

Notes from the Brainstorming session held with Care Leavers on.

1) What are the weaknesses in the post care services that are available in Adelaide now?

- Understaffed, under resourced, staff overworked – How could the staff resolve services to people that are represented from 5 different groups?
- Lots of bureaucratic red tape
- No simple process to access services, PCS and all Govt services
- Not a personalised service
- People missed out on Mullighan Inquiry – media advertising was too small. PCS was not advertised enough
- Staff can't cater for influx of people eligible for service
- PCS need their own building – one interview room is not enough
- PCS is not comfortable and needs bean bags and welcoming space, calming, customer friendly environment, this will help staff too
- PCS needed in the country
- Social Workers to get on the streets to meet with people eligible
- People in the country know nothing about PCS and the support available
- Not enough information
- Help needed for people to study, in other age groups
- Trauma prevents some people from getting out of their houses to access services
- Expediency is the word – less talk more action
- Refugees left by themselves once they are over 18years old
- Transition support for Refugees leaving care would help – information on how to keep out of trouble with the law would help a lot; not a lot of basic community and living skills
- Workers should do home visits and expand service to people that won't come out
- Promotion of PCS through media is needed so people know what PCS can do
- People don't know what they can access – lack of information
- Some people more stressed after going through the Catholic post care service process
- Lack of understanding among service providers about what the people went through
- Catholic Post Care Service, pathetic use of time, little info given and assistance limited, interest in abuse is limited – was a waste of time.
- Not able to respond immediately in crisis circumstances
- Too many referrals or appointments needing to be made
- Too many people doing different things in different areas
- How will one PCS cater for needs of different groups / nationalities and needs? People with different cultures and needs at same service.
- Adoptions and other services from one service/location; not enough space at the current location for service to be delivered
- Ring up – Don't get to speak to someone straight away

- Hate answering machines – would prefer someone to answer the call and pay for the call myself (referring to the freecall 1800 only available 1-4pm weekdays)
- People need support if they have to get to court or doctors
- Staff on short term contract is not helpful. Long term staff would be more efficient, and would have better understanding of client problems/needs

2) What are the gaps? (missing services)

- Mental Health group in Millicent – would like to have someone from PCS to attend it
- Disruptive tenants – third warning, HSA SRF weakness, lack of clamping down
- Services are not careful about where the money goes to and clients are falling through the cracks of other services
- You have to continue to insist and ask to get assistance with education and dental assistance & up to \$500 legal assistance (via Mullighan report)
- We have to press to get assistance
- Not being shown the door – therefore don't know how to do it or access services
- Services should be developed thoroughly in an assessed way
- Need to be a proactive service
- Don't get enough information about services we are entitled to
- Not enough research able to be done by the staff
- People who are employed are discriminated against by PCS

3) What are the strengths of the available services?

or what are the good aspects of the existing services that you would not want to lose?

- The foundation
- The conversation like tonight for voice to be heard
- Meetings with the Minister – an open channel that PCS had an avenue
- Knowing there is someone there for me
- Being able to meet up with first foster parents and catch up after all those years and being able to see each other
- Consumer Reference Group to connect with other care leavers, to overcome isolation and to connect with people with similar experiences
- Facilitation of Memorial Working Party and Consumer Reference Group – achieving where the Memorial is at
- Help brother received with Housing
- Counselling I received
- Inclusion – being younger and able to access the service, knowing there is something for us later too is good
- To be able talk to someone
- To be able to access birth family and my file
- Introduction of Northern and Southern Youth Support Teams and being able to access them
- Support Group – extremely helpful, especially with something buried

- People there, Eveline would give support, call at home, after hours – service to be recognised and excellent tool and empathy – that someone at long last cares
- Knowing I can ring, mornings are hard, staff to get work done
- Able to talk to someone in the afternoon
- Organisation for Public Meetings and food
- The work that went into the Apology
- Inclusion of anyone that shows interest could and were invited
- Acknowledged that I exist
- A Team set up specifically for us
- Appreciate Melanie moved office to make another meeting room
- A Board Room to have meeting in, feel like we are worthy of having 'our installations'
- Staff keep pressing issues – don't want it lost, in there for us pushing it to the top

4) Describe the post care services you would like to experience and be specific.

- Need a gold card – for health services like Veteran Affairs
- Help with medical problems, since when I was in care that wasn't offered
- Someone to talk to about problems, especially in country
- An advocate to get access to entitlements
- Healing Centre: Receptionist, Mental Health workers, Drug and alcohol workers, Nurse on call, centre coordinator and committee, Doctor, back up nurse, MH workers for back up, client liaison and advocacy for rural and city; housing workers, financial advisors to show budgeting and money management, DFC liaison to mediate between customers and the department, another liaison officer if demand is large, program officer, speaker, programs, staff and client info
- Housing co-op for care leavers
- Help to access education – help by paying for, not adequate, want it now to get somewhere in life
- SW's who don't leave in one or two years (continuity). Always have someone to know my story rather than re tell it.
- Service for different groups, information on dental health education, housing, one stop shop, somewhere to do paperwork, variety of things needed
- Family heritage needed to be represented accurately. Photos are misrepresentative. Want to preserve history and what it was like in State care accurately.
- Information to go to State library
- Somewhere to get together as a group to write the truth down and preserve correct records
- Employ a project officer, not Government, to work with healing centre
- Assistance for parenting – Parenting education specific for care leavers, or people who were abused as children
- Education and preventative programs
- All children who were in care to have a safe place to come that is open to all Forgotten Australians – Healing Centre

- One stop healing centre with a qualified professional legal rep for State Wards to get legal advice, to answer all questions.
- Courses offered as joint activities – parenting, alternative therapy to stay connected together, do it together social activities
- Physical and mental abuse not looked at by Mullighan – PCS should educate Govt Ministers and Public in general about what care leavers experienced
- Reopen institutions of the past, they provided good food, shelter and discipline, what was lacking was love and warmth. Now the young people are on streets which is even worse, can be loved and cared for, not being a number.
- Team of 3 people when someone first makes contact to visit home of the person, make an inventory of all needs and once seen as friendly, re-engage with the Govt Dept
- Facilitator in PCS to help aging care leavers with Housing issues to access what is available to ensure we will have housing in our old age
- Special category for health care so we don't have to wait long periods because we can't afford dental assistance
- Validation of PCS when issues raised are listened to but nothing happens. When are things going to start moving? Govt decides but doesn't respond to what we need
- Someone to be an advocate – example with Centrelink, when dealing with past issues, one can get violent. Speaking with Centrelink is like talking to a brick wall
- Want someone to speak on my behalf to Centrelink and help me through so I don't lose it (get angry at the service)
- Need help learning to deal with other people - don't want to end up in jail
- Outsourcing– Agencies don't want to advertise that they are funded to provide service eg. Parenting education to Care Leavers or Forgotten Australians or Stolen Generation –this information needs to be on the front page (ie Respond SA website). Programs need to meet our specific needs
- We are simple people and we need the information and programs in our face
- We cannot help ourselves, we help anyone else first before ourselves
- Resources to help young people with their files and piece together what happened
- Help access birth family and siblings
- Things you need to know as an adult – ie insurance, how to write a will
- Couldn't read, relate to people in the community, only scream and yell – no one wants to listen - no way of getting assistance, no communication skills – this is what State Wards need, reading writing, grammar, how to be a responsible person in the community – Govt's duty because the Govt did this to us – only Govt again fix
- No action = deeper the hole gets.
- To get a win win, victims get resources and life skills, due respects. Win for Government and Govt will get votes.
- \$18 extra for medical bills in the country – not right

- Future of Forgotten Australians needs to be taken care of – childhood abuse causes life expectancy to be reduced, cost of high care nursing in old age is very high
- Would like to get basic cooking skills to live more comfortably and not spend so much money on food
- Citizen advocates – required
- Advocates are needed – the advocates should be people who have been there, in care and know what it was like
- Extend service to use care leavers themselves and to know how to do it properly
- Peer educators and mentors
- People who were in State care to work with care leavers
- Clients need to have home visits by people who understand what the person has experienced
- Gives an opportunity for trust
- Advocates – who were abused and neglected in State care, to know our problems and our background.
- Been in situation to fix the situation.
- Need computers to have access to resources

5) Any further Comments?

- Prevent the cause of problem in care now, broaden responsibility of community and make them aware of their responsibilities to reduce the costs to the State in future, if we did that it will reduce 2/3 people in gaols, Mental Health services and Drug and Alcohol clinics, and on the streets. Stop abuse from the beginning.
- Government will save 2/3 extra staff and resources and funds.
- We were told, never come back when we left State care – told that there was no service once they were adults

Where to from here?

We (organisers of the brainstorming session) will type up all the ideas gathered neatly

Will sift the ideas carefully and identify –

- What is feasible under the current financial climate
- What could be a future possibility

Will not throw away any of the gathered ideas

Will include the practical and feasible ideas in the recommendations to the Families SA Executive towards the end of July 2009.

The notes from the brainstorming session will be available

Proposal to the Executive will not be available – It is for Families Executive only.