



Better Together Housing Check-in Greater Whitsunday Region

Meeting notes

Tuesday 14th June 2022, 3-5pm



Attendees: Dallas Seivers, Cr Pauline Townsend, Cr. Karen May, Cr. Fran Mann, Diana Roper, Tamara Flynn, Fleur Holyland-Salvador, Josey Comerford, Yvonne Harris, Glen Cole, Carol Norris, Dorne Wallace, Rebecca Grisman, Lauren Pattie

Apologies: Kathy Oates, Therese Donnelly, Mary Richardson, Toni Hamilton, CR Belinda Hassan, Cr Michelle Green

We felt it was important to reflect on our key deliverables and partnership benchmarks that were established at the beginning of the funding arrangement in 2021. All but one of our expected deliverables under the Better Together Housing contract have been achieved. Members of BTH were also invited join us and to participate on a higher level throughout the project, however we have not had any interested participants at this time.

Coast2Bay Housing and Greater Whitsunday Communities developed a number of partnership benchmarks we felt would facilitate a successful collaborative partnership ,and have met these in most areas. Benchmarks that we hope to improve on in the next phase of funding, with increased staff hours, include improving continuity and regular collaboration between our teams.

Key Deliverables and Responsibilities

- ✓ Identification of key partners in the Mackay Region and building relationships and formal agreements to assist in promotion and delivery of BTH in an effective way
- ✓ Promotion and awareness raising of the availability of BTH and its target group in a way that reflects local community
- ✓ Using community development principles and practice to ensure BTH is delivered in a way that reflects local community need
- ✗ Ensuring community (participant) representation on the BTH Advisory Group to reflect codesign principles of BTH
- ✓ Coordinating the hosting of face to face and online gatherings of registered participants of BTH



Initial success indicators

> COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES

- X Regular communication with at least an 8 week checkin & establish peer practice group
- ✓ Establishment of a Regional Advisory Group , to include a member representative
- ✓ Sharing stories of successes & process steps of the journey

> PARTNERSHIP OUTCOMES

- ✓ Raise awareness of & understanding about housing insecurity amongst older women , service providers & key stakeholders
- ✓ Involvement & participation by regional real estate agents
- ✓ A number of partners signed up to support BTH structured by Partnership Agreements & agreed Partnership Principles
- X A Mind Map with the integrated support pathways for older women experiencing housing Insecurity

> SPECIFIC GREATER WHITSUNDAY COMMUNITIES OUTCOMES

- ✓ A Regional Action Plan to respond to identified Housing Insecurity issues
- ✓ A Regional Advisory Group to inform on housing matters



Our approach in Mackay has been to connect with active community groups targeted at women and/or seniors. We have also connected with service providers in the housing, women and senior sectors to ensure that the project is well-known from both a service and community level. We have utilised community partners' support through social media and local news channels in the Mackay and Whitsunday regions.

Community Partners have provided value to the project in the Mackay and Whitsunday regions over the past 12 months through supporting women in ways that we were not able to under the model of the funding. We hope to strengthen the project through formalisation of those existing partnerships in line with the project plan for 2022-2023 where appropriate.

Key Community Partners

The Neighbourhood Hub:

- Volunteer support to connect to website through use of centres computers
- Support with obtaining BlueCard through volunteer program
- Promotion and support of the project within their own programs
- Participation in Regional Advisory Group

Mackay Women's Centre:

- Promotion and support of the project within their own programs
- Collaborative partnerships in potential community projects

MackayZonta Club:

- Promotion of project through regular article space in Mackay Whitsunday Life and social media
- Providing opportunities to promote project at public events relevant to cohort
- Participation in Regional Advisory Group

Community Legal Service:

- Provide advice and support to members
- Interest in co-developing resource for members/ this cohort

Hugh Reilly Real Estate:

- Advocate for members in application process
- Participation on Regional Advisory Group
- Interest in developing resource for members/this cohort

Whitsunday Libraries (Bowen and Cannonvale)

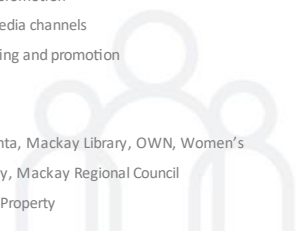
- Provision of space for gatherings
- Promotion through their media channels to Library members

Strategic Media Partners

- Sponsorship through Facebook promotion
- Connections to mainstream media channels
- Support and advice on marketing and promotion

Other Connections:

- Cannonvale Zonta, Bowen Zonta, Mackay Library, OWN, Women's Circle, Soroptimist club Mackay, Mackay Regional Council Community Teams, Coral Tree Property



Community connection and promotion

Information sessions delivered: 10

Regional connections: Interagency and other network agencies, community events, regional service newsletters and media

Get Togethers Held: 10 (7 x Mackay, 3 x Whitsunday)

Memberships: 7

Mailing List: 18

Advisory Group meetings attended: 7

Regional Advisory Group meetings held: 5



A Regional Advisory Group was established to assist in the promotion of Better Together Housing, through utilising existing connections and knowledge of localities across the Region and the target cohort. This group met monthly between August 2021 and March 2022. The Terms of Reference were to be reviewed in May 2022 – this was held off due to uncertainty of continued funding and confirming its parameters. Now that funding has been confirmed for the next three years, feedback from this event will be considered in the review of next TOR.

Regional Advisory Group

- Six representatives from across Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Region
- Councillors, Local Business, Real Estate, Neighbourhood Hub, Marketing, Zonta, Financial counselling

Role of the Regional Advisory Group

- Promoting Better Together Housing leveraging off existing community connections and supporting Women over 55 years to participate in the project through access to resources you or your organisation are at liberty to provide.
- Supporting GWC by advising on engagement methods and principles to build and sustain relationships with key stakeholders relevant to their locality.
- Supporting and monitoring the development and progress of relevant actions as part of the project.
- Working with GWC to advocate for recommended actions that arise from the project.

Timeline July 2021 - June 2022 – Due for a review



Rebecca, as Project Manager of Better Together Housing across Qld, shared what has been evolving on the Sunshine Coast and we discussed some of the shared challenges we have been facing across the regions. She also outlined the funding, issues and challenges overall, and the priorities for the next 12 months as comprehensive reporting to Qld government for its funding begins. These include gathering case studies of members' journeys and improving the resulting number of members who join, connect and either find or share their homes through BTH.

Sunshine Coast journey

- Get it Togethers – monthly
- Community partnerships: two looking to increase
- Case studies capturing to report up to the Dept.
- Funding confirmed for three years, inclusion of two FTE staff in South East Queensland, increased contact and support for WIM region
- USC research under review



Shared Challenges

- Developing resources and stages in the process: intake, induction, membership, website engagement
- Registration and membership wait times for BlueCard's/ police check, registration can be clunky
- Emergent need of women in crisis and lack of housing options puts pressure on timelines
- Operating as satellites
- Funding limitations, limited direction
- Reporting obligations increasing in detail and regularity



Small group work: Better Together Housing Going Forward

Q. 1 What would you expect a project like Better Together Housing to achieve in the next twelve months?

Program level expectations

- Continue to connect with women who require or will require housing in the future
- Grow supporter and membership base
- A “champion” to get people together to create a warm referral process (volunteers, clubs)
- Develop an induction process with support or volunteers to help navigate the process
- Easier website navigation
- Find and add FAQs about existing services in Mackay and identify the gaps
- Set the model up right, especially in regional context, before expanding to new hubs
- Have a two-step/layered approach to help women in crisis or needing emergency accommodation

Community level expectations

- Raise awareness in the community about homelessness/housing insecurity
- Lobby/ Advocate to Governments to understand the issues and impacts – Local State and Fed levels
- Have resources and \$\$ to undertake developmental work, e.g. mapping underutilised housing resources

Q. 2 What are the enablers that can improve women’s capability to secure housing?

- Personal and social networks, safe places to connect
- Good intake process with information upfront, FAQs including legal information (e.g. quick videos)
- Peer to peer support is important
- User friendly model – support to navigate the ‘system’ and the website, use volunteers to help sign up
- Strong intensive support for women closer to crisis. Partnerships with Lifeline or other crisis contact as navigators
- Tool to make matching easier – matrix
- Evidence of rental history and points of ID, add information about BTH to rental applications forms by realtors
- Offer links to other services from the website
- Connect with transport services
- Breakdown the stigma of sharing your story and seeking help
- Host GIT events at other free venues and not just public cafes – cost of a coffee/ public place can be a barrier
- Language and other multicultural support
- Another Govt incentive to assist people in need to replace NRAS/ assisting with home renovations to enable shared living (add extra bathroom)
- Awareness of entitlements with: Centrelink, and legal in separation (assets, finances etc)

Q. 3 What is the Regional Advisory Groups role in working effectively across the regions to support and promote Better Together Housing?

- Continue to promote BTH
- Creating or development of a strategic plan to promote a coordinated approach
- Network development/promoting natural linkages, raising awareness in their circles, referrals
- Ensure correct membership of advisory committee- review gaps and fill spaces
- Members who understand their geographical community using local knowledge to assist in project development in that area, drill into local knowledge
- Business leaders
- Meeting regularly touching in with groups maybe out of demographic
- Extend RAGs to family groups
- RAGs raise funds to assist with police checks and other requirements
- Visible presence in community on a regular basis – forefront of minds
- Advocacy, training and support
- Feedback
- Facilitate strategic partnerships- Mackay Community Foundation, Mining/chamber of commerce

We thank everyone who attended for their input and continued support of the Better Together Housing Project.