



Surviving or Thriving?  
Older Victorians at risk of homelessness  
Forum June 5 2014



# HOME AT LAST

Older persons housing  
information & support service

## Progress Report

*Home at Last is funded by the Department of Human Services  
as a Homelessness Innovations Action Project  
It is a strategy of the Victorian Government's Homelessness Action Plan*



# *Are we there yet?*

- Home at Last service approach is based on early intervention and prevention
- Home at Last is funded until June 2015
- Final evaluation phase underway
- Meeting our targets
- Navigating through wider reforms

## How many people has Home at Last assisted?

Over first 21 months June 2012-February 2014

- 6368 at community education sessions
- 1805 assisted to find a housing outcome (788 information, 408 Home at Last support, 609 external agency)
- 201 provided with tenancy advice, 37 retirement housing service

## Who is Home at Last assisting?

- More than half are aged 66-85
- 61% female
- 32% from a CALD background with many groups represented
- Broad geographical spread



## Why do older people seek our help?

- 33% have a housing crisis
- 29% can't afford their rent and bills
- 27% can't live in their home due to its condition or need for it to be more adaptable
- Relationship breakdown 8%
- Planning for the future 3%



## Housing Outcomes?

### Housing type

- Public housing 68%
- Social housing 24%
- Independent Living Units 8%
- Transitional Housing 1%
- Private rental 1%



## Time to be re-housed

Less than a month 20%

1- 3 months 50%

4-6 months 20%

More than 6 months 10%

## How is this achieved?

- Older persons specific housing
- Public housing households turn over
- Priority system
- A range of housing options available





## Housing Outcome

98% Long term housing

98% Housing in good condition and well designed

98% Housing designed for their needs

98% Affordable

- 68% rent payments reduced to 25%
- 24% rent payments reduced to 30%
- 8% rent payments reduced to 25-30%

100% have stayed well housed after relocation





## Some project learnings

- Older people first time homeless often rely on friends and family
- May not be identifying as being in need if 'managing' to live in squalor and hardship and also fear taking action as being too hard
- Need to encourage older private renters to make decisions as it is a matter of when not if a problem will arise
- Current homelessness support system does not cater for the needs of older people at risk of homelessness
- Vital linkages into the health and aged care systems



## Project learnings continued

- Better understanding of the CALD communities that need our help
- Transition applications for older people considering retirement and integration with housing system more generally
- Vacancy register to work more efficiently with housing providers
- Promote housing for older people as a positive step, as a right, to live independently, next move doesn't mean residential care
- Working with government i.e. Elder Abuse Strategy
- Support for all older people with a housing problem



## What is our vision?

- Older persons homelessness support program – it's about time!
- Housing as a fundamental pillar of the health & aged care system
- Needs national development as the problems identified in Victoria are found in all states and capital cities



## Thank you!

- Department of Human Services, Consumer Affairs Victoria, Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Management Committee: Pauline Williamson, Gordon Beard, Bob Brooks, Vicki Gutsjahr, Sue Leigh, Carmel McMennemin, Sivarasa Nallaratnam, Maree Norris, Dalene Salisbury, Kris Spark, Sally Stabback, Eunice Walters and past chairperson Wyn Stenton.
- Home at Last Governance Committee: Paula Svehaug, Helen Draper, Daniel Attard, Matthew Munforte, Fran Moloney, Kate Incerti, Peter Sibly, Rose Vince, Terry Kelly, Wei Choong
- Home at Last staff: Maria Cozzi, Anne Maher, Melis Cevik, Kaye Trainor, Ani Loriente, Crystal McDonald, Fionnuala Spillane, Gemma White, Shanny Gordon, Shane McGrath, Tegan Leeder, Naomi Geberts, Marc Westley (on leave), Megan Baker (resigned 2013), Nhuc Liu (current RMIT student placement)