

**OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION 1**

**Are COVID responses the  
building blocks for a national  
plan to end homelessness?**

# Victoria's homelessness response during COVID-19

Innovation, investment and impact

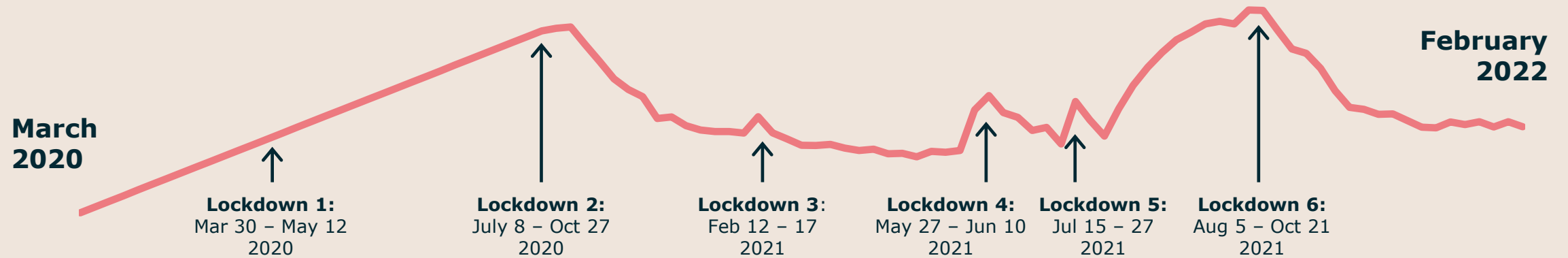
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# Background

## Victorians provided with emergency accommodation as the pandemic unfolded



- Lockdowns restricted movement but no solution for rough sleepers to follow public health directions.
- Government moved quickly to design and implement a response, including:
  - Emergency hotel accommodation for people experiencing homelessness
  - Area-based Homelessness Emergency Accommodation Response Teams
  - Onsite health and homelessness support at hotels
  - COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Facilities (CIRFs)
  - *From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) & Homes for Families (H4F)*



# Innovation and investment

## Homeless Hotels Emergency Response

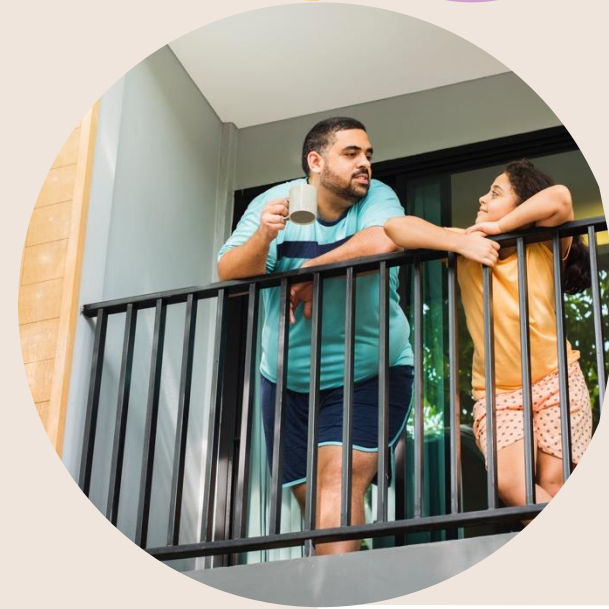
- 1.4 million nights of emergency accommodation provided over 30,000 households.
- Onsite health concierge, homelessness support and security at a peak of up to 24 hotels.

## Homelessness Emergency Accommodation Response Teams (HEARTs)

- Area based structures to support location-based, data driven responses.

## COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Facilities (CIRFs)

- \$8.8m for COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Facilities to provide self-isolation facilities for Victorians experiencing homelessness.



# Innovation and investment

## From Homelessness to a Home (H2H)

- Australian first based on *Housing First* principles.
- \$150m for housing people experiencing homelessness, from emergency hotel accommodation to stable housing with wrap around supports.

## Homes for Families (H4F)

- \$66m in housing and support for up to 250 families with children experiencing homeless and in emergency hotel accommodation.



# Housing First

- There has been a 17% reduction in people sleeping rough presenting between April 2020 and April 2022.
- This reduction has been sustained beyond 1 February 2022, with the number of clients sleeping rough reduced after a long-term gradual increase prior to the pandemic.



# Collaboration

## Stewardship

- Health and homelessness sectors co-designed an agile and flexible response.

## Collective impact

- Sectors worked together and pivoted while always focusing on the safety and wellbeing of Victorians.

## Flexibility and agility

- Structures developed to support locally-driven responses.
- Innovative models adopted, centred around tailored support and housing-first principles.



# Lessons learned and ongoing support

## Lessons learned will help deliver a tailored approach to homelessness supports, focused on client needs

- COVID-19 homelessness response was data driven and based on individual needs.
- Flexible and revised regularly to meet people's different circumstances.
- Ongoing reform, informed by lessons learned from the COVID-19 response, will deliver a more effective specialist homelessness service system.
- More tailored, flexible support models with emphasis on Housing First principles and integration with other sectors.
- \$75 million in the 2022–23 Budget to support reform of homelessness services.
- The Big Housing Build will continue to grow Victoria's social and affordable housing.
- \$8.5 million Community Connectors initiative.







# Questions