

Head Leasing in social programs

- Lessons from Victoria

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Head of Strategic Initiatives



A long (long) journey

- Head leasing first used in 2017
 - Innovation programs via tenders
- Morphed over time (learnings)
- Multiple programs and client groups
 - *Moving On*
 - *Housing Now*
 - *Homestretch*
 - *Targeted Care Packages*
 - *Homelessness to a Home*



Moving On (2017 – 2022)

- Support Victim survivors of domestic violence (from Vic Royal Commission recommendations)
 - Clients nominated to program => assessed by panel
 - Ongoing support from support agency
 - Participant searches for suitable property
 - Haven applies on behalf of client => subleases at discount
- Purpose of program – to regain control ('move on')
- 58 real estate agents (REAs) participated
- 20 leased multiple properties
- 150 clients supported
- 105 stayed in property (took over the lease)
- 15 moved into social/public housing

During COVID lockdown:

- 3 evictions for rent arrears
- 2 abandoned property
- 5 moved back with partner
- (8 'other/unsure')

Housing Now (2018)

- Support for homeless people in rural areas
- Clients nominated by support agency
- Participant searched for suitable property (see the theme?..)
- 9 REAs participated
- 10 Clients supported
 - 9 stayed in private rental
 - 1 evicted

Homestretch (2019 - current)

- Young people leaving residential care
 - Supported *before, during and after* transition into private rental
 - Structured multi-year program led by support agency
- Participants work with support worker to find suitable rental
- 25 REAs have participated
- 21 clients completed (11 still current)
 - 10 have stayed in private and/or moved in with partner/family
 - 2 abandoned
 - No evictions

Targeted Care Packages (2021 - current)

- Similar to Home Stretch
 - Child Protection-led program
 - Individualised support packages
 - Young people leaving care residential care as nominated by internal panel
 - Support agency provides support, HHS provides tenancy support
 - often crisis driven (can be within weeks before 18th birthday)
- 24 REAs have participated (one has offered 4 properties to date)
- 29 Packages to date
 - 15 moved into long-term housing
 - 1 incarcerated
 - 1 abandoned property

Homelessness to a Home (2021-2022)

- Clients experiencing chronic homelessness
 - Supported in emergency accom (hotels) during 2020 lockdowns (metro *and* rural)
 - Housing First principles (comprehensive wrap-around support and housing)
- HHS head lease targets: 61 in Geelong, 53 in Bendigo/Mildura
- Geelong – all 61 housed
 - 24 separate REAs participated (16 offered multiple, one offered 9 properties)
 - 2 evictions, 1 abandoned
- Bendigo/Mildura – only 9 head leases obtained (6 in 2021 and 3 in 2022)
 - *Bendigo <1% rental vacancy rate 2021 (only 6 REAs participated)*
- Only 1 client stayed in private rental
- 65 clients eventually moved to public/social housing, or with family

In summary...

Total head leases to date (including current)	233
Total subleases to date (including current)	324
Total Real Estate Agents involved	114
2 or more head leases	51
5 or more head leases	12
REA with most head leases	11
2 or more programs	23
REA with most programs	4

Total subleases complete across HHS	287
Remained in private rental	131
Moved to Public Housing	49
Moved into affordable housing	43
Moved into supported accom	3
Total clients secured ongoing housing	223 (78%)

<i>Others not so successful...</i>	
<i>Abandoned</i>	8
<i>Evicted</i>	7
<i>Moved interstate</i>	2
<i>Incarcerated</i>	2
<i>**'Other/unknown'</i>	32

Key learnings

Head leasing can clearly achieve positive long-term housing outcomes for clients

- Gain independence
 - *Rental history*
 - Move on from social welfare dependency
 - *Work/educational outcomes from stable accommodation*
 - *Establish lifestyle*

But it is administratively complex and burdensome

- Competitive private rental market
 - *Many applications, low rental availability*
- Lease sign off processes differ
- Dealing with owners and agents
- Dealing with support agencies
- Managing multiple maintenance
- Reconciling grant funding
- Reconciling rent collection
- Managing complaints (up and down)

Takeaways

1. ONE client equals TWO (or more) leases
 - Don't underestimate extra management required
 - Data collection is intense (different IT systems used; renter based v client based views)
2. Managing REAs/landlords is a specific skill
 - Relationship management enables repeat business; 'bad' renter experience kills relationship
3. Empowering client to choose rental property up front leads to greater outcomes
4. You need rental properties in the first place!
5. Support agencies must stay involved
6. **Head leasing is NOT a substitute for social housing stock**
 - It is an additional pathway to independence

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