



# Victoria's homelessness service system: Presentation to the Legal and Social Issues Committee

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# Purpose of today's presentation

## **To provide the Legal and Social Issues Committee an overview of:**

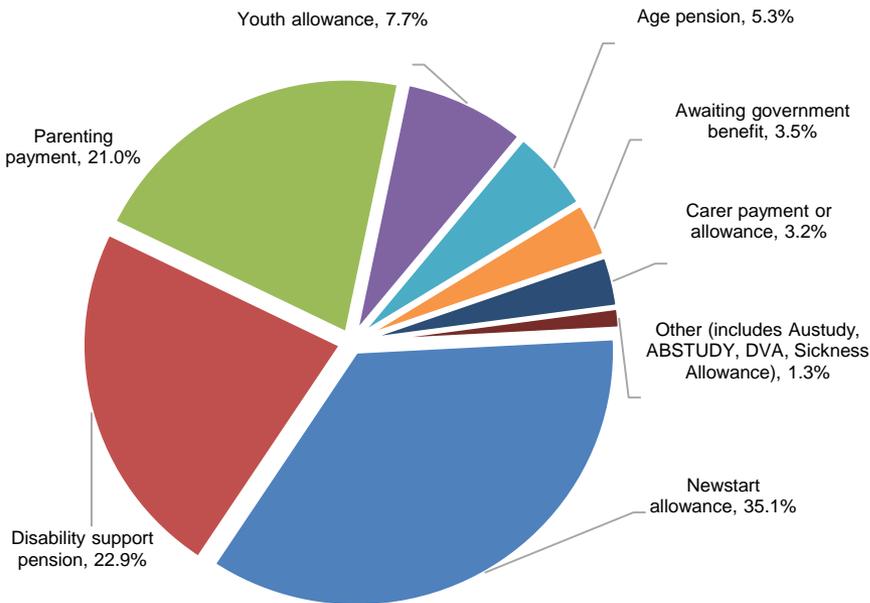
- the scale, nature and causes of homelessness in Victoria
- policies and practices that respond to homelessness
- the challenges people experiencing homelessness face during the pandemic
- homelessness responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including major initiatives to keep people experiencing homelessness safe during the pandemic
- recent investments in new support to assist people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic exit into sustainable housing
- work to maintain, renew and grow social housing

# Drivers of demand for homelessness services

## Inadequate Commonwealth income support to vulnerable people

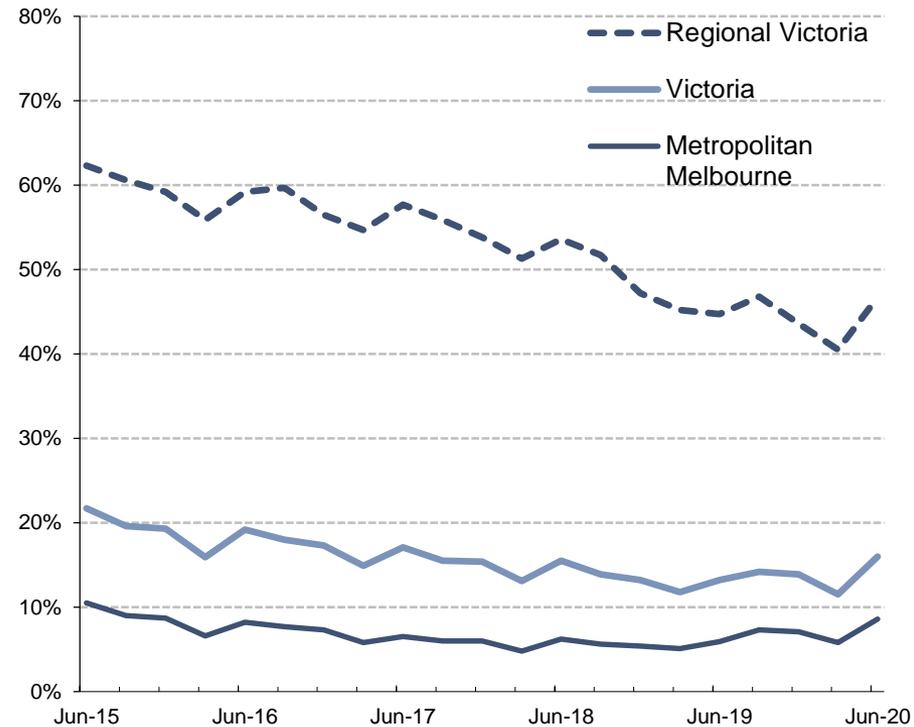
52,824 clients seeking homelessness services (approximately 76% of clients aged 15+) reported Commonwealth income support as their main income source.

Proportion of clients on Commonwealth income support, 2017-18



## A lack of supply of social and affordable housing is one of many drivers of homelessness

Affordable rentals as percent of all rentals

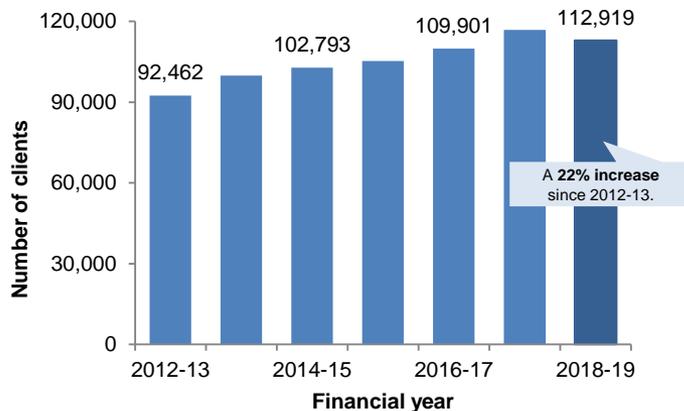


Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data cubes 2011-18

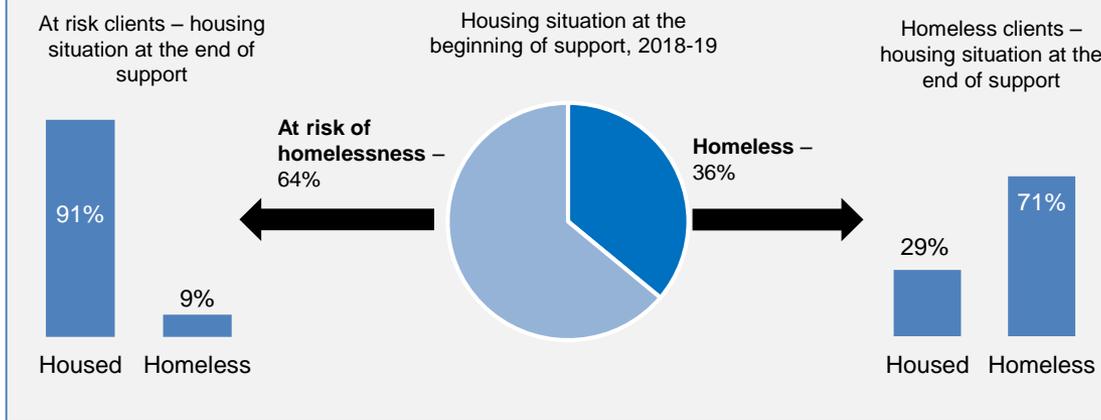
# Demand for homelessness services is increasing and more people are presenting with multiple needs

In 2018-19, 112,919 people sought assistance from homelessness services in Victoria.

Number of clients provided assistance from homelessness services, 2012-13 to 2018-19



Housing situation for people seeking assistance from homelessness services



## Presenting reasons and accommodation needs

### Top three reasons for people presenting to homelessness services (note that clients can select multiple reasons)

- family violence (44%)
- financial difficulties (44%)
- housing crisis (37%)

Additionally, 18% of clients note mental health issues as a reason for presenting to homelessness services.

### Clients are not having their accommodation needs met

Over 55,000 clients had a need for short, medium or long term accommodation (49% of all clients). Of these:

- 32% could not be provided or referred for short term or emergency accommodation
- 62% could not be provided or referred for medium term/transitional accommodation
- 76% could not be provided or referred for long term housing

# Homelessness service system

Approximately \$300 million in annual funding to provide assistance to more than 100,000 people accessing homelessness services across Victoria

Note that this includes combined State and Commonwealth funding under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.

## Services

75 homelessness access (entry) points across Victoria

- More than 130 agencies**  
Mixture of agencies, including:
- large and small organisations
  - regional / metropolitan locations
  - focus on certain cohorts.

**Around 80 homelessness programs – some small in scale and not available statewide.**

### Early intervention

- Small scale brokerage and support programs including flexible funding to prevent families entering rooming houses
- 2012 Innovation Action Projects – testing early intervention approaches
- Private Rental Assistance Program
- Assessment, planning and brief intervention trials
- Support for young people leaving out of home care or youth justice

### Providing accommodation

- Housing Establishment Fund
- Purpose built short-term accommodation with support including congregate crisis, youth refuges and family violence refuges
- Transitional Housing Management Program
- Enhancements and innovations to crisis accommodation, e.g. family violence refuges
- Modular units
- Accommodation for the Homeless initiatives and rooming house upgrades

### Support to maintain accommodation

- Youth foyers
- Supportive housing for people who have experienced chronic homelessness
- Housing first initiatives such as Journey to Social Inclusion (J2SI) and Common Ground
- Flexible support packages and multidisciplinary supportive housing teams
- Tenancy Plus expanded to social housing tenants
- A further stage of J2SI delivered through a Social Impact Bond

## Outputs

Includes:

- Over 100,000 Victorians accessing homelessness services
- Around 36,000 households assisted with housing establishment
- Around 9,000 households assisted with crisis/transitional housing
- Over 6,000 Victorians assisted through the Private Rental Assistance Program

## Enablers

- Local Area Service Networks
- Peak Body (Council to Homeless Persons)
- Workforce training
- National dataset
- DHHS Homelessness data collection

# The service system is putting in place different responses to more effectively meet people's needs

## People seeking assistance from homelessness services

**Cohort:** people at risk of homeless or recently homeless.

People are more likely to need time-limited support to resolve or be diverted away from homelessness.

### Examples of current responses:

- Private Rental Assistance Program
- Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program
- Brokerage
- Brief Intervention
- Enhanced Housing Pathways (for people exiting prison).

**Cohort:** people experiencing homelessness who have increased support needs.

People are likely to require a higher level of support for a longer period of time to resolve their homelessness.

### Examples of current responses:

- Flexible support packages
- Foyers
- Therapeutic crisis accommodation
- Social housing.

**Cohort:** people who have experienced chronic homelessness and rough sleeping who often have multiple support needs, such as mental or physical health, alcohol or drug use or other traumas.

People are likely to need a *Housing First* response – intensive and sustained support.

### Examples of current responses:

- Assertive outreach
- Flexible support packages
- Melbourne Street to Home
- Social housing
- Supportive housing teams
- Therapeutic crisis accommodation

# As the pandemic has evolved, we have adapted our response to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness

## Different cohorts presenting to homelessness services require different responses

**Cohort:** people at risk of homeless or recently homeless.

People are more likely to need time-limited support to resolve or be diverted away from homelessness.

**Cohort:** people experiencing homelessness who have increased support needs.

People are likely to require a higher level of support for a longer period of time to resolve their homelessness.

**Cohort:** people who have experienced chronic homelessness and rough sleeping who often have multiple support needs, such as mental or physical health, alcohol or drug use or other traumas.

People are likely to need a *Housing First* response – intensive and sustained support.

## This understanding has in turn helped inform the homelessness responses to COVID-19

### Emergency accommodation

Additional funding to help people find either temporary accommodation, or enter or sustain a private rental tenancy.

### Homelessness Emergency Response

Established teams to provide social supports and infection prevention control to people experiencing homelessness in emergency accommodation.

### COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Centres

Establishing facilities to help people experiencing homelessness recover from COVID-19 or avoid infection in the first place. Includes mobile fever clinic embedded as part of service model.

### Supported by broader government measures

**Sector specific responses:** e.g. additional assistance for family violence services.

**Whole of Victorian Government responses:** e.g. rent relief grants and moratorium on evictions from private rental tenancies.

**Commonwealth Government responses:** e.g. JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments to people who are at risk of unemployment or unemployed.

# Summary of homelessness responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

	Additional homelessness support funding	Homelessness Emergency Response	COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Facilities
What is it	<p>\$6 million for the Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) and Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) for homelessness services to provide temporary housing and private rental brokerage</p> <p>An additional \$9.8 million investment has been made to continue to support people in emergency accommodation, including additional HEF to keep people in safe accommodation and additional specialist support workers, including drug and alcohol support.</p>	<p>Provides social supports and infection prevention control to people experiencing homelessness in emergency accommodation.</p> <p>Specialist Aboriginal homelessness workers in areas where there are higher numbers of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness to support them to safely remain in emergency accommodation, and to transition into more appropriate housing.</p>	<p>\$8.8 million to establish four facilities to help people experiencing homelessness recover from COVID-19 or avoid infection in the first place.</p> <p>Service is a collaboration between a major hospital and homelessness service providers. Model includes embedded mobile fever clinic.</p>
Who is it for	People at risk of or experiencing homelessness.	People in emergency accommodation.	People experiencing homelessness who do not have a place to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19.
Delivery partners	Existing homelessness service providers receiving HEF and PRAP allocated these funds.		<p>St Vincent's Hospital, partnering with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglicare Victoria</li> <li>• Brotherhood of St Laurence</li> <li>• Launch Housing</li> <li>• Sacred Heart Mission</li> <li>• VincentCare Victoria.</li> </ul>
Service location	Metropolitan and regional areas across Victoria.	Inner Melbourne	Inner Melbourne – all four facilities are within easy reach of St Vincent's Hospital.
Starting date	From March 2020.	From July 2020	From April 2020.

# The emergency response is enabling services to accommodate everyone who needs shelter



**\$19.527 million**

To ensure presenting households could be provided with temporary accommodation as part of the public health response.

**6000**

Estimated household requests emergency accommodation met by homelessness agencies = **18,500** individual requests.

**566**

Households exited into private rental - some may have benefited from PRAP in obtaining private rental.

**102**

People admitted to a CIRF. 40 people who were COVID-19+ to isolate and receive any additional medical care needed.

**\$15.73 million**

additional HEF, plus additional \$3.28 million in PRAP and new funding for intake and specialised support workers.

**2,253**

households currently accommodated

**635**

Households exited into circumstances defined as 'no dwelling or an inadequate dwelling'

**403**

Were couch surfing.

Most people whose support ended by the end of June were in short term accommodation at that time. This may include motels or registered or unregistered rooming houses.

# Supporting people into sustainable housing options

## Homeless to a Home \$150 million investment package

Additional Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) to extend emergency accommodation until April 2021

1,100 leased properties from the private rental market for 18 months

Exits to private rental for up to 150 households

Support packages to assist people with complex needs

Access to social housing units under the 1000 Homes initiative

### Now: keeping people safe

HEF funding extension enables people to remain in emergency accommodation during the lockdown

Ongoing housing and support services

### Next: helping people into their own homes

Extra funding for the Private Rental Assistance Program for people to find appropriate private rental housing

Leverage existing social housing vacancies for those leaving emergency accommodation

Develop new support packages providing tailored support for people in emergency accommodation to help them sustain a tenancy once they move to other long-term housing.

EOI process to for homelessness agencies and community housing agencies to secure head leases within defined parameters

## Complementary initiatives

### Rental Relief Grants Program

- \$80 million program to support renters and landlords
- \$3000 available tenants who have lost income as a result of the COVID-19 emergency and who are experiencing rental hardship

### Family violence homelessness response

- \$40.2 million over two years for crisis accommodation and specialist support for people experiencing family violence.
- \$20.2 million to help Victorian family violence and sexual assault services meet the expected increase in demand
- \$20 million for short-term accommodation for victim survivors who do not feel safe isolating or recovering from coronavirus at home.

# Improving and expanding social housing

## Maintenance and upgrades stimulus package

- \$498 million to deliver better and more housing for vulnerable Victorians, reduce social housing management costs and stimulate the economy
- Maintenance or upgrade to over 17,000 Director of Housing and 4000 specialist disability accommodation properties.
- New, upgraded and maintenance to over 2000 community housing properties, over 150 properties for justice housing and transitional & emergency housing and family violence services
- Construction of 110 new public housing dwellings.
- Construction of 60 new community and Aboriginal housing dwellings.

## 1000 Homes

- \$209 million deliver at least 1,000 net additional public housing dwellings to support homelessness and victim survivors of family violence by December 2022.
- 57 new homes have been completed and 87 homes are under construction.
- 122 homes are about to start construction.

## Towers relocation program

- \$31.7 million over two years offering up to 420 public housing tower households the opportunity to move into private rental properties for two years.
- Voluntary program to minimise the risk of the spread of COVID-19 and protect the most 'at-risk' tenants living in the public housing high rise towers.

## Social Housing Growth Fund

- Launched in 2017 as part of the Homes for Victorians housing strategy
- \$1 billion fund invested by the Victorian Funds Management Corporation
- Grants to community housing associations to grow stock through:
  - Rental subsidies to lease new dwellings from the private sector – 116 new leases since August 2018
  - Capital grants and recurrent rental subsidies for new builds – agreements to date to build 782 new homes by 2022

# Conclusion

**Thank you**

**Questions?**