

The Intersections of Mental Health and Homelessness in NSW

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land as the first people of this country. Always was, Always will be Aboriginal land.



Our Mission

We exist to build the capability of people and capacity of systems to end homelessness.

Our Vision

We have a vision for future where everyone has a safe and secure home and connection to community.

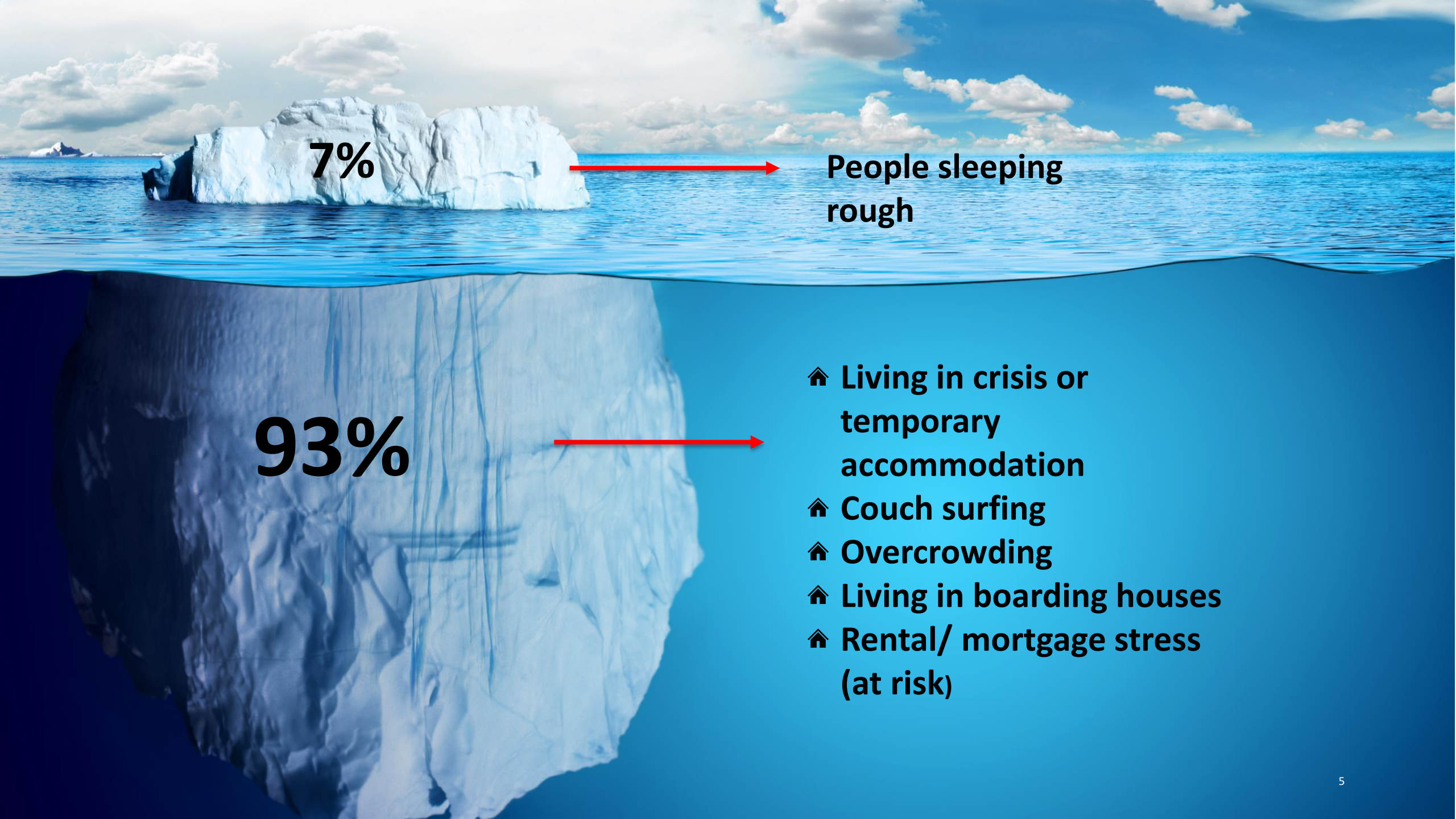
Who we represent

190+ members made up of specialist services, allies, changemakers and people with lived experience working to end homelessness.

Ending Homelessness
means its...

RARE
BRIEF and
NON RECCURING





7%

People sleeping rough

93%

- 🏠 **Living in crisis or temporary accommodation**
- 🏠 **Couch surfing**
- 🏠 **Overcrowding**
- 🏠 **Living in boarding houses**
- 🏠 **Rental/ mortgage stress (at risk)**

There is a growing number of people in need...

- Recent disasters have left thousands of people homeless
- In 2021/22, over 68,500 people supported
- Of those approx. 4,000 people support per month are people with Mental Health conditions)
- Last year 49.9% of people seeking accommodation assistance could not have needs met

Source: AIHW Homelessness Report NSW 21/22

Housing supply is not delivering for those in need...

- 57,000 households currently on the housing waiting list that face 10+ years wait
- It will take 80 years to meet the demand of the waiting list at current building rates of 2%
- 54,000 people in rental stress (Aftershock report)
- Affordable rentals are not available with a less than 1% vacancy rate

Investment is not meeting demand...

- NSW Government currently spends \$1.2b in total on housing & homelessness
- Of this spend, \$42.87 per day per year is allocated for each person supported- 2nd lowest in Australia
- Those same clients are costing an additional \$31,000 per year in peripheral services, which is x4 times higher than the population of NSW

Source: Ending Homelessness Together, Homelessness NSW Online

<https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/campaign/ending-homelessness-together-2022/>

Homelessness is both a
cause and a consequence of
mental illness

How prevalent is mental ill health amongst those experiencing homelessness?

- Mental ill health diagnosis was highest in the 'chronic instability, homeless' group (78%) and lowest in the 'stable homeless, with friends or family' group (61%).
- Nationally 31% of people experiencing homelessness access SHS services
- Over 40% also experienced DFV
- Majority women
- 71% returning/ previously supported

Source: [Journeys Home survey](#) and [AIHW 21/22](#)

Does experiencing housing stress or homelessness impact mental ill health?

There is evidence to support the idea that environmental exposure to stress, such as stress related to experiencing housing instability or homelessness, can lead to mental illness.

An analysis of the Journeys Home survey for the [AHURI-Mind Australia Trajectories research project](#) identified that for those who were homeless before they developed a mental illness, the onset of the illness occurred on average nine years after first experiencing homelessness, and that it developed at a much older age than for those whose mental illness was present prior to becoming homeless or for the general population.

Challenges

Exits from Hospital

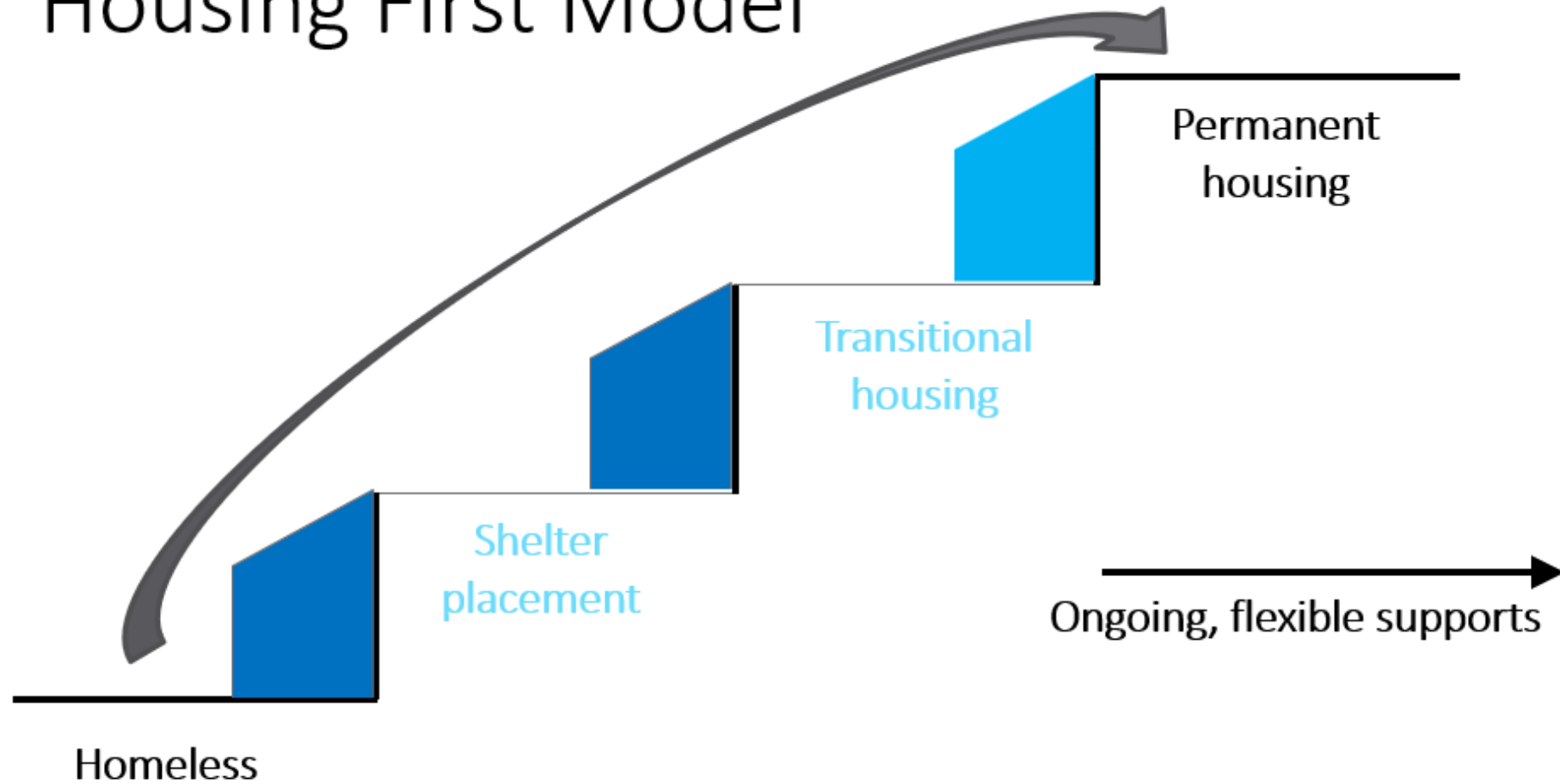
“One quarter of all people admitted to acute mental health services are homeless prior to admission and most are discharged back into homelessness.” The Productivity Commission, 2020

Services not funded with multi disciplinary teams to meet complexity of need (including assertive outreach)

Lack of services in regional areas

What is Housing First?

Housing First Model



Housing First- Success Internationally

- 🏠 83% housed @ 1 year (Portugal)
- 🏠 77% housed @ 5½ years (Netherlands)
- 🏠 94% housed @ 1 year (Denmark)
- 🏠 80% housed @ 13 months (France)
- 🏠 80% housed 6-18 Months (NSW)

Compared to evidence for *this particular group* of 30-50% success rate for pathway/staircase services

Evidence of ending very long-term homelessness

Housing First in NSW- Together Home

The Together Home Program is a \$177.5 million investment by the NSW Government. It aims to support over 1,072 people street-sleeping across NSW into stable accommodation, linked to wraparound support.

Homelessness NSW is funded separately to manage and deliver Together Home High Needs packages. If a participant has a high degree of complexity, Community Housing Providers can make a referral to the High Needs Assessment Panel for a High Needs package.

Over \$3.79 million has been allocated to 162 people through the initial referrals, reviews and one-off grants. Over 33% allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipients.

Housing and Mental Health Agreement 2022

People who live with mental illness have timely access to safe, secure, appropriate housing; and mental health supports in place when needed, to sustain housing, live well in the community and lead their recovery.

Homelessness NSW conducted consultation with 95 services

- Broad support for coordination, governance and accountability mechanisms
- Policy gaps – need for a whole-of-government approach
- Challenges with practical implementation of frameworks, mainly due to resource shortages



Ending Homelessness for people with mental health conditions looks like...

- Addressing root causes and building community connection**
- Investing in prevention and early intervention support**
- No exits from hospitals into homelessness**
- Housing First Programs and in home support programs like HASI**

Systems Change Strategy

Co-develop a bottom up 10-year shared vision and agreed areas of action that supports Homelessness NSW and the sector to mobilise and align efforts to end homelessness in NSW.

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a shared vision
- Collectively identifying the systemic conditions that hold the biggest challenges of homelessness in place
- Identifying the highest value leverage points in the system, to act in aligned and independent action

We recognise the need to:

- Build on the strength of the work being done across the diversity of our communities.
- Centre the voice of lived and living experience
- Not further burn out as a sector by spreading ourselves thin.
- Build shared visions for action, in a climate of finite resources
- Input this work into the development of the national housing and homelessness strategy and the review of the housing and homelessness strategies at the state level.





THANK YOU!
Homelessness
NSW

