National Housing Conference 2022

Pivot CoHousing

A strengths-based housing model for Trans, gender diverse and non-binary (TGDNB) young people

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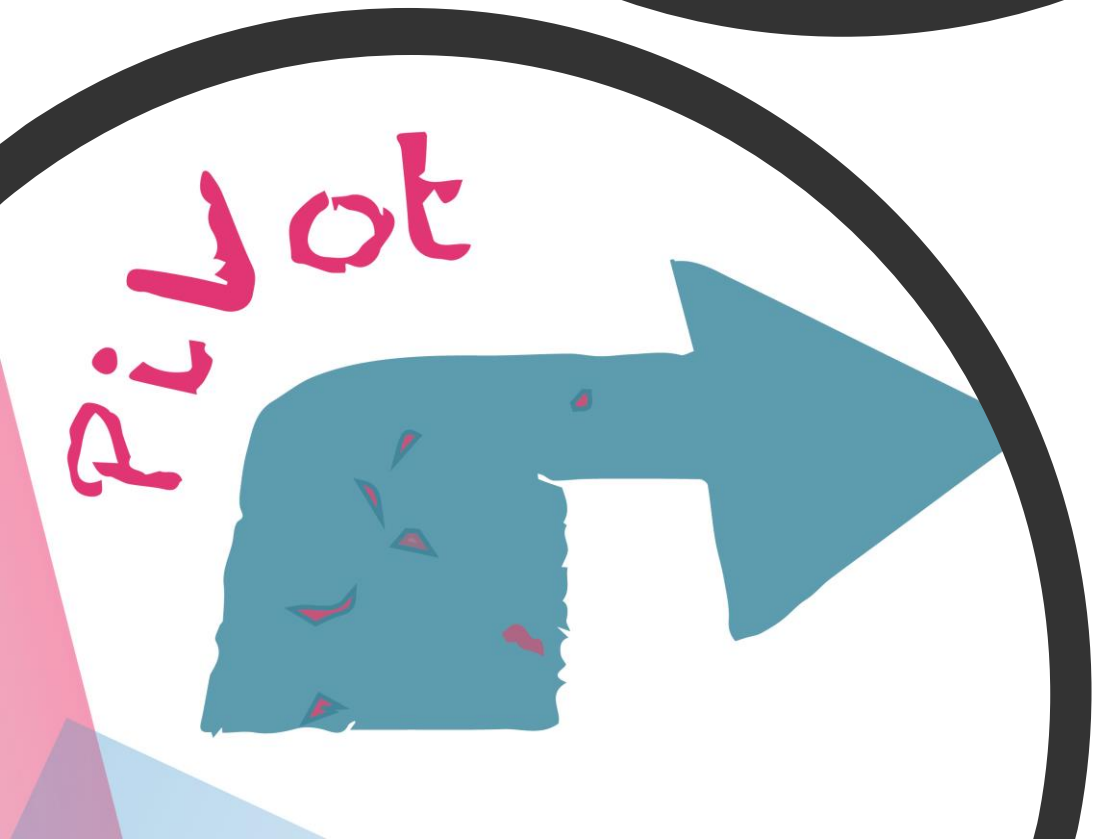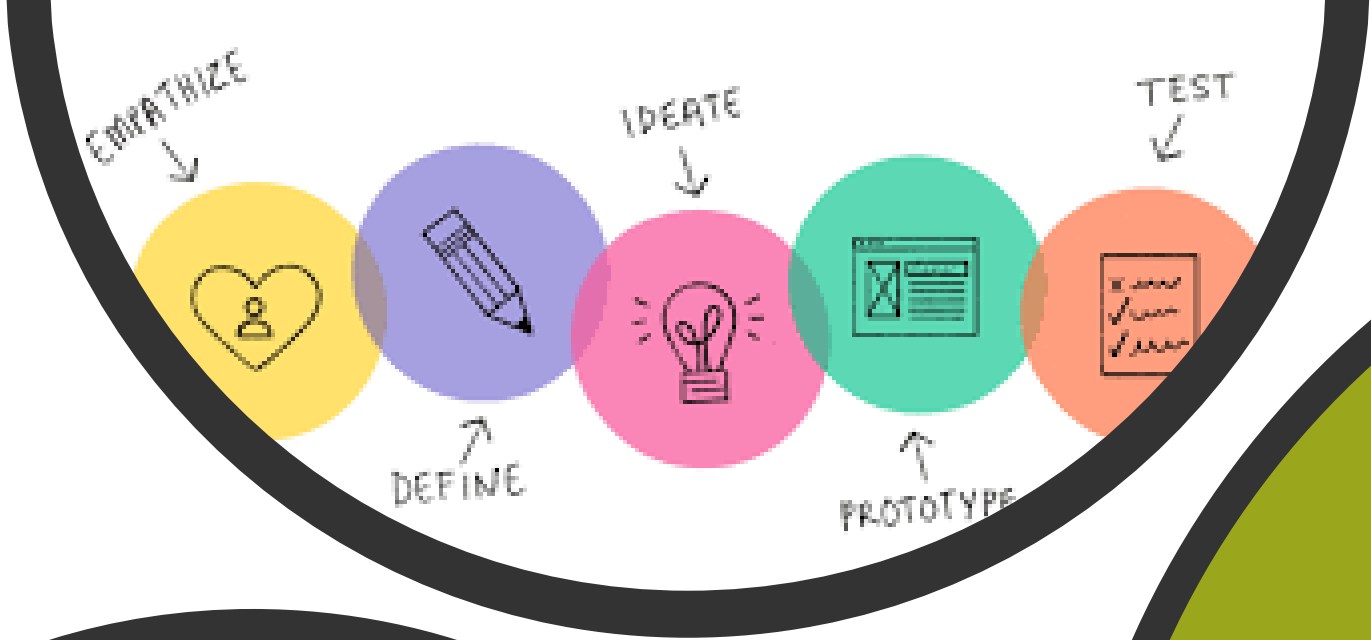# What problem are we are trying to solve?

Primary intervention?

› A 2021 AHURI paper found 'the current policy environment has been ineffective in reducing youth homelessness...support systems are fragmented and there are deficits in present service delivery.' Researchers recommended greater focus on intersectional identities and intersecting services; emphasizing the importance of early intervention, plus available housing options.

› Oakley & Bletsas (2013) found LGBTIQ youth over-represented in homelessness populations - even with systemic 'invisibility' within reporting systems around gender and sexual diversity. They show this has led to 'homogenisation of homelessness' and a lack of understanding of being queer and homeless. At the service level, lack of safe crisis accommodation and discrimination in services is rife. Trans- and homophobic abuse are common experiences for LGBTIQ accessing emergency housing - institutionally and from others service users. Some feel safer 'transient or couch surfing', than to be placed in boarding houses. Oakley, S & Bletsas, A 2018, 'The experiences of being a young LGBTIQ and homeless in Australia: Re-thinking policy and practice', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 3, pp. 381-395.

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Secondary victimisation or social benefits?

TGDNB face higher rates of discrimination in accessing private rental and employment. They experience homelessness at a younger age and face greater danger rough sleeping. Early intervention with secure and appropriate housing is critical if they are to 'pivot' from vulnerability towards their best lives.

"Support is needed which goes beyond accommodation to include emotional and identity building resources, life-skills, and enabling a sense of belonging". Oakley and Bletsas, 2018:

› Effective intervention not only helps LGBTIQ+ Youth, it offers substantial benefits for society and for local communities in particular (Beer et al. 2005). Policies targeting LGBTIQ youth homelessness are critical to address unemployment and welfare dependency, reduce long term health costs and in contribute to stronger and more inclusive communities. But these policies need to be developed and implemented in partnership LGBTIQ youth. (Oakley & Bletsas 2013).

› Pivot Cohousing has used codesign methodologies which team creative and utopian thinking with lived experience. When developing the values model participants agreed upon every aspect:

›   *A cohousing community where the 'social glue' is a shared bond of belonging.*

EMPATHIZE

IDEATE

TEST

DEFINE

PROTOTYPE

PiVot

Banyule
City Council

Transgender Victoria

through Department Premier and Cabinet

Darebin City Council, Moreland City Council, Lee Taube (Trans Housing Melbourne, psychologist) and Ricki Spencer (Queer Greens, UoM, Trans advocate)

Steering committee and project support

Pivot CoHousing Model
Key Values

These co-designed key values are foundational to the model will underpin our mission statement

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Ongoing consent
- Accessibility
- Adaptive Innovation

- Intersectional
- Sustainable
- Anti-oppression
- Outreach
- Restorative justice

The value and importance of lived experience

Harper's story

Intentionally queer?

Pivot explored potential for 'ghettoisation' and/or nimbyism. Participants started from a queer starting point but chose to built something more inclusive. Their model encompasses two core areas specific to Trans GD&NB people: It is trauma-informed, acknowledging poor mental health is 3-4 times higher for TGDNB than for non-trans, for ***socially determined and not individual*** reasons: (LGBTIQ Health Australia, 2021)

› Attempted suicide 48.1%; Depression 74.6%; Anxiety 72.2%

› Peer rejection (89.0%) and bullying (74.0%)

› Discrimination (68.9%), exclusion, (unaddressed) family violence.
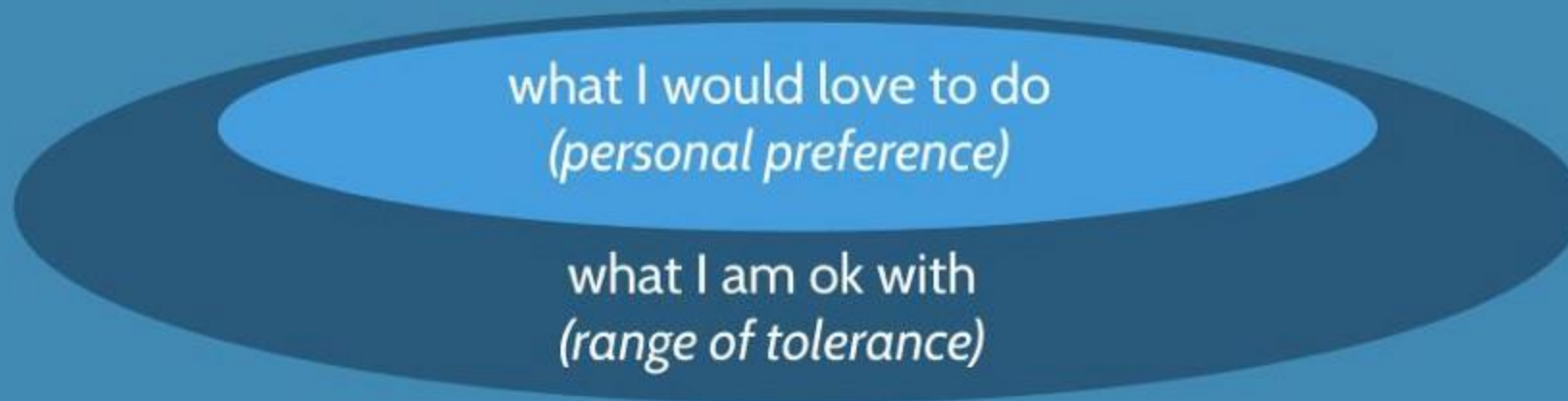
Research shows these common experiences drive a 'positive transgender identity' of greater emotional maturity, empathy and resilience than in non-queer people, highlighting importance of peer networks and mentoring approaches (Taube, LN. and Mussap, AJ. 2020)

Decisions by consent

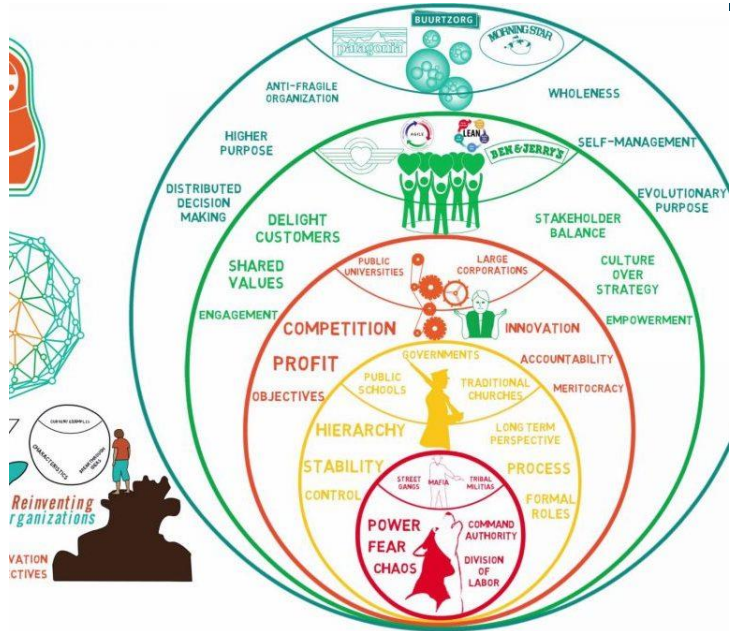every circle has an aim (a description of what they do)
an objection means "I can't achieve the circle's aim like this"
a decision is made if there is no objection

what I would love to do
(personal preference)

what I am ok with
(range of tolerance)

objection: I cannot work with this

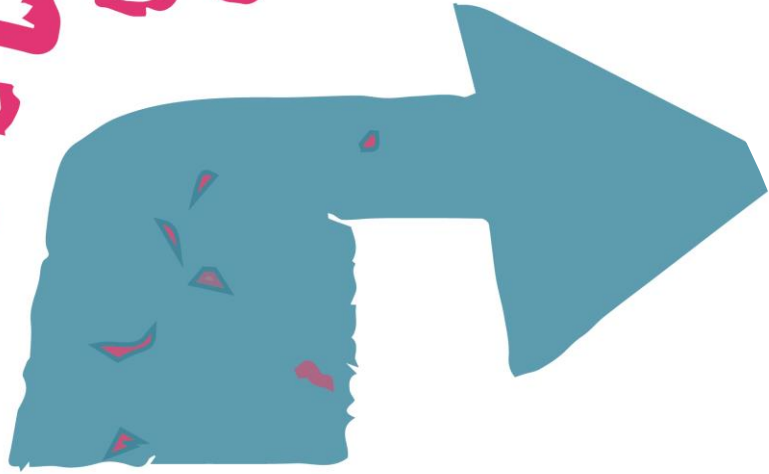Sociocracy For All

sociocracy

Circles of consent

Next steps

- ➤ Test model with community (e.g. Trans Housing Melbourne)
- ➤ Iterate our model
- ➤ Report and advocacy
- ➤ Continue to explore 'queering' housing pathways

Want to get involved?
Contact Myfan.Jordan@Banyule.vic.gov.au

We recognise the Traditional Custodians of Na'arm in this project, and acknowledge the lands now called 'Melbourne' were never ceded. We commit to seeking permission and wisdom from Elders of the present and future in relation to progressing this work. Additionally, the invaluable contribution of codesign participants who aren't here today.