost a year. During this time, in addition to housing and case management, ICYAR assisted with:

- brokerage to purchase travel tickets to attend training and on occasion to transport Sarah interstate to see her children and maintain contact arrangements
- addressing physical health concerns at Kirketon Road Centre

- Driving 4 Employment program managed by Oasis (P1 licence).

All these achievements were unimaginable for Sarah prior to living in ICYAR housing, with her main goal at the time being to simply stay out of jail. ICYAR supported housing has provided Sarah with a stable platform to finally

begin to address her needs. The long term and consistent support from services has meant that Sarah has formed therapeutic and trusting relationships with workers, which has significantly contributed to her progress. The collaboration and relationship between agencies that was developed through the OCC Meetings have enabled this support.



## 5. Appendix A: ICYAR Partnership Agencies and Terms of Reference

### Membership

Salvation Army, Oasis Youth Support Network  
South Eastern Sydney Local Health District  
Kirketon Road Centre  
Mission Australia, The Crossing  
Reconnect  
Salvation Army Street Outreach Service  
The Wayside Chapel  
The Come In Centre  
Juanita Neilson Centre Youth Program  
Medically Supervised Injecting Centre  
Juvenile Justice  
Community Services  
Kings Cross Adolescent Unit  
St Vincent's Hospital Program for Early Intervention and Prevention of Disability  
Sex Workers Outreach Project  
Neami  
Centacare, Alive Program  
New Horizons  
Shopfront Youth Legal Service  
Twenty10  
Yfoundations  
NSW Police, Kings Cross Local Area Command  
St George Community Housing  
City of Sydney

### Steering Committee terms of reference (written 2009)

#### Role

A Steering Committee has been established to oversee a 3-year project focusing on improving the planning and coordination of services across the government and non- government sectors for young people with complex needs in Kings Cross and surrounding areas. The role of the Steering Committee is to provide high-level coordination and strategic support to the Inner City Youth At Risk project and to oversee the review process of the project.

#### Principal Functions

The Inner City Youth At Risk Steering Committee will:

1. Meet monthly for 1½ hours over a 3 year period;
2. A quorum of five members is required for a meeting to take place;
3. Develop an implementation plan in response to the recommendations contained in the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan* (related to the Inner City Youth At Risk Project);
4. Provide strategic and, where appropriate, operational support to the Inner City Youth At Risk Project Coordinator;
5. Monitor project progress against the performance indicators and analyse and report on outcomes and the achievement of targets to South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health (SESIH), NSW Health and the Regional Homelessness Committee;
6. Regularly review and assist in identifying areas for reform in relation to the delivery of youth services in the Inner City;



7. Establish connections and forge linkages to other government, non-government, committee processes and initiatives relating to young people at risk or in crisis to complement the initiatives and reforms;
8. Oversee the review of initiatives and outcomes from the Inner City Youth At Risk Project, including but not limited to, the Brokerage Fund, Joint Outreach Sweeps and Support Housing;

### Membership

In March 2004 a Kings Cross Youth At Risk Project Steering Committee was established. From October 2009 this committee will be known as the Inner City Youth At Risk Steering Committee.

The committee includes representatives from the following government and non- government agencies:

- Inner City Youth At Risk Project Coordinator
- SESIH Area Youth Health Coordinator
- Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- Housing NSW
- Salvation Army Oasis Youth Support Network
- City of Sydney Council
- NSW Police, Kings Cross
- Kirketon Road Centre
- Youth Accommodation Association
- Department of Juvenile Justice

The position of chair will be performed by the Area Youth Health Coordinator (SESIH).

Each agency is required to nominate a key and an alternative agency representative to the committee. Should an agencies key representative be unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the alternative representative should attend in their absence.

### Method of Evaluation

Steering Committee members will be asked to complete an evaluation of the meetings annually.

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## Outreach Coordination Committee terms of reference (written 2009)

### Role

An Outreach Coordination Committee has been established to actively participate in the planning and coordination of government and non-government services for young people with complex needs in Kings Cross and surrounding areas. The Outreach Coordination Committee will provide case managed and coordinated responses to young people at risk and in crisis in Kings Cross and surrounding areas.

The project and the committee will support two major initiatives, a Brokerage Fund to assist individual at risk young people, and resources to support regular, late night Joint Outreach Sweeps.

### Principal Functions

The Outreach Coordination Committee will:

1. Meet monthly for 1½ hours for the duration of the project;
2. Provide timely approval of case managed brokerage applications distributed by email;
3. Provide operational support to the Project Coordinator;
4. Participate in Outreach Sweeps where required;
5. Regularly review and assist in identifying areas for further reform in Kings Cross and surrounding areas;
6. Establish connections and forge linkages to other government and non-government, committee processes and initiatives relating to young people at risk or in crisis to complement the projects initiatives and reforms;
7. Participate in the review of initiatives and outcomes of the Inner City Youth At Risk Project;
8. Identify young people (10 per annum) and approve applications related to social housing tenancies and support.

## Membership

In March 2005 a Kings Cross Outreach Coordination Committee was established. From October 2009 this committee will be known as the Inner City Youth At Risk Outreach Coordination Committee. The committee includes representatives from the following government and non-government outreach services.

- Oasis Youth Support Network – Salvation Army;
- Kirketon Road Centre – South East Sydney Illawarra Area Health Service;
- The Crossing – Mission Australia;
- Rough Edges – St John’s Church;
- Salvation Army Street Outreach Service;
- The Wayside Chapel;
- The Come In Centre – St Francis Social Services;

- Juanita Neilson Centre Youth Program – City of Sydney Council;
- Medically Supervised Injecting Centre – Uniting Care;
- Kings Cross Adolescent Unit – Community Services;
- Program for Early Intervention and Prevention of Disability – St Vincent’s Hospital;
- Sex Workers Outreach Project – Aids Council of NSW
- NEAMI

Membership may be reviewed by the Outreach Coordination Committee. New membership is to be endorsed by the project Steering Committee.

## Method of Evaluation

Outreach Coordination Committee members will be asked to complete an evaluation of the meetings annually.

## 6. Appendix B: Project documentation

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### 6.1 Project Coordinator position description

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**Position Title:** Project Coordinator

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**Position Summary:**

The key responsibilities of the Project Coordinator are to implement the Inner City Youth At Risk Project including:

- facilitate collaboration between youth service providers and government agencies
  - coordinate an integrated service network that provides a case management response for low, moderate and high needs young people in the Inner City
  - collect and report on data related to the project
  - coordinate and participate in quarterly outreach sweeps
- 

**Essential Criteria:**

- Relevant tertiary qualifications/relevant experience
  - Proven experience in a project officer/management role
  - Experience in service development and service planning
  - Ability to work within tight time frames and budget constraints
  - Sound leadership, analytical and problem solving skills
  - Excellent oral communication skills including demonstrated interpersonal, negotiation and conflict resolution skills.
  - High level written communication skills with proven experience in producing detailed reports and briefs
  - Computer literacy in Microsoft Office
  - Sound knowledge of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
  - Knowledge and understanding of ethical practice, EEO, the charter of principles for a culturally diverse society, ethnic affairs priorities statement and OHS policies, practices and standards.
- 

**Key Performance Areas / Duties:**

- Create linkages and improve coordination between existing youth service providers to assist clients at risk or in crisis in the broader Kings Cross area.
- Negotiate and problem solve with key stakeholders involved in the project
- Facilitate meetings and identify and coordinate joint actions arising from:
  - the Inner City Youth At Risk Outreach Coordination Committee
  - the Inner City Youth At Risk Steering Committee

- Report monthly on project outcomes to the Outreach Coordination Committee and the Steering Committee.
- Prepare quarterly project reports in accordance with NSW Homelessness Action Plan
- Develop and implement the Brokerage Fund consistent with the guidelines and criteria established by the Inner City Youth At Risk Steering Committee.
- Coordinate the provision of low/moderate support packages to 110 young people at risk per annum
- Coordinate the provision of supported accommodation packages to 10 high needs young people at risk per annum.
- Coordinate and participate in regular Joint Outreach Sweeps.
- Coordinate and implement changes to the project in accordance with the project outline
- Participate in professional supervision and participate in the SESIH performance management program, as required

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**Critical Aspects / Job Demands Summary (OH&S):**

Demonstrate a commitment to both legislative and organisational requirements for ensuring a safe, healthy and hazard free work environment, particularly in regard to:

- safety and security issues (eg. handling aggression, whereabouts procedures)
- driver and vehicle safety (eg. licence checks, monthly vehicle checks, driver safety)
- manual handling (eg. moving stores and equipment, loading vehicles, keyboard operation)
- infection control (eg. needle stick, contaminated waste, universal precautions)
- incident and near miss reporting
- hazard management (identification, assessment, control)
- smoke free workplace policy.

## 6.2 Sweeps data collection form

### Inner City Youth At Risk - Data Collection Tool

Sector 1:       Sector 2:       Sector 3:       Sector 4:

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sex:** Male:       Female:       Transgender:

**DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Aboriginal:** Yes:  No:  **Cultural Background:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you currently homeless?** Yes:  No:

**Suburb of current/last residential address?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If no longer in stable accommodation, when did you leave?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why did you leave?** Family Breakdown  Financial Difficulty  Overcrowding   
Family Violence  Other

**What suburb are you staying in tonight?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Type of accommodation tonight?

Boarding House  Parents Place  Rental House/Flat  Shelter/Refuge

Street based  Squat  Friends House  Other

Additional Info: Friends/Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Nights in Kings Cross in previous week?

Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday

Friday  Previous Saturday  Sunday  All

**Why do you come to Kings Cross?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What agencies do you access?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you completed this survey before?** Yes  No

#### What support was offered?

Brokerage  Referral Card  Direct Referral  None

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## 6.3 Brokerage protocols

### 1. Brokerage – definition

Brokerage funding enables services to be purchased or creative initiatives developed to address identified service gaps at the local level, to help meet the needs of the target group.

Brokerage describes the way a system or a particular service or program facilitates a young person's access to the pathways appropriate to their needs.

Brokerage is designed to provide access to sustainable solutions to a problem, using a strategic approach and has the following long-term objectives:

- Engaging existing services and funding in a coordinated, holistic way to support young people 'at risk' in the Kings Cross area.
- Engaging key players both government and non-government in reviewing, evaluating and monitoring the project.
- Providing data to inform policy development for the Inner City area.

Funds are available for:

1. Emergency brokerage
2. Case managed brokerage
3. Project brokerage

### 2. 'At Risk' Young People

'At risk' young people can be viewed as those who are vulnerable to, and affected by, a range of factors likely to impede their successful transition to a fulfilling adult life.

The target group of young people should be considered vulnerable to one or more risk factors as outlined in the criteria:

### 3. Criteria

#### Essential Criteria

- a. Target age of 12-25 years of age, with a focus on the 18-25 year age range
- b. The client must be referred to or access at least one agency participating in the Outreach Coordination Committee (OCC)
- c. The client is not having needs addressed by existing support systems

- d. The client requires specialised intensive support
- e. The client must be connected to the Kings Cross or immediate area and at risk of one or more of the following:
  - Are involved or at risk of being involved in substance abuse
  - Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
  - Are involved or at risk of being involved in underage and/or problematic sex work
  - Are leaving care or a Juvenile Justice setting
  - Are experiencing mental health issues or physical health issues

#### Other Criteria

- a. Family and Relationship Difficulties
- b. Employment or Educational Difficulties
- c. Involvement with Juvenile Justice, Probation and Parole &/or Community Services
- d. Are parents or soon to be parents

### 4. Aims of the Inner City Youth at Risk Project

- a. To improve access to housing for young people at risk
- b. To improve health and resilience for young people at risk (including reduced drug and alcohol misuse)
- c. To improve educational and employment opportunities for young people at risk
- d. To improve local coordination and infrastructure
- e. To improve agency coordination and information sharing
- f. To provide specialised intensive support

### 5. The use of brokerage funds

The Inner City Youth At Risk project offers brokerage within the agreed guidelines:

- a. Brokerage is to be seen as a tool in the provision of intensive support, whereby the brokerage funds will be readily available to the client to purchase services, material and resources that will help in their empowerment.
- b. No young person is to be given money directly; the service provider must purchase resources required.

- c. Brokerage should not be used to purchase resources readily available through existing avenues.
- d. The utilisation of brokerage will be tailored to address the particular needs of the individual being considered.
- e. Accommodation placement accessed via brokerage should be assessed based on the individual client's age, exposure and experience. And only to be used if there is no other option available.
- f. Brokerage used for emergency accommodation is only a short-term option until the client is accepted into supported or private rental accommodation. The ongoing affordability of the accommodation is to be considered.
- g. Brokerage used for groceries is not to include alcohol or cigarettes. Only vouchers will be provided.
- h. Access to brokerage is limited to organisations who participate in the Outreach Coordination Committee and for items or interventions not covered by existing services at this time.

## General Working Principles

### 6. Confidentiality

- a. In order to promote and protect the privacy of individual clients, this brokerage program requires high standards of confidentiality. The referral agency will explain to the client the laws of confidentiality. The term confidentiality pertains to the safeguarding of information relating to client matters within the bounds of the relationship between worker and client. However their case may be discussed with the Outreach Coordination Committee to assist with the application approval process.
- b. The client needs to complete the 'privacy and consent' form.
- c. Client and organisational information will not be made available to unauthorised persons during or following any person's association with the brokerage program. Exceptions to this rule are strictly limited and apply only to legal, safety matters &/or duty of care.
- d. For the purpose of evaluation de-identified client and support agency information may be used where ethics approval has been provided.

- e. Information shared with partner agencies should be relevant to assist with the brokerage application process.

### 7. Documentation

- a. Completed Brokerage applications are to be emailed/faxed to the Project Coordinator as soon as the activity has been completed.
- b. The Inner City Youth At Risk database is to be updated frequently and reviewed monthly by the Project Coordinator.
- c. All invoices for agency reimbursement must be forwarded to the Project Coordinator at the end of each month. Invoices forwarded late may not be honoured by the Inner City Youth At Risk Project.

### 8. Interagency Contact

- a. Intensive collaboration and integration with existing services and resources is an important aim of the Inner City Youth At Risk Project. There must be a clear capacity to work in a collaborative manner in the best interests of the young person.
- b. Referrals from other agencies may be facilitated through the Outreach Coordination Committee meetings.

### 9. Transparency

A transparency of areas of responsibility should always exist between the agencies involved. Committee meetings and regular interchange will be helpful to ensure this. The young person as well as the referring service has to be informed about the assessment procedure.

The brokerage guidelines in this document have been developed to ensure that the brokerage funding is equitable, transparent and responsive to meeting the needs of young people 'at risk'.

## Assessment Procedure

### 10. Entry/Screening

- a. Data Collection Information will commence once a referral is made to the brokerage program. The client must sign the privacy and consent form at this point.
- b. When referrals come through individual services, the case manager/counsellor of that service will take on the responsibility of monitoring the brokerage activities and reporting back to the committee.



- c. At the time of referral, it is important to obtain as much information as possible regarding the client. Contact details of both the client and referring agency need to be obtained.
- d. Referrals to the brokerage program will be tabled for approval at the monthly Outreach Coordination Committee meetings. Where there are time constraints and approval is needed before the monthly meetings the coordinator of the project will distribute the request to OCC member agencies for approval. When a minimum of 5 agencies agree to the proposed activity the lead agency can proceed.
- e. Brokerage requests over \$5000 or applications with a staffing component will need both OCC and steering committee approval.
- f. All applications that contain staff support hours will be provided in advance for OCC approval and steering committee sign off.
- g. Each referral to the brokerage program is to be recorded in the 'Program Referral' file as well as on the Inner City Youth At Risk database by the Project Coordinator.
- h. Each client is to be informed about the entry and screening process by the referring agency.
- i. Whether the application to the program is accepted or denied, a response will be made to the referring agency as to the outcome.
- j. Each person not accepted into the program is to be informed about alternative services, and wherever possible referred onto a service better suited to their needs. The young person will be entitled to be given specific reasons why their application has been turned down.

## 11. Emergency Brokerage Funds

The Kings Cross Youth At Risk report (2005) highlighted a need for an emergency brokerage fund for crisis intervention for young people 'at risk' in the Kings Cross area.

These could include:

- a. Transport
- b. Pathways to crisis accommodation
- c. Food, clothing and medication
- d. Other support crisis interventions.

## 11.1 Emergency brokerage funding guidelines

- a. These funds are only available to agencies that actively participate in the Outreach Coordination Committee.
- b. These funds can only be used to assist young people 'at risk' in the Kings Cross, or immediate area or young people linked into agencies participating in the OCC. Restricted to those aged between 12 and 25, with a focus on the 18-25 year age range.
- c. These funds will only be available if all other avenues of possible funding have been investigated without success. Proof of the steps undertaken to investigate other options will need to be provided.
- d. These funds must be used to ensure an immediate response to high needs 'at risk' youth with a positive outcome.
- e. These funds are limited to a total of \$500.00 per individual.
- f. These funds will only be available to individuals once, although the same individual may be eligible for funding through other forms of brokerage, such as case managed brokerage or supported housing funds.
- g. If the proposed activity exceeds the emergency brokerage limit on a weekend, the applying agency must contact the Project Coordinator for approval. The coordinator will then seek retrospective approval from the OCC the following working day. When the coordinator is unavailable please contact the alternate representative as discussed at the OCC for approval.

## 11.2 Process for accessing these funds

All applications administered are to be faxed/ scanned to the coordinator as soon as possible to ensure those 'service surfing' are identified immediately. Agencies with access to petty cash will forward a copy of the receipt to the coordinator for record keeping.

Those agencies without access to petty cash systems will contact the coordinator for a reimbursement of emergency funds spent.

## 12. Case Managed Brokerage Funding

The main aim of the case managed brokerage fund is to provide sustainable outcomes for young people 'at risk' in the Kings Cross and immediate areas. Ensuring the system, service or program facilitates a young person's access to pathways appropriate to their needs.

As each young person's needs are different the case managed brokerage program has been designed to cater for a range of interventions, some examples of this include support with educational and vocational needs; the provision of funds for involvement in positive activities or assistance with housing set up costs.

### 12.1 Case managed brokerage funding guidelines

- a. These funds are only available to agencies that actively participate in the Outreach Coordination Committee.
- b. These funds can only be used to assist young people 'at risk' in the Kings Cross, or immediate area or young people linked into agencies participating in the OCC. Restricted to those aged between 12 and 25, with a focus on the 18-25 year age range.
- c. These funds will only be available if all other avenues of possible funding have been investigated without success. Proof of the steps undertaken to investigate other options will need to be provided.
- d. These funds will only be available to an agency that is case managing the individual client and identifies as the young person's lead support agency.
- e. These funds are limited to \$5000.00 per individual and if additional monies are required the involved agency will need to seek OCC approval to extend support.
- f. These funds are limited to \$5000 per individual receiving case management. Funds are not subject to the \$5000 limit where the client has been identified as a high needs client accessing ICYAR supported social housing.
- g. Application requests exceeding \$5,000 will have to be approved by the Steering Committee after (in principle) approval by the OCC.
- h. Brokerage applications which include a staffing component will need to be approved by the Steering Committee.
- i. These funds will only be provided if the Outreach Coordination Committee and/or the Steering Committee agree the proposed expenditure has merit and will result in real outcomes for the recipient.
- j. These applications will be tabled and assessed once a month at the Outreach Coordination Committee meeting. Urgent requests will be assessed by the Project Coordinator and members of the Outreach Coordination Committee via email. When 5 agencies have approved the activity the lead agency can progress.

### 12.2 Process for accessing these funds

An application form and case management plan form will be provided and each document must be completed by the lead agency with the young person applying for brokerage.

These applications will be assessed by the committee on a monthly basis and if approved lead agencies are required to invoice ICYAR for brokerage to implement the planned activities.

Agencies who have taken on the responsibility of case managing the individual brokerage plan will be required to give timely updates on the progress of the plan and the outcomes achieved.

## 13. Project Brokerage Funding

Brokerage funding may be available for one or more organisations who wish to provide a project or program which addresses the needs of young people 'at risk' in Kings Cross. Examples of such projects may be joint agency recreational activities or group training that improves the capacity of organisations to service the target group.

A project proposal template will be provided and the applications will be tabled at the Outreach Coordination Committee meetings, if supported at this forum the proposal will then be tabled at the Steering Committee meeting for endorsement.

### **13.1 Project brokerage funding guidelines**

- a. These funds are only available to agencies participating in the Outreach Coordination Committee.
- b. These funds will only be available if all other avenues of possible funding have been investigated without success. Proof of the steps undertaken to investigate other options will need to be provided.
- c. These funds will only be made available if the proposed activities meet the aims of the Inner City Youth At Risk Project.
- d. These funds will only be made available after final approval from the Steering Committee.
- e. These funds are limited to innovative and new initiatives rather than extensions of existing projects/programs.

### **13.2 Process for accessing these funds**

These guidelines have been developed to ensure that the brokerage funding is equitable, transparent and responsive to meeting the needs of young people 'at risk'.

A project proposal template will be provided, when completed this should be submitted to the Outreach Coordination Committee. After approval from the Outreach Coordination Committee the proposal will be forwarded to the Steering Committee for approval. Following this approval the lead agency will be required to invoice ICYAR for the brokerage to administer the activities.

## 6.4 Entry assessment for Supported Housing Packages

Identified Risk	Category		Support Required: (List and please identify which agency you consider appropriate to provide this support)	Additional Comments
<b>Accommodation</b> Low: At Risk of Homelessness Mod: Homeless (less than 12 months) High: Long Term Homeless (more than 1 year)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Type of Homelessness</b> Low: Tertiary Mod: Secondary High: Primary		<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
<b>Physical Health</b> Low: Health issues – receiving GP support Mod: Health issues – no GP support High: Serious health issues – no GP – non-compliance	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Drug and Alcohol Issues</b> Low: Not daily use, not IDU Mod: Daily problematic/multi use High: IDU, poly drug user	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Mental Health Issues</b> Low: Mild condition Mod: Disabling condition High: Chronic or multiple conditions	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Risk of Self Harm</b> Low: No suicide plan or ideation Mod: Personal harm risk behaviours High: Suicide plan, suicidal behaviours	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Involvement with JJ or PP</b> Low: Known to police/No JJ or PP contact Mod: One or less occasions in JJC or prison High: Multiple incarcerations in JJ and/or prison (Further score of 5 if recently released)	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Legal issues</b> Low: Legal issues and fines – has legal representation Mod: Legal issues and fines - no legal representation High: Multiple legal issues with no representation	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			

<b>Income</b> Low: Has regular income Mod: Eligible for Centrelink benefits but breached or not receiving High: Not eligible for Centrelink benefits	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Education/Employment</b> Low: Recent/current involvement in education/employment Mod: No recent/current involvement in education/employment High: Not work/study ready	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Risk of Isolation/Risk of Safety</b> Low: Some social supports, able to identify some risks and access support Mod: Unable to identify risks to personal safety and socially isolated High: Social Isolation greatly affects mental health and personal safety	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Risk of Aggression</b> Low: Irritable, verbally aggressive Mod: Property damage High: Assaults other people	Y	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High		
	N			
<b>Score: Add total score for each category</b>		Lower risk =	Moderate risk =	High risk =

Low risk = 5

Moderate risk = 10

High risk = 15

This assessment was adapted from the Vulnerability Index Tool, developed in the USA to target the most vulnerable, and used in homeless programs around the world (Parsell & Davis, 2011). It was adapted for use with young people in consultation with project partners.

## 7. Appendix C: History and features of the project

The ICYAR Project was managed by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Child, Youth, Women and Families Health. Research on the ICYAR project outcomes between July 2010 and June 2012 (Eastman and Valentine, 2012: 1) found that the project was reaching its target group of highly disadvantaged young people, with the majority (82.9 per cent) of clients experiencing unstable accommodation, approximately one third having mental health issues, almost a third having drug and alcohol issues, and the majority having multiple presenting issues. A quarter of all clients identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background. Through ICYAR, 1,145 instances of brokerage were provided to 487 clients. This report found that partner agencies regarded the model as both effective and efficient.

The development of the ICYAR project began in 2001 when the NSW Government initiated a new funding program. The Community Solutions and Crime Prevention Fund was established as a result of the 1999 NSW Drug Summit. It was intended to assist community development and crime prevention initiatives in high need communities across NSW, including Kings Cross. Kings Cross and surrounding areas attract significant numbers of young people who are at risk of long term homelessness, problematic substance use, mental health, violence, problematic sex work, criminal activity, and self-harm. Four organisations working with young people in Kings Cross – the Department of Housing, the Department of Community Services (DOCS), South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health (SESIH) and the Salvation Army – who were all interested in developing initiatives under the program, were asked by the government to work together to develop a joint project.

Community Solutions funding was provided for two years from February 2003. It was intended to 'help older youth who have become involved in high risk Kings Cross lifestyle [focussing on] coordinating services, working with youth in crisis and ensuring service availability after hours' (Petersen, 2007).

DOCS established a Steering Committee to oversee the project and review youth services in the Kings Cross area. This committee consisted of representatives of SESIH, including its Area Youth Health Coordinator and the Kirketon Road Centre; DOCS (including the Kings Cross Adolescent Unit); the Department of Housing; the NSW Premier's Department; and Oasis Youth Support Network run by the Salvation Army.

This Committee commissioned an independent consultant, Edwina Deakin, to map and review services for young people at risk (12–25 years) operating in the broader Kings Cross area. The resulting 2004 report, *Improved Services for Young People in Kings Cross*, found that service provision was erratic and coordination between agencies in the area was poor. This resulted in a lack of sustainable outcomes for young people in situations of crisis. This, in turn, placed vulnerable young people at risk of long-term homelessness. The review found a need to increase collaboration and joint activities between existing services, and recommended the remaining Community Solutions funding be allocated over two years to support the Kings Cross Youth at Risk project. It also proposed a number of joint measures between existing providers including the establishment of a coordination committee, the introduction of outreach sweeps, and the establishment of a brokerage fund.

In response to the review, the existing Steering Committee formed the basis of the new Kings Cross Youth at Risk Project Steering Committee,



which in January 2005 recruited a Project Coordinator commencing with the following responsibilities:

- to establish the Kings Cross Outreach Coordination (OC) Committee;
- to coordinate regular joint outreach sweeps to determine and monitor the numbers and profiles of young people at risk in the Kings Cross area; and
- to establish and implement the brokerage program and monitor its outcomes and impacts.

Given that a key concern behind the establishment of the project was that multiple agencies were working in the area but not communicating well, an initial task for the new coordinator was to contact these agencies, inform them about the project and encourage them to meet and discuss their clients. This group became the OC Committee. As a result of these meetings, the OC Committee members realised the extent to which young people were 'service surfing', or using multiple services in an uncoordinated way, often without having their key needs met.

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## 7.1 Experiences of participating agencies

For this project, we asked participating agencies about their experiences of the project and what they viewed as its key benefits.

Stakeholders stated that there are a large number of agencies in the Kings Cross area that provide services to young people, but before the establishment of ICYAR, their work lacked coordination. By bringing these agencies together, ICYAR has enabled them to enhance their assistance.

Bringing services together to support the young person means that they can draw on each other's strengths. It was also found that ICYAR assisted them in reviewing their approaches and processes because they are usually constrained by what their service is funded to provide. ICYAR enabled them to look beyond barriers linked to territorial ideas of 'my client', servicing specific goals, and individual service philosophy in order to together focus on supporting young people to achieve their goals and live independently.

The agencies were able to seek assistance from each other and to develop different approaches not limited by any one service's brief.

Because of the brokerage component, there is flexibility to meet the needs of the clients. Therefore, the client does not need to fit the criteria of a particular service to access brokerage; instead, the brokerage addresses their issues. For example, if the client requires more than 6 hours case managed support per week, and an organisation's policy is to only offer a maximum of 6 hours per week, the organisation can apply to ICYAR for supplementary funds to provide the additional support. Another example is that, before ICYAR was established, when a young person found housing, there was no clear avenue to secure funds for the bond, furniture, and whitegoods. Support workers would spend lengthy periods of demoralising effort trying to secure furniture and (sometimes inadequate) second-hand items for the new home. The availability of brokerage has meant that young people are in crisis for a shorter time, and because services can assist more quickly, they are able to work with more young people. Services stated that with the assistance of ICYAR a lot of young people had been housed, received assistance to resolve crises, maintained their tenancies, and started their studies.

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## 7.2 Financial implications of participation for partners

While partners acknowledged that participating in ICYAR involved time and effort from each service, they assessed the benefits as outweighing the costs. Firstly, the availability of brokerage and the quick decision-making processes for most brokerage applications enabled them to provide assistance that they could not previously provide, or that had been time consuming and difficult to provide, as described above. Services reported that the quality of assistance had improved as a result of cooperation and communication between services. Where services worked together and assisted each other, they came up with better solutions for working with young people.

Further, services reported that receiving new furniture and receiving better support meant that



young people felt proud of their homes, looked after them better, and were more likely to remain housed.

When ICYAR started, a small amount of brokerage funding was available to each young person. ICYAR has worked to expand this funding. However, organisations have continued to be frugal with brokerage funds and have spread the brokerage money much further than was intended by the government. The brokerage costs of assisting young people are less per year than was anticipated by government and therefore more young people are assisted. A key reason that the funding can be spread further is because of the effect of a group of agencies cooperating to provide an expanded range of activities to assist young people.

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### 7.3 Strengths of the model and opportunities for improvement

Interviewees were unanimous in their view that ICYAR had proved extremely useful in assisting the provision of services to homeless and at risk young people in inner Sydney.

The most important components were identified as:

- the independent coordinator: having the coordinator positioned outside of the agencies involved means that this person is not influenced by the needs of any one agency, and is able to educate new ICYAR members about collaboration, manage negotiations and relationships, as well as be responsible for the administrative side of the project. If one organisation had ownership of the committee through the coordinator, other members would lose enthusiasm;
- partners who are committed to working together collaboratively and outside the scope of their usual operations to assist young people: this cooperation prevents service isolation and duplication; and increases agencies' flexibility and their ability to provide a service';
- brokerage: assists agencies to engage with and provide immediate and long-term help to young people that meets their needs; attracts and enables services to operate in partnership rather than in isolation; and provides for a flexible model of service delivery;

- client data: ICYAR has generated quality data on numbers, demographics and needs of young people in the inner city; what services are needed and provided; and where there were gaps in services;
- social housing properties and packages for high needs young people: provide safe long-term housing and stability that underpins their ability to achieve their goals.

These features combine together to form what one interviewee referred to as 'a gestalt' [Int\_1]: success from the combined work of all the agencies, which is greater than if the work had been performed separately by individual agencies. ICYAR is able to go beyond 'bandaid' [Int 5] solutions for homeless young people to assist them to get out of homelessness and look forward to a stable future for themselves and their children.

The most significant limitation that was identified was the uncertainty of funding for the project and for the services involved. The project, including the coordinator position, was funded through a series of short-term arrangements, the shortest of which has been three months. Furthermore, while the ICYAR project benefited from the stable presence of a highly committed and skilled coordinator, uncertain funding does make it more difficult in general to attract and retain quality staff.

The information provided by ICYAR participants indicates that features of this model do address issues of lack of coordination, which the literature review (see following section) identified as common in this area. These include services being 'siloes' or unaware of other agencies; and young people being passed between services with no service taking responsibility, having to retell their story, not developing trusting relationships, and, overall, receiving inadequate help. The evidence suggests ICYAR currently does address issues that sometimes cause poor outcomes in projects involving joint working arrangements such as poor communication and information sharing; ambiguity of role demarcation and responsibility; lack of resources; failure to deal with staff turnover and training needs; problems with participation; and issues relating to program fidelity and compliance.

## 8. Appendix D: Findings from the literature review

### 8.1 Young people at risk in the Kings Cross and inner city area

The Kings Cross area has been an epicentre of Australia's sex and illicit drug industries for many decades (Petersen and Janssen, 2007; Southgate et al., 2005; Van Beek, 2003). This area, and inner city Sydney more generally, attracts homeless, transient or disconnected people, including young people, from other parts of the city and elsewhere in NSW and Australia (Petersen and Janssen, 2007; Robinson, 2002). The sex and drug industries in Kings Cross provide young people with an opportunity for survival and engagement in a community outside the mainstream as well as excitement and entertainment (Robinson, 2002). Local police report issues including '... the presence of homeless and drug dependant persons, visible drug dealing on the streets, visible alcohol related crime particularly in the form of street assaults, street prostitution, youth related crime ...' (Reynolds et al., 2002: 2). Some researchers use the term 'street-involved youth' rather than 'homeless youth' to describe young people in this situation. These terms are used on the basis that some of these young people may have transitional lifestyles that involve fluctuation between living in refuges, or in the homes of friends and family, but may not involve long periods of living on the street (Connolly and Joly, 2012).

Sweeps conducted by ICYAR of young people at risk in the Kings Cross area (Eastman et al., 2013: 1) found that of those surveyed, 60 per cent were male and the average age was 20 years, although the Aboriginal people surveyed tended to be younger and were more likely to be female. Of those who gave information about income and employment, 29 per cent reported they were working, mainly in retail, hospitality,

sex work, or drug dealing. Sixty-three per cent received Centrelink payments. Forty-one per cent reported they were homeless or living in unstable accommodation, and one in three were staying in temporary accommodation or were unsure where they would stay that night.

Multiple health and welfare services operate in Kings Cross, and their presence assists young people to sort out legal, health or welfare issues (Petersen and Janssen, 2007; Robinson, 2002; Southgate et al., 2005). These services include accommodation, support, counselling and welfare services, many aimed at marginalised groups, including young people. Services used by young people include (Petersen and Janssen, 2007; Robinson, 2002):

- crisis accommodation;
- emergency department hospital services;
- services for people injecting drugs including needle exchange, injecting room, detoxification and rehabilitation programs;
- other health services including free general, sexual, and mental health care and assessment;
- specialised counselling services;
- street outreach;
- special needs education programs;
- other basic services such as food, showers, washing facilities, 'hang out' places, leisure activities, courses, internet use, job search facilities, and assistance at night; and
- other support services.

### 8.2 Needs of youths at risk

Research highlights a number of interacting risks that restrict young people's transition to independence and are associated with their becoming street-involved or homeless (Barker et al., 2012; Cameron, 2009; Rachlis et al.,

2009). These include family breakdown (conflict, neglect, and abuse), mental health issues, unemployment, poverty, alcohol and other drug issues, crime and other socio-economic disadvantages (Barker et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2008; National Youth Commission, 2008; Quilgars et al., 2008). While resolvable family conflict is the cause of family breakdown for some young people, violence and abuse are frequently the cause of homelessness (Quilgars et al., 2008). Indeed, family physical and sexual abuse and a dysfunctional past are highlighted as key experiences of homeless young people, resulting in trauma, grief, and the experience of being outside of mainstream society (Robinson, 2002, 2005, 2010). Young people who become homeless may have had their education disrupted, for example through being suspended or excluded from school (Quilgars et al., 2008). Particular population groups are also over-represented in the homeless population and are at increased risk of homelessness, including young people who have been in state care and protection, young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, new arrivals to Australia, and refugee young people (Barker et al., 2012; National Youth Commission, 2008).

Young people who become homeless or are street-involved often have high support needs, with coexisting emotional and behavioural issues, substance abuse, and physical health problems (Cauce et al., 1994; Quilgars et al., 2008). They are at high risk of developing negative health, social, and economic outcomes in addition to the problems that initially led to homelessness (Barker et al., 2012). These include susceptibility to substance abuse and dependence, mental health problems, medical problems, violence as perpetrators and victims, dealing drugs, stealing, exploitative and/or unsafe sex work, risky sexual behaviour, sexually transmitted infections, malnutrition, and disengagement from traditional social institutions and forms of support including family, school and community groups (Altena et al., 2010; Barker et al., 2012; Connolly and Joly, 2012; Quilgars et al., 2008). Homeless and street-involved young people experience high rates of trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a result of both events before leaving home and events on the streets, as well as depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues (Bender et al., 2013).

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### 8.3 Service responses

The younger a person is when they first become homeless, the more likely they are to become homeless for a longer period (Johnson and Chamberlain, 2008). While early intervention is important in preventing or reducing youth homelessness (Barker et al., 2012), young people who have been homeless for longer tend to return to conventional accommodation if they have long term support (Johnson and Chamberlain, 2008).

Because of the range of issues that young homeless people may face, service responses need to cover multiple areas, including shelter, food, and clothing; physical health needs; case management, counselling and other mental health services; and skill-building, vocational training and employment readiness (Thompson et al., 2006). While there is a lack of evidence about the effectiveness of specific interventions with homeless young people (Altena et al., 2010), research has identified that young people themselves value service providers that listen to them and are respectful, non-judgemental, empathic, encouraging, caring, and appropriate to their needs (Darbyshire et al., 2006; de Winter and Noom, 2003). Young people have negative views of services that are perceived to label or stigmatise them; that give only cursory attention, information or explanation; or where they lack personal control (Darbyshire et al., 2006).

While outreach activities are recognised as a first step in connecting young people who are on the street to interventions to help them avoid or minimise these risks, engaging and maintaining a quality relationship is central to providing effective services (Barker et al., 2012; Connolly and Joly, 2012; Farrow et al., 1992). Trusting and respectful relationships with service providers are highlighted in literature as being of particular importance to young homeless people whose past experiences may cause lack of trust in other people and services (Barker et al., 2012; Connolly and Joly, 2012). Receiving thorough information about services is also important (Connolly and Joly, 2012). In addition, young homeless or street-involved people also need services that respond to the high incidence of trauma in their lives (McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2012; Robinson, 2005).

There are multiple barriers to service utilisation by young homeless or street-involved people (Rachlis et al., 2009). Traditional services may be unable or unwilling to address their needs (Cauce et al., 1994), and young people may lack knowledge of services or be distrustful of services and authority figures, particularly if they have experienced abusive behaviour from adults (Thompson et al., 2006). Rigid or unrealistic service rules also create barriers, for example rules that impose rigid curfews regardless of the circumstance, such as an evening job, or prohibit young people from returning to their accommodation after smoking or drinking (Garrett et al., 2008; Keys et al., 2004). Similarly, staff attitudes that are experienced as disrespectful or ignorant, for example staff who do not understand the difficulty of keeping important documents while homeless or who view young homeless people as troublemakers, constitute barriers to service use (Darbyshire et al., 2006; Garrett et al., 2008). Exclusion or expulsion of young people from services as a result of a range of factors including mental illness or behaviour may prevent service use, as may services' location, waiting lists, operating hours, maximum capacity and age restrictions (Garrett et al., 2008; Ombudsman, 2004). For example, research with young homeless people in inner city Sydney in 2002 found widespread service exclusions on the basis of high substance abuse or mental illness (Robinson, 2002).

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#### **8.4 Service fragmentation: a barrier to service utilisation**

A key barrier to service utilisation by young people who are homeless is the fragmented or siloed nature of the community services sector, that is, where services are often offered by separate groups in an uncoordinated way (Barker et al., 2012; Cameron, 2009). A lack of coordination between services is also a barrier to addressing the concurrent, multiple, and complex needs of young homeless people (Australia's Homeless Youth, 2008; Barker et al., 2012). Young people may rotate between services (Robinson, 2002), or be passed between services, and miss out on receiving services because no agency takes responsibility (Cameron, 2009; Friedman, 1986). They may

experience frustration in being referred from service to service, trying to navigate the varying approaches of different providers, dealing with bureaucracy, and having to retell their story and fill in forms with multiple service providers (Cameron, 2009; Keys et al., 2004). While young people may initially find it difficult to tell their story to a stranger, they may establish the foundations of trust with the first interaction, but find it more difficult to retell their story (Darbyshire et al., 2006). Homeless young people may not persevere in the face of these obstacles (Cameron, 2009).

Where young people do use uncoordinated services, this results in piecemeal interventions where the total context of their situation may be overlooked (Kurtz et al., 1991). Addressing one area of need in isolation from other needs is not as effective as an intervention that addresses multiple overlapping needs (Barker et al., 2012). Fragmented service provision with referral from one service to another is an obstacle to young people developing trusting relationships with service providers, and feeling that they have been listened to, and that they matter (Darbyshire et al., 2006). Fragmented service provision is more likely to be associated with cursory rather than holistic assistance (Darbyshire et al., 2006).

Research about young homeless people in inner-city Sydney that was conducted prior to the establishment of ICYAR noted that:

The chaotic nature of young people's lives and their often multiple needs usually mean that young people circle between services, at times healthy, at other times seriously at risk. So for young people drawn to the inner-city, aside from the central mental and physical health, emotional and legal issues they face, trying to coordinate help and prioritise their needs often leads them to feel overwhelmed, particularly in a context in which further complications and problems arise daily (Robinson, 2002: 8).

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#### **8.5 The potential of multi-agency working to address fragmentation**

Multi-agency working is widely suggested as a way of addressing the problems of lack of coordination and obstacles to effective engagement and service provision, including



for young homeless people (Atkinson et al., 2007; Barker et al., 2012; Darbyshire et al., 2006; National Youth Commission, 2008; Phillips et al., 2011). Indeed, increasing cross-agency collaboration is central to both the Commonwealth and NSW government approaches to homelessness (Australian Government, 2008; NSW Government, 2009) although integration is not as coherently set out in Australian policies on young people (Bond, 2010). Multi-agency working may include 'joined up working, partnership working, multi, cross and inter-agency working, multi-professional and multi-disciplinary working, integration, networking, collaboration and coordination' (valentine and Hilferty, 2012: 3), and may range from minimal cooperative relationships through to active collaboration (Flatau et al., 2013; valentine and Hilferty, 2012).

Generally, managers feel integration is worthwhile. Although there are some costs involved in collaborating, it enables their service to have greater impact than it could on its own, and to better meet the needs of clients (Flatau et al., 2013). As well as offering benefits for service providers and systems, service integration also offers benefits to clients as it creates a more seamless system of care and support for meeting their needs (Flatau et al., 2013; Konrad, 1996).

It is argued that young people who become homeless or street-involved need integrated and intensive services because of their multiple and high needs (Cauce et al., 1994; Kurtz et al., 1991). Local cross-sectoral communities of services have been suggested to support collaboration and co-ordination at a community level (Australia's Homeless Youth, 2008). Similarly, it has been suggested that service providers need to develop connections with each other, and with institutions in the broader community, in order to create a web of support for young people who are homeless (Wilks et al., 2008).

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## 8.6 Models of integrated services for young people at risk of homelessness

Service models which offer place-based co-located services for young people are one approach to service integration that has been found to be successful: these include youth hubs or one-stop-shops, located in schools or other central locations, and offering a community access point for a range of programs, services, and activities for young people in a particular area (Bond, 2010; Deakin, 2013). In the United Kingdom and the United States, programs such as the UK's Extended Schools and Aiming High policies and the US full-service schools and Wraparound models have been developed to deliver more integrated services to young people (Beek and Gilmour, 2000). Some of these projects are specifically targeted to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. These include the Frontyard model of collocated services in Melbourne (Cameron, 2009; Konrad, 1996), and foyer models that provide housing and integrated services to young people (Bond, 2010). In the US, The Door (The Door, 2013) in New York was created to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing comprehensive, integrated services under one roof to young people, including to young 'homeless and runaway' people. In the UK, Centrepont (Centrepont Soho, 2013) is an example of a different model, where a single large organisation is able to provide and coordinate a range of different services from multiple sites to young people. Centrepont services include short to longer stay accommodation services, floating support, a dedicated health team, and education and training programs.

Internationally, there are, however, only a small number of examples of services for young homeless people where joint working is provided using a model that uses the same service model as ICYAR: where a number of different organisations collaborate in order to provide seamless services. London Youth Gateway (London Youth Gateway, 2013) is funded by London Councils to offer pan-London services to young people in housing need. It involves a partnership between four established providers of services to young people to

provide accommodation advice and support, homelessness prevention, education, training and employment, and emotional and physical wellbeing services.

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## 8.7 Barriers and facilitators to effective integrated service delivery

Despite the evidence of poor outcomes caused by fragmentation, and although some literature does identify benefits for service users (Kennedy et al., 2001), joint working is not necessarily a simple remedy for these problems, and the literature does not overall demonstrate that joint working results in better outcomes for people using services (Atkinson et al., 2007; valentine and Hilferty, 2012). Even where integration is increased, clients still report barriers to accessing services, suggesting that further work is required (Flatau et al., 2013).

Problems with joint working may include: poor communication and exchange of information within and between services; ambiguity of role demarcation and responsibility between services; failure to provide additional resources to support joint working; staff turnover and training; challenges in maintaining program fidelity; challenges in achieving a balance between mandated and voluntary participation; and compliance with new systems and structures (valentine and Hilferty, 2012). In particular, the costs and difficulties of joint working in terms of financial resources, time, expertise, role clarity, and scrutiny are frequently underestimated (Phillips et al., 2011; valentine and Hilferty, 2012). Even in service systems where joint working was judged to be effective, issues such as resource constraints and lack of understanding of each service's role continued to present challenges, and some young people still fell between the gaps in service responsibility (Quilgars et al., 2008). Further, integration projects are reportedly difficult to sustain and replicate (Corbett and Noyes, 2004). The use of 'market mechanisms' and fostering of competition within the public sector have also been argued to limit interagency working and collaboration (Kennedy et al., 2001).

Joint working is a means, not an end (Phillips et al., 2011). Some barriers are systemic or entrenched and could only be resolved by policy responses rather than changed working arrangements by services (valentine and Hilferty, 2012). Furthermore, problems in areas other than joint working, such as service quality and program design, impact on outcomes, and the imperative to resolve fragmentation may obscure the benefits of specialisation and professional autonomy and the complex tensions between service roles of surveillance (such as mandatory reporting) and support (valentine and Hilferty, 2012). While joint working is intended to assist with building trust, the blurring of surveillance and support roles may undermine trust.

There is some evidence available about factors that enable successful joint working (Phillips et al., 2011). In particular, the literature highlights the importance of strong leadership and a clear mission, with these factors carrying more weight than structural or administrative arrangements (Corbett and Noyes, 2004; Jones et al., 2007). Successful models have been found to have emerged as a result of local initiative and leadership (Corbett and Noyes, 2004).

Australian research lists trust and commitment; planning, monitoring and evaluation; allocation of responsibility; multi-level interventions; shared infrastructure; and adequate time and resources for change management as important factors in success of joint working (Jones et al., 2007). In addition there is evidence that good choice of both formal and informal integration strategies and tools to suit the particular context and goals are important (Phillips et al., 2011). Similarly, international research suggests enablers of joint working are committed staff, good working relationships, role demarcation, trust, communication, a clear demand, common understandings, shared aims and goals, expertise, the availability of funding, adequate staff and time, senior political support, a flexible and reflexive approach, and being developed at an operational rather than a policy level (Atkinson et al., 2007; Kennedy et al., 2001).



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## 8.8 Key findings and implications of the literature review

There are several implications for service delivery models from the literature review:

Findings relating to young people

- Young people who are homeless or street-involved often have high support needs, with coexisting emotional and behavioural issues, substance abuse, and physical health problems.
- Young people may be at risk as a result of interacting issues such as family breakdown (conflict, neglect, violence, and abuse), mental health issues, unemployment, poverty, alcohol and other drug issues, crime and other socio-economic disadvantage. In order to make an impact on their housing and other outcomes, services may need to address each of these issues.
- Young people will not receive adequate assistance if service provision is fragmented, inaccessible, or gives only cursory help.

Findings relating to service delivery:

- Although many service models aim for

integrated service delivery, internationally, there are few services for young homeless people that use the same service model as ICYAR.

- Multi-agency working is widely suggested as a way of addressing problems of lack of coordination and obstacles to effective engagement and service provision, but it is not necessarily a simple remedy for these problems and joint working does not always lead to better outcomes for people using services.
- In order to deliver services effectively, integrated service models need to address the factors that can cause problems with joint working, such as poor communication and information exchange, ambiguity of role demarcation and responsibility between services, failure to provide additional resources to support joint working, staff turnover and training issues, program fidelity challenges, and compliance

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