



Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA)

With limited sector capacity to make a formal submission within the timeframe, a consultation with **Daniel Scoullar, Pauline Ireland** and **Milena Canil** and the members of the EHSSA, was deemed the most expedient way to contribute to the **Victorian Social Housing Regulation Review**. Please accept the below discussion points from this meeting held on 2nd September 2021.

- The obvious siloed approach to the provision of services in the different sectors is causing confusion and barriers to clients trying to access these services. Housing and homelessness are funded in one stream and Mental Health, Disability, AOD and Health in another.
Recommendation: Coordinated model of funding, support and information sharing.
- The *Homelessness* and *at risk of homelessness* services system is completely overstretched. Majority of clients have underlying issues of Disability/Family violence/MH or AOD and the long wait time for referrals to services is causing clients to disengage. Homelessness services are not funded to provide long term or ongoing support but rather short-term support to assist clients to maintain their tenancy. They cannot keep clients “open” whilst waiting long periods for other services to come onboard or there will be challenges achieving targets set out in Funding agreements.
Recommendation: A range of support models that includes wrap around support with housing.
- Often referrals are received too late when there is virtually no hope of saving a tenancy. Is there opportunity to identify an early intervention model that works toward linking people to supports earlier and saving tenancies before they become unsalvageable?
Recommendation - better integration from social housing providers to the homelessness service sector.
- Tenancy Plus is such a beneficial program helping people maintain their tenancy. However, the program is under resourced with more than 30 people currently on the wait list in the eastern metro region. The issues putting tenancies at risk increase whilst tenants/renters are waiting for support.
Recommendation: Better resource the Tenancy Plus Program to allow more people in Social housing access to support in a timely manner.
- Establishing Successful Tenancies (EST). Since the introduction of the VHR and the inclusion of community housing providers, the region is not seeing the *Establishing Successful Tenancies* referrals to the Tenancy Plus program from the community housing providers.
Recommendation: Strengthen partnerships between Department of Housing, Community Housing and Tenancy Plus Programs, and promote full implementation of the Tenancy Plus guidelines regarding referrals. As per recommendation above Tenancy Plus will need to be better resourced to meet demand.

- How do we meet the multiple forms of housing needed for people? There are so many barriers for people on low income to access mainstream privatised housing. How could the privatised market be regulated to offer opportunity for people on low income and thereby relieving the pressure on social housing?
- There is a severe lack of affordable housing options for single adults over 25 and under 55 on low incomes. There is simply not enough social housing stock available. Singles are at a huge disadvantage, paying 55% of their income on substandard rooming houses and insecure share properties. This is a large group that is not being supported and often have, or end up with, very high support needs.
Recommendation: Ensure a percentage of all new builds include housing for singles.
- It was noted by members, that when people are placed in properties where they have connection to their community and opportunity to find employment and training, they are more likely to thrive and maintain their tenancy.
Recommendation: Consider the importance of community connections in the acquisition of stock
- The concerning number of public housing and transitional housing properties offline due to maintenance is impacting property availability and turnaround. Maintenance delays also add to a person's stress, risking their ability to maintain their Tenancy.
Recommendation: Improve the maintenance coordination of social housing properties.

Maidie Graham – EHSSA Chair

Jo McDonald – Homelessness Network