



Catholic Social Services
Australia

SPEECH

2010 AWARDS

**NORMA PARKER AWARD FOR THE MOST INNOVATIVE PROGRAM –
ORGANISATIONAL**

**CANBERRA
MONDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2010**

Presented by
**BARRY SHEEHAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTACARE TOOWOOMBA**

**Check against delivery

NORMA PARKER AWARD FOR THE MOST INNOVATIVE PROGRAM

It gives me great pleasure tonight to announce the winner of the Norma Parker Award for the Most Innovative Program.

This award highlights outstanding achievement by member organisations offering programs which set trends and benchmarks in their particular area of service.

The award is presented each year in honour of Norma Parker, who travelled to America to complete post-graduate studies in social services in the late 1920s at a time when the discipline was little understood in Australia.

On her return she co-founded the Catholic Social Services Bureau in Melbourne in 1936, which was Australia's first professionally organised child and family welfare agency.

Tonight's winner is: CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES' SEVERE DOMESTIC SQUALOR PROJECT

This project provides support to people living in environments that are so unclean that their health, ability to receive services or their ability to live independently in the community is jeopardised.

The project also aims to educate service providers working in the community about how to respond when situations of squalor are encountered.

A Catholic Community Services study found that there were few services specifically equipped to deal with incidences of squalor.

The research shows that interventions should include providing a single point of contact for persons or services needing assistance in cases of squalor, providing intensive coordination over the period of time necessary to assist in cases of squalor, and providing professional and community education on squalor and its management – which would provide an opportunity for early intervention.

The Severe Domestic Squalor program aims to foster assessment and support for people who are living in squalor. It also aims to foster sustainable solutions for clients and educate service providers working in the community and other gatekeepers – such as postal workers and meals on wheels – about how to respond to situations of squalor.

As a result there is a decrease in the consequences of living in squalor, there were less safety, health and fire risks, and clients became less isolated from the community. They also had less risk of eviction.

In addition to services for clients, the program educates the broader community about how to respond to situations of squalor.

In the twelve months to July 2009 the Project ran 32 training sessions for 748 people. An estimated 1,000 calls for advice were received on the squalor hotline.

The Project has been widely acclaimed by local government and local health services.

A squalor toolkit is available to help service providers and community members within the city of Sydney to respond to situations of Severe Domestic Squalor.

I'm sure we're going to hear a lot more about this unique approach in the months ahead. Congratulations again.

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