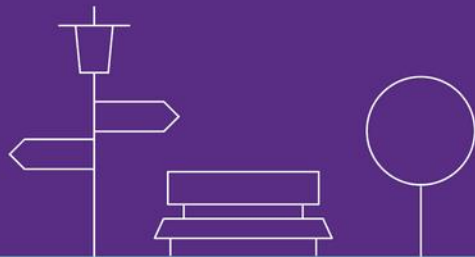


HOMELESSNESS IS A HEALTH EMERGENCY

The case for integrating health and homelessness responses

Laura Mahoney
Executive Director, Homelessness Solutions and Impact
Launch Housing



ABOUT LAUNCH HOUSING

WHO WE ARE

Launch Housing is the largest independent Melbourne-based specialist homelessness organisation.

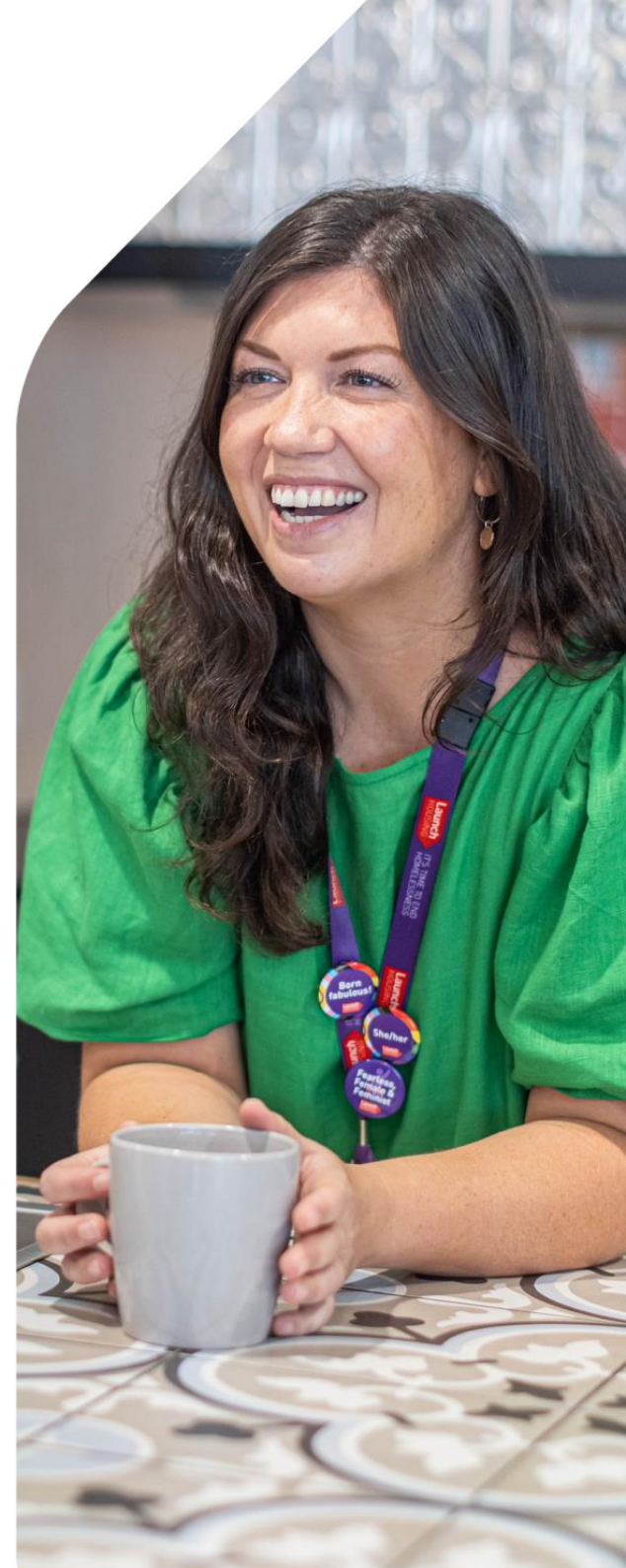
With more than 75 years' experience and 400 staff working across 14 locations in greater Melbourne, **we bring solutions to homelessness under one roof for over 14,000 people each year.**

OUR MISSION

To end homelessness.

OUR VISION

We believe housing is a basic human right that affords people dignity. Everyone has a right to a home and it's our job to make this happen.



WHY HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a **growing crisis**, especially here in Victoria.

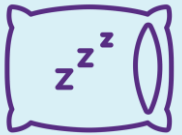


Last census night over 122,000 people were homeless in Australia, with 30,000 people without a home in Victoria - a **24% increase since 2016**

There are over **67,000 Victorians** on the public housing waitlist

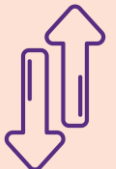


Sleeping rough can reduce a person's life expectancy by as much as **30 years**



In 2021, the number of First Nations Victorians without a home was 1,109 - **42% more than 2016**

The number of people we assisted who were employed increased on the previous year **from 16% to 25%**

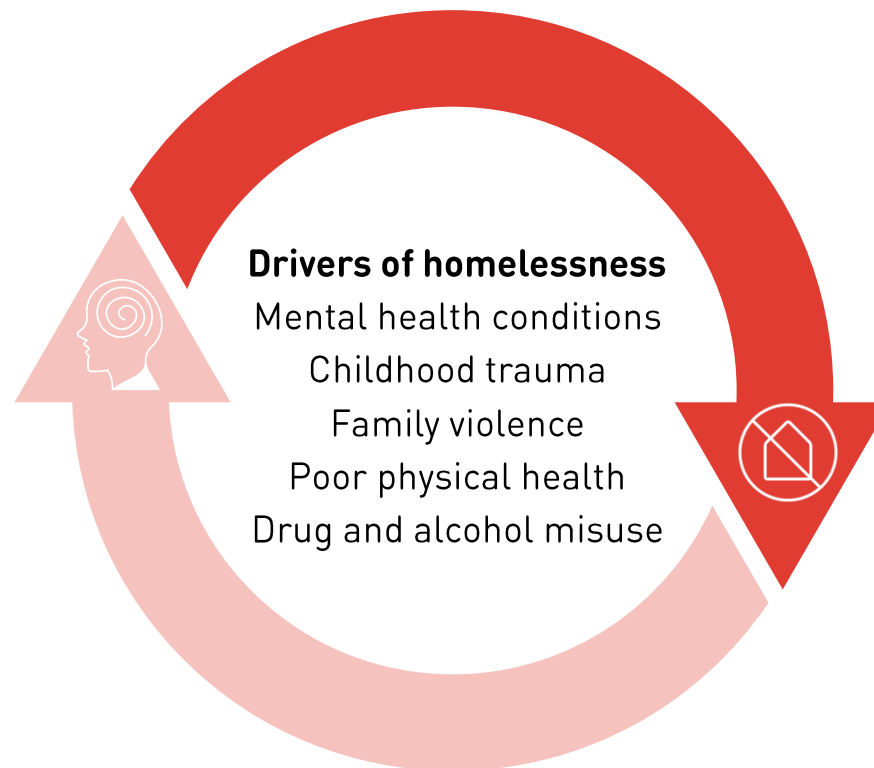




HEALTH IMPACTS OF HOMELESSNESS

Health and homelessness are intricately linked. Investment in healthcare is integral to ending homelessness.

Mental illness is the leading health concern as both a contributor and consequence of homelessness.



15-20%
of people moving out of homelessness will need one-off or lifelong support

Rough sleepers
40x
more likely to have PTSD than the general population

79%
of rough sleepers reported having at least one diagnosed mental health condition

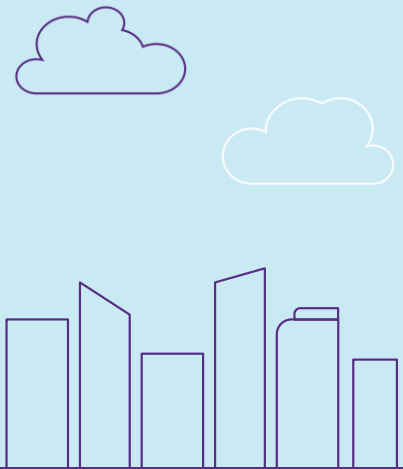
“The years I spent homeless, it changes you forever. You never feel safe again. Before I was homeless, I had a mental illness... it’s taken 22 years to be medicated in the right way.”

-LAUNCH HOUSING CLIENT



THE IMPACT ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM

People experiencing homelessness are **over-represented** in hospitals and emergency departments.



9% of homeless admissions **identify as Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander**, while making up 0.8% of the Victorian population

People experiencing homelessness account for **4-30% of ED admissions**, while making up **<1%** of the national population

Homelessness healthcare at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne **costs an average of \$14,602 per person over six months**



INTEGRATING HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS RESPONSES

Strong evidence shows access to **specialised support and accommodation, plus primary and community health services** leads to positive health outcomes.



INCREASED PRIMARY HEALTHCARE ACCESS REDUCES HOSPITAL, ED ADMISSIONS AND AMBULANCE CALLOUTS



Research has shown that slight increases in primary healthcare access (0.5 to 5 visits/year) led to a 74% drop in hospital nights for the homeless

An inner Sydney study found that nurse-led primary care led to

82% of homeless men avoiding ED admissions

through facilitated referrals



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Sumner House

Sumner House, in partnership with St Vincent's Health Melbourne, offers clinical and supportive care in a home setting for people experiencing homelessness, allowing stays of up to six months.



Early evaluation results confirm dramatic improvements in participants' health:

1. Improved mental and physical health
2. Increased quality of life and personal engagement
3. All clients with planned exits have secured medium to long-term housing

4x
less likely to present to emergency

74%
saw improvement or resolution of one or more health issues

Personal wellbeing score rose from **44.6** to **74** upon exit

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cornelia Program

The **Cornelia Program** works with **pregnant women and new mothers and their babies** who are experiencing homelessness.

Cornelia provides temporary accommodation and holistic supports for up to 12 months.

73
women and their babies have been supported since 2021



Improves access to clinical support through Royal Women's Hospital for prenatal and postnatal care, to support overall health and wellbeing



At the end of FY23, there were 22 women in the Cornelia Program - 19 of whom were receiving support for family violence



35 women and their babies exiting the program in FY23 were supported into longer-term housing or reunified with family



AMY'S STORY

Cornelia Program



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Southbank Nurses Program

Southbank is a **51-bed crisis accommodation**, where people can stay for up to 8 weeks.

An independent 2022 evaluation found on-site nurses positively improved the health of residents:

1. Increased trust between clients and health staff
2. Acute and chronic issues identified earlier so management can begin
3. Improved management of mental and physical health, including better management of alcohol and other drug use

35%

of clients self-reported a mental health issue

26.3%

of clients live with an acquired brain injury

338

COVID interventions including on-site vaccinations

“I hadn’t really had any other supports before. That was the first time I had ever had a nurse or doctor’s support. Previously I just had to go to the hospital.”



24 engagements per client during their stay





“The cancer is not better but this - living here - is better. Everyone here treats me very humanely, I’m respected here. When I was in hospital, [Southbank staff] remembered I like to paint, and so they brought into hospital some paints and colouring books so I could pass time focusing on my art.”

-JAKUB, SOUTHBANK CLIENT

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Elizabeth Street Common Ground

Elizabeth Street Common Ground provides permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness with 65 studio apartments and 24/7 support.

An internal 2021 evaluation found on-site nurses positively improved the health of residents:

1. Improved mental and physical health
2. Lessened use of self-medication through alcohol and other drugs
3. Increased independence in managing health, housing and wellbeing

10-20

years of homelessness prior to moving to Elizabeth St

50%

of residents experienced childhood abuse and trauma

13%

of residents are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Launch
HOUSING

IT'S TIME TO END
HOMELESSNESS

THANK YOU

Together, we can end homelessness

Questions?

FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS
www.launchhousing.org.au



Level 7, 54 Wellington Street
Collingwood, Victoria 3066

T: 03 9288 9600 F: 03 9288 9601
E: info@launchhousing.org.au