

SOLVING HOMELESSNESS

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Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
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Overview

- Types of homelessness
- The dangers of statistics
- Don't service it, solve it
- Permanent supportive housing for people who experience chronic homelessness
- Other solutions for other types of homelessness

Types of homelessness

- All homelessness is caused by poverty.
- Add **high cost of housing** to poverty and homelessness increases.
- Majority of people who experience homelessness/housing crisis will not be homeless long term.
- A smaller number (perhaps 20% of total) will experience chronic homelessness and may have additional support needs.

Ending homeless with housing

- Solving homelessness caused by poverty and unaffordable housing requires affordable housing solutions and strategies that lift people's incomes (eg. employment).
- Solving longer term homelessness caused by poverty and where individuals have complex needs that need support – is solved by permanent supportive housing.
- Also a group of people who need housing & support but do not need support long term (they do need housing long term).

**105,000
HOMELESS
PEOPLE**

Don't be fooled by the numbers

- 105,237 people counted as experiencing homelessness in Australia (ABS, 2011)
- Counted as homeless:
 - Rough sleepers (people with no shelter) – **6,813**
 - People in homelessness services (have temporary shelter) – **21,258**
 - People staying temporarily with others (couch surfing) & temporary lodging – **18,055**
 - People in boarding houses – 17,721
 - People in sub-standard, inadequate or over-crowded dwellings - 41,390

6,813 rough sleepers nationally

- Not an insurmountable national problem, a solvable problem – less than 7,000 people.
- About 40% are in NSW
- Total NSW is about 42,000 (all categories)
- Couch surfers NSW about 7,000
- Homelessness services NSW about 8,500
- Rough sleepers NSW is about **2,700**. How many in Newtown? **Probably less than 40**.
- **Ending homelessness just for rough sleepers in Newtown – a completely solvable problem.**

PERMANENT HOUSING & SUPPORT FOR 40 PEOPLE IN NEWTOWN

PLUS: WORK ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING
STRATEGIES & PROGRAMS TO SOLVE & PREVENT
OTHER TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS IN NEWTOWN

What 'talking up' the numbers does

- Makes the general public think that homelessness is an intractable problem that keeps growing and can't be solved.
- Makes us think it's very complex (people may be complex, solving their homelessness isn't).
- Some may believe we need lots of services to help homeless people. Yes homeless people do need to eat and be warm. But most importantly they need housing.
- If we only feed and comfort homeless people we'll never solve their homelessness.

The evidence for solving chronic homelessness/rough sleeping

- Housing First works
- But for those with additional support needs it is not 'Housing Only'.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) – a range of models:
 - Common Ground or high density mixed tenancies.
 - Scatter site (individual houses/units with support workers who visit).
 - Variations on those themes.

Common Ground

- Just one model of PSH
- Key concepts
 - High quality, permanent housing
 - Mixed tenancies (formerly homeless and people who are working/studying and need affordable housing)
 - On-site support
 - Concierge
 - Separation of tenancy management and support provider

Does our existing system work for chronically homeless people?

- Sometimes, but obviously not in most cases – because they are (in fact) not housed, but chronically homeless.
- Pathway system from crisis, to transitional to eventual housing does not work for those with the highest needs. They drop out along the way.
- Ensuring housing comes first provides a stable base and ongoing support assists people to sustain that housing.

However, solving most homelessness in Australia

- Majority of homelessness – people don't have high needs, most homelessness caused by poverty and unaffordable housing.

We need

- National, state and local affordable housing strategies.
- re-investment in public and community housing.
- Housing subsidies that assist people into housing (not tax subsidies that assist property owners to buy more properties).

Act locally

- Understand who is homeless in your community.
- Find out their housing and support needs.
- Work to get people into housing and ensure they get support (if needed) to sustain that housing.
- Affordable housing developments are difficult to undertake, but not impossible.



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