

**Safe@Home**

# Safe at Home

presentation

**McAuley Community Services for Women 2022**



We respectfully acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we are meeting.

We acknowledge their elders, past, present and future.



Lessons from the Front Line in Family Violence  
Support Services.....

*Shifting the system in favour of  
more women and children remaining at home*



## What's the problem?

- In Victoria, family violence is a leading (and growing) cause of presentations to homelessness services - unique client numbers ***increasing by 30% between 2015-16 to 2019-2020***
- In 2019-20 over **32,000** women & nearly **12,000** children were homeless because of family violence
- Over 160 motel rooms per night used for women and children as crisis accommodation, costing over \$4million pa
- With compounding and costly impacts on individuals!



## Why are we working on this problem?

- McAuley's data shows **less than 5%** of women and children are able to return home safely from crisis accommodation
- Crisis accommodation, refuges and motels are commonly used by women and children fleeing their homes - with children moving schools up to three times a year
- Despite large increases in funding since the Family Violence Royal Commission in 2015, other jurisdictions are doing better in keeping women and children at home



## What did we do?

- Researched the problem
- Tested findings with stakeholders from across the system: police, courts, men's and women's services, peak bodies, universities and a legal service - which then formed an ongoing Working Group
- Consulted with victim-survivors seeking their experience and views
- Mapped the system - in consultation with those listed above
- Gathered the data
- Consulted with frontline workers



## Researching the Problem – what did we find?

- Victoria has all the parts and actions necessary for a comprehensive approach
- Victoria prioritises staying at home in policy and strategy
- Not aligned under a safe at home heading
- Lack of awareness of what constitutes a Safe at Home system



## Testing the findings

- What did the stakeholders say?
- What did the Victim Survivors Say?
- What did we do as a result?

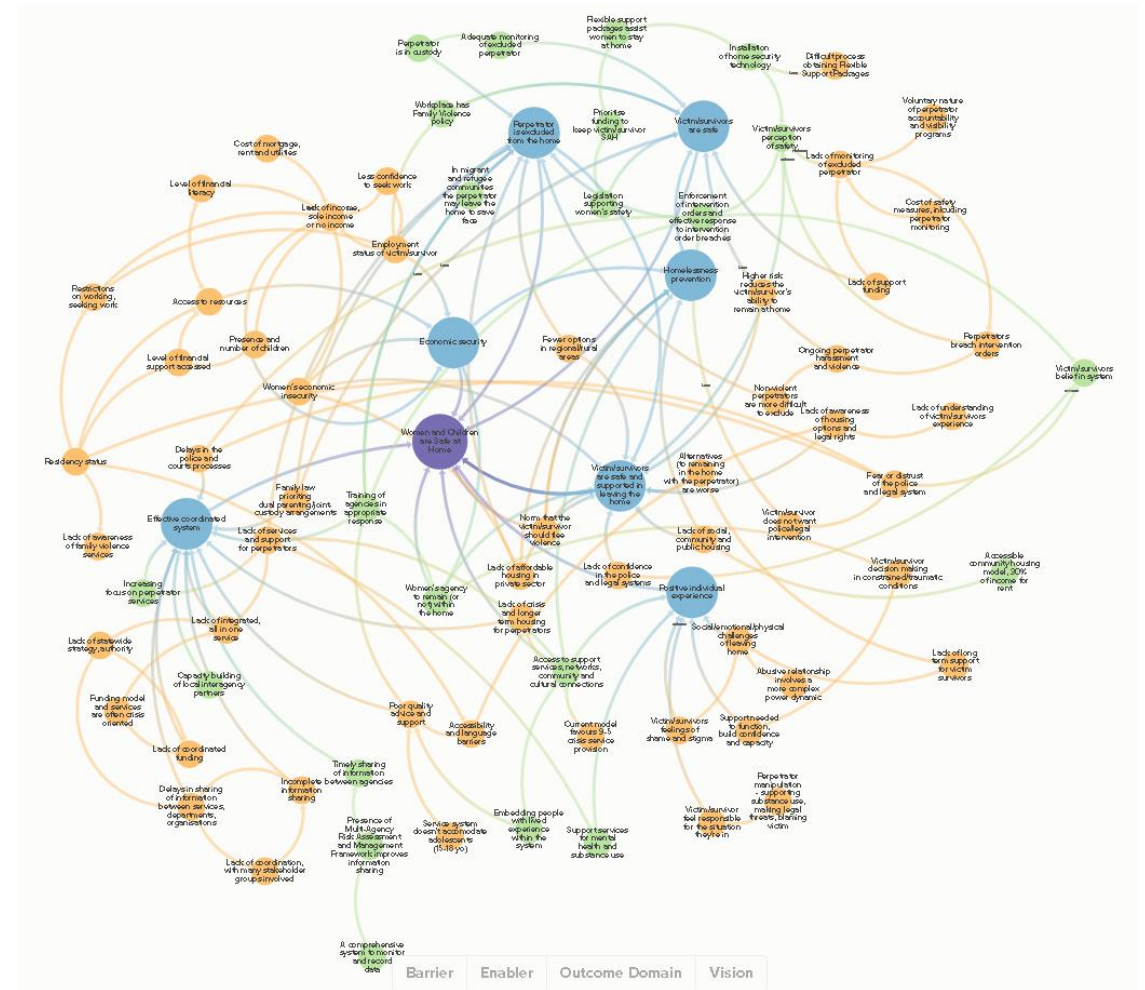




## The systems map

*Seven preconditions in order to achieve our vision*

- Systems coordination
- Economic security
- Perpetrator accountability
- Victim-survivors are safe and supported
- Homelessness prevention
- Positive individual experience



## Gathering the Data – what's the extent of the problem?

- Determining the extent of the problem - not an easy task
- Independently verified to:
  - Gives us confidence in the figures
  - Helps to establish a baseline for Safe at Home targets
  - Can link to the Action Plan to measure progress
  - Shows what we don't know; the data gaps
  - Points to where barriers exist in the system
  - Is vital as part of our advocacy



## What did the frontline workers think?

- A key intervention point was reaching victim-survivors before they left home; agencies who worked across victim survivor and perpetrator programs appeared to have more chance of preventing homelessness – **it's almost too late when they get to specialist family violence services**
- A house vs a home
- “It's worse to be homeless in the homelessness system”
- Financial assistance a relief, but not necessarily helpful to preserve housing when in crisis
- The child protection dilemma ‘damned if you do (leave) & damned if you don't’
- System confusing and uncoordinated



## What's our Goal?

- Public recognition that Safe at Home is a victim-survivor's right, and support should be orientated to ensure that choice is made possible.
- Safe at Home is a clearly identified strategy in all levels of Government and is clearly articulated and resourced in National and State Plans
- Safe at Home is recognised as a prevention of homelessness strategy
- That more women choose to remain home because they feel, and are, safe  
- and have access to the full suite of supports to do so
- Establish a benchmark for Safe at Home measurement against progress



## What's next?

The Working Group is continuing to work through the recommended actions. Starting with a clear definition of Safe at Home and an audit of awareness material

- Continued consultations with victim - survivor groups - informing all new work
- Advocacy will broaden out to include more public awareness
- Implications for policy need to be examined
- We'd like to work with you - implementing the 'statement'



Thank you - any questions?

