



NMHCCF Advocacy Brief

Issue: Supported Housing & Homelessness (Shh!)

Background

Approximately 20 per cent of adult Australians will experience some form of mental illness. From the available research, we know that for people who are homeless, the rate of mental illness is a staggering 75 per cent. With Australia's homeless population estimated to be over 100,000, up to 75,000 people currently without a home will experience some form of mental illness.

Key Points for Mental Health Consumers and Carers

- There is a critical and urgent need for accommodation for our most vulnerable citizens.
- The lack of safe, secure and affordable housing consigns those with a mental illness to a life of insecurity, ill health and danger because they are in a transient, unsafe and unsupported environment.
- Being homeless or without housing support exacerbates ongoing health problems and usually causes a further deterioration of their mental and physical health.
- The lack of support and assistance for homeless people with a mental illness places further strain – both financially and emotionally – on their carers, families and friends and can result in further relationship breakdown and isolation.
- The ongoing impact on carers also impacts on their own mental health and can lead to episodes of anxiety, depression and self harm.

*Prepared by National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum
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Previous pilot programs, such as the Woolloomooloo Homelessness Project, and current programs like NSW HASI, are models which support a whole of government approach to homelessness. These programs have shown to be effective in providing the necessary support and accommodation services as well as appropriate health care and the integration of other appropriate services.

Recommendations for change and Key Issues for the Future

The National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum (NMHCCF) believes that the right to appropriate, affordable and secure housing is a basic human right of all people.

The NMHCCF supports:

- A whole-of-government approach across the states and territories that promotes and supports access to people that require ongoing and /or intermittent support.
- The process of multi- disciplinary support services working in a cooperative manner to achieve real and appropriate outcomes irrespective of where people live.
- The provision of appropriate support services that enhance the quality of life and access to services needed by those who are homeless and those who also have an existing or future mental illness.
- A whole-of-government approach to establishing safe, affordable and secure accommodation and the connection of services that support and maintain people as their needs require.

Name of Nominated NMHCCF contact on this issue

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Please contact NMHCCF Secretariat (details below)

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