

Towards Meeting the Unmet

Support for older people in public
housing

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Support programs in public housing for older people

- May 1997 – Ministerial Taskforce on Support Services for Tenants in Low Cost Accommodation
- Responding to needs of adults and older people who have unmet complex needs and are homeless or living in insecure or low cost accommodation

A need to respond to unmet needs

The Taskforce found that older people in low cost accommodation were often:

- among the most **vulnerable**
- **isolated** & alone
- on the outside, **not connected to services**
- most at risk of homelessness



Aged Care Branch developed a range of accommodation support programs aimed at improving health, housing and social participation outcomes for people with complex care needs experiencing housing insecurity

The Response - Low Cost Accommodation Support Programs

- ❖ Community Connections Program
- ❖ Housing Support for the Aged Program
- ❖ Older Persons High Rise Support Program



Community Connections Program

Uses an assertive outreach model to:

- Find
- Engage
- Assess &
- Link people into the services they need

Flexible pool of funds to assist



Around 1800 people assisted annually
Community Connections Program

16 CCP services located across Victoria

Mostly aged 45 to 65 years

Mostly single, 60% male

Live in private rental, rooming houses, supported residential services, caravan parks, emergency housing and public places

Assists some older people into public housing and links them with Housing Support for the Aged Program

Housing Support for the Aged

- Supports older people with complex needs and a history of homelessness to **maintain long-term public housing** & improve their health & wellbeing
- More complex support needs due to age-related frailty or disability/chronic health conditions, requiring more intensive one-on-one support



Housing Support for the Aged

Began as a throughput option for CCP – HSAP worker provides ongoing support to get them accepted into public housing

Not all clients ready or choose to move into public housing

Also supporting older people already in public housing whose tenancy had become at risk

Support includes monitoring, case management to coordinate client access to services, and practical assistance to get clients to appointments or linking into social & recreational activities

Workers access a flexible pool of funds to avert crisis, eviction or pressing need unable to be readily met by existing services

Housing Support for the Aged

Around 300 people assisted annually

13 services located across Victoria

Mostly over 50 years – 30% are 70 and older

Mostly single, 60% male

Live in public/community housing

Stabilises health & housing outcomes through case management, where the older person has significant needs but doesn't qualify for community based aged care packages

May provide initial intensive support for someone moving into older persons high-rise tower and then refer on to Older Persons High Rise Program worker to provide lower level monitoring & support

Dan's story

Evicted by family

Alienated from family and friends

Run-down rooming house - 'Living hell'

Referred to community housing



Dan's story

HSAP provided:

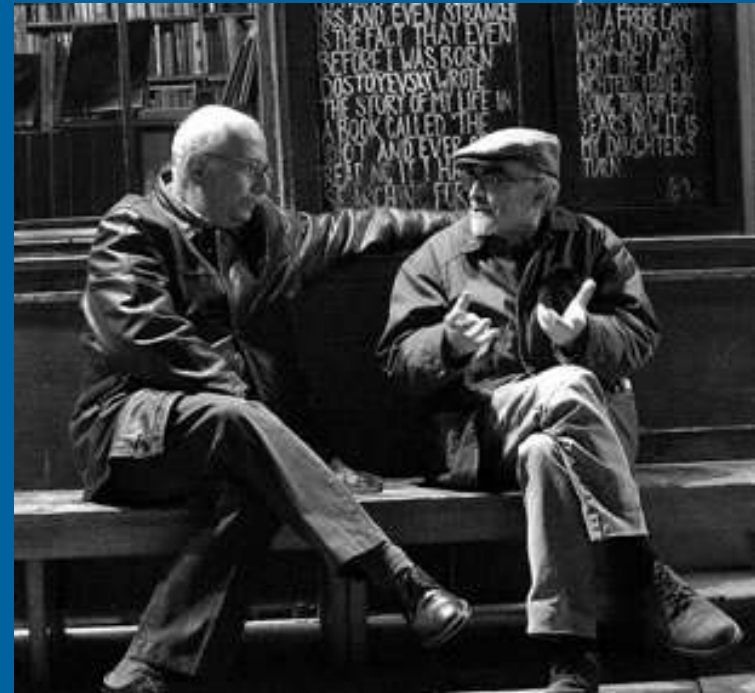
- Flexible support
- Time to develop a relationship & build trust



Dan's story

What this meant for Dan:

Dan has expressed his appreciation & looks forward to visits from HSAP staff



Older Persons High Rise Support Program

A place based approach to ensure isolated & vulnerable tenants are linked to support & services



Older Persons High Rise Support Program

Provides low level monitoring & support to tenants of older persons high-rise public housing towers in inner suburban Melbourne

On-site workers outreach to seek out and engage isolated or vulnerable tenants and link them to support and services

This might include HACCC, community aged care packages, community health services, other local or specialised supports

Around 600 registered clients annually (plus large numbers of casual contacts)

About 50% are 70 or over

All live in a public housing high-rise estate designated for older people - 17 workers are employed in 11 older persons towers

Older Persons High Rise Support Program

Key strength is partnership with Office of Housing, including

- office space made available within the towers
- tenant issues jointly resolved before they 'blow out'
- protocols to advise of new tenants so OPHR workers offer help

Site/place based approach has benefits, including

- facilitates engagement with tenants and provides a focal point for distribution of information
- focal point for social activities, guest services planning activities on site, and projects eg. Well4Life, edible gardens
- fosters sense of community in tower and involves residents

Key Elements of Low Cost Accommodation Support Programs

Department of Health

health

All these programs:

- Embrace a social model of health
- Have a dual focus on support and housing
- Take a person-centred approach
- Offer flexibility
- Provide access to brokerage funding



All these elements make these programs unique
and contribute to their success

Summary

Older people are an important group to consider when discussion of homelessness and insecure housing arise, as access to suitable accommodation and the security of that accommodation is critical

This impacts on dignity and health for older people

These programs are small and have no secure growth funding base

The principles are applicable to other settings - SAVVI is a multi-dimensional initiative to improve the viability of pension-level SRS and quality of life for residents

The models could be used in other settings – public housing neighbourhoods or social housing developments with numbers of older persons units; retirement villages

Flexibility of support is a key

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