



## B. MILES REFERRAL AND ALLOCATION POLICY

### Introduction

B. Miles Women's Housing Scheme provides medium term (3-18mths), low-level supported accommodation to women without dependent children who have a mental illness. B. Miles also has the capacity to provide outreach support to a small number of women living in their own accommodation (for more information on the outreach program refer to the B. Miles Information Pack).

B. Miles is funded by the NSW Department of Community Services under the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP). The SAAP program is the Government's response to homeless people. Thus, women accepted into B. Miles must also be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and in need of support.

Applicants must undergo a formal assessment before they are accepted into B. Miles.

### Aims of this Policy

- To ensure equitable access and distribution of supported housing.
- To maintain a fair assessment process and non-judgemental allocations.
- To provide an open and transparent application and allocation process.

### POLICY

The applicant must be aware that a referral is being made to B. Miles.

When vacancies arise within the program, B. Miles will select the most suitable applicant for assessment. B. Miles will consider the following when making this selection:

- Does the applicant still meet the B. Miles eligibility criteria.
- Will applicant be available to receive support from B. Miles during office hours (Monday – Friday. 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.).
- Whether the vacancy is in a single or shared dwelling.
- If shared, compatibility with existing tenant (e.g. smoking/non-smoking, age, addiction issues etc).
- Location needs.
- Whether or not clinical supports are in place.
- Whether or not applicant/referring agency has maintained contact with B. Miles whilst on the waiting list.
- Whether or not the applicant is engaged with supports/programs as stated at the time of referral.
- Whether or not the applicant's needs can be met within existing resources.

#### I. B. Miles Responsibility

At the point of referral, B. Miles will:

- Be open and transparent regarding the application and allocation process.
- Send each applicant/referrer a B. Miles Information Kit.
- Explain about B. Miles generally and the assessment process specifically, if required.
- Consider all relevant information provided by or for the applicant and inform applicant/referrer if applicant does not meet eligibility criteria, stating reasons why.



- If applicant does not meet eligibility criteria or has an urgent housing need, provide information about suitable alternatives, if available.
- Update the referral form as new information is made available from the applicant/referrer.
- Explain about the B. Miles outreach program if the applicant does not require housing within the B. Miles program.
- Provide the Complaints Procedure if applicant/referrer is not satisfied with the outcome.

## II. Applicant's/Referrer's Responsibility

- That all relevant information regarding an applicant and her circumstances is provided at the point of referral.
- To provide accurate and honest information regarding the applicant's circumstances;
- To remain in contact with B. Miles (minimum once a month) to register continued interest.
- To keep B. Miles informed of any change in contact details, particularly telephone numbers;
- To keep B. Miles informed of any change in circumstances, e.g. offer of housing elsewhere; change of clinical supports.

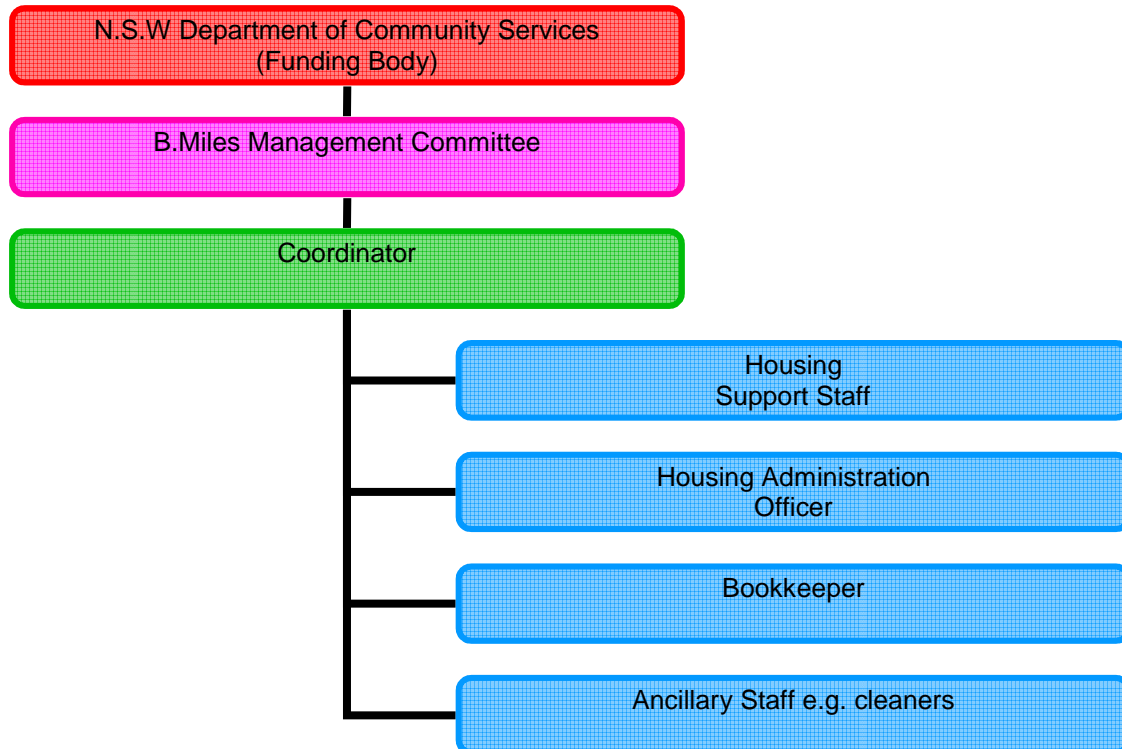
**If B. Miles does not hear from an applicant/referrer for 6 months, the application will be removed from the waiting list.**

Updated on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2006



## B.MILES WOMEN'S HOUSING SCHEME

### Organisational Structure



### Staff as at April 2006

Fiona Power – Coordinator  
Megan Roberts – Housing Support Worker  
Amy Bruton – Housing Support Worker  
Melissa Sharp – Housing Support Worker  
Marina Robertson – Housing Support Worker  
Kirsty Kubik – Housing Administration officer  
Nina Chehade – Bookkeeper



## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**Women who are accepted into B. Miles Women's Housing Scheme are those who meet all of the following criteria:**

- Have been diagnosed and can provide evidence of having a major mental illness/disorder, including schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, clinical depression, anxiety disorder; eating disorders and personality disorders.
- Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Are receiving regular clinical support or are willing to do so.
- Are available during B. Miles office hours (Monday – Friday, 9.00a.m – 5.00a.m.) for contact with support worker.
- Give consent for B. Miles staff to contact and liaise with their clinical support(s), as required.
- Have an identified support need that can be met within B. Miles resources, i.e. B. Miles support staff meet with each tenant, on an average, once a week.
- Are willing to have regular contact with their B. Miles support worker.
- Understand that B. Miles Women's Housing Scheme is a medium term supported housing program (3 – 18 months) and does not provide long term housing.
- Are aged 18 years and over.
- Have completed a drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation program, if relevant
- If taking methadone:
  - Have been on the methadone program, in NSW, for at least 3 months;
  - Can provide evidence that they have been attending the methadone clinic regularly
  - Have not been under the influence of alcohol and other drugs when they have presented at the methadone clinic
  - Can provide evidence that their behaviour has been appropriate and stable while being on the program
  - Does not have take away doses at any time while living at B. Miles

### **Factors that will be given consideration when assessing a referral**

- Is the primary diagnosis mental illness?
  - Can the applicant live in the community without supervision and high level support?
  - Are there adequate and accessible resources available to assist B. Miles in supporting the applicant?
  - Does the applicant want support from B. Miles and other relevant services?
  - Does the applicant present a risk to others?
  - Is B. Miles the most appropriate service for her?
- Is the applicant's welfare currently 'at risk'?



## AT RISK FACTORS

### At risk factors include:

- Existing accommodation lacks essential facilities (eg. water, electricity, bathroom, kitchen etc)
- Extreme isolation from family/friends/others
- Current accommodation has severe overcrowding
- Substandard property conditions (eg. Extreme damp, dangerous or unhealthy living conditions)
- **Currently** experiencing one or more of the following:
  - Domestic Violence
  - Sexual Assault
  - Torture or trauma
  - Threatening behaviour by one or more household members
  - Experiencing barriers due to cultural factors (eg non-English speaking)

The applicant may need to provide documentation to support their placement. The types of documentation will vary due to the circumstances, but may include:

- Police reports
- Apprehended Violence Order
- Report from doctor, health professional, social worker or community support agency such as a refuge, community centre, family support service etc
- Support letter from STARTTS

B.Miles will treat '**at risk**' situations with sensitivity. Information provided by an applicant and/or referrer will be kept confidential. Information about an applicant may be passed between the B.Miles staff members where it is required in the normal course of their duties. B.Miles will only provide an individual's personal information to external organisations/individuals if:

- We assess that there is a child at risk of harm, then we are obligated to notify the Department of Community Services
- We are served by the police with a search warrant
- Information is disclosed to us by the applicant, the referrer and/or her clinical supports that indicates that the applicant is a threat to self or others
- The courts subpoena the file notes as evidence in a legal manner
- The applicant gives permission for information to be released to another agency/individual.

## **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN B. MILES AND THE WOMEN'S HOUSING COMPANY**

B. Miles has expanded its reach into the inner west of Sydney. In conjunction with the Women's Housing Company we have 2 units in Dulwich Hill. Unlike our properties in the Eastern Suburbs, we are not the landlord of the Dulwich Hill units. The Women's Housing Company is the landlord.

### **B. Miles Role**

Our role is strictly limited to the selection and support of the two tenants. The tenants are provided with the same support as all our other tenants and are required to meet the same eligibility requirements. Length of stay within the Dulwich Hill units is between 3 and 18 months, which is consistent with our properties in the Eastern Suburbs. B. Miles can withdraw support if necessary. For example, if the tenant does not want to maintain regular contact with her B. Miles support worker, we have the option to withdraw support. It is our responsibility to inform the Women's Housing Company of any such action.

### **Women's Housing Company Role**

As the landlord, the Women's Housing Company collects rent and manages repairs and maintenance. Rent arrears, evictions etc are their responsibility. As with other B. Miles tenants, the leases are for a 3-month period. If the tenancy progresses well, the tenant is given the option to renew the lease every 3 months, until her time within the Scheme expires. If B. Miles were to withdraw support, the Women's Housing Company may not elect to renew the lease. Each situation would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **How else does Dulwich Hill differ?**

As B. Miles is not the landlord of the Dulwich Hill units, we do not receive any rent. The rent goes to the Women's Housing Company. The Dulwich Hill tenants pay for their own utilities (gas, electricity and phone) and their rent is 25% of their income. B. Miles received a one-off grant from the NSW Department of Community Services in 2002 to provide furnishings in the 2 units. We do not receive any recurrent funding to replace furnishings. As B. Miles receives NO income from the tenants, nor any recurrent funding to replace furnishings, we cannot guarantee that the flats will be furnished.



## B.MILES OUTREACH PROGRAM

B. Miles has a number of properties in the Eastern Suburbs. Some of these properties are for single accommodation and others are shared. It has been our experience that the shared properties can be more complex. The reasons for this are many and varied. Over the past few years, B. Miles has gradually turned more and more properties into single accommodation. In the Eastern Suburbs we now have 6 shared households, and 13 single households. We also have 2 units (single) in Dulwich Hill in our partnership arrangement with the Women's Housing Company. Thus, B. Miles now has the capacity to support a minimum of 3 women in the community. We have called this our Outreach Program.

### **Geographic Area**

The Outreach Program is only available to women living in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

For the purpose of the Outreach Program, we cannot work with a client who is homeless. It is the intention of the Outreach Program to work with women whose tenancies are at risk and who require support to help them to sustain their independence. All other aspects of the eligibility criteria remains the same – please refer to the B. Miles Information Pack.

Each request for outreach support will be considered. When assessing whether or not to provide an outreach service to an applicant, we will undertake a risk assessment of the situation. If it appears that the situation may pose a risk to staff we will not provide an outreach service to the applicant. For example, if the applicant is living with a violent partner, B. Miles will not commence an outreach service, as there would be safety concerns for our staff.

### **Assessment**

A formal assessment will be undertaken, at the B. Miles office, prior to accepting a client for the Outreach Program. This takes approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours to complete.

### **Type and Length of Support**

Outreach clients are provided with the same support as all our other tenants (refer to Information Pack). As with all of our clients, support is available for a 3 – 18 month period. B. Miles and the outreach client will have the option to discontinue the support during this period.

### **Referrals**

Referrals can be made by ringing the office. Please specify that the referral is for the Outreach Program.

### **Cost**

There is no cost for participants in the Outreach Program.



## COST

### Rent

Tenants over 21 years old are required to pay 30% of their income as rent and tenants under 21 are required to pay 25% of income.

Our properties are leased out fully furnished, paid for by rent we receive. If you have your own furniture, please note that you require written permission to store these furniture items in our houses or flats.

B.Miles will pay for the reasonable cost of electricity, gas and local phone service bills.

### Rent in advance

All tenants are required to be 2 weeks in advance with their rent.

A tenant should pay 2 weeks rent on the day she moves in, but please advise us if a part payment plan is needed.

### Rental Bond

A rental bond of \$200 is charged to cover the cost of tenancy breaches. The bond will be lodged with the Renting Services Branch of the Office of Fair Trading. If there are no breaches the tenant will receive the full \$200 refund from Renting Services at the end of their tenancy.

\$200 bond should be paid on the day a tenant moves in, but please advise us if a part payment plan is needed.

So before a person moves in they will need to:

- 1) Provide proof of income, such as an Income Statement or payslips.
- 2) Organise 2 weeks rent in advance, or let us know you need a part-payment plan.
- 3) Organise \$200 rental bond, or let us know you need a part-payment plan.



## THE LIFE OF BEE MILES

Beatrice Miles was born in 1902, she preferred to be called Bee.

*"I am an atheist, a true thinker and speaker. I cannot stand or endure the priggery, caddery, snobbery, smuggerly, hypocrisy, lies, flattery, compliments, praise, jealousy, envy, pretence, conventional speech and behaviour upon which society is based".* Bee Miles. (Barlow, *Voyage of 'The City of Brisbane' 1862*, 2001, page 131)

Bee was from a wealthy, conservative family. Bee's father WJ Miles was a well-known controversial nationalist who was pro-Aboriginal and anti-British.

Bee had a love hate relationship with her father, but took on many of his nationalistic ideas and values. Like her father Bee was fiercely patriotic and loved Sydney and Australia. Bee was an atheist and "*believed religion was the cause of so many wars and so much misery that she didn't want any part of it.*" (Barlow, *Bee Miles's Attitude to Religion*, Sydney Morning Herald, 1994, page 12)

Bee attended Abbotsleigh, the exclusive private girls' school. Teachers described Bee as '*original and high spirited*'. At 12 years old Bee wore a 'No Conscription' badge to school during the referendum in World War 1. In another incident Bee was disgusted when she was severely marked down for an essay about Gallipoli, which she described as a 'strategical blunder' rather than a 'wonderful war effort'.

Bee enrolled in Arts at Sydney University but discontinued after a year because '*they didn't teach enough Australian stuff*'. (Radi, 1988, page 218) Shortly after leaving university Bee contracted encephalitis, a serious disease that causes brain damage. After the illness Bee's behaviour became more eccentric and considered by some to be 'anti-social'.

Bee became part of the 'Bohemian crowd'-the intellectuals, poets and artists of Sydney. According to old newspapers, Bee was more widely known than the Prime Minister in pre-war Sydney. Bee became a famous Sydney personality because of her outspoken criticism of political and social authorities and larrikin and eccentric behaviour.

Bee was well known for jumping onto bonnets of moving cars. She would also ride bicycles and motorcycles through the city in an evening dress. However she is most famous for jumping into taxis, refusing to leave and refusing to pay.

In a Sydney bank Bee used to cheekily smoke cigarettes below a sign that read '*Gentlemen will refrain from smoking*'.

Bee swam from Coggee Beach to Wedding Cake Island with a sheaf knife strapped to her leg to protect her from the sharks.

When Bee was 21 her father admitted her into Gladesville hospital, then known as the lunatic asylum. Bee hated the mental institutions. She wrote about her time in there in an article titled "Advance Australia Fair."

There are conflicting stories about Bee escaping the asylum with the help of '*Smiths Weekly*' a widely read tabloid. '*Smiths Weekly*' published a front-page story that campaigned for her release from the asylum- "*Mad House Mystery of Beautiful Sydney Girl.*" Stories say Bee met the writer from the tabloid in the asylum. Conflicting stories say the writer was part of the bohemian crowd. It is not clear if Bee escaped from the asylum or was allowed to leave.



There are reports of her staying with journalists for 28 days, and according to laws at the time if a person was away from the asylum for 28 days they were free.

Bee was in and out of hospital and prison most of her life she had 200 convictions against her *"80 I deserved but 120 were unfair and malicious"*. (Barlow, *Voyage of 'The City of Brisbane' 1862, 2001, page 131*) Bee lived in the streets and parks despite the income she received from her grandmother's estate.

Bee was famous for reciting Shakespeare in public places for money. She had signs around her neck advertising the price. For example: *"Shakespeare sonnets 6d, Soliloquy 1/-"*. Bee often recited Shakespeare at the State library, she read up to 3 books a day until she was banned.

In a famous incident in 1955 Bee was driven by a female cab driver to Perth. The journey took 19 days and cost 600 Pounds. Bee stayed for 3 months studying the wildflowers and returned to Sydney by ship. John Benyon, her favorite taxi driver and friend, drove her to Hobart and Adelaide.

Bee was seen frequently wearing a tennis eyeshade. She had a declaration of sanity by psychiatrists and 1-pound notes pinned inside her jacket.

Bee slept on park benches. The police, according to law, could not arrest her while she was on a seat so they tipped her off and took her in to Central Police Station.

Bee spent time sleeping in or around local churches. The situation had advantages for Bee but tested the patience of the good-humoured priests. Bee enjoyed the "hymn singing" on Sunday and the free meals; she joined in the dinner conversation when it suited her. Bee went to bed early and got up late so the priests walked around her.

In 1964 Bee, who had diabetes, arthritis and poor health, was offered a place at the 'Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged' in Randwick. Bee said, *"I live in a home run by Catholics because there isn't one for old people run by atheists. But don't think I'm unappreciative- the nuns and sisters here are wonderful people."* (Barlow, *Voyage of 'The City of Brisbane' 1862, 2001, page 134*)

Bee died of cancer on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 1973. There is conflicting evidence about whether she repented on her deathbed and became a Roman Catholic; those who knew her well were very skeptical. Bee said of death *"I'm not afraid to die, I've had a good and full life, and now I'm getting old. When it comes, it will be the end. I don't believe there will be anything after."* (Barlow, *Bee Miles's Attitude to Religion, Sydney Morning Herald, 1994, page 12*)

At her funeral Bee had Australian Wildflowers placed on her coffin along with a ribbon that read *'One who loved Australia'*. A jazz band played *'Waltzing Matilda'* *'Tie me Kangaroo Down Sport'* and *'Advance Australia Fair'*.

Author Kate Grenville wrote *'Lillian's Story'* which was based loosely on the life of Bee Miles. The book was later made into a movie starring the late Ruth Cracknell.

Bee's writings are in the State library, some in her own handwriting, they are: *'Dictionary by a bitch'*, *'I go on a wild goose chase'*, *'I leave in a hurry'* *'For we are young and free'* *'Notes on Sydney Monument'* and *'Advance Australia Fair.'* The manuscripts are very interesting and a good example of Bee's strong views and larrikin nature.



B.Miles Women's Housing Scheme was named after Bee Miles but is not and never was funded by Bee Miles or through her estate. The scheme provides medium term supported housing for women with a mental illness.

Completed by Nina Blundell TAFE Welfare student August 2002.

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womens housing scheme

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## OUR INFORMATION BROCHURE ALSO COMES IN 7 COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

- Spanish
- Greek
- Italian
- Chinese
- Russian
- Arabic
- Hungarian

## B MILES WEBSITE

[www.bmiles.org.au](http://www.bmiles.org.au)