

Housing First in Sydney NSW

What we did right? (and wrong)

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Where is Sydney?



This



Not this!



Not this!



This!



Who are we?

A peak not for profit organisation that works with its members to prevent and reduce homelessness across NSW.

Our members include small, locally based community organisations, multiservice agencies with a regional reach and large State-wide service providers.

Where are our members?



Our vision!

- A NSW where no one is experiencing homelessness and no one is at risk of homelessness.
- A NSW where there is affordable and safe housing for all with access to a range of community and support services.

Homelessness NSW

- Small peak body
- 6 staff
- NSW – 7.5million
- 120 member organisations

Homelessness NSW

- 90%+ of our funding is from the Government
- We provide no services for people experiencing homelessness
- We advise the government and work with services

My job?

Write nice letters to government telling them what to do to end homelessness

Their job?

Thank me for my ideas

Why does Government fund us?

Central point of focus

Or

200+ services talking to them

How do we count homelessness in Australia?

- National Census every 5 years on population and housing
- Australian Bureau of Statistics – sort of independent
- Main issue – slow release of data!

Who do we count?

The ABS statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

Who do we count?

People who are experiencing homelessness are usually staying in the following areas:

- Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- Supported accommodation for the homeless
- Temporarily with other households
- Boarding houses
- “Severely” overcrowded dwellings

How many homeless Australia?

Year	Number	Rate per 10k of population
2001	95 314	50.8
2006	89 728	45.2
2011	102 439	47.6
2016	116 427	49.8

How many homeless in NSW?

Year	Number	Rate per 10k of population
2001	23 041	36.4
2006	22 219	33.9
2011	27 479	39.7
2016	37 715	50.4

What type of homelessness?

Type	Number	%
Rough sleeping	2 588	7
Homeless service	5 861	18
Boarding house	6 869	23
Couch surfing	5 350	18
Severely overcrowded dwelling	16 821	34

So how does Australia compare?

Brazil – 11 million people



Buenos Aires – Retiro 80,000



California – your guess is as good as mine!



But Australian economy is travelling well!



And NSW?

26 years of uninterrupted growth and triple-A credit rating

- This globally recognised ranking reflects the state's sound record of financial performance, diverse economic base and capacity to withstand changing economic circumstances. The state's economy has enjoyed 26 years of uninterrupted growth, giving it a triple-A credit rating from global agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's.
- As a regional hub for information and communications technology, biotechnology and education services, NSW is at the forefront of research and innovation into the technologies that will drive the digital economy of the future.

And NSW?

Sydney and regional NSW leading the way

Sydney, in particular, has a well-deserved reputation as a global leader in finance and banking, legal and accounting services, prompting many of the world's leading multinationals to establish their regional headquarters in the city.*

*<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/invest-in-nsw/about-nsw/economic-growth>

Despite this!

One in 104 people in New South Wales (NSW) received homelessness assistance.

The top 3 reasons for clients seeking assistance were:

- housing crisis (54%, compared with 44% nationally)
- financial difficulties (42%, compared with 38%)
- housing affordability (31%, compared with 25%)

Census data shows

A 37% increase in NSW in 5 years

What does our neighbour say?

Homelessness proves capitalism is a 'blatant failure'

Jacinda Ardern

Housing First in Sydney?

- Camperdown Common Ground Project - 2010
- PLATFORM 70 - 2010

Platform 70

- To place 70 rough sleepers in the Woolloomooloo area into long term housing by 2012/13.
- To reduce the reliance on crisis accommodation for homeless people by increasing long term housing options for rough sleepers in the Woolloomooloo area
- To enhance the sustainability of private rental tenancies for rough sleepers in the Woolloomooloo area by linking housing assistance with support services

Did they succeed?

After 12 months there was a **94% tenancy** retention rate among all Platform 70 consumers and all tenancy issues were resolved.

Why did they succeed?

Bridge Housing worked collaboratively with 7 other
Community Housing Partners across NSW!

Why did they succeed?

Homeless services more than capable of supporting a tenancy, AOD, mental health, intellectual disability etc

Over time?

- After 3 years this had slipped to 85%
- Now closer to 75%

Why?

- Support was time limited
- Time limited support does not suit clients!

Why?

- Limited support for Housing First?
- Change of Governments?
- Sector slow to pick up?

Why?



Did it work?

Year	Number
2010	418
2011	363
2012	310
2013	274
2014	346
2015	365

Maybe?



Also

- Government 'reformed' homeless service delivery!
- Competitive tendering
- No increase in social/affordable housing stock
- Did not stop people becoming homeless in first place!

Where did rough sleepers come from?



Great question – and answered!

Dr Olav Nielssen and his colleagues collated data from the medical records of 2388 homeless people attending three mental health clinics in three inner Sydney homeless hostels between July 2008 and December 2016

Lots of detail!

The team analysed social-demographic information such as employment history, marital status, social security benefit, duration of homelessness and whether they had previously lost public housing tenancy; and clinical information, including psychiatric diagnosis, medication use, past psychiatric hospital admissions, cognitive impairment, substance use, and history of trauma.

More detail!

The most common diagnoses were;

- substance use disorder (66%)
- psychotic illness (51%)
- acquired brain injury (14%)
- intellectual disability (5%)
- early life and recent trauma (42%)

And what did they find?

Pathways to homelessness included;

- release from prison (28% of the attenders)
- discharge from a psychiatric hospital (21%)
- the loss of public housing tenancy (21%)

Lets add that up!

28+

21+

21

= 70!

Lesson?

- Housing First can end current homelessness; not future!
- Governments need to stop people becoming homeless in first place!!!!!!

Homelessness on rise



Repsonse?

- The New South Wales Premier has said homeless people sleeping rough in Sydney made her “completely uncomfortable” and were refusing emergency accommodation, as state ministers called on Lord Mayor Clover Moore to clear tents from Martin Place.
- “I’m concerned that some [homeless] people there are not there for the right reasons and that’s why we’ve written to Clover Moore asking her to do what’s in her powers to move them on,”

Current policy?

The controversial tent city in Sydney's Martin Place will likely be shut down by the end of this week after NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian moved this afternoon to give state government the power to evict people from Crown lands over issues of public safety.

Current policy?



Current policy?

- Temporary accommodation works better than offering access to homelessness services
- 325 given temporary accommodation
- Lack of engagement with Non Government partners
- Housed without support

Cost effective?

TAXPAYERS are forking out thousands of dollars to house homeless people in four-star hotels and hostels after they were kicked out of the financial heart of Sydney to clear the way for a multimillion-dollar skyscraper.

Value for money?

Still two in a hotel since August!

Quick quiz time!

➤ Bed?

➤ Cutlery?

➤ Crockery?

Current policy direction ?



Lessons?

- Need to make ending homelessness non political!
- Need a sector that works together
- Need Government to respect sector

Can we end homelessness?

With enough political will and concrete we can
solve any issue!