

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS

CANBERRA

A NATIONAL INITIATIVE BY



Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

This initiative has involved 8 workshops during March – April 2017 (one in each capital city) aimed to get jurisdictional input to better understand the national picture of housing, homeless and mental health in order to develop policy and research directions by injecting ‘housing affordability and supply’ into the national mental health debate.

The workshops included highly participative exercises and were based on a discussion paper developed by the Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute (AHURI).

The feedback gathered in workshops will form a more detailed Consultation Report - this summary document is intended to disseminate major themes only, it is not the endorsed policy of the National Mental Health Commission.

The Consultation Report feedback will be analysed to form a Position Paper that the Commission will use to inform advocacy in the development of national and jurisdictional policy for housing, homelessness and mental health.

OUR FEEDBACK

This is a summary version of outputs captured during the workshop (a full report will be available)



POLICY & PROGRAM SUCCESS FACTORS

From the programs that are in place and effective, the following success factors were highlighted:

- Clinicians working with the client alongside NGOs
- Case management, support workers, multi-Agency service coordination
- Independent units with communal areas
- Preventative outcomes and cost benefits
- Resources made available, training and services provided
- Outreach with the person based in their own home
- Step up, step down facilities for discharge
- Integration between health and housing
- Specific mental health support programs for homeless people, based with NGOs
- Single point of access to housing and homelessness, children, youth and family support services

HOW TO INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY?

- More partnerships between NGOs and private philanthropists
- Developers to allocate via inclusionary zoning
- 'Homes for Homes' where a % of private house sales goes into a pot to fund and build affordable and social housing
- Housing strategies at Departmental levels
- If the NDIS had a higher unit price for services and accommodation this would put pressure on the market to increase appropriate housing supply designed with people with MH issues in mind
- Provide incentives for developers to consider the needs of mental health tenants at the starting point
- Reduce disincentives to downsizing for people in properties larger than their needs (i.e. retirees)
- Shared equity schemes
- Similar model to Defence Housing
- Social housing bonds or fund an Aggregator Model
- Supply issue is a sustained tenancy issue so build models around tenancy (if tenancies can be sustained, it's a cost saver)



HOW TO PROVIDE MORE HOUSING CHOICE?

- Adopt a regional approach to identifying housing needs and a mechanism for this to drive the provision of housing
- Choice Based Lettings systems (UK model) is a system for allocating public housing where the individuals actively bid online on where they want to live; Inclusion Officers can assist people with additional support needs to navigate this process;
- Community driven approaches
- Better involve tenants and prospective tenants in the design of housing and community spaces
- NDIS individual packages can increase consumer choice, providing the funding is appropriate
- Non-government involvement (e.g. Snow Foundation and other philanthropic groups)

WHAT DATA SHOULD BE COLLECTED?

- Better alignment between datasets gathered to provide a better overall picture (i.e. a common dataset) and reduce duplication
- Quantification of the cost to health services and across sectors
- Better data through the lifespan for people with mental health issues
- Conduct a health needs audit every year, for homeless people
- More data around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences at the sub regional level
- The Community Services Directorate has a tool which has not been rolled out yet which should bring good measures (Outcomes Framework)
- Regional housing needs analysis can be built into existing mechanisms such as PHN needs analyses
- All social determinants of health need to be looked at, not just housing in isolation

SUGGESTED FOCUS AREAS

The following key policy issues and research areas were suggested by the participants (in order of priority)

- Develop an **Outcomes Framework** for States and Territories
- **Economic analysis** of the benefits of effective housing provision vs the cost of poor housing provision to persuade Treasury
- **Mechanism for research facilitation** by all peak bodies working together to pool resources and gather the evidence around this (e.g. model from UK 'Making Every Adult Matter' is a coalition working specifically on multiple and complex needs issues including homelessness, mental health, criminal justice and substance misuse)
- **National standards for discharging people** into sustainable accommodation
- Provision of **integrated housing and mental health services models** (e.g. Trieste in Italy which is a whole of system approach)
- More research on **Torres Strait and Indigenous** experiences
- **Identify and define the group** with these complex housing and support needs including characteristics and size of the group, their housing needs and housing design requirements (likely an analysis of existing research)
- Existing research shows that approx. 25 - 30% of homeless people present with mental health issues and half of them have acquired those conditions during their period of homelessness. Need to research the **triggers to mental health when homeless**. If suitable accommodation was found that reduces these triggers, would this enable them to manage their MH recovery sooner and more sustainably?