Welcome

Acknowledgement of Country

I wish to **acknowledge** the people of the **Kulin Nations** the custodians of the land we are gathered on today and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

I acknowledge that we are meeting on land that was never ceded and that the vast over representation of First Nations people amongst those experiencing homelessness is a direct and ongoing consequence of colonisation.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

Acknowledgement of those with lived and living experience of homelessness

I would also like to acknowledge those with lived and living experience of homelessness and/or family violence and recognise their strength, resilience and courage.

They are suffering the consequences of a structural problem that no-one should be facing in a country as wealthy as Australia.

August 2024

The Homelessness Service System in Melbourne's west

Orientation

- Overview of homelessness in Melbourne's west

- Those assisted by the Homelessness Service System (HSS)

- Role, resources and navigating the HSS

- Framework for the homelessness service system

- Long term housing

- Advocacy

- Contacts and resources

30,605

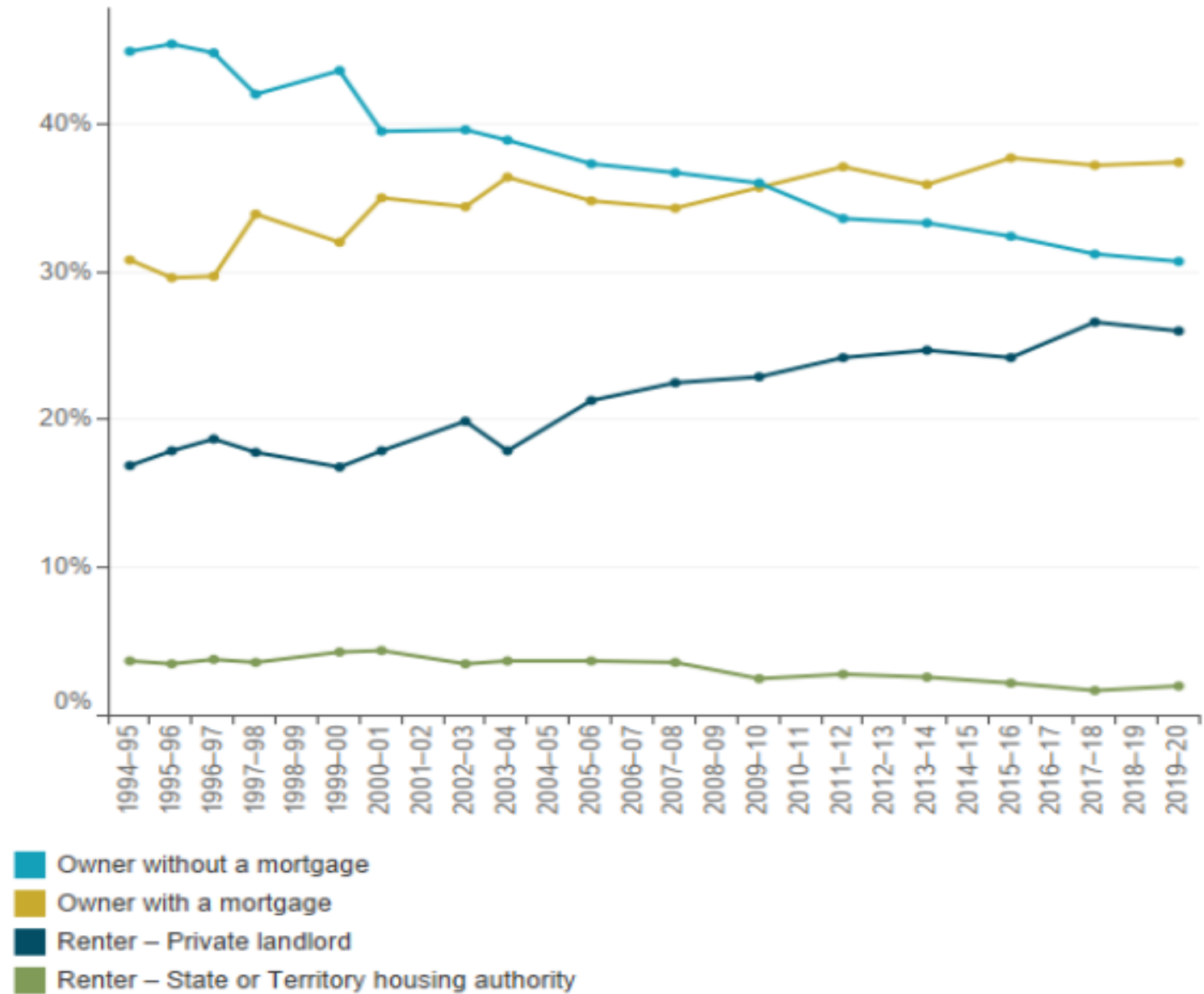22,000 Victorians homeless every night

"more houses for people"

Overview of homelessness in Melbourne's west

Households by tenure type in Victoria:

1994/95 – 2019/20

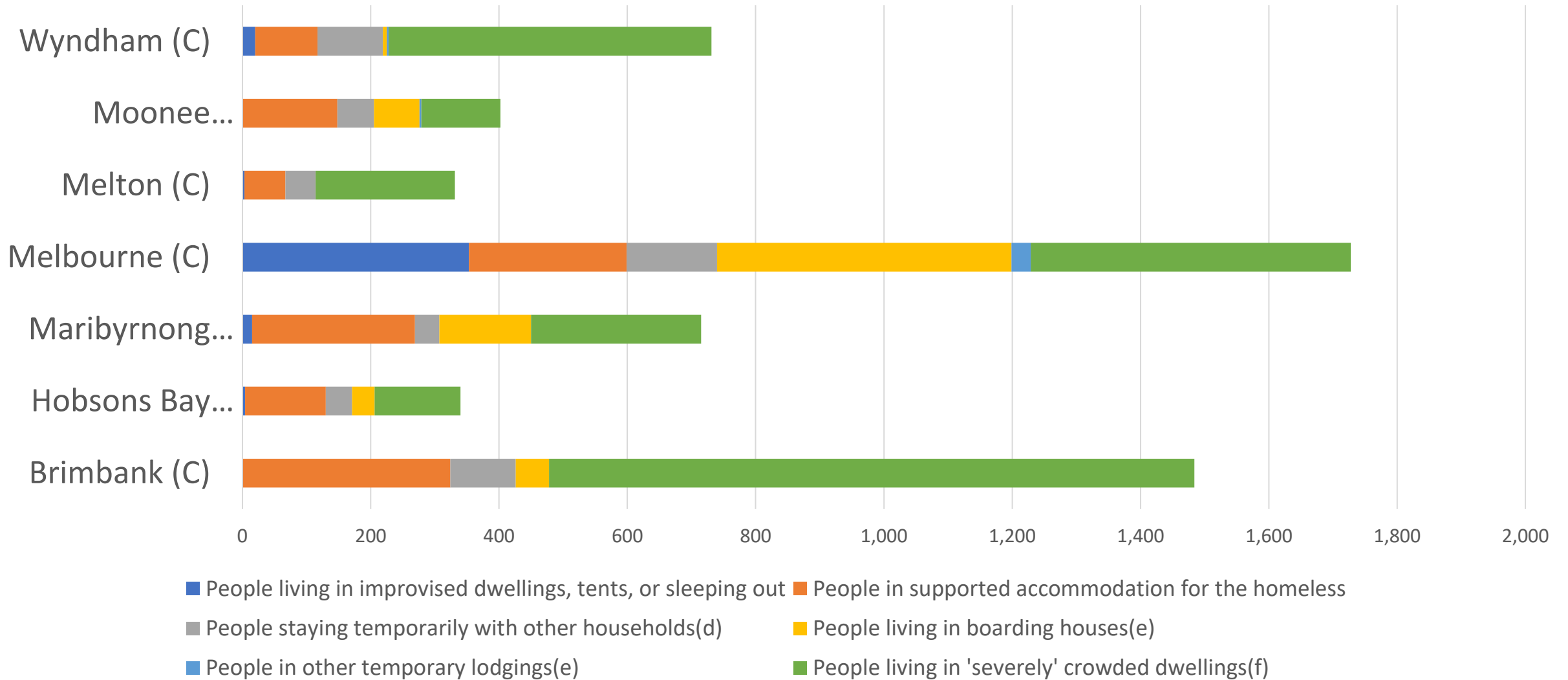Households by tenure type (%), 1994–95 to 2019–20
Victoria

Rough sleeping is the tip of the iceberg

- Census 2021: 30,605 Victorians were experiencing homelessness.

- People sleeping on the streets are the tip of the iceberg in terms of the real numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

- Nearly 1/5 of those experiencing homelessness in Victoria identify as being in Melbourne's west.

- The numbers of people experiencing homelessness in the West increased by 40% from 2011 to 2016 but remained the same for 2021 (Census was impeded by lockdown).

- The number of people living in severe overcrowding (4 or more bedrooms short) increased by 60% over the past 10 years.

36% Severely overcrowded dwellings

29% Supported Accommodation for the homeless

18% Rooming houses

12% Couch surfing

5% Rough sleeping

Census 2021, Homelessness Enumeration, Melbourne's west

Why is homelessness increasing?

We have a crisis in housing supply

Melbourne needs **2.3 M more houses** by 2051. Insufficient housing supply leads to an increase in the cost of housing.

Private rental properties rates are extremely low (1.1 % in Jan 24) and rents have risen 19% in the last year.

3.7 % of all properties in Victoria are social housing. There are 13,853 social housing properties in Melbourne's west and 30,372 households waiting.

Housing and homelessness by LGA

Melton
- Est need for 4,100 social housing properties
- 70% of Q1 in rental stress
- 24% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 2.3 to 6.1x median annual wage

Brimbank
- 2nd highest levels of homelessness – Census
- 77% of Q1 in rental stress
- Est need for 4,800 social housing properties
- 28% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 3.1 to 9.1x median annual wage

Wyndham
- Est need for 7,000 social housing properties
- 73% Q1 in rental; stress
- 32% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 2.5 to 5.9 x median annual wage

Melbourne
- Est need for 5,800 social housing properties
- 53% of Q1 in rental stress
- 69% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 4.7 to 15.5 x median annual wage

Moonee Valley
- Est need for 2,300 social housing properties
- 54% of Q1 in rental stress
- 33% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 4.5 to 11.9 x median annual wage

Maribyrnong
- Est need for 2,000 social housing properties
- 61% of Q1 in rental stress
- 44% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 4.2 to 10 x median annual wage

Hobsons Bay
- Est need for 1,900 social housing properties
- 61% Q1 in rental stress
- 30% of homes rented
- Average cost of a home risen from 3.6 to 9.8 x median annual wage

Melton

Moonee Valley

Brimbank

Maribyr-nong

Melbourne

Hobsons Bay

Wyndham
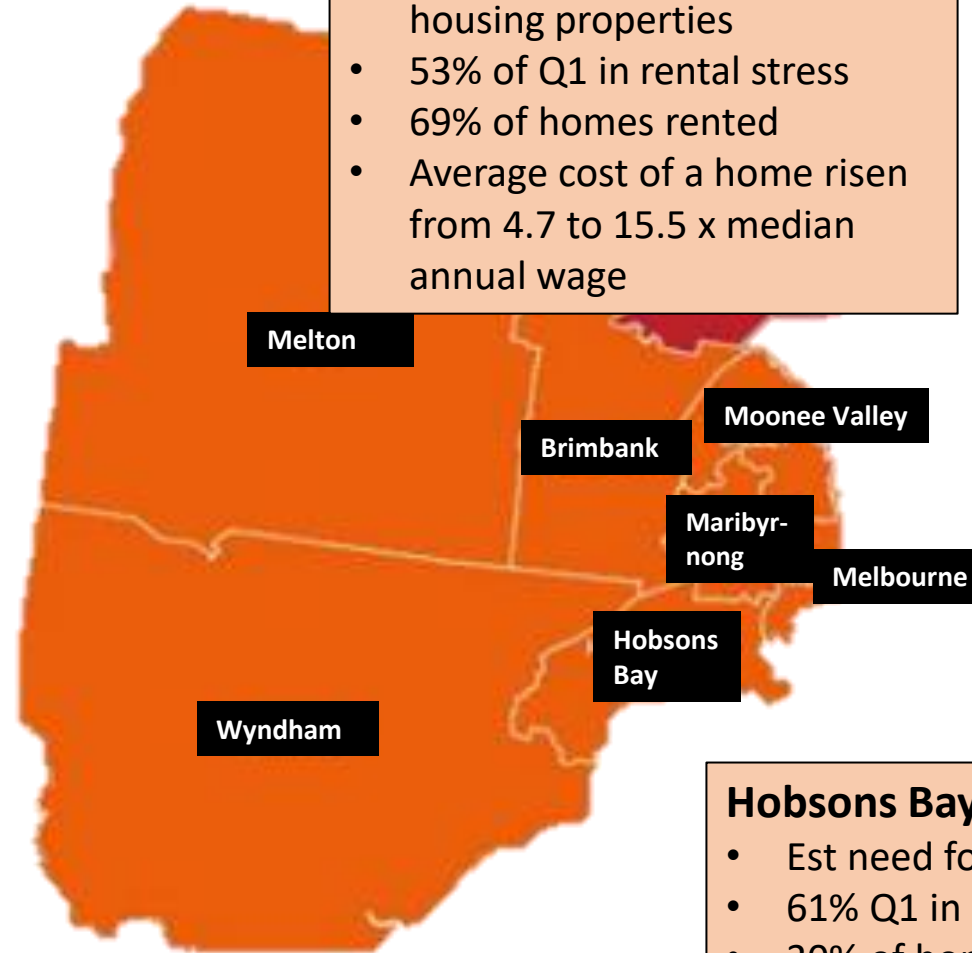
Why is homelessness increasing?

We have an affordability problem

In March 2024 Anglicare reviewed the 9,852 properties available private rental properties in Melbourne

There were 3 properties affordable for a couple on Centrelink payments with one or two children and 1 property in the whole of Melbourne affordable for a single parent with 1-2 children on Parenting Payment.

There was not a single property affordable for a single person on Jobseeker or a young person on Youth Allowance.

Inadequate social housing supply

Proportion of all housing that is social housing
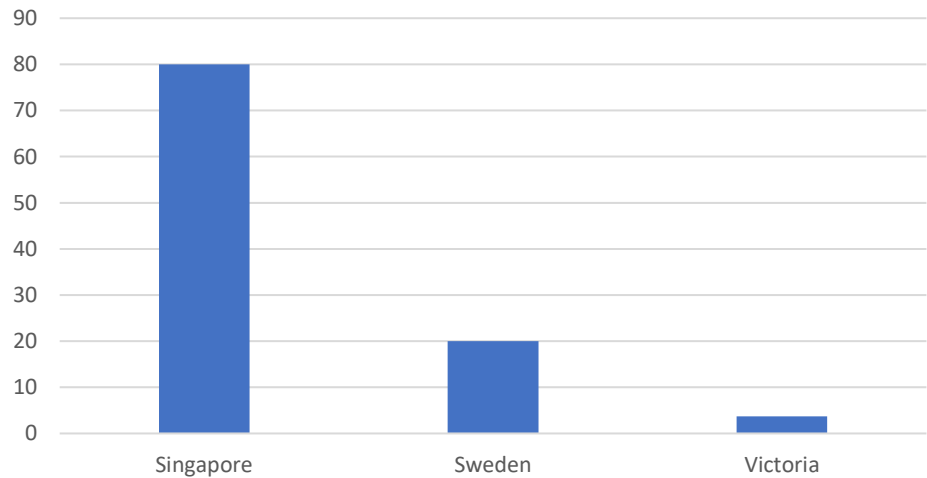
60,000 households on the social housing waiting list now. (This is more than 82,000 Victorians, including over 25,000 children).

Approximately 3,500 households are allocated social housing each year.

There is at least **a 3 year wait** for urgent applicants and indefinite waits for other groups.

The State Government Big Housing Build is constructing 9,300 new social housing properties over 4 years.

However, to meet the national average Victoria will need to build more than 6,000 properties each year for ten years.

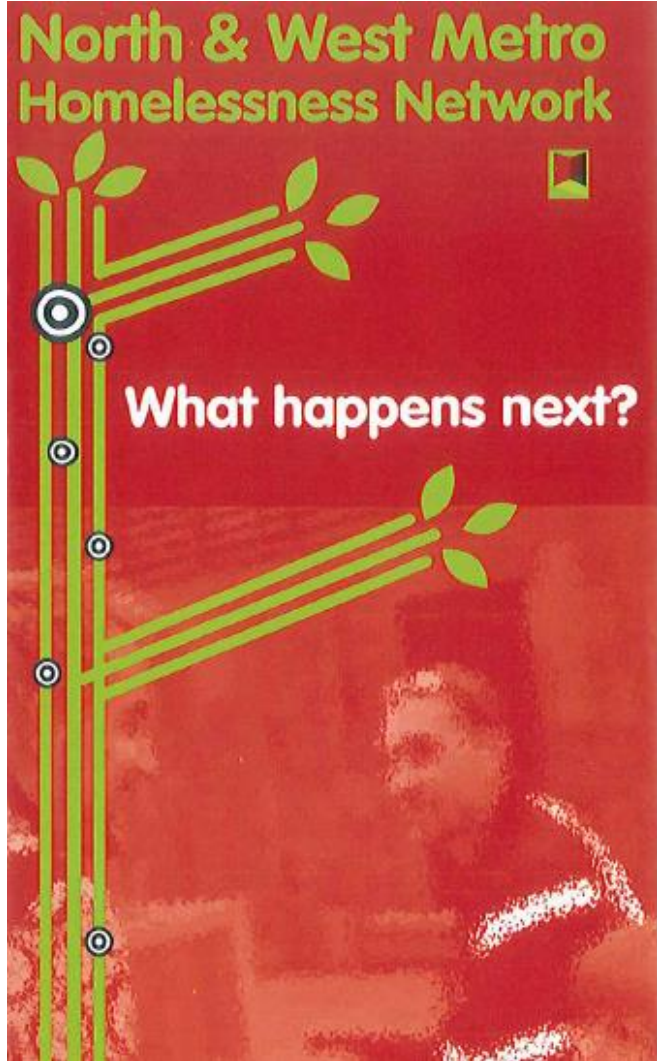**Victoria has the lowest proportion of social housing of any State.**

30,605

22,500 Victorians homeless every night

"more houses for people"

Those assisted by the homelessness service system

Role of Consumers in the service system

North & West Metro Homelessness Network

What happens next?

✔️ All programs are voluntary

📍 Consumers choose geographic area and programs

📋 Consumer charter guides client rights and responsibilities

🔍 Consumers can identify if there are services that they don't want to be referred to

⚛️ Network collects and responds to consumer feedback.

🔒 Consumers consent to transfer of information across the homelessness system

Who is seeking homelessness assistance and why?

Of those who present to the HSS in Victoria, generally

- 60% are women
- 17% are under 25 (12% in the West)
- 36% are sole person households
- 43% are accompanied by children
- 13% are First Nations people (8% in the West)

Research shows that generally one event will trigger homelessness.

People presenting to homelessness service identify the key trigger as:

- Financial difficulties (48%)
- Family violence (40%)
- Housing crisis (36%)

Other key triggers are:

- Abuse and family breakdown (young people)
- Loss of employment
- Ill health

Impact of being without a stable home

Women experiencing homelessness reported:

- deterioration in their mental health
- worry about their children
- family breakdown
- being raped whilst homeless
- being scared, unsafe, despairing, and
- loneliness.

Men reported:

- deterioration in their mental health
- depression
- Anxiety
- inability to work, and
- loss of employment.

Feedback from Consumers

- The experience of homelessness is devastating

- Melbourne is experiencing a housing crisis – the key thing that consumers identify would improve their experience of the homelessness service system is access to affordable housing.

- Consumers generally feel respected by homelessness service providers.

- **Consumers report that they still have to tell their story more often than they would like.**

- Emergency accommodation is generally inappropriate and harmful.

- Consumers report a key reason for seeking support is "someone to talk to about my problems".

- Consumers express different preferences for communication methods: face to face, phone, zoom, whats app

- Consumers want accurate and transparent information.

30,605

22,000 Victorians homeless every night

"more houses for people"

Navigating the HSS in Melbourne's west

Access point catchments

| VincentCare Community Hub |
| Salvation Army Western Metro Homelessness Service |
| Haven Home Safe |
| Unison |
| Launch Housing |

Unison	9689 2777 iap@unison.org.au	112 – 122 Victoria St Seddon	
Unison outpost	9216 0300 iapwerribee@unison.org.au	Level 1, 1-3 Watton St Werribee	
Salvation Army Western Metro Homelessness Services	9313 4700 sunshineIAP@salvationarmy.org.au	34 Devonshire Rd Sunshine	Initial contact is generally by phone. Service will be moving – July? Melton outpost is currently closed.

Accessing the HSS

If your client is:
- 16 or over
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Looking for support and housing

Call 1800 825 955 to be directed to the closest access point Free call from most mobiles

Present to a homelessness access point for an assessment

Initial Assessment & Planning
- Housing, support & risk assessment
- Prioritised for resources
- Short term planning, including possible access to brokerage

Access

- Access points in the West are Salvation Army Western Metro (Brimbank/Melton), with a youth specialist response and Unison (rest of the west)

- Women's Housing Ltd, Frontyard and Housing Choices are specialist access points. Some access points have appointments

- **ADDRESS ON HEALTH CARE CARD OR WHERE SOMEONE'S CAR IS PARKED DO NOT DETERMINE SERVICE.**

- First contact generally by phone (ring 9-5)

- 1800# - can forward a call to the nearest access point during the day if the consumer knows their postcode

- Access Points negotiated a shared approach to HEF allocation.

- After hours – St Kilda Crisis Centre responds via 1800#

Access point - Initial assessment & planning (IAP)

Ascertain
- Ascertain need for emergency accom
  - HEF, referral to hotels and rooming houses
  - Co-contribution system

Identify
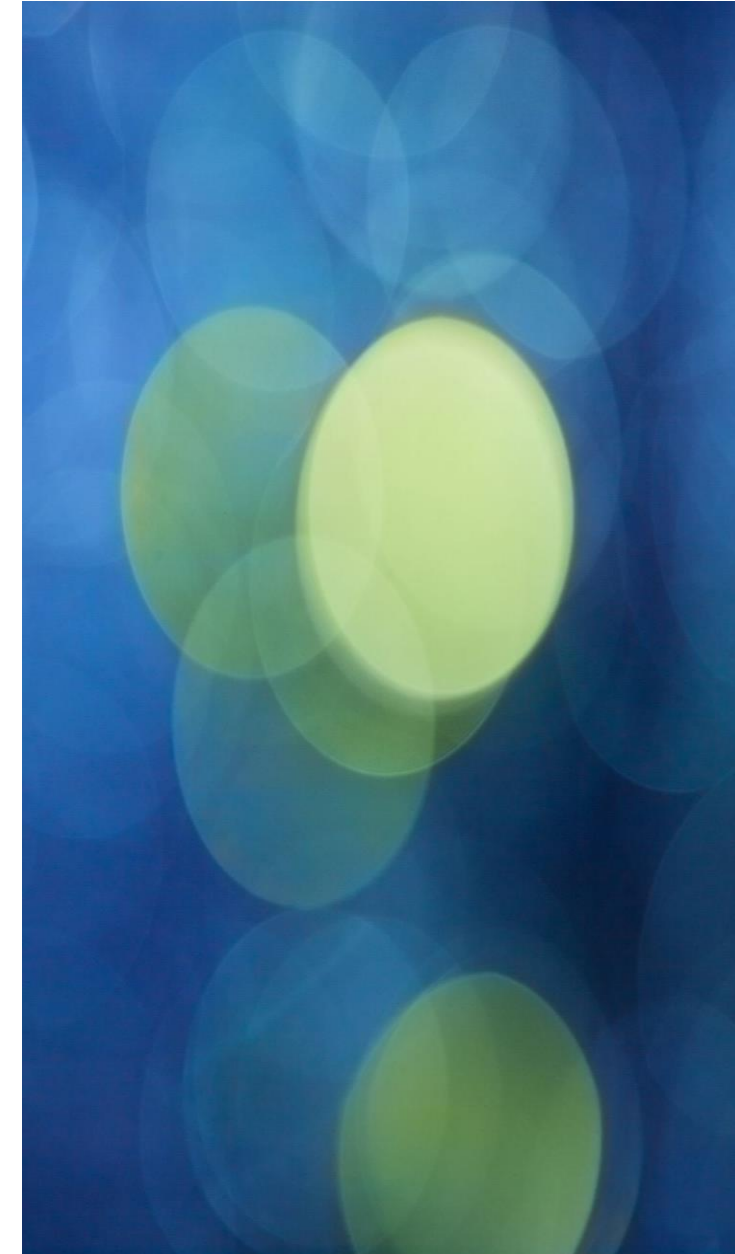- Identify short term goals and develop a plan in response

Undertake
- Undertake a risk assessment

Place on
- Place on prioritisation list for referral to support and accommodation

Make
- Make referrals if possible (PRAP, support)

Statewide IAP assessment tool

Summary

Needs and Risks

Response Provided (include housing assistance provided or planned and supports needed, provided or arranged)

Housing Allocated

Support Allocated

Next Steps

Target Group (Family Violence, Young People, Indigenous, Families, Single Adults)

Priority Status
Housing Need
Support Need
Assessment of Personal Vulnerabilities
Status of Interim Response

Consent

Client consent to share information
To record freely given informed client consent to share their information with a specific agency/ies for a specific purpose

Name: <<p_firstname>> <<p_lastname>>
Date of Birth: <<p_dob>>
Sex: <<p_gender>>

Section 1: Proposed Information Uses and Disclosures
1.1 Referrals
The following service(s) are recommended. It is also recommended that relevant information is forwarded to the agency(s) that provide these services, in order that consumers receive the best possible care.

Service Type Eg. - Housing support - Drug & Alcohol support	Name of Agency	Type of information (including limits as applicable) Eg. - All relevant information - Housing situation only

Section 2: Record of Consumer Consent

2(a) Verbal consent

Worker Use Only

Verbal consent can be used when it is not practicable to obtain written consent.

I have discussed the proposed referrals with the consumer or authorised representative and I am satisfied that the consumer understands the proposed uses and disclosures, and has provided their informed consent to:
Referrals ☐

Signed
....
(Worker)

Date   <<today>>

Worker name:
<<w_firstname>> <<w_lastname>>

Position: <<w_position>>

2(b) Written Consumer Consent

My worker/practitioner has discussed with me how, and why certain information about me may need to be provided to other service providers. I understand the recommendations and I give my permission for the information to be shared as detailed above.
Signed

....
Signed by ☐ Client or ☐ Authorised representative

Date   <<today>>

Name: <<p_firstname>> <<p_lastname>>

Witnessed: ....
(worker)

Worker name: <<w_firstname>> <<w_lastname>>

Position: <<w_position>>

Informed of privacy/confidentiality & storage of personal information   ☐ Y ☐ N
Provided with hard copy of clients rights and confidentiality   ☐ Y ☐ N

Housing need

10.3.4 Prioritisation of Housing Need

Level of housing need	Current Accommodation	Other housing options
High	Client experiencing primary homelessness (sleeping rough, on trains, in car, squatting). Client, living in a family violence situation at immediate risk of injury to self and/or children (possibly with Child Protection Order to leave violent partner or have children removed)	Client has no other reasonable accommodation options: • Client cannot access HEF and/or • Accommodation cannot be sourced due to multiple bans from accommodation providers and/or • Accommodation cannot be established because the health or wellbeing of the client would be seriously compromised in HEF purchased accommodation, for example: ➢ Client has recently suffered physical attack within a rooming house setting, and it could be reasonably assessed that further accommodation in a similar setting would increase the clients experience of trauma ➢ Client experiencing sever health problems could reasonably be expected to be worsened by rooming house accommodation, but does not require hospitalisation ➢ Client assessed as particularly vulnerable to exploitation or violence in a rooming house environment-for example, frail aged and families

Level of vulnerability

Level of personal vulnerability	
High	• There is significant risk of harm to individual/household by self or others; and/or • There is a significant risk of standover and abuse in congregate settings; and/or • Individual/household is experiencing a level of crisis significant enough to impact on their capacity to manage independently; and/or • Household/individual has no access to supports.
Medium	• Individual/household faces no immediate and significant risks, however, if the situation is unlikely to improve, the individual/household's capacity to cope in the current situation will be impacted and their needs will be likely to escalate; and/or • Household/individual does not have access to additional supports.
Low	• Individual/household exhibits good copings skills; not negatively impacted by others; and/or • Individual/household may have access to additional supports.

Support need

10.3.5 Prioritisation of Support Need

Level of support need	Stated and/or observed support needs	Professional support available

High	• Client has one or more significant support needs currently having a major impact on clients functioning and/or wellbeing
	
	and/or
	
	• Client has multiple or complex support needs requiring intensive assistance
	
	and/or
	
	• There is significant risk of harm to client or others, due to:
	
	  ➤ Major physical or mental health issues
	
	  ➤ Vulnerability to violence (including domestic violence), exploitation or abuse from others
	
	  ➤ Potential for self-harm/suicide risk.
		Client currently has no active support in place:
		
		• Previous support links may have broken down
		
		• Client may be resisting support
		
		or
		
		• Client has some support in place, but the support relationship is tenuous or likely to break down in the near future.

Purchased accommodation

If people have nowhere to live, access points will try to purchase emergency accommodation for short periods.
Funding is now so tight that services prioritise funding for emergency accommodation.

There is not enough funding to accommodate everyone who needs it for as long as they need it.

MOTELS/HOTELS

- Motel accommodation consists of basic living facilities. Motels with cooking facilities are rare and expensive
- 2 rooms are required for large single parent families
- During lockdowns Homes Victoria provided more HEF so that people experiencing homelessness could be accommodated in hotels
- Families are generally asked to co-contribute 30% of incomes to stretch their stay

ROOMING HOUSES

- The majority of rooming houses are unhabitable; unregistered and unsafe, therefore, not used by the Salvation Army
- Housing agencies are boycotting some of the most unsafe and unregistered rooming houses.

There are **423** government funded crisis beds in Victoria.

When these beds are full, homelessness services purchase hotel and rooming house accommodation.

The homelessness access points in Melbourne's north and west had to purchase nearly **10,000** beds in 2018/19.

A Crisis in Crisis

For more information on crisis accommodation, see "*A Crisis in Crisis*" Crisis in Crisis: The Appalling State of Emergency Accommodation in Melbourne's north and west (nwhn.net.au)

During the pandemic over 3,000 households were accommodated in hotels – largely with poor amenity.

Sector has developed a 'script' for consumers.

Vacancy Management System

- In SHIP and SRS

- Available to non SHIP homelessness services

- Services with vacancies load vacancies

- Vacancies show type and complexity of support available

- Refuge vacancies included

Vacancy Type	Vacancy	Next Available Date
HEART	1 (Low needs clients)	
HEART	(Medium needs clients)	
HEART	1 (High needs clients)	
HEART	(Low needs clients)	
Interim Support	1 (Medium needs clients)	
Interim Support	(High needs clients)	
Case Management	(Low needs clients)	
Case Management	(Medium needs clients)	
Case Management	2 (High needs clients)	

Resource Allocation

Resources are allocated:

- To those in greatest need
- Matched to available resources
- For those who have been waiting longest

All resources listed on VMS

Holder of resource responsible for 'publishing' and describing resource

Access Points 'best matches' to available resources from prioritisation list

Access Point usually contacts the consumer to check that they would like to be referred to resource

Access Points refers to resource (support first, then housing if available)

NB:

- E referral is available in SHIP/SAMIS to assist with sharing of information

- Consumers report they are still telling their stories too often – importance of reading referral

E referral

- E-referral assists us to work as a service system, so consumers don't 'tell their story too often.'

- All homelessness services have the capacity to send referrals to each other electronically through SHIP/SAMIS.

- This is safer than emailing referrals.

- SHIP keeps a record of referrals sent and received.

- E referral sets up a support period and migrates information to SHIP

Link to e-referral training

Overview session - https://bit.ly/eReferral-Overview
Demonstration session - https://bit.ly/eReferral-Demonstration
Info sheet: Data and SHIP/data tools (nwhn.net.au)

Acceptance of referral

- Support agency accepts first eligible referral

- Agency contacts client, provides information about the service and arranges a catch up

- Support agency commences comprehensive assessment (assessment builds over time)

- Support agency advises access point whether consumer needs to remain on prioritisation list for transitional housing or other resources

- Support agency can forward updates on this form or through e referral.

NORTH AND WEST HOMELESSNESS LASN
POST REFERRAL CLIENT FEEDBACK FORM

Support agency name:

General Criteria:

Client Name: D.O.B:

Date of referral to support agency: Date of feedback:

Worker's Name and contact details:

Household Type	Current Accommodation	Summary of factors contributing to change of priority (Support; Housing; Personal Vulnerability)	Other information requiring updating on assessment (i.e. change to household, seeking access to other homelessness resources, change of contact details)	If no longer receiving support, please summarise: • Outcomes achieved, • Housing tenure and type obtained at exit ar • Date of case closure

Is client requesting transfer of assessment to another access point: Yes/No
If yes, which one: _____
Does client wish to remain on prioritisation list at referring access point service   Yes/No

For completion by access point:
Date SHIP updated:
Date assessment transferred to another access point, if required:

Assessment

Assessment is narrative based

- **Recorded in a standard format across the State:**
  Needs & risks; Response provided; Housing allocated; Support allocated; Next steps

Two part assessment:

a) Initial assessment – Undertaken by Access points

- Incorporates risk assessment
- Assessment of support need, housing need and personal vulnerability
- Informs short term planning and matching to service vacancies

b) Comprehensive assessment – Undertaken by Support agencies following a referral

- Comprehensive assessment of range of needs identified by client to inform case plan
- Worker and client have capacity to address needs identified

Resources of the Homelessness Service System

Access Points (2+ 1 youth & 1 family violence)	Providing: initial assessment, short term planning, risk assessment, prioritisation and referrals to homelessness services
Crisis supported accommodation	Youth refuges, women's refuges and Flagstaff/Ozanam/Southbank – average stay of 6 weeks
Transitional housing	1,100 properties – managed according to the Housing & Support Partnership Agreement
Support	Most homelessness assistance is outreach based, case managed support for an average of 13 weeks
Interim Response 2 and 3/Brief Task Based Response	Support allocated to people for a very short time to undertake discreet tasks that will help someone avoid becoming homeless or will reduce they crisis they are experiencing before they can access support.
Homelessness Emergency Accommodation Response Team (HEART)/H2H	**HEART:** Coordinated support to people experiencing homelessness who are accommodated in hotels as a COVID response. **H2H:** medium term housing and support packages for people who were accommodated in hotels during COVID.
Brokerage	HEF, Private Rental Access Program, Family Violence packages
Day centres	Drop-in services, such as VincentCare Homelessness Resource Centre and St Mary's House of Welcome – providing food and some onsite services
Tenancy Plus	Support to tenants of public and community housing, whose tenancy is at risk.
Children's programs	Children's Resource Coordinators, Bright Futures
Specialist programs	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Wintringham, Justice linked programs

Client consent and data

Specialist homelessness information system (SHIP) is a consumer data system (challenging for IA&P)

Salvation Army uses SAMIS and some services use SRS – all report to DFFH through SHIP

Data is our primary tool for advocacy (SHIP and Census)

See SHIP Info sheet for key data

DFFH reporting provided through SHIP data

SHIP informed consent approach utilised

- Access point services ask for client consent to transfer information across the HSS.

- DFFH advised that consent wording to clients is: you will share their information as needed, to achieve the client's primary goal. If they do not want you to share their information, then they should not provide it to you.

- If the agency has obtained consent has a copy of the consent at the service, then a copy of the consent does not need to be transferred with the referral.

- Consumers identify any services that they don't wish for information to be transferred to

- Consent lasts six months

Key data questions

Reason<u>s</u> for presenting to homelessness service

- Encourage a consumer to list all the reasons that have contributed to them being homeless i.e family violence, family breakdown, mental health issues etc.
- Revisit these questions

Needed, provided, referred

- Key field for identifying complexity of need
- List all 'needs', whether or not the service can provide them.
- List long term housing as a need

Housing situation at beginning and end of support

- Drawn from three questions covering: tenure, dwellings/residents and conditions of occupancy.

Homelessness support services linked to accommodation

- **Crisis supported accommodation** (CSAs): 423 beds in Victoria: youth refuges, women's refuges and supported accommodation for single men, single women and families.

  Case managed support in crisis support and crisis supported accommodation services is funded for an average of six weeks with a higher ratio of staff to clients (generally 1 worker: 6 individual clients or 5.5 households when assisting families).

- **Homes First:** Replaces Homelessness to a Home and Homes for Families which linked housing and support packages for 18 months for people with a history of sleeping rough, who were accommodated in hotels during lock down. (Not taking new clients.)

- **Foyer models:** Step Ahead, Ladder, Hope Street Melton and Whittlesea, Launch Broadmeadows and soon Wyndham

- **Transitional housing:** all tenants of transitional housing must have a homelessness or other support worker

Homelessness (transition) support (Activity 20082)

Outreach based case managed support to assist people in crisis to move to independent long term housing.

- The average duration of support is 13 weeks.

- Generally provided on an outreach basis:
  clients may be residing in temporary situations (e.g. a rooming house), exiting crisis accommodation (e.g. refuge), or in transitional housing. Support may be offered from an office base, the client's residence or an agreed venue

- 1 worker: 12 clients when supporting individuals

- 1 worker: 7.5 households when assisting families (about 2.5/hrs a week per client)

- Support provision includes:
  assistance to find housing, emotional support, advocacy, assistance to obtain income, parenting support, active referral to other service systems, assistance with living skills, assistance to access employment, education and training.

Transitional Housing Management (THM) Program

- Transitional properties are either owned or leased by the Director of Housing

- The purpose of the program is to provide short term accommodation while a household stabilises.

- Salvation Army Housing Services and Unison manage 500 THM properties in the West.

- IAP refer into THM properties from the prioritisation list.

- A tenant must have a support worker throughout their tenancy.

- A Housing and Support Partnership Agreement guides responsibilities of tenancy admin, support and the tenant.

- Tenancy conditions are determined by the RTA.

Brokerage

- **Housing Establishment Fund:**
  - Initially to assist households to maintain or establish housing.
  - Access point services use to purchase emergency accommodation.
  - Support services to assist consumers to settle into new housing.

- **Private Rental Access Program (PRAP):**
  - Managed by access point services
  - DFFH program guidelines: PRAP Guidelines revised 2019.pdf (dffh.vic.gov.au)
  - Includes three elements: Private rental brokers, Private rental assistance brokerage & PRAP Plus (support program)
  - Up to $7,000 brokerage packages available per household once every 12 months (DFFH can approve higher amounts)

- **Family Violence Flexible Funding Packages:**
  - Provide a new individualised approach to respond to victim/survivors experiencing family violence. Individualised packages of up to $10,000 will be available, with an average cost of $3,000. DFFH program guidelines here
  - Managed by GenWest in the West; available through The Orange Doors: Brokerage services | Family violence information for professionals | What We Do | GenWest | Gender Justice and Change | Genwest

- **Children's Resource Program brokerage:** http://merri.org.au/site/regional-childrens-resource-program/

- **Creating Connections Education Employment Pathways (CEEP) brokerage:** https://www.mcm.org.au/homelessness/support-services/ongoing/creating-connections-ceep

- **FRMP brokerage:** https://www.mcm.org.au/homelessness/frontyard/our-services/family-support/family-reconciliation-mediation-program

- **Youth Private Rental Brokerage:** https://vincentcare.org.au/our-services/private-rental-brokerage-program/

Family Violence Services in the West

Everyone has the right to feel safe respected in their own home and community.

If you or someone you know is exp abuse or control from a loved one member or carer, this is not okay support is available.

1800 Respect - 1800 737 732

InTouch - 1800 755 988
Men's Referral Service - 1300 766 49

All services offer interpreting servic

If you feel unsafe or fearful for you child or family member, please call **Police** 000 or **Safe Steps** 1800 015 1

You are not alone.

Together For Respect At Home

- Orange Doors have just opened in the West
- A new Family Violence Court is opening in Sunshine
- You can access information about family violence responses in the West here: [WIFVC - Western Integrated Family Violence Committee](#)

Homelessness funded family violence programs:

- Family Violence Outreach Support/L17s
- Court Support
- CALD specific support
- Flexible funding packages

- **Women's refuges**

  Elizabeth Morgan, Women's Health West, McAuley Community Services for Women & Safe Futures

- **Statewide: Safe Steps and In Touch**

Broader Integrated Family Violence Services:

- **The Orange Doors**

  - Men's behavioural change programs
  - Women's and children's counselling programs
  - See also The Rainbow Door

Resources for young people

- **Family Reconciliation Mediation Program:**
  Brokerage to assist young people to access therapies (counselling, mediation, group work) and some funding for young people couch surfing

- **Creating Connections:**
  A living skills, education, employment and training program (including CEEP brokerage) – managed by Melbourne City Mission and a Private Rental Brokerage program managed by VincentCare

- **Homelessness Youth Dual Diagnosis Initiative (HYDDI)** – based at WRAP, this position provides secondary consultation for workers supporting people with both mental health and substance use issues.

- **Youth Reconciliation positions**

- **YAC and SAFY**
  Youth Allocations Committee (YAC) and Supported Accommodation for Young People (SAFY) – assisting all young people who present to the HSS in the West

ACCOs in the North and West

First Nations people have the option of presenting to the generalist services or to one of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations operating across the North & West:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access points will be opening.**

- **Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service:** support for Aboriginal women or other women involved with Aboriginal men experiencing family violence, Ph: (03) 9482 5744. Has an office in Melton. www.emhaws.org.au

- **Marg Tucker Hostel for Girls:** accommodation service for young women; Fairfield, Ph: (03) 9482 1161, margarettucker.org.au

- **Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Service:** crisis accommodation service for young men;

- **VACSAL** – homelessness outreach program

- **Case management service for Indigenous men who use violence**, Thornbury, Ph: (03) 9484 5310, www.vacsal.org.au/programs/bert-williams-center.aspx

- **WT Onus and George Wright Shelter for the Homeless – Aboriginal Hostels Ltd:** Northcote, Ph: (03) 9489 6701, www.ahl.gov.au (ring first to check that the service is taking referrals)

- **Indigenous Tenancies at Risk program**: based at Aborigines Advancement League; Thornbury, Ph: (03) 9480 7777

- **VACCA** – support to families experiencing homelessness – operating in Werribee

Salvation Army has an ATSI IAP worker, who will be based at Kirrip four days a week and at the Sunshine office one day a week. Kirrip provide cultural supervision.

Other direct referral services

You can contact these services directly:

- **Flat Out/ACSO/Brosnan**
  Support services for adult men, adult women and young people in contact with the criminal justice system

- **Day centres**
  Provide meals, showers, some onsite services

- **Bright Futures North West**
  Support for children and secondary consultation on supporting children

- **Greenlight Partnership**
  Support to people who were sleeping rough but who have now access housing with links to Yarra, Melbourne and Stonnington

- **Pride In Place**
  Pride in Place assists lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, asexual and queer people find housing in the Inner West, Hume, Merri-bek, Outer East and Central Highlands.

Youth programs:

- **Reconnect**
  Program for 12 -18 years who are homelessness or at risk

- **Hope to Home Whittlesea**
  A program, managed by Hope Street, to assist young people to access private rental

- **Melton First Response Youth**
  Outreach: outreach based support for young people in Melton

- **Supported referral services**
  Some homelessness funded youth services provide an assertive outreach role – supporting young people until they are ready to contact an access point service.

Homeless Service System: need vs capacity

The homelessness service system in Melbourne's west

13,546 households presented to Western homelessness services in 2017/18

Approximately 4,000 (28%) turned away without appointments

1,385 are still on a waiting list for housing and support

3,596 (26%) were provided with short term low cost private accommodation/rooming houses

Just under 4,000 (28%) were provided with homelessness case managed support

230 (2%) were provided with transitional housing

Be kind...

30,605

22,000 Victorians homeless every night

"more houses for people"

Role of the homelessness service system

Aim of the HSS

To provide assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to support them:

- to find or maintain stable long term housing; and

- to address those issues that have contributed to homelessness, or risk of homelessness, to reduce the likelihood of recurring homelessness.

Funding for the HSS

- **Specialist Homelessness Services** (SHSs) across Australia are jointly funded through by the Commonwealth and State Governments, through the National Housing & Homelessness Agreement (NHHA)
  [The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement | Federal Financial Relations](#)

- The Agreement has expired and we are awaiting the new Agreement.

- The Commonwealth sets targets for the State, but the State manages allocation of the funding.

- Funding is allocated to community organisations through a Funding and Service Agreement (FASA) by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

- The FASA outlines targets for each homelessness program and all guidelines, legislation and conditions of funding that the service must adhere to.
  https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/

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22 000 Victorians homeless every night

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Framework for the homelessness service system

Practice Framework

Services are funded to work from an approach which is:

- Strengths based

- Consumer focussed

- Trauma informed

- Children are consumers

- Case managed (in the support services)

And to work with these Family Safety Victoria Frameworks:

- [Responsive to family violence](#) (MARAM)

- CISS/FVISS

- Child Safe Standards

Elements of good homelessness practice

- **Tenacity and consistency**: do what you promise to do

- **Attentiveness**: consumers are the experts in their own lives

- **Consumer focused**: what are the consumer's priorities?

- **Trauma informed**: know the impacts of trauma; operate in a trauma informed way

- **Strengths based:** consumers show enormous strength by surviving homelessness – let them know that and draw on their strengths/resources

- **Flexible –** ask consumers how they would like to communicate (face to face, text, email, What's app, zoom)

- **Honest –** only offer what you can. Provide clear and transparent information.

The Eight Elements To Case Management

Check Their Needs
Entry Screening

- Be clear about who you can help
- Be clear about what you can do
- Talk in a friendly place
- Act quickly, on urgent/ emergency needs
- Use other services, if needed
- If you can't help, tell them why
- If they don't accept this, they can talk to the co-ordinator
- Write down what you found out and how you helped

Talk About Their Story
Assessment

- Ask if it is okay to get their info from other services or give it to other services they used
- See what has to be done first
- See what needs to be done over the next few weeks and months
- Find out what their hopes, skills and interests are
- Give them time to open up and give their whole story
- Let them know you will keep their story private
- Check that their needs are met in basic safety, health, income, shelter, food and warmth
- Write down what you have done

Think About Your Next Action
Planning

- Think about what their hopes, skills and interests are
- Talk with your fellow workers for more ideas
- List the things you need to do, and that they need to do
- Start small, think big
- Make sure short term needs are met quickly
- Write down what you both agree to do and when you will do it

Helping Them
Direct Service

- Make sure their privacy is respected
- Keep them up to date with what you are doing for them
- Keep yourself up to date with what other services are available
- Write down how you help and what happens (good and bad)

Get Someone Else To Help Them
Co-ordination

- Talk with co-workers to get ideas on how to help
- Talk with other services
- Work out how you and other services can work together
- Write down what you do

See How They Are Going
Do Something Else If It Is Not Working
Monitoring Review

- See what they have done well
- Encourage them where they have done well
- Sit down, ask questions and listen
- Take any chance to see a positive
- Check what you and they have done against the original plan
- Make changes to the plan if needed
- Write down the successes and what needs to be worked on

Finish The Job
See They Keep Getting Help
Check In Later
Exit Planning
Case Closure
Follow Up

- Make a time for your work with them to end
- Tell them what follow-up support will be given
- Be clear about who needs to be part of the decision to finish direct support
- If the person chooses to leave at any time, make sure they are linked up to support people or services
- If you decide they need to leave make sure they are linked up to services or get outreach support
- Make sure they have somewhere to go and can get there

See If You Did Everything You Could To Help
Evaluation

- Think about what was successful and what could be done better
- Talk with the person you helped in a relaxed way
- Talk with other workers
- Talk with the person's family and friends
- If your service has forms to be filled in by the person leaving, make sure they understand the words used
- Help them fill it in (they talk, you write)
- Use this information to do your job better and show your community what the service does and how well it is done

Role of the LASN

Homelessness services were formed into local area service networks (LASNs) with shared responsibility for:

- Holding consumers and assisting them to navigate the service system

- Coordinated provision of services

- Operating a shared prioritisation approach matching client need to available resources

- Managing the limited resources of the Sector effectively

- Sharing information and provide advice to DFFH & advocacy

- Authorised delegate attends LASN meetings

- LASN agencies abide by LASN decisions

Opening Doors
Better access for homeless people to social housing and support services in Victoria
Service coordination guide

Shared approaches

Common approaches and shared tools:

- A shared assessment framework

- A shared approach to prioritisation

- Development of a vacancy management system

- Statewide and local practice guidelines

- Ereferral

The LASNs monitor arrangements through:

- Regular LASN meetings

- Improvement processes

- Consumer feedback

- Working Groups

Opening Doors
Better access for homeless people to social housing and support services in Victoria
Framework

Guidelines

Statewide

[Statewide resources (nwhn.net.au)](nwhn.net.au)

- Homelessness Guidelines and Conditions of Funding, May 2014 + 2020 updates – about to be updated.
- Opening Doors Framework
- Prison Exits Protocol – to be incorporated into updated Guidelines.
- Cross Regional Referral Protocol – to be incorporated into updated Guidelines.
- Youth Justice/Homelessness Protocol – to be incorporated into updated Guidelines.
- Private Rental Access Program (PRAP) Guidelines
- MARAM Guidelines
- H2H Guidelines
- Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework
- Homelessness/NDIS guidelines

In the West

Northern and Western Homelessness Guidelines (nwhn.net.au)

- Regional Practice Manual – currently being updated
- LASN Terms of Reference
- Housing and Support Partnership Agreement – currently being updated
- Family Violence Entry Point/ Homelessness Access Point Protocol – currently being updated
- IR 2 Practice Guide
- Post Referral Feedback form
- Intra regional HEF Guideline/Access Coordination Practice

North&West Metropolitan Homelessness Network

Service System Practice Manual

Version 3: December 2012

Peak bodies, training and consumer advocacy

Peak bodies

There are three peak bodies particularly relevant to homelessness and family violence services:

- Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)

- Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA Vic)

- Safe and Equal (formerly DV Vic)

Sign up to CHP ebulletin:

https://chp.org.au/enewsletters/

Homelessness Advocacy Service

- HAS is the key advocacy service for consumers who are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

- HAS can assist consumers to address issues with services.

- The goal of HAS is to achieve mutually beneficial resolutions for consumers and service providers.

- Angela Kyriakopoulos is the HAS Advocate. You can contact Angela via email at angela@chp.org.au or by phone on 1800 066 256 or 9415 6200; please ask for HAS.

Training

Sign up to CHP Learning Hub:
https://chp.kineoportal.com.au

30,605

22,000 Victorians homeless every night

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Long term housing

Long term housing

What is social housing?

Social housing is an umbrella term to describe short and long-term rental housing that is owned and run by the government or not-for-profit agencies. … It is for people on low incomes who need housing, especially those who have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have other special needs.

Generally housing is referred to as **public housing** if it is managed by Homes Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Housing managed by not for profit non government Housing Associations is generally referred to as **community housing**.

PUBLIC, SOCIAL, COMMUNITY OR A~~FFORDA~~
TERMS IN VICTORIA

PUBLIC

COMMUNITY

SOCIAL

"AFFORDABLE"

MARKET

RUN BY HOUSING ORGS
OR PRIVATE AGENTS.
USUALLY 75-80%
OF MARKET RATE.
AS DEFINED BY DEVELOPER

PRIVATE AGENTS.
GOES TO HIGHEST BID

STATE GOVERNMENT RUN
25% OF YOUR INCOME
* SOME PUBLIC HOUSING IS MANAGED
BY COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS

RUN BY HOUSING ORGS
30% OF YOUR INCOME +
RENTAL ASSISTANCE

rahu.org.au

Victorian Housing Register

- [The Victorian Housing Register](https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/victorian-housing-register) is a single register, managed by Homes Victoria, for applications for both public housing and community housing. (https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/victorian-housing-register)

- Homelessness agencies have access to an EPRIN number, which enables support workers to submit housing applications on behalf of consumers through a portal.

- Community housing providers are able to opt-in to the Register and select the amount of stock they wish to allocate through the Register.

- The VHR has two main categories, Register of Interest and Priority Access. Register of Interest is for all eligible applicants to register their interest in social housing.

- Priority Access is for people:
  o Who are homeless* and receiving support
  o Are escaping or have escaped family violence
  o With a disability or significant support needs
  o With special housing needs
  o Over 55

*Homelessness is broader than people sleeping rough and covers crisis and transitional housing, unsuitable or substandard housing, couchsurfing, squatting and some other circumstances.

	Application Category	Description	New or Transfer applications
Priority	1. Emergency management	For people whose housing is no longer safe or habitable, due to an emergency, e.g., a bushfire, flood or storm	Transfer or new applications
	2. Priority transfers	For existing public or community housing tenants who require relocation due to the current property being unsafe or unsuitable, or is to be redeveloped, sold or could be better utilised.	Transfer applications only.
	3. Homeless with support	People who are homeless and receiving support. Applications are lodged by support workers.	New applications only.
	4. Supported housing	For households who need a home with major disability modifications, or that receive independent living assistance or care.	New applications and transfer applications for reasons of 'severe overcrowding' and 'urgent medical needs'.
	5. Special Housing Needs	The special housing needs category helps individuals or families whose housing becomes unsuitable or who have no other housing options. Reasons applicants might apply under this category include insecure housing, inappropriate housing, unsafe housing and urgent medical need.	New applications only.
	6. Special Housing Needs, Aged 55 and over	For singles or couple aged 55 years or over who are not eligible for other priority access categories.	New applications only.
Register of Interest	For all other applicants who meet the general eligibility criteria for the VHN but do not satisfy the additional priority criteria.		Transfer or New applications.

Whilst the number of people awaiting social housing in Brimbank/Melton does not fall far short of those from Western Metro, the level of current stock is far lower.

More information about social housing can be found at: www.housing.vic.gov.au

You can appeal a social housing decision here:

Appeal a decision | Housing.vic.gov.au

You can find out about the number of current applications by broadband here:

Victorian Housing Register and transfer list by local area – June 2021.xlsx (live.com)

**Current social housing stock vs applications:
Melbourne's west**
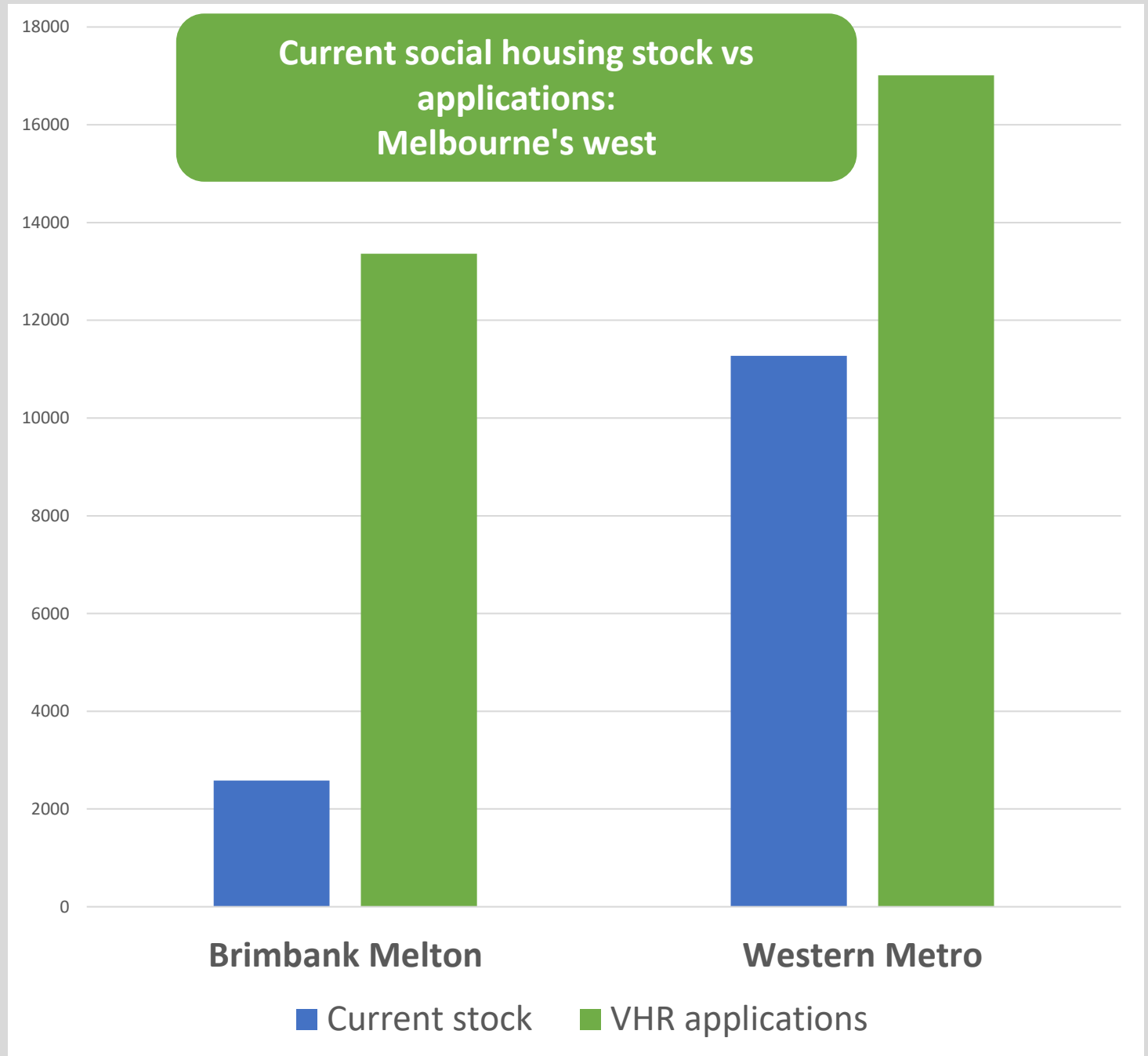
Big Housing Build

- State Government has allocated $5.3b to build more social and affordable housing in Victoria.

- **Big Housing Build** projects in the West:

LGA	# of projects	# of homes	# underway	# completed
Brimbank	23	287	242	35
Hobsons Bay	8	34	30	4
Maribyrnong	35	322	180	142
Melbourne	12	1713	571	1,142
Melton	15	63	34	29
Moonee Valley	7	583	180	142
Wyndham	51	339	302	37
West total	151	3341	1539	1531

- **Affordable housing:**
Government has built some 'affordable' housing for people on middle incomes. Rental agreements generally for 3 years with rent lower than market rent. Sign up for updates:
Homes Victoria Affordable Housing Scheme (HOMES)
<affordable@homes.vic.gov.au>

Private Rental Access Program (PRAP)/ Private Rental Brokerage (PRB)

Rent in advance

- Available through the access points
- Rent will be no more than 55% of income
- Required documents – acceptance email from Real Estate Agent or private landlord
- Correspondence indicating that income and rental affordability is calculated @ 55% of income
- IAP can request up to three weeks rent in advance from PRAP

Rental arrears

- Notice to vacate from VCAT
- Current income statement
- Income and rental affordability is calculated at 55% of income
- Contact may be made with Real Estate or landlord to discuss payment plan to save tenancy

Bonds
Can be access through Homes Victoria: RentAssist bond loan | Housing.vic.gov.au

Resources for applying for private rental

- **Realestate.com.au**

- **Fairy Floss Real Estate Facebook group** - 236,000+ members, and specific to Melbourne. Main focus is ads for rooms in share houses. Fairy Floss Real Estate - Posts | Facebook

- **Flatmates.com.au** (Listings for rooms in Melbourne)

- **https://www.domain.com.au/**

- **https://www.gumtree.com.au/s-flatshare-houseshare/melbourne/**

- **Flatmatefinders.com.au**

- **Dept of Social Services** website for information on National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) properties for rent

- **Queer Housing Melbourne & Trans Housing Melbourne** Facebook groups

- Gayshare: Gay Share Flatmate Service - Home | Facebook

- **Tenant's Victoria** inspection checklist

- Affordable housing register

Tenancy Support

- **Tenants Victoria** (general advice line, workers' advice line, rooming house support line)

- **Justice Connect Homeless Law**

- **Consumer Affairs Victoria**

- **Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Programs** – for private rental only, including private rooming houses and caravan parks. Uniting Lentara runs the program for Brimbank, Melton, Hume, Moreland and the North East. WestJustice runs the program for Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Hobson's Bay and Wyndham.

- **PRAP Plus programs**

- **International Students' Housing and Accommodation Legal Service** (via Study Melbourne and WEstJustice)

- **Tenancy Plus:** Tenancy support for people in public and community housing: Tenancy Plus support program | Housing.vic.gov.au

- **https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/private-rental**

Non homelessness resources

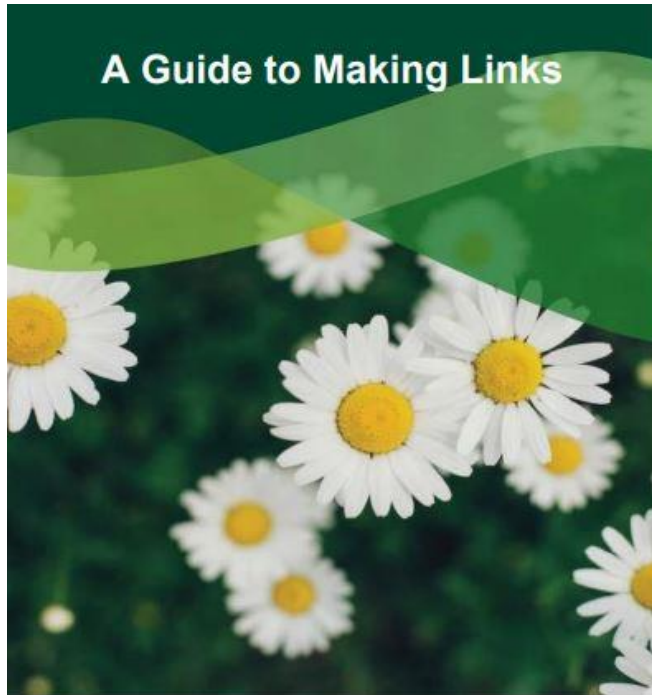A Guide to Making Links

- **Information:**
  - Facebook group: Melbourne Homelessness Support Group
  - Emergency relief list from DFFH [western-region-emergency-relief-services-covid-19-update-19-october-2021.pdf (nwhn.net.au)](#)
  - [Ask Izzy](#) – website providing information about local community services; not great on homelessness services
  - Making Links: AOD, Mental Health pathways [Making Link: AOD, Mental Health and Homelessness Partnership in Melbourne's north and west (nwhn.net.au)](#)
  - **NWHN Website**: reports from info sessions on NDIS, Births, Deaths, Marriages [WHN Info sheets (nwhn.net.au)](#)
- **Legal assistance**: WestJustice, Youth Law, Youth Justice
- **Telstra** – free phone boxes (SHIP: credit on phones)
- **Financial support**: No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS - [No-interest Loan Scheme - DFFH Services](#)), Queens Fund, Energy payment
- **NDIS** – [Brotherhood of St Laurence is local NDIS provider](#)

Advocacy

What will reduce homelessness in Melbourne?

Houses, houses, houses……

Every Victorian Should Have a Home campaign

What can you do?

✓ **Ring or email your State and Federal Members of Parliament and tell them that:**

We need immediate solutions to increase our supply of affordable housing:

- A monumental boost to social and public housing (building more public housing is an ideal economic stimulus activity)

- Legislation that requires a portion of any new housing development to be allocated to those awaiting this housing

- Construction of innovative temporary accommodation that is safe and self contained.

✓ Talk to your family, friends and colleagues about homelessness and the housing crisis

✓ **Build Origami Houses for Homelessness Week**
See: Houses At Parliament | Houses At Parliament (vhn.org.au)
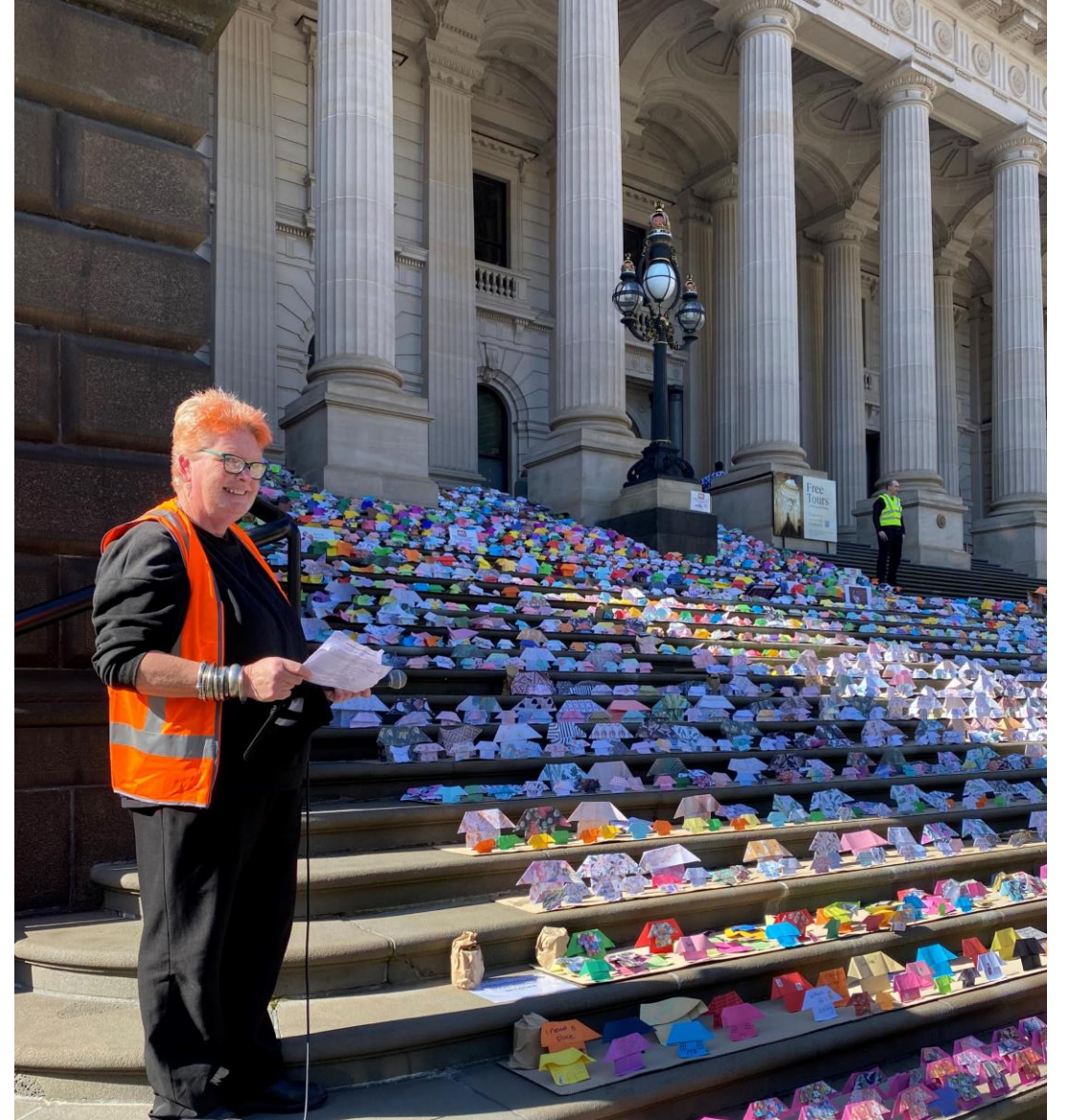
Join the Everybody's Home campaign

Ask the Federal Government to:

■ Commit to invest in building 25,000 homes per year

■ Increase the Commonwealth Assistance rate by 50 per cent

■ Commit to a plan to end homelessness by 2035

https://everybodyshome.com.au/

Sarah Langmore
Western Homelessness Networker

Ph: 0407 832 169

sarah@wombat.org.au

- **Northern & Western Homelessness Networks' website**: www.nwhn.net.au (WLASN member page password is: WLASN)

- **Subscribe to e bulletins:** Get the latest from NWHN (confirmsubscription.com)

- **Link to NWHN Guidelines:** Resources for homelessness workers in Melbourne's north and west (nwhn.net.au)

- **Link to Making Links Guide to the AOD, homelessness and mental health sectors:** Making Link: AOD, Mental Health and Homelessness Partnership in Melbourne's north and west (nwhn.net.au)