

**Draft Western Australian Mental Health,
Alcohol and Other Drug Accommodation
and Support Strategy
2018-2025**

**Consultation Process Report
Phase One
March 2016 to July 2018**

July 2018

Background

Access to stable accommodation is recognised as one of the most significant factors contributing to wellbeing for a person with mental health and/or alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues. A stable home assists people to maintain connections with family and friends, form new relationships and be part of local communities. It also provides the basis for other areas of a person's life such as returning to study, securing employment, taking up a sport or hobby, increased social interactions and other activities. It provides the security of a 'place to call home'.

While there are a range of supported housing options currently available, there is still a significant shortfall to meet the varied needs of people with mental health and/or AOD issues.

For many people who experience mental health and/or AOD issues, finding and maintaining life in a stable home can prove difficult. Some people move from house to house or become homeless. People living in rental properties can be at risk of losing their home during periods of mental health instability.

As such, to help outline reforms in this space, the Mental Health Commission (MHC) has developed the draft Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Accommodation and Support Strategy 2018-2025 (draft Accommodation and Support Strategy) with key stakeholders.

Purpose of this document

This paper provides an overview of the consultation processes that the MHC has undertaken for the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy. This report covers Phase One of the consultation, which occurred March 2016 to July 2018. Phase Two of the consultation process will include online public consultation, which is yet to occur.

The MHC acknowledges all stakeholders, including consumers, families and carers for their contribution and time spent providing feedback in the identification of key priorities that was used to inform the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy.

The report does not attempt to detail all feedback provided during the consultation but aims to briefly highlight the key findings raised by stakeholders that were used to identify the priorities for the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy.

The content of this report includes an overview of the topics raised during the consultation process. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the consultation participants and do not necessarily reflect the MHC's policies and practices. A traditional policy process was undertaken to produce the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy ensuring it is informed by evidence-based research.

Methodology

The Phase One consultation period commenced in March 2016 and concluded in July 2018. Methods applied throughout this process included: individual meetings, workshops, written submissions, an advisory committee and targeted consultations. These were designed to meet the MHC objectives to support consumers, families and carers and other key stakeholders to actively participate in the co-design of policy development. The MHC aimed to ensure both metropolitan and regional stakeholders were engaged in the process.

The MHC also drew upon community feedback garnered from the consultation processes for the development of the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025, and from previous forums in which accommodation and support issues were identified and discussed.

Objectives

The objectives of the Phase One consultation process were:

1. Provide information to key stakeholders with regard to the intent and relevance of the project;
2. Provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to provide advice in relation to their key issues pertaining to housing and support; and

3. Identify key priorities that will inform the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy.

Overall views

Through the various consultation processes, significant input was received from a range of individual and organisational respondents regarding accommodation and support in Western Australia. A summary of the overall key themes and challenges raised by respondents as part of Phase One are outlined below.

Access

- A lack of affordable housing, as the costs associated with the private rental market often excludes this as an option for many individuals.
- Demand on social housing means that there are significant wait times (5 to 7 years).
- Bottlenecks created within currently available accommodation options due to the lack of affordable alternative housing for individuals to access once they no longer require the same level of support.
- Limited housing and support in rural and remote locations.
- Limited housing and support options for youth.
- Limited housing and support models, resulting in restricted ranges of accommodation and support types, such as crisis, respite and transitional housing.
- Service access barriers for people who have been homeless for a long time, including street present people and those not engaging with the service system.
- Limited pathways for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Support

- Lack of access to culturally appropriate accommodation and support options.
- An apparent lack of coordination between support services and housing services.
- The need for all mainstream services to be involved in the generation of solutions.
- A need to up-skill service providers to ensure effective support to people with multiple issues including homelessness, forensic issues, and AOD issues.
- Staff turnover results in the loss of rapport and knowledge of individual's preferred support approaches.
- Housing design and service modelling is out of step with individualised recovery principles in many current situations.
- Evictions of people with mental health and AOD issues from public housing, private rental and community housing (which may be potentially avoidable).
- Lack of contemporary service model alignment.
- A need to review policies that contribute to homelessness.

Who provided input?

The MHC has undertaken an extensive consultation process with a range of key stakeholders. The Phase One consultation process included:

- Individual meetings with targeted stakeholders;
- a consumer, family and carer workshop;
- a group meeting with stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Independent Living Program;
- written submissions to the MHC;
- establishment of the Accommodation and Support Strategy Advisory Committee;
- targeted consultation with the Department of Communities and Directors General Implementation Group; and
- other consultations in the form of presentations.

More than 50 non-government organisations, peak bodies, and government agencies, and more than 30 consumer consultants, carers and family members have been involved in the consultation process to inform the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy. More detail on these processes are outlined below.

Individual meetings with targeted stakeholders

Targeted consultation meetings with key stakeholders across a range of sectors were undertaken at the beginning of the consultation process to ensure: issues were taken into account from the beginning and reflected in the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy; any gaps in evidence were supplemented; an understanding of public perception and relevance of local context; the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy is relevant and accepted; and to improve the receptivity to its uptake and dissemination. One-on-one meetings (including regional and remote locations) were held with 27 organisations in total.

Key themes include:

- Reducing stigma and discrimination.
- Greater linkages between accommodation and support services.
- Recognition of vulnerable groups such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Training for staff.
- Support for smooth transition between accommodation and support options.
- Lack of accommodation options.
- New and ongoing funding.
- Hostel standards.

Consumer, Family and Carer Workshop

On 16 September 2016, the MHC convened the Accommodation and Support Strategy Consumer, Family and Carer Workshop. The workshop focused on identifying the key issues for consumers, families and carers to inform the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy. The facilitators of the workshop included an external consultant with a lived experience of supporting a family member experiencing mental health distress and MHC staff.

The MHC liaised with the Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWa), Carers WA, Helping Minds, Mental Health Matters 2 (MHM2), the Western Australia Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), and the Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) to identify nominees with a lived experience of accommodation and support issues and mental health and AOD issues to participate in the workshop.

A total of 31 individuals were nominated with 25 people attending on the day. Attendees participated in small group discussions to establish key themes and issues to inform the Accommodation and Support Strategy from a consumer, family and carer perspective. A summary of the workshop was provided to workshop participants for their review.

The group emphasised that as a result of the limited attention historically given to the development of accommodation and support services for people experiencing mental health distress and/or AOD problems, there are a significant number of issues identified as urgent and high.

The stories shared by workshop participants clearly demonstrated that access to safe affordable housing and support is currently at crisis point in Western Australia.

The group stressed that immediate attention is required to identify solutions to address the accommodation and support crisis, and work needs to commence with relevant government and non-government agencies in consultation with consumers, families and carers.

It was acknowledged that while a number of the issues raised require a longer term strategic approach in their implementation, the group also identified issues that could be addressed in the short-term. These include a focus on:

- working with agencies to develop a trauma informed approach to service delivery;
- pathways to develop collaborative practices across the sector;
- reflecting on the learnings from collective impact approaches;
- exploring the concept of social impact bonds as a way to address funding challenges; and
- the development of a strategic partnership between the MHC and the Department of Communities, Housing,

Independent Living Program Practitioners Forum

The Independent Living Program (ILP) is a supported housing program to assist people with severe mental illness to gain appropriate accommodation and live with support in the community. The ILP is a joint initiative between the Department of Communities and the Department of Health.

On 2 August 2016, the MHC convened a workshop for ILP practitioners. A total of 20 individuals attended the workshop, including representatives from health service providers, community managed organisations and community housing organisations.

The purpose of the forum was to identify key issues, challenges and opportunities related to the delivery of ILP. The below is an example of some of the challenges and opportunities raised at the workshop:

What is working well

- Clients being housed.
- Good relationships between the mental health services and ILP providers.
- Regular meetings to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Provides long-term stable accommodation.

Challenges

- Maintaining properties to high standards.
- Waitlist management consistency.
- Property availability.
- Quality, suitability and flexibility of housing stock.
- Transition pathways.

Opportunities

- Case managers to be advised when rent inspections occur to support consumer.
- Regular meetings between ILP provider and Mental Health Services.
- Improve communication.
- Standardised referral, waitlist and housing allocation processes.

A summary of the forum was provided to attendees and key themes identified included:

- implementation of transparent, standardised referral processes and approaches to waitlist management;
- need for more housing stock, with emphasis on quality, suitability and sustainability;
- investigation of exit strategies including processes for transfer of tenure if individuals no longer meet the ILP's requirements;
- housing allocation (location and configuration) needs to be mapped/matched to need and demographic, and be regularly reviewed; and
- ongoing continuous improvement processes within a partnership framework to ensure the ILP is responsive, contemporary and meets current needs.

Written Submissions to the MHC

Throughout the consultation period (March 2016 to July 2018) the MHC received written submissions outlining suggested priorities and focus areas for the Accommodation and Support Strategy, from individuals, service providers, peak bodies and networks. These included eight submission documents from the WAAMH, Mental Health Advocacy Service, North Metropolitan Health Service, the Co-Chair of the Multicultural Mental Health Sub Network and the Youth Mental Health Sub Network. The submissions suggested improvements to accommodation and support for people who experience mental health and/or AOD issues and key considerations regarding the development of contemporary service models for improving access to accommodation and support for people who experience mental health and/or AOD issues. Other key themes include:

- More accommodation and support options are required across the spectrum.
- Future service development to be age appropriate and developmentally informed.
- Funding to be coordinated to prevent silos.
- Complex needs require a partnership approach between agencies.
- Accommodation and Support models need to be trauma-informed and responsive to diversity (gender, Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse, youth).
- Development of clear transition pathways.
- The use of peer support workers as providing positive mentoring.

All submissions have informed the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy.

Advisory Committee

In March 2017, the MHC established an Accommodation and Support Strategy Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) that provided guidance regarding the finalisation of the vision, principles and key focus areas and helped shape the priority actions for public consultation.

The Advisory Committee included consumers and carer/family members, representatives from State Government departments, community housing providers and as well as peak community mental health and AOD agencies.

The Advisory Committee held four meetings and provided input and endorsement for the Vision, Principles and Key Focus Areas of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy.

The Advisory Committee considered the key themes from the consultation processes and other preparatory work in making their recommendations. The Advisory Committee held its final meeting in June 2017 where they reviewed examples of contemporary models for potential inclusion in the Accommodation Strategy such as: Individualised Community Living Strategy, Inner City Cadre Project and the ILP. The members also discussed Collective Impact and agreed that an integrated approach is required to address accommodation and support service issues.

Other Consultation

Throughout the consultation period the MHC received requests for presentations on the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy at events and committee meetings. These include:

Housing and Advisory Round Table (HART)

Participants were asked to provide two priority areas/initiatives that would have a positive impact on accommodation and support for people with mental health and/or AOD issues.

The following innovative initiatives were discussed:

- **Support:** provide long-term support for client and their family e.g. carer, partner, child.
- **Collaboration:** work together to provide a one-stop-shop with a range of services.
- **Holistic:** include services for physical and mental health, domestic violence, AOD, disability etc.
- **Lead:** have a 'trusted person' who will refer and link client to the appropriate support.

The following practical initiatives that organisations could commit to now included:

- A risk-fund that connects people when at risk of losing house.
- A 'bank' from which people can draw to maintain suitable accommodation to minimise the period of accommodation risk.
- A forum for mental health workers, people with mental health and carers for mental health to present to the public to breakdown prejudice/barriers.
- Sharing of knowledge, information and research.
- Advocacy.
- Training and support for staff.
- Resources: Staff time (meetings, framework development, committee membership etc.) to develop and implement new strategies.

Mental Health Network Co-Chairs

The MHC presented at the Mental Health Network Co-Chairs meeting to gather feedback. Participants were asked for their thoughts on the following:

1. What is one “big” initiative you would like to see in the Accommodation and Support Strategy? Responses include:
 - targeted care in specialised services e.g. young people, dementia, personality disorders etc.
 - Increase short term accommodation to assist with transition.
 - Flexible options with individualised supports.
 - Improved linkages between all services.
2. Thinking about what might be realistic and achievable in the shorter term, what is a practical initiative that your organisation could commit to now? Common responses include:
 - non-clinical support such as training/education for family, carers and community.
 - Continue to advocate.
 - Collaborative working and data sharing, service integration.

Participants were also provided with the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy Vision, Principles and Key Focus Areas.

Shelter WA Housing and Homelessness Forum

The Mental Health Commissioner was invited to present on the Accommodation and Support Strategy at the Shelter WA Housing and Homelessness Forum in August 2017.

Private Mental Health Regulation Reference Committee (PMHRRC)

The MHC was requested to present an update on the progress of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy to PMHRRC. No concerns were raised by the group.

Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC)

The MHC gave a comprehensive presentation on the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy to the MHAC. This presentation provided an overview of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy and highlighted the consultation process, vision, principles and key focus areas.

Mental Health Commission Aboriginal Advisory Group

The MHC’s Aboriginal Advisory Group has members from a range of areas. Members were asked to provide their thoughts regarding the following:

1. What would be the top 2-3 strategies/actions for each key focus areas that would be essential in improving the accommodation and support system for Aboriginal people with mental health and/or AOD issues? The MHC Aboriginal Advisory Group Feedback included:
 - Not enough housing options available, including larger houses.
 - System needs to be flexible.
 - Educate clients before they enter housing.
 - Capacity building for the agencies, educating staff around cultural security.
2. What is a current model that is improving access to Accommodation and Support for Aboriginal people with mental health and/or AOD issues?

Current models discussed were the Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services in Fitzroy and the Yawurur Home Ownership Project in Broome.

3. Do you have any recommendations on how we can increase engagement and consultation with Aboriginal communities around the Accommodation and Support Strategy? Some examples include:
 - Aboriginal Alcohol and other Drug Service.
 - Derbal Yerrigan Health service.

- Yorgum.
- Mission Drug and Alcohol Youth Service.
- Allawah Grove Hostel.

Members were also provided with the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy Vision, Principles and Key Focus Areas.

Joondalup Wanneroo Mental Health Steering Group

The MHC presented on the development of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy. No concerns were raised by the group.

Tenancy WA State Conference

The Acting Assistant Commissioner Planning, Policy and Strategy presented a workshop on behalf of the Mental Health Commissioner at the Tenancy WA State Conference in November 2017. This presentation provided an overview of the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy and highlighted the consultation process, Vision, Principles and Key Focus Areas.

Targeted Consultation

In March 2018, the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy was provided to the Department of Communities - Housing and in July 2018, to the Directors General Implementation Group for early, in-confidence, targeted consultation.

Department of Communities – Housing

The MHC provided a draft copy of the Accommodation and Support Strategy for review by Department of Communities – Housing who provided positive feedback and indicated their support for collaboration during the implementation of the strategy, raising a number of points for consideration. Department of Communities – Housing also acknowledge that there are clear points of mutual interest between the MHC and the Department of Communities.

Directors General Implementation Group (DGIG)

The DGIG members were provided with a draft copy of the Accommodation and Support Strategy for review and to endorse the strategy for public consultation. All member organisations provided their endorsement and some provided minor suggested changes to the document.

Consultation - Phase Two

Phase Two of the consultation process will include online public consultation. A summary of this consultation will be developed and released in due course.

Attachment A: List of Respondents

The following is a list of organisations that provided a submission on the draft Accommodation and Support Strategy and/or who were consulted in the development of the Accommodation and Support Strategy.

Targeted one on one consultation

- Amana Living
- Bloodwood Tree Association
- Carers Association of WA Inc.
- Child and Adolescent Health Service
- Consumers of Mental Health Western Australia
- Cyrenian House
- Department for Child Protection and Family Support
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Department of Corrective Services
- Department of Health – Mental Health Unit
- Disability Services Commission
- Helping Minds
- Housing Authority
- Mental Health Advocacy Service
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- North Metropolitan Health Service
- Office of Multicultural Interests
- Richmond Wellbeing
- Romily House
- Salisbury Hostel
- Shelter WA
- South Metropolitan Health Service
- Southern Cross Care (WA) Inc.
- St Bartholomew’s House Inc.
- St Jude’s Hostel
- Teen Challenge
- Western Australian Association for Mental Health

Independent Living Program Practitioners Forum

- Access Housing
- Alma Street Centre
- Department of Health – Mental Health Unit
- Foundation Housing
- Mirrabooka Mental Health Service
- Pathways
- Rise Network
- St Bartholomew’s House Inc.
- Uniting Care West

Written submission

- Foundation Housing
- Mental Health Advocacy Service

- Multicultural Mental Health Sub Network
- North Metropolitan Health Service
- Shelter WA
- Western Australian Association for Mental Health
- Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies
- Youth Mental Health Sub Network

Advisory Committee

- Access Housing
- Community Housing Industry Association of Australia
- Consumers of Mental Health Western Australia
- Consumers, carers and family consultants
- Department for Child Protection and Family Support
- East Metropolitan Health Service – Mental Health
- Foundation Housing
- Housing Authority
- Mental Health Advocacy Service
- Noongar Mia Mia
- North Metropolitan Health Service – Adult Mental Health
- Shelter WA
- Western Australian Association for Mental Health
- Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies

Other

- Alcohol and Other Drug Advisory Board
- Department of Communities
- Directors General Implementation Group
 - Department of Communities
 - Department of Education
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Justice
 - Department of Premier and Cabinet
 - Western Australia Police
- Fusion Australia
- Great Southern Community Housing Association
- Hope Community Services
- Lamp Inc.
- Life Without Barriers
- Mental Health Matters 2
- Mission Australia

- National Affordable Housing Agreement Transitional and Young Parents Accommodation Program
- Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation
- Ruah Community Services
- WA Country Health Service (Great Southern Mental Health Service)