

OPENING AND PLENARY SESSION 1

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

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NSW Covid Response to addresses Homelessness

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What triggered the COVID Response in NSW



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- People sleeping rough or those experiencing homelessness were at greater risk during the pandemic due to complex health issues, co-morbidities, and limited ability to practice physical distancing
 - People accommodated in congregate care models were also at greater risk due to complex health needs, shared facilities, and challenges adhering to general precautions due to the inability to self-isolate in a home.
 - Distortions in the private market due to Covid offered both opportunities and challenges
 - Growing housing needs required intervention across the housing continuum from crisis to social/ affordable to private market assistance
 - Fast tracking housing supply was also required to meet demand

Key actions taken in response to homelessness in NSW during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Sector collaboration

- Established the COVID-19 Sydney Rough Sleeper Taskforce with the City of Sydney, local health districts and homelessness services to support local decision-making, coordination and communication
- Data and information Sharing across national, state and territory jurisdictions

Sector support

- COVID-19 guidelines, PPE Reference Guide, Covid-19 Training Video for Specialist Housing Services.
- Provision of PPE and Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) to service providers.
- Regular and deep cleaning on congregate care facilities

Client engagement and support funding

- Increased Assertive Outreach to engage and support clients
- Additional support for people experiencing Domestic and Family Violence during Covid

- Support for temporary residents.
- Additional support for young people

Housing Programs

- Introduced Together Home a Housing First model which will assist more than 1000 rough sleepers, comprising of time limited head-leasing and support subsidies with funding for 250 homes providing long term exit options.
- Increased Temporary and Emergency Accommodation
- Long term housing options through fast tracked redevelopment projects and Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF) attracting co-contributions from the community housing sector.
- Expansion of Private Rental Assistance products
- Investment in building more crisis accommodation

Increased System Level Capacity in the last couple of years

- Supporting vulnerable people during the pandemic and natural disasters to access temporary and emergency accommodation, and critical wraparound supports
- Assisting 70,600 people experiencing, or at risk, of homelessness through our funded Specialist Homelessness Services in 2020-21
- Expanding our Assertive Outreach patrols into new local government areas, resulting in DCJ and partners conducting 11,716 Assertive Outreach activities
- Housing clients through our Together Home program, with around 800 rough sleepers housed and more than 900 receiving wrap around support
- Delivered around 3,000 new social and affordable homes through programs like the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, LAHC redevelopments and Community Housing Innovation Fund.
- Supported community housing providers deliver a pipeline of new dwellings through old and new programs. 2,600+ new homes in the pipeline. Since 2012, CHPs have delivered 5,300 new homes with an investment of \$1.82 billion

Funding for key activities

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSW Government has committed more than \$950 million as part of the COVID-19 response and COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness



\$40 million
Private rental subsidies



\$64 million
Temporary
Accommodation



\$3 million
Emergency
Accommodation



\$177.5 million
Together Home program
1070 housing and support
packages and 250 new
dwellings



\$14.8 million
Deep Cleaning of refuges and
congregate care facilities



\$183 million
To fast track new homes
as part of the NSW
Government's
economic recovery
package.



\$484.3 million
DFV funding for new crisis core
and cluster refuges and 200
long term social housing
dwellings

Key Learnings



NSW Government has adapted and pivoted its funding and policy settings in the face of the crisis

It has leveraged off the capacity and innovation of the community housing sector and specialist homelessness service system to expand current programs and introduce new ones

It has established inclusive governance mechanism to ensure voices from the ground are heard and responded to in a timely manner

Real time inputs from the sector used to adapt program guidelines

The pandemic has shown that a common cause can mobilise government and its partners to act quickly and stand up programs and adapt and learn from each other

For NSW its relationships of trust and mutual respect with industry partners has paid off and allowed real outcomes to be delivered for clients in a short space of time

Towards a Plan to End Homelessness

**Harnessing this energy and spirit of collaboration
to achieve enduring outcomes**



**Creating policy and practice environments that
foster and support innovation**

**A Plan that address need at all levels and
throughout the housing continuum including long
term Housing First Programs based on successful
Covid responses**

Identifying sources of funds

- **Leveraging CHP debt/ equity capacity**
- **Housing Australia Future Fund**
- **Attracting investment**
- **State Government commitments**