

MEDIA RELEASE

Registrations NOW OPEN for the PATHWAYS THROUGH THE MAZE Squalor Conference

“Catholic Community Services continues to provide strong leadership in the provision of comprehensive services and information for those affected by situations of Squalor and Hoarding” said Janis Redford, General Manager of Catholic Community Services NSW/ACT.

“Our inaugural National Squalor Conference in 2009 demonstrated the enormity of the impact that squalor and hoarding has on many people’s day-to-day lives. The consequences of squalor and hoarding behaviors present an enormous number of challenges, both for the person who lives in these circumstances, as well as for others affected by their problem” Ms. Redford said.

Funding from NSW Department of Aged, Disability and Home Care has enabled Catholic Community

Services NSW/ACT to provide hoarding and squalor services across 4 regions of NSW-The Hunter, Sydney, Illawarra and the Southern Highlands.

An initiative of the original Severe Domestic Squalor Program was the development of the web based Squalor and Hoarding Toolkit launched in 2010. The Toolkit funded by the City of Sydney Community Services Grants Program provides a step by step guide to intervention and directory of relevant services in the City of Sydney local government area (LGA) for professionals and community members who wish to gain direction and further information on what to do if they encounter people living in squalor.

The toolkit was designed to be used as a template for other

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LGA's wishing to adapt the resource to their specific area.

"The toolkit provides another important means of continuing the work already started by Catholic Community Services. Ms Redford said.

"Last year Catholic Community Services staff participated in fact-finding trips to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands to further develop understanding and expertise in the area of squalor and hoarding. Many valuable collaborative practices have been initiated and these will provide a firm platform for future work in Australia" Ms. Redford said.

The 2nd National Squalor and Hoarding Conference will be held on February 21-22 2012 at the SMC Conference and Function Centre, Sydney. The Hon. Barry O'Farrell, Premier of NSW has been invited to launch the conference and Julie McCrossin will host the 2 day event. Confirmed speakers include,

- Dr David Mataix-Cols – Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London
- Prof. Catharine Lumby – Journalism & Research Centre, University of New South Wales

- Prof. Merrilyn Walton – Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney
- Francis Rush-Public Guardian, Department of Justice and Attorney General
- Julie Harris – Community Education, Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board
- Andrew Brown-Public Health, South Australian Department of Health
- Liz Giles-Homelessness Unit, City of Sydney

Peter Mengede, Policy Officer Queensland Shelter, said this of the 2009 National Hoarding and Squalor Conference....

"Improved research and anecdotal reporting of incidence of squalor, should lead to an improved understanding of its prevalence and impacts upon Queensland's aged and impaired residents. In my opinion the conference provided not only a *pathway through the maze* but identified that there is a maze.....One that we're yet to navigate."

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For more information contact

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About Catholic Community Services

Catholic Community Services works with a diverse range of people and communities to enable and maintain sustainable and vibrant lives.

We work with the elderly, financially disadvantaged, people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, people with a disability, people with a mental illness and carers.