



# Homelessness is solvable: How we can end it in Australia

David Pearson

*2020 Churchill Fellow awarded to study efforts to end homelessness*

United States of America | Canada | England | Scotland | Finland | Sweden



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**David Pearson, 28 June 2023**

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Front Cover:

- **Measurement** - Top Left - Poverty maps of London - from the Thames Reach CEO's office, UK.
- **Supportive Housing** - Bottom Left - one of a number of permanent supportive housing services operating as part of a system in Chicago, USA.
- **The Problem** - Top Right - People sleeping rough in front of the US Treasury building with flags at half mast because of COVID-19.
- **Targets** - Bottom Right - the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, New York, USA
- **Housing and Support** - Middle - Managed Alcohol service in Glasgow, UK



*(Image: Public Art Installation, Downtown Seattle, USA)*

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### **Keywords**

Homelessness, Ending Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Housing First, Advance to Zero, Built for Zero, Functional Zero, Collective Impact, Data, Collaboration, Permanent Supportive Housing, Improvement.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

I acknowledge the Kurna people on whose lands I live and work, and pay my respect to elders past and present. In a spirit of reconciliation, I also acknowledge that homelessness is a concept brought to the lands now known as Australia through the process of colonisation and that this has left a lasting legacy of disparity and inequity.<sup>1</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also more likely to experience housing insecurity, ill health and homelessness than non-Aboriginal people. For example, the forcible removal from traditional homelands continues to this day to undermine access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to secure and stable housing.<sup>2</sup> Greater focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness is needed and recommendations in that regard are made in this report.

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- And last but not least all of those people with lived experience of homelessness who spent time with me and so generously shared their insights, their wisdom and their stories.

### **Trigger Warning**

Please note that this report discusses suicide and mental illness which may be triggering for some readers.

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<sup>1</sup> Pat Anderson, *Lowitja O'Donoghue Oration*, Don Dunstan Foundation, June 2021, Available <https://dunstan.org.au/events/lodo20/>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Right Commission (2022) *Education: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders-australias-first-peoples>

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*(Photo: William Ratcliffe, Hampstead Garden Suburb Painting, a new housing development from 1914 intended to be a place where people from different classes could live, mix and feel wellcome, Tate Britain, London, UK)*

## Quotes

*“I know ending homelessness is possible because there was none when I started my career”.*

- Nan Roman, The National Alliance to End Homelessness, USA

*I feel like my “only options at times are suicide or to rob a bank”.*

- Guy, person with a lived experience, Chicago, USA

*“If sleeping rough is somehow a choice, why do no rich people choose to do it?”*

- Mark McGrevy, De Paul International, London, UK

*“Homelessness is not a moral failure of people, it is a moral failure of society - it is immoral to choose eviction over extreme wealth inequality”.*

- Donald Whitehead - National Coalition for the Homelessness, USA

*“To end homelessness you need an unwavering belief that this is possible...[and] a voracious appetite to learn”.*

- Jake Maguire - Community Solutions, USA

*“This is literally a life or death issue, we need to act with a sense of urgency, but simultaneously take the long term view. Short-term solutions aren’t helping anyone”.*

- Jeff Olivet, US Interagency Council on Homelessness

*“You could make many homelessness responses twice as effective if you managed the system better, but the inclination is always there to fund direct services, it’s inefficient. If you want to shift the dial, fund the improvements to the systems”.*

- Norman Suchar - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

*“To end homelessness you need to join up government policy and community-led organising”.*

- Laurel Blatchford - Former Chief of Staff at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development

*“Just as with climate change, we should focus on the net reduction, not the programs that might get us there. The outcome of ending homelessness is what is most important”.*

- Philip Welkhoff - Gates Foundation, USA

*“Homelessness is what happens when every other system fails”.*

- Alex Fox, Mayday Trust, Leeds, United Kingdom

*“There is plenty of research on housing problems in the world, we need more solutions”.*

- Patrick Duce, World Habitat, England, United Kingdom

*“My proudest possession is the key to my home”.*

- Julie - Resident, Mercy Housing, Chicago, USA

## Acronyms Guide

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
AAEH	Australian Alliance to End Homelessness
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACI	Anchor Communities Initiatives (A Way Home Washington)
ACORN	Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (USA)
AHVTT	Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool
AIHW	Australian Institute for Health and Welfare
API	Associates for Process Improvement (USA)
ARA	Housing Finance and Development Center (Finland)
AtoZ	Advance to Zero (Australia)
A3HN	Australian Health, Housing and Homelessness Network
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (USA & Canada)
BNL	By-Name List
CA	Coordinated Access
CAN	Community Ambition Network (Glasgow)
CAEH	Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
CCCLM	Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (Australia)
CHP	Community Housing Provider
CLT	Community Land Trust
COAG	Council of Australian Governments (Australia)
CoCs	Continuums of Care (USA)
CPI	The Center for Public Impact
CRA	Commonwealth Rent Assistance (Australia)
CS	Community Solutions (US)
CHI	Centre for Homelessness Impact (UK)
CSI	Centre for Social Impact (Australia)
CSH	Corporation for Supportive Housing (USA)
DESC	Downtown Emergency Service Centre (Seattle)
EPOCH	European Platform on Combating Homelessness (Europe)
FEANTSA	European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (Europe)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (USA)
FUSE	Frequent Users Systems Engagement (CSH, USA)
FZ	Functional Zero
GAEH	Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMHF	Greater Manchester Housing First (UK)
HARC	Homelessness Advocacy, Research, and Collaboration Lab (Chicago)
HHS	US Department of Health and Human Services
HiAP	Health In All Policies
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System (USA)
HRS	Homelessness Response System (USA + Australia)
HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnership (Glasgow)
HUD	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
IGH	Institute of Global Homelessness
IHI	Institute for Healthcare Improvement
LAHSA	Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority (USA)
LE	Lived Experience
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning

NA	Narcotics Anonymous
NHS	National Health Service (UK)
NHHA	National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (Australia)
NICE	National Institute of Care and Excellence (UK)
NIMBY	Not in my back yard
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDSA	Plan, Do, Study Act cycle
PIT	Point in Time Count
PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing
PTS	Person-led, Transitional and Strengths-based (UK)
PWLE	People with lived experience
RBA	Results Based Accountability
RSLs	Registered Social Landlords (Scotland)
SA	South Australia
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SHLN	Supportive Housing Leadership Network (USA)
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Service (Australia)
SIB	Social Impact Bond
STARS	Service Triage, Assessment & Referral Support Tool
UBI	Universal Basic Income
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
USICH	United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
VA	US Department of Veterans Affairs
YABs	Youth Advisory Boards
VI-SPDAT	Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool
WIFM	What's in it for me



*(Image: Grenfell Street, September 2020, Adelaide, Australia)*



## Executive Summary

Ending homelessness is possible. This is not something I *believe*, any more than I *believe* in the human-induced nature of climate change. I *recognise* climate change is happening because scientists have demonstrated it with data. I similarly *recognise* that ending homelessness is possible because, through the course of my Fellowship, I met with a growing number of communities who have demonstrated with data that they have ended homelessness.

Homelessness is a big complex problem. Solving it requires many things. Throughout my Fellowship, I asked everyone I met two simple questions - whether they be philanthropists, academics, CEOs, social workers, heads of government agencies, or people previously or currently living on the streets.

I asked

- **Is ending homelessness possible?**
- **Based on your experiences, what are the three most important things you think it would take to end homelessness?**



(Image: Community Solutions, USA)

All answered the question 'is ending homelessness possible' in different ways, some hesitated or didn't answer for quite some time, but almost all eventually said 'yes'. Just a few said no, some thinking it was the wrong question, that we should seek to prevent homelessness rather than end it, and others just didn't believe it possible. The overwhelming majority of the people I met thought ending homelessness was indeed possible.

What they believed it would take was a combination of the following, in order of frequency:

- Leadership - firstly community leadership, then political
- Data - reliable, quality, real-time, person-centred
- Collaboration - at all levels, service delivery, improvement and governance
- Prevention - providing care before care is needed
- Hope
- Funding/investment
- Better coordination/integration of health and other support services with housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Person-centred approaches
- Curiosity, improvement and an ongoing willingness to learn
- More affordable housing, better income support and reducing inequality
- Understand trauma
- A rights-based entitlement to home

A hallmark of the feedback I received has been optimism, positivity and a can-do attitude in the face of some pretty dire circumstances. The reality is that in most places, in Australia and in the countries I visited, it is a bad situation getting worse. In fact, a low point in my Fellowship was a roundtable meeting in Los Angeles when discussing the challenges of working on such an overwhelming issue the staff around the table revealed they each have members of their own teams who show up to work every day to help people experiencing homelessness who are themselves experiencing homelessness. Such is the state of the Californian housing market and the poor wages people working in the homelessness sector are subject to.

Despite these challenges, what initially attracted me to the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) - the organisation I now lead - was this same sense of optimism, positivity and a can-do attitude demonstrated by those involved.

## A Framework for Ending Homelessness

When I started as the inaugural CEO of the AAEH in May 2020 we were a volunteer network with little money, no staff, and the approach to ending homelessness or our methodology had just been turned on its head - from counting up to the goal of ending homelessness for a specific number of individuals (i.e. the 500 Lives Campaign in Brisbane or the 50 Lives Campaign in Perth)<sup>3</sup>, to counting down to the goal of ending homelessness for a whole community (generally a local government area like the City of Adelaide for the Adelaide Zero Project).<sup>4</sup>

In 2021 I applied for, and was awarded, a Churchill Fellowship to help me figure out what this change meant, how it could be applied in the Australian context and to document it in an agreed and commonly understood way. My Fellowship travels were delayed substantially by the COVID-19 pandemic and family illness, but this gave me the opportunity to spend almost two years learning about the homelessness service systems across Australia and to consider what questions I wanted to ask when I was finally able to travel.

Three years after taking on the AAEH CEO role, two years after winning a Churchill Fellowship, and a few weeks after returning I can finally, with some confidence, outline what I think it would take to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible in Australia. It takes the form of this following framework:



(Image: The AAEH Advance to Zero Ending Homelessness Framework, Australia)

<sup>3</sup> The 500 Lives and 50 Lives campaigns were some of the most successful campaigns that sought to identify and house a set number of the most vulnerable people experiencing rough sleeping homelessness in those communities. Once the initial 50 people were identified and housed, many communities expanded the number they were counting up to, others kept going and some wound up.

<sup>4</sup> The Adelaide Zero Project, learning from these efforts, was the first community to seek to count down to the goal of ending homelessness - or functional zero. More information can be found at <https://saaeh.org.au/azp/>

It is, of course, a work in progress, as ultimately we won't know what it will take to end homelessness in Australia until the first community does it. However, this framework, which I explore further in this report, is for communities who share the aim of ending homelessness to follow, to inform their efforts, and be guided by. It was initially called a methodology and developed collaboratively by the many partners of the AAEH across the country. My Churchill Fellowship has provided the opportunity to test and refine it further.

## No Definition and No Strategy

What has struck me as one of the most surprisingly simple realisations to come out of testing this framework and the Fellowship overall is that despite homelessness having been around for some time and the number of actors involved with it, very little thought or effort has gone into defining what exactly an end to homelessness actually means. Many have adopted the language of ending homelessness, even the branding, but surprisingly few (particularly in Australia - less so overseas) have taken the time to define what success looks like.

Similarly, Australia stands alone of all the countries I visited without a strategy - not just no strategy for ending homelessness - it has no housing and homelessness strategy at all. The Albanese Labor Government has thankfully committed to developing a new national housing and homelessness plan but to date there is no word if this plan will have an ambition to end homelessness or if it will simply add up to a range of measures that ultimately just manage it a bit better.

## This Report

It is hoped that this report can inform the development and content of this new national plan, but also the efforts of others with an interest in ending homelessness - including state and local governments, the community services sector, universities, businesses and others. To that end, this report provides some context or background on Churchill Fellowships, me and my work at the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, a summary of what I have learned it would take to end homelessness and some key insights from each country I visited. Importantly it also proposes a series of recommendations for action for everyone who needs to be involved in efforts to end homelessness.

The appendixes summarise in detail what I learned, what I heard, where I went and further context for many of the recommendations for action. They are intended to be resources to support and inform efforts to end homelessness in Australia into the future. These appendixes are therefore intentionally long and detailed.

## Call to Action

If there is one single conclusion that my Churchill Fellowship has left with me it is this: ending homelessness is possible, but it is not something that can be achieved by one individual, one agency, one level of government, one program, building, policy or pill.

Ending homelessness has and can only be achieved by coalitions of like-minded leaders, people and organisations standing together and saying enough is enough - that we will no longer accept homelessness in our community.

Not only is homelessness solvable it is necessary. Having a safe, secure, affordable home is not a luxury. It is a fundamental human need. There is no time to lose and much to be done.

## Background

What follows is some further background on me, the AAEH and its work. A large focus of my Fellowship was meeting with people and organisations, and testing assumptions and strategies that underpin my work in Australia as a leader of the AAEH, as well as the AtoZ Campaign.

I was able to visit the following cities, those highlighted in red I visited in 2022 and those in gold in 2023.



(Image: Google Maps, modified)

For further information about my itinerary and who I met, see Appendix B.

For further background on a number of the concepts in this report, see Appendix D.

## Churchill Fellowships

In late 2021, I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore how communities around the world are seeking to reduce and end homelessness. Churchill Fellowships are awarded by the Churchill Trust and they provide financial assistance to Australians from all walks of life who want to further their search for excellence overseas. My Fellowship enabled me to focus on the very broad goal of what it takes to systemically end homelessness.

More information about Churchill Fellowships can be found at: [www.churchilltrust.com.au](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au)

## About Me

- I recognise that ending homelessness is possible and that it is not normal or something we should accept.
- I have worked towards this goal in a range of roles in the community, government, university, and philanthropic sectors, including currently as the CEO of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness where I am working to build a national movement of communities seeking to end homelessness in Australia - starting with rough sleeping.
- In 2020 I received a Kenneth Myer Innovation Fellowship which enabled me to take on the role of inaugural CEO of the AAEH.
- I am also a Senior Advisor with the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH).
- Before holding these roles I was the Executive Director of the Don Dunstan Foundation, where I helped lead the establishment and development of the Adelaide Zero Project, a nation-leading initiative seeking to end rough sleeping homelessness in the inner city.



- Prior to this I was the Senior Policy Adviser to several South Australian Premiers and Commonwealth Government Ministers in a range of portfolio areas including mental health, health, housing, homelessness, child protection, education, innovation, the arts, treasury, planning and urban development, public sector reform and others.
- I have a Bachelor of International Studies and a Bachelor of Media, with Honours in Politics and Public Policy from the University of Adelaide.
- I am currently also Deputy Chair of the Adelaide Fringe Festival and Chair of the Fringe Festival Foundation.
- In 2019 I was recognised as one of the top 40 Under 40 leaders in South Australia.
- I live in the inner city of Adelaide, Australia, and am married to Dr Jill MacKenzie and father to Sophie MacKenzie-Pearson.

## The AAEH

- The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) is an independent champion for ending homelessness in Australia.
- We recognise that the scale of homelessness in Australia is both preventable and solvable and that despite the common misconception to the contrary, we can end homelessness in Australia.
- We have, since 2013, supported individuals, organisations, governments and local communities to work collaboratively across sectors to end homelessness - not just at an individual level, but systemically.
- Specifically, we work to prevent, reduce and end homelessness by ensuring everyone has access to the housing and support they need so that any future incidents of homelessness that do occur are rare, brief and a one-time occurrence.
- Through the Advance to Zero Campaign, our Allied Networks and our Training and Advisory Services, we support local communities to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible.
- For more information, about each of these, see our website at: [www.aeah.org.au](http://www.aeah.org.au)
- Ultimately, the AAEH exists to bring community, business and government together to inspire action for an end to all homelessness in Australia.

**aaeh**  
australian alliance  
to end homelessness

COMMUNITY, BUSINESS  
& GOVERNMENT ENDING  
HOMELESSNESS

## The Advance to Zero Campaign

- The Advance to Zero (AtoZ) Campaign is a groundbreaking national initiative of the AAEH that supports local collaborative efforts to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping – one community at a time.
- Using a range of proven approaches from around the world, communities are supported not just to address individual instances of homelessness, or even reduce overall homelessness, but to end it.
- The Campaign itself is a collaboration (or what's sometimes called a collective impact initiative) between a broad range of communities, organisations and individuals that are all committed to making homelessness rare, brief and once-off – how we define an end to homelessness.
- Communities, generally defined as a local government area or collection of local government areas, seek to measure their progress towards this goal by calculating what we call Functional Zero, a dynamic way of determining if a community has been able to make homelessness rare, brief and a one-time occurrence.

 **advance  
to zero**

- To help guide these efforts to end homelessness, the AAEH developed what we called the Advance to Zero Methodology (and what this report proposes renaming the AtoZ Framework) based on what is working around the world and what we've learned from efforts so far in Australia.
- The Campaign supports community-based efforts to build public support for ending homelessness and political support for renewed Commonwealth, State and Local Government investment in the type of housing, support services, healthcare, and local coordination efforts needed to end homelessness in each community.
- A key way in which this is done is through supporting communities to collect consistent by-name data through a common assessment tool or survey that can provide guidance in ending individual homelessness, but also the community-wide data needed to support community advocacy and government planning.
- The AtoZ Campaign focuses on ending homelessness one type, and one community at a time.
- While Australia is one of the most prosperous and livable countries in the world, many individuals continue to be trapped in a cycle of homelessness, often transitioning from unstable accommodation to emergency shelters to rough sleeping to housing and back again. This can continue for many years resulting in a state of chronic homelessness – putting huge cost pressures on local health, homelessness and other systems, as well as significantly reduced life expectancy for the individuals concerned.
- Whilst the Campaign starts with rough sleeping, it does not finish there. Some communities also focus on all chronic homelessness, families, veterans and other forms of homelessness.
- The strategy, or theory of change, is based on what has worked overseas, and seeks to break the problem up – to focus on a particular type of homelessness, and then to break that up and to focus on a particular sub-population and to do all of this in a placed based way.

#### How it works

- The AAEH supports communities participating in the AtoZ Campaign or community of practice through a series of six-monthly improvement cycles, where communities work together, build capacity and share knowledge, tools and resources.



*(Image: Advance to Zero Learning Session, Brisbane 2022, Australia)*

- The Campaign is supported by a series of Allied Networks focused on particular sectors like health, business or veterans, and large-scale change efforts across cities, regions or states and territories.
- With our international and domestic partners, the AAEH provides training, coaching and other infrastructure or tools-based support through these improvement cycles.
- Importantly, the strategy does not seek to count up to the goal of housing more and more people, but to change the system and count down to the goal of Functional Zero.
- It is by focusing on this system change outcome and putting the individual needs of the people experiencing homelessness at the centre of that system, that we can actually end homelessness.
- More information about the AtoZ campaign can be found on the AAEH website.

# What Does It Take To End Homelessness?

The following summarises what I've learned about what it takes to end homelessness, based on observing the Built for Zero communities that have done it (in the United States and Canada), the communities that have made significant progress, Finland and Glasgow, and based on my experiences in Australia leading the AAEH.

## Understand The Problem

There are literally hundreds of thousands of pages of words written about the phenomenon of homelessness - the types of homelessness, the needs of those experiencing homelessness, the need for more housing and cutting the existing data every conceivable way you could ever want to look at. This report and my Fellowship focused squarely on solutions.

If you want to understand more about the phenomenon of homelessness, I'd recommend:

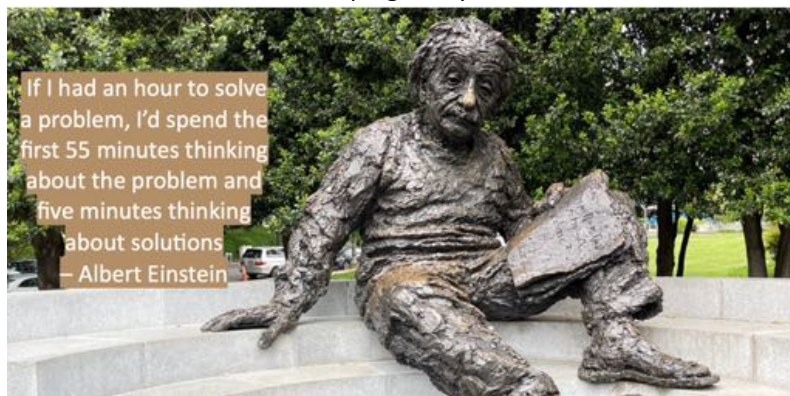
- The Centre for Social Impact's analysis of all the data - including data collected through the Advance to Zero Campaign - in their comprehensive 2022 'Ending Homelessness Report'.<sup>5</sup>
- The Productivity Commission's review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.<sup>6</sup>
- The Launch Housing 2022 Homelessness Monitor.<sup>7</sup>
- The great overview/snapshot in Churchill Fellow Leanne Mitchell's report titled: Everyone's Business - What Local Government Can do to End Homelessness.<sup>8</sup>

In order to discuss solutions I've found it helpful to first be clear about the nature of the problem.

### *There are no Silver Bullets*

Homelessness is a complex problem, there is no one agency, government, program or pill that will solve it, in short, there are no silver bullets. In fact, it's insightful to be aware of the history of the concept - it comes from mythology. The silver bullet is what you use to kill a mythical creature, the werewolf. There's no one thing that's going to solve this problem - including housing. More housing alone is not going to solve the problem. More case management alone is not going to solve the problem. More outreach alone is not going to solve the problem. We need a whole range of different things to help us solve this problem.

To solve a complex problem you really need to understand the nature of the problem we're trying to solve - or as Albert Einstein once poignantly said:



(Image: Einstein Memorial, Washington DC, USA)



<sup>5</sup> [https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/homelessness\\_deep\\_dive\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/homelessness_deep_dive_full_report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/housing-homelessness/report>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.launchhousing.org.au/ending-homelessness/research-hub/australian-homelessness-monitor-2022>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/news\\_item/tackling-australias-homelessness-crisis-new-report/](https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/news_item/tackling-australias-homelessness-crisis-new-report/)

The problem of homelessness is not actually the problem, it's the result of the problem. When other human service systems fail what you get is homelessness. It's when mental health, corrections, child protection, drug and alcohol, private rental, social housing, family violence and other systems fail that homelessness results.

So it's complex, but what is a complex problem? The best explanation (as shown in the graphic below) that I have heard is as follows:

- **Simple Problems** - are like baking a cake. If you put in all the ingredients, you follow the recipe, you do the same thing, you can bake the same cake over and over again and get pretty similar results (unless you're terrible at cooking).
- **Complicated Problems** - are like figuring out how to put a person on the moon. It's very hard the first time, but once you've worked it out, the experience can help you to build procedures that you can then follow. If you follow the same process, use the same science and calculate the variables, you can get the same result.
- **Complex problems** - are when human beings get involved. It is like raising children, as any parent knows if you raise one child the same as you raise the other, do all the same things, and give them all the same opportunities in life, you won't necessarily get the same result because human beings are complex.



(Image: FSG, 2023, USA)<sup>9</sup>

Add trauma and multiple levels of disadvantage, as you have to when considering homelessness, and the problem becomes even more complex - what's often called a 'wicked problem'.

In recognition of this, our efforts to end homelessness must be able to respond to this complexity and we need to make sure that we're using the right tools to solve the right problems. Complex problems can't be solved with just simple solutions like programs. So many governments, services and organisations default to thinking that solutions to the problems they face can be addressed with the right policy or the right program, better commissioning or better service delivery.

A program like providing food is a service that's vital but it's a simple problem, the person lacks food so we need to give them food. You solve the problem with the service, but if you want to end homelessness you've got to solve multiple problems at once across different service systems at different points in time. You need a different set of tools.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fsg.org/blog/what-having-baby-teaches-you-about-complexity/>



This is where system change efforts like the collective impact approach come in. Collective impact is a structured form of collaborative effort that brings together diverse stakeholders to address complex social issues. By establishing a shared vision, common agenda, and coordinated actions, collective impact aims to change the way systems operate. Further information on the collective impact approach can be found in Appendix D.

In short, we need more tools in the toolbox. As the saying often goes: if all you have is a hammer every problem looks like a nail. For governments, in particular, their tool of choice is commissioning or funding new services - generally through competitive tender processes that force agencies to compete, breaking down the collaboration needed to solve complex problems. The following table sets out the broader array of solutions or tools needed to end homelessness.

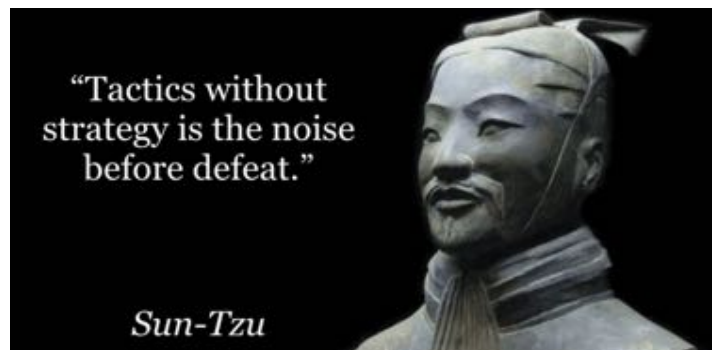
Problems	Solutions
Simple	Services and Programs
Complicated	
Complex	Systems Change Collective Impact Improvement
Wicked	

Homelessness is not a simple or even complicated problem, it's a complex problem that requires solutions that meet the complexity.

**No Strategy or Definition**

In grappling with complexity, strategy serves as a compass, guiding decision-making and action amidst intricate and uncertain circumstances - or what at times felt like chaos when I first joined the AAEH. In the context of complex social challenges, strategy provides a systematic approach to understanding interconnected issues, aligning efforts, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, ultimately increasing the likelihood of ending homelessness.

It is easy to get lost in the complexity, to feel overwhelmed by it and to focus on short-term wins or things that feel as though they have an impact. When I returned from my Fellowship and sought to summarise what I had learned, this statement by Sun-Tzu resonated with me:



(Image: Cambridge Caledonian, USA)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [https://lake.blogs.com/my\\_weblog/2017/05/tactics-without-strategy-is-the-noise-before-defeat-or-why-you-need-a-exit-or-succession-plan.html](https://lake.blogs.com/my_weblog/2017/05/tactics-without-strategy-is-the-noise-before-defeat-or-why-you-need-a-exit-or-succession-plan.html)

Australia is the only country I visited without a strategy that seeks to end homelessness, indeed as noted earlier, Australia doesn't even have a strategy in relation to homelessness and housing. What we are left with is a range of activities, programs and efforts that too often just amount to tactics.

## Ending Homelessness Requires a Strategy

Ending homelessness is an ambition, it is a theory of change, a methodology, a framework, and a campaign, but first and foremost, ending homelessness requires a strategy.

My Churchill Fellowship has given me the opportunity to better understand this and to clarify/propose the following key components of any Australian strategy to end homelessness:

<b>Strategy Aim</b>	The aim of our strategy should be to <u>prevent, reduce and end all homelessness</u> .
<b>Definition</b>	An end to homelessness is defined as a state where homelessness is <u>prevented where possible and rare, brief and once off</u> when it does occur.
<b>Measure: Functional Zero</b>	A community will know that we have ended homelessness if they have reached a <u>functional zero</u> , a dynamic measure, which must be sustained, and indicates that a specific geographic community has measurably solved homelessness for a particular population group.
<b>Framework: Advance to Zero</b>	The AtoZ Framework (or Theory of Change) sets out the approaches that can be taken to reach functional zero, based on what has worked in Australia and around the world.
<b>Implemented Through Improvement Cycles</b>	The AtoZ Framework is implemented through improvement cycles, starting with action planning, achieving quality data by-name list data, using improvement to drive to zero, sustaining functional zero when achieved and expanding to others along the way.

At a high level many communities and the AAEH have talked about preventing, reducing, and resolving homelessness for some time in Australia, but this proposed 'typology' of ending homelessness strategy components placed each concept into context and how they relate to each other.

Various stakeholders I met with have very strong views about the relative importance of each concept. Slight variations in the terminology were used in different parts of the world, but what is important is that communities have a shared, transparent ambition. This is something that the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) has been very helpful in encouraging in Australia and around the world.

Too often the tendency is to see them as conflicting, or in the case of Functional Zero, much misunderstanding of what this represents (further background on this in Appendix D). There is also space I believe for all of these various definitions, measures and aims. The point of this is to have a shared aim, and for communities to own it. Hopefully, the above guide to the components of an ending homelessness strategy helps communities, policy makers, researchers and advocates to better understand how these components fit together and complement each other.

## Defining an End to Homelessness

It perplexes me that although homelessness has been occurring for some time, and the large number of actors involved with it, very little thought or effort appears to have gone into defining what exactly an end to homelessness actually means or looks like. At the AAEH, we understand an end to homelessness as being

where homelessness is prevented where possible and, when it does occur, is rare, brief and a one-time occurrence.

This definition and the explanation below have been heavily influenced by a range of organisations and governments around the world including the Homelessness Hub in Canada, the Centre for Homelessness Impact in the UK, World Habitat and others.<sup>11</sup>

To define an end to homelessness, also requires a definition of what constitutes homelessness - this is measured very differently in many countries, the Institute of Global Homelessness framework for understanding homelessness is particularly instructive in this regard.

People without accommodation	People living in temporary or crisis accommodation	People living in severely inadequate and insecure accommodation
<p><b>1A</b> People sleeping in the streets or in other open spaces (such as parks, railway embankments, under bridges, on pavement, on river banks, in forests, etc.)</p> <p><b>1B</b> People sleeping in public roofed spaces or buildings not intended for human habitation (such as bus and railway stations, taxi ranks, derelict buildings, public buildings, etc.)</p> <p><b>1C</b> People sleeping in their cars, rickshaws, open fishing boats and other forms of transport</p> <p><b>1D</b> 'Pavement dwellers' - individuals or households who live on the street in a regular spot, usually with some form of makeshift cover</p>	<p><b>2A</b> People staying in night shelters (where occupants have to renegotiate their accommodation nightly)</p> <p><b>2B</b> People living in homeless hostels and other types of temporary accommodation for homeless people (where occupants have a designated bed or room)</p> <p><b>2C</b> Women and children living in refuges for those fleeing domestic violence</p> <p><b>2D</b> People living in camps provided for 'internally displaced people' i.e. those who have fled their homes as a result of armed conflict, natural or human-made disasters, human rights violations, development projects, etc. but have not crossed international borders</p> <p><b>2E</b> People living in camps or reception centres/temporary accommodation for asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants</p>	<p><b>3A</b> People sharing with friends and relatives on a temporary basis</p> <p><b>3B</b> People living under threat of violence</p> <p><b>3C</b> People living in cheap hotels, bed and breakfasts and similar</p> <p><b>3D</b> People squatting in conventional housing</p> <p><b>3E</b> People living in conventional housing that is unfit for human habitation</p> <p><b>3F</b> People living in trailers, caravans and tents</p> <p><b>3G</b> People living in extremely overcrowded conditions</p> <p><b>3H</b> People living in non-conventional buildings and temporary structures, including those living in slums/informal settlements</p>
<b>IGH FOCUS AREA IN BOLD</b>		

(Global Framework for Understanding Homelessness, Institute of Global Homelessness, Chicago, USA)<sup>12</sup>

So what does the information in the AAEH definition mean precisely?

- **Prevented:** means stopping people from becoming homeless in the first place. This can be achieved by working upstream and avoiding having people leaving public institutions (like hospitals, prisons, and child protection systems) and going into homelessness, investing in prevention programs to support people whose tenancies are at risk, greater renters rights, providing adequate social security etc. There are many types of prevention, and far too little focus is placed on prevention.

<sup>11</sup> <https://world-habitat.org/our-programmes/homelessness/campaign-principals/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://ighomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/globalframeworkforundertanding.pdf>

Further information about definitions of homelessness in Australia can be found at:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/homelessness-and-homelessness-services>

- **Rare:** means proactively reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in a community to as close to zero as possible - what we call Functional Zero. That is when a housing and homelessness system is able to support more people into permanent housing than are coming into that system - not just at a point in time, but over time.
- **Brief:** means if someone is experiencing homelessness, it should be for as little time as possible. People who are new to homelessness should be identified and supported back into a home as quickly as possible.
- **Once Off:** means no one should experience multiple episodes of homelessness, i.e. that it is non-reoccurring and for those who are housed following an experience of homelessness they should be supported to avoid returning to homelessness.

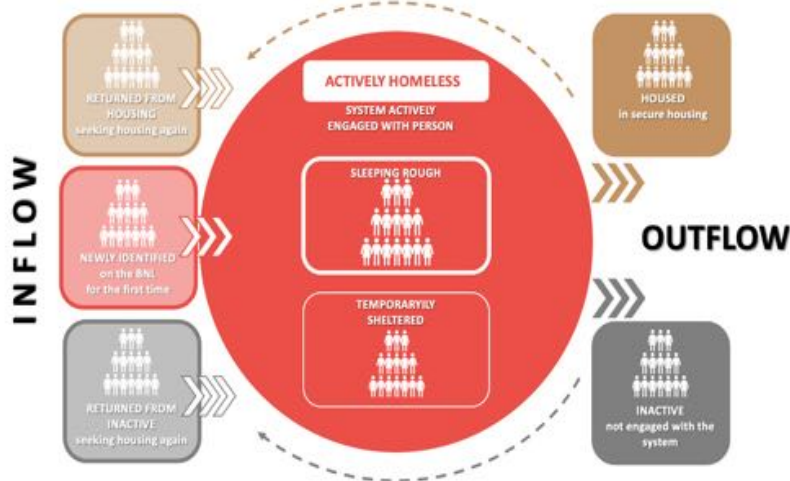
## Measuring Homelessness

In Australia not only do we not have a national strategy, we have no national systems in place to measure the rates of homelessness across the country – rather, we estimate it every five years through the census. The day the latest census was released it was nineteen months out of date. Imagine how we’d manage problems like unemployment if we estimated the rates every five years and then took 588 days to release this information.

This is why communities in Australia, inspired by the successful efforts in the US and Canada, have begun to collect their own data - known as a by-name list. It is called a by-name list because it literally lists everyone experiencing homelessness by name, and identifies their needs. Importantly this is done with the consent of the people experiencing homelessness, for the primary purpose of supporting them into housing.

We not only need to measure the rates of homelessness, we need to be able to measure if our efforts are working. As homelessness is a complex, constantly changing problem, we need to track our progress in a dynamic way.

This is where the ‘functional zero’ measure pioneered by Community Solutions comes in. Functional zero is calculated using the data collected through by-name lists, with further background available in Appendix D. In Australia, we track progress toward functional zero by measuring the following data points:



(Image: By-Name List Data Points, AAEH 2023, Australia)

## Framework/Theory of Change

If strategies to end homelessness need to set out an aim, have a clear definition and a way to measure progress, they also need to have a theory of change or framework.

A theory of change is essentially a comprehensive description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It helps illustrate what has been described as the ‘missing middle’ between what a change initiative does and how these activities add up to the desired outcome being sought. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then working back from this to identify all the conditions that must be in place (and how these relate to one another) for the goals to occur.<sup>13</sup>

In the case of ending homelessness, this is working back from the outcome of functional zero or rare, brief and once off homelessness in a community. The AAEH has developed a theory of change called the Advance to Zero Methodology to help guide efforts to end homelessness in Australia, based on what is working around the world and what we’ve learned from efforts so far in Australia. It is our theory of change that has evolved based on what we are learning.



(Image: Centre for Theory of Change, New York, USA)<sup>14</sup>

The following section which sets out a new version based on the insights from this Fellowship, has also seen a slight name change from the AtoZ Methodology to the AtoZ Framework, to better reflect its descriptive, not prescriptive nature.

### A Shared Aim

Some of the people I met with on my Fellowship initially thought that solving a complex or even ‘wicked’ problem like homelessness was not possible, but when presented with the definition of an end to homelessness as being rare, brief and once off - pretty much all changed their view. Having a shared, clearly defined and measurable aim is clearly essential.

Ending homelessness requires a strategy, and the AtoZ Framework is about informing that strategy. It starts therefore with having a shared system-wide aim. That aim should include a clear definition and way to measure progress. We have developed the following:

**A Shared Strategy**

To prevent, reduce and end all homelessness in Australia by ensuring that when it does occur it is rare, brief and once off measured by seeking to reach and sustain functional zero

The precise meaning of prevented, rare, brief and once off has already been covered. But a more detailed definition of functional zero, something that is often confused or misinterpreted, is as follows:

- **Functional Zero:** measures whether a community has ended homelessness for a population. It is

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

reached when a community can demonstrate that their system is routinely housing more people than are coming into it, and has sustained that state for a period of time, thereby ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and once off.

### Four Approaches to Ending Homelessness

Understanding the complexity of the challenge that ending homelessness represents, the Framework also sets our four ‘approaches’ that can be applied to local community efforts to end homelessness, these are:

Four Approaches to Ending Homelessness			
Housing First Systems Change	Person Centered & Strengths Based	Data Driven Improvement	Place-Based Collaboration

1. **Housing First Systems Change** - involving a commitment to seek to change the entire system of support for people experiencing homelessness, not just individual services or programs. It seeks to implement the principles of the housing first approach at the system level. Specifically, to provide immediate access to housing with no housing readiness requirements, whilst simultaneously working with people to promote recovery and wellbeing.
2. **Person-centred and Strengths Based** - a commitment to put the person experiencing homelessness at the centre of the service system, to build on their strengths to support an end to their homelessness. Listening to the voices of people with a lived experience of homelessness and ensuring culturally appropriate responses are central to this approach.
  - It is about recognising that people are the experts in their own lives and that we need to listen to that expertise.
  - This approach is based on the principle that policies should be developed according to the existing needs of the individual rather than the needs of organisations or the system.
3. **Data Driven Improvement** - is about building problem-solving capability across a system through an ongoing process of learning, testing and adopting new ideas and ways that build on the successful efforts to drive reductions in homelessness through cycles of improvement. Informed by quality by-name data these improvement efforts can help change systems to better meet the needs of the people in need of support from them. We have adopted the methodology developed by Community Solutions and the Institute of Healthcare Improvement to inform these efforts.
4. **Place-Based Collaboration** - Commitment to work together in a place and in a coordinated way that holds everyone involved accountable to reach our shared goal of ending homelessness. We have adopted the collective impact approach as a way to guide these efforts.

### Seven Agreed Activities

In addition, there are seven agreed activities that should be implemented in a way consistent with each of the four approaches to ending homelessness, these activities are:

Seven Agreed Activities (Applying the Four Approaches)	
Prevention	
Assertive Outreach	Service Coordination
Common Triage	Leadership & Advocacy
A Real-Time By-Name List	Housing First - Programs & Permanent Supportive Housing

1. **Prevention** – the best way to end homelessness is to prevent it from occurring. To enable systems to

provide care before care is needed. The use of data and continuous improvement practices to focus early intervention and prevention work on reducing the ‘inflow’ of people entering into rough sleeping is crucial.

2. **Assertive Outreach** – coordinated street outreach efforts are essential in helping to identify and support people who feel unsafe or otherwise unable to come into traditional services - including through the use of Connections (or Registry) Weeks.
3. **Common Triage** - ensuring there is a coordinated triaging of the scarce housing and support resources in the system to support the most vulnerable first. One element of this triage process is a common tool that enables the collection of data on an individual's needs so that they can be assessed and recommended for support in a consistent, evidence-informed way (i.e. the VI-SPDAT/AHVTT - see Appendix D for further information).
4. **A real-time quality by-name list** – of people experiencing homelessness and their individual needs, provides a shared understanding, or quality data, to inform who needs what support, whether efforts are working, how to target resources best, and how to improve the system as a whole. It also enables scarce housing and support to be triaged according to local priorities and it enables a prevention focus, better advocacy and the implementation of Housing First.
5. **Service Coordination** – a community-wide, data driven approach to the coordination of services and housing allocations ensures more equitable, efficient, and effective resource allocation. Ensuring whole of government support for this effort is crucial, as is ensuring there are escalation and improvement pathways in place to support this work.
6. **Leadership and Advocacy** – systems leadership is crucial to advocate for the changes in government policies, organisational practices and community attitudes necessary to drive the broad based change needed to end homelessness. Leadership and advocacy lead to sustainability - ending homelessness is a long term proposition. Leadership and Advocacy are also incredibly important because they are needed to obtain:
  - Public support, sometimes generated through information or YIMBY (Yes in My Back Yard) Campaigns.
  - Political commitment at all levels (National, State/Territory and Local).
  - Policy changes and adequate funding and investment.
7. **Housing First – Programs and Permanent Supportive Housing** – ultimately the biggest driver of homelessness is the lack of affordable and appropriate housing. Leveraging the by-name list data to support better systems planning and advocacy to get access to housing and support needed is crucial to sustaining tenancies, particularly among those with the most acute and chronic experiences of homelessness. Housing First Principles for Australia have been developed to inform these efforts and the AAEH is developing permanent supportive housing principles.

Support resources about all of these activities are available for communities participating in the Advance to Zero Campaign and further background on many of the concepts can be found in Appendix D.

### Improvement Cycles

To encourage the implementation of these activities and approaches, we support communities to establish local Zero Projects through a series of improvement cycles. Through these cycles, communities are supported to break up the problem and the work into smaller and smaller pieces. As communities work their way through each improvement cycle, a range of different tools, coaching, training, milestones recognition and other resources are made available.

Implemented Through Improvement Cycles				
Action Planning	Quality Data	Improving to Zero	Sustaining Zero	Expanding to Zero for All (not sequential)



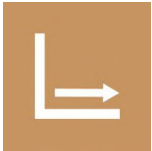
1. **Action Planning** - a starting point where communities develop a collaborative system wide plan to help get key stakeholders on the same page, set targets, agree to next steps and build an improvement team who is responsible for getting to zero. These plans also set out how communities will establish a collective impact initiative or Zero Project.



2. **Quality By-Name List** - where communities work to build a comprehensive real-time, by-name list of people experiencing rough sleeping homelessness in their community.



3. **Improve to Zero** - where communities use a range of solutions, tools and approaches - including triage, improvement and data-driven advocacy to drive monthly reductions in homelessness.



4. **Sustaining Zero** - when communities have achieved functional zero and are seeking to sustain it.



5. **Zero for All \*** - communities expand their focus to new target populations and greater geographical areas to continue the campaign toward ending all homelessness.

*\* = not necessarily sequential*

## The Story of Zero

Much of the AtoZ Framework has been adopted from the successful efforts of the Built for Zero Campaign in the USA - which has since spread to Canada, the UK, and Europe. All have been supported by Community Solutions, a not for profit agency, that I was able to spend quite some time with during my Fellowship and who for a number of years have provided a significant amount of support to Australian communities. They describe themselves as being an agency that doesn't simply believe that all communities have the power to end homelessness because they work with more than 100 communities making it a reality every day.

The Built for Zero Campaigns were informed by the lessons from the 100,000 Homes Campaign also supported by Community Solutions. A key lesson of that campaign was that despite reaching their target of housing 100,000 people previously sleeping rough - they weren't able to reduce homelessness by anywhere near 100,000 people. They realised that rather than





just processing people through broken systems more quickly, they need to change the way those systems work. Put another way, they realised that they were counting the wrong way - rather than counting up to the goal of housing a set number of people, they needed to count down to the goal of ending homelessness. This was the genesis of the functional zero measure.

A series of communities in Australia ran similar campaigns, notably the 500 Lives Campaign in Brisbane and the 50 Lives Campaign in Perth. The AtoZ Campaign evolved out of these campaigns, all of which started by conducting connections weeks or a series of community-driven activities aimed at identifying and surveying individuals experiencing homelessness within a specific area over a short period, often a week. This approach involves volunteers and outreach teams engaging with people who are homeless, conducting surveys to gather information about their circumstances and needs, and subsequently entering this data into a centralised by-name list.

Initially, the focus of the approach was to 'count up' to the number of people housed, however, communities around the world have shifted their focus to 'counting down' to the outcome of functional zero homelessness.

In 2017 Adelaide was the first community in Australia to commit to achieving functional zero street homelessness and to developing a public dashboard that is updated monthly to show how the city is tracking in reaching its goal. In its first 12 months, the Adelaide Zero Project, which I helped lead the establishment of, housed a record 161 people who were previously sleeping rough in the inner city. Importantly, as a consequence of the data the project collected, it was identified that despite housing this record number, a total of 356 new people were identified as sleeping rough for the first time during these first 12 months. This demonstrates the importance of efforts to prevent and divert people from sleeping rough at a system level, not just to seek to house as many people as you find.



*(Image: Connections Week Volunteers Training/Launch, Hutt Street Centre, Adelaide, Australia)*

## Why Start With Rough Sleeping?

Ending homelessness requires focus and it involves learning the lessons from elsewhere. The Advance to Zero Campaign, just like the Built for Zero Campaigns in the USA and Canada, focuses on rough sleeping. This is not

because this type of homelessness is more important than any other type of homelessness - but because the focus of the campaign is to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible in Australia, modelled on the successful efforts of other communities.

Whilst the statistical categories of rough sleeping, couch surfing, overcrowding and others are important, from the perspective of the people experiencing homelessness, they are often almost meaningless because people move between all of these types of homelessness on a regular, sometimes daily basis.

There are however other reasons to focus on rough sleeping, including:

- It can reduce a person's life expectancy by up to 30 years, leading to an estimated 424 deaths of people living on the streets from often preventable illnesses as estimated by the AAEH.<sup>15</sup>
- It is more costly to governments to leave the problem of chronic rough sleeping unaddressed than it is to provide permanent housing. In fact, it is \$13,100 cheaper per year, per person.<sup>16</sup>
- The overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability and other particularly vulnerable populations.
- It is the most prominent form of inequality in our community - when we leave this unaddressed, it starts to pull communities apart. Larger and larger groups of people starting to sleep rough, creates conflict in local communities that often lead to a 'hardening' of community attitudes and counterproductive policy responses.

There are many reasons to focus on rough sleeping, but the biggest is that such a focus works. The efforts in the USA have been successful in reaching functional zero in 14 communities and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, through their Built for Zero Campaign, has supported three communities (as set out below). They have all done it by focusing on particular types of rough sleeping - chronic or veteran rough sleeping homelessness. They have not done it by - to quote the Academy award winning film - trying to do everything, everywhere, all at once. We need to start somewhere, and if everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority.



(Image: Community Solutions, Built for Zero Progress Dashboard, USA)<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/MEDIA-RELEASE\\_-\\_E2%80%98Housing-is-healthcare%E2%80%99\\_-\\_Renewed-calls-for-urgent-Australian-Government-action-on-rough-sleeping-homelessness.docx.pdf](https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/MEDIA-RELEASE_-_E2%80%98Housing-is-healthcare%E2%80%99_-_Renewed-calls-for-urgent-Australian-Government-action-on-rough-sleeping-homelessness.docx.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://theconversation.com/supportive-housing-is-cheaper-than-chronic-homelessness-67539>

<sup>17</sup> <https://community.solutions/>

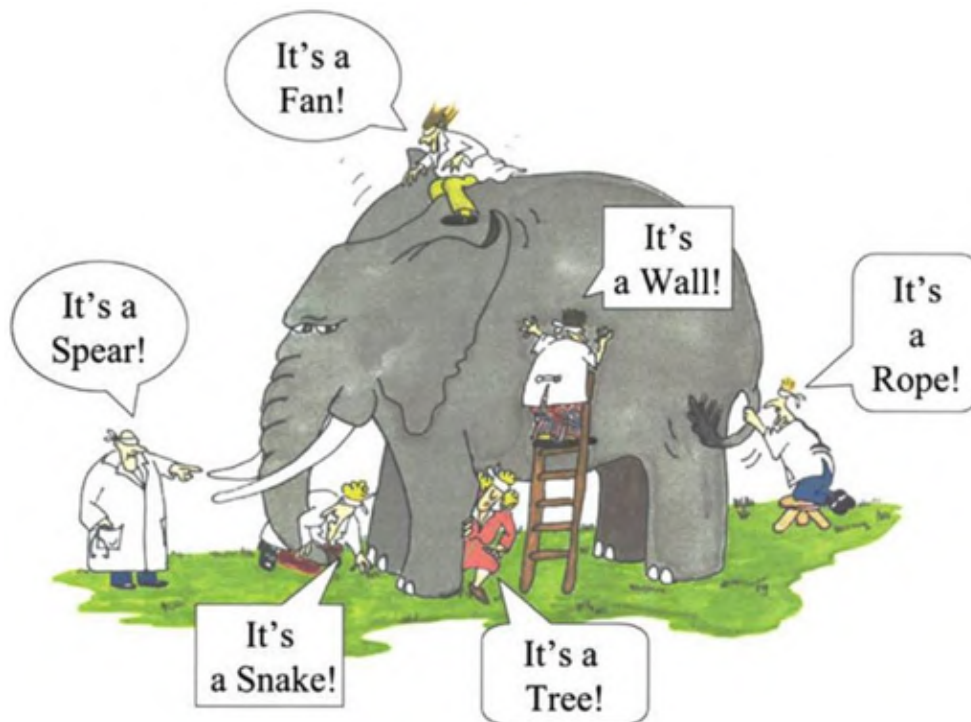


(Image: Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Built for Zero Progress Dashboard, Canada)<sup>18</sup>

It's worth noting that despite the decades of homelessness reductions that Finland has been driving they have not yet ended homelessness in a place or for a population, though they are getting close! However, what both the North American examples and the Finnish success have in common is that they have both successfully sought to change the systems in which they are operating.

### It's About System Change

Ending homelessness requires system change because homelessness is not merely a single-issue challenge but a complex outcome of various interconnected factors. System change entails addressing the underlying structures, policies, and interactions that contribute to homelessness. In order to change a system, one must first be able to see it – a notion exemplified by the fable of the elephant and the six blind men. In this analogy, an elephant enters a village, and six blind men begin touching it, each describing it from their limited perspective as shown in the following image.



(Image: John Godfrey Saxe fable of the 'Blind Men and the Elephant, Companies are Elephants, Medium, USA)<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <https://bfzcanada.ca/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://medium.com/analysts-corner/companies-are-elephants-d9bf807bf217>

Similarly, various stakeholders in the homelessness system often see only a part of the whole picture. To end homelessness, we need to step back and view the entire system comprehensively - this is what a by-name list helps with, and what a collaboration or zero project enables in terms of the various players in the system being able to 'see' the complete system. Just as the six blind men need to communicate and combine their insights to understand the full elephant, we must collaborate and integrate efforts across sectors to end homelessness.

**Policies to Support Collaboration and Systems Change**

The challenge in Australia has been that we do not have a policy framework for creating the collaborations necessary to enable the system to see itself. In the USA they have policies requiring Continuums of Care and Coordinate access to be established, and in Canada they have a policy of coordinated access and a nationally-funded Built for Zero campaign.

The US Government Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) describes Continuums of Care (CoC) as being:

*Designed to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by non-profit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.<sup>20</sup>*



(Image: Continuums of Care, Community Solutions, USA)

Both the USA and Canada have developed the concept of 'Coordinated Entry', a process that helps communities prioritise assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs, to ensure that people who most need assistance can receive it as quickly as possible. Coordinated entry processes also provide information about service needs and gaps to help communities plan assistance and identify needed resources. Further background on both can be found in Appendix D.

There is no direct comparison for the Australian context, we have developed a number of activities including service coordination, the by-name list and coordinated triage. We have adopted the language of triage as it invokes the notion of triaging that takes place in emergency medicine where the preliminary assessment of patients or casualties occurs in order to determine the urgency of their need for treatment and the nature of treatment required.

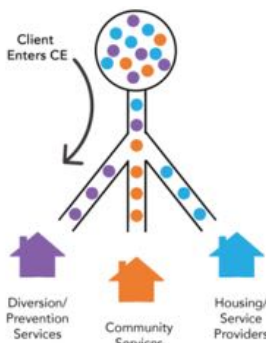
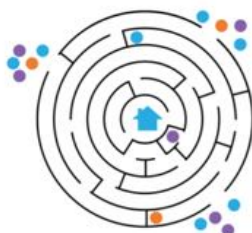
<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>

### Without Coordinated Entry

Clients continually re-directed, creating delays in service or even distrust, especially the most vulnerable populations.

Available resources are underutilized or misused as clients are continually referred to multiple providers.

Multiple assessments leading to duplication of services, and poor data tracking.



### With Coordinated Entry

No wrong door approach, meaning any agency participating in CE has the ability to direct a client to the resources that best match their needs.

Shared resources and assessments to better understand our population.

Clients are placed in safe and stable housing options faster and more effectively to reduce length of time homeless and returns back to homelessness.

(Image: Community Alliance for the Homeless, USA)<sup>21</sup>

These comparisons raise the question of who needs to be involved in efforts to end homelessness in the Australian context? This has been one of the hardest questions to answer because of all the countries I visited Australia has the most decentralised policy framework on homelessness. Essentially the Commonwealth Government require, through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) the States and Territories to have a strategy. However, the Productivity Commission recently reviewed the NHHA and found that this agreement was ineffective, did not foster collaboration, nor did it hold governments to account - in effect, it is “a funding contract, not a blueprint for reform”.<sup>22</sup>

As a consequence, each state and territory does their own thing in Australia with vastly different focuses and results. Generally, one of the more consistent features of homelessness policy is not one of seeking to end homelessness but is one of neglect. Ending homelessness for a population group (if it exists at all) gets lost within the broader focus on homelessness policy which in turn generally gets lost within the broader challenge of social housing, which gets lost in the broader challenge of housing affordability, which in turn is generally subservient to the great Australian dream of home ownership (see illustration below). Something again the Productivity Commission found, when it suggested redirecting more investment from supporting first home buyers to people facing homelessness.



(Image: What is the focus? Housing vs Homelessness Policy, AAEH, Australia)

To address this ‘gap in focus’ and to replicate what has largely been created through policy settings in the USA and Canada through CoCs and Coordinated Access, communities in Australia have banded together locally

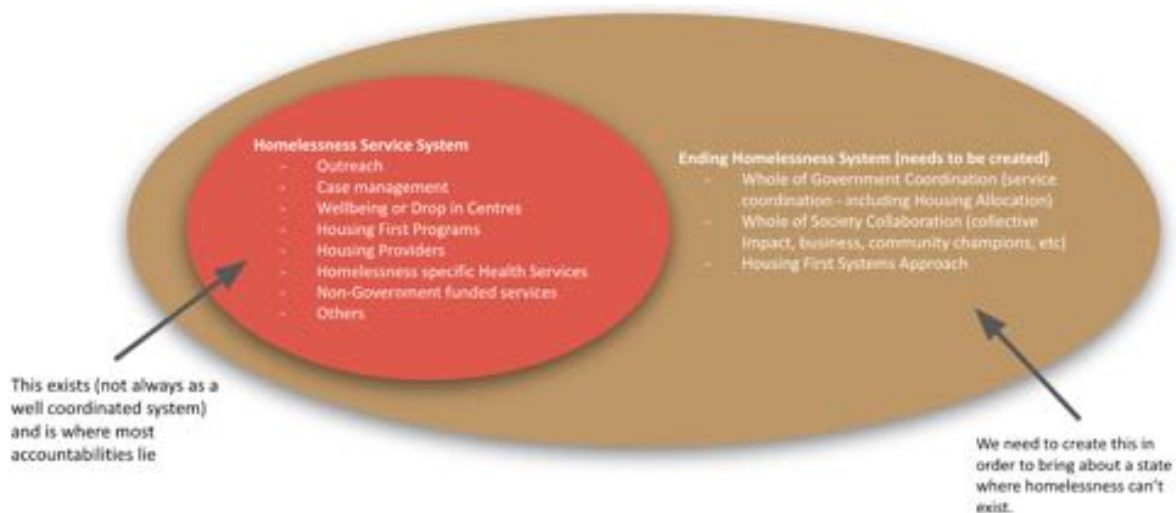
<sup>21</sup> [www.cafth.org/coordinated-entry/](http://www.cafth.org/coordinated-entry/)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-30/housing-productivity-commission-report-latest/101489072>

and self-initiated their own local AtoZ collaborations with limited government support and often in a stop-start manner because of limited resources.

### Collective Impact

Many of these Australian efforts have been informed by the collective impact approach, to make up for the lack of government engagement in systems change efforts to end homelessness, as compared to government efforts to recommission and improve the existing specialist homelessness sector. Such recommissioning processes generally rely on competitive tender processes that set up agencies to compete against each other for this funding, rather than collaborate as the efforts to end homelessness require. Collective impact helps with addressing this, but I've also found it helpful to be clear on the difference between the homelessness service system and an ending homelessness system.



(Image: Homelessness vs Ending Homelessness Systems, AAEH, Australia)

Coordination and integration across homelessness services is crucially important, but if the goal is to end homelessness then it is insufficient, as this system can't solve the problem alone. That requires whole of government and whole of society efforts to change the way these systems operate, the combination of these efforts makes up what I think we should call the 'ending homelessness system' in Australia.

Ensuring there is someone thinking about this system, and how to change it, is the unique role of a backbone organisation in a collective impact initiative: to hold the vision, and ensure the right people are in the right rooms at the right time, with the right Information.<sup>23</sup> The accountabilities of government and services pull them into focusing on short-term needs and to try and do everything, everywhere for everyone all at once. Generally, no one is responsible for the whole system. A backbone focuses on supporting the system change with the specific measurable aim of the collaboration. Backbones take many forms and can be in local governments, in service delivery agencies or in independent agencies like think tanks, universities and other dedicated system change agencies - but wherever they sit, their role is to think of the system. To see the entire elephant.

If who should be involved in system change efforts in the Australian context was one of the hardest things to contextualise from overseas, figuring out what is Housing First and what its role is in ending homelessness was probably the most contentious.

<sup>23</sup> The AAEH acts as the backbone for the Advance to Zero Campaign and also as the backbone for the Western Australian and South Australian efforts. The AAEH supports the backbones in Qld, NSW and Victoria.

## Housing First and Ending Homelessness

I've found through my Fellowship that people in the housing and homelessness sectors have very strong views about many things, no more so than Housing First. Trying to understand exactly what Housing First is has been challenging because so many of the people I've met have such strong views about their element. **WARNING:** If debates about the types of Housing First are not your thing, you might want to skip this section.

### What is Housing First?

Confusingly, there are many types of Housing First, called different things in different contexts. The phrase is often used interchangeably as a term for a particular type of program, as an approach or philosophy, and as a systems change effort. The thing is, it is all of these things. To help better understand the different types of Housing First, the diagram below is the clearest guide setting out the different types of Housing First for the Australian context. My particular thanks to my colleagues Leah Watkins and Karyn Walsh who helped me make sense of all the knowledge people had shared with me, when I got back home.



*(Images: Australian Guide to the Types of Housing First, edited with permission, Leah Watkins)*

Housing First has evolved separately but concurrently out of two places. The Housing First program model, which has evolved from the mental health and homelessness Pathways service in the United States<sup>24</sup> and the Housing First principle or philosophy which has evolved out of Finland. Both are needed as part of strategies to end homelessness and have been integrated into the Australian Advance to Zero Framework.



### Housing First Approach - A Compass

Often used interchangeably with:

- Practice
- Philosophy
- Principle / Principles



### Housing First Programs - A Roadmap

Examples Include:

- Journey to Social Inclusion (scattered site)
- Common Ground (single site)



### Housing First System - A Compass

Often used interchangeably with:

- Ending Homelessness
- The Finish Housing First Principle

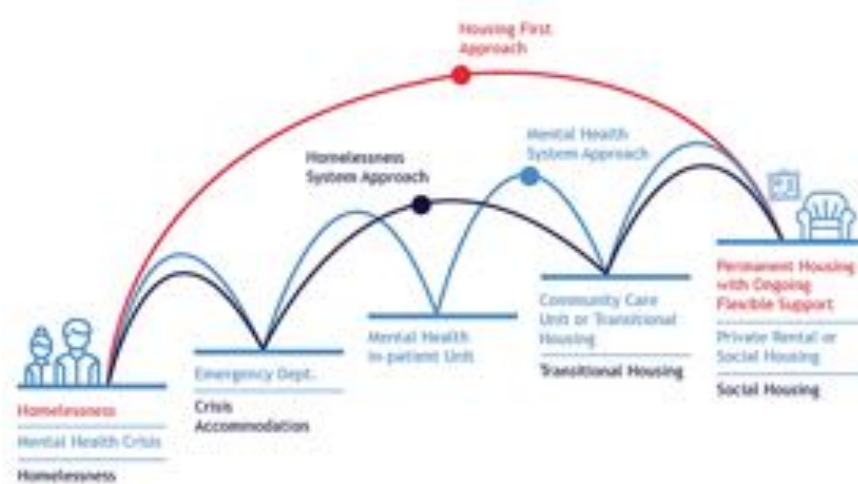
*(Images: Australian Guide to the Types of Housing First, edited with permission, Leah Watkins)*

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.pathwayshousingfirst.org/>

The Housing First Europe Hub I think differentiates these types of Housing First best when they describe the approach and the systems change effort, as a compass, to guide the way. Conversely, Housing First programs are more of a road map, they are descriptive as they have a particular model behind them for which fidelity is important including whether this be scattered side (housing in the suburbs) models, or single site higher density models that enable greater permanent onsite support like Common Ground (called Permanent Supportive Housing).

**Housing First Approach**

A leading champion of Housing First in Australia is Micah Projects and they described the Housing First approach in this way.<sup>25</sup>



(Image: Housing First Approach, Micah Projects, Australia)

The following principles for Australia have been developed collaboratively to promote the implementation of this approach in Australia, with the support of the Housing First Europe Hub, whose creation was supported by the Y Foundation out of Finland.



(Image: Housing First Principles, Homelessness Australia)<sup>26</sup>

**Housing First Programs**

Housing First as a program is an internationally recognised evidence based service intervention for people with high support needs who have experienced long-term or chronic homelessness. However, there is often

<sup>25</sup> [www.endhomelessnesswa.com/our-approach](http://www.endhomelessnesswa.com/our-approach)

<sup>26</sup> <https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/homelessness-resources/housing-first/>



furious discussion about what types of program interventions do and do not constitute Housing First - the fidelity debates. This is I think for a number of reasons:

- Confusion re language and concept. There are debates about the categories of Housing First, what fits into each category and what they are named, varying from country to country.
- There are programs that call themselves Housing First but aren't.
- It's not well understood that high fidelity Housing First programs are not for everyone, whereas the Housing First approach is.

This last point took me a while to wrap my head around. There are some people with low acuity/needs for whom a Housing First program intervention would not be overkill. With some light touch support, they can be assisted back into housing - without the need for an intensive, ongoing and relatively expensive Housing First program intervention. They would however benefit from the services in that system utilising the Housing First approach/principles. There is also a group of people who have very high needs, or are high acuity, that may never be able to live independently, without some sort of support. For this group of people, permanent supportive housing might be a better option. The following diagram sets this out:



(Image: Australian Housing First Systems Change Guide + Acuity, edited with permission, Leah Watkins)

### Housing First and Systems Change

The value of Housing First in many ways is the simplicity which it brings to the homelessness problem - homelessness can be ended by providing housing and adequate support. However, this simplicity at times has led to Housing First being misinterpreted as a one-size-fits-all solution to a deeply complex issue. I think this is why it has evolved beyond just an approach underpinned by principles, and a series of programs, but is also a systems change effort. Again I have worked with colleagues in Australia to make sense of what I learned about Housing First as a Systems Change effort and the following guide sets this out:



(Image: Australian Housing First Systems Change Guide, edited with permission, Leah Watkins)

There are a few points worth clarifying.

The first is that there is a role for crisis accommodation in a Housing First system, but it needs to be small. Australia doesn't by and large have the problem of very large-scale crisis accommodation (shelters) in the way that colder climate countries in the Northern Hemisphere have. We do need to reduce barriers and improve the quality of crisis accommodation in many Australian communities though. There is no role however for transitional accommodation<sup>27</sup> in a Housing First system, and any services providing them should seek to transition them to permanent housing, or better yet Permanent Supportive Housing (see Appendix D for further background on Permanent Supportive Housing).

Second, Permanent Supportive Housing is a type of Housing First. Some advocates argue that because the support is connected to the place where support is provided and not the individual, that this is somehow not Housing First. Independent living in low density housing in the suburbs is not what everyone wants. If someone wants to live in higher density living, why shouldn't that be their choice? If wealthy people can choose to have 'congregate living' with shared gyms and concierges in luxury apartments and retirement villages, why shouldn't incredibly vulnerable people have those same options. For reasons I don't understand, some high fidelity Housing First advocates view this as not aspiring to independence.

Lastly, whilst there is a massive body of evidence that shows that Housing First programs work, as the Y Foundation pointed out to me, there is less evidence about what makes up Housing First as a systems change effort.

### ***Housing First and Ending Homelessness***

The difference between Housing First and ending homelessness is that Housing First is primarily an approach, and ending homelessness is about strategy. In this sense, Housing First is an important part of strategies to end homelessness, but it is not the only thing needed to end homelessness. To achieve an end to homelessness you also need to prevent it, to know how much of it there is (by-name lists) and to meet the needs of everyone in the system.

As Juha Kaakinen, former head of the Y Foundation in Finland told me:

***"We know that housing first works, it is successful about 80% of the time. But if the goal is to end homelessness, we need to find ways to meet the needs of 100% of the people in the system. Researchers have conducted 10,000+ peer-reviewed studies on housing first programs into the 80% that high-fidelity housing first programs work for, but there are next to no studies about the 20% that it didn't work for and why".***

Housing First works to end homelessness for some individuals, Housing First is crucially important, but if the goal is the end of homelessness, rather than just to house people, then Housing First is a second-order issue. The first-order issue is ending homelessness and more precisely a strategy to end homelessness - that must incorporate Housing First. You could say more simply that Housing First is about tactics, and ending homelessness is about strategy.

Now, of course, we need more investment in Australia in Housing First programs, but we should focus on the goal we want - ending homelessness. The central lesson of the 100,000 Homes Campaign, that the Built for Zero and Advance to Zero Communities have learned is that yes Housing First ends an individual's

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<sup>27</sup> Excluding youth services, as transition is a normal part of the youth experiences and youth specific Housing First principles often lean more towards choice and self determination to accommodate this.

homelessness - but if you want to end homelessness for a community you need to seek to end homelessness, not just deliver high fidelity programs in broken systems. It requires a systems change approach.

Now Housing First is also a system change effort - but there isn't an evidence base behind Housing First as a system change effort, in the way that there is for Housing First as a program level intervention. In fact, Juha Kahila, Head Of International Affairs, Y Foundation in Finland told me:

*“Time is running out to demonstrate the effectiveness of housing first at the system level, Governments have been increasingly backing housing first, but it's not delivering the results with a rigid focus on high-fidelity programs that solve an individual's problem but won't solve the community problem.”*

When I asked Juha Kaakinen, if the Finns had their time again would they call it Housing First Systems Change or would they call it ending homelessness, the answer was “ending homelessness, this is the goal” with the Housing First ‘principle’ as they call it, or the ‘approach’ as I’ve proposed calling it for consistency in naming in the Australian context, as an important part of that.

We have the opportunity in Australia to avoid the confusion that exists about Housing First as a system change effort elsewhere, and the risks of being pulled into often endless debates about fidelity if we focus our strategy, efforts and language on the first-order issue, ‘ending homelessness’. This is after all the thing we want, rather than trying to build up Housing First into something bigger than it is, one of a number of valuable, evidence-based approaches to ending homelessness (as set out in the AtoZ Framework). In the end, you can do Housing First and not end homelessness, but you can't end homelessness and not do Housing First.

### The Homelessness Sector: ‘Eating its own’

To ‘eat one's own’ is to turn on and attack members of one's own group or sector.

There is a tendency - both in Australia, and internationally - to ignore, talk down, misunderstand, misquote and mischaracterise the work of others in the homelessness sector.

This tendency is prominent amongst senior managers, researchers, CEOs, advocates and some policymakers. Interestingly rarely in the six countries I visited, nor in my work in Australia, have these debates surfaced among front-line staff, people with lived experience, or even political leaders (although the political leaders certainly benefit from divisions within the sector).

I found a lot of the difference stems from a lack of dialogue and open-mindedness, tribalism, competition, and a scarcity mindset that a lack of resources so often drives.

The debates often centre around one program model or another, one tool or another, one definition or another. What is or isn't Housing First, what definition of ending homelessness should be used, which milestones people recognise on the way to ending homelessness, and whether the emphasis should be on data, coordination, prevention, or just advocacy for more social housing?

The strength of these arguments often has more to do with which charismatic leader, organisation, or country first championed a model, rather than any clear-eyed analysis of what works. This tendency isn't helped by the fact that sometimes it is the researchers who are the most ‘tribal’ in these debates, something that a number of leaders I met with expressed frustration about.

Whilst we know a lot about what works at a program level, it was said to me frequently that we know very little about what works at the system level, particularly given how few communities around the world have ended homelessness or are making large-scale progress towards this aim.

As a consequence, it would seem that a little more open-mindedness, or a sense of curiosity, is called for from some CEOs, managers, researchers, and advocates. It would also be helpful for the people in these 'leadership' positions to engage and support those who are seeking to apply approaches from other jurisdictions rather than quietly, passive-aggressively, criticising, and undermining these efforts.

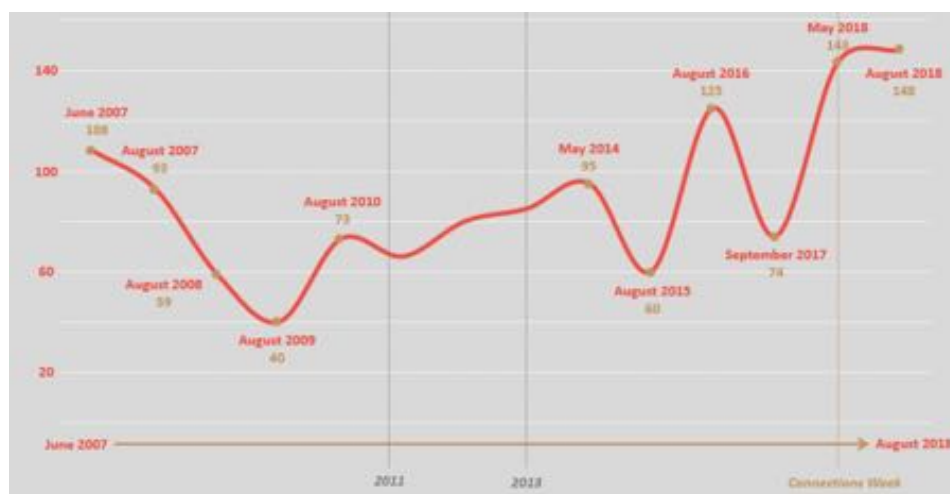
This isn't to say that we shouldn't critique and seek to improve individual and collective efforts, but to do so in a productive way, in a transparent way, through respectful dialogue and not mischaracterising or commenting critically while remaining ignorant of the actual efforts being undertaken. These are all behaviours I have unfortunately seen repeatedly in Australia and during my Churchill Fellowship.

I hesitated to include this section in my report, because it is petty, it is negative, it is only a small number of people, and as you will read in the rest of the report I remain eternally optimistic about the efforts to end homelessness. I am optimistic because of the overwhelming positivity, generosity, humility and kindness of the many people and organisations I have met through my work with the AAEH and through my travels as a Churchill Fellow. Having witnessed this behaviour so regularly internationally, and having been on the receiving end of it so often in Australia, I didn't feel this report would tell the whole story without me 'calling it out'.

As Lydia Stazen from the Institute of Global Homelessness said it best 'this problem is big enough for us all to find our space to work on it'.

## Advocacy Strategy

My involvement in homelessness policy started when I became the Social Inclusion Adviser to the South Australian Premier Mike Rann. At that time (2009) as a consequence of a number of things including the Social Inclusion Initiative and the recommendations of the Thinker in Residence - Rosanne Haggarty, we were able to reduce the number of people rough sleeping down to about 40 in the inner city. According to the Adelaide Zero Project by-name list, as of June 2023, it is now 130+ people.<sup>28</sup>



(Image: History of Rough Sleeping In Adelaide, SAAEH, Australia)<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> <https://saaeh.org.au/progress-dashboard/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://saaeh.org.au/progress-dashboard/>

The Social Inclusion era was the high water mark in efforts to end homelessness, but I remember well when the data were released showing homelessness had been reduced to a record low of 40 people, naive me thought at the time that the sector and the media would welcome this result. They did not. The discussion focused on how rough sleeping is not the only form of homelessness, that data could not be relied upon, and what more needed to be done - everything but what was working, what progress was being made and how it was done. There seemed no room for solutions, only the space to talk about problems and failure.

The dominant narrative in homelessness is crisis, and on this occasion, as in so many more that I have seen working in and out of homelessness policy over the preceding 14+ years, is what I would describe as a deficit-based advocacy strategy from the sector. The glass is always half empty. As a consequence, political leaders in these situations throw their hands in the air and say 'why bother? I've got plenty of other problems to focus on'.

Another example of this happened more recently (2020) in Western Australia when the WA Premier released the Government's strategy (the first in Australia to commit to ending homelessness) and a large funding commitment - the response was critical because it wasn't enough. And to be clear it wasn't enough. But which political leaders, Premiers, Treasurers and Ministers will be willing to stake their reputation, to spend their political capital, on an issue in which they can't win? They wouldn't, it's not human nature.

We know that when working with people experiencing homelessness, a focus on faults and what's not working rarely gets you anywhere. In fact, it's generally counterproductive. What every front line homelessness sector worker knows is you need to focus on strengths - to take a strengths based approach.

Yet what characterises most homelessness and human service advocacy is relentlessly talking up the crisis (because there is one). As a consequence, there is often a disincentive for political leaders to engage in the issue, and what you get is policy and reform neglect, until the crisis escalates to such a level that something must be done; then you too often get short-term reactions, law and order responses, temporary short-term (generally non-Housing First) investments. In other areas of human service delivery in Australia, what you usually get when the crisis hits a tipping point is a Royal Commission.

In many of the countries I visited, and in Australia, almost every area of human service delivery is in crisis. Child protection systems are in crisis, our mental health systems are in crisis, hospitals are in crisis, there is a home ownership crisis, there is a housing affordability crisis, there is a broad homelessness crisis, and there is a crisis of people dying whilst sleeping rough largely from preventable illness.

The space for crises is pretty crowded, however, the space for solutions is wide open.

I have dedicated my working life to the issue of ending homelessness because if we are to end homelessness we need to improve all these systems. Ending homelessness isn't just about homelessness, it's about changing and fixing all the other broken systems because homelessness is not the problem, homelessness is the result of the problem.

Finland seems to have recognised this in the way their key agencies undertake advocacy. They have the Y Foundation which is the trusted partner of the government in solving the complexities of the problem and they have a representative body 'No Fixed Abode', which undertakes more traditional advocacy.

My Fellowship has confirmed my view that the human service sector, and the homelessness sector specifically, need to create the space for a more strengths based approach to advocacy. It doesn't need to be all the time, governments need to be called out for their chronic underinvestment in social housing and

human service systems more generally - but there needs to be the space to focus on strengths and developing solutions. This needs to be done in a joined up way, speaking not with one voice, but with a consistent voice.

Build for Zero has done this successfully in the US. They have focused on strengths, they have broken the problem up and made progress through 'proof points' - demonstrating that it is possible to end homelessness one population group and one community at a time. This approach creates the space for progress to be made, recognised, and built upon.

It enables advocates to go to governments, federal, state and local, and break the problem up, to make it smaller rather than bigger. Our usual tendency is to go to government with bigger and bigger numbers: we need X large number of houses and \$X billions in investment.

I first came across Build for Zero when I was the social policy adviser to the then South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill. There I spent a lot of time thinking of and advocating for ways to get greater investment in housing, homelessness, mental health, child protection and other areas of critical need. Then after an election, the Premier took on the Treasury portfolio, and I consequently also became a Treasury adviser. I no longer needed to 'make the case to others'. Sitting in meeting after meeting, finding ways to make 'savings' really focuses the mind. In this context, it's pretty hard to argue for more investment into a system that is fundamentally broken. Most human service systems are in crisis and swamped by need, governments don't want to tip more money into broken systems or leaking buckets as we called them. They want to fix the holes in the bucket and meet the need.

This is what Built for Zero in the US, and the Advance to Zero effort in Australia does. A glass half empty perspective would say it helps make the progress necessary to avoid the need for a Royal Commission into the growing number of people who die whilst experiencing rough sleeping. Or a more strengths based perspective would say it helps us know precisely what we need to solve this problem, one population group and one community at a time. It helps political leaders have confidence that if they invest their time, political capital and government resources they can make progress in an area of public policy that is so often a bottomless pit of demand.

In this sense Advance to Zero is not just about rough sleeping, it's not even just about homelessness, it is about empowering communities and then governments to change local systems to solve complex problems.

## Context, History and the Economy

One of the things that stood out most for me in visiting so many different communities seeking to deal with the challenge of homelessness is the importance of context.

If you stand on the street, and look up into the systems that exist to support people experiencing homelessness, they all look quite similar, the needs of the people in each system obviously vary, but the problem is pretty similar. However, if you were a government official looking down on the homelessness systems, you would see they are mind bogglingly complicated and very different.

I found it very helpful to put into context how each system got to where it is now as the complexity of these systems is so often a consequence of historical legacy, not any intentional design.



As Winston Churchill himself is often quoted as saying. “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it”.<sup>30</sup>

Learning about the history of homelessness is hard because it has not been well documented. At times I felt that my Churchill Fellowship was an oral history of historical homelessness efforts in the communities I visited, as the Meeting Notes Appendix of this report sets out.

The shortest summary of the history of homelessness I can present is this:

- First Nations people are the original homeless. Those dispossessed from their land, and the frontier wars in the US, Canada and Australia, saw the first documented cases of homelessness appear in colonial records from the 1640s in North America. European settlers were displacing First Nations peoples and the resulting conflicts on the frontiers led to homelessness among both First Nations and settler people.<sup>31</sup>
- The Industrial Revolution saw homelessness accelerate, and there have been waves of homelessness that have come and gone during the Great Depression and the building of the modern welfare state.
- Many have argued that the latest wave started in the 1970s with the broad-based adoption of neoliberal economic policies, underinvestment in (and in many cases large-scale sells-offs of) public housing, coupled with the introduction of well-meaning but poorly implemented policies of de-institutionalisation.

First Nations homelessness is a legacy of colonisation and the incomplete progress of reconciliation.

Chronic homelessness is the legacy of poorly implemented policies of deinstitutionalisation.

Mass homelessness is the consequence of neo-liberal economic<sup>32</sup> policies and while climate change is forcing a long hard look at our economic system to make it less extractive to the detriment of the planet, our economic systems remain incredibly detrimental to all people, and homelessness is an inevitable consequence of that.

I both believe and recognise that we can technically solve homelessness through the Advance to Zero framework laid out here, but to structurally solve it, to solve all forms of homelessness for everyone experiencing it, will require broader reforms such as those implemented in Finland. As Jake Maguire from Community Solutions said to me, ‘while we are waiting’, we have Advance to Zero to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible one community and one population group at a time.

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<sup>30</sup> There is some debate as to if Winston Churchill ever used this exact form of words, despite it having been regularly attributed to him. I think the point is still well made, further information here: <https://www.inlander.com/Bloglander/archives/2016/02/16/condon-misattributes-quote-to-churchill-in-the-state-of-the-city-speech>

<sup>31</sup> <https://invisiblepeople.tv/history-of-homelessness/#:~:text=During%20the%20Industrial%20Revolution%20and,lose%20their%20jobs%20and%20homes>

<sup>32</sup> Neoliberal economic policies have a preference for markets over government, economic incentives over cultural norms, and private over collective action. Neoliberalism it is a hard concept to pin down, but is a catchall for policies associated with deregulation, privatisation or fiscal austerity. It was broadly recognised as part of my fellowship conversations as the ideas and practices that have produced growing economic insecurity and inequality.

## Key Insights

The following section outlines some key insights from each of the countries I visited as well as further reflections on the challenges and benefits of making comparisons with each of them, with Australia.

### What can we learn from the United States of America?

My first stop was the United States. I recognise that it seems strange to look to the USA for inspiration on how to solve homelessness. When I told people I was visiting the USA to learn about efforts to end homelessness, some were outright dismissive of the idea that there is or was anything we could learn from the USA about ending homelessness. They believed that the home of Skid Row<sup>33</sup> and the nation enduring abject poverty at a scale unparalleled in the Western world, was not the kind of place that Australia could learn much from.



(Image: Australia / USA Map Comparison)<sup>34</sup>

I obviously disagree, having chosen the United States as the first place to visit on my Fellowship. The reality is that what unites Australia and the USA is far greater than what separates us - and I certainly learned a great deal. Australia is a lot more like the USA than many in Australia recognise. As a nation, we are more like the USA than we are Finland for example, even though I firmly believe we should seek to be much more like Finland.

Probably the most common reflection from every country I visited, starting in the USA, is that the language of ending homelessness is so prevalent, it's part of the lexicon. The language of ending homelessness, or what it means (to make it rare, brief and non-recurring), is very much part of government strategies and policy documents, organisation strategic mission statements, and even in the names of a vast number of organisations. It's not seen as threatening. None of this is true of Australia, though it is changing.

During my visit to the USA, I was able to meet with people from communities that have actually ended homelessness for particular population groups - for example, Arlington County, Virginia in relation to veteran homelessness, or Chatanuga in relation to chronic rough sleeping homelessness.

There were, however, a number of key insights that really stood out:

- **Shrink the Change** - Sometimes the challenge can feel so large and out of control that the constant need to respond to crises can overtake any progress towards change. In the USA it is so hard to get change from governments that they have really focused on shrinking the change - no matter how large the problem might be - to put elements within your control. This is inherently empowering, for

<sup>33</sup> Skid Row, an area near downtown Los Angeles, contains one of the largest ongoing populations of people experiencing homelessness in the United States.

<sup>34</sup> Blog Website, accessed 30 May 2022, <https://blog.done.gr/snifsnif/comparisons>

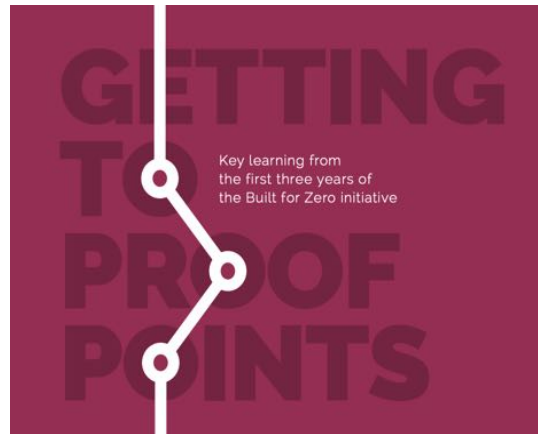


both the leaders in the sector, and for political leaders to make the bigger broader structural changes that are needed to end homelessness. We could all do more to shrink the change by focusing on what Community Solutions call the improvement space as shown here.



(Image: Guide to the Improvement Space, AAEH, Australia, modified with permission from Community Solutions)

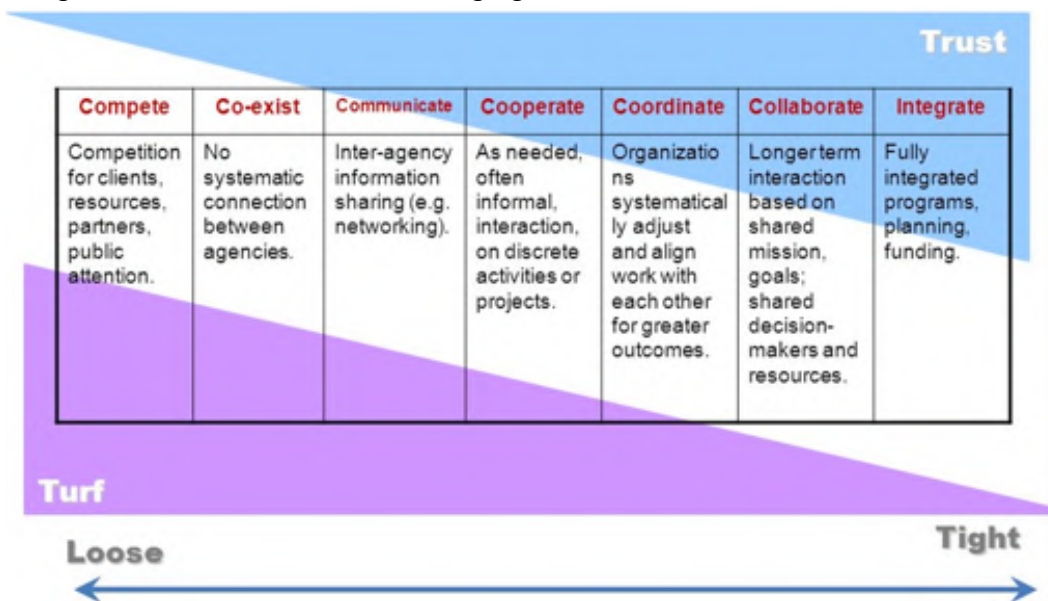
- Use Proof Points to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible** - The USA had the first communities anywhere in the world to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible. They did it by shrinking the change, by focusing on a place, and on a particular population group. It still surprises me that so many people’s reaction to this is to downplay and diminish it. To end homelessness requires a belief and a recognition that ending homelessness is possible, the success of these initial communities has inspired a movement of communities around the world seeking to emulate their success. It is also, fundamentally, an advocacy strategy. So often the housing and homelessness sectors go to the government and make the problem bigger. It's no surprise then that political leaders are hesitant to prioritise the issue because it's so easy to get lost in the complexity and because no matter what they do it will never be enough. A proof points advocacy strategy, as developed in the USA, flips that on its head. It makes the problem smaller, more digestible and more local.
- Health Equity** - As the US health system has so many inequities and barriers to access, and because the homelessness service system is such an integral part of the social safety net in the US (because their income support system is so negligible compared to Australia) - healthcare has been integrated into homelessness services in a way that would be the envy of many communities in Australia. There are some excellent examples of this that Australia could learn a lot from. The US is by no means perfect, and in fact, in many ways, it is because the problem is now so out of hand, that they treat homelessness as a public health crisis. In Australia, we need to see homelessness as much of a public health issue as it is a consequence of the housing affordability crisis - people are literally dying.



## The world needs more Canada

No country is more comparable to Australia than Canada. New Zealand is not as big, the USA is so much bigger, and European countries don't have the same colonial history, dispossessing the First Nations people. One of the things that Canadians are renowned for is just being nice - that was certainly true of my visit. Key insights for me were:

- **Being nice isn't the same as collaborating** - What we often think of as collaboration at the systems level is often just communication - see the table below from the Tamarack Institute. One way of addressing this is by having better systems level meetings and better backbone organisations to support this. Canada has a significant number of ending homelessness collective impact initiatives, there are examples of great practice just as there are pockets of frustration at 'talk fests' that don't lead to impact. Too often we fight so hard to establish backbones we're exhausted by the exercise and give little consideration to what being a good backbone looks like.



(Source: Tamarack Institute, 2018 Canada)

- **Plan for the long haul** - Ending homelessness should absolutely be the ambition but we must also realise that this is a long-term effort, particularly in large cities. This was the salient advice of a number of Canadian stakeholders I met with. Setting milestones along the way will be key to maintaining momentum, in particular using milestones that measure the reduction in the prevalence (or percentage of homelessness per head of population) is important. Prevalence is how public health issues are measured, and homelessness is amongst other things a public health crisis.
- **Racism and Reconciliation** - Both Canada and Australia were settled on stolen land and racism remains stubbornly present (if often just below the surface). The legacy of this lives on in the homelessness we seek to end. Canada has done a lot more work with and for First Nations groups regarding culture and ending homelessness. Australia has a long way to go. Leadership, listening and investment will be needed to address this. Canada has much we can learn from in this area.



(Photos: CAEH Conference Welcome to Country and Public Art, Edmonton, 2019 Canada)

## The UK - A mixed bag

Some of the worst homelessness I saw on my travels was in London, the place where some of the most impressive reductions in homelessness in the past have occurred. I also saw some incredibly impressive results in Glasgow and some truly inspiring efforts regarding practice and collaboration in the UK. It was very much a mixed bag.

Highlights were:

- **Prevention, Prevention, Prevention** - We need to listen to the early warning systems - when someone is struggling to pay rent, that's the point to intervene and prevent homelessness, not only respond after they've been evicted. As Lorine McGraw from Glasgow said to me "we need to provide care before care is needed". Prevention is a much bigger part of the thinking and effort in the UK than it is in Australia. There are many types of prevention and Appendix D sets out further background on this.
- **Opportunity: Employment and Social Enterprise** - The UK is a lot stronger at integrating employment and homelessness efforts than Australia, including in relation to supporting social enterprise and social procurement, both of which provide significant opportunities for more flexible employment arrangements to aid in the recovery of people who have experienced homelessness, particularly chronic homelessness. I think this might have something to do with the fact that employment services are commissioned nationally, but delivered more locally, whereas in Australia employment services are commissioned by a different level of government (the Commonwealth) from our broader community services which by and large are commissioned by state and territory governments. Either way, there are a lot of opportunities to better integrate these sectors to provide better social outcomes from both.



(Photo: Social Bite Social Enterprise that employs people who have experienced homelessness, and also donates profits to support efforts to end homelessness, London, UK, 2022)<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.fmj.co.uk/baxterstorey-teams-up-with-social-bite-to-tackle-homelessness/>

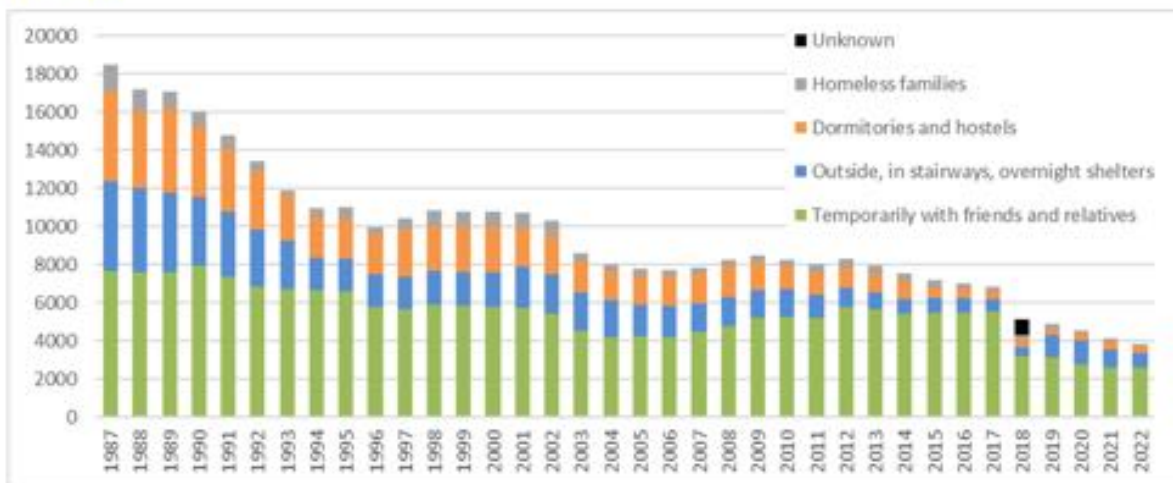
- **Person Centred Approaches** - I wouldn't say that the UK as a whole is a leader in putting the needs of people at the centre of service systems, but they certainly have pockets of excellence and some really interesting innovations regarding co-design in health and homelessness, engaging and empowering the voice of people with a lived experience and trauma informed practices<sup>36</sup>, for example. See Appendix A for further background and insights.

## Finnish Trailblazers

Finn's are trailblazers in so many ways. Finland:

- Is the third most prosperous country in the world.
- Is the best country in the world in comparisons of human wellbeing.
- Is the freest country in the world together with Sweden and Norway.
- Is the safest country in the world.
- Has the least organised crime in the world and has the third least corruption in the world.
- Judicial system is the most independent in the world.
- Availability of official information is the best in the EU.
- Banks are the soundest in the world.
- Has the third best pension system in the world.
- Has the third most personal freedom of choice in the world.
- Has the fourth best press freedom in the world.
- After Denmark and Sweden, Finland is the most socially just EU country.
- Is the best country in the world in protecting fundamental human rights.<sup>37</sup>

Finland is unique and comparisons of their homelessness efforts in isolation of everything else they have done is difficult. Nonetheless, there is much to learn from Finland and their Housing First/Ending Homelessness results are impressive over a long period of time, the following graph sets this out:



(Source: ARA, Number of Homeless 1987-2022, Finland)

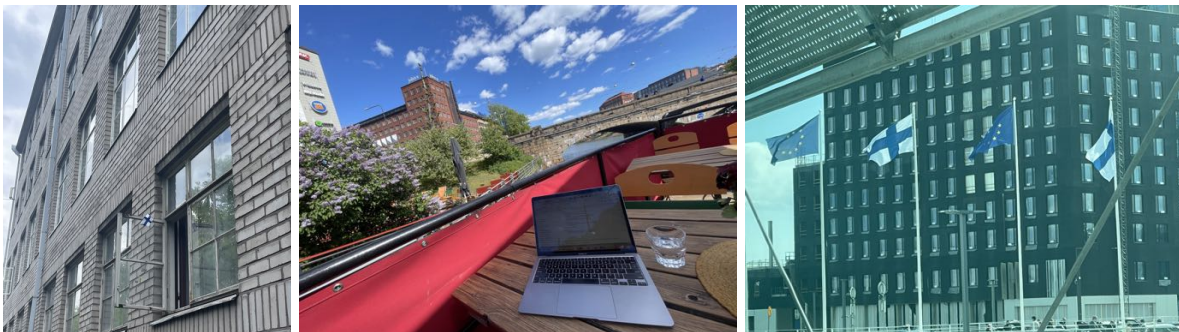
<sup>36</sup> Trauma-informed practice acknowledges that trauma can hinder development, affect relationships, and contribute to mental ill-health. Recognising the prevalence of trauma among homeless individuals, efforts to end homelessness should include practices that prevent re-traumatisation. This approach, known as trauma-informed care, focuses on understanding trauma's impact, prioritising physical, psychological, and emotional safety, and enabling survivors to regain a sense of control or empowerment.

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.stat.fi/tup/satavuotias-suomi/suomi-maailman-karjessa\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/tup/satavuotias-suomi/suomi-maailman-karjessa_en.html)

The Finns I met with were at pains to point out that notwithstanding a lot of misleading international media, they haven't actually ended homelessness. But they are rightly proud of their success underpinned by the Housing First principle they have adopted.

Key Insights from Finland were:

- **It's the economy stupid** - To paraphrase Winston Churchill regarding democracy - capitalism is the worst way of organising an economy except for all the alternatives. The Finns, along with their Scandinavian neighbours, have been the most successful countries in the world at civilising capitalism in making it work for everyone, not just a privileged few. If in Australia homelessness isn't the problem, it's the result of the problem, in Finland, that maxim still holds true, but the other service systems aren't anywhere near as broken as they are in Australia, the USA and UK.
- **Focus on ending homelessness, not just Housing First programs** - It's often said that if we want to end homelessness all we need to do is invest in Housing First, but as the Finns pointed out to me, that's not true. By their nature Housing First programs can only ever support those that they are designed for, and as successful as they are, they only work for between 85-90% of people. To end homelessness we need to support 100% of people experiencing homelessness. To mainstream Housing First, to make it part of business as usual, you need to seek to end homelessness. Housing First is only one element of what is needed to end homelessness, so zero in on ending homelessness, otherwise the risk is too great you don't end up actually ending homelessness, instead you just provide high fidelity programs to a larger group of people, similar to the experience in a number of other European Countries.<sup>38</sup>
- **Permanent Supportive Housing Systems** - Finland and the USA are the only countries I visited that have Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) systems. Australia does not. We have a small number of buildings that operate as separate services, that have by and large struggled to maintain the 'supportive' part of PSH. Discussion regarding housing and homelessness in Australia focuses almost entirely on the need for more social housing - for which there is a clear need. Too little consideration is given to what type of housing is needed in advocacy and policy discussions in Australia. If we are to end homelessness in Australia we need a Permanent Supportive Housing system like Finland.



*(Photos: Finnish Supportive Housing, Waiting to meet with the Y Foundation and Departing Helsinki, Finland)*

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<sup>38</sup> As set out in "Ending Homelessness?: The Contrasting Experiences of Ireland, Denmark and Finland", Mike Allen, Lars Benjaminsen, Eoin O'Sullivan, and Nicholas Pleace, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvx1hvwv>

## More Quotes

*“Western democracies see homelessness as largely an issue to be managed, to manage the people on the streets as efficiently as possible. To not let it cause too much disruption and to not let it cause too much cost”.*

- Mark McGreevy, De Paul International, London, UK

*“We don’t debate the data in meetings anymore. We debate solutions”.*

- Pat Togher, Glasgow Health & Social Care Partnership, Scotland, UK

*“More of our staff are about to become clients, we already have homelessness support staff who show up to work every day but are homeless themselves, California is just not affordable”.*

- Hazel Lopez, Senior Director, The People Concern Los Angeles, USA

*“The secret is to gang up on the problem - not each other”.*

- Jake Maguire, Community Solutions, USA

*“It helps to talk about the global narrative. We can count the number of people living in slums and the number of refugees in the world, but we currently have no way to understand how many people are experiencing homelessness in the world right now.”*

- Mark McGreevy, De Paul International, London, UK

*“We need to act with urgency but strap in for the long term”.*

- Samara Jones, Convenor, Housing First Europe Hub, UK

*“We can make change by showing how it's done, not just by arguing our case”.*

- Elisabeth Hammer, Managing Director, Neunerhaus/House of Nine, Austria

*“Philanthropy is part of the problem when it sees itself as being here for the long haul, we're all saving for a rainy day, and it's pouring outside... We need to break down this mindset that we're here for the long term, we need to be here to solve the problem”.*

- Emily Bradley, Director, Strategic Investments, United Way Greater Los Angeles. USA

*“The cost of not providing person centred services grows cumulatively until it reaches a tipping point where systems start to harm people rather than help them”.*

- Alex Fox, Mayday Trust, Leeds, UK

*“Take the profit out of housing, when you take the profit out, you put people back into it. We need to be moving away from the financialisation of housing”.*

- Patrick Duce, World Habitat, England, UK

*“Homelessness is the result of poverty, poverty is the result of inequality, and inequality is the result of government's inability or unwillingness to take the requisite action.”*

- Mark McGreevy, De Paul International, London, UK

## Recommendations For Action

The following recommendations for action are a result of my Churchill Fellowship, the many conversations I had, the varied resources I read along the way and of course my ongoing work leading the AAEH.

They are self evidently not the result of any detailed consultation process - which I acknowledge I would ideally like to conduct. For now, that is beyond the scope of this Churchill Fellowship Report. It is my intention to refine these recommendations over time, along with the many partners of the AAEH to sharpen up and be clearer about the actions that are needed by various actors to end homelessness. Feedback on these recommendations is therefore greatly appreciated.

For further context on these recommendations, see the meeting notes and the key concepts and further background parts of this report. An index of where to exactly to find further background on each recommendation can be found in Appendix E.

### Commonwealth Government Recommendations For Action

To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness, the Commonwealth Government should:

1. Establish a National Housing and Ending Homelessness Plan
2. Invest in Placed-Based Efforts to End Homelessness
3. Develop a National Homelessness, Housing and Health Equity Policy
4. Establish Intergovernmental and Interagency Coordination mechanisms
5. Create Permanent Supportive Housing Systems
6. Close the Homelessness Gap
7. Establish a National Homelessness Early Intervention Service
8. Better Support Employment Pathways - including through Social Enterprise
9. Invest in an Ending Homelessness Flexible Fund
10. Address the Structural Factors driving new homelessness

#### *A National Housing and Ending Homelessness Plan*

- We need a national plan on housing and homelessness. Not since the Rudd Labor Government released 'The Road Home' policy have we had this. However, what goes into it is really what matters.
- Ending homelessness needs to be the ambition, because what else is acceptable? Australia is the only country I visited on my Fellowship without an ambition to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 1: A Plan to End Homelessness** - Ensure that 'ending homelessness' is the ambition of the new housing and homelessness plan being developed.

#### *Invest In Placed-Based Efforts to End Homelessness*

##### Measurement

- You can't change what you don't measure and in Australia, we don't really measure the amount of homelessness that exists.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates homelessness every five years in the census - but it is an estimate as there is no explicit census question about homelessness.
- Homelessness services are required to report to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on the effectiveness of their efforts at helping the individuals who access their services, as well as the number of people they turn away. This can be up to 260 people a day.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/dec/11/homeless-services-turn-away-260-people-daily-due-to-lack-of-accommodation>

- Various state and territory governments in Australia conduct what are called point-in-time (PIT) street counts, which are a measure of the number of homeless people on a specific day (hence the point-in-time reference). This type of counting is known as “taking a snapshot” of the situation.<sup>40</sup> They do not, however, identify people by name and there is a lot of variation in how these PIT counts are conducted.
- None of these efforts add up to what many call ‘actionable intelligence’ about what is going on in their community regarding homelessness.

#### The By-Name List

- Community Solutions in the US have advocated the adoption of real-time by-name lists because homelessness is a dynamic problem, which changes from night to night, from person to person (See Appendix D for more information about by-name lists).
- Developing a real-time, quality, by-name list of people experiencing homelessness and their individual needs provides a shared understanding to inform who needs support, whether efforts are working, how to best target resources, and how to improve the service system as a whole.
  - In this context a ‘quality’ by-name list (BNL) means that you have the vast majority of providers feeding into the list, you have it shared, and community-owned, and you have had the list certified as quality by the AAEH, utilising our by-name list scorecard. A by-name list is not just a static list of names that one or even a handful of agencies have, or even a dynamic list that only a handful of agencies have.
- Such a BNL enables scarce housing and support to be triaged according to local priorities and it enables a prevention focus, better advocacy and supports the implementation of the Housing First approach (see Appendix D for more background).
- Ultimately, it gives a real-time feedback loop as to whether a community's improvement efforts to end homelessness are working - not just at an individual or service provider level, but across a community/system.
- The AAEH is supporting over 25 communities to develop by-name lists in Australia - an important element of these by-name lists is that they have been driven and continue to be ‘owned’ by the community.
- In order to build a quality BNL there needs to be trust and consent from the people experiencing homelessness. This is much easier to get if the data are owned by a community collaboration that has the sole purpose of ending homelessness, as opposed to governments which include law enforcement, child protection and other agencies that have powers of compulsion.

#### Utilise the Advance to Zero Framework

- The AAEH has supplemented what we have learned from Community Solutions about by-name lists and other solutions with knowledge from around the world, including through this Fellowship, about what it takes to end homelessness.
- This knowledge is summarised in the Advance to Zero Framework or Theory of Change.
- **Recommendation 2: Support New Communities** - Support the rollout of the Advance to Zero Framework in more local communities through the renegotiation of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.
- As Norman Suchar, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, told me: “you could make many homelessness responses twice as effective if you managed the system better, but the inclination is always there to fund direct services, it’s inefficient. If you want to shift the dial, fund the improvements to the systems”.
- Commonwealth Government financial support is urgently needed because, to date, efforts to

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/monitoring-progress/point-time-counts>



implement the system-wide AtoZ Framework have largely been funded through:

- time-limited philanthropy;
  - some, generally once off, local government grants;
  - within the existing already stretched resources of the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS), and;
  - a limited number of state government grants, usually once off.
- None of this is sustainable nor is it a solid foundation from which to build the foundations for the long-term efforts required to end homelessness.
  - In addition, the evidence from around the world is that innovation is better achieved through community efforts than prescribed by governments.
  - If we are serious about ending homelessness then we need to fund it, and this need not, and should not, come at the expense of other efforts to deal with the broader problem of overall homelessness or the even broader problem of housing affordability in Australia.
  - **Recommendation 3: Support Existing Communities** - Urgently invest in existing community led efforts to end homelessness, that are utilising the Advance to Zero Framework, to support and accelerate their success.
  - The Commonwealth Government should urgently directly financially support community-led efforts, utilising the Advance to Zero Framework, in Australia.
  - Invest in the existing community-led efforts, utilising the Advance to Zero Framework, in Australia to support their success.

#### ***Develop A National Homelessness, Housing and Health Equity Policy***

- Throughout my Fellowship, it seemed apparent to me that health services are much more integrated into housing and homelessness services in other countries than they are in Australia.
- No doubt there are many reasons for this. In the USA, for example, the homelessness system acts as a much bigger part of the social safety net as they don't have as equitable access to healthcare or as comprehensive an income support system as Australia.
- As a result, there are some outstanding examples of integrated health and homelessness services.
- Irrespective of the reasons, homelessness needs to be seen as a health issue as much as it is a housing issue. This was the case before the COVID-19 pandemic, and it's particularly the case now.
- The failure to better integrate our health and homelessness responses is one reason why people who sleep rough are likely to die up to 30 years earlier than those with stable housing and is why an estimated 424 people die whilst experiencing rough sleeping homelessness in Australia each year.<sup>41</sup>
- Based on my Fellowship experiences and the existing work of the AAEH and its Australian Health, Housing and Homelessness Network (A3HN), the following have been developed.
- **Recommendation 4: Health Equity** - The Department of Health should develop a National Homelessness and Health Equity Policy, that:
  - Includes a dedicated, adequate and ongoing funding stream through Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to better address the urgent healthcare needs of people experiencing homelessness.
  - Is informed by a working group that considers how to better meet the health needs of people experiencing homelessness within new and existing Commonwealth policy frameworks – including the National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

#### ***Intergovernmental and Interagency Coordination to End Homelessness***

- Homelessness is not the problem, it is the result of the problem. Homelessness is what happens when other government service systems let vulnerable people down. Child protection systems,

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<sup>41</sup> [https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/MEDIA-RELEASE\\_-\\_E2%80%98Housing-is-healthcare%E2%80%99-Renewed-calls-for-urgent-Australian-Government-action-on-rough-sleeping-homelessness.docx.pdf](https://aaeh.org.au/assets/docs/MEDIA-RELEASE_-_E2%80%98Housing-is-healthcare%E2%80%99-Renewed-calls-for-urgent-Australian-Government-action-on-rough-sleeping-homelessness.docx.pdf)

income support, the veteran's support systems, mental health, corrections, disability, aged care, migration, the list goes on.

- This is a refrain that I heard time and again during my Fellowship, and through my travels throughout Australia.
- Homelessness is such a complex issue that no government can solve it alone. They need to work with other levels of government (Commonwealth, state and local) and they need to work across the various arms of that level of government.
- To improve these systems, we need to engage, across government. The Commonwealth Government needs to play a role in this and it needs a mechanism to do so.
- In the United States the Interagency Council on Homelessness, established by the White House, provides that mechanism. Australia needs something similar.
- It needs to be ongoing because sustained engagement was crucial in Finland, and as has been seen in efforts in the UK, while interagency effort is often activated or enabled during the development of a strategy, or a particular reform effort, sustaining interagency cooperation has been challenging. The Rough Sleeping Strategy in the UK was signed by all the government agencies, but this action was seen by many as being because they all wanted to get a budget bid up or their piece of the reform initiative pie for their portfolio - but rarely do they show up for the long haul, to help with delivery.
- I discussed with public sector experts the usefulness of a commission model, which a number of Australian Governments have in relation to mental health for example. These can be expensive and often focus more on policy reform rather than the operational coordination amongst agencies that is also needed, and so often missing.
- **Recommendation 5: Interagency Council** - Establish an Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness, to support the engagement of Commonwealth service delivery agencies relevant to ending homelessness, including in disability, aged care, primary health, veterans, social security, etc.
- Consideration should be given to such a council being supported by a central agency like the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, jointly with the Department of Social Services.
- **Recommendation 6: State Government Interagency Coordination** - Require having state-based, across-government, and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms in place as a requirement of funding as part of the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement funding.
  - This requirement is needed because never before in the history of the Australian Federation has a state government had the attention span to sustain effort on this issue: political and bureaucratic attention always moves on before the job is complete, but to their credit usually after progress has been made. Coordination efforts often get merged with other human service coordination activities and the focus is lost. Key personnel leave their roles and their functions fall away. An ongoing requirement for interagency coordination is needed if ending homelessness is truly the goal.

### **Create Permanent Supportive Housing Systems**

- Housing alone doesn't solve individual instances of homelessness, housing and support do. Yet the support all too often isn't provided and doesn't meet the individual's needs including by not being intensive enough or not lasting long enough. Some people's needs are so profound that they may always require some level of additional support. This is where Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) comes in. I visited some inspiring services of this kind in the USA and Finland in particular.
- For more information about Permanent Supportive Housing see Appendix D.
- The US truly has a supportive housing system, rather than just a collection of supportive housing facilities - which is what exists in Australia and many examples of which have struggled to maintain the 'supportive' part of supportive housing.
- In Australia we had a wave of Permanent Supportive Housing built as a consequence first of the Social Inclusion efforts of the South Australian Rann Government (date), and then the Rudd Government's 'The Road Home' homelessness policy and investments (date).

- From time to time, some new services have been built by state governments, but one of the most surprising things for me, after witnessing the maturity of this type of housing in the US, is how friendless Permanent Supportive Housing seems to be in Australia.
- There are no peak bodies who focus on advocating for this type of housing at a national level, there are very few organisations and individuals who even seem to understand what it is and how it differs from general social housing.
- Most of the public servants and sector leaders who were involved in the initial waves of building supportive housing in Australia have moved on to other roles. What little discussion there is regarding Permanent Supportive Housing seems to focus on if the supportive housing should be on scattered site or single site models. All of this needs to change.
- Supportive housing is the type of housing that we know is needed to end the experience of those who have a long-term, or chronic experience of homelessness and multiple and often intergenerational needs arising from poverty and trauma.
- Not everyone who has slept rough needs this type of housing, but for those who do, it not only literally saves lives, it is also cheaper for taxpayers. The Corporation for Supportive Housing in the USA has done a lot of work to demonstrate this. In Australia, we know that these savings were at least \$11,000 per person eight years ago.<sup>42</sup>
- Other groups such as the New York Supportive Housing Network have done a lot to build the network of these types of services because a really important part of the model is that while they are permanent, the goal should be to, over time, graduate out of these types of expensive services and into social housing or private rental. This requires services working together as a system, rather than just individual agencies.
- **Recommendation 7: Unmet Need** - Commission an agency like the Productivity Commission or the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to review and determine what the level of unmet need for supportive housing is in Australia and most importantly, what it would take to end chronic rough sleeping homelessness.
  - The review could also investigate the creation of a Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) top-up for people who have an experience of chronic rough sleeping homelessness to ensure we can prevent future instances of chronic homelessness from occurring.
- **Recommendation 8: Growing Permanent Supportive Housing** - Establish a Permanent Supportive Housing Growth Fund for capital and services to meet the immediate needs of those experiencing chronic homelessness: tie such investments to communities across Australia that are seeking to not just manage homelessness better but are working to end it.
  - Targeting such investments towards communities with quality data, service coordination forums, and the other elements associated with ending homelessness efforts will substantially increase the 'bang for buck' or impact these investments can have, as they can be leveraged to transform - or unclog - local homelessness and housing systems.
- As it was once colourfully explained to me, PSH can be the laxative for constipated homelessness and housing systems - but only when the system is coordinated.
- **Recommendation 9: Sustaining Permanent Supportive Housing** - Support the AAEH to establish a National Permanent Supportive Housing Network, to guide the development of local supportive housing systems in Australia, build understanding, improve practice, and help to ensure that when we do build PSH they stay permanent supportive housing.

### **Close the Homelessness Gap**

- Travelling to the USA and Canada highlighted for me the fact that like Australia, these countries were founded on stolen land. It is bound into our identity that land ownership is part of what is seen as

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<sup>42</sup> <https://theconversation.com/supportive-housing-is-cheaper-than-chronic-homelessness-67539#>

success - convicts in Australia and the US were given land when they were released. Migrants were given land to incentivise them to come.

- The work of ending homelessness is entirely bound up in the work of decolonisation and reconciliation.
- I wish I could say I came across lots of great practice in relation to this on my travels. I did not. I did meet with a range of people who recognised the problem and were committed to walking alongside First Nations people, and people of colour to address what we too often don't call out for what it is in Australia, systemic racism.
- My Fellowship highlighted how a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and community-controlled sector - delivering high-quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country, is essential to efforts to end homelessness.
- We need to improve our efforts to end systemic racism and to Close the Gap in the housing and homelessness indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
- **Recommendation 10: Grow the ACCO Sector** - Consider how as part of the National Plan and the renegotiated National Agreement they can redouble efforts, as committed to in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, to build the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) sector, in particular those organisations that work on preventing and ending homelessness.
- Alongside the need to grow and support the ACCO sector, is the need to better support and grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in the existing homelessness response system's services.
- **Recommendation 11: Improve Cultural Safety** - Support the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ending Homelessness Network to improve cultural safety in efforts to end homelessness within existing homelessness response systems. In particular to:
  - provide a space for peer-to-peer support,
  - develop training resources and cultural engagement protocols, including in relation to Housing First practice, service coordination, data collection and triage,
  - ensure indigenous data sovereignty,<sup>43</sup>
  - sharing of best practices, and
  - better support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce within the existing housing, homelessness and other related sectors.

#### ***Establish a National Homelessness Early Intervention Service***

- Finland is undoubtedly the world leader in efforts to end homelessness, one of the less well-known elements of their strategy is their early intervention or prevention service. There are many factors that make it difficult to directly translate activity from Finland to Australia, but their national prevention service is one that I am convinced could and should be adopted in Australia.
- We need to 'turn off the tap' as the Institute of Global Homelessness often describes it, or prevent more and more people from experiencing homelessness in the first place.
- Increasingly there are effective, impressive but generally small scale early intervention programs in Australia. Understandably, it is hard to take funds from a crisis part of the system, while the system is in crisis, and invest upstream. The states are primarily responsible for the existing system and struggle with this. It makes sense therefore for the Commonwealth, as part of broader reform efforts, to invest in services that prevent homelessness from occurring.
- **Recommendation 12: Prevention** - Invest in a National Homelessness Prevention Service, modelled on the Finnish Housing Advisers Prevention program.

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<sup>43</sup> More information on this available at: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/publication/116530>

- This need not require the Commonwealth to enter into directly commissioning homelessness services - something it has to date largely not done - but could require a broadly nationally consistent model to be rolled out.
- For further information on this program see the meeting notes from Järvinen Mrika from the Finnish Housing agency ARA in Appendix A.

### **Better Support Employment Pathways - including through Social Enterprise**

- Australia's social enterprise sector is more emergent than countries like the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA. Consequently, the social enterprise sector in these countries is generally more connected to the homelessness sector and provides support in helping recover from or prevent homelessness.
- There are some great small scale examples of this in Australia already, but there are some big opportunities to scale up the impact with the right incentives and support.
- Social procurement and the use of housing maintenance and other contracts to provide greater employment opportunities for people with an experience of homelessness is one obvious area.
- **Recommendation 13: Employment Pathways** - As part of the development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan consider ways of better integrating employment service and homelessness support systems to provide more employment pathways - including improved support for social enterprises.

### **Invest in an Ending Homelessness Flexible Fund**

- Money matters. In the USA for example they have a plethora of government voucher programs and initiatives across federal, state, regional and local government agencies. They also traditionally have a substantially larger philanthropic sector and a more well-established business culture of corporate giving than Australia.
- The European countries I visited all emphasised the importance of flexible funding to assist with efforts to address the failings of other systems and demonstrate innovation in the way these systems interact.
- So much investment in health, human services and homelessness goes into responding to needs, rather than solving problems.
- The role of brokerage or flexible funding has been essential to a range of communities around the world and Australian communities seeking to end homelessness - they need greater access to such funding to enable the innovations, improvements, and solutions needed to drive reductions in homelessness - particularly in relation to prevention.
- Organisations like All Chicago for example, have been successful in collecting funding through a range of sources and directing it through brokerage funds to support the system change efforts needed to drive reductions.
- In the USA, the National Alliance to End Homelessness has also advocated for these types of funds, as what drives people to sleep rough is varied, but often very small issues, and a small amount of flexible funding can go a long way in helping prevent the catastrophic consequences that even a short experience of rough sleeping can cause.
- **Recommendation 14: Flexible Fund** - Establish an 'Ending Homelessness Flexible Fund' to support efforts to drive and sustain reductions in people experiencing homelessness through the Advance to Zero Campaign - with a particular focus on prevention and diversion activities.

### **Structural Prevention - Addressing the factors driving new homelessness**

- A credible national housing and ending homelessness plan needs to incorporate all of the recommendations above. This is what I think it will take to demonstrate that ending chronic rough-sleeping homelessness in Australia is possible.

- The above recommendations will not be enough to sustain an end to chronic homelessness and to support efforts to end all forms of homelessness - broader structural change is also required.
- What else needs to be considered in relation to the development of a National Housing and Ending Homelessness Plan is to:
  - **Build and upgrade more Social and Affordable Housing** – to do this ultimately greater investment is needed. Many reports and proposals have outlined how more investment would support many thousands of jobs and expand Australia’s social housing by 30,000 homes.<sup>44</sup> Housing ought to be a right in Australia, just as access to health care or aged care is. It currently is not because we lack sufficient investment and supply of affordable housing.
  - **Make Income Support Livable** – It is broadly understood and has been conclusively demonstrated, that the current rate of the JobSeeker payment, in particular, is not enough to stay above the poverty line and to avoid being driven into homelessness. Australia’s social safety net should allow people to afford to put a roof over their heads and food on the table. The COVID-19 JobSeeker top-up should be reinstated.
- **Recommendation 15: Social Housing Investment** - Continue to increase investment in social housing and income support as part of the development of a national plan on housing and homelessness.
- Finally, it is important to be clear that a range of other structural factors that impact on homelessness in Australia require greater consideration. This includes things like how child protection systems drive young people into homelessness, outdated drug and alcohol policies, meeting all the targets set in the Closing the Gap strategy<sup>45</sup>, and how other ‘upstream’ systems fail. The benefits of the Advance to Zero Framework are that it sets out a series of approaches and activities that seek to address these issues at a local level, but what will absolutely be needed to ensure this is successful is sustained engagement and leadership from the Commonwealth Government in working across these systems with a common goal, to end homelessness.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background sections of this report.

### The National Cabinet Recommendation for Action

If we genuinely want to end homelessness in Australia, it will take all levels of government working together to support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness. I believe that the only place that a reform of this scale will be achieved is through the National Cabinet.<sup>46</sup>

- **Recommendation 16: A National Initiative** - the National Cabinet consider the establishment of a national initiative to support efforts to end homelessness.
- Such an initiative should be a joint partnership between the Commonwealth Government, all states and territories and the representatives of local government.
- This should be similar to the way the Council of Australian Governments got together to create the National Depression Initiative, Beyond Blue, which has been so successful in helping to de-stigmatise depression and anxiety and improve access to support.
- We need a similar initiative, involving all levels of government, not just to change attitudes about the perceived pervasive and intractable nature of homelessness, but to support efforts to demonstrate that ending it is possible.

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<sup>44</sup> Building the Recovery, Community Housing Industry Association, May 2020, <https://www.communityhousing.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/MediareleaseSHARP.pdf?x59559>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://federation.gov.au/national-cabinet>

## State Government Recommendations For Action

To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness, state and territory governments should:

- Commit to ending homelessness.
- Invest in building local capacity to end homelessness at the system level.
- Invest in programs that work.
- Meet the Housing Need.

### **Commit to Ending Homelessness**

To date only the Western Australian and South Australian Governments have committed to ending homelessness and that has taken a lot of work and leadership - in and out of government. In many of the overseas jurisdictions I visited, making such a commitment was not seen as particularly controversial or 'brave'. The discussion was focused more on how to achieve that goal.

- **Recommendation 1: Have a Strategy** - Establish and publicly document a whole of government strategy to end homelessness, including:
  - A target or timeframe.
  - Utilise the Advance to Zero Framework in the development of that strategy.
  - Establish across government and intergovernmental coordination efforts to support the implementation of that strategy.

### **Invest in Building Local Capacity to End Homelessness at the System Level**

Ending homelessness is possible, but it's not easy, it takes sustained effort, leadership and a set of skills or capabilities.

- **Recommendation 2: Sector Capacity** - Enhance sector capability by providing training and capacity-building initiatives that empower local communities to undertake the type of work that ending homelessness requires: working collaboratively, using data to inform decision-making, trauma-informed, Housing First, etc.
- **Recommendation 3: Make Collaboration Easier** - Consider setting policies, or issuing guidelines on engaging with and procuring support from collective impact initiatives - to be clear on how state government agencies and personnel can best engage with and support these collaborations. Currently government processes are rarely equipped to support this new way of working.
- **Recommendation 4: Invest in Backbones** - Collective impact backbones are essential to ending homelessness as they enable cross-sector collaboration, the establishment of quality data, support service coordination, and improvement as well as comprehensive, coordinated and sustained efforts that tackle the multifaceted nature of the problem that is homelessness.<sup>47</sup> Working in them is hard, specialised work, and innately long-term. Funding for this work is often ad-hoc and insufficient.
- **Recommendation 5: Data Linkage** - Better utilise by-name list data currently being collected by undertaking data linkage efforts with other service systems to inform all AtoZ work, particularly prevention efforts.
- **Recommendation 6: Coordination Hubs** - Support the establishment of hubs or the co-location of service coordination efforts, backbone activities and other system change efforts to enable across system collaboration and improved service coordination.

### **Invest in programs that work**

- **Recommendation 7: Invest in Housing First Programs** - We know they work. The Advance to Zero framework incorporates the Housing First approach that seeks to connect people experiencing homelessness with long-term housing as quickly as possible and without preconditions. Housing First

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<sup>47</sup> A list of the backbones or coordination agencies for Advance to Zero Efforts in Australia can be found on the AAEH website: <https://aaeh.org.au/local-communities>

programs work best for people with long histories of homelessness, mental illness or addictions, and can achieve housing stability in long-term housing if provided with the right support.

- **Recommendation 8: Peer Work** - Develop homelessness peer workforce strategies to increase the number of, and support best practice in relation to, peer workers in the housing and homelessness sectors.
- **Recommendation 9: Social Procurement** - Better utilise the significant investment in housing maintenance contracts by adding social procurement components to support employment opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness.
- **Recommendation 10: Integrate and Invest in Health** - Review and invest in support needed to better integrate all health services (hospital, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, primary care) with efforts to end homelessness, making sure that resources are there to address the health inequities that people experiencing homelessness face.
- **Recommendation 11: Better Rehab** - Invest in the establishment of long-term managed alcohol models of supportive housing generally but also specifically culturally appropriate models to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait people experiencing homelessness who are also grappling with addiction.

### **Meet the Housing Need**

- **Recommendation 12: Supply** - Invest in more of the type of public, community, and permanent supportive housing that by-name list data is showing is needed.
- **Recommendation 13: Triage Allocation** - Use by-name list data to triage the allocation of the scarce local housing allocations on the basis of vulnerability, suitability and local improvement priorities identified by Advance to Zero efforts.
- **Recommendation 14: Regulation of CHPs** - Community Housing Providers struggle to allocate housing vacancies to the most vulnerable (as demonstrated by the data on who is getting housed and where from by-name lists across the country. There are many reasons for this, amongst them the often incredibly prescriptive regulatory environments providers operate under. Improvements need to be made to provide more flexibility to prioritise allocations on the basis of vulnerability and collaboratively set local improvement priorities.
- **Recommendation 15: Make Renting Fair** - Greater collaboration and investment are required to better prevent evictions, ensure healthier homes<sup>48</sup>, address racism and other discrimination, strengthen rights regarding pets, no-fault evictions, and other rights for people seeking or currently renting.
- **Recommendation 16: Short Stay Distortions** - Review the impact of short-term rental providers like Airbnb and consider options to mitigate the negative impacts on housing affordability and homelessness in their jurisdictions.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background sections of this report.

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<sup>48</sup> More information available at: [https://www.betterrenting.org.au/healthy\\_homes\\_for\\_renters](https://www.betterrenting.org.au/healthy_homes_for_renters)



## Local Government Recommendations For Action

The local government's role in relation to homelessness in Australia is very different from those of the countries I visited. Apart from a handful of exceptions, they don't provide direct homelessness services. They still, however, have an important role to play in homelessness as they are the level of government closest to the problem and are therefore in a unique position to support local efforts to end homelessness.

My Churchill Fellow colleague Leanne Mitchell outlines in her report what role local governments can take in ending homelessness incredibly well, and as follows:

### KNOW YOUR LOCAL HOMELESSNESS SITUATION

- **Collect local data:** Know your local homelessness situation. Collect data in your area and use that to make your decisions about what to do next.
- **Listen to your community:** Take time to listen and learn from your community. Know what they are doing and build your approach with them.
- **Establish a shared definition of homelessness:** Work with your partners and agree on how you jointly define homelessness. This will help align your work.

### LEAD THE NARRATIVE AND DRIVE COLLABORATION

- **Nurture community alliances:** As a council, carefully consider your role in local collaborations. If the opportunity arises step back and let the community lead.
- **Embrace lived experiences:** Look to people with a lived experience of homelessness to partner in and inform your work. They will bring a perspective and an ability to connect that you may not be able to access in other ways.
- **Involve all parts of government:** Consider which government partners will be most important to you in addressing homelessness locally and bring those people together.
- **Collaborate to address welfare, safety and amenity:** Establish coordinated partnership responses with agreed goals and well-defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Communicate and educate for better outcomes:** Councils have the connections and the means to change perceptions of homeless. Make the time to tell the story.

### ORGANISE YOUR APPROACH AND YOUR WORKFORCE

- **Build a collaborative strategy:** Develop a homelessness strategy, but make sure it is not just yours. A genuine approach to collaboration will see



better outcomes for the whole community.

- **Lead good giving initiatives:** Be prepared to have tough conversations with your community about on-street giving. Conversations about alternative ways of helping can redirect goodwill and see better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.
- **Structure your teams for success:** Working in homelessness is hard. Support your staff by establishing a clear understanding of your goals and shared values.
- **Involve your mayor and senior management:** Equip your mayor and councillors with knowledge and information and involve them in your homelessness efforts to tell your local story and build support for your efforts.
- **Rethink and realign budgets:** Tight budgets may become the fundamental barrier to councils taking action on homelessness. Look for funding opportunities internally and assign funds where you can. Some lobbying of State and Commonwealth to increase their funding.

### ACT TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

- **Know what you can do to influence housing supply:** Use planning powers to control and direct influence over your housing supply. Ensure collaboration between council planners and homelessness service staff to align efforts and create more opportunities.
- **Refocus prevention:** Make the most of the community connection points that councils hold and build organisational-wide responsibility for upstream interventions that prevent homelessness.
- **Bring in your libraries and other customer service staff:** Recognise the value of your colleagues who work with your community but are not the homelessness 'experts'. With the right training and support they can help identify and respond to homelessness.
- **Know what you can offer in crisis response:** Local Government is in a good position to convene on-the-ground crisis response. Know where you can add value and take an informed, human rights approach that considers the needs of all members of your community.

(Image: Guidelines for Local Government, Leanne Mitchell, Churchill Fellow Report, 2019, Melbourne Australia )<sup>49</sup>

What I would add by way of further detail to this is that local government can be among the most effective stakeholders in holding the vision not just to manage homelessness but to end it. There are so many accountabilities that pull state governments and homelessness services into trying to manage homelessness, and to try and do everything, for everyone, everywhere all at once. Local governments have the 'luxury' and the responsibility to focus on their local community and its specific needs. This is unique.

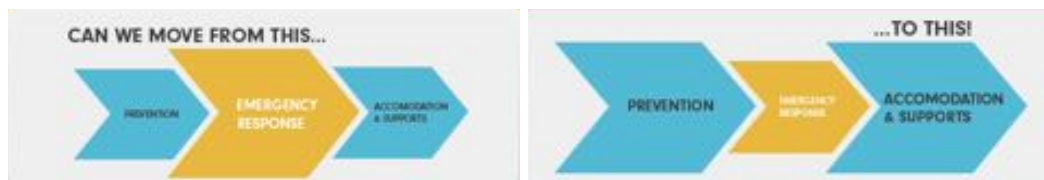
<sup>49</sup> <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/leanne-mitchell-vic-2019/>

That said, a frustrating observation I would make about local government involvement in homelessness in Australia, is that wherever local governments have stepped up, it has often seen state funded systems step back, particularly in capital cities. This is an understandable consequence of under-resourced and failing systems, but it doesn't advance the efforts to actually solve the problem.

To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness the local government sector should:

- **Recommendation 1: Utilise the Ending Homeless Local Government Guidelines** - as developed by Churchill Fellow Leanne Mitchell and set out above.<sup>50</sup>
- **Recommendation 2: Declare the ambition to end homelessness** - Sometimes the hardest part about being a leader is being willing to go first. The Adelaide City Council (South Australia) and Port Phillip Council in Victoria were almost the first to do this in Australia and local governments were central to this in the communities that have successfully ended homelessness in other jurisdictions. Australia is alone in the nations I visited without a policy ambition to end homelessness. One of the most successful factors in shifting this is when local councils have led the debate and declared their ambition to support efforts to not just manage homelessness but to end it.
- **Recommendation 3: Focus efforts on ending homelessness** - Local government's involvement in crisis responses is needed from time to time, but is largely the responsibility of state governments. Local government should take the longer view and focus on bringing communities together to create local zero projects and to financially support the backbone efforts of these initiatives.
  - This focuses local accountability, builds whole of society buy-in and doesn't pull local government into direct service delivery (often with the crisis or emergency response focus) and/or enable cost-shifting from state governments.
  - Wherever possible local government should avoid being a direct provider of homelessness services, and focus on the things that it is uniquely suited to contribute to, namely as a:
    - convenor (bring communities together);
    - coordinator (service coordination, multi-agency case conferencing);
    - improver (supporting improvement in systems integration, prevention, etc.);
    - advocate (transparency in data and outcomes); and
    - funder of the above including backbone work.
- **Recommendation 4: Develop Resources to Make It Easier** - Agencies like the state-based Local Government Associations, the Australian Local Government Association and the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM) should support the development of tools and resources to make it easier for local governments to engage in and support this work.
- **Recommendation 5: Capital Cities Dashboard** - The CCCLM should work with the AAEH to establish a centralised real-time/monthly homelessness public dashboard for capital cities outlining the status of their efforts to end homelessness to support advocacy efforts.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background Appendices of this report.



(Image: Strategies for Ending Homelessness, The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2013, Canada)<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellow/leanne-mitchell-vic-2019/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/what-are-5-ways-end-homelessness>

## Community Services Sector Recommendations For Action

Interestingly when I finished tidying up all my notes from all the meetings I had across the entire Fellowship I didn't have a single recommendation for the community service sector.<sup>52</sup> I had to think quite hard about the following.

I think there are two reasons for this. Firstly, the community service sector can't solve the problem alone, homelessness is what happens when other service systems fail. It takes a whole of government, whole of sector, and whole of community effort to solve homelessness - my Fellowship focused more on these other systems. The second reason is, they already do so much. There is a reason that the burnout rate of the homelessness workforce, for example, is so high.

That said, there are clearly things that need to change in the way the community services sector operates (including in the homelessness, housing, justice, health and broader social services sectors). To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness, the community services sector should:

- **Recommendation 1: Utilise AtoZ** - Embrace all the elements of the Advance to Zero Framework - in particular through supporting local Advance to Zero efforts or by establishing one. This action includes supporting Housing First, by-name lists, improvement, person centred approaches that integrate the voices of people with a lived experience and more.
- **Recommendation 2: More than Branding** - The language ending homelessness is in the names, taglines and other marketing materials of many organisations I visited. Ending homelessness needs to be more than just a branding exercise, it needs to be properly understood and defined, with contributions measured and the ambition included in strategic plans. It is also a better frame for the concept of Housing First as a systems change effort, even though conceptually they are very similar.
- **Recommendation 3: Re-direct Some Resources** - Invest where possible in systemic efforts to end homelessness, not just program-level responses, and do so in a joined-up, collaborative way.

### Allied Sectors

- **Recommendation 4: Participate in Service Coordination** - For those community service organisations from the allied sectors of mental health, primary health, alcohol and other drugs, corrections, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, work within the collaborative 'service coordination' forums of Advance to Zero efforts.

### Community Housing Providers

- **Recommendation 5: Vulnerability** - House the most vulnerable first, and where that isn't possible advocate for the regulatory and funding changes that would make it possible.
  - It's not possible to know who the most vulnerable are if you don't know who is in your system, and there are no common assessment processes. AtoZ helps to address this.
- **Recommendation 6: Better Understand** - Work with the local AtoZ Campaigns and the AAEH to better understand how CHPs can support the efforts to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 7: Grow Supportive Housing** - Support the establishment of a Supportive Housing Leaders Growth Network to improve understanding of supportive housing models and to coordinate advocacy for greater governmental investment in Permanent Supportive Housing.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background sections of this report.

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<sup>52</sup> The community services sector includes homelessness, housing, primary health, public health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, justice, family services, disability, gambling, food and many other human services.

## Universities Recommendations For Action

If I didn't initially think much about the recommendations for the community services sector, I thought regularly about the role of universities and researchers throughout my travels.

Universities and researchers have such an important role to play in ending homelessness, however, their significance is often overlooked and under-resourced. I asked many of the people and organisations I met with about the role of researchers in ending homelessness and I experienced almost unanimous recognition of their crucial role, but also high levels of frustration with academia across service providers, system change advocates and policymakers.

One comment from a community that has been very successful in its efforts to end homelessness stood out: "Just because there hasn't been a massive number of peer review journal articles or randomised control trials into something doesn't mean it doesn't exist". Another stated that "Ongoing research projects and evaluations are increasing our understanding of the homelessness phenomenon, but there is still a need for research that is of concrete use in practice".

It is important to recognise that many of these frustrations are felt most acutely by researchers themselves and are to do with the way university research is funded (or not) and what is valued and measured in the career progression of individual researchers. Collaboration and translation, or efforts to see their research findings implemented are not generally supported. Understanding the drivers of this and potential solutions is beyond the scope of my Fellowship. However, what I have picked up is that in order to better support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness the university sector in Australia should:

- **Recommendation 1: Evaluate Strategies and Systems More** - Try and invest more time evaluating and understanding ending homelessness strategies and less time evaluating Housing First programs (that we know work, but operate in broken systems). Running the fidelity ruler over services delivering programs in broken systems isn't always helping. A greater focus on how to improve systems, in setting clearer more effective strategies, in improvement work and in using data will ultimately be more helpful in achieving impact.
- **Recommendation 2: Focus More on Translation** - Emphasise translating research findings into practical applications for end-users.
- **Recommendation 3: Use the AtoZ Framework** - Researchers should utilise the AtoZ framework to guide these efforts and help with the iteration and improvement of the framework over time.
- **Recommendation 4: Formal Ending Definition** - Australia lacks a commonly agreed definition of what an end to homelessness looks like in policy documents and academic publications. The research community should help resolve this, drawing upon the work of the Centre for Homelessness Impact, and others.
- **Recommendation 5: Research Agenda** - Work with the AAEH to develop options for the establishment of a national ending homelessness research agenda integrated into local efforts to end homelessness with a focus on improving understanding of what works and the translation of that into real time practice (as opposed to the current predominant focus on retrospective evaluations of programs).
- **Recommendation 6: Impact Report** - Establish an annual ending homelessness report card, including an independent rating on the progress and the comparative efforts of each jurisdiction in Australia seeking to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 7: Co-Labs** - Consider working with the AAEH to establish state based Collaboration Laboratories (or Co-Labs) for ending homelessness, building the capacity for advocacy, research and collaboration in Australia across research, teaching and local Advance to Zero efforts to end homelessness.

- Some effort could focus on students being paired up to help with delivering pro bono communications services to local community efforts to end homelessness, similar to the work Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness have supported.
- **Recommendation 8: Prevention** - We still know too little about the interventions needed to drive prevention. Greater research in this space would have a significant impact, particularly research that supports AtoZ community efforts to stem the inflow of people onto by-name lists.
- **Recommendation 9: History of Homelessness** - Support further research to make the history of homelessness in Australia more accessible, to help key stakeholders understand and communicate this, so that we can learn from history and not repeat it.
  - Homelessness is not an individual choice, it is the result of the choices we make as a society expressed through public policy. As Tim Richter from the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness said to me, “Homelessness was created by public policy; it can be solved by public policy”.
  - There is a need to better understand the historical context of the present situation regarding homelessness - in particular the neoliberal economic policies popularised by the UK Thatcher Government and the Reagan Administration in the USA.
  - The other key policy that has significantly contributed to the current challenges of homelessness is the well intentioned but poorly implemented deinstitutionalisation policies that started in the 1960s in Australia and even earlier in some of the countries I visited. It has been surprising to me how little this is talked about or understood - particularly amongst stakeholders who are interested in ending homelessness, but not deeply engaged in it.
  - Universities are uniquely suited to help change this, and better place into the historical context, where the current challenge of homelessness has come from.



*(Image: The Centre For Homelessness Impact, London, UK, 2022)<sup>53</sup>*

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/post/could-universities-do-more-to-prevent-homelessness>

## Business Recommendations For Action

I've had the opportunity to meet with many business leaders all over the world who are helping to end homelessness in their communities.

Business leaders have a role in ending homelessness because homelessness is a human tragedy, a community disaster, and an economic problem, too. In terms of lives and community resources, it is a problem that is more costly to ignore than to solve. As both citizens and economic players, business leaders have a stake in ending homelessness.



*(Image: Community Solutions, USA, 2022)*

To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness, businesses and business representatives from small, medium, and big enterprises should:

- **Recommendation 1: Support systemic change** - Business leaders, chambers of commerce, and local trader groups are all playing a key role by endorsing changes at the system level in the efforts to end homelessness. In some communities, business communities have mobilised to organise for systems change and created pressure and provided funding for the policies, practices, and support needed to move the community toward its shared aim. Charitable arms of businesses and philanthropic organisations can also leverage their investments and resources by ensuring that they help drive system change as well as support the individuals who receive the support and/or housing.
- **Recommendation 2: Champion the collection and use of quality data** - People in business are familiar with the idea that “what gets measured gets managed”. The same is true of homelessness. Before homelessness can be solved, it’s necessary to know who is experiencing homelessness. That requires knowing the names and needs of every individual experiencing homelessness in a local community. Once a community has established reliable data, it can systematically address the needs of each individual. At the same time, it is important to track the changing size, composition, and dynamics of the homeless population.
- **Recommendation 3: Understand your community’s specific goals** - Advance to Zero communities focus on establishing a shared aim, called functional zero, to create accountability for reducing and ending homelessness for different populations such as chronic homelessness, veterans or Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people. Business leaders also have a role in supporting activities that can prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

- **Recommendation 4: Identify Champions** - Business leaders, allies and champions who partner with local Advance to Zero communities to support their efforts including through increased awareness not of the problem, but of the solutions, can be enormously helpful. Business champions can help:
  - build understanding that ending homelessness is possible.
  - tackle stigma and false notions that homelessness is a choice.
  - support the development of business cases for local data driven efforts to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 5: Support Social Enterprise** - Businesses can support events and other efforts to enable greater collaboration and partnerships between homelessness agencies, employment service organisations and the social enterprise sector.
- **Recommendation 6: Use Social Procurement** - Consider the ways in which procurement activities can be better leveraged to support local efforts to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 7: Learn More** - Find out more about efforts to end homelessness in Australia by getting in touch with local zero projects or collaborations and reading more about business leaders working to end homelessness in other places.<sup>54</sup>
- **Recommendation 8: Develop a Toolkit to Make it Easier** - Ending homelessness is complex, it can be difficult to know where to start. Businesses could support the development of an ending homelessness and business engagement toolkit that integrates shared value strategies<sup>55</sup> and makes it clear to businesses, of various types (small, medium and big), how they can most helpfully support the efforts to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 9: Social Impact Investment** - Become a social impact investor, these types of investments can play an important role in increasing access to affordable housing for those experiencing homelessness.
- **Recommendation 10: Engage Your Team** - Be an employer that helps end homelessness. Engaging employees in your philanthropic work creates meaningful experiences for employees that boosts team morale, connects your company's mission to meaningful change, and makes employee donations go even further.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background sections of this report.



(Image: Community Solutions, USA, 2022)<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> For more information about efforts in the USA see: <https://community.solutions/get-involved/business-leaders/>

<sup>55</sup> See the Chicago, Community Solutions Discussion Meeting notes for further background on Shared Value

<sup>56</sup> <https://changeplease.org/>

## Philanthropy Recommendations for Action

I recognise that the philanthropic sector in Australia is very different from many of the countries I visited - no greater example of this is the fact that Community Solutions, the organisation that has supported 14 communities so far to end homelessness received a US\$100 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation.

That said, the philanthropic sector in Australia still plays a crucial role in efforts to end homelessness, including beyond just being a funder. In fact, much of the progress in establishing a movement to end homelessness in Australia is due to the dedicated efforts of philanthropy. My first year as CEO of the AAEH was funded through a Kenneth Myer Innovation Fellowship, from the Myer Foundation. This report and Fellowship were supported by the Churchill Trust and every one of the Advance to Zero communities in Australia has received philanthropic funding in some form.

To continue to improve and support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in Australia the philanthropic sector should:

- **Recommendation 1: Focus More on Systemic Change** - Philanthropic organisations should leverage their unique position and resources to support efforts that go beyond crisis responses. Crisis responses quite literally keep people alive, reduce human suffering and are absolutely crucial, but this shouldn't be the only focus, yet for many funders it is.
  - The short term nature of the way politics increasingly works in Western democracies pulls governments towards ever increasing investments in the crisis end of service systems. These same forces don't pull at philanthropy and so it is uniquely suited to supporting systemic efforts to end homelessness.
  - In particular where it can philanthropy should support local Advance to Zero backbone efforts. This collaborative whole of society coordination is widely recognised but struggles to find funding, less so at the establishment phase (everyone likes new things), but more so as efforts need to be sustained - arguably the hardest part.
- **Recommendation 2: Consistently Show Up** - Funding is essential, but so too is your time, networks and perspective. Philanthropy should use its influence to consistently show up to support collaboration and be an active voice if focusing efforts on ending homelessness.
  - So many forces pull people and organisations back into their own silos often driving competition, we need more voices at the table driving person centred collaborative efforts.
  - The number of independent voices calling for efforts to end homelessness, as opposed to advocating for the needs of those doing their best to respond to day-to-day needs, are too few on the ground. It's understandable that services get pulled back into the day-to-day crisis response needs of systems that are fundamentally broken. We need more voices, leaders, and organisations maintaining a laser focus on what it would take to end homelessness, and philanthropy is uniquely positioned to help hold the vision for this specific goal.
- **Recommendation 3: Leverage Investment** - To maximise its impact philanthropy should strategically utilise additional investments in support and housing within local communities to leverage systemic change in these local systems. A particularly effective approach to this would be to direct new housing and support investments through local Advance to Zero efforts, that have strategies to end homelessness and are backed up by quality data and collaborative system wide efforts. By directing funding through these initiatives, philanthropy can increase its impact and accelerate progress towards ending homelessness at the community level.
- **Recommendation 4: Support Impact Investing** - In particular to support greater affordable, social and permanent supportive housing supply.
- **Recommendation 5: Network** - Consider the creation of an annual Australian Funders Together to End Homelessness gathering - with a focus on building understanding and capacity to support efforts to end homelessness, including sharing, implementing and refining the philanthropic sector recommendations made in this report.



## Citizens and Civil Society Recommendations

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” - Margaret Mead, anthropologist.*

I wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment, I would add “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed and organised citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has”.

Civil society represents the ways in which people work collectively to achieve their aims. Civil society refers to the diverse range of voluntary associations, community groups, and non-governmental organisations that operate independently from the government and the private sector, working collectively to address social issues, advocate for public interests, and foster civic engagement in a democratic society. It plays a crucial role in mobilising people, promoting social cohesion, and advocating for positive change, contributing significantly to the well-being and progress of communities and societies.

To support the implementation of strategies to prevent, reduce and end homelessness citizens and civil society should:

- **Recommendation 1: Be the Change** - Ending homelessness is everyone's business, as a society, we need to make our elected representatives, through the questions we ask and the way we vote, deliver on the leadership, reform and funding needed to ensure all citizens have access to a home.
- **Recommendation 2: Be Positive** - Help create a sense of the possible. Hand wringing in the pages of newspapers, journals, social media, newsletters and other public media about the supposed indifference of the public or elected representatives is of little value, however true it might feel from time to time.
- **Recommendation 3: Promote a New Understanding of Homelessness** - including but not limited to recognising that:
  - Ending homelessness is possible;
  - Housing is not just an asset or investment class, but also a basic human need;
  - Homelessness is not an individual problem but a systems problem;
  - Homelessness is not an individual choice, but a choice by society for allowing the rising inequality that drives so much of it; and
  - Ending homelessness is also about racial equity, justice and reconciliation.
- **Recommendation 4: Engage Political Leaders in Ending Homelessness** - Create accountability for measurably and equitably ending homelessness. Find out if your local, state or territory government has a commitment to measurably and equitably ending homelessness, and hold them accountable for making progress toward that goal. Also support associated campaigns such as:
  - Raise the Rate - the campaign calling for increased levels of income support payments.
  - Everyone’s Home - the campaign calling for greater investment in social housing.
  - Close the Gap - the nationwide effort aimed at eliminating the health and life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
  - Many other campaigns calling for reform to drug and alcohol, justice and incarceration, mental health, rental rights and others.
- **Recommendation 5: YIMBY Campaigns** - Support or set up Yes In My Back Yard or YIMBY campaigns, to support efforts to end homelessness, including building more affordable, social and permanent supportive housing in your community.<sup>57</sup>
- **Recommendation 6: Volunteer and Donate** - Support the efforts of local homelessness agencies, and/or support the efforts of local collaborations, ask them what you can do to help and if you can, donate to both efforts to meet the crisis needs of people experiencing homelessness and systemic efforts to end it.

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<sup>57</sup> For further information about such campaigns in Canada see: <https://redwoodparkcommunities.com/yimby/>

- **Recommendation 7: Support Community Wealth Building** - In order to demand action on wealth inequality and poverty, citizens and civil society need an alternative to the neoliberal economic policies that are the cause of so much of the rising inequality that has driven much of the poverty and homelessness that communities witness today. Community wealth building provides an alternative that civil society could learn more about and champion.<sup>58</sup>
  - The reality is our economy is not working well, for people, places, or the planet, yet there is no shortage of wealth. Wages are low, work and housing are increasingly insecure, and poverty and inequality between the rich and the poor are on the rise. Inequality has been on steroids in Australia over the last decade with data showing the bottom 90% of Australians received just 7% of economic growth per person since 2009, while the top 10% of income earners reap 93% of the benefits.<sup>59</sup>
  - This needs to change. Governments need to lead this change, and communities and citizens need to demand they do it. At the heart of this is the need to stop treating housing solely as a vehicle for wealth creation, increasingly for the most well-off, and ensure it is something that is available to everyone.

Ultimately the only thing that has ever created lasting change has been an organised and committed group of citizens standing up and demanding it.

A reminder that further context and background on these recommendations can be found in the Meeting Notes and Key Concepts and Further Background sections of this report.



*(Image: The Dianna Award, Quote of the Data, Twitter, 2015)<sup>60</sup>*

<sup>58</sup> Further information about Community Wealth Building can be found in Appendix D of this report and here: <https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://australiainstitute.org.au/post/inequality-on-steroids-as-bottom-90-get-just-7-of-economic-growth-since-2009/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://twitter.com/DianaAward/status/658901001852841984>

## AAEH Recommendations For Action

The following are recommendations for the AAEH to adopt. Some will take some time to complete, some we have already started on and others will be subject to resources and/or funding being available.

Whilst many of these might seem quite operational, I thought it useful to share some of the insights that my Churchill Fellowship has resulted in for the AAEH organisationally, but also because of the inherently collaborative nature of the AAEHs work. None of these recommendations can be implemented by the AAEH alone, because of the innate collaborative nature of our work, they require the involvement and support of a broad range of stakeholders.

### *Underway*

- **Recommendation 1: PSH Needs Analysis** - Work with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (USA) to develop a Permanent Supportive Housing Needs Analysis toolkit for Australia, to help local communities do cost benefit analysis regarding the amount of Permanent Supportive Housing their community needs to end homelessness.
- **Recommendation 2: Racial Justice** - Develop a statement of intent regarding racial equality, racial justice and reconciliation in relation to the AtoZ Campaign, including how we plan to better address these matters in our collective work.
- **Recommendation 3: Data Dictionary** - Publish or make more publicly accessible the working definitions it uses as part of the AtoZ campaign and work with Commonwealth agencies, researchers and others to develop more broadly understood or agreed definitions in Australia.
- **Recommendation 4: Explain How We Work** - Develop a 'how we work' fact sheet, drawing heavily on the efforts of Results for America: to not just describe what we do, but to describe how we do it.
- **Recommendation 5: Systems Training** - The AAEH should incorporate more systems thinking training (including mental models, psychology of change, etc.) into the existing training.
- **Recommendation 6: Impact Measurement** - Seek to measure, evaluate and report on its impact against the world's to-do list, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Recommendation 7: Mindsets** - Develop an agreed set of mindsets that underpin the efforts to end homelessness through the Advance to Zero Campaign.

### *Under Consideration*

- **Recommendation 8: Champions Strategy** - Develop a strategy for engaging those who truly 'get' the work of ending homelessness - including by recognising and supporting community champions, as well as developing a faculty of Fellows, or people who are recognised as being able to train, coach and mentor communities that are seeking to end homelessness in Australia.
- **Recommendation 9: Grow Improvement Capability** - Partner with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Australia to seek state government support to build capacity in the homelessness and health sectors to utilise the model for improvement.
- **Recommendation 10: Lived Experience Network** - Consider supporting the development of a "Street Voices for Change: Lived Experience Network" - not just as a consultation forum but as a community organising network that supports the development of advocates, establishes a paid speaker service, provides training about working in a person-centred way, campaigns to reduce stigma and other associated activities.
- **Recommendation 11: Prevention Data Reporting** - Support AtoZ communities to benchmark, track and publicly report their system's performance in reducing the number of people newly identified or returning to homelessness - i.e. prevention.
- **Recommendation 12: Winter Solstice** - Encourage the winter solstice to be a focal point in better recognising the estimated 424 people whose lives are lost whilst homeless each year in Australia.
- **Recommendation 13: Prevalence Milestones** - Incorporate homelessness prevalence reduction milestones into its Advance to Zero campaign milestones guide.

### *Subject to Resources/Funding*

- **Recommendation 14: Prospectus** - Develop a prospectus of all the things the AAEH would like to do to support an end to homelessness in Australia. Including the following recommendations:
  - **Recommendation 15: Better Meetings and Backbones Guide** - Develop a better meetings and backbones guide providing templates and other training materials - including how to best facilitate collaboration, have more effective meetings and utilise technology.
  - **Recommendation 16: Community Organising** - Partner with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to deliver community organising/advocacy training for interested parties in Australia and/or the establishment of a Fellowship model.
  - **Recommendation 17: Business Case** - Develop a detailed business case to consider what it would take to support the adoption of the Advance to Zero Framework across Australia, with the eventual goal of an integrated nationwide network of locally controlled and developed by-name lists. Setting out:
    - Why there is a risk in rolling out too quickly;
    - Understanding which communities are most in need of support;
    - The technology requirements to support this; and
    - Developing the workforce capability to deliver it.
  - **Recommendation 18: Support Youth BNLs** - Develop resources and toolkits to support communities who wish to seek to end youth homelessness, through the Advance to Zero Framework.
  - **Recommendation 19: Prevention Legislation** - Commission an issues paper on the merits of dedicated preventing homelessness legislation in Australia.
  - **Recommendation 20: Person Centred Training** - Partner with organisations like the Mayday Trust to deliver more person-centred training in Australia.
  - **Recommendation 21: Deaths Data Media Campaign** - The Health, Housing and Homelessness Network should consider partnering with the Guardian Australia to undertake a similar campaign in Australia.
  - **Recommendation 22: Better Communication and Fundraising Guide** - Develop a 'better communication and fundraising guide for ending homelessness' modelled on similar resources that have been developed in Europe to help better understand and manage the tensions between fundraising and seeking to change community attitudes about the nature of homelessness and how it is solvable.
  - **Recommendation 23: Improve PSH Understanding** - Bring representatives of the Corporation for Supportive Housing to Australia to:
    - Raise awareness of what PSH is and the need for Permanent Supportive Housing Systems;
    - Facilitate the integration of the corporation's FUSE program lessons into the AtoZ tools relating to coordinated systems; and
    - Help develop Australian Supportive Housing Standards.
  - **Recommendation 24: Communications** - Establish an ending homelessness communications toolkit and community of practice to develop and champion best practice efforts to frame, communicate, and talk about ending homelessness.

## Conclusion

My Churchill Fellowship has given me the opportunity to better understand what it would take to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible in Australia. It seems strange to sum up the lessons from eight weeks of travel through six countries and 12 cities, in 81+ meetings, visits, and events with over 112 people as simply as this - if you want to end homelessness:

1. Have a strategy to end homelessness.
2. Define clear indicators of success and regularly measure progress.
3. Foster collaborative effort, learning from others' experiences.
4. Commit and believe that it is possible to end homelessness.

It's that simple. There is so much more to it than that, but it's also that simple.

No matter what sector readers of this report are from, government, community services, philanthropy, universities or business, I have proposed a framework and a range of recommendations to support action by you!

## Implementation and Dissemination

A core element of a Churchill Fellowship is sharing the knowledge of what has been learned - this report has been structured to be a resource for people and organisations from across governments and across society.

Through my work with the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, I look forward to working with our numerous partners to drive the implementation of many of these recommendations. A number of these are already underway or have been integrated into our planning efforts.

I will work with all of the other stakeholders to encourage the consideration and implementation of these recommendations too - in particular with the Commonwealth Government.

I'll continue to share the insights from this Fellowship through all the communication channels and opportunities available to me. See Appendix C for the summary of my social media reflections so far.

The comprehensive meeting notes set out in Appendix A are also I hope a lasting legacy of the knowledge and insights I picked up throughout my Fellowship. I hope one day to distil them into a book and/or a documentary. Please get in touch if you want to collaborate on that.

One personal reflection I have had on this Fellowship has been that I do need to make greater time to share what I've been learning - on my journey as the CEO of the AAEH as well as part of the Churchill Fellowship - about what communities are achieving, and most importantly how we can use this to demonstrate that solving homelessness is possible in Australia.

## Homelessness is Solvable

Homelessness is a complex problem, one that does not lend itself to simple or short-term solutions.

It is not a problem that can be solved by one agency, individual or organisation alone.

Nothing proposed in this report recommends a one size fits all approach or suggests that there are any silver bullets that can solve this problem.

Yet, homelessness is a solvable problem. I am convinced that this will be achieved in Australia when there is sustained and collaborative local and large scale efforts.

If the intent is there, in the strategies of governments, communities and organisations, if the ability is there to measure progress and if the willingness to share and learn is part of that journey, ending homelessness is not only possible, it is necessary, and it is deadly urgent.

I think Iain De Jong from Canada, who wrote the book on ending homelessness literally called “The Book on Ending Homelessness”, beautifully captures the essence of the challenge. “What it takes to end homelessness is the difference between bacon and eggs. For the chicken, it was a passing moment of interest, for the pig it was a lifetime commitment”.

Which will you be - interested or committed?

## Appendix A - Meeting Notes

The following section provides notes from the various meetings and visits I undertook throughout my Fellowship. These are my notes and have been used to inform the recommendations in this report. They were taken during and immediately after each meeting, reflecting broadly the basis of the conversation as well as insights and ideas they brought up for me.

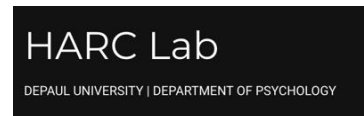
They should not be taken as a transcript of what was said or who said it, or be taken to reflect the views of those I met with. Instead, they hopefully provide greater context and background to the various recommendations either made or inspired by these conversations.

I also recognise there is a lot here, I have already shared, and intend to keep sharing, the details from these insightful conversations with those that I work with regularly.

### Chicago, USA

#### *Molly Brown - DePaul University*

- Title: Professor of Clinical Community Psychology; Director of the Homeless Advocacy Research Collaboration Lab.
- Date: 9 May 2022



#### Continuums of Care (CoCs)

- The role of continuums of care, or CoCs was discussed and how we don't really have the concept in Australia - we have gateway services, i.e. phone lines to call and get access to support.
- The gateways in Australia can also be disconnected from the agencies providing the outreach or the case management - though every state has a different arrangement.
- Zero projects are a community-driven version of what CoCs are trying to do, whereas CoCs are required by government. There are lots of challenges with CoCs. For more background on continuums of care, see Appendix B.

#### Housing First

- We discussed the strong views that exist regarding Housing First. Some argue for a particular model, with a particular caseload, others argue there needs to be greater flexibility.
- For more background on Housing First, see Appendix B.
- Is Housing First a framework, a policy, a service model, a philosophy or a systems change effort? Ultimately we agreed it is primarily a philosophy, and that when it comes to the service model debates, there needs to be flexibility.

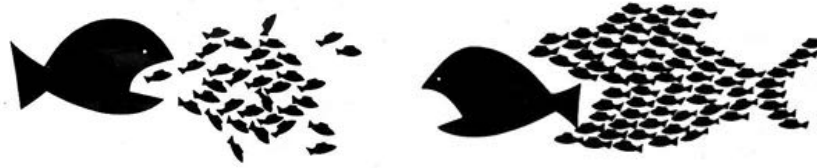
#### HARC Lab

- The HARC (Homelessness Advocacy, Research, and Collaboration) Lab, is largely self-funding and has a very small team.
- Their advocacy work is driven by two core beliefs:
  - The root causes of homelessness are housing unaffordability, economic injustice, structural racism, and inadequate healthcare.
  - Access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing is a human right.
- They work with other advocacy or community organising groups to support advocacy. For example, Organization Neighborhoods for Equality (ONE Northside), is a mixed-income, multi-ethnic, intergenerational organisation that unites our diverse communities. They seek to build collective



power to eliminate injustice through bold and innovative community organising and accomplish this through developing grassroots leaders and acting together to effect change.

- The Centre for Social Impact (CSI)<sup>61</sup> in Australia is a key partner of the AAEH and has nodes in Western Australia and South Australia that have been central to efforts to end homelessness in those two states.



*(Image: Don't panic, organise image, One Northside: Organising Neighbourhoods for Equality)<sup>62</sup>*

#### Co-Lab

- There is significant community concern about homelessness, and without a way to channel that into integrated efforts to end homelessness, people will set up their own initiatives that can often pull in different directions. The HARC Lab is an effort in channelling that.
- Creating a similar Collaboration Laboratory (or Co-Lab) modelled on the HARC Lab in Chicago could be a great way for the Australian movement to build capacity and channel community enthusiasm for action into existing integrated efforts to end homelessness.
- The Co-Lab could have a series of nodes in the various Allied Networks of the AAEH including the Western Australian Alliance to End homelessness, the South Australian Alliance, the End Street Sleeping Collaboration in NSW, etc.
- It could be a place for interdisciplinary groups of students from various universities to come together to work on and support efforts to end homelessness - with a particular focus on communications, data analysis, improvement and advocacy.
- It could also be a place for volunteers from across the community to come together to learn about how they can support efforts to end homelessness and take action.
- Such efforts need to be supported. Universities provide the perfect place for this type of activity, as they have the classroom infrastructure to support collaborative working places, but organising and ongoing support of participants are needed. A business case for the idea needs to be developed.

**Universities Recommendation 7: Co-Labs** - Consider working with the AAEH to establish state based Collaboration Laboratories (or Co-Labs) for ending homelessness, building the capacity for advocacy, research and collaboration in Australia across research, teaching and local Advance to Zero efforts to end homelessness.

#### The VI-SPDAT

- Ultimately, I could write a whole report just on the VI-SPDAT and the very strongly held views on it from various quarters.
- For more background on the VI-SPDAT and the replacement tool that the AAEH is seeking to develop with OrgCode, the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT), see Appendix B.
- The AAEH, along with OrgCode, the co-creators of the VI-SPDAT, train service coordination groups to make decisions and not delegate decision-making to the scoring component of the tool. We also find consistent data collection incredibly useful for advocacy/system planning purposes.
- We argue that the challenge with cultural appropriateness and structural racism is with society, our practice, broader policy settings and not solely with the tool itself. All of these things need to be taken into account when making allocation decisions.

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.csi.edu.au>

<sup>62</sup> <http://onenorthside.org/resources/>



## Accuracy Issues

- Molly's view was that a key challenge with the tool is self-reporting. Her research has found that homeless people with mental illness generally produce reliable and valid self-reports; however, self-reported psychotic symptoms and substance use issues are less reliable and often underreported. Valid in this context means that it measures what it claims to measure and reliable in that the results of the assessment are consistent.
- Molly highlighted the concern that underreporting vulnerabilities through the use of the VI-SPDAT may unintentionally limit an individual's opportunities for housing and support services by producing lower scores.
- Others argue that self-reporting may have some outliers but generally it is an accepted form of reporting with acceptable levels of accuracy and that the data should be supplemented with the observations and knowledge of practitioners.
- Molly explained how her research has demonstrated that inaccurate reporting on the VI-SPDAT also has implications at the systems level, as the instrument is used to ensure the costliest housing services, such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), are delivered to those with the greatest housing needs.
- We discussed this as an ongoing challenge irrespective of the VI-SPDAT use in Australia given we don't have continuums of care or coordinated access systems in the same way the US does.
- The issue of 'street level bureaucracy' was discussed. This is the concern raised that having service providers administer the tool may impact the assessment process - in particular, that service providers have a strong will to advocate for clients, which may be at odds with organisational and/or systemic goals.
- All of these issues highlight for me the importance of providing better support and training resources on the use of the tool, and future versions in Australia.

## Different use of the tool in the US vs Australia

- Another related concern is the tool's usefulness as a predictor of housing stability.
- My view is that the tools are not intended to do that, that's a function of housing departments, service coordination/housing allocation groups.
- I recognise the challenge however in the US, particularly in large communities, when you never have the time to get to know every person coming before the service coordination group, that it's human nature to delegate to the use of the tool, and its scoring.
- This was a key insight for me into the difference in the way the tool is used in the US and how it is used in Australia. In the US it has been used to help inform who gets access to supportive housing.
- In Australia the vulnerability score has not determined who gets housing – it is an indicator of need and urgency for housing and healthcare, disability and other support services. It is used as part of a first step in accessing housing and support and providing quicker pathways to accessing it.
- It is also worth noting that people experiencing homelessness do not have to participate in the survey, it is voluntary and when explained how it assists in the process most people consent.

## Alternatives

- A key question I put to Molly and others was do we seek to improve the tool, or move away from it - as is occurring in the USA?
- Much of the criticisms of the tool ignore the fact that there isn't really an alternative, and those alternatives that have been developed are not necessarily any better in addressing all the concerns that are raised with the VI-SPDAT.
- The leading alternative that some point to is the Vulnerability Assessment Tool - developed and used by the Downtown Emergency Centre in Seattle. Daniel Malone is the key contact there.
- A range of people have raised concerns about this tool too.

- Ultimately there is no one tool that is going to help us end homelessness, it's got to be used in the context of overall efforts to end homelessness.

#### VI-SPDAT Summary

- Molly's key provocation to me in these discussions was thinking about the power dynamics, and how we are making sure that we are privileging the voices of those with lived experience and particularly those who are subject to systemic racism.
- "How are we making sure their voices and perspectives are driving decision-making - rather than service providers, policymakers, and people and organisations who have strong perspectives on this?"
- The advice of people like Molly has been very helpful for me throughout my Churchill Fellowship in informing the efforts of the AAEH in seeking to develop new and improved tools for use in Australia.

#### Chicago Homelessness Sector Leaders Dinner

- 9 May 2022
- In attendance (from left to right in the photo below):
  - Doug Schenkelberg, Executive Director of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
  - Dr. Molly Brown, Professor of Clinical Community Psychology; Director of the Homeless Advocacy Research Collaboration Lab; DePaul University
  - Carolyn Ross, CEO of All Chicago
  - Steve Brown, Senior Director, Social & Behavioral Health Transformation & Advocacy; Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences
  - Mark Angelini, CEO of Mercy Housing
  - Lydia Stazen, Executive Director, Institute of Global Homelessness



#### Capitalism and Racism

- In the US right now there is an inflation crisis but inflation has been high in the housing market and the health system for years. We don't measure this - we need to.
- The history of racism in the US housing and homelessness policy is strong and ongoing. 'The colour of law' details how US policies mandated segregation and undermined the ability of African American families to own homes and build wealth.



*(IGH Organised Dinner with homelessness sector leaders, Chicago, USA)*

- Despite the promise of the New Deal<sup>63</sup> - which opened up a lot of low-income financing options for housing - it included provisions preventing access to finance for African Americans.
- To this day, black and white people generally don't live in the same neighbourhoods. Schools also remain largely segregated, despite the Supreme Court issuing its famous ruling in 1954 desegregating schools (Brown versus Board of Education). This is because housing is still largely segregated - due in no small part to the racist provisions in the New Deal.
- Capitalism has taught us to criminalise those who are living in poverty. Our challenge is to mobilise and amplify the voices of people with lived experience.
- Homelessness is about money and poverty. Money matters in life, until you hit a certain level of income, at which point it starts to matter a lot less.



*(Image: New Deal section of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Washington DC, USA)*

- A common theme across the organisations represented at this dinner was an effort to take capitalism out of the system, address racism directly, and build more supportive housing as a public good.

#### Public attitudes

- One of the best ways to address homelessness would be to put drugs that increase empathy in the water- not a serious suggestion, but highlighting the fact that we've lost empathy in society.
- The more that we normalise people living in abject poverty in front of us in our cities and communities every day, by allowing it to continue, the more we harden the collective hearts of our culture.
- Tackling stigma needs to be a much bigger part of our efforts to end homelessness.
- Stigma is a consequence of what capitalism and colonisation have taught us.
- We can't allow the culture wars to divide us. We need to support efforts to strengthen and rebuild the community.
- Better supporting the voices of people with lived experience to share their stories is important. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless has established a speakers bureau.

#### Health and Homelessness

- 80% of the health needs are determined by the social determinants of health - something the medical system can't easily deal with. See Appendix D for more background.
- Homelessness is not and should not be an Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting - we need to stop labelling people - getting them to tell us how bad their homelessness is.

<sup>63</sup> The New Deal was a series of programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States between 1933 and 1939 to overcome the effects of the Great Depression.

- Part of the AA process is standing up and admitting you are an alcoholic in front of your peers. There are therapeutic reasons for this when it comes to substance use. There's no reason to do this when it comes to accessing housing, yet our systems force people to declare this. It is stigmatising and traumatising.

#### The VI-SPDAT

- The VI-SPDAT tool is in the early stages of development when you compare it to the development of tools in use in the health sector.
- Give it time, to see what other tools develop, others have been developed and they haven't necessarily been any better than the VI-SPDAT in terms of concerns raised regarding racial equity.
- In the meantime, improve practice and listen to the voices of people with lived experience.
- In particular, consider the power imbalances in the system. When determining if and how to use a tool like this, consider the arguments on both sides, and consider the privilege and power positions of the people making the arguments.
- There are elements of the tool that need to be updated - i.e. it was developed using the Charlson Index which is now obsolete. The Charlson Comorbidity Index was developed to predict the risk of death for patients with specific comorbid conditions. Comorbidity is the simultaneous presence of two or more diseases or medical conditions in a patient.
- Whilst debates continue about the VI-SPDAT, communities need a tool to use every day, and the disruption that would be caused by moving away from the VI-SPDAT would arguably do more harm than addressing the perceived and real failings of the tool. See Appendix B for more background.

#### Finding the Properties

- All Chicago works directly with 'mom and pop type landlords', they don't seem to have as high a culture of relying on real estate managers in the USA as we do in Australia.
- They made a call to only work with properties where there is direct contact with the owners - i.e. to bypass the real estate agents.
- They allocate case managers who liaise with the owners to act as a buffer, helping prevent evictions and helping to get vulnerable clients an opportunity for housing that they might otherwise not get.
- On moving in, All Chicago help liaise with organisations like the Chicago Furniture Bank to assist with set up.

#### Collaboration

- We all agree we want to get to zero, how we do it is the key question - Collective Impact is a big part of the answer.
- Collective Impact is a structured form of collaboration that brings together communities to advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change.
- See Appendix B for further background on the Collective Impact approach.
- Collective Impact is a contested concept. There are those who take a view that it must be done a certain way or else it's not Collective Impact, and there are others who believe it's a useful framework to be informed by.
- Chicago leaders recommended remembering that collaboration is a means to an end - ending homelessness - it's not an end in itself.
- So don't let the need to build a collaboration get in the way of ending homelessness, you don't always need every provider or stakeholder, you need just enough to achieve your goals.
- To build Collective Impact we can't rely on government, they can't solve this by themselves, and even when they engage in Collective Impact, they can't lead it.
- Government accountabilities and structures are too strongly geared towards the short-term, and to the whole problem, not parts of it.

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Yes

The top three things needed to end homelessness:

- Mark Angelini, CEO of Mercy Housing
  - Stop criminalising poverty
  - Mobilise and amplify the voices of people with a lived experience
  - Investment - we need the funds to solve this problem
- Dr. Molly Brown, Professor of Clinical Community Psychology; Director of the Homeless Advocacy Research Collaboration Lab; DePaul University
  - Take capitalism out of the system
  - Address racism
  - More supportive housing
- Steve Brown, Senior Director, Social & Behavioral Health Transformation & Advocacy; Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences
  - Strengthen the mental health system
  - Support earlier intervention
  - Address the social determinants of health
- Carolyn Ross, CEO of All Chicago
  - Rapidly rehouse people experiencing homelessness for the first time
  - Use Collective Impact to rebuild community
  - Tackle stigma
- Doug Schenkelberg, Executive Director of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
  - Build the political will, this starts with the community
  - Funds - including secure local flexible funding sources
  - Ensure homelessness is a priority for other systems - corrections, hospitals, etc.

### **Guy - Lived Experience - Chicago Streets**

- 9 May 2022

On the first night of my Fellowship, I had a chance meeting with a man sleeping rough. His story was so similar to mine - with a huge divergence. I had family and privilege to fall back on - he had neither.

- I discovered that we are both the same age, both have a four-year-old daughter, and our mums both died of cancer when we were young.
- Where our lives differ is Guy has been on the streets for eight months, was not on any lists, and doesn't think he'll survive another winter in Chicago.
- His father suicided when he was seven and he has a history of family violence.
- His wife took up prostitution to make money, then got addicted to the drugs she took to cope and eventually left him. Around the same time, his brother overdosed.
- He turned to alcohol and was charged with driving under the influence. This resulted in him losing his job as a forklift operator.
- He is scared all of the time, of the cops, of the public who are frequently not just cruel but sadistic in what they do to the homeless, particularly young people.
- He feels like his "only options at times are suicide or to rob a bank".
- Guy is worried that he won't survive another winter on the streets of Chicago, given he lost almost half his body weight last winter.
- He remains hopeful however that he'll find the strength to join a Narcotics Anonymous (NA) group and that the future might bring change, maybe even housing and the chance of a new beginning.



*(Image: Chatting with Guy on the street - my first night in Chicago, USA)*

Note: Guy agreed to share his story with me and gave me permission to share it. He was also happy for me to take this photo to help raise understanding of how hard life is on the street.

### **Jake Maguire - Community Solutions**

- Title: Principal
- Date: 10 May 2022

## **COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS**

### Methodology vs Theory of Change

- We discussed the changes and progress of the Australian and US movements to end homelessness, including the continued improvement of the Advance to Zero methodology. We discussed how it might be better framed as a ‘theory of change’ rather than a methodology.
- Whilst US communities have demonstrated that ending homelessness is possible, this is yet to be demonstrated in Australia. The term methodology implies a recipe that can be followed and you get the same outcomes. Baking a cake is a simple problem and lends itself to simple solutions like a recipe. Ending homelessness is a complex challenge that is constantly changing.
- There are a number of stakeholders in Australia who don’t want a change to the language in relation to methodology vs theory of change, as it is starting to get traction and others who think it’s more a framework than a traditional theory of change.

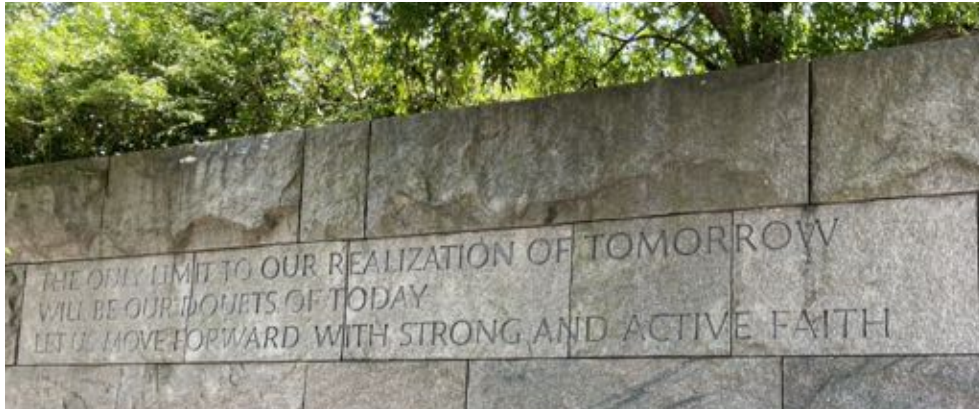
### VI-SPDAT

- Some take the view that in large cities no matter how much training you provide, there is a psychology involved with people deferring decision-making to the scoring component of the tool. Dealing with this is a challenge.

### Advocacy

- Political engagement takes time and effort. You have to fight to get this issue on the agenda, it shouldn’t be that way, but it is. Resourcing and building the capacity for this work longer-term is important.
- Community Solutions have recently undertaken some unpublished research on this. They found that mayors believe they are held responsible for addressing homelessness in their cities, but feel they have little control.

- An overwhelming majority of mayors (73%) perceive themselves as being held highly accountable for addressing homelessness in their communities, but 81% feel that homelessness is outside their control.
- A strong majority of mayors do not define policy success as reducing homelessness, and a surprising number do not have clear definitions for success. In fact, 60% of mayors do not define success by whether their cities are reducing homelessness.
- Mayors do not have access to the data that they need to solve homelessness, which is exacerbated by challenges in coordination across cities, counties, and non-profits.



*(Image: Franklin D Roosevelt Memorial, Washington DC, USA - reminded me of this conversation with Jake)*

Is ending homelessness Possible?

- Absolutely.

The top three things needed to make ending homeless a reality:

- Unwavering belief that this is possible - this prevents you from becoming an industry. The goal ought to be to do ourselves out of a job.
- Build understanding that no one can solve this problem alone - and so have an ego (organisational and individual) about nothing else other than achieving the goal of zero homelessness.
- Having a voracious appetite to learn.

**Liz Drapa - Corporation for Supportive Housing & La Casa Norte**

- In attendance:
  - Liz Draper, VP Field Operations & Consulting, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
  - Angelina Sidney, Property Manager (La Casa Norte - Pierce House)
- Date: 10 May 2022



Corporation for Supportive Housing

- Further background on Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) can be found in Appendix B.
- Some of the challenges of building a supportive housing system include governments going from famine to feast in terms of investment.
- The CSH helps communities deploy the funds, make the argument that the money was needed, and reduce the risk that it is wasted.
- Quality can be a challenge, and then sometimes you push up against NIMBYism or not in my backyard perspectives. You need champions for this work.

## Cost Benefit Analysis

- CSH does a lot of work to support communities to conduct cost-benefit analysis as part of building the case for investment in Permanent Supportive Housing.
- The process involves working out things like the amount, type and cost of the supportive housing that is needed in a community to reduce homelessness by a certain amount or to end it. They use by-name list data, but also data from any and all systems they can access.
- CSH then works with communities to understand what this data is telling them and use that to help build a Permanent Supportive Housing system that provides choice.
- One of the things CSH have found through this work that you need to be careful with is - the 'sicker' the people you focus on, the costs aren't going to shift that much (in the health system), because they are really sick.
- Ultimately the goal of these exercises is to get more non-homelessness departments funding the support service for ending homelessness, i.e. health, corrections, etc.
- It's a systems/service planning exercise from a government agency's perspective and an advocacy exercise from the community services perspective.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has said in the US that they do see supportive housing health services as important.
- More and more states have departments of supportive housing and have put in place legislation to create new taxes to build supportive housing.
- In Miami Florida this needs/cost-benefit analysis work was helpful in successfully preventing a prison from being built and the resources being put into housing prevention work and Permanent Supportive Housing.
- Policymakers often want to defund crisis services and shift the resources into prevention/permanent housing programs. This is very hard, it rarely happens, and almost never well. You need to establish a new system with a range of services most of the time before you can defund the old services. In the end you have to advocate for additional resources and then divert.

**AAEH Recommendation 1: PSH Needs Analysis** - Work with the CSH to develop a Permanent Supportive Housing Needs Analysis toolkit for Australia, to help local communities do cost benefit analysis regarding the amount of Permanent Supportive Housing their community needs to end homelessness.

## Debate about models

- There are some critics of single site supportive housing models (i.e. a small, medium or large number of units/apartments as part of the one site) who believe that supportive housing should only be scattered-site models (i.e. general independent living in the suburbs, or everyday housing - with drop-in support rather than on-site support).
- Single-site Permanent Supportive Housing is sometimes called congregate living, which is a bit of a misnomer because in PSH each person should have their own room, with their own bathroom and kitchen. Congregate implies they are all living together in a shelter-type setup.
- Liz's response to this debate is - surely we should give people choice. A choice they all too often don't have. Many people who have never experienced homelessness choose high-density living, so why not provide that same choice to those who have? A sense of community is fundamentally important to a lot of people who have experienced homelessness for long periods.
- It is obviously significantly cheaper, and thus many more people can be helped with single-site, rather than scatter-site support model. That said, this shouldn't be the primary driver in deciding which PSH model is most suited, it should be individual choice and suitability to their needs.
- One of the things that differentiates Australian PSH and that in the US is that the 'social mix' doesn't mean the same in Australia as it does in the US, as US wages are so much lower.
- So, for example in a single-site model you don't have 100% occupancy of people who've experienced homelessness with a high level of care needs (often called high acuity) on a site, you have a social mix



of people who are low acuity, people who are seeking affordable housing (who are working in low paid industries etc).

- Some of this relates to Housing First debates and what precisely constitutes Housing First. Some say that there needs to be a very specific case load (i.e. the number of people to support workers).
- Liz, as a range of others I met with, took the view that we need to not be absolutist when it comes to Housing First. This was a common theme.
- See Appendix B for further information about Housing First.

#### La Casa Norte's - Pierce House Visit

- La Casa Norte partner with the Howard Brown service to offer a Federally qualified Health Center on the first floor. This is next to the community food pantry and food program, with a community center space on the second floor and supportive housing on the top floors.
- The community food pantry is basically a mini grocery store that people can come and shop at and pay next to nothing for the items - providing a non-stigmatising experience. When I visited, food was being distributed as parcels because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- They house young adults (single, pregnant, and parenting) in the supportive housing program that uses Chicago Housing Authority vouchers and Federal 'Continuums of Care' PSH subsidies.
- The services on the ground floor are for the whole community, not just residents.
- The site is locked and residents can only access their own floor.
- Each resident has their own lease. Case managers, and some service coordination is located on the second floor. They can pop up to the rooms to chat, meet in the common areas, or the meeting rooms on level two.
- It's a Housing First model - you don't have to 'work a program' to get housing.



*(Images: La Casa Norte - Pierce House, a new room being set up, living area of the same room and food parcels lined up to be distributed to the community)*

Do you think that ending homelessness is possible?

- Both: Yes

The top three things needed to make that a reality:

- Political will particularly at the city level - Mayor can get things moving, can line up business folks, rally resources, break down barriers.
- You need the housing authorities on board. They are the biggest provider.
- Be relentless on housing not shelter - getting in, the cash for brokerage is there, the paperwork is there. Make it easy.
- Housing First, but have a choice. Some people want a structured environment, you need that choice. Some people want to live in a big building, with a strong sense of community - just as they had a community on the street. It is possible to provide choice.



*(Image: At the conclusion of the visit to La Casa Norte)*

### Community Solutions Discussion

- In attendance:
  - Rosanne Haggerty, President and CEO
  - Jessica Venegas, Principal Strategic Partnerships
  - Melanie Lewis Dickerson, Portfolio Lead
  - Rian Watt, Strategy Lead, International & Initiative Large Scale Change
  - Dawn Moskowitz, Strategy Lead, Catalytic Projects
  - Ramina Davidson, Strategy Lead, Zero for All Proof Points
  - Regan Harvey, Project Manager for Large-Scale Change, Strategic Communities
  - Aras Jizan, Portfolio Lead (Data)
- Date: 11 + 12 May 2022

# COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

### Background on Community Solutions and Functional Zero

- Community Solutions is a non-profit organisation that leads Built for Zero, a movement of more than 80 cities and counties using data to radically change how they work and the impact they can achieve — and proving that it is possible to make homelessness rare and brief.
- A growing number of communities across the country are proving this is an achievable reality by reaching a milestone known as Functional Zero.
- Functional Zero (FZ) is a milestone, which must be sustained, that indicates a community has measurably ended homelessness for a population. When it's achieved, homelessness is rare and brief for that population.
- FZ is a milestone on the way to absolute zero homelessness. Absolute zero can and has been achieved at a point in time, in Built for Zero communities, and elsewhere. To sustain absolute zero is something that is not possible in the short-term, not until the broader issues of poverty, mental illness, addiction, racism and other factors are also eliminated from our societies.
- FZ is the standard that communities ought to be able to set as a way of measuring if we are getting closer to or further away from the goal of ending homelessness, but seeking to make it rare, brief and non-recurring.
- For reasons that remain a mystery to me, the concept of Functional Zero elicits strong reactions from some. They suggest that it's just a way of defining your way out of the problem - it's not. Or that it's

too complicated, it is, and so is the issue of homelessness. Or that it's not the end goal, it's just a milestone - agreed, it is a milestone that makes significant improvements to systems.

- 14 communities so far have achieved this milestone.
- In 2021, in recognition of their efforts, Community Solutions was awarded the MacArthur Foundation's 100&Change grant to help accelerate an end to homelessness in the United States.
- 100&Change is the MacArthur Foundation's global competition for a \$100 million grant to fund a single proposal that promises "real and measurable progress in solving a critical problem of our time".

#### Data

- Data systems in the US, as in Australia, are very much about measuring transactions, not outcomes.
- The health system often puts the patient at the heart.
- We've built data systems that are disempowering to people.
- The goal of data in efforts to end homelessness is to help build more humanity in your system.
- In the US, the Federal Government requires agencies to use a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) - a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.
- They don't stipulate what system you must use, just that there are some common features to that system that must be in place. As a consequence there are a lot of private vendors who provide a HMIS system, that in order to protect intellectual property and proprietary information, don't easily talk to each other.
- This is creating some challenges for communities that want to scale their by-name list beyond their existing collaborative, or Continuum of Care. They all need to be using the same vendor.
- In the US, communities store their by-name list in this HMIS platform.

#### Policy

- Identify incentives in the system that push people to current ways of acting.
- Outcomes-focused contracts can help. Change the funding levers, because all too often the contract tells agencies to have x number of contacts with people experiencing homelessness, so you focus on that, rather than what is needed.
- You need policies set for sustainability so that you get a policy shift that makes it harder for the status quo to exist. Generally, however, policies exist to perpetuate services, not to end homelessness. We need to shake that up.
- Political leaders need quick fixes, for example, they want the encampment cleared out tomorrow. This makes it hard to get focus on longer-term integrated strategies, but at the same time have to recognise the demands being placed on them. That's why you need trustworthy data.
- You cannot just spend more and more on housing, you have to turn off the tap in the adjacent/upstream sectors.
- You need to build a system to be able to change when you get to the 'last mile' on the journey to functional zero.
- Some health systems do this well - they have had to, you need to eradicate every last case of an infectious disease. We need systems in homelessness that support this too if we are going to be successful in the last mile.
- You need a vehicle to get to the end point you want to get to - that's where the Zero Projects, collaborations, campaigns in Australia are so important, they are that vehicle.

#### Collaborations

- Federal policy, in the USA, has required communities to develop a vehicle, the Continuums of Care (CoCs). They have been of varying quality and effectiveness. There are lots of lessons on how to do

this better in the book *Ungoverned and Out of Sight: Public Health and the Political Crisis of Homelessness In the United States* by Charley E. Willison.

- COCs are very diverse - some work well, many do not. The common problem with them is that they can't fund themselves very well.
- The US also required CoCs to implement a coordinated access system for better coordinating who gets housing, best described as triaging scarce housing and support resources to those most vulnerable.
- This action is often described as prioritisation, but is much better understood as triage - just as you triage in a hospital emergency department, rather than first in, first serviced. That's what we need to do better in relation to how houses are allocated to end homelessness.
- Australia should learn the lessons from the US, in creating Continuums of Care (CoCs), then coordinated access, and eventually they will get to the QBNL step. The lesson for Australia is you need to do all three.
- The AtoZ Framework picks up all of these elements.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 2: Support New Communities** - Support the rollout of the Advance to Zero Framework in more local communities through the renegotiation of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 3: Support Existing Communities** - Urgently invest in existing community led efforts to end homelessness that are utilising the Advance to Zero Framework, to support and accelerate their success.



(Image: Rosanne and I at the Community Solutions Learning Session)

#### Large-Scale Change

- Australia is currently struggling to figure out how quickly we seek to expand the AtoZ Framework. The inclination of state governments is generally to try to solve the problem everywhere at once and to create state-wide by-name lists.
- The lessons from the United States to date have been to start small, demonstrate the value of what you are doing and achieve proof points or system change outcomes, i.e. quality by-name list data, shift reductions, functional zero for a population group etc. See Appendix B for further information about by-name lists, and these measures.
- In Australia we're operating in large cities and small regions. In this sense - we have 'caught up' to the Built for Zero movement in the US. However we've not yet had the demonstration of 'proof points' that the US has had.
- CS have teams that are working with large cities, and this is a current focus for them. There are a

number of large cities that have had significant reductions in homelessness, but none yet that have ended it. Though some are close.

- CS also has teams that are working on large-scale change, that is, groups of communities or CoCs working together across a state or region. Colorado is one example, but there are not a lot, and the pressures to scale up do not seem to be as strong given the place based collaborative approach (through CoCs) is such a strong part of US homelessness response systems.
- In this sense, the work of the Advance to Zero Campaign needs to ‘chart our own course’, but as much as possible resist the urge to scale up too quickly in the absence of demonstrated proof points.

**AAEH Recommendation 17: Business Case** - Develop a detailed business case to consider what it would take to support the adoption of the Advance to Zero Framework across Australia, with the eventual goal of an integrated nationwide network of locally controlled and developed by-name lists. Setting out:

- Why there is a risk in rolling out too quickly;
- Understanding which communities are most in need of support;
- The technology requirements to support this; and
- Developing the workforce capability to deliver it.

#### Health and Homelessness

- Homelessness is a public health crisis - from poverty, discrimination, addiction and natural disasters, homelessness has many different causes, and many similar effects: serious adverse consequences for physical and mental health, quality of life, education and work attainment.
- Homelessness is at its core a threat to population health and health equity.
- In public health and medical communities there is a resounding call to permit a culture of health in all policies. Yet most conversations about health reform centre on hospitals and health care - conspicuously absent are factors influencing population health across the life-course. For more information about health in all policies see Appendix D.
- Cities across America are facing a homelessness epidemic.
- When thinking about the governance of efforts to end homelessness, we need to look more at the public health and emergency management fields than at the governance arrangements of housing and property management agencies.

#### Movement building and problem solving.

- Using champions, in the political world, the business world, philanthropy, etc. is critical.
- This work takes a while to wrap your head around, you need to hold onto connections with those people who ‘get it’.
- You need to develop strategies for engaging these people, having associates is one way, an alumni network of sorts.
- Recognising system leaders who have expertise in this work is another way - i.e. having a faculty of fellows in ending homelessness to draw upon.
- Either we are making progress, or we are not, and we need more resources for system change. It's about creating a real time feedback loop.
- As long as you can constantly do quality improvement, you can keep solving problems, you can keep moving forward.
- We're often hard-wired to be great starters, but we also need to be better finishers.



(Image: Community Solutions, *We all Have a Role to Play in Ending Homelessness Guide*)

- You have to be prepared to ‘piss people off’ and to have an honest look at your own system. Collaboration and relationship building can’t get in the way of solving problems.

#### Organising, events and administration

- Organising events and administration is very much undervalued, but when it works well it is a powerful enabler of collaboration. Community Solutions has established a project excellence team to build capacity and recognise the importance of this work.
- Our systems are not set up to support collaboration. The people you need to work with in a collaboration are not all in the same organisation and you can guarantee they will all be using different software.
- This diversity may be email software (Microsoft, Apple, Google), different communications software (Slack, Teams, Zoom, etc.), document storage software (Dropbox, Files, Onedrive, etc.) and project management software (Asana, Basecamp, Monday, etc.). Taking the time to consider which platforms will enable everyone to work together is important.
- Organising better meetings is also an important part of supporting collaborations. Utilising the principles of continuous improvement, there are a number of ways to make sure meetings are better planned. They are all pretty basic things, but important things to have in place to enable collaboration amongst busy people.
  - Make sure every meeting has a chair/facilitator and a very clear intent/purpose, as well as membership. Sometimes the person whose meeting it is, is not the best facilitator of the meeting.
  - Make sure every meeting has at least a very basic agenda - shared in Google Docs (or similar). Develop templates to support this, setting out who’s leading each item, how much time is allocated, etc.
  - Make sure people have the information they need to consider and participate in the meeting in advance of the meeting.
  - Make sure someone is taking minutes/action items.
  - Come back to those action items at future meetings if they are not fully addressed.
- If you don’t have these things in place for a meeting, are you respecting the participants' time?

- Events are also an incredibly important part of bringing people and organisations together to think differently about efforts to end homelessness, to collaborate outside their own organisation, sector, agency, level of government, industry, etc.

**AAEH Recommendation 15: Better Meetings and Backbones Guide** - Develop a better meetings and backbones guide providing templates and other training materials - including how to best facilitate collaboration, have more effective meetings and utilise technology.

#### Working with Business

- Working with business is important for the longevity of this work. It is worth the effort to build the allies, funding partners and capacity partners .
- Corporate partners want to be able to tell the story of what they are helping you to achieve.
- Bright spots are a great way of doing this. Bright spots are when you focus on the things that communities have learned and achieved together (Built for Zero (in the US) or Advance to Zero in Australia). Sometimes it's helpful to focus on what is working, rather than what the problem is.
- Corporate partners can also be helpful in supporting you to influence the government. It's not the usual voices going to government then, they have government relations teams - get them to help lobby governments to understand that ending homelessness is possible.
- You also need corporate partners to understand we don't need them to fund initiatives, which then starts the tail wagging the dog. We need them to invest in the core operating budget of your collaboration - working closely with the engagement and comms teams to help learn together what it takes to end homelessness.
- Another way to do this is to seek secondments of people. This helps build the capacity to do the work, but also brings a new set of thinking, new perspectives to your collaboration and then the seconded people can go back to their organisations to help them better understand where to create value together. Sometimes this is called shared value.



(Image: Shared Value)<sup>64</sup>

- Shared value is a type of management strategy that focuses on companies creating business value that is measurable through addressing and identifying social problems that impact their business.

**Business Recommendation 8: Develop a Toolkit to Make it Easier** - Ending homelessness is complex, it can be difficult to know where to start. Businesses could support the development of an ending homelessness and business engagement toolkit that integrates shared value strategies and makes it clear to businesses, of various types (small, medium and big) how they can most helpfully support the efforts to end homelessness.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.3pillarsnetwork.com.au/blog/shared-value-and-the-3-pillars-network/>

## Supportive Housing

- Supportive housing exists at scale in the US, that is essential. Australia needs a supportive housing system, not just a collection of buildings, common ground model or not.
- The challenge is broader than that, because you not only need to build more in Australia, you need to think through that if you do build more supportive housing how can you ensure it stays as supportive housing and connected to the system wide efforts seeking to end homelessness.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 9: Sustaining Permanent Supportive Housing** -The Commonwealth Government support the AAEH to establish a National Permanent Supportive Housing Network, to guide the development of local supportive housing systems in Australia, build understanding, improve practice, and help to ensure that when we do build PSH that they stay PSH.

## Building Learning Systems

- The role of community leads and data leads is about capacity building - particularly regarding improvement. A community lead is someone who takes responsibility for operationally building a Zero Project. A data lead supports that with the focus on building the by-name list and building understanding of what it is telling communities.
- The teams in Community Solutions have been creating learning systems that talk to each other, when the organisation was small that was super easy, as it has grown it's a lot harder. You need to give thought to that.

**AAEH Recommendation 8: Champions Strategy**- Develop a strategy for engaging those who truly 'get' the work of ending homelessness - including by recognising and supporting community champions, as well as developing a faculty of Fellows, or people who are recognised as being able to train, coach and mentor communities that are seeking to end homelessness in Australia.

Do you think that ending homelessness is possible?

- All: Yes

The top three things needed to make that a reality - Rosanne:

- Building political will for solving the problem, not a one time solution, but a sustained solution.
- Developing a data driven operating system.
- Ensuring the housing types that match the dynamic housing needs of individual communities.

## **Niñon Lewis - Institute for Healthcare Improvement**

- Title: Vice President
- Date: 11 May 2022

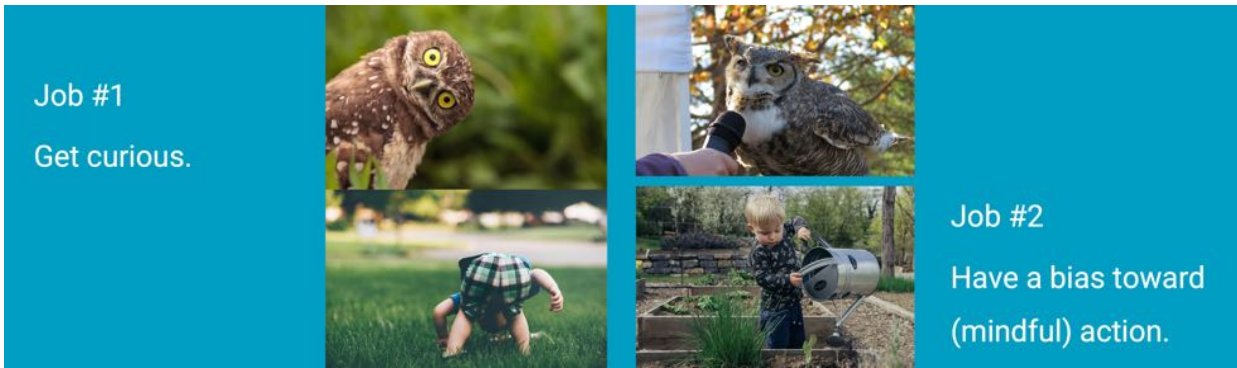


## Improvement Science

- For further background on improvement science see Appendix B.
- Improvement science has been a fundamental driver of the success of communities in the US in ending homelessness, and is a major influence on the AtoZ work in Australia.
- The following are key insights from the presentation and subsequent conversations.
- When doing improvement work, there are really two key roles - 1) get curious, see the water you swim in, and 2) have a bias towards action.
- The 'lenses of curiosity' is a focus on improvement work and has been adapted from the concept of a 'system of profound knowledge' - which is the culmination of Dr. W. Edwards Deming's lifelong work.



- This rather grandly named concept is an effective theory of management that provides a framework of thought and action for any leader wishing to transform and create a thriving organisation or system, with the aim for everybody to be successful in getting what they need.
- Improvement requires us to constantly think of the system. We get systems: for example when we look at a subway map, we know what the coloured lines mean, that you can move from one to the next.



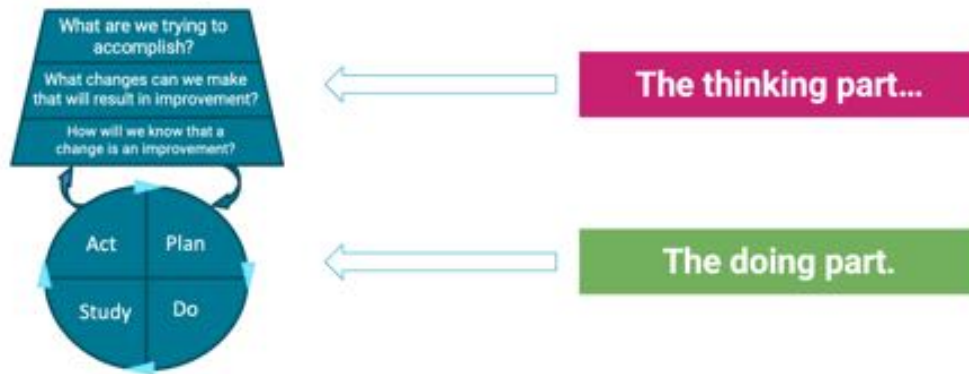
*(Image: Niñon’s presentation at the Community Solutions Learning Session - that got a good laugh from the audience, Chicago USA)*



*(Image: Washington DC Metro System, USA)*

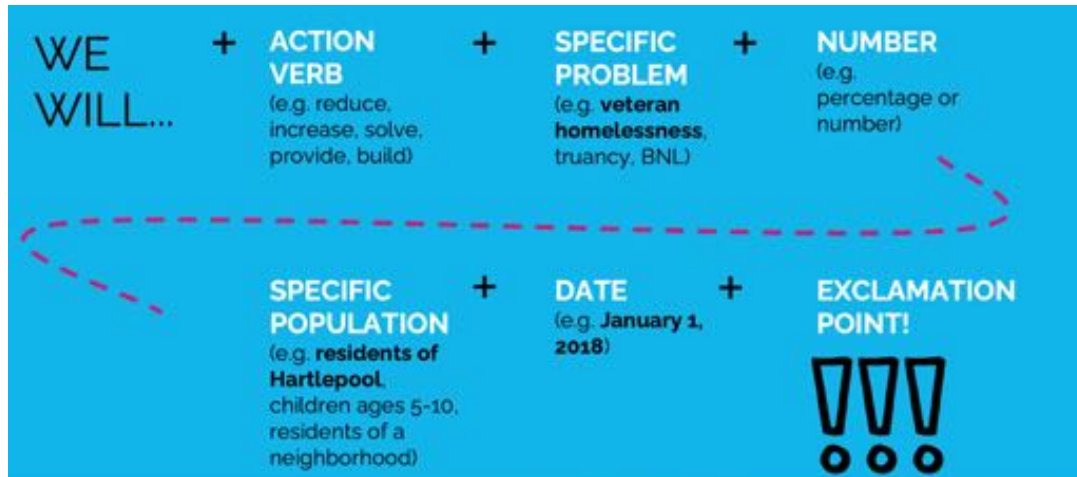
- We need better ways to understand homelessness systems like this. The functional zero measurement points help us to see the water we swim in or the ‘homelessness service system’ we are trying to shape.
- The improvement model really has two parts to it, the thinking part and the doing part.
- This model has been central to the success of the US communities that have achieved functional zero and for those who have driven reductions.

## The Model for Improvement



*(Niñon's presentation at the Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)*

- The model has been widely adopted because it:
  - can be used across all types of organisations, across all types.
  - facilitates the use of teamwork to make improvements.
  - encourages planning to be based on theory.
  - emphasises and encourages iterative learning.
  - provides a way to empower people to take action.
- Too often people feel disempowered by the complexity of the system.
- Developing clear aim statements is essential to help with this. Being specific helps with this work.
- Hope is not a plan, some is not a number and soon is not a time - Don Berwick, MD.
- The components of a strong aim statement are as follows:




*(Niñon's presentation at the Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)*

- Having a strong aim statement is essential to ending homelessness. When working through what a community's goals are, write them down and quibble with them, but don't make assumptions. For example, we're the only community that has a shortage of housing, we have a high functioning case conferencing mechanism etc., back up your statements with evidence that is measurable and specific.




The **Aim** can be imagined as a **Lighthouse**. And while you can see the lighthouse from where you are, the path to it is not clear.

- Get people to sign onto the aim statement at the end of the exercise. Action Plans are a simple mechanism for this. In the US, CoCs are required to do this. In Australia, Zero projects, campaigns or collaborations need to do this - some are, but not all.
- The overall aim should be making homelessness rare, brief and once off, measured by functional zero.
- Remember, goals are different from aims as shown in this illustration.



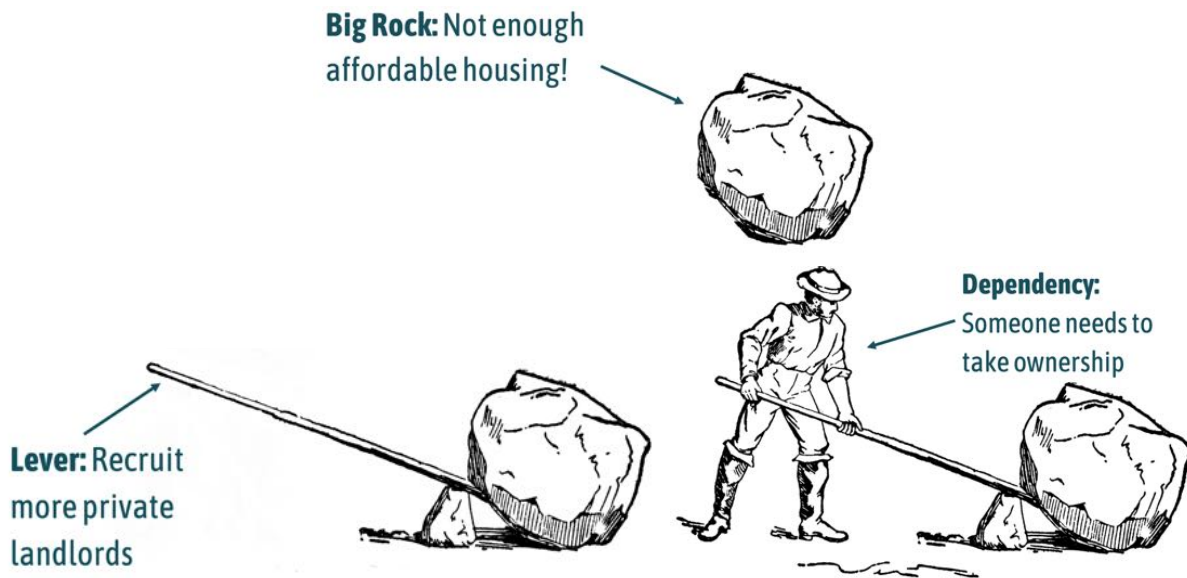
**Aim (Functional Zero or a Reduction Aim)**  
The overall objective or aim of a program, project, initiative, campaign or movement



**Goals (usually 90-100 Days, or the length of an Action Cycle)**  
Interim objectives that help determine if you are on track to meet your goal

(Images: Community Solutions, Emma Beers, Chicago USA)

- On the road to the goal, we know we're going to hit some obstacles - we call these rocks. Look for levers to help you overcome these, and work through what are the dependencies that will be needed to make that happen. A dependency is who will 'hold the big red ball' and get that done, and how are you measuring that.



(Images: Community Solutions, Emma Beers, Chicago USA)

- Finally, one of the key benefits of the model for improvement is it ensures you remove ambiguity from the work you are doing - as much as possible. It's then really clear what you are all working towards, and the path you are taking.
- A model for improvement enables a focus on how you overcome the obstacles, the levers you will use and the dependencies - rather than discussions about where you are going.



(Images: Community Solutions, Emma Beers, Chicago USA)

**AAEH Recommendation 9: Grow Improvement Capability** - Partner with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Australia to seek state government support to build capacity in the homelessness and health sectors to utilise the model for improvement.

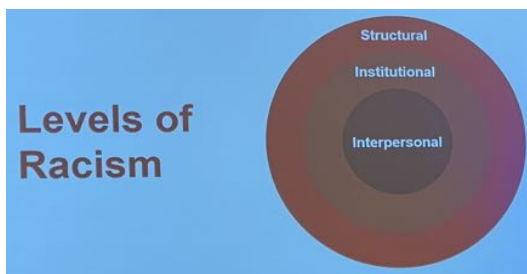
**Donald Whitehead - National Coalition for the Homeless**

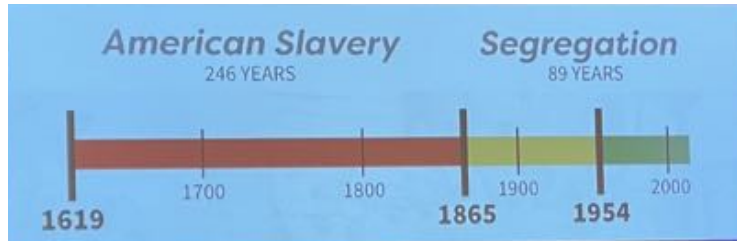
- Title: Executive Director
- Date: 11 May 2022



**Race Equity Discussion**

- When you hear the history of your country, you should react the same way as when you hear about the fact that your family has a history of addiction or mental illness. You don't feel guilty, you take measures to mitigate its effects in the future, you learn from it.
- The George Floyd execution live on television was a massive inflection point in the US. It helped fuel a much deeper understanding that racism exists at the structural, institutional and interpersonal level.
- "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" - George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 1905.
- Homelessness has been with us since the European beginning of this country (USA), with the displacement of First Nations peoples. It continued from 1619 when the transatlantic slave trade started.
- The 1830s Trail of Tears saw hundreds of thousands of people move to the plains states - creating new waves of homelessness.





(Images: Donald's presentation at the Learning Session, Chicago USA)

- We need to understand that structural and institutional racism are intentional decisions and are a deeply ingrained part of American culture.
- The idealism of children seeps away the more times you hear that you 'fit the description' in the words of law enforcement.
- Today, we need to make a choice: you can be a racist, or an anti-racist, there is no middle ground.
- We are far from a colour blind society. We have lived through too many incidents/too many inflections. We need racial justice now.
- "Homelessness is not a moral failure of people, it is a moral failure of society - it is immoral to choose eviction over extreme wealth inequality."
- We need to all use our spheres of influence, to the extent we can, wherever we work - to support anti racism efforts - in the work to end homelessness in the USA or Australia.



(Image: Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)

- Community Solutions have developed a racial equity framework to inform their work towards ending homelessness. All communities should consider how their work seeks to understand and account for racial inequity and colonisation.

**AAEH Recommendation 2: Racial Justice** - Develop a statement of intent regarding racial equality, racial justice and reconciliation in relation to the AtoZ Campaign, including how we plan to better address these matters in our collective work.

**Amber Chandler - Lived Experience Discussion**

- Title: Systems Improvement Advisor, Community Solutions
- In attendance: Various representatives
- Date: 11 May 2022



- You need a person with a lived experience at all tables, so everyone hears that voice, but importantly to also ensure they have the support and mentors they need to succeed.
- Some communities have created a shelter resident's bill of rights. In Australia, we have a home visitors scheme for aged care, and disability care, but not for homelessness care services - why is that?
- Lived experience voices are the most powerful with political leaders.
- You need to pay your lived experience voices, and the going rate in the US at the moment is US\$125 an hour.
- Many communities in the US have structures for engaging people with a lived experience. Some of them provide a speakers network to help raise awareness of the impacts of homelessness, and what can be done about it.
- The following 'People with a Lived Experience of Homelessness' theory of change has been developed by Community Solutions to inform their work.



(Image: People with a Lived Experience of Homelessness: Theory of Change, Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)

**Anna Kim - Community Solutions**

- Title: Principal Communications
- Date: 12 May 2022



- Cynicism and competing priorities are amongst the greatest threats to our progress.
- How do we demonstrate and communicate to different audiences that ending homelessness is possible?
- It is the challenge of seeking to tell the truth louder - that homelessness is a result of systemic failures, not individual choices.
- The key communications challenge is to shift the narrative, to amplify the bright spots, and to demonstrate that we need new understandings and new behaviours.
- From a national organisation's perspective the challenge is to champion and amplify the progress and solutions being driven by local communities - without being seen to take credit for their work.
- A key communications task is to shift the understanding of homelessness as being a problem that is solvable, a byproduct of systems and the urgent matter of racial equity.
- Engage people's heads and hearts. When you see homelessness everyday, you become hardened to it. We run out of empathy, it contributes to cynicism. If we can move the heart, we can move their minds. But there is a lot of competition for both.

- The more we can ‘see’ concerted efforts from various stakeholders working towards ending homelessness, you can see the government working for the people as they are supposed to, if you see corporations being part of a community not just about making profit - it is a virtuous cycle.
- Your communications efforts need to help people find a space in this work for them.
- Communication is about many things, but one of them is about helping to rally the resources you need to do the work.
- Having a list and clear explanation of what you want to do and why it will be beneficial is something that is rarely developed. This is different from the policy requests you have of the government.

**AAEH Recommendation 14: Prospectus** - Develop a prospectus of all the things the AAEH would like to do to support an end to homelessness in Australia.

### Crisis UK

- In attendance: Ciara Devlin Head of Place-based Programmes and Kate Farrell - Housing Led Programmes Lead
- Date: 12 May 2022



- How do you define an end to homelessness? Rare, brief and non-recurring, but it’s not really defined in the UK and the concept of functional zero hasn’t really made it there - outside of Crisis.
- In the UK, there is some regular data collected on rough sleeping, but it’s not great.
- In 2018 the Bureau of Investigative Journalism did a big profile on homelessness deaths and that really got a lot of attention and created some focus. The ONS - Office of National Statistics, is committed to better enumerating this, but work is slow and challenging.
- In terms of the role of various stakeholders in ending homelessness, there is a role for all governments, local and in Westminster - the challenge is getting them to work together sometimes.
- There’s also a big role for civil society, business, and others - it’s not always well coordinated, or joined up. Crisis does some annual polling on attitudes in this space.
- In terms of examples of shifting the focus from crisis services to ending homelessness, the UK managed to get a private members bill passed called the ‘Homelessness Reduction Act’ which is worth looking into more. It gave everyone the right to support.

Do you think that ending homelessness is possible?

- Yes

What are the top three things that are needed to end homelessness?

- Data
- Government Commitment and Funding
- Housing and Support



*(Image: Meeting at the Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)*

### *Marie Morison - Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness*

- Title: Director, Built for Zero
- Date: 12 May 2022

#### Housing First/Coordinated Access

- Housing First is a philosophy - but it needs to be implemented into systems.
- Some have very specific program models, but it needs to be about how to improve outcomes.
- In Canada for some, the focus has shifted away from Housing First, not because we don't believe in it, or because it doesn't work - it does. It's just hard to do Housing First, if you don't have the housing, first!
- A lot of attention has shifted to Coordinated Access, where there is a focus on actively working to prevent and divert households from an experience of homelessness by assessing their situation and connecting them to the financial, social service sector and supports.
- If Australia was to go down the path of implementing Coordinated Access, which is basically what you mean by 'coordinated care' as part of the AtoZ Framework, Commonwealth dollars should go directly to local collaborations or Zero projects and not go through the states.
- It's too hard for states to focus sometimes. Governments also need to allow for much more flexibility in contracts, to enable shared learning.

#### Administering a National Campaign

- Managing websites, and making sure you are sharing and curating your library of resources is a big job.
- The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) has a strategy to build allied networks to support the work of ending homelessness, and a national conference. The AAEH strategy to copy that makes sense - as does the intention to ensure that the allied networks serve as much as possible the goals of the AtoZ Campaign.

#### Deaths

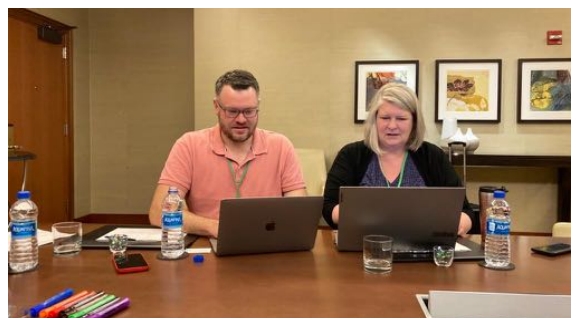
- Regarding data on deaths - the CAEH encourages communities to collect this information as part of measuring outflow from local by-name list systems.

#### Do you think that ending homelessness is possible?

- Yes

#### Top three things that are needed to end homelessness?

- A population level target and way to measure that - i.e. functional zero.
- Cross sectoral guiding coalition, that takes accountability for getting to zero.
- Quality real time data.



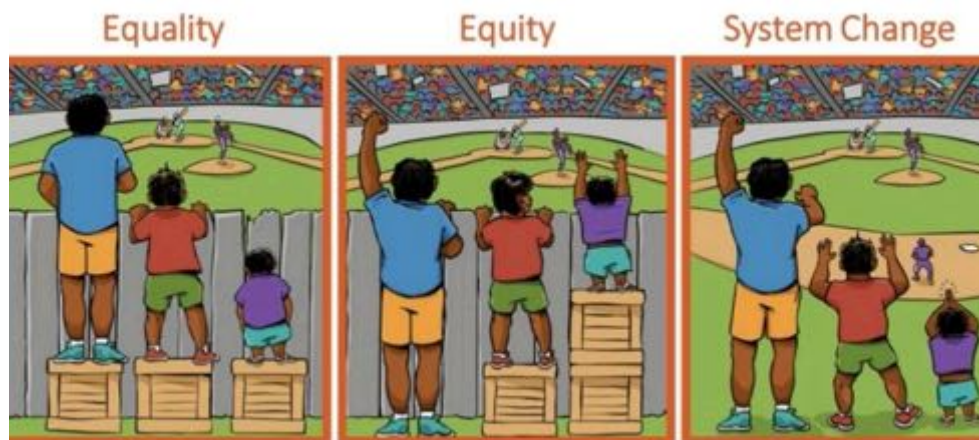
*(Image: Marie and me at the Community Solutions Learning Session, Chicago USA)*



**Amanda Andere - Funders Together to End Homelessness**



- Title: CEO
- Date: 12 May 2022
- We're moving a bit away from the idea of racial equity, which is about removing the inequity, and more towards racial justice - to make up for lost ground.
- Philanthropy can help change the narrative, it should focus on filling gaps - focus on doing the things that no one else is doing.
- Focus on changing the system.
- Help grow the pie for ending homelessness directed work.
- Ending homelessness is possible, but seeking racial justice must be at the heart of it.



(Image: Interaction Institute for Social Change, Angus Maguire, USA)<sup>65</sup>

**Lydia Stazen - Institute of Global Homelessness**

- Title: Executive Director
- Date: 13 May 2022



George and Tanya Ruff  
Institute of Global  
Homelessness

**Background**

- The Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) drives a global movement to end street homelessness.
- Founded in 2014, IGH is the first organisation to focus on homelessness as a global phenomenon with an emphasis on those who are living on the street or in emergency shelters.
- The IGH staff and Advisory Committee work with a broad network of world-class advisors, experts, and organisations — balancing geographies, cultures, and skills.
- They work towards their vision through three strategic priorities:
  - See It: Advocate for international homelessness policy focused on definition and measurement.
  - Solve It: Partner with cities and countries eager to take concrete action to solve the problem.
  - Share It: Connect with others to coalesce the global movement.

**Collaboration in the homelessness sector**

- Sometimes collaboration is hard, in fact more often than not it's hard, but working through that isn't a distraction from the work - it is the work.

<sup>65</sup> <http://madewithangus.com/portfolio/equality-vs-equity/>

## Definitions

- Regarding functional zero as a concept, there are some - particularly in academia, who have a view that absolute zero should be the goal, not functional zero.
- Often there is a misunderstanding that functional zero doesn't focus on a stemming of the inflow into the system. It does.
- What works for everyone is a focus on the outcome, that we want to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. Focus on outcomes.
- Australia needs to do more work to have agreed definitions, outside of the AtoZ movement, engaging Commonwealth government agencies in this will be important. Particularly in relation to what ending homelessness means, how it's measured, definitions of chronic homelessness, etc.



*(Image: Visiting the UN Headquarters in New York reminded me of the work being done by Lydia and the IGH to push for greater recognition of homelessness within the UN Sustainable Development Goals Framework)*

**AAEH Recommendation 3: Data Dictionary** - Publish or make more publicly accessible the working definitions AAEH uses as part of the AtoZ campaign and work with Commonwealth agencies, researchers and others to develop more broadly understood or agreed definitions in Australia.

- Do you think that ending homelessness is possible?
  - Yes
- What are the top three things that are needed to end homelessness?
  - Person centred approaches
  - Comprehensive housing and services options
  - A focus on outcomes and data

### **Emily Krisciunas - Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness**

- Title: Director
- Date: 13 May 2022



## Background

- There are six or seven local networks which are part of the national 'Funders Together to End Homelessness' network led by Amanda Andere.
- Chicago is a newer one. The origins story is, a group of organisations were frustrated with a range of things. There was a lack of coordination across funding organisations, no shared strategy, and a frustration that ultimately they were not moving the needle in any meaningful way.
- There was also next to no coordination with government or interaction with government by funders.

- Their work is centred on developing a shared investment strategy around ending homelessness, and to partner better and more effectively with government.
- There were originally eight foundations, and there are now 30, a mix of large community foundations, and some family foundations, corporate philanthropy, local united way efforts (who raise funds largely through employees in companies like United Airlines who then give to communities).
- They have three key strategies:
  - A greater focus on policy change; this is so central to ending homelessness. The philanthropic sector has been hesitant to engage with advocacy, community organising, and to be more patient with the advocacy that can often take a long time to be effective.
  - Aligning systems and sectors; work related to ending homelessness is so siloed, health, justice, employment, education - so bringing other funders to the table, who don't see themselves as a part of the homelessness world to align their efforts.
  - Power and shifting power dynamics - recognising that funders are predominantly white and wealthy family foundations, that hold the power on what ending homelessness looks like, what service models should be etc, and seeking to address that.

#### Power and Privilege

- One issue facing Chicago at the moment is that gun violence has exploded. It is the top priority of elected officials, it's covered extensively by the media.
- Increased eviction rates have been demonstrated to lead to increased gun violence.
- In Chicago, as in the US generally, people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately people of colour.
- Amanda says in relation to getting push back - meet people where they are, but don't leave them there. Privilege is power.
- To deal with the power dynamics, funders have started to engage in participatory grantmaking or the democratisation of philanthropy.
- They have developed a strategic plan that seeks to do all of these things.
- The focus on ending homelessness is the strategy, but they get caught in the fact that the US Housing and Urban Development definition has a narrower focus on rough sleeping, whereas Chicago Funders to End Homelessness, and others, try to broaden the focus to be on all forms of homelessness, including doubling up (overcrowding).
- A philanthropic organisation in Australia, like the Mercy Foundation for example, could consider establishing an Australian Funders Together to End Homelessness Network, modelled on these efforts in the USA.

#### Communications and Ending Homelessness

- This is underfunded, under-prioritised, but really essential.
- There is a great organisation called the Housing Narrative Lab<sup>66</sup>, that is focused on telling the story of who becomes homeless and why, and how safe and affordable housing is their first step toward stability and opportunity.
- Like many organisations in the US, the Housing Narrative Lab are seeking to lead with equity because "black, brown, Indigenous and immigrant people in our communities disproportionately bear the brunt of the nation's housing crisis".
- They offer pro bono communications support for grassroots organisations and national advocates working to solve homelessness. They provide narrative research assistance, strategic communications, content creation and education and training.

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<sup>66</sup> <https://housingnarrativelab.org/>

- Ultimately they work together to advance the real story of why housing is out of reach for so many citizens/neighbours.
- The proposed co-lab could focus on providing pro bono communications support to local community efforts to end homelessness.

#### Business Engagement

- Try and identify corporate partners who may not see homelessness and housing as critical as it is, and make it relevant to them.
- Companies that are concerned about crime and homelessness have a role to play in shaping policies towards ending homelessness rather than just responding, or worse, seeking to move it.
- A gold star example of this is Home for Good in the US, a similar organisation, but exists as a public, private and philanthropic partnership.
- The work is personal and relational. Personal proximity to the issue helps.
- Finding champions and advocates in the private sector who are willing to lend their voice to local efforts can be transformative. You need a way to support them.

**Business Recommendation 4: Identify Champions** - Business leaders, allies and champions who partner with local Advance to Zero communities to support their efforts including through increased awareness not of the problem, but of the solutions can be enormously helpful. Business champions can help:

- build understanding that ending homelessness is possible.
- tackle stigma and false notions that homelessness is a choice.
- support the development of business cases for local data driven efforts to end homelessness.

Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes.

Top three things needed?

- A continued pipeline of affordable housing stock.
- Significantly increased government will. We need to see investment that is proportional to the size of the problem.
- More racially equitable housing policies that overcomes the history of structural and institutional racism.

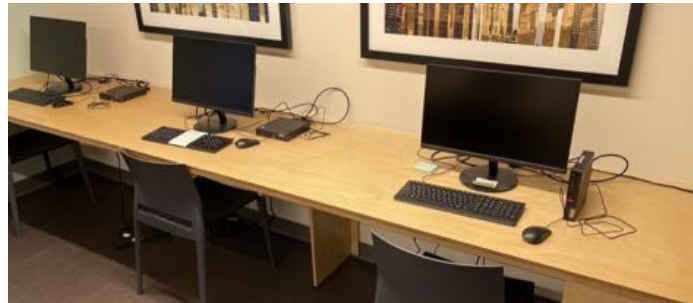
**Philanthropy Recommendation 5: Network** - Consider the creation of an annual Australian Funders Together to End Homelessness Network gathering - with a focus on sharing, implementing and refining the philanthropic sector recommendation made in this report.

#### **Mercy Housing /Miriam Apartments Site Visit**

- In attendance: Various staff and residents, including:
  - Felix Matlock Jr - Regional Vice President of Resident Services
  - Jacqui - Service manager
  - Sharnell - New Philanthropy & Partnerships Lead
  - Chariot - Resident and Lived Experience Peer-Worker
  - Julie - Resident
- Date: 13 May 2022
- Mercy Housing is the largest community housing provider in Chicago.



- Mercy House runs a large number of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) properties - funded through a blend of funding from federal, state and local funding programs (vouchers) as well as through philanthropy.
- Each person has their own permanent lease.
- There is a 24/7 presence at the front door, supporting workers during the day and early evenings, with security guards the rest of the time.
- Residents are allowed one to two visitors at a time, and can have guests stay overnight but must check in.
- They offer a range of group activities, many of which have been impacted by the pandemic - with the intention of helping residents with their recovery, to get to know neighbours etc.
- They have invested in a computer room (see below) to support digital inclusion and provide a range of support for their use, including software training, resume drafting, etc.



*(Image: Computer Room, Miriam Apartments, Chicago USA)*

- They have in the past held Mother's Day painting sessions, nutrition bingo, yoga, scheduled walks, etc. They have a community room for groups to get together, including a shared television with movie collection and an attached kitchenette (pictured below).
- Nearby health centres do in-reach for things like covid vaccinations, script refills, etc. They also have a mobile health clinic that visits - from the Near North Health Clinic.



*(Image: Mobile Health Clinic visiting the, Miriam Apartments, Chicago USA)*

- Rent is capped at 30% of income - utilities are included in this - including wi-fi.
- Common laundry facilities are provided, including a swipe card system for payment.
- To support improved health, and after consultation with residents, they established a gym - with much of the equipment donated from neighbours and community partners.
- Julie, who spent six years in and out of homelessness, ended up in shelters for a further three years before she was able to access the PSH.
- During this time she developed a problem with drinking and said that the ability to stay at the Miriam Apartments had literally saved her life.
  - Her proudest possession is her key (pictured below).

- She credits her ability to sustain housing now on all the support available on site, including peer workers like Chariot.
- A peer worker is someone who has a lived experience of homelessness and works with people who are currently experiencing or recovering from homelessness.
- Chariot experienced homelessness for almost 14 years, and stayed in shelters for over a year before being able to access PSH. She lives at the Miriam Apartments but also works as a peer support worker at one of the other Mercy Housing organisation's PSH sites.

**State Governments Recommendation 8: Peer Work** - Develop homelessness peer workforce strategies to increase the number, and support best practice in relation to, peer workers in the housing and homelessness sectors.



(Image: Miriam Apartments, Chicago USA)

**Dough Schenkelberg - Chicago Coalition for the Homelessness**

- Title: CEO
- 13 May 2022



**Background:**

- The Chicago Coalition supports 'community organising' of people with a lived experience and anyone else interested in ending homelessness.
- Community organising is something that Chicago has a long history of. It is about generating and wielding people power.

- They are completely self funded with a budget of about US\$5 million per annum being made up of two thirds regular individual giving and the rest family foundations.
- They have six community organisers on staff. The places they go to do organising include shelters and encampments, to talk about who the coalition is and what they do.
- Community organising like this was born in Chicago. Famously, former President Barack Obama was a community organiser.

#### Lived Experience

- The view of this organisation is that you shouldn't be making decisions about what people experiencing homelessness need without involving them in those decisions.
- They are focused on building a system of leadership development - not just individual leaders.
- Most community organisers were once activists. So, a lot of the community organisers have a lived experience of homelessness.
- About half of their staff are people with a lived experience - some of the challenges can be getting people to understand working in the workplace.

**AAEH Recommendation 10: Lived Experience Network** - Consider supporting the development of a "Street Voices for Change: Lived Experience Network" - not just as a consultation forum but as a community organising network that supports the development of advocates, establishes a paid speaker service, provides training about working in a person-centred way, campaigns to reduce stigma and other associated activities.

#### Advocacy, Activism and Community Organising

- This organisation does what we'd consider activism in Australia including holding actions by showing up at the city hall or press conferences to raise awareness.
- They do a lot of work with the media to provide case studies, but making sure the personal stories are tied to systems issues. This means not just enabling a media focus on 'poverty porn' and contributing to a cycle of helplessness, despondency and doom when it comes to reporting homelessness.
- A tenet of community organising is that people do it for free - this is distinct from engaging people with a lived experience to be paid consultants to sit on reference groups and be part of governance or policy discussions.
- Organising is about power and power comes from people. Homelessness is a result of many things - amongst them is the power imbalance that in public policy debates prioritises the needs of the wealthy and powerful over the needs of the vulnerable and powerless.
- What distinguishes activism from community organising in the US parlance is having a really clear strategy or theory of change.
- Community organising is about pragmatism - being realistic about what is possible.
- People with a lived experience get lots out of activism, it builds confidence, helps with future employment opportunities, and makes change happen.
- They have had a lot of success with train the trainer models.
- Their training on this usually takes up to three days.

**AAEH Recommendation 16: Community Organising** - Partner with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to deliver community organising/advocacy training for interested parties in Australia and/or the establishment of a fellowship model.

#### Washington DC, USA

##### *Linda Kaufman*

- Title: Retired leader with the 100,000 Homes Campaign, Community Solutions
- Date: 15 May 2022

- The 100,000 Homes Campaign was an incredible experience and learning opportunity.
- Although very successful in ensuring many, many people were housed, ultimately it failed to move the dial on homelessness, and why the move to the Built for Zero campaign was so important - to seek to count down.
- The VI-SPDAT is a crude tool, but there is no viable alternative.
- Housing First is useful, but the debates surrounding it are often not.
- Ultimately this work is about building a movement.

#### Definitions

- Having clear definitions is important.
- In Australia, we have relatively clear definitions of homelessness that are measured through an estimate and infrequently.
- In the US they have a federal definition of homelessness which we would define as rough sleeping, but they don't have a federal definition for or focus on overcrowding, and couch surfing..



*(Image: Meeting at a 'typical American diner' in Virginia, USA)*

#### **Jeff Olivet - U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness**

- Title: Executive Director
- Date: 16 May 2022

#### Background

- Recognising that solutions to homelessness cut across federal, state, and local jurisdictions, Congress charged The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) with building a robust interagency, cross-sector approach to preventing and ending homelessness.
- The mission of USICH is to coordinate the federal response to homelessness and create partnerships with the private sector and state and local governments to reduce and end homelessness.
- The USICH consists of representatives from 19 federal agencies on its governing Council and a full-time staff led by an Executive Director.
- Membership includes for example:
  - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  - Department of Education (ED) - which has been really important in supporting families and youth.
  - Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
  - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
  - The Department of Interior - which is responsible for First Nations homelessness or what many Americans refer to as 'native affairs'.
- The USICH's authorising statute requires members of the Council to be secretaries/agency heads or their designees.

#### Reducing Bureaucracy/Improving Integration:



- In the decade after USICH published the first Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in 2010, homelessness declined 9% overall.
- The plan drove significant progress among families and veterans experiencing homelessness, which respectively declined nearly 30% and 50%.



(Image: The 2020 point in time count - annual homeless assessment report to Congress)<sup>67</sup>

- USICH has certified that more than 60 communities across more than 30 states have ended veteran homelessness - though their definition of ending homelessness is very different from the Community Solutions definition and essentially is a point in time achievement measured through street counts. In Australia, we wouldn't consider this to be 'ending homelessness', but rather a milestone on the way to ending homelessness.
- USICH makes it possible to combine federal resources to more effectively end homelessness. For example, it has helped pair HUD-funded housing with Medicaid-funded services to deliver high-quality Permanent Supportive Housing.
- Despite the existence of the Council there is still a lot of fragmentation, but it would be many times worse without it.
- "I highly recommend establishing a council in Australia, and would be happy to meet with the new Australian Minister."

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 5: Interagency Council** - Establish an Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness, to support the engagement of Commonwealth service delivery agencies relevant to ending homelessness, including in disability, aged care, primary health, veterans, social security, etc. It should be supported by a central agency like the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**Commonwealth Recommendation 6: State Government Interagency Coordination** - Require having state-based, across-government, and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms in place as a requirement of funding as part of the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement funding.

- This requirement is needed because never before in the history of the Australian Federation has a state government had the attention span to sustain effort on this issue, political and bureaucratic attention always moves on before the job is complete, but to their credit usually after progress has been made. Coordination efforts often get merged in with other human service coordination activities and the focus is lost. Key personnel leave their roles

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

and their functions fall away. An ongoing requirement for interagency coordination is needed if ending homelessness is truly the goal.

#### Disaster Resilience and Homelessness

- One of the agencies involved in the Council is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and a benefit of having them engaged is that it has sparked conversations about better disaster resilience efforts in relation to people experiencing homelessness, and developing support resources.<sup>68</sup>
- It has been found in Australia that having a by-name list can be very helpful in disaster preparedness, response and resilience.

#### Ending Homelessness in the Strategy

- USICH are working on a new strategy - but their existing strategy titled 'Opening Doors' talks about making homelessness 'rare, brief and a one time occurrence' - however some have concerns about this. Some people think the current strategy has seen neglect of families and youth.
- A key challenge for governments is they are accountable for seeking to do all things for all people all at the same time. It's hard for them to have a focus on a specific area for any length of time.
- Others see the chronic focus as an arbitrary construct - as people are constantly moving through different types of homelessness. It changes daily.
- Rare, brief and non-reoccurring in this sense is a milestone, not the outcome.
- We've become very good at ending homelessness at the individual level, we need to get better at doing it at the systemic level.
- The next strategic plan will likely be published in September, and focus on themed areas of work, rather than population by population focus.
- Themes/pillars will be: equity, data and evidence, housing and prevention.
- There will be a bigger focus on lived experience.
  - "We can borrow from the mental health world where they have a well-understood concept of nothing about us without us".
- Target setting will be important to the new strategy, by all agencies.

#### Prevention

- Prevention will be much more of a focus - the White House recently spearheaded a homelessness prevention workgroup, agencies committed to what they can already do within existing resources.
- The prevention workgroup has been quite successful so far. Some successes include:
  - Eviction prevention dollars in the Carers Act
  - Foster care transitions efforts
  - Justice system discharge improvements
  - Military engagement on housing and other pre discharge planning
  - Mental health inpatient care discharge arrangements.
- They are also doing some work in the primary care field - for example when a doctor screens you for depression (PHQ5 tool), and if it signals some indicators of depression, you ask a few more questions, we don't do anything like that with housing risk. But we should.
- Prevention work is rarely successful when you take the dollars for it from the crisis/resolution end of the system. You need additional funding and you need mechanisms (targets and strategies) to hold these other systems to account for the outcomes to turn off the faucet (tap).

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<sup>68</sup> [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Omicron\\_Variant\\_of\\_COVID19\\_What\\_Homeless\\_Service\\_Providers\\_Need\\_to\\_Know.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Omicron_Variant_of_COVID19_What_Homeless_Service_Providers_Need_to_Know.pdf)

- There has been some interesting work being done in the US, using computer models to predict who will become homeless to inform service providers where prevention activities will be the most effective.<sup>69</sup>

**State Governments Recommendation 5: Data Linkage** - Better utilise by-name list data currently being collected by undertaking data linkage efforts with other service systems to inform all AtoZ work but particularly prevention efforts.



*(Image: Meeting with Jeff, Washington, USA)*

#### History

- The Interagency Council on Homelessness was established in 1987 - when modern homelessness really started to emerge.
- It was originally established within the Housing and Urban Development Agency, but that was not very effective, particularly in getting mental health, veterans and other agency buy-in.
- Over time it moved to be a stand-alone agency.
- The Bush administration (Republican conservative) breathed new life into the Council - so it has seen bi-partisan support, and it then grew in standing substantially under Obama (Democrat/progressive).
- They have a direct line to the White House, with the director appointed by the White House. Having the central government agency in your corner is essential.
- The head of the domestic policy council is Susan Rice, former Ambassador to the United Nations. Rice is the key contact in the White House. Underneath her is the Special Assistant to the President for Housing and Urban Development.
- Many of the states now also have interagency councils. Two of the more advanced ones are California and Massachusetts.

**State Governments Recommendation 1: Have a Strategy** - Establish and publically document a whole of Government strategy to end homelessness, including:

- A target or timeframe.
- Utilise the Advance to Zero Framework in the development of that strategy.
- Establish across government and intergovernmental coordination efforts to support the implementation of that strategy.

<sup>69</sup> [www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-06-12/homeless-prevention-unit?\\_amp=true](http://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-06-12/homeless-prevention-unit?_amp=true)

## Operations

- In Washington DC they have a policy, communication, and administration role. Then they have regional coordinators, for the various parts of the country that ensure a two way flow of communication.
- They have quarterly meetings, and that feels about right as the time, paperwork and resources needed to go into coordinating them is a lot.
- They also have a council policy group, which is a delegated group below the secretaries. From time to time they also seek to make the state based groups stronger.

## Coordinating Entities

- Some argue that Continuums of Care are conceptually flawed because they have very varying levels of effectiveness. The authority of a loose conglomeration of NGO leaders who are competing for the same funds, is minimal. The locus of control might better sit with local governments.
- Be wary of setting up new entities to take the funding, this has been tried in the US, but usually just becomes another place for accountability to be shifted, where the levers of control don't exist.
- One example of a well established legal entity is the King Country Regional Homelessness Authority.
- In LA for example, the counties are strong and the Mayor's offices are weaker, comparatively to the rest of the country. They have had to set up regional homelessness authorities - and it becomes a blame game. This is where it's most dysfunctional in the US.
- To learn from this in Australia, perhaps the way to go is to utilise the Collective Impact models of 'backbone coordinating entities', that work closely with governments and the sector, but are not from either.
- One example of the Collective Impact approach is the EveryOne Home initiative to end homelessness in Alameda County. It has a well functioning board, and the Mayor has backed it. Another is the Destination Home - Santa Clara County. The challenge is the sector often turns on itself.

## Definitions

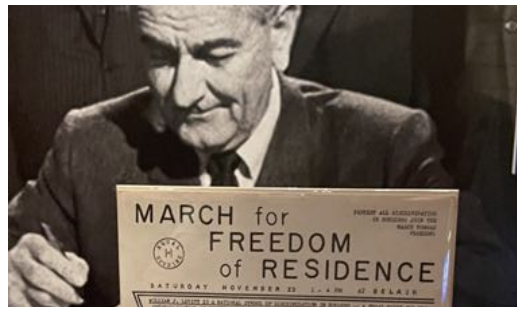
- Some find the functional zero concept challenging, or don't like the terminology as it accepts some homelessness, rather than seeks the goal of absolute zero, even though we're a long way off that.
- We can imagine a world where there is no homelessness for anyone, anywhere, anytime. So we should seek to bring that about. That's the first order goal. Then you can seek to make homelessness rare, brief and a once off in the short-term.
- Conceptually, it helps to see functional zero as the way you measure that for particular population groups, on the way to absolute zero.
- Each of these concepts can be nested within the broader goal of a literal end to all homelessness.
- The BNL has its role, but unless you do the data-matching to other service systems, you won't be going far enough upstream to really turn off the tap.

## Do you think ending homelessness is possible?

- "Absolutely - I've been in this work 28 years, I've never felt more confident that it's possible."

## Three things that are essential to ending homelessness:

- We really need to go upstream, it takes time, but we need to focus on it.
- We need a greater focus on equity.
- National, state and local infrastructure is needed - bringing officials together with the sense of urgency, and the long view.
- "This is literally a life or death issue, we need to act with a sense of urgency, but simultaneously take the long term view. Short term solutions aren't helping anyone."



(Image: Photo from the National Museum of American History, display on democracy and advocacy, President Johnson signing an executive order re fair housing ordinance for the Washington DC area)

### Michele Jolin - Results for America

- Title: Co Founder and CEO
- Date: 16 May 2022



#### Background

- The main areas of focus for Results for America, is supporting system change work, enabling a focus on evidence and outcomes.
- Michele worked in the Obama White House on the social innovation team. There she helped create the US\$50m social innovation fund, but it was very hard to get Congress to understand this, to get a focus on funding things without a track record/or evidence base - to back innovation.
- Results for America was formed to help set a standard of excellence, what government needs to have to make decisions based on evidence and data.

#### Social Enterprise

- Michele works with Ashoka, a pioneer in the field of social entrepreneurship and seeks to help build a global community of changemakers who have the confidence and support to solve problems and contribute to the common good.
- We discussed the relevance of the quote below from Bill Drayton, CEO of Ashoka to the work of seeking to end homelessness, as opposed to addressing individual instances of homelessness.
- *“Social entrepreneurs are not content to just fish, or teach to fish, but to revolutionise the fishing industry”* - Bill Drayton CEO of Ashoka.
- To seek to end homelessness requires being entrepreneurial.

#### Communicating our work.

- When you’re working to get others to change and working in an innovative way, it’s important to be really clear about what you do - but equally to describe how you do it.
- Results for America describe how they work this way:
  - The Opportunity: We know more than ever before about what works to improve lives. Evidence and data point the way to solutions.
  - The Solution: Government leaders must have the will to seek out evidence and data on what works – and what doesn’t – and the courage to use what they learn. If governments invest in what works, we can dramatically improve the impact of public dollars and increase opportunities for all.
- There are three streams to their work including:
  - Standards of Excellence - creating standards that highlight the government infrastructure necessary to invest in what works.

- Implementation support - supporting policymakers committed to investing in what works through tools, resources and technical assistance.
- Movement Building - celebrating the behaviour change and mobilising champions committed to investing in what works.

**AAEH Recommendation 4: Explain How We Work** - Develop a 'how we work' fact sheet, drawing heavily on the efforts of Results for America, to not just describe what we do, but to influence how we do it. For example:

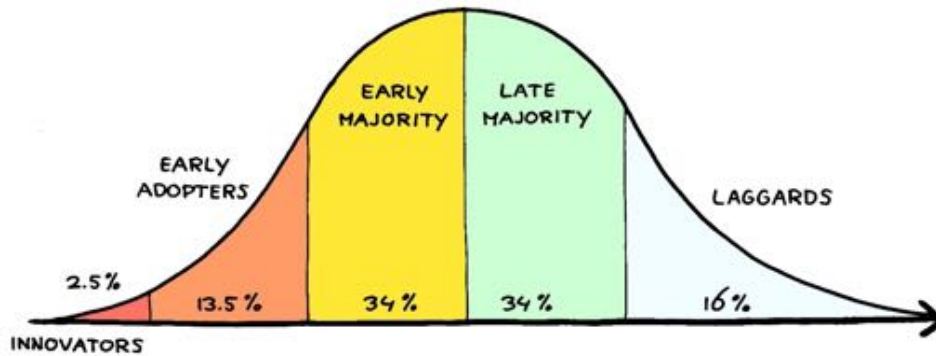
- Excellence in practice: Advance to Zero, Allied Networks, etc.
- Implementation: training and advisory, fellows, academy, etc.
- Mobilisation: Summit, Allied Networks, etc.

#### Results-based funding

- Results for America started at the federal level, and are now working with over 100 cities in a place-based way as a result of Bloomberg philanthropic support. Consequently a lot of programs have moved to outcomes-based funding rather than traditional block funding.
- Outcomes-based funding is where some, or all, of a contractual payment, is conditional on certain outcomes being achieved. It differs from block funding - more traditional methods of government procuring human services where a 'block' of funding is provided and a set of outputs is required, e.g. help ten people a day.
- Block funding is how almost all homelessness services are funded in Australia.
- The challenge with results-based funding is that a lot of the efforts to implement it have shifted 'risk' to non-government organisations.

#### Innovation vs Evidence Base

- There are a lot of people who will argue governments shouldn't be funding services that aren't 'evidence based'. If you follow this argument to the logical conclusion, it's inherently conservative and doesn't enable change, innovation, and learning - outside a highly prescriptive, expensive, randomised control research context.
- There are many types of evidence, ranging from build an evidence base through innovation, all the way up to randomised control trials.
- Having a really clear theory of change in the work you are doing helps create the space for innovation, but must include a commitment to building the evidence base as you go. This is what is so powerful about the by-name list innovation that Community Solutions has pioneered.
- The by-name list helps build a culture of using data for improvement and focusing on what works, and what we are learning, as opposed to data for accountability - either community and media holding governments to account, or governments holding service providers to account.
- We need more data for improvement versus data for judgement.
- Government needs to get better at providing the resources for building the evidence base as you go.
- Remember the innovation adoption curve - it classifies people by their willingness to adopt new ideas, technologies, or trends. Developed in 1962 by E.M. Rogers, it's also known as the Rogers Adoption Curve (illustrated below).
- It is represented by a bell-curve graph, which is used to show deviations within a group, with the highest point on the bell-curve indicating the majority; the early majority and late majority make up most of the population.
- It's helpful to have a clear understanding of where you are at on the curve.
- The AtoZ movement is moving from innovators phase to the early adopters phase. This is a helpful reminder that we don't need to solve this issue everywhere at once - we're seeking to demonstrate that ending homelessness is possible.



(Image: The Innovation Curve, The Centre for Association Leadership, USA)<sup>70</sup>

### Collective Impact and Consultation

- Governments have not generally funded Collective Impact initiatives in the US. Some governments show up at the table, but the concept is mostly driven by community and philanthropy. More information on Collective Impact can be found in Appendix B.
- This is a challenge for Australia given our philanthropic sector is so much smaller. Local government has a really important role here.
- Governments talk about community consultation and co-design, but it's rarely done well - the systems of government make this hard.
- Targets are important, as is having the right people at the table. Building capacity in government to do consultation better is also really key.

**State Government's Recommendation 3: Make Collaboration Easier** - Consider setting policies, or issuing guidelines on engaging with and procuring support from Collective Impact initiatives - to be clear on how state government agencies and personnel can best engage with and support these collaborations.

**Local Governments Recommendation 3: Focus efforts on ending homelessness** - Local government involvement in crisis responses is needed from time to time, but is largely the responsibility of state governments. Local government should take the longer view and focus on bringing communities together to create local zero projects and to financially support the backbone efforts of these Collective Impact initiatives to end homelessness.

- This focuses local accountability, builds whole of society buy-in and doesn't pull local government into direct service delivery and/or enable cost-shifting from state governments.
- Wherever possible local government should avoid being a direct provider of homelessness services, and focus on the things that it is uniquely suited to contribute to, namely as a:
  - convenor (bring communities together);
  - coordinator (service coordination, multi-agency case conferencing);
  - improver (supporting improvement in systems integration, prevention, etc.);
  - advocate (transparency in data and outcomes); and
  - funder of the above including backbone work.

**Local Governments Recommendation 3: Develop Resources to Make It Easier** - Agencies like the state-based Local Government Associations, the Australian Local Government Association and the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM) should support the development of tools and resources to make it easier for local governments to engage and support this work.

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an\\_plus/2017/september/rethinking-the-change-adoption-curve](https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/articles/an_plus/2017/september/rethinking-the-change-adoption-curve)



*(Images: Photos of homelessness in the Washington DC area, including a children's stroller in front of a tent)*

### Communications and Evidence

- Better communicating the evidence you build is essential. It's all well and good to build an evidence base, but if no one knows about it, what's the point?
- To deal with this, Results for America has established the 'What Works Media Project'. This project uses the power of storytelling and data-driven solutions to impact policy and change lives.
- In particular, they use the power of non-fiction filmmaking to highlight 'what works' to advance social mobility and the courageous leaders in government who are driving this change.
- The project is led by award-winning documentary producers and journalists with decades of experience creating stories that translate difficult subjects and motivate action.
- Australia needs to build the capacity for this type of collaborative communications activity in support of efforts to end homelessness. The Co-Lab concept could provide a vehicle for this.

### Stop Raising Awareness of Homelessness

- Another thing we need to get better at regarding communications and ending homelessness is to stop raising awareness.
- For anyone working on a cause they are passionate about, the instinct to make sure that as many people as possible are aware of the problem is strong.
- When we care about an issue, it's natural to want others to care as much as we do - surely if people knew that you're more likely to die in an accident if you don't wear a seat belt, they'd wear their seat belt.
- That instinct is described by communication theory as the Information Deficit Model.<sup>71</sup>
- What we need to do is create awareness that leads to action. There is a great Stanford social innovation review article that focuses on this and explains the four essential elements to creating a public interest communications campaign that leads to action:
  - target your audience as narrowly as possible;
  - create compelling messages with clear calls to action;
  - develop a theory of change; and
  - use the right messenger.<sup>72</sup>

**AAEH Recommendation 24: Communications** - Establish an ending homelessness communications toolkit and community of practice to develop and champion best practice efforts to frame, communicate, and talk about ending homelessness.

<sup>71</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information\\_deficit\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_deficit_model)

<sup>72</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/stop\\_raising\\_awareness\\_already](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/stop_raising_awareness_already)



## Organising for Change

- Organisations that build robust infrastructure, which includes communications, but also information technology systems, financial systems, professional development, fundraising processes, and other essential overheads, are more likely to succeed than those that do not.
- This is not news, and non-profits are no exception to the rule.
- The AAEH needs to think about its organisational strategy, and build an organisation capable of supporting the movement that will be needed to end homelessness in Australia. This isn't a distraction from core business, this is literally your business as a social enterprise.
- One way to build capacity is to utilise volunteers and interns, but again you have to build the capacity to support them.

## Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes

## Three most important factors:

- Movement building - political engagement, making it mainstream, celebrating the changes in behaviour, and calling out the poor practice.
- Knowing what good looks like - examples of it being done elsewhere.
- Helping people to get there - remember the innovation adoption curve, we don't need to solve this everywhere at once. We need to demonstrate the innovation.

## ***Norman Suchar - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development***

- Title: Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs
- Date: 16 May 2022

## Background

- Norman has been at the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for seven years and was previously with National Alliance.
- He is the director of Special Needs Assistance at HUD - one of the executive departments of the U.S. federal government.
- HUD administers federal housing and urban development laws. It is headed by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, who reports directly to the President of the United States and is a member of the President's Cabinet.



## Data

- To get a system level outcome you need data to inform your efforts, to give you confidence that you are achieving what you think you are achieving.
- In the US we generally don't have great data on unsheltered homelessness - the people move a lot and use many different types of services.
- HMIS creates a set of data standards, and each community hires a vendor, to help them meet the requirements for reporting.
- The Australian Institute for Health and Welfare provides a similar role in Australia. The Challenge for HUD is they don't have any legal structures to influence the vendors, just consistent data standards.



*(Images: Arriving at the HUD office in Washington DC)*

### Continuums of Care

- Continuums of Care or CoCs - were created to create incentives for providers to not cream, or cherry pick, who they house and leave the most vulnerable cycling through different forms of homelessness. More background on CoCs is in Appendix B.
- Some take the view that when CoCs are dominated by providers, they generally are not well operated, there isn't much accountability, often stagnation and very little innovation.
- Coordinated entry was established to take decision making away from the providers, and to put it at a community system level. This was really important.
- The CoCs that are most effective have heavy participation of various levels of government, and the various arms of government.
- Best continuums have strong mayoral or gubernatorial leadership. Champions are critical.
- There isn't much flexibility in how CoCs geographic coverage is decided, they are mostly historical anachronisms. There are a handful of states that have just one CoC - Montana for example, Ohio has six or seven city based CoCs and the rest of the state falls into what's called a 'balance of state' CoC.
  - Colorado has a number of CoCs but they all use the same HMIS vendor/system, enabling data sharing.
- Despite the challenges and problems with CoCs, what they really help with is ensuring that communities need to come up with a shared vision, if they don't the issues get played out in the media.
- The lack of local plans or action plans is why so often rough sleepers get such a poor service.
- Another challenge is the CoCs come up with action plans, and the city and state government change the plan - quite a bit. The idea behind CoC's action plans is that they represent everyone's view, but it doesn't work this way. CoCs aren't influential enough.
- When you have competing priorities, then you don't really have priorities.

### Housing First

- In the US, people agree broadly with Housing First, but we have very spotty execution.
- It's either not done at all, or if you're a provider, it's easier to run a program that is inflexible, delivers Housing First purely to a small number of people, but operates in a system that is broken, and does little to influence that system.
- Regarding fidelity to the Housing First debates, these went away a bit in recent times because of President Trump - the debate was about defending the role of the federal government in homelessness at all. This helped more people recognise that Housing First fidelity debates are an academic exercise unless you are changing systems on the ground.
- Homelessness needs are similar in most communities, but the responses are very different. So for example, New York is very shelter focused (and has a right to shelter), but California does not.

## VI-SPDAT

- There are lots of debates about VI-SPDAT, but the reality is there really isn't an alternative.
- We need a process for identifying people who are very ill and have high levels of disability, so that in the US we can identify people who need permanent supportive housing. In Australia this isn't the purpose behind the use of the tool, because we don't have a supportive housing system.
- Why government has not engaged in this, and left it to communities to decide is accountabilities are different in government. For example, if you've been arrested recently, you are more likely to be identified as vulnerable and more likely to get housed. If government mandated a process like that they would be crucified because it would be seen by some as incentivising the committing of crimes.
- There have also been significant racial disparities identified in housing outcomes in the US, but the fact that we have racist landlords in the private rental system, doesn't mean you need permanent supportive housing for all people subject to discrimination. We need to address racism in the private market.

## Deaths Data

- The US collects some data, a lot of the data is collected through news reports, some cities track the numbers through coroner's courts. There is no consistent national framework for measuring how many people die whilst experiencing homelessness.
- There are an estimated 21 deaths of people experiencing homelessness every single day in the USA. They die in cars, abandoned houses, tents, shelters, and sidewalks. Almost all of these deaths are preventable.<sup>73</sup>
- This estimate is pulled together by a volunteer non-profit based in Seattle.

## How did Ending Homelessness become the Strategy

- The work of the National Alliance to End Homelessness was pivotal.
- In 2010, the federal government adopted the language through their 'Opening Doors' policy.
- It introduced the language of rare, brief and a once time occurrence - whereas the Alliance's language was closing the front door into homelessness (i.e. prevention) and opening the back door out of homelessness (i.e. stopping people from cycling back into homelessness).
- The outcome has been the same, and has really permeated thinking ever since, and has even made it into the names of organisations and collaborations.

## By-Name Lists

- The difficulty in understanding functional zero is often a barrier for many, for others the level of resources to keep a by-name list up to date is prohibitive.
- The by-name list is a really good 'last mile tool', i.e. as you get closer to achieving functional zero: it's less helpful when you have 5,000 people sleeping rough out the front of the mayor's office.
- The standard that the US Govt uses to recognise an end to homelessness is significantly less rigorous than the functional zero measure. It shares the rare, brief and non-reoccurring goal, but it relies on point in time counts.

## The US Interagency Council on Homelessness

- The USICH has a really crucial function. Interagency work needs to be someone's responsibility, and it's always low on an agency's priorities, as they have their own issues to work through.
- Accountabilities are very strongly up and down in government departments, you need someone to bring people together across agency structures.
- Agencies will always have disagreements, and you need someone to mediate.

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<sup>73</sup> <https://homelessdeathscount.org/>

- If you're developing strategy it's also really helpful to have it sit above agencies, i.e. out of the White House.

#### Is Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Absolutely, ending homelessness is possible, we can have enough housing.
- This is fundamentally a challenge of democratic governance - housing costs are going up everywhere, there is a problem with incentives around building housing and infrastructure and addressing poverty and inequality.

#### What are the top three things needed to end homelessness?

- Setting specific, measurable goals and modelling your progress to this is really important. To do that you need good data collection.
  - This enables a set of performance measures, cost effectiveness measures, and preference measures to be developed.
  - To set a goal and model towards it is a telling strategy, it shows you where the pain points are, what the opportunities are.
  - HUD did some modelling on ending veterans homelessness. It got a surge in federal funding, but when they checked the model, they realised it was inaccurate. They realised through this that technical assistance (consulting) and implementation assistance was really needed.
- Bravery in the funding, stop funding things that aren't working.
  - They have had some success at redirecting funding away from transitional housing.
  - There are always going to be agencies who only want to work with those with low acuity - it's easier and it's cheaper (for that agency - not for the system). Stop rewarding these agencies and punishing the ones who focus on the high acuity.
- Collective impact is key, but you need to fund it.
  - *"You could make many homelessness responses twice as effective, if you managed the system better, but the inclination is always there to fund direct services, it's inefficient. If you want to shift the dial, fund the improvements to the systems, not more funding into the crisis end of broken systems."*

#### Triina Van - Arlington County Department of Human Services

- Title: Homeless Services Coordinator
- Date: 17 May 2022



#### Background

- Arlington County is small, and only has one level of government involved in homelessness service delivery and coordination.
- All their funds come through their CoC which operates the coordinated access effort, as well as all the municipal services including employment, ageing etc.
- There are five non-profits that are part of the CoC. Co-Chairs of the CoC are from the NGOs, but it also includes housing developers, elected officials, etc.

#### Involvement in Built for Zero

- Arlington County involvement started in 2016 when they joined the 100,000 Homes campaign. This really helped bring the county together.
- At the time, they had between 500-600 people experiencing all forms of homelessness. Roughly 225 in shelter, their capacity doesn't change much.
  - The campaign was really successful in getting greater integration.

- Involvement in the campaign spearheaded the decline in overall homelessness that has been sustained.
- The key factor in the success of getting to functional zero was that at the time, the federal strategic plan rolled out (pulled together by the interagency council). They moved from requiring a 10 year plan, to two-three year plans focused on a subpopulation strategy - i.e. chronic and veterans.
- Community Solutions help was really crucial to successfully achieving functional zero for veterans and they have effectively sustained it ever since.
- Arlington County has had ebbs and flows in the reporting of the data to Community Solutions.
- They have sustained veterans' functional zero to this day. That doesn't mean no one will ever be on the street who is a veteran, just that experiences will be rare, brief and a one time thing.
- They haven't officially signed on to do 'zero for all' - i.e. all rough sleeping - they are working through their governance processes on that. They need to develop a new strategic plan due by the end of the year.

#### Data and Coordination

- The by-name list is just a subset of the data Arlington County has to collect for the Federal Government (HMIS). They have a number of by-name lists.
  - Families
  - Single adults - sheltered/unsheltered
  - Single adults - rapid re-housing (short term rent assistance)
  - Youth gets overlapped.
- There is a different meeting/coordinating team for each list.
- Chronic homelessness has been really hard because although people meet the definition, but are not eligible for housing, i.e. they are undocumented, mental health system doesn't meet their needs, culturally appropriateness of services, stigma, etc.
- The community has been tracking data, and action is linked to strategic plans, but the data doesn't necessarily inform the activities. It should.
- HUDs trying to support collaboration, but the resource starved nature of the CoCs mean that the NGOs are usually competing with each other.

#### Challenges

- Arlington County has challenges, like most communities, with turnover of staff and stakeholders and general capacity issues for system level work.
- Getting people to engage is hard, it's trying to incorporate this side initiative that Community Solutions and Built for Zero are pushing and incorporate it and see it as part of the day-to-day work communities are doing.
- The challenge is finding solutions for the really specific sub groups.

#### Action Plans

- Having an Action Plan is a requirement of the CoCs - but HUD makes it flexible. They help build understanding of what everyone is agreeing to do.
- Most find plans very useful - they give your work a grounding, they help enable a focus on connecting the strategy with the data.
  - Originally required 10 year plans. That was too long term, it's better now with the requirement for 3-5 year plans.
- Arlington County reports data using a Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach, a way of measuring the real differences made to communities, also known as outcomes based methodology.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See Appendix D for further background on Results Based Accountability

It's closely linked to the Collective Impact approach towards collaborating with local communities to make positive, sustainable change to complex social issues.



(Image: Photo of the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington Cemetery, Virginia, USA)

#### Prevention

- Arlington's prevention efforts are to be credited as to why there has been no waitlist for the past few years.
- They have staff whose job it is to focus on this, and to measure performance.
- For example in 2015, the CoC benchmarked the number of persons who were homeless and entered permanent housing but returned to homelessness (e.g. emergency shelter or on the streets) within two years.
- In 2015, the percentage of persons returning to homelessness was 25%; this decreased slightly to 22% in 2016. It was a small difference, but had a big impact.

**AAEH Recommendation 11: Prevention Data Reporting** - Support AtoZ communities to benchmark, track and publicly report their systems performance in reducing the number of people newly identified or returning to homelessness - i.e. prevention.

#### Permanent Supportive Housing

- Arlington has about 400 units available in their county, funded through a plethora of federal, state and local government programs.
- Most if not all of the Permanent Supportive Housing is scattered site, so no onsite support. They would very much like to have some more onsite based Permanent Supportive Housing.

#### Is ending homelessness possible?

- Originally I would have said no - not without the resources, but now, we have the flavour for what it will take, and what kind of resources are needed - so yes. If the federal government could find the funding for the pandemic response, surely they could find the funding to end homelessness.

#### Top three things needed?

- Paying reparations to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) communities and getting resources and power into their hands.
- Move to a rights frame, and trust people with the funds and housing - so an empowerment model, where we stop policing the poor, making decisions on the basis of the deservingness of the poor.
- Data and Collaboration.

### *Nan Roman - The National Alliance to End Homelessness*

- Title: CEO
- Date: 17 May 2022
- National Alliance's work focuses on data and research, policy work, and technical assistance/training.



#### Data and Research

- Has a research council that meets periodically and comes together at conferences.
- Often research what no-one else is focused on or even knows about.
- Government Departments have funds for research, but by the time they do it, the issues have usually moved on. It's frustratingly behind the eight ball.

#### Policy Work

- The National Alliance has done a lot of work with Dennis Culhane, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Using administrative data, he's been really helpful in giving a sense of what the cost of action/inaction is and it helped raise a HUD program that was going to be US\$1bn to being a US\$4bn program, based on his work estimating the projected mortality rate of the homeless during the pandemic.
- They also do a lot of work with the California Policy Lab - Jannie Roundtree.
- A key challenge is effectiveness - in the US - 9% get housed and the rest self resolve or remain homelessness.
  - People who are unsheltered are homeless five times longer than sheltered people.
  - 80% of unsheltered women are tri-morbid - experiencing mental health, physical health and drug and alcohol problems.
  - 2% of sheltered are tri-morbid.

#### Technical Assistance and Training

- The National Alliance do this work not because we need or are chasing the funds, but to understand what's going on on the ground, to understand what is needed by communities. To keep us grounded.
- Every few years we shift the focus, from individual adults, to people who are unsheltered, etc.
- The main activities of the Alliance are our two conferences: one in DC, that is focused on everyone, veterans, youth, families, individuals, and another on the West Coast - always on a subpopulation, it was families recently.
- Most of the funding for the Alliance comes from the conferences and training. They get a few bequests and philanthropy, but don't chase the corporate dollar, as it too often comes with too many strings.



*(Image: An example of foundations engaging in Advocacy in Washington DC)*

### Communications and Advocacy

- Is a big part of work of the Alliance- in all three areas, data and reach, policy and technical assistance.
- Very important to be focused on the mission and not the industry.
- Found it hard to engage with healthcare.

### Supportive Housing

- There are problems with the efficacy of the supportive housing models.
- Providers don't always take the high needs clients. Sometimes they take them some time in the past, people get better, and then the service starts to fall away, so when you get vacancies, they don't want to take the high needs clients because they don't have the services any more or don't want to upset the service model.
- Holding PSH as PSH is hard.

### Prevention/Assessment:

- There is a process regarding screening and tools used in veterans affairs on primary health which asks about housing. This is not seen as threatening.
- Requiring a policy of no discharge is seen as threatening, and often doesn't get anywhere - that's why protocols are important.
- When it comes to prevention, one of the most effective measures can be diversion - i.e. on the day someone presents at a shelter or service, you work with them so that they don't need to come in, and try and work on options so that admission is a last resort, rather than a 'come on in' approach.
- What drives people to sleep rough is varied, but often very small issues, and a small amount of funding can go a long way. Flexible funding is key to this - often called brokerage funding in Australia.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 8: Flexible Fund** - establish an 'Ending Homelessness Flexible Fund' to support efforts to drive and sustain reductions in people experiencing homelessness through the Advance to Zero Campaign - with a particular focus on prevention and diversion activities.

### Is Ending Homelessness possible?

- When Nan started working on affordable housing in 1983, they had racism, drug use, mental health problems, but could get people into housing. There was no large-scale homelessness back then. Things have changed a lot since then, but 'I know ending homelessness is possible, because there was none when I started my career'.
- The National Alliance was originally called the National Citizens Committee for Food and Shelter. Nan changed it to be about ending homelessness because she believed it is possible.
- I know we don't need it to be this way. Ending homelessness is absolutely possible, but we need housing.

### Top three things you would do to end homelessness.

- Target funding to those who are most vulnerable, not the easiest to manage.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Make housing and health an entitlement or a right, not something that you have to jump through a maze of programs to try and access.





(Image: Rev Martin Luther King Jr Memorial, Washington DC)

### National Alliance to End Homelessness

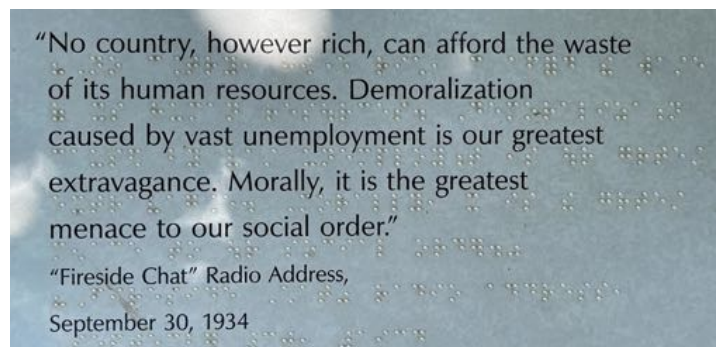
- In attendance: Jerry Jones, National Field Director and Kristi Schulenberg, Director: Centre for Capacity Building
- Date: 17 May 2022



### Field Organising/Politics

- Grassroots advocacy or bottom-up movement building - both are needed.
- The grassroots approach has been the Alliance's founding focus, but they are doing the top-down policy work a lot more now too.
- The organisations they engage in their advocacy work are shelter operators, drop in centre operators, etc.
- Local non-profits are the lion's share of the Alliance membership.
- Activities include petitions, getting people to write to Congress etc.
- Homelessness used to be bipartisan - increasingly less so.
- Homelessness is solvable, but Washington has to be willing to spend the money it would take.
- Field organising is key. The kind that the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) was well known for.
- One event that gets a lot of attention is the homelessness persons Memorial Day, held on the winter solstice - longest night of the year.<sup>75</sup>

**AAEH Recommendation 12: Winter Solstice** - The AAEH encourage the winter solstice to be a point to recognise the number of people whose lives are lost to homelessness each year in Australia.



(Image: Photo of President FDR Memorial quote, Washington DC)

<sup>75</sup> <https://nationalhomeless.org/about-us/projects/memorial-day/>

## Training and Advisory

- The Alliance work focuses on building system capacity, with cities, or CoCs to conduct assessments of systems and their effectiveness. They support building capacity in the Collective Impact as well.
- This is helpful for local communities - as the saying goes, no one is a prophet in their own land.
- The Alliance has developed a centre for capacity building - the team includes an online learning manager who helps with developing onboarding training curriculum (because turnover is so high in the sector), delivering training on trauma-informed care, improving racial equity, etc.

**State Governments Recommendation: Secotr Capacity** - Support more training and capacity-building efforts to build the capability of local communities to undertake the type of work that ending homelessness requires: working collaboratively, using data to inform decision-making, assertive outreach, trauma-informed, Housing First, etc.

## New York, USA

### **Paul Howard - The Institute for Healthcare Improvement**



- Title: Senior Director, Community Health Portfolio Lead
- Date: 19 May 2022
- Paul is doing a lot of work at the moment on community and population health - working with Orange County in California where they have highly wealthy areas and very poor areas right next to each other. The goal is to move the dial on the social determinants of health. They are selecting the areas at the moment - food security, safe affordable housing, etc.
- Tips for Australia, are
  - Focus on pain points, don't make it academic, doesn't matter what the issues are when you start, build the improvement muscle.
  - A lot of people say we don't have time for this. Helping them to recognise this is part of their work is a big part of improvement.
  - Building a foundational understanding of systems thinking, where they can see that they are making things worse in many instances by working in such a fragmented way.
  - Build the muscle, start small (small problems and few people). The first time a community runs a PDSA cycle (plan, do study, act), try and do it in seven day projects, and then 30 day projects.
    - Try to only introduce 90 day projects after a learning session, and you've built the muscle, and tested and learned after a few rounds.
- You don't need to try and get everyone on board right away, you are looking for your innovators and early adopters - relevant to the innovation adoption curve.
  - 15% of the people start with the innovators - they will try because it's new.
  - Then there are early adopters who are often influential people in their system that will help shift the dial - 35%.
  - Others will wait to engage until the evidence has been demonstrated - 35%.
  - Then there are the laggards, or traditionalists, will only change behaviours when required to by policy, contract, or legislation - 15%.

## Government's role

- Being supportive, but not mandating, is very important at the early and mid stage. Only towards the last 15% do you want to mandate - for the traditionalists.
- We really need to test, and continue to customise in the Australian context, failing forward etc.
- Government wants to fund results - the pitch should be 'we want you to fund us to learn about what it takes to end homelessness in Australia'.

- Government helps with the support and getting the last 20%, but they aren't good at learning. Government can address homelessness, but to end it - for that you need learning.
- Government can solve technical problems, they can do big reforms, with policies and reporting, but you need to do constant improvement and learning in complex systems. Government should support those who are helping to learn, and inform them of what is working.
  - There is a need for innovation in the systems required to end homelessness - not just the homelessness system, but the feeder systems too.

#### Collaboration and Learning

- Forcing collaboration doesn't work, you need the light bulb to go off, and people to engage, for sustained change.
- Some will always push back - all we need is to fund Housing First responses, and it is true that this is the lion's share of the problem, but that will help to address homelessness, not end it.
  - Housing First investment is a big part of the piece, it's not the entire answer to the problem.
- Others will also say you've been doing this work for years, how much more learning do we need to do? The answer I'd say to this is we haven't got the dosage right - funding will help with getting the dosage right, helping with coaching and the support, plus capacity on the ground - to do the improvement and learning required to truly solve this problem.

#### Doing Improvement Work

- What dosage is necessary in supporting improvement work? Do you always need direct coaching, can you have self directed learning or cohort coaching?
  - What we've learned is that a high dosing early on is essential.
  - Explaining why you need to fill out the PDSA form, zeroing in on the hypothesis they are trying to test.
  - What we've also found is that people can learn it online, but have a lot of trouble applying it without coaching.
- The resources that we've really built on are design thinking, psychology of change and doubling down on working with people with lived experience.
  - IHI thinks of design thinking and the Model for Improvement as complementary. For example, maybe you've figured out what you want to improve, but you're struggling with developing change ideas or the ones you've tried haven't worked. Design thinking makes you step back and work with patients to go beyond surveys to get insights about their experience. Those insights help generate a greater range of change ideas than can be formulated through more traditional processes. This helps speed improvement.<sup>76</sup>
  - The psychology of change in particular, has a lot of community organising, crafting strong messages, understanding what's in it for me (WIFM) type analysis - rather than just asking people to do things. A core tenet of the psychology of change is the four conditions for changing mind-sets:
    - A purpose to believe in;
    - Reinforcement systems;
    - The skills required for change; and
    - Consistent role models.<sup>77</sup>

**AAEH Recommendation 5: Systems Training:** The AAEH incorporate more systems thinking training (including mental models, psychology of change, etc.) into the existing training.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.ihi.org/communities/blogs/how-to-overcome-improvement-resistant-challenges>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-psychology-of-change-management>

- We've found that the best way to engage a new community is to ask two simple questions: do you believe that ending homelessness is possible? If so, do you want to be part of a community that is learning how to do that?
- Regarding the best way to engage the health system in the work of ending homelessness - the trick is finding what is important to the healthcare system, and making your work relevant. To do that, you need to listen.

#### Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes - we know how to do it and build the will necessary. It's a community and government choice to allow homelessness - we could choose to end it if we wanted.

#### The three things that enable any community that wants to end homelessness are:

- Use data and measure outcomes, through the establishment of by-name lists.
- Learn all of the tools, re improvement science.
- Connect and learn with others who are on the same journey.

#### *Laurel Blatchford - Blue Meridian*

- Title: Senior Adviser - System change - Place Matters team
- Date: 19 May 2022

blue meridian  
partners

#### Background

- Laurel was chief of staff at the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Obama Administration.
- Blue Meridian: brings problems, solutions and funders together. They support philanthropy to pool their funds to support leaders who are seeking to make change at scale, so they can focus on having impact and not on chasing grant dollars.
- They seek to scale what is working at a national level - but recognise the importance of place.
- They focus on youth or cradle to career outcomes in 14 places and are very informed by Collective Impact.
- It's a philanthropic effort, and they are looking to give US\$80-100m per place.
- They use the funds for technical assistance (i.e. data work), field building or backbones of the local backbone work (i.e. what Community Solutions or the AAEH does).
- For example, the Gates Foundation is funding an economic mobility alliance, common definitions, common standard - building a frame of reference.

#### Place Based Work

- The benefits of place based work are apparent; it helps break down silos - and recognises that where you live is so fundamental to your life outcomes.
- Blue Meridian came to this work through affordable housing.
- The reason to think about place based work is to address the postcode lottery.
- The Johnson administration tried to do urban renewal, and it had some very destructive, gentrification outcomes.
- When doing place based work, innovative ownership structures, like land trusts are really important.

#### Community Land Trusts

- Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit organisations governed by a board of CLT residents, community residents and public representatives that provide lasting community assets and shared equity home-ownership opportunities for families and communities.

- CLTs develop rural and urban agriculture projects, commercial spaces to serve local communities, affordable rental and cooperative housing projects, and conserve land or urban green spaces. However, the heart of their work is the creation of homes that remain permanently affordable, providing successful homeownership opportunities for generations of lower income families.
- There are over 225 CLTs in the United States.<sup>78</sup>

### Philanthropy

- Getting philanthropy to support efforts to get to scale in place based approaches is hard work, but worth it.
- Philanthropy is big in the USA because government is dysfunctional, and because of the massive wealth inequality.
- A lot of US based philanthropists think that they can solve complex problems like homelessness with the technical solutions that made them wealthy: for example building an app that gets you your sushi faster. Homelessness is more complex than that, but there are lessons to be learnt about working in an agile way, building minimum viable products to test innovations, etc. Philanthropists bring skills that the sector needs.

**Philanthropy Recommendation 1: Focus More on Systemic Change** - Philanthropic organisations should leverage their unique position and resources to support efforts that go beyond crisis responses. Crisis responses quite literally keep people alive, reduce human suffering and are absolutely crucial, but this shouldn't be the only focus, yet for many funders it is.



*(Image: Photo from the exhibition on Entrepreneurship in the Museum of American History, Washington DC)*

### Role of Government in ending homelessness

- There's a view amongst some that HUD is broken, it's under-resourced to do what it does, and like any government agency, there's little incentive for taking risks.
- Critics say it's full of aeroplane hanger programs that take up all the money.
- We place too much expectation on government sometimes. It's harder for government because community led initiatives like the Advance to Zero movement get to pick the communities you work with. Government often doesn't.
- You need to join up government policy and community led organising.

### Is Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Yes, but needs a system and structural response.
- Housing First has demonstrated the first step, but it's not enough.

<sup>78</sup> <https://groundedsolutions.org/strengthening-neighborhoods/community-land-trusts>

Top three things that are needed to make this happen?

- Radically changing the investment structure in housing, to make it more affordable.
- Income - wages and benefits. Both need to be fixed.
- Funding systems at the level of need.

**Deborah DeSantis - Corporation for Supportive Housing**

- Title: CEO
- Date: 19 May 2022



Politics

- Homelessness is becoming more and more politicised; there is a tension between the business community and advocates.
- Increasingly on the east coast (of the USA), there is a wrong connection being made between homelessness and crime. On the west coast it's more a public nuisance issue, than it is a public safety issue.

FUSE Program

- The FUSE program (Frequent Users Systems Engagement) helps communities break the cycle of homelessness and crisis among individuals with complex medical and behavioural health challenges who are the highest users of emergency rooms, jails, shelters, clinics and other costly crisis services.
- FUSE is a proven model identifying frequent users and then improving their lives through supportive housing.



*(Image: I met with Deb at a cafe in one of the largest former bank vaults in the USA - the signs of wealth inequality were never far away wherever I went)*

- It's the wrap-around support services that tenants are provided with alongside their housing which stabilises their lives and significantly reduces returns to jail and homelessness, reliance on emergency health services, and improves overall quality of life.

#### CHALLENGE

Communities waste billions on uncoordinated service responses as people without housing frequently cycle between shelters, hospitals, jails, and the streets.

#### SOLUTION

The FUSE supportive housing framework stabilizes frequent users of homeless, health and justice services, ending this costly revolving door.

CSH FUSE has been formally evaluated and shows impressive reductions in the use of expensive crisis services and greatly improves housing retention. Over 30 communities implementing FUSE are seeing positive results.



(Image: Overview of the FUSE initiative, Corporation for Supportive Housing, USA)<sup>79</sup>

#### Housing First

- There are a lot of debates about Housing First in the US as in Australia: they usually fall into the following camps:
  - Housing First as a program intervention: People who say that Housing First is a very specific service model, with specific case management loads.
  - Housing First as a philosophy: Those who seek to implement the philosophy as best they can in an environment where there isn't enough housing.
  - Non Housing First: Either don't know about Housing First, don't know how to do it, or don't want to.
- CSH sees Housing First as a philosophy.
- Supportive housing can be best practice Housing First, but also have to recognise that some supportive housing isn't - i.e. some supportive housing tenants will want a clean and sober environment. That's not possible in a pure Housing First model.
- The need is therefore to ensure choice that meets the needs of the people seeking help.
- CSH doesn't put much energy into defending Housing First - 'we focus on making sure people understand what supportive housing is'.
- Housing First is seen to be failing in the US because providers don't have the funding, staff, willingness, and/or knowledge for supporting high needs clients.

#### Standards/Model Fidelity

- It's important to be honest about the challenges faced in holding the PSH model.
- There are examples of where tenants stay for a while, get better, the programs drop off (i.e. providers don't provide as many as they aren't needed), but then can't take the high needs clients going forward as they don't have the services.
- This is why you need a system that meets the needs of those that are in it.
- The CSH have developed a way of assessing the efficacy of the model - like a certification model, but it's voluntary.
- They have called it the dimensions of quality, but will be moving to a 'quality standards' in a rebrand shortly. There are:

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.csh.org/fuse/>

- **Component**—The four primary elements of a supportive housing project:
  - **Project Design and Administration**—The process of planning and leading the supportive housing project, including key decisions about physical structure, team members and funding
  - **Property and Housing Management**—The ongoing operation of supportive housing and connection to private market landlords
  - ◆ **Supportive Services**—The package of support services available to help tenants use stable housing as a platform for individual health, recovery and personal growth
  - ▲ **Community**—The relationship to and role of housing in the larger context in which it operates
- **Dimension of Quality**—All successful supportive housing projects are:
  - **Tenant-Centered**—Every aspect of housing focuses on meeting tenants' needs
  - **Accessible**—Tenants of all backgrounds and abilities enter housing quickly and easily
  - **Coordinated**—All supportive housing partners work to achieve shared goals
  - **Integrated**—Housing provides tenants with choices and community connections
  - **Sustainable**—Housing operates successfully for the long term

(Image: Corporation for Supportive Housing, USA)<sup>80</sup>

**AAEH Recommendation 23: Improve PSH Understanding** - Bring representatives of the CSH to Australia to:

- Raise awareness of what PSH is and the need for Permanent Supportive Housing Systems;
- Facilitate the integration of FUSE program lessons into the AtoZ tools relating to coordinated systems; and
- Help develop Australian Supportive Housing Standards.

Options for Growing the Supportive Housing System in Australia

- A tenant based vouchers scheme, or a top up to the Commonwealth Government Rent Assistance type arrangement would help to create an ongoing marketplace for this type of housing. Further consideration of this, and how it could work is needed. Lessons could be learned from what is and isn't working regarding access to supportive housing in the disability and mental health spaces.
- Arguably the easier and faster option is to create a Commonwealth Government capital fund - utilising the quality standards - to help unlock the investment to start to develop a PSU.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 7: Unmet Need** - Commission an agency like the Productivity Commission or the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) to review and determine what the level of unmet need for supportive housing is in Australia and most importantly, what it would take to end chronic rough sleeping homelessness.

- The review could also investigate the creation of a Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) top-up for people who have an experience of chronic rough sleeping homelessness to ensure we can prevent future instances of chronic homelessness from occurring.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 8: Growing Permanent Supportive Housing** - Establish a Permanent Supportive Housing Growth Fund for capital and services to meet the immediate needs of those experiencing chronic homelessness, tying such investments to communities across Australia that are seeking to not just manage homelessness better but are working to end it.

- Targeting such investments towards communities with quality data, service coordination forums, and the other elements associated with ending homelessness efforts will substantially increase the 'bang for buck' or impact these investments can have, as they can be leveraged to transform - or unclog - local homelessness and housing systems.

<sup>80</sup> [https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CSH\\_Dimensions\\_of\\_Quality\\_Supportive\\_Housing\\_guidebook.pdf](https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CSH_Dimensions_of_Quality_Supportive_Housing_guidebook.pdf)



**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 9: Sustaining Permanent Supportive Housing** - Support the AAEH to establish a National Permanent Supportive Housing Network, to guide the development of local supportive housing systems in Australia, build understanding, improve practice, and help to ensure that when we do build PSH that they stay PSH.

Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes, is it doable.
- Is it likely - no. We are lacking resources, political will and coordination - without this we can make great strides, but as a field we don't spend enough time on workforce development and income.
- We had a keynote speaker a few years ago, Anan, who challenged everyone at our conference to imagine what would happen if you all decided you would advocate for one thing, rather than the hundreds of programs and various initiatives that you all go to the government and advocate for. Imagine how much more effective you would be. Imagine what could be achieved.
- We're all doing wonderful things but are we doing the right things? Are we aligning our efforts enough?

What are the top three things you would do?

- Address income inequality.
- Ensure services are funded on the basis of addressing need, not on block grants, so that if you need it you get it, particularly mental health.
- Ensure there are collaborative vehicles in place to drive this change - i.e. in the US redesign the Continuums of Care to ensure they have all levels of government at the table - the vast bulk of them in the US are ineffective.

**Cynthia Stuart - Supportive Housing Network of New York**

- Title: Chief Operating Officer
- Date: 20 May 2022



- The network developed organically. It supports providers to improve practice, like person-centred support, if the resident is using, helping them to reduce the harm etc.
- The network started out as a SRO providers group (single room occupancy), where there were shared bathrooms and cooking facilities, mostly from old hotel rooms. This was the first round of supportive housing. In the early 2000s we ran out of these old hotels and then had to start building.
- There are a plethora of grants from the federal, state and local governments that need to be woven together; the network helps track all of this.
- New York had 92,000 people in institutions in the 1960s, and when they started closing them as part of the de-institutionalisation process, they did not create 92,000 places in the community. Now there are only about 2,500 institutional beds left.
- The sources of funds for the Network are: about 50% from foundations, 25% dues based on the number of units people have (a lot of the organisations do other things so they don't do it as a percentage of revenue), plus 25% revenue from events - conference and an awards gala etc.

Cost Effectiveness

- The City of New York realised that funding shelters didn't really solve people's homelessness and was very expensive, so they got more interested in supportive housing. The city gave a bunch of land to help build this, with cheap finance.
- The Million Dollar Murray argument has helped get some shift in resources.

- Million Dollar Murray refers to *A New Yorker* story by Malcolm Gladwell about a man who was homeless and over the course of 10 years of expensive 'non-solutions', such as jail and hospitals, cost Nevada taxpayers one million dollars.

#### Service Model/Scattered Site versus Single Site

- We often say that 'but for' the services, the housing wouldn't be successful, 'but for' the housing the services wouldn't be successful - this is central to supportive housing.
- We used to depend a lot on scattered sites for people who have light touch, they let their dealer or abuser into the house for example.
- Front desk services are crucial, helping enable an environment where there are very few rules, unlike the shelter system.
- The supportive housing 'is beautiful, there are gyms, gardens, etc, and people want to stay, they want to live there, and it's better than the private market offerings which are often very run down'.
- 'One of the challenges with scattered site models is you're not growing the pot most of the time, you're just repurposing existing affordable housing, so you're just robbing Peter to pay Paul.'

#### Creaming

- Creaming refers, in the US, to not taking the hardest to house into your service, and just creaming off the top of the system those more easy to manage.
- This is a struggle, because you have a group of vulnerable people already in your service that you need to continue to help or protect.
- You need to focus on what supports you need to wrap around that person, additional mental health, etc. and finding it, not just throw your hands in the air and say it's too hard, we're not taking them.
- If all supportive housing was equal, then it would be fine to take the most vulnerable all of the time - but they are not. So it would be irresponsible to bring in the most vulnerable to some of the ones with only light touch support available. It is difficult, which again is why you need a system of PSH, not just a few providers, and you need a coordinated access system.

#### Certification/quality assurance

- Our name (Supportive Housing Network of New York) is taken in vain a lot. There is no such thing as transitional supportive housing. There's not really a need to call it permanent supportive housing, because if it's not permanent, it's not supportive housing.
- There is no quality assurance scheme by the network - that wouldn't be appropriate for us - and the system isn't licensed either as that is part of what makes it work. This is because you have flexibility, you don't have to have a psychologist visit only for an hour only for a certain type of people - as Medicare requires for example.
- The state and local governments do have quality control through their contracting and through the general regulation of non-profits in the US.

#### Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Yes, it's just a matter of priorities. We give huge tax breaks to very wealthy people.

#### Top three things required to end homelessness?

- Invest the money that we are putting into mortgage breaks into affordable and supportive housing, plus universal rent assistance.
- Put more support into our mental health and substance use rehabilitation systems, so that they actually help people rather than re-traumatise and criminalise them.
- Convince the public that it's in their best interests to end homelessness, save tax dollars, improve community safety and contribute to creating a greater sense of community.

### *Fred Dust - Dust and Company*

- Title: Founder and CEO
- 20 May 2022



#### Background

- Dust and Company describe themselves as co-hosts, not consultants - they believe that developing strategy is a conversation you should be having and their job is to give you the structure and tools to have it.
- 'Practice is more important than theory. This is a core belief that separates us from traditional consultants. The learning is in the doing instead of reading about doing.'
- They help organisations that facilitate conversations that create change - i.e. the World Economic Forum.
- They do a lot of work with the Einhorn Collaborative; a non-profit foundation dedicated to addressing America's growing crisis of connection.

#### Systems change

- Designing conversations is really important, especially when working across sectors.
- If you can't talk with someone, or a group, if it just ends badly, or you avoid it, do something together, bake together. A community that is divided should come together and clean up a playground, or find some other activity to help them talk.
- Systems change requires making conversations, amongst people who often don't or won't talk.
- You need leaders in government, community, philanthropy, and media all working together.
- Helping people craft hard conversations needs to be someone's job.

#### Homelessness

- People are leaving areas where there are huge numbers of homeless. It's been getting worse.
- Homelessness has been increasingly conflated with crime.
- The Pope says you should give. It's not charitable work, it's human work, and not enough human work is going on. Justice not charity.

#### Do you think that ending homelessness possible?

- No, watching it intensify has been dispiriting. So not without radical change.
- Given some have such serious health issues, I keep seeing things not progressing. We need leadership.

#### Top three things you think are needed to address this?

- There is a lot of embedded stigma on these issues, we need to address this. We've become desensitised. We need a societal mindset shift, then you get the political will. If someone fell over you would call 911 but we see homeless people suffering every day and we do nothing, and we have for decades now. That's corrosive.
- Building the connections of everyone in society to address this, librarians for example are on the front line for homelessness care, everyone has a role.
- We need to educate people that this is a modern contemporary challenge:
  - First Nations people didn't have homelessness.
  - Neoliberal economics, de-institutionalisation - these are the things that have caused this.

## Seattle, USA

### *Ashley Barnes-Cocke - A Way Home Washington*

- Title: Director of Anchor Communities Initiative
- Date: 23 May 2022



### Background

- A Way Home was founded in 2016 and in 2018 their Anchor Communities Initiatives (ACI) was established. Communities involved include:
  - Four counties - for the past four years.
  - Five new counties in March 2022.
  - There are 35 counties all up in Washington State.
- They got going because they kept hearing young people saying 'we can't get what I need' or 'I get offered what I don't need'.

### How it is funded

- A Way Home have received funding from a combination of governments and philanthropy to:
  - Fund a full time coordinator in each community, and
  - Extra funding for services in each community.
- A group of funders got together who wanted to copy what Community Solutions did with the Built for Zero campaign.
- The First Lady of the Governor of Washington is the co-chair - having champions like this is essential.
- The Office of Homelessness Youth, along with strong interest from the foster care sector (the Mockingbird Society) was also helpful.
- There are three communities that are both part of Built for Zero, and ACI - so they have an all communities by-name list.
- There are 81 people in Walla Walla - one of these communities - and they had an 80% reduction in the last year.

### Flexible Funding

- A key part of A Way Home's model is they get an extra US\$500k a year added to their services that are participating - helping fill outreach gaps, do prevention work etc.
- Their improvement teams are really using the data, are setting goals, have built a culture to look at data and nimbly respond.
- They have also worked really hard at being Housing First focused, helped by using the new dollars for outreach, prevention dollars, etc. They do what they need to do with that flexible funding, and have the most lax eligibility requirements. Funds can be used for prevention, for people who are chronic, or people who are in another program and making it better (i.e. shelter etc).
- A Way Home has some definitions for when you can use funds, for example they enabled funds to be used to reunite with the family - particularly for minors.



*(Image: Street Art in Seattle, USA)*

### Stigma

- Seattle is dying, there is a movement where there is a lot of antagonism towards the homeless in Washington State.
- Not making progress in ending homelessness leads to this kind of backlash, and it's ugly. The people experiencing homelessness, they see it, they hear it and they internalise it.
- The Office of Homelessness Youth is in the Department of Commerce, the view was that it wouldn't get cut if it was put there.

### National Youth Initiative

- There was a national initiative based on what is being done in Washington called "A Way Home America" established, however it had some challenges.
- They had ten communities, but they started in some of the biggest and hardest areas - i.e. Miami Dade, Sacramento, etc.
- It made it really hard for them. After a while it all fell apart, the director left, and the outsourced trainers didn't like the model. So they ended up shutting down their headline initiative.

### Youth Focused Improvement

- A key focus of their improvement activities is trying to get communities to increase their housing placement rate. There was a lot of push back, "ohh there's no houses", and in essence they said they couldn't do it.
- They pushed ahead with improvement challenges - '30 diversions in 30 days' - they just set a challenge. And a bunch of communities got there.
- You need young people involved at every level of the work. You can't have older people doing it, the young people need to be able to associate.
- Their improvement teams, have:
  - a coach, and a data coach (to help with quality data).
  - a youth engagement officer - to support all communities to engage with young people - trains people up in the communities to have a Youth Action Board (lived experience).
  - a data team - including a data solutions manager, and data sciences student/capability and a tableau (data visualisation software) capability to support dashboards.
  - Admin support - there are a lot of contracts.
- They have developed a definition of functional zero for use with young people - which is that communities know they have reached functional zero when they have the capacity to:
  - Prevent most homelessness.

- Quickly identify all the unaccompanied young people who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability at any given time.
- Quickly resolve homelessness with connections to safe and stable housing.
- They have regular learning sessions, twice a year, online once and once in person at the moment.
- They don't put much data up publicly at the moment.
- Disproportionality is measured - i.e. for LGBTIQ people and others.

**AAEH Recommendation 18: Support Youth BNLs** - Develop resources and toolkits to support communities who wish to seek to end youth homelessness, through the Advance to Zero Framework.

**Recommendation 46:** Based on what 'A Way Home Washington' have developed, AAEH develop a charter for participation in the Advance to Zero Movement.

Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes, we could do it overnight with slight policy changes, we don't have a lack of resources, it's just a matter of political will.

Top three things needed?

- We should tax unoccupied units, a wealth tax on multi-millionaires, stopping developers from hanging onto properties and not using them.
- Reparations for people whose land was taken by colonisation.
- Flexible funding, with as few barriers for access as possible.

***Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) Hobson Place Visit***

- 24 May 2022
- In attendance: Patrick Szymanski, Associate Director of Housing and Drew Duplantis, Project Manager of the Clinic at Hobson Place
- The building has been decorated by art from the Salish people whose land the facility is built on.
- The facility was built in two stages: first 85 studios, and then last year they opened up the second stage - another 92 studio apartments with a health clinic integrated.
- They have 24/7 shifts of 'residential counselor staff' - who have a basic level of qualifications and operate on a three shifts basis, with a thirty minute block in between for handover. A number of these staff are people with a lived experience.
- They also have Clinical Support Specialists on site (CSS) or case managers. Every resident gets one, and it's about building a rapport, so for example if they are using [drugs] they will encourage people to link to services, and harm minimise.



HOUSING AND HEALTH  
TO END HOMELESSNESS





(Images: The Clinic at Hobson Place, Seattle, USA - including those that follow)

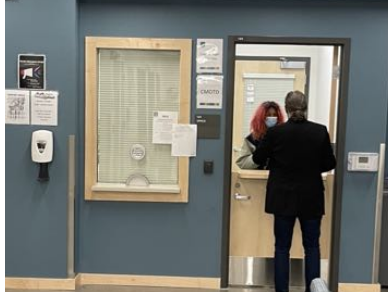
- To support staff retention the centre has a generous common room, with shower and locker facilities for staff.
- Drew was originally from Louisiana which has not got a robust social services system, and didn't really even try to operate under Housing First principles.



- The focus on harm minimisation is a real strength at DESC whereas in other places like Louisiana they don't talk about drug and alcohol issues, so don't do harm minimisation.
- Rooms are all individual with bathroom, kitchen etc. Residents have to pay for their own phone and internet.
- Each room has a timer for the electrics in the kitchen to help with forgetfulness and reduce risk of fire alarms being set off etc.
- Everyone can access all areas, not locked down by floor.

#### Services

- Medication monitoring, all on a voluntary basis, helps manage controlled substances and harm minimisation.
- Alcohol monitoring programs - for example two beers in the morning, afternoon and then evening.
- Budgeting support or payee services (i.e. guardianship arrangements for people who aren't capable of making decisions for themselves/a form of income management).
- They have a specific desk (see below - closed) for distributing funds to get people used to banking etc. when they are having their income managed. The following illustration also shows where medication is dispensed.



- Employment services, with a team based on site, funded through a collection of federal and other levels of government to deliver these services.
- Peer workers are a big part of this service.
- Many other services on site, like music and art therapy, are provided in therapy rooms as shown below, many of which were just starting to reopen as the COVID-19 situation improves.



### Health Clinic

- The Health Clinic provides a full range of primary care services - i.e. physical, wounds, pathology, eye exams, etc.

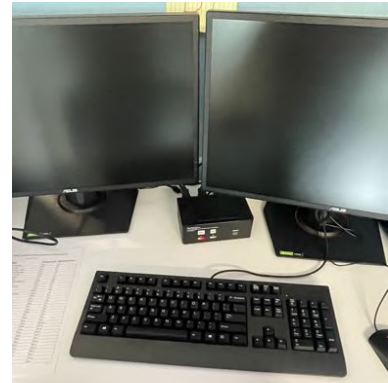


- A range of behaviour health services, including: psychiatry, psychology, substance use support, etc.
- A lot of people using the clinic have behavioural health issues that were unaddressed and couldn't or wouldn't get addressed by mainstream services.
- They have a substance use disorder team, funded by Medicaid/federal government.
- While DESC have a good relationship with the state on harm reduction, federally there are a lot more restrictions. Having an enlightened attitude to harm minimisation is key.
- Anyone from the community can utilise the health services, not just residents of Hobson Place.





- They ask people to make bookings but will take walk-ins from the community and Hobson Place, but do try to encourage people to stick to appointments.
- Getting the health and the homelessness systems to talk to each other can be a challenge. So much so that two computer systems are needed for each of the staff - with a box that allows you to switch between systems.
- DESC also have an ambulance bay where emergency overdose patients can be diverted from emergency departments to this clinic.



#### Service Support + Tenancy Management

- The building ownership, tenancy management and support are all provided by the Downtown Emergency Service Centre.
- They incorporate both as it enables both to have an aligned mission and enables maximum possible integration. If they were separated out into different teams across the organisation they would have had to have staff managing multiple properties, and not be as connected to the service and clients as they currently are.
- The DESC workforce indicated strongly they didn't want to do this - they wanted a closer connection to the local communities in each site.
- How it works is everyone signs a lease, follows landlord laws. For instance, property damage or unsafe behaviour can result in eviction. However, they do sign a mutual lease term, so that if evictions are required there is no eviction on record, and DESC can do a risk assessment down the track to re-admit them.
- It's generally a myth that most people graduate from Permanent Supportive Housing - it's likely that most will want/need to stay for a long time. Not all do, and many that leave often have a cycle of 6-9-18 months when they are ok, but something happens and they spiral, often ending up back on the street or back at Hobson Place, but with more trauma.



#### Specialisation and Coordination

- Many of their Permanent Supportive Housing sites have a different focus or specialisation.
- Who we selected is 100% high acuity. There is no attempt to have a mix of client vulnerabilities.
- DESC have a centre that is focused on alcohol, where they have experimented with establishing a sober floor to help people manage their alcohol issues.
- Some centres have a focus on veterans, some have very light touch services on site, like a drop in nurse, etc.
- The smallest complex is 50 units, and the largest 190. To maximise land and services, having a minimum of about 100 people is seen as best practice now. All have 24/7 onsite support.
- A number of sites do coordination and case management from the site, they have outreach teams from the site.
- Place matters, and supportive housing as a system coordination hub can be really valuable. Co-locating CoCs with case management, with the accommodation, with on site services, and with system coordination improves all of them.

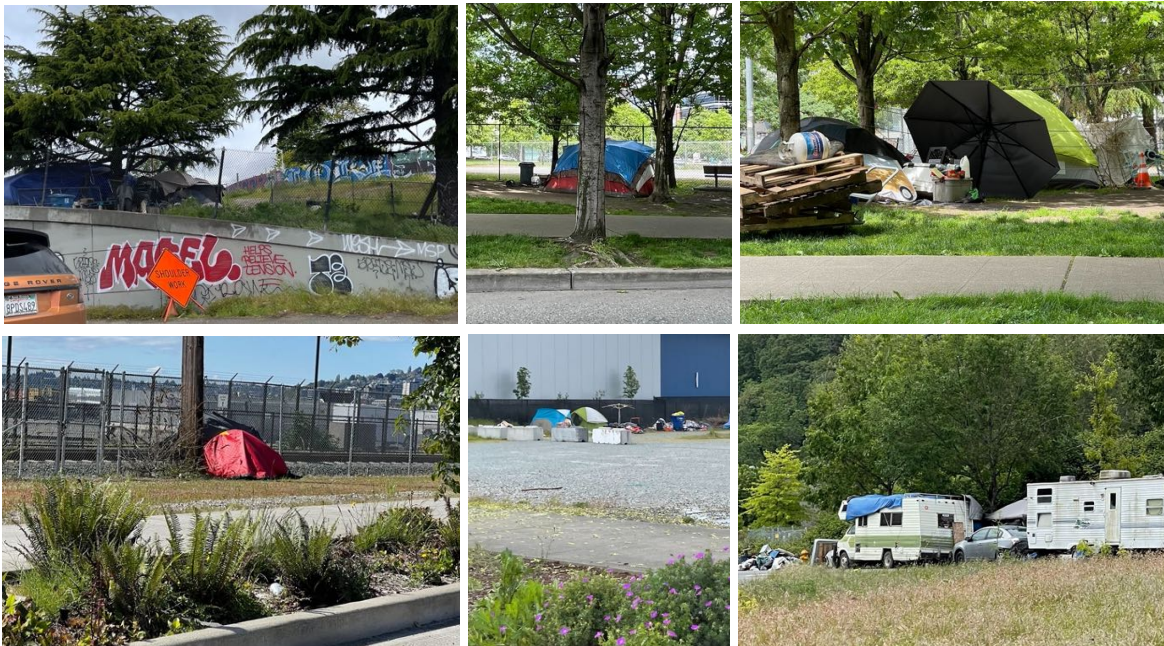
#### COVID

- DESC main shelter in Seattle had 200 people in it prior to COVID-19 and when the pandemic hit they moved everyone into hotels.
- They had such good results, that they decided not to re-open the congregate living shelter.

- COVID has meant that there's been a big transition away from congregate shelter.
- DESC are now looking to modify the shelters into permanent supportive housing.

#### Seattle is Dying Narrative

- Street homelessness is quite bad in Seattle at the moment, there is a view amongst some commentators that it is so bad that "Seattle is dying".
- Both interviewees agreed that there is a huge amount of highly visible homelessness.
- All over the US you don't see the addiction and mental health issues that are going on as they are taking place in people's homes - the housing crisis is driving this into the public domain and making it more visible, along with the increasing homelessness in Seattle.



*(Images: Various homelessness encampments across Seattle, Washington, USA)*

- People are being forced to live their worst life in full view of the general public (as shown in photographs), and it doesn't engender sympathy.
- "Thankfully we're not buying into this 'Seattle is dying narrative', we're just not criminalising the problem here like others".
- DESC has moved to a Housing First model, not trying to require people to prove they are housing ready.
- Stigma is a big issue, 'don't talk to these people' is the prevailing orthodoxy.
- We need to do more to encourage people to engage with people experiencing homelessness, to tackle this pervasive narrative that homelessness is a choice.
- Homelessness is not a choice, it's the least bad option available. Other options are likely to be re-traumatising.

#### Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Yes, absolutely. But you need the housing and support.

#### Top three things needed to end homelessness?

- Funding, for housing, staff and services (for staff development and because they make peanuts- they are paid so poorly) .

- Funding for community services, like mental health, drug and alcohol programs, etc.
- Tackle stigma.

**Philip Welkhoff - Gates Foundation**

- Title: Director Malaria
- Date: 24 May 2022

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

Importance of Zero

- Counting down is something the public health space recognises is fundamental.
- What kinds of problems lead themselves to an eradication strategy - this is something the public health world has learned a lot about.
- The foundation takes an elimination strategy in public health, when it's not enough to make improvement.
- Malaria is an example - it is a brutal disease. 600,000 deaths a year, used to be about 1,000,000 people dying annually.
- The reproduction rate for COVID-19 is 2-4. The reproduction rate of Malaria is 100 - so one untreated person can go on to infect over 100 people.



*(Image: Magnification of a mosquito larva taken just after the meeting with Philio at the Seattle Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, USA)*

- In the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, more people died of Malaria than Ebola because the supply chains broke down. Malaria is just so unforgiving unless you get rid of it altogether, it is deadly.
- Homelessness has many parallels with Malaria; chronic homelessness is also deadly.
- Sri Lanka eradicated Malaria, and deaths reduced by almost double what they thought as Malaria was reducing people's immune systems which meant people were dying of illnesses that would not have killed others. When they eradicated Malaria, it had a cascading effect<sup>81</sup> in other areas.
- Public health recognises that the only reasonable, strategic, and ethical goal is zero.
- When you realise and accept that, you recognise that the current systems you have won't get us there. They just aren't set up in the same way that will get us to the outcome we seek.
- "Just as with climate change, we focus on the net reduction, not the programs that might get us there. The outcome of ending homelessness is what is most important."
- The parallels between Malaria and homelessness are incredible.
- The difference is that the reproduction rate parallel doesn't apply to homelessness - other than the perverse outcomes you start to get when homelessness becomes endemic, criminalisation, sweeps, move on powers, more shelter, etc.

<sup>81</sup> A cascading effect is an inevitable and sometimes unforeseen chain of events due to an act affecting a system. One of the most renowned cascading effect is the story of how wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park, and the cascading effect was to literally change the direction of the rivers and the whole ecosystem. Could ending chronic homelessness have a cascading effect on the homelessness system?

<https://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wildlife/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem/>

- In public health, when you are trying to get to the last mile, it is sometimes disproportionately costly. If you can get it down to a manageable level, then it goes away over time with economic development. The opposite exists in homelessness. The last mile clients are the most expensive largely because of being such frequent users of services.

#### Funding

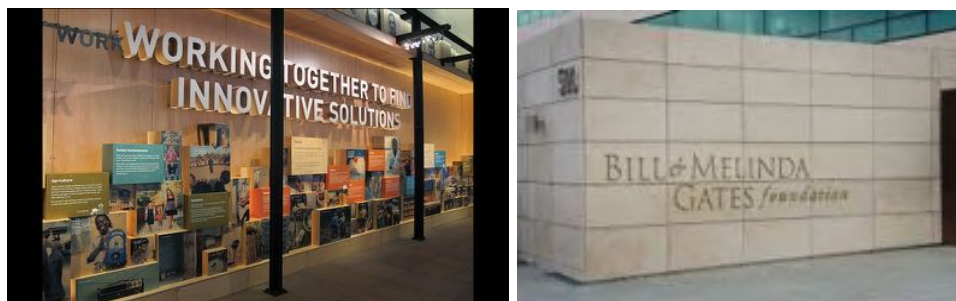
- The public health world recognises that we can't eradicate Malaria for the US\$3.5 billion we currently spend on it because it's not enough. If the systems change strategy is set up right, the additional investment will get us to where we need to be. Just more money into a broken system won't.
- From 2004-2015 - a lot of progress was made globally on tackling Malaria - global roll out of nets etc., but they realised that Malaria is very different in every community. So you need really good data to help inform local decision-making.
- Another critique given in the public health world is that the data driven work is undercutting the argument for more resources.
- There's no solution to this mindset, other than just push through, and let the results speak for themselves.

#### Lessons Regarding Systems Change

- A key lesson from the Malaria work is that there is a lot of inertia in the existing power structures for how resources are distributed.
- We need to seek to use data to inform local decision-making, but when the data shows you need to make a change, often the existing power structures are reluctant to give up power or influence.
- If you have a one size fits all approach, you can have centralisation of allocation, but when you have to decide locally you have to give up power and influence, to enable more local decision-making.
- For system change, having the viability of data, getting the quality data is important. But there will be push back of why you are spending resources on data collection and data analysis, and not on direct service delivery.
- People will ask you where the evidence is, and you can fix one or two things, but this hasn't resulted in a change in the system, yet!
- It's the challenging nature of the work, because you have to fix multiple things at the same time, and hold them, often before you start to see results, but when the system changes, often it will really move.
- In summary, tips for system change are to recognise that you'll need to change the power structures, that you'll need good data, and inform local decision-making.

#### Is ending homelessness possible/top three things needed

- Yes, but you need to make sure you're dealing with the inflows as well as the outflows.
- Quality data on the issue you're seeking to resolve.
- Local decision-making is so important.



*(Images: The Gates Foundation, Seattle, USA)*

## Los Angeles, USA

### *Community Solutions*

- Date: 3 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Beth Sandor, Director Built For Zero
  - Jake Maguire, Principal
  - Leslie Wise, Strategic Consultant, Housing for Health

# COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

**“What is common to all human beings... is their ceaseless confrontation by problems, problems, problems. We humans are manifestly good at problem solving and, if we are any good at problem solving, we don’t come to utopia, we come to more difficult problems to solve” – R. Buckminster Fuller, Guinea Pig B**

#### Key insights - Since we last caught up in Chicago

- Progress moves at the speed of relationships, “how quickly can this community trust each other” is central to determining how quickly progress will be made.
- A big challenge Community Solutions are finding is that you can make a lot of progress and then one key leader changes and you lose a lot of traction/momentum.
- So we’re really grappling with how you scale relationships at the local level. That’s really hard, this work is so relational.
- Stigma leads to the acceptance of the view that homelessness is inevitable. Tackling this stigma needs to be a big part of the communications efforts associated with ending homelessness campaigns.
- Some people don’t think that you can count functional zero as a win because, from a day-to-day perspective, nothing changes, you are still just helping the person in front of you. There is a communication challenge to the front line of sharing what progress has been made at the systems level.

### *United Way Greater Los Angeles*

- Date: 4 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Chris Ko, Vice President, Impact and Strategy, United Way Greater Los Angeles
  - Emily Bradley, Director, Strategic Investments, United Way Greater Los Angeles
  - Leslie Wise, Strategic Consultant, Community Solutions





(Images: United Way Greater Los Angeles, USA)

### Background

- United Way is a community chest. In the wake of a worldwide pandemic 100 years ago, they started to be a collector and conduits for social change.
- In 2007 they shifted to being more of a collective impact effort, to being more involved in driving impact, not just distributing dollars, but being a backbone.
- Most United Ways were built as a way to collect funds, starting with a workplace giving model, which is outdated now. This was in the pre-internet era.
- They are a funder, structured as a not-for-profit, but don't do direct services. They have government and corporate relationships that they can leverage and are a table setter, to bring the unlikely suspects to the table.

### Homelessness Focus

- United Way's involvement in homelessness started with bringing together a business leaders taskforce, involving key business leaders and the local chamber of commerce - they all had the same end goal, but were coming to it for different reasons.
- United Way launched a cost study, which was the beginning of many efforts like this, that helped to demonstrate the case for moving from treating the problem's symptoms to focusing on solving it.
- From this the organisation developed Action Plans with real tangible goals - aim statements.
- They set up a funders collaborative which raised private funds, and in order to unlock greater public funds they had to demonstrate to government that they could work together. They were then able to get public funding and blend it with their own.
- Pairing the private (innovative) funding and the specific (public) funding has really helped.

### Workforce

- United Way has been successful in getting 'ballot measures' up, where specific funding measures were passed at an election to fund responses to homelessness.
- This large increase in investment has led to some significant workforce challenges, so they are looking at programs where retention benefits are paid.
- In recent years in LA they have built a system, but now they are having big problems staffing the system - the supply of workers just isn't there, but also the COVID-19 pandemic has made it all the more challenging.
- Very few people focus on these workforce issues, the government doesn't do it and the non-profits have often cut their back offices so much that there's little focus on this.

- United Way is setting up a 'triage line' for the workers in the system, it's an escalation pathway, funded to support retention efforts and to support them when dealing with a challenging situation or needing advice.
- People are burning out without sufficient support.
- Investing in these efforts helps avoid the false economy of constantly curbing the back office and putting it towards front-line staff who aren't sufficiently supported with sufficient systems.

#### Macro Factors

- Coordinated Entry, is a foundational element of the Build for Zero work of United Way and has been in operation for a number of years in LA. United Way has built system-level structures.
- What's really changed is the broader macro factors not just in LA but the rest of the USA and around the world. It's not just the economy it's 'Our Economy' and it's not working for us, it has really changed - affordability is so bad that the inflow issue is swamping any efforts at the coal face.
- The biggest driver of this is we see housing primarily as a financial asset - the speculation in real estate is driving the affordability.
- Wealth inequality has grown so much that the wealthy need to keep finding more and more efficient ways to invest their assets.
- Housing is seen as a commodity, and it's being automated. Wherever there is cheap housing or land, the private sector is good at exploiting it for profit, locking it up, making it unavailable for those who most need it.
- LA isn't an aberration, it's where we are going. If we don't find a way to develop a more inclusive growth model.
- LA is a fast forward of California, and California is a fast forward of the US. What Americans are seeing in the US is a fast-forward of what we could see in Australia if current trends and trajectories continue.
- Capitalism won to such an extent, that people have given up on public structures that respond to these things.
- When the UN Sustainable Development Goals were created, housing didn't show up. That is changing and just recently the UN General Assembly passed its first resolution on the social economy.<sup>82</sup>

#### Skid Row

- Skid Row is one of the largest ongoing and concentrated populations of homeless people in the United States and has been an issue for decades.
- Skid Row is a uniquely LA creation, it was designed. When you have 2,000 beds that empty out at 6am, you get what we got.
- It's changing, and is not as bad as it was, when people were camping in the middle of the street, it was just a no-go zone. Some of the rescue missions have changed their model to be less dramatic about it.
- This large-scale homelessness in the public domain will always be worse where there is housing stock that can't be adopted.

#### Coordinated Access

- The re-housing system can claim an ending homelessness agenda, but there needs to be a focus on upstream or stemming the inflow.
- What we've done is moved from bandaid individual responses to a coordinated bandaid. A macro level bandaid.
- Smarter, stronger, systemic responses are what coordinated access is about.

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<sup>82</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/04/un-resolution-social-solidarity-economy/>

- Coordinated systems are a foundational necessity, but the focus also needs to be on the structural issues.
- Shared tools and shared data at the stem level is a game changer, you at least have eyes on the problem, who's not getting support and how that, in the end, is more expensive.



(Images: Skid Row, Los Angeles, USA)

#### Focus of Future work

- One of the lessons of United Way as a collective impact backbone, was they probably moved out of the systems leadership space too soon - this space being institutionalising data systems, coordination, leadership at the system level etc.
- United Way aggregated all the community trusts and then built the systems level capacity, now it's returning to building back the local community organising capacity, but holding onto the system's leadership.

#### Role of Government and Systems Change

- United Way has found that government will never be as good at certain elements of this collective impact or ending homelessness work.
- On leadership, they are hard-wired to top-down leadership.
- On data systems, there are just no incentives towards data transparency, it will in time almost always get lost, particularly if there are challenging stakeholders involved - the focus shifts to managing them, rather than driving improvement.



- On continuous improvement - the government is not good at doing this either but can support it. It requires being really honest about the problem, innovating, and taking risks.
- A key role of a backbone is the systems resourcing advocacy - the government can't advocate for its own resources very often in the US, and as a consequence, philanthropy is often called upon to fund a resource within the public sector.
- United Way is trying to focus more on hyper-local. United Way started as local community trusts, and were aggregated, they moved to the system coordination space and are moving back to supporting local effort, and connecting to systems coordination.

#### Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes, but the only sustainable end to homelessness will be where neighbourhood mutual aid groups are built up, where the systems exist to involve the community, create shared ownership models, to seed community building.
- Chris Ko, Vice President, Impact and Strategy, United Way Greater Los Angeles
  - I do, but it's changed in meaning for me. It's not just about rehousing someone, I think more about the social structures of ownership and wealth, and it's possible to change that. To create broader systems of community power and care, that are essential to eradicating extreme poverty. Changing "our economy", not "the economy".
- Emily Bradley, Director, Strategic Investments, United Way, Greater Los Angeles
  - Yes, I used to be very gung ho about ending homelessness, but I'm less so now because so much of this work is structural and cultural.
  - It is possible, it will just take a lot of recommitment from the community, and it's just likely generations away - but there is a lot that deeply oppressed people can do.
  - We need a better model of advocacy. Traditionally, we've gone and collected power and asked others for the power they need. But I believe, and have seen, that even the poorest communities, the most oppressed and excluded, have the agency and the ability to create better circumstances for themselves.

#### Top Three Things Needed to End Homelessness

- Emily Bradley, Director, Strategic Investments, United Way, Greater Los Angeles
  - Arguments about changing the narrative often have too much gravitas these days, but we need to build a culture of caring. Internationally other countries have a safety net, we need to stop promoting individualism.
  - Build better systems, we require people to show up and bear their own soul /story to every part of the system and focus on the bad - not their strengths.
  - Philanthropy is part of the problem when it sees itself as being here for the long haul, we're all saving for a rainy day, and it's pouring outside. There will be wealthy people in the future, so there will be opportunities to raise funds in the future, so why squirrel it away now? We need to break down this mindset that philanthropy needs to be here for the long term, we need to be here to solve the problem.
- Chris Ko, Vice President, Impact and Strategy, United Way, Greater Los Angeles
  - Change the tax codes, make housing ineligible for capital gains exemptions - de-commodify housing.
  - Address the physical and mental health needs of people.
  - Use all the resources in the system, NGOs, philanthropy, government, to build the agency and wealth of the communities involved, so that they don't need help - so they can thrive on their own.

**Philanthropy Recommendation 2: Consistently Show Up** - Funding is essential, but so too are your time, networks and perspective. Philanthropy should use its influence to consistently show up to support collaboration and be an active voice if focusing effort on ending homelessness.

### **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**

- Date: 5 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Christina Miller, Senior Advocacy Officer
  - Seyron Foo, Senior Program Officer, Homelessness
  - Jeoff Krentel, Senior Evaluation Officer, Homelessness
  - Jonathan Sanabria, Research Coordinator, Homelessness
  - Leslie Wise, Strategic Consultant, Community Solutions



### **Background**

- The Hilton Foundation has no direct connection to the Hilton chain of resorts, but was established by the Hilton family.
- They have been involved in homelessness for 30 years with a focus on making it rare, brief and once off.
- This has meant a shift in focus from supporting the rehousing sector to supporting the homelessness response system - with a particular focus on stemming inflow.
- They have a major focus on using philanthropy to advocate using research and data to support this.
- The Foundation currently has a big focus on supporting agencies to convert hotels from interim housing (crisis accommodation) to permanent housing.

### **Ending Homelessness Definitions**

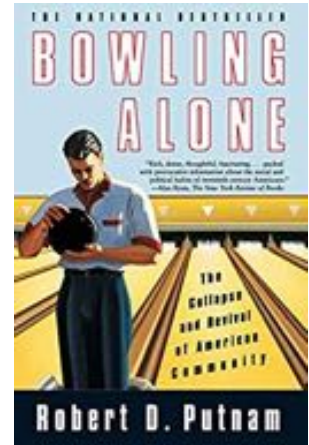
- In 2020 The Hilton Foundation adopted the language “rare, brief, and non recurring”: it came about mainly as a way of managing expectations - as they didn’t want to lose the ambition of ending homelessness.
- HUD requires measuring system performance and it’s defined as rare, brief and a one time occurrence.
- A systems focus is also key to their work, what they call building system efficiency or system operational excellence. This is often driven by those from a corporate and/or entrepreneurial background.

### **Bright Spot**

- The Foundation has supported the establishment of a new agency set up by the LA county called the Affordable Housing Solutions Agency - which is essentially a public housing authority. It blends all the funding options from a range of sources to support rental prevention measures.
- There is also a concept in LA called ‘by-right housing’ - whereby if a local government doesn’t complete an affordable housing plan, then developers get the rights to develop affordable and Permanent Supportive Housing without the approval of councils. I deal with the NIMBYism and councils who seek to keep housing segregated.

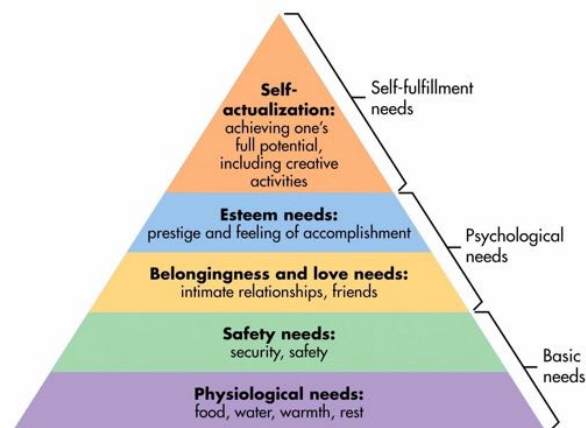
## Bowling Alone

- Homelessness, it can be argued, is in part a consequence of declining social capital and the whole Bowling Alone phenomenon.
- Author Robert Putnam, in his book of the same name, explained that social capital refers to the connections among individuals' social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.
- He documented how social capital has decreased rapidly since the 1970s, largely as a result of television, increasing pressures of time and money, urban sprawl, and generational succession.<sup>83</sup> And that as a consequence, the connections between people are breaking down, we are joining fewer clubs and associations, we don't know our neighbours and are in effect, bowling alone.



## Homelessness a Basic Human Need

- Homelessness is a basic human need. It meets the base needs as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- This hierarchy is a model for understanding the motivations for human behaviour. It maps different motivations onto a pyramid, with each level representing a different human need.



(Images: Maslow's Hierarchy of Need - Simple Psychology)<sup>84</sup>

## Is Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Yes - Homelessness is a policy choice, we make decisions every day that are policy choices and if we made the right choices we could end it. A good development in LA is that as political leaders you cannot not seek to address this as there would be a severe political consequence.

## Top three Things Needed to End Homelessness

- Seyron Foo, Senior Program Officer, Homelessness
  - Resources - broadly, houses, services and the policy choices that drive it.
  - Build community - demonstrate that we are all Angelina's (people from Los Angeles) - getting back a sense of community that has been lost with social breakdown and the whole 'bowling alone' phenomenon.

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/putnam-bowling#:~:text=Conclusion,pressures%20of%20time%20and%20money.>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

- Housing First - recognition that everything comes from the dignity of home, it provides for all the base elements of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- Jeoff Krentel, Senior Evaluation Officer
  - Resources, de-commodification of housing and de-commodification of people, because of the vouchers funding model in the US, it drives behaviour that sees people as just a funding package. We need to see each other with dignity.
- Christina Miller, Senior Advocacy Officer, Homelessness
  - We need to believe we can, there needs to be that North Star.
  - The de-commodification of housing, we need to stop allowing giant corporations to make money out of housing.
  - Change the tax code to benefit the people who are excluded from our economy, because it's structured to help the wealthy!

How do we de-commodify housing?

- Recognise that both the US and Australia are countries that were founded on stolen land.
- This is bound into our identity that land ownership is part of what is seen as success - convicts in Australia and the US were given land when they were released.
- So de-commodification of housing is tied up in de-colonisation.

**Civil Society Recommendation 1: Be the change** - Ending homelessness is everyone's business, as a society, we need to make our elected representatives, through the questions we ask and the way we vote, deliver on the leadership, reform and funding needed to ensure all citizens have access to a home.

**Civil Society Recommendation 3: Promote a new understanding of homelessness** - including but not limited to recognising that:

- Ending homelessness is possible;
- Housing is not just an asset or investment class, but also a basic human need;
- Homelessness is not an individual problem but a systems problem;
- Homelessness is not an individual choice, but a choice by society for allowing the rising inequality that drives so much of it; and
- Ending homelessness is also about racial equity, justice and reconciliation.

### **The People Concern**

- Date: 4 May 20223
- In attendance:
  - Hazel Lopez, Senior Director of CES and Community Engagement
  - Ciara DeVozza, Outreach Team Manager,
  - Evelin Montoya, Housing Navigation Manager
  - Marian Mitchell, Director, Interim Housing
  - Leslie Wise, Strategic Consultant, Community Solutions



### **Background**

- The People Concern are a fast-growing non-profit homelessness service provider that looks after the SPAR 4 - the Service Planning Area four - which includes Metro LA and skid row. They also cover a number of other SPAR areas, such as Santa Monica.
- They have the following areas in the organisation.



- Housing Navigation - is about case management to support people to find permanent supportive housing.
  - They have recently been directed to only support people coming out of interim (crisis) housing, so people on the street need to engage with outreach first.
  - They are expected to house a client within 120 days.
  - Their Intensive Case Management Service - would have a 20:1 case management load.
- Outreach - is still a relatively new service in many areas. Their caseloads are overwhelming and they can't hold onto people for long once a housing placement is made, and as such up to 70% of the placements fail.
- Interim Housing - which is shelter. The organisation runs housing fairs where they get all the government agencies together to help people get vital documents ready.
- Permanent Supportive Housing - where they have case managers who will visit once a month, they have more intensive models, project based housing, where there is on site case management support.
  - The organisation prefers housing simultaneously, not Housing First, because if people are put into housing without regard to eligibility then the organisation is not able to sustain the placement because of funding rules, the 'working the program' elements of Housing First - mental health or sobriety concerns - aren't requirements anymore.
- In the US - drugs are cheap and housing is expensive.

#### Workforce

- During the pandemic, outreach workers were doing all the COVID testing, and all they got were pins. There's been no real recognition that they were front line responders.
- Workforce challenges are massive as COVID led to the health system paying more, and California is already incredibly expensive.
- More of the staff are about to become clients, we already have homelessness support staff who show up to work every day but are homeless themselves, California is just not affordable.
- United Way funded a workforce analysis survey that looked at a lot of these workforce issues.



(Images: Skid Row, Los Angeles, USA)

### Is ending homelessness possible

- It is possible but will be hard without structural change and without the gaps in the system being met.
- Until then we are left to “manage it”, we can re-house within a set period, but we are always in a rush, there is never any time to focus on education, on employment.
- So not in the current Californian system, unless we change the economic system, our medical, criminal justice system, foster care system, institutional violence, institutional racism, etc.
- We’re drowning and we’re not even thinking about this.

### Biggest priorities

- Freeze and lower rents, we need better rental rights. Affordable isn’t affordable anymore.
- Functional mental health and health care systems that are accountable for the care they provide, discharging people onto the street, who then die, is not acceptable.
- Inclusive services, it should not matter, where you have come from, or how long you’ve been homeless.

**State Governments Recommendation 15: Make Renting Fair** - Consider ways to make renting fairer including promoting collaboration to better prevent evictions, ensuring healthier homes, addressing racism and other discrimination, and strengthening rights regarding pets as well as other support people seeking or currently renting.

### *Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority (LAHSA)*

- Date: 5 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Molly Rysman, Chief Program Officer
  - Leslie Wise, Strategic Consultant, Community Solutions

### Background

- LAHSA brings together the funding from the city and the country to address issues of homelessness in the LA area. LAHSA faces huge pressure to deliver because of the scale of the problem in the city but also because such significant revenue measures have been passed to fund the additional effort.

### Coordination

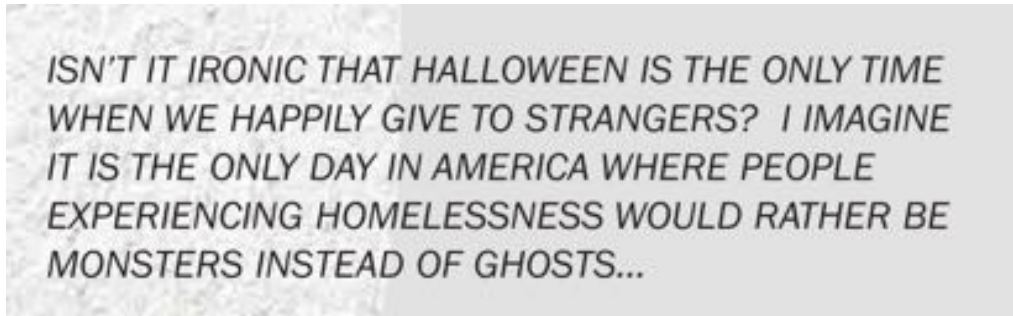
- LA has many problems, but one thing it has done well is that its collaborative governance models work.
- What has been very effective is system leaders being at the table together, using the data.
- CoCs are structured to make sure there is not a command and control governance model.
- LAHSA has some challenges internally enabling this because of the immense pressure/community expectation it is under.
- Some people are against coordinated entry as they say it's too inefficient because it takes time.

### System Overwhelmed

- LAHSA are rethinking the way coordinated entry works, and letting go of the focus on the most vulnerable, as it's too inefficient.
- They use the VI-SPDAT, but there is so much demand that they won’t house people unless they are engaged in a program and document ready. On top of this, they have deemphasised the score component of the VI-SPDAT.



- They are also rethinking the place-based Service Planning Areas and trying to work more in an unstructured way about what ‘nearby’ means as they have to be careful to not violate the Fair Housing Act - which was created in part to avoid discrimination based on location.

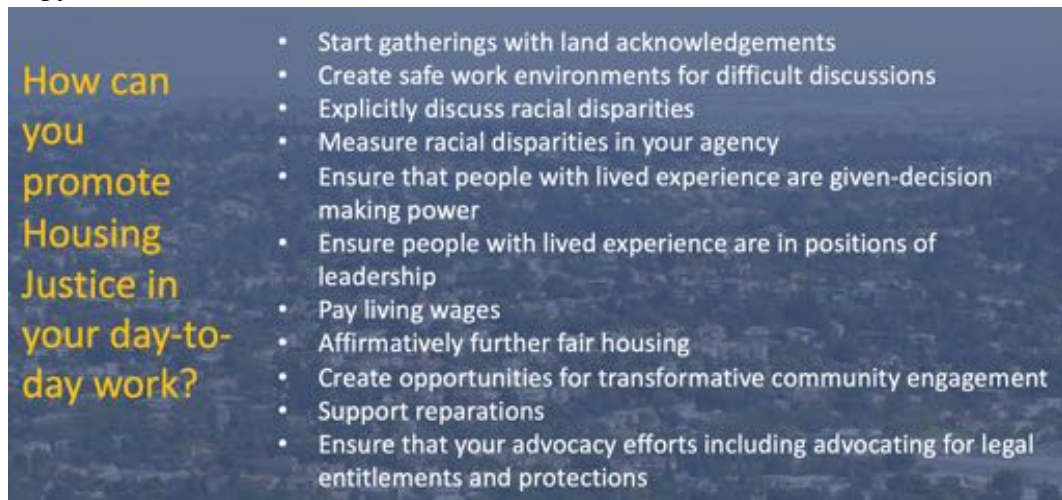


(Image: Housing Justice forum slide organised by Molly Rysman, Los Angeles, USA)<sup>85</sup>

- The biggest thing driving people into housing is they can't pay rent, so the most significant thing needed is a right to housing entitlement.
- Even if you started with young people and over 65s and expanded over time.
- LAHSA has worked with the California Policy Lab to develop system KPIs and make them available transparently. This has been well received by the sector.

#### Housing Justice

- Between 2018 and 2019 Molly was a Stanton Fellow, similar to the Churchill Fellowship, which enabled her to better understand if ending homelessness is indeed possible .
- Housing justice, she argues, is the pursuit of rights and entitlements that guarantee every community access to safe and decent homes, with attention to reversing racial disparities and promoting racial and economic inclusion, and access to and the ability to retain housing.
- It’s not about doing everything, it’s about finding your own role, and doing what you can, acknowledging the original ownership of the land you stand on is one form of housing justice.
- The following table sets out the various ways Molly found to ensure everyone can contribute to housing justice.



(Image: Housing Justice forum slide organised by Molly Rysman, Los Angeles, USA)<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> [https://www.reframinghomelessolutions.org/files/ugd/1a7815\\_7ebd965fa312404fb6b55e72b8d80eb1.pdf](https://www.reframinghomelessolutions.org/files/ugd/1a7815_7ebd965fa312404fb6b55e72b8d80eb1.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> [https://www.reframinghomelessolutions.org/files/ugd/1a7815\\_0c4bfb77759b48c0b0d46dfe8f8dc9fa.pdf](https://www.reframinghomelessolutions.org/files/ugd/1a7815_0c4bfb77759b48c0b0d46dfe8f8dc9fa.pdf)

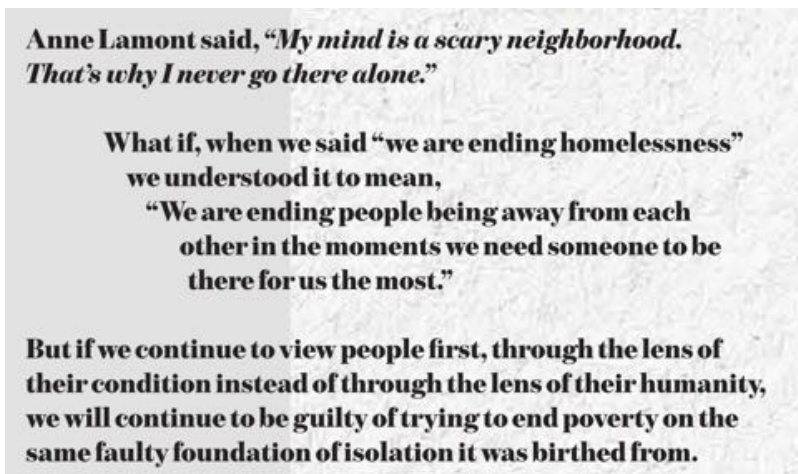
- We need to think beyond programs, we spend a lot of time advocating for housing and homelessness programs, we won't get on top of the injustices we are up against with just programs, you can't fight structural racism with programs, you can't fight the financialisation of housing with programs. There must be rights, there must be entitlements and protections.

Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes - but there are global forces in the real estate industry and with global capitalism that have to be addressed, and at the local level in the communities that have these crippling high housing costs.

Top three things needed to end homelessness

- An entitlement to housing assistance, even starting with youth and seniors.
- Really need lower rents, to see more tenant protections, rent control - the biggest issue in ending homelessness is inflow.
- Increasing incomes, this is essentially a financial issue.



(Image: Housing Justice forum slide organised by Molly Rysman, Los Angeles, USA)

## Toronto, Canada

### Homes First

- Date: 8 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Patricia Mueller, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
  - Michael Lyster, Director of Housing and Shelters
  - Gayle McFadden, Site Manager 222 Spadina Avenue

### Background

- Homes First provides housing, homelessness and other support services all from the one organisation.
- The COVID response in Toronto saw a big increase in the use of hotels to shelter people. They are slowly closing now.
- A big improvement during this time was the provision of medical support on-site, it demonstrated that it makes financial sense to set up in shelters.
- Affordable housing is seen as 80% of market rent - but this just isn't affordable.
- The National government instigated a funding measure in response to COVID that helped increase access to housing, it put more money in people's pockets.





## Universal Basic Income

- Universal Basic Income (UBI) would just be a much more efficient way of solving the poverty that is the cause of so much of the poverty that causes homelessness.
- There are many models but at its heart, UBI is a regular cash payment every individual receives, without any reference to their other income or wealth and without any conditions. Finland is the only country to have carried out a nationwide, randomised control trial of UBI.<sup>87</sup>

## Drugs and the Opioid Crisis

- Canada seems to have a much bigger drug problem than Australia, with a lot of drugs coming from the US and before that the Mexican border.
- The drug issue seems to have driven greater harm minimisation policies. The Police Chiefs Association of Canada has called for the decriminalisation of all personal drug use.
- Medicinal cocaine is available with a script and the cannabis retail sector is very widespread in Toronto. It's likely to have a market correction, and supply (retail stores that are taxed) outstrips demand.
- COVID enabled safe injecting rooms to be established, so rather than one or two across the province/state, they were set up at shelters and hotel rooms and saved lives.
- This was challenging from a governance perspective, some took the view that the organisation was involved in 'supporting drug use'.



(Images: Various Cannabis retailers in downtown Toronto, Canada)

## Supportive Housing

- Homes First focuses on the 'hardest to house' the 5s:
  - 1 = here's your key, no problems, you're relatively self sufficient.
  - 5= a chronic experience of homelessness, and will likely need 24/7 and potentially permanent support on site. This is what their 'Strahan model' looks like, and Common Ground (an Australian model of supportive housing, adopted from New York) learned a lot from them when it was first set up.
- Before establishing this supportive housing Toronto had a large number of people that had housing - paid for by the state - but were accessing shelter because people had taken over their tenancy. They didn't feel safe in their own home, whether it was because of domestic violence, drug use issues, or some other trauma.
- Controlled access to the site is critical. Ensuring there aren't unit takeovers.

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/universal-basic-income-good-idea#:~:text=Finland%20is%20the%20only%20country,randomised%20control%20trial%20of%20UBI>



*(Images: Homes First new supportive housing service, Toronto, Canada)*

### Service Challenges

- There's a big trend of people sleeping on public transport in Toronto.
- Homes First found that people don't want to go to housing if they lose their meals, if there are restrictions on visitors, and a range of other restrictions, as a result when the weather is milder, many feel that encampments are a better option than shelter.

### Modular housing

- In Canada there has been a big uptake of modular housing or what's sometimes called pre-fabricated housing in Australia - where the building is contracted in parts in a factory and just assembled on site rather than constructed on site. It has been helpful in getting housing initiatives rolled out fast, and it's used for apartment block construction, not just housing.
- It's likely this is a result of the building industry being shut down because of the climate for much of the year in Canada.

### NIMBYism

- Building isn't the problem though, it's planning approval. Homes First have a whole modular housing apartment building sitting in a warehouse as the planning restrictions are so onerous.
- The planning process has been improved in recent times because new developments no longer require community consultation, where NIMBYism dominated. They are now only required to engage the community.
- At these consultation sessions, Homes First felt they needed to hire security guards to protect the staff from the abuse.
- No matter how liberal or conservative the community, the arguments put up were so similar you could play bingo with key phrases like, parking is an issue, have you done a shadow study (what shade a building might cast on surrounding buildings).
- This NIMBYism is more directed at 'halfway houses' or what we would call boarding houses in Australia.
- Homes First are also able to access a mechanism called a Ministerial Zoning Order - that just cuts through all the red tape, but it's not used enough.

### Housing

- Financialisation of housing is a big issue in Canada, like elsewhere.
- The organisation has lots of trouble accessing the significant amount of vacant industrial land and buildings, as it's very hard to get it re-zoned.
- There is a big focus on converting vacant office buildings into housing.



(Images: Planning Notice Notification, just outside the building where I met with Homes First, Toronto, Canada)

### Fidelity to Housing First and Ending Homelessness

- Homes First have an organic, do-what-it-takes, approach to Housing First.
- They develop and provide affordable, stable housing and support to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the fewest housing options.
- Homes First as an organisation pre-dates the creation of Housing First, and they believe ‘homes’ is a better framing. “We seek a homeless homefull Toronto”.
- They believe that there needs to be a choice in housing options and that scattered site supportive housing is and should not be the only model offered. It just has the added benefit of having a more scalable business model.
- 
- “The idea of fidelity to a model sends shivers up my spine... fidelity is a middle-class notion being rammed down the throats of people who aren’t middle class.”
- By definition one size fits all models aren’t for everyone.

### Is ending homelessness possible

- Yes, it’s not rocket science, it costs less to solve the problem, but only if we take a longer-term approach.
- It’s like the goal of full employment, we’ve defined that as about 4% unemployment - we need to define an end to homelessness, it’s possible, there is just a lot of work to be done.

### Top three things needed to end homelessness

- Stop the short-termism.
- There didn’t used to be a housing shortage in Canada - governments just need to invest.
- Universal basic income - the cost of the plethora of programs just doesn’t work, see the Million Dollar Murray example.<sup>88</sup>

### Toronto Shelter Network (TSN)

- Date: 8 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Leslie Gash, Executive Director
  - Patricia Mueller, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - Homes First

<sup>88</sup> Million Dollar Murray refers to A *New Yorker* story by Malcolm Gladwell about a man who was homeless and over the course of ten years of expensive “non-solutions”, such as jail and hospitals, cost Nevada taxpayers one million dollars.

## Background

- Originally there was the Ontario Hostels Association - but the Provincial Government didn't want to keep paying for it and regional people didn't want to pay for it as they didn't believe there was homelessness in the regions, "these young people should go back to their parent's homes" was the view of some. So the TSN was born.
- They focus on advocacy and the professional development of the sector.
- The Association is a big part of the system, Toronto has a 400-person shelter - Calgary has a 1,000-person shelter. They have downsized in response to COVID and it's likely that some of this can be converted to permanent housing.



## Lived Experience

- Their 'people with lived experience' (PWLE) work is funded through a foundation.
- Their efforts in this space are focused on employment engagement - this helps with the massive workforce shortages the sector faces.
- TSN also run some peer-to-peer housing support or retention programs.
- The city has also asked them to set up a community advisory board for the peer workers.
- They have no advisory structure of their own but have a roster of people who work with them.
- There's also a bit of work underway with employment opportunities through social enterprise and social procurement.

## Workforce

- COVID has exacerbated the already challenging workforce issues TSN have.
- The city runs a range of homelessness services and they pay their staff at a higher rate than they fund the sector to do the same job. This makes the problem even harder.
- Homes First has 280 staff vacancies at the moment, partly filled by the relief pool of staff. Staff just can't afford to live in Toronto.

## Role of Research in Ending Homelessness

- TSN supports research on a range of topics. They have a grief and loss research project that looks into the vicarious trauma many in the sector workforce experience.
- Vicarious trauma is the emotion resulting from empathetic engagement with trauma survivors, i.e. those experiencing homelessness and other forms of trauma. Anyone who engages empathetically with survivors of traumatic incidents, torture, and material relating to their trauma, is potentially affected.<sup>89</sup>
- Research is crucial to helping make progress, but this work isn't an article to be peer-reviewed by your peers - this is a project to house people. That's something we have to remind the researchers a lot.

## Advocacy

- The biggest problem in Toronto and Ontario is there is no homelessness plan.
- Every time they work on a plan they get distracted by a crisis.
- City has a housing plan, but this has been impacted by the interest rates, supply chain issues, etc.
- Homelessness doesn't get lost as much in the public debates about housing in Canada because local government is responsible for homelessness and their definition of homelessness is not as broad as

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<sup>89</sup> <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/your-wellbeing/vicarious-trauma/vicarious-trauma-signs-and-strategies-for-coping>

the Australian definition (in terms of who the definition of homelessness covers - they don't include overcrowding and inappropriate housing).

#### Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness

- The Alliance focuses on the larger systemic issues and has driven the creation of the by-name list etc.
- It was only incorporated last year, prior to this it was largely a volunteer network with staff coming on board only recently.
- Its funding comes from a cocktail of sources, but a large chunk is sector contributions or membership fees. Homes First - pay \$20k per year.



#### Coordination

- One of the frustrations with progress is that there are so many meetings, there is lots of overlap with the membership of the people in those meetings.
- Getting the right people in the right room is a key ongoing challenge.

#### Technology and Innovation

- We are late adopters of technology in the homelessness sector. Social housing was slow to get onto the computer world, it took years to get people at Homes First to use computers because they were hired for their penmanship. The same trend exists today with the use of data.
- So much of the workforce comes to this work from a social perspective, not data analytics, we're hiring social workers to do detailed data which isn't their skill set - it's inefficient.

#### Is ending homelessness possible

- Yes

#### Top three things needed to end homelessness

- Greater political leadership.
- Fund more non-profits to develop housing rather than the private sector - we do it better.
- Incomes you can live on, we need Universal Basic Income.



(Images: Various, Toronto, Canada)

### Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and Various - Dinner

- Date: 8 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Marie Morison, Director, Built for Zero, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
  - Jennifer van Gennip, Co-Chair of the Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness
  - Trish Lenz, Manager, Coordinated Access, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, City of Toronto
  - Alana Jones, Manger, Borden Place
  - Andrew Bond, Medical Director, Inner City Health Associates and Chair of the Canadian Network for the Health and Housing of people experiencing Homelessness (not pictured).



(Images: Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Canada)

- In the Canadian context, local government agencies do the tenancy management and fund the local case management services, whereas the provincial government provides income support, not the National government.
- There isn't a strong permanent supportive housing sector in Canada, needs are more met through the disability and health sectors, but poorly.
- In terms of engaging private landlords, one tactic many use is to send a certificate to say thank you to the private landlords for helping to end homelessness. It really drives a change in behaviour.

*All of us are called to be people who through our kindness and tenderness and focused, attentive love, return people to themselves. You do it in a particular way: through housing.*

- Father Greg Boyle



(Images: Jennifer van Gennip is from Redwood Park Communities, Toronto, Canada)

### Peer Work

- There is a strong culture of supporting peer workers, but one of the challenges is boundaries get crossed. For example, we say peer workers shouldn't use drugs with clients they are supporting, but sometimes it happens.
- Inner City Health Associates do a range of training for peer workers.

## Individualism

- During COVID we found that people wouldn't go inside from encampments if they have to split up their community, so housing placements with clusters really help, even if it had to be to shelter for a little while. Housing First can have a very individualistic response and needs to pay more attention to supporting communities.
- What we need to get away from is extractive individualism, to vibrant supportive communities.
- The system encourages housing placements, not the effectiveness or sustainability of those placements. So many in the system wish they had the time to support employment pathways.
- The system can be very inefficient, the by-name list helps with that, but some people had three case managers because the clients had complex needs that required that level of support.

## Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness

- The Alliance are very much in support of the CAEH Built for Zero approaches, like the Toronto Alliance.
- They have other Ontario regional alliances that are completely voluntary.
- The Ontario Alliance support the lived experience caucus - that the city has funded, to ensure lived experience voices are at the table.
- One of the criticisms of these efforts is there is a lot of talking, this can be about ensuring they find their niche in the system. There is a lack of spirit of completion.



## Better Backbones

- People show up to contribute to those sessions, but what gets written up and what happens between meetings is key.
- Backbone teams need to be exceptional at distilling the conversations and the actions down into brief papers that are written in a simple, non-jargon and engaging way. The burden of writing things down falls heavily on backbone teams.
- There is a big difference between connected and coordinated, this difference needs constant work.
- People can have refreshing conversations - this doesn't mean anything is getting 'done' at the systems level.
- Backbone organisations need to build their capacity to get ideas and problems on paper - and communicate this in a way that resonates with different audiences.
- The benefits of backbone organisations or Alliances like this are they can present the issues, advocate for the funding, in a way that public sector officials can't to ministers, executives and councillors, and Mayors.
- Backbone work is very political, and backbone teams need to be able to navigate these system politics.

## Better Meetings

- Alliance meeting structures can't be a verbal update table, that should be in an email or paper that people read. Sharing these papers broadly is key too - collaborations move at the speed of trust so transparency is essential.
- These meetings can't just be a venting table either, therapy is best done at the pub, not at a meeting that should be about action.
- The meetings need to concern strategic planning, setting targets and holding accountability - they are not always best structured as a formal meeting but as a workshop.

- What makes a good meeting is to start with the issues at the service coordination level, and lift those up through the other governance meetings - they should be path-clearing meetings.
- Backbone staff need to be able to speak up to the system and listen down to the frontline and translate this.

Service coordination

- The focus of service coordination can't be about managing risk. In Scotland they have a concept of the 'situation table' - from community policing - the idea is to use knowledge to locate risk and identify where there is a need for multi-agency coordination - everyone is in and out in 7 minutes. Police co-lead this.



(Images: The Situation Table model in action, Cambridge, UK)<sup>90</sup>

- Glasgow Implemented this "Situation Table" model in 2008 as part of an anti-gang violence strategy, as they had been identified as the murder capital of Europe. By 2013 it had helped to drive violent death down by 50%.

## Glasgow, Scotland

**"Murder Capital of Europe"**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Alcohol Abuse</li> <li>◦ Low Life Expectancy</li> <li>◦ Youth Violence</li> <li>◦ Gangs</li> <li>◦ Drug Use</li> <li>◦ HIV</li> <li>◦ Teenage Pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Domestic Violence</li> <li>◦ Education Standards</li> <li>◦ Housing Problems</li> <li>◦ Unemployment</li> <li>◦ Suicide</li> </ul>
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(Images: Community Mobilization in Glasgow, Scotland)<sup>91</sup>

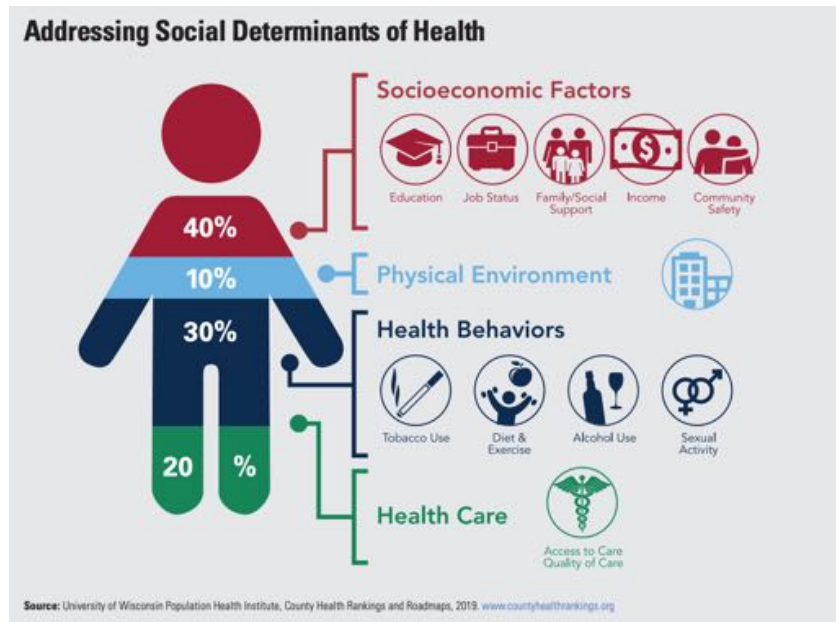
<sup>90</sup> <https://taylornewberry.ca/addressing-risk-through-system-collaboration-evaluation-of-the-connectivity-situation-tables-in-waterloo-region/>

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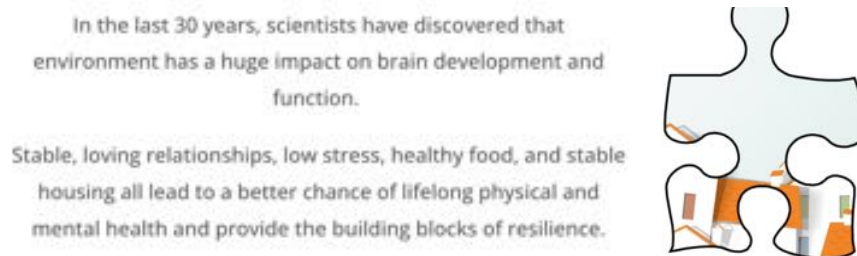
## Social medicine

- Social medicine aims to understand how social and economic conditions impact health, disease and the practice of medicine and then try to work out how we can foster conditions to lead to a healthier society.
- Some might say the concept of social medicine is half branding half concept - but it was pioneered by Dr Paul Farmer, Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School.<sup>92</sup>
- The concept of social medicine is how you apply the social determinants of health in practice.



(Images: American Hospitals Association, Making the Case for Hospitals to Invest in Housing, USA)<sup>93</sup>

- In Canada and the US, there are hospitals practising social medicine by investing in housing.
- Given the inextricable link between affordable, quality housing and good health, housing is one area that hospitals and health systems are starting to focus on more and more.
- The American Hospitals Association has been campaigning on this.<sup>94</sup>



(Images: Community Mobilization in Glasgow, Scotland)<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> <https://ghsm.hms.harvard.edu/about/memoriain>

<sup>93</sup> [https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/05/AIHC\\_issue\\_brief\\_final.pdf](https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2019/05/AIHC_issue_brief_final.pdf)

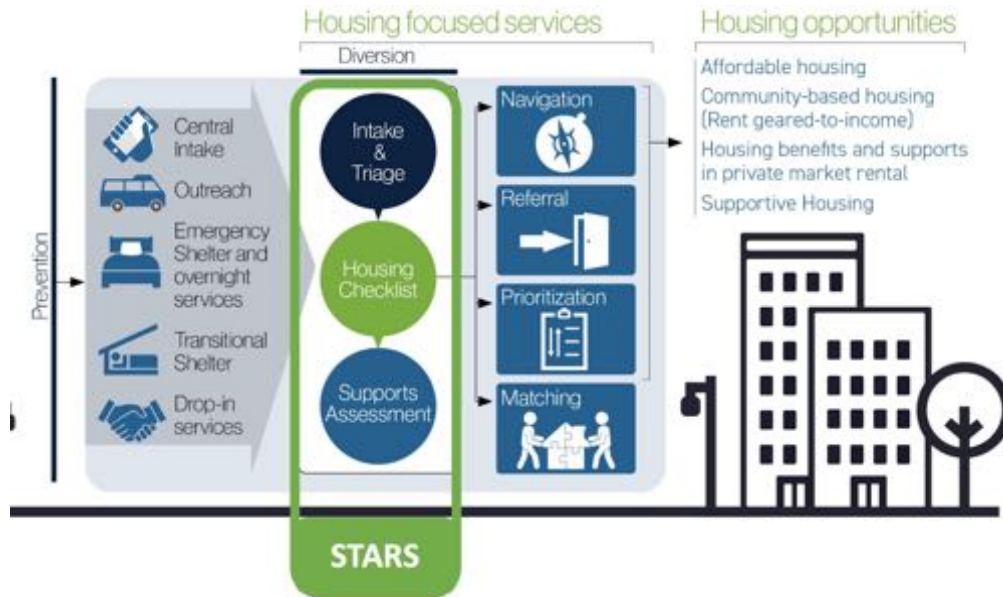
<sup>94</sup> <https://www.aha.org/issue-brief/2019-04-24-making-case-hospitals-invest-housing>

<sup>95</sup> <https://redwoodparkcommunities.com/yimby/>

- In Canada there is the McLaren Hotel in Manitoba which has been converted to housing for patients stuck in the hospital setting.

### Triage Tool

- There have been concerns raised about the VI-SPDAT scoring in Toronto, though there is recognition that it is just one tool. As a result, they have recently developed the Service Triage, Assessment & Referral Support (STARS) tool as a replacement.



(Images: Alison Kooistra, Coordinated Access, City of Toronto, Canada)<sup>96</sup>

### First Nations Homelessness and Data

- One of the things that has been important is the appointment of a First Nations program coordinator in the coordinated access team to ensure a culturally appropriate response.
- The issue of data sovereignty is an ongoing conversation.
- Indigenous data sovereignty is the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the collection, ownership and application of data about Indigenous communities, peoples, lands, and resources.<sup>97</sup>
- Data sovereignty has not been satisfactorily resolved nor is there even a policy commitment to addressing it, but the government is working towards it.
- When collecting the data, it is emphasised that the data is held on behalf of the people experiencing homelessness, and solely for the purpose of getting people access to housing.
- In that sense, some consider the principle of data sovereignty to be in part met.
- It's broadly acknowledged however that the practices regarding culturally appropriate or safe data collection need improvement.
- There is talk about cultural sensitivity, but the way data are collected is extractive, it's couched as storytelling, but people shouldn't have to share some things the way we make them share it.

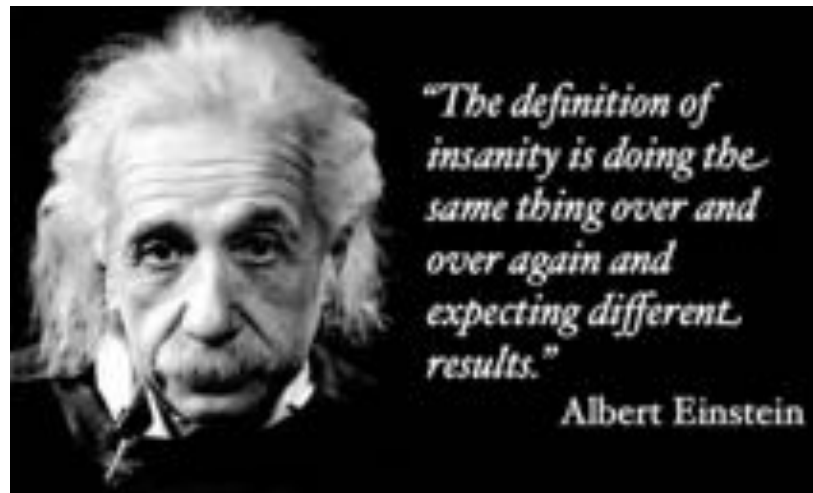
### The System

- There is so much work to be done at the systems level.
- There are good people in the system doing their best, but the system is doing harm. It's rightly engaging for people who realise this, but it also leads to burnout.

<sup>96</sup> <https://training.caeh.ca/wp-content/uploads/Toronto-STARS-Common-Assessment-Tools-June-9-2022.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> <https://aiatsis.gov.au/publication/116530>

- So few people understand or can even see the system.
- This creates a challenge of how you demonstrate how broken the system is while creating hope.
- We can't keep doing the same thing and expect a different result, that is the definition of madness.



#### Target Setting

- Setting arbitrary targets is a bit of a challenge for maintaining a sense of hope.
- One lesson learned in Toronto is don't commit to functional zero in arbitrary short-term timeframes - don't create false expectations about what is possible in a large metro area.
- What San Francisco did is commit to a reduction in the prevalence - i.e. 9 in 1,000 people down to 6 in 1,000 for example. As a target that is more honest and less arbitrary in the short-term.
- The World Health Organisation creates targets based on the prevalence of a disease, and we should do the same to help end homelessness.
- It will, however, still be just a milestone to the ultimate goal of ending homelessness, however, communities define that.

**AAEH Recommendation 13: Prevalence Milestones** - Incorporate homelessness prevalence reduction milestones into its Advance to Zero campaign milestones guide.

#### Action

- Society needs to own this problem, we need to vote for politicians who prioritise ending homelessness.
- Agreeing and admitting failure is essential to this work. We will get there but not on the timeline that we originally thought. We have to hold onto that vision. There are many ways to do that.
- It's really hard as a case manager to project hope for people, when they don't feel it.
- We need to talk about commodification. Scandinavian societies are built on taking care of themselves not extraction. Hence they have a much better housing model.
- How can housing be both a commodity and a human right?
- Quebec has passed legislation to ban Airbnb which has had an inflationary impact on rental prices because it takes so many properties out of the market and makes them available only on a short-term basis.

**State Government's Recommendation 16: Short Stay Distortions** - Review the impact of short-term rental providers like Airbnb and consider options to mitigate the negative impacts on housing affordability and homelessness in their jurisdictions.

Is it possible to end homelessness

- All - Yes, if ending it means it's rare, brief and non-recurring.
- Marie - Yes, I didn't originally, it wasn't until I understood the ways you can do it.

Top three things needed?

- Jennifer van Gennip, Co-Chair of the Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness
  - Tax billionaires out of existence. No one makes a billion dollars, you take it.
  - You need really good metrics.
  - More social housing.
- Trish Lenz, Manager, Coordinated Access, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, City of Toronto
  - Funding - with enough funding you could do it.
  - Public support and awareness about poverty, the drug crisis, and affordable housing - it's hard to make change when there is so little understanding of the problem and the system.
  - Stop the ad hoc funding arrangements - the famine and feast, particularly in relation to housing funding it compromises our effectiveness.
- Alana Jones, Manager, Borden Place
  - We have to ensure there are variations of housing opportunities that meet the needs of the people experiencing homelessness in our community.
  - There needs to be co-creation with folks to meet their needs.
  - This housing needs to be across communities not concentrated. Because the nature of homelessness is constantly changing.
- Marie Morison, Director, Built for Zero, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
  - It's a lack of historical memory, it wasn't that long ago that we didn't see homelessness in our communities. Not like this. We need to learn from history so that we don't repeat it.
  - It's not solvable if we don't change the system, we created these systems, we can uncreate them, to do that we need to create hope.
  - Simply, provide housing with support.

**University Recommendation 9: History of Homelessness** - Support further research to make the history of homelessness in Australia more accessible, to help key stakeholders understand and communicate this, so that we can learn from history and not repeat it.

## London, England

### *Crisis*

- Date: 11 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Matt Downey, CEO
  - Francesca Albanese, Head of Research and Evaluation
  - Sarah Walters, Head of Best Practice
  - Alice Barley, Senior Philanthropy Lead



### Background

- Crisis started in the early 1990s, and the idea was to raise lots of funds at Christmas, to support a crisis response. They did very well at this and they got more and more into advocacy. As the fundraising efforts became even more successful, Crisis felt the pressure to get into more service delivery.
- Crisis are completely independent of government.

- They've recently signed a funding partnership with the Lloyds Banking Group, but COVID has made their fundraising efforts more challenging.
- Sarah's team has a number of best practice officers and has a focus on practice, policy or research, with an increasing focus on ending homelessness.
- Crisis is seeking to support the adoption of Built for Zero in the UK. They are currently establishing a team to support this.
- They are focusing these efforts in communities where Crisis has a service delivery presence.

#### Crisis Perspectives on Ending Homelessness

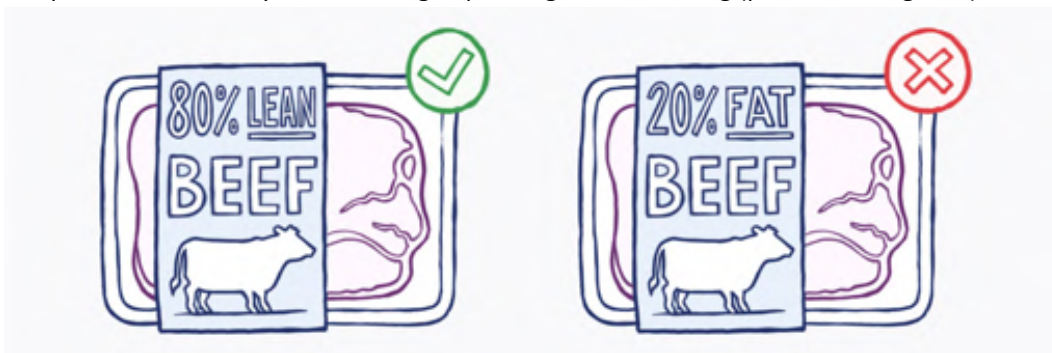
- The conservative government in the UK has committed to ending rough sleeping, though they have not to date been clear on what they mean by that.
- They have commissioned the Centre for Homelessness Impact to set this out, which spun out of Crisis.
- The number of people sleeping rough is going up. This is a challenge. Crisis have put a lot of effort into this. There was a big effort in response to COVID to bring 'everyone in' and they were successful in this, but it was temporary shelter, it was not permanent housing.
- The problem in the UK is that the government policy really sees homelessness as just about people sleeping rough.
- Another challenge is the government aren't committed to Housing First, and neither is much of the sector, though they say they are.
- The public gets a lot of the cynicism and fatalism about homelessness from the sector. Crisis has sought to change this with our work with the Frameworks Institute.
- Crisis started to build Common Ground-like service, or what they called an urban village, but it never happened. NIMBYism killed it. Community Solutions were involved in helping with this.



*(Images: Crisis Op Shop, London, UK)*

## Framing

- Framing means using evidence to make deliberate choices in the words and images we use to tell our stories about homelessness. For audiences, these choices can lead to radically different ways of thinking. This includes choices about:
  - what to emphasise;
  - what to explain;
  - what to leave unsaid.<sup>98</sup>
- The Crisis fundraising team have come on a journey regarding this and understands the importance of framing. Many in the sector continue to double down on the stereotypical images of homelessness in support of their fundraising efforts.
- This attitude perpetuates the fatalism about homelessness that so many have, in the sector, in the public, and in government.
- People react differently to something depending on the framing (positive or negative)



(Images: The Framing effect, Scribbr)<sup>99</sup>

- We need, collectively, to get the messaging and imaging regarding homelessness right.
- Crisis needs to connect from a marketing perspective to the particular audiences we are trying to reach. Re fundraising and framing:
  - Connect people to solutions to homelessness, not just sympathy to it.
  - Don't just target the guilt money at Christmas.
  - Build a donor profile that understands solutions to homelessness.
  - If you get a response from funders that reinforces the negative stereotypes, you need to pull back to the donors who resonate with the solutions. This is hard.
- The framework's effort has often been seen as purist, it's all or nothing, it's not. It is about adapting it to your own organisation and going on a journey. Organisations can't just turn off revenue streams that have been reliant on this funding for some time.
- If you do run a fundraising campaign, the message or the language needs to be very different to a policy influence campaign. There's going to be a lot more policy wonk dot points in an influence campaign, compared to a fundraising effort that has to be super simple.

## Philanthropy Team

- 75% of Crisis income, £60m, comes from their Christmas Appeal - it is the biggest in the UK, and 3,000 people volunteered at it last Christmas.
- Crisis also runs a series of other fundraising efforts, like the Ice Breaker Challenge where people commit to swim in an open lake and raise funds to support homelessness.
- The Christmas Appeal leads to a lot of ongoing donors.

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/242494/crisis-framing-toolkit-july-2020-update.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/framing-effect/>

- Volunteers are central to the appeal, they commit to working a number of eight-hour shifts, serving breakfast, chatting to guests, planning, coordinating, running the hotels for up to six weeks over the Christmas period, when it is coldest in the UK.



(Images: Crisis Christmas Appeal, London, UK)

- As part of the Christmas response, 65% of the guests end up in accommodation.
- I did hear some criticism of the Christmas response in that it displaces people from the existing services that often have support services connected and existing relationships, but there was widespread recognition that it helps meet a need that would otherwise go unmet.

#### Built for Zero Fundraising

- Built for Zero target donors who like to disrupt, but there needs to be a high level of support and communication provided to them, including enabling them to come to workshops (but it is made clear they are there as observers). It is resource intensive.
- They also target donors interested in place-based efforts, because it's about local identity.
- Crisis is finding this fundraising much tougher than usual because it's not direct service delivery.

#### Is Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Yes, although it requires some seismic cultural, economic changes and political bravery not seen by any Western government I've spotted.

#### Top three things needed to bring that about

- Economic change so that wealth creation is not inextricably bound up with property ownership.
- Political will to end the hostile environment for those with insecure immigration status.
- Adequate supply of safe, affordable housing with the support people need to sustain it.

#### **Brent - Skylight Service (Crisis)**

- Date: 11 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Sarah Walters, Head of Best Practice
  - Nick Bradshaw, Brent Service Manager
  - Holly Cooper, Housing Practice Lead
  - Ryan, St Mungo's Outreach Lead, Brent



## Background

- The Skylight model uses a dedicated building to deliver services, operating in a range of locations. The organisation is designed to counteract the poor social integration associated with homelessness and seek to deliver:
  - Good health and well-being:
  - Achievement of housing stability:
  - Good relationships and social networks:
  - Employment and financial stability.
- Crisis are intended to counter the negative effects of homelessness, including those beyond the immediately negative effects of a lack of settled home.
- The Brent service had recently moved into new offices.
- The service provides case management, and limited 'day centre' type services, i.e. shower, respite, etc. They have room in the centre to start to provide more health and other services as the partnerships are developed.
- It started as a local community winter night shelter, it was a severe weather protocol activation.
- The Brent community is a very multicultural area.
- 80-90% of the people sleeping rough have no recourse to public funds, because of their immigration status. Helping access advice regarding migration status is a big part of the effort there.

## Built for Zero

- Due to the immigration status of many of the people one of the challenges with creating a by-name list in their area, as they are seeking to do, is the perception and real risk that the data could be used for deportation purposes.
- They operate a homelessness forum - bi-monthly - that will provide the basis for their project governance.
- They are currently working on a Driver Diagram that sets out their theory of change - included in this will be the later development of a service coordination forum.
- Crisis is self-funding a Community Lead who will be appointed soon to lead this work, there is a lot of community excitement about it.



(Images: Crisis Skylight Brent + Holly Cooper - Housing Practice Lead, London, UK)



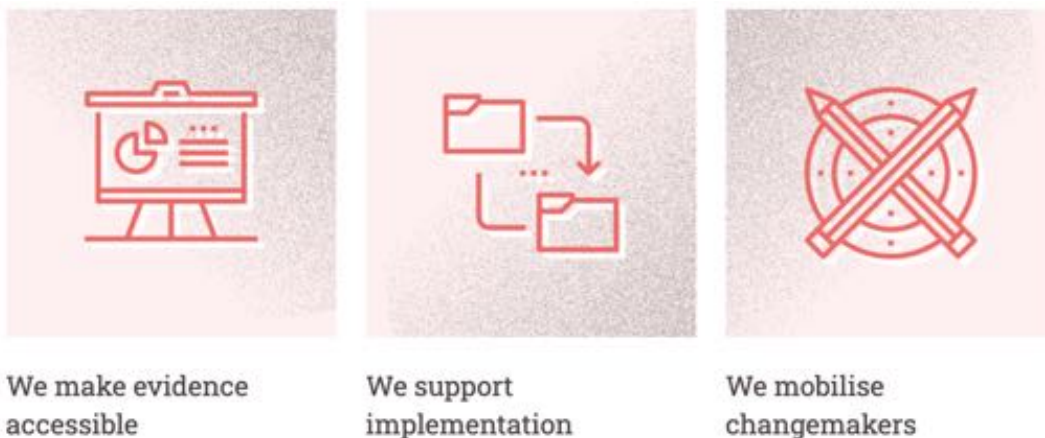
## Centre for Homelessness Impact (CHI)

- Date: 11 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Ligia Teixeira, CEO
  - Greg Hurst, Head of Communications and Public Affairs
  - Rob Anderson, Head of Implementation and Policy



## Background

- Ligia was working at Crisis when she was able to work up a proposal and get funding for a 'what works' centre on homelessness.
- The centre's mission is to act as a catalyst for evidence-led change to enable people working in and around homelessness to achieve breakthrough results.
- One of the initial things the centre did was establish evidence gap maps, to help identify what we know is working and where the evidence base needs improvement.



We make evidence accessible

We support implementation

We mobilise changemakers

*(Image: Centre for Homelessness Impact, London, UK)*

- The Blair Labour Government set up a number of these 'what works' centres in areas like education, crime reduction, local economic development and others but the homelessness one was the first self funding one.
- They are now receiving bi-partisan support, and the homelessness agency in the UK, the Department for 'Levelling Up' has engaged CHI to help with a number of elements to their strategy including how to define and measure an end to homelessness.

## Definition

- CHI has adopted the definition of an end to homelessness as being:
  - A society where any experience of homelessness is prevented whenever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is a rare, brief and non-recurring experience.<sup>100</sup>
  - I had initially considered prevention to be a sub set of rare - because you can't make homelessness rare unless you engage in prevention activities (what are sometimes referred to as inflow or 'turning off the tap'), however, there are different types of prevention.
  - See Appendix D for further background on homelessness prevention.

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/mission-and-impact>

#### THE DEFINITION

Ending rough sleeping means preventing it wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, making it a rare, brief, and non-recurrent experience.

#### Prevented

This is about enabling you to track how effectively rough sleeping is being prevented.

#### Rare

This provides an enhanced and more directly comparable way of tracking the prevalence of rough sleeping nationally and locally.

#### Brief

This allows you to assess how effectively local systems are able to rapidly identify people sleeping rough and support them off the streets, and then into long-term accommodation.

#### Non-recurring

This intends to track how well local areas are doing at ensuring people who have previously slept rough are supported to avoid returning to the streets.

*(Image: Ending Rough Sleeping Data Framework, Centre for Homelessness Impact, London, UK)*

- Making homelessness rare requires crisis prevention, when people are already at imminent risk or experiencing homelessness. So practise improvements like not discharging people from health or corrections settings into homelessness.
- There is also the need for structural prevention or going further upstream. This requires broader things like ensuring income support payments keep people above the poverty line, changing tax settings to make housing more affordable etc.

**University Recommendation 4: Formal Ending Definition** - Australia lacks a commonly agreed definition of what an end to homelessness looks like in policy documents and in academic publications. The research community should help resolve this, drawing upon the work from the Centre for Homelessness Impact, and others.

The AAEH and the Centre for Social Impact, as part of their partnership, should publish a 'defining an end to homelessness in Australia' paper to clearly articulate what is meant by an end to homelessness, why it's important to define and how it is possible to achieve.

#### Functional Zero

- There is not a widespread understanding of the international Built for Zero methodology or what functional zero actually means in the UK.
- There are some who see it as unhelpful because it is seen as a milestone measure and not an outcome measure. I think this stems largely from a misunderstanding of what precisely functional zero means, in particular in different contexts and for different homeless populations, i.e. rough sleeping in Australia, vs chronic homelessness in the USA, vs all homelessness in the UK.
- Given these misunderstandings, there is a legitimate worry that functional zero as a measure could allow communities to 'game the system' just as many agencies 'cream' the clients when it comes to Housing First programs.

## Homelessness Reduction Act

- In the UK they have homelessness legislation, it looks slightly different in Scotland and Wales because of devolution.<sup>101</sup>
- The Homelessness Reduction Act in effect means that everyone has a right to case management, and some agencies have a duty to refer (like hospitals etc).
- I have reflected often on whether ending homelessness legislation in Australia would be a good thing, or if it would lead to perverse outcomes.
- For instance, in the US they have a 'right' but it is a right to shelter and it causes a range of problems, not least of it all it doesn't work, as it's not a Housing-First evidence-based intervention.
- In the UK, there is a range of issues in the way the legislation operates, it makes a level of government responsible that doesn't have the fiscal capacity to actually meet the need. It also creates categories of people that are in or out of the statutory definition, which has nonsensical categories regularly called 'voluntarily homeless' because of the way the specific criteria in the legislation are drafted.
- Ligia suggested commissioning an issues paper on the Act to consider the benefits and risks in the Australian context.

**AAEH Recommendation 19: Prevention Legislation** - Commission an issues paper on the merits of dedicated preventing homelessness legislation in Australia.

## Research agenda

- To end homelessness needs research, on evaluation or what's working.
- There is no dedicated homelessness research agenda in Australia.
- CHI has adopted the work from global best practice and provided advice on how to implement it in the UK.
- What has been central to the success is that the design of the research projects has been separated from the delivery of them. The CHI, in concert with the government and housing sector, designs the projects and various researchers deliver them.
- CHI are not a traditional research centre - they have a very strong focus on translation and what works.
- CHI want to see homelessness practice, as evidence-based as practice in the health sector is.
- CHI work is structured around four pillars:
  - Evidence and data - value for money.
  - Implementation - Rob Anderson (CHI) getting to know people.
  - Mobilisation.
  - Equally applicable.
- As they say in health translation research, from laboratory to bedside, we need an ending homelessness research agenda that connects researchers to the street.

**Universities Recommendation 5: Research Agenda** - Work with the AAHE to develop options for the establishment of a national ending homelessness research agenda integrated into local efforts to end homelessness with a focus on improving understanding of what works and the translation of that into real time practice (as opposed to the current predominant focus on retrospective evaluations of programs).

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<sup>101</sup> Devolution is when the central Westminster government transfers powers to local governments - such as Scotland, Wales, or major cities like Manchester.



(Images: Centre for Homelessness Impact Team and office, London, UK)

### Thames Reach - Bill Tidham

- Date: 12 May 2023
- Title: CEO
- Thames Reach is a large homelessness service provision agency based largely in London.
- We believe that Thames Reach can only end street homelessness with the active support and involvement of governments.
- Homelessness is a result of upstream systems failing. Those systems are beyond the control of the homelessness sector, but we can influence them.
- The UK's 2018 Homelessness Prevention Act has by and large been a good thing.
- The Act introduced two new universal homelessness duties to local authorities in England: a 'prevention duty' and a 'relief duty'.
- Another area that the UK seems to do well is the integration of employment services with homelessness services.
- The challenge with the focus of the UK government's homelessness strategy is that it waits for people to sleep rough before they pay attention.
- There really isn't a strong history of Permanent Supportive Housing in the UK.
- The focus has been more on temporary supported housing (in the disability and mental health areas), and not focused specifically on homelessness. There is scepticism about whether there is a need for this type of housing for people defined by their homelessness, rather than defined by their disability or health issues.



### Housing First

- Housing First works for some, but not all. It's a solution to a specific problem, it's not 'the' solution to ending homelessness.
- Housing First has a risk of saying shut the shelters down and convert them to housing, meanwhile those who are waiting on the street, they can just keep on dying.
- The goal should be to end homelessness not do high-fidelity Housing First. It confuses means and ends.



(Images: Bill Tidham and Photos of Booth Poverty Maps in Bill's Office, London, UK)

## Data Systems

- Data systems have evolved a bit since the late nineteenth century when Charles Booth's landmark social and economic survey found that 35% of Londoners were living in abject poverty. Booth's team of social investigators interviewed Londoners from all walks of life, which formed the basis of Booth's colour-coded social mapping.<sup>102</sup>
- Today there is a range of data reporting and data systems in use in the UK. As in Australia, there is a big desire to minimise duplication.
  - H-click is the central government system, similar to how in Australia services are obligated to report to the AIHW.
  - In London all outreach services must use CHAIN, a system run by Homelessness Link, funded by the local authorities. This functions as a quasi by-name list and is the source of the frequency or incidents of rough sleeping homelessness reporting.
  - Agencies also use Inform, a homelessness case management system, and the vendor of this is Homelessness Link. They own the software, as opposed to CHAIN which they are contracted to operate by the government.
- People are cautious of talking about by-name lists because of the privacy implications.
- Australia could require all outreach services to have and report a by-name list.

## Street Link

- Street Link is a website/app that helps “end rough sleeping by enabling members of the public to connect people sleeping rough with the local services that can support them”.<sup>103</sup>
- A notification is sent to the outreach services, they investigate and a report is sent back to the person who provided the notification.
- Homeless Link operates Street Link. Adelaide has a similar service called Street Connect.<sup>104</sup> It doesn't however report back the response.
- In Adelaide this was seen as a useful way to let the public know that support was there, and that people experiencing homelessness didn't need to be reported to police. It was therefore helpful in

<sup>102</sup> <https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.streetconnect.sa.gov.au/>

decoupling homelessness from being a public safety issue, to help prevent the further criminalisation of homelessness.

- With Street Link in the UK, there is some cynicism about the program. Up to 70-80% of the notifications that come through are inaccurate referrals because they concern people begging or experiencing poverty and not actually experiencing homelessness.

Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes, if you adopt the rare, brief and non-recurring definition.

Top three

- Get serious about prevention - i.e. Homelessness Reduction Act, but realise that is a whole of community function not just the council's responsibility.
- Recognise the complexity - that street homelessness is a confluence of housing, benefits, health, substance use, justice, immigration - addressing the failures in those systems
- Join it together and provide services that match the support with the complexity of the individuals experiencing homelessness.

### Homelessness Link

- Date: 15 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Rick Henderson, CEO
  - Joanne Prestidge, Head of National Practice Development



Background

- Homelessness Link is a membership-based organisation that seeks to represent its members, it's what in Australia is called a peak body.
- They receive a lot of government funding, because 'having government funding means you have a seat at the table'. They have developed social enterprise streams for the organisation to balance this out.
- In part because the Conservative Government thought peak bodies represent red tape and that front-line organisations needed to get their funding so they cut the peaks and thousands of other organisations they call part of the 'charity infrastructure'.
- Homelessness Link also made a decision three years ago that they wanted to be bolder in their campaigning, they sought to be more proactive in their campaigning, and COVID really demonstrated the benefits of membership with Homelessness Link to their members.
- One thing they are campaigning on is that there is a lot of concern about the increasing commercialisation of homelessness service provision, of for-profit organisations bidding and winning homelessness contracts.
- There was a recent BBC documentary on unregulated supportive housing and how there is a lot of exploitation of vulnerable people.

Housing First

- Homelessness Link - set up the UK Housing First Hub/initiative - which led to the development of UK principles, as well as other resources including a fidelity tool.
- It's a program, but not a fundamental building block in the system.
- Academic Nicholas Pleace, from the University of York, has written a lot about this, about how Housing First is important as part of a system.
- Need to remember that Housing First started as a health intervention.
- High-needs people need permanent on-site support, but don't really have this in the UK.

- Housing First is not cost-effective for some people. They don't all need such an intensive intervention.

#### COVID and Climate Change

- COVID saw some rapid progress in low-quality shelter's changing practices. There was also a Winter Transformation Fund established that enabled communal shelters to be converted to temporary accommodation, it provided capital and ongoing funding to support this (for three years at least and currently are waiting to see if it will be continued).
- Homeless Link have also seen in recent times some SWEAP funding allocated for Severe Weather Activation programs, which is likely to be needed more and more as the impacts of climate change are felt.

#### Ending and Prevention

- Hyper-local approaches work at making improvements but are not sustainable unless connected to advocacy.
- The UK Government made a strategy of ending rough sleeping and they didn't at all focus on prevention, so they are seeing increased rough sleeping. They didn't recognise what organisations were all telling them, that they also need to turn off the tap.
- The government had a previous policy that is pretty similar to their current strategy called: 'No second night out', it included:
  - No one arrives on the streets - which was 'rare' in the new language.
  - No one lives on the street - which is brief.
  - And no one returns - non-recurring.
- So the new strategy of rare, brief, and non-recurring is just re-badged.
- Finland hasn't ended homelessness, it's PR, they have people sleeping rough, and they have lots of people in temporary accommodation.
- Finland has a lot of congregate permanent supportive housing, that is not Housing First in many people's view, people have to go through the system again.
- It could be argued Functional Zero is a manipulation or just an administrative construct. Some people think that achieving Functional Zero for a smaller subset of a population and a tiny jurisdiction like Medicine Hat isn't really ending homelessness.

#### Social Enterprise Strategy

- Rick started in the role of CEO of the organisation ten years ago and two-thirds of the funding came from the state, which made them very dependent on the government.
- The organisation set a clear social enterprise strategy to reduce the proportion of government funding without reducing the amount, the only way to do this was growth.
- Now they receive less than 20% of their funding from the government, approximately £2m from governments out of £11m overall revenue.
- The greatest proportion of this growth came from training (at scale), events, consultancy, and grants (for projects and administering the distribution).
- To cover costs in training you need to do it at scale, this is possible in the UK as the sector employs 10,000 people. The Associates - or people who provide the training - only receive 50% of the funding which helps them to cover the costs, and make a little to support the core operations of the organisation.
- They also do a lot of strategy reviews for local governments and smaller non-government agencies.
- They cover a large range of topics including trauma-informed care, professional boundaries, Housing First and more.
- The other element of the organisation's social enterprise strategy is events - conferences, forums, workshops, and other events that help build the movement.

- It's hard to build a movement over Zoom. So you need to invest in this if you want to be able to cover the costs to make this work. You need to see it as a social enterprise.



*(Images: Photos from around London, UK)*

### Movement Building

- This is about building solidarity among the communities working for a common cause, to break the power of destructive competitive tendering.
- Movement building is focussed on a leadership perspective, particularly the next generation of CEOs
- Collective impact comes with too much process. Focus on leaders.
- Homelessness Link's work has two streams - established leaders and emerging leaders.
- There is momentum behind the UK Housing First practitioners, in 2015 there were about ten services doing Housing First, now there are about 150 providers, and at a higher fidelity. There are a lot of practice forums emerging.

### Deaths

- Homelessness Link have done some advocacy on homelessness deaths, the Office of National Statistics does a report but there are no standards for reporting.



- There is a great organisation that champions this issue, and is operated by people with a lived experience, called the Museum of Homelessness.<sup>105</sup>

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- The homelessness sector can't end homelessness, but we can respond better.

Top three things needed

- More housing.
- Good quality support for everyone.
- Trauma informed prevention approach.

**Patrick Duce - World Habitat**

- Date: 16 May 2023
- Title: Programme Lead (Homelessness)



Background

- Patrick did a Churchill Fellowship in 2017 - primarily visiting Germany and Canada, focused on the issues of refugee housing and homelessness.
- He started at World Habitat in 2018 as the Campaign Impact Manager for the European End Street Homelessness Campaign and since 2020 has been the Programme Lead (Homelessness).
- Previously Patrick was the Innovation and Good Practice Project Manager at Homeless Link – the national membership body for organisations working to end homelessness. He also worked for St Mungo's No Second Night Out program, their first attempt to intervene with people who were new to homelessness and to give them intensive rehousing support.
- World Habitat has approximately 13 members of staff, it is based in Leicester and has about \$28m invested in the stock market, from which they fund their operations. The original investment came from the sale of some land, and the independent foundation was born.<sup>106</sup>
- Habitat used to be much more research-focused, but now focuses more on sharing good news and taking a strengths-based focus.
- Habitat is more than bricks and mortar (or the built form), they are about communities. There is plenty of research on housing problems in the world, we need more solutions.

World Habitat Awards

- The organisation is most well known for their World Habitat Awards - an annual competition celebrating the right to housing model. There is one award for the global north and one for the global south and they have a very big focus on positivity and solutions to housing.
- The global south housing challenge is really marked by the threat from climate change, and increasing natural disasters. That is the focus of their work there.
- Two awards for the global north have gone to Community Solutions for their work on the 100,000 Homes campaign and the Y Foundation in Finland. They were winners in two different years.
- Both campaigns were really good at doing housing allocation to support the most vulnerable, but the data-driven and collaborative approach of Community Solutions and the housing supply demonstrated by the Y Foundation are what made each of them such standouts.

Homelessness and Climate Change

- Climate change has the potential to be one of the biggest inflow factors. Our buildings are not built to withstand the impacts of climate change and our services are not built that way.

<sup>105</sup> <https://museumofhomelessness.org/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://world-habitat.org/>

- The greatest threat to homes is no longer war but climate change, and people on the street are the most vulnerable and likely to suffer from the impacts of climate emergency.
- Homelessness organisations can't just focus on housing inequality, and homelessness organisations need to think about the climate emergency at the same time.
- Organisationally homelessness organisations may have a carbon budget, and they treat that with the same level of importance as financial management. They have committed to being carbon neutral. To fly less and have more partners in countries they are working with.

#### The European End Street Homelessness Campaign

- Set up in 2015, they have supported a range of communities that are “working together to permanently house Europe’s most vulnerable people and end chronic street homelessness by creating a greater awareness of homelessness, the people around us who are affected, and what can be done about it, and find and deliver better, quicker ways to help people off the streets”.<sup>107</sup>
- Initially supported by the campaign were the communities of Westminster (England), Croydon (England), and Barcelona (Spain). Over time they expanded to a lot more including Glasgow (Scotland), Brussels (Belgium) and others. They have learned, over time where they can have the most impact and as such they are now much more focused on central and eastern Europe.
- Similar to the AtoZ Campaign the European campaign was inspired by the 100,000 Homes Campaign in the USA - they utilised the VI-SPDAT, connections weeks along with the Y Foundations approach to Housing First.
- The campaign was set up as a learning journey, and as such looks a lot different now from when it first started.
- They only ever had two people working on the campaign, they provided small grants to organisations on the ground, provided a peer support model and a range of other elements.
- The organisation helped set up a by-name list in Croydon, and counted the number of people going into permanent accommodation. They worked to a set of key principles because they couldn't wholly adopt the B4Z approach.

#### Campaign Impact and Evaluation

- The annual Impact Report of the organisation sets out how they have evaluated the campaign three times: the pilot phase, year two and year five. They were very honest evaluations that look at the effectiveness of the ending homelessness campaign, but also recognised the huge impact they have had.
- The organisation faced challenges with bringing an American concept to Europe, particularly as each country has their own ways of defining homelessness and data collection methods. The complexity of this makes the efforts of supporting a campaign across the Australian States positively simple by comparison.
- They've learned that it's important to focus on working with organisations that want to do things differently, and who aren't happy with the status quo.
- They've been talking about Housing First and complex data sets and the problem is people don't really understand what this means.
- There are now massive commitments to Housing First, there are data frameworks in Europe.
- The organisation thinks the greatest impact they can have is in central and eastern Europe, so their focus is on the post-Soviet contexts where there are, for example, few to no private rental systems and little transparency in data.
- They are quite relaxed about the fact that cities and organisations come and go from the campaign and get what they need from it.

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<sup>107</sup> <https://world-habitat.org/publications/the-european-end-street-homelessness-campaign/>

### Is ending homelessness possible

- Yes, I have to say that, otherwise, what's the point of doing my job without believing that ending homelessness is possible, it's not easy, and the solutions don't look the same for everyone, but we can end homelessness.
- By working together, we can activate the notion that there are solutions. We can look to places in the world where homelessness has demonstrably been ended. That doesn't mean that homelessness won't start again, but we have to set up a system that prevents that as best as possible and resolves it when it occurs.
- It won't be ended and that will be it. There will always be people who are the victims of housing injustice, so it's an ongoing task.

### Top three things needed to end homelessness

- Long-term funding.
- Take the profit out of housing, when you take the profit out, you put people back into it. We need to be moving away from the financialisation of housing.
- The right type of housing in the right place, that meets the needs of those who are seeking it.

### **Mark McGreevy - DePaul International**

- Date: 16 May 2023
- Title: President of The DePaul Group



### Background: DePaul International

- DePaul International, supports the Institute of Global Homelessness, and the FamVin (Vincentian family) Homeless Alliance - which supports capacity building across the Vincentian network of homelessness providers - the largest in the world.
- DePaul International works through the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia.
- They partnered on a global advocacy campaign 'Make Us Count' along with the Institute of Global Homelessness' efforts with the United Nations.

### Background: De Paul UK

- DePaul UK was a youth homelessness focused agency, but isn't so much anymore, because of the way the government funds initiatives has forced them to broaden out. They don't fund only youth services, but general services essentially.
- They provide a cradle-to-the-grave model now from youth homelessness to wet shelters, outreach to end-of-life support.
- They have a focus on expanding the Night Stop franchise project model, where they train young people and families to share a house with a young person escaping a crisis situation for four days, while they look for and set up alternative housing options.
  - Canada has just taken this model up. Insurance becomes a bit of a barrier in this volunteer model which they have addressed.
  - DePaul has been supporting the initiative for over 25 years, with very few complaints the entire time.
- DePaul is very big in Ireland - their turnover is £17m in the UK, but Ireland's is £25m.

### Creating Civil Society

- DePaul UK supported the first ever street count in Croatia and before the war established a range of services, like outreach, in Ukraine.

- In places like this, they are having to work really hard to create civil society to help address the problem of homelessness.
- This has been the way DePaul have needed to roll out homelessness services in Eastern Europe, they had to create the concept of a not-for-profit entity. They had only government entities, and since the end of the USSR private companies, now they are creating non-profits.
- In Ukraine, before the war they were supporting 8,500 people a year, now they support 35,000 people a day.
- Homelessness is about poverty, in the global north and the global south.
- The next time someone asks you isn't homelessness a choice, ask them how many rich people they know who make that choice, the answer is none, because by definition they have the resources. Homelessness is the result of poverty, poverty is the result of inequality, and inequality is the result of government's inability or unwillingness to take the requisite action.



*(Images: Mark McGreavy and the DePaul International Office, London, UK)*

#### Endowments

- Setting up an endowment is a good way to build for the future that is needed to end homelessness. This is long-term work.
- The Institute of Global Homelessness is partially funded through the revenue from an endowment, DePaul International is setting up an endowment with the surplus from their operations going into the endowment. They also get high value donors and institutional donors who would prefer to direct their giving to something that will have a perpetual legacy. All their 'gifts in will' go to the endowment fund.
- The London Housing Foundation<sup>108</sup> - was given some significant assets, they sold them, to establish an endowment. It's run by Ian Bradey, who was the head of operations for the UK Government's Rough Sleepers Initiative.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>108</sup> <https://lhf.org.uk/about-us/>

<sup>109</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/334429.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/334429.stm)

- This initiative was very successful and was the first effort of the then Blair Labour Government's new Social Exclusion Initiative.
- Baroness Louise Cassey, DBE, CB who is now the Institute of Global Homelessness Chair was appointed to lead the initiative.
- Tony Blair said he chose Louise to lead it because she was smart enough to conceptualise it and tough enough to withstand the pressure required to progress it.
- The London Housing Foundation got their funds from what's called dormant funds, people had to pay a tithe for some time to cross the bridge, it was all put in a fund that was forgotten about for a long time, and so it's now City Bridge Trust.<sup>110</sup>
- Dormant funds exist like this in Australia, generally smaller, and getting them 'unlocked' can be challenging - but have a significant impact if you can pull it off.
- It makes sense for some charities to tap into University Endowment funds, to store the donations and manage the fund.
- DePaul has expanded into the US because they have been invited by a range of religious orders that are winding up to take over some of their assets as they want to leave a legacy with them.
- There are now whole categories of funders who will only fund measures to adopt the UN (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); the so-called 'world's to do list'. Various players have aligned more than US\$220bn to implement the SDGs.
- This is a problem as homelessness has not been included in the SDGs. This is something that IGH and UN Habitat are working to fix. But for now, organisations should seek to align their impact to the SDGs to not only support that effort but to attract funding and resources in this growing space.

**AAEH Recommendation 6: Impact Measurement** - Seek to measure, evaluate and report on its impact against the world's to-do list, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Rights-based approach?

- You can make it a 'right', but where are we going to win a rights-based argument? In the countries that have it, it's not a right to housing it's a right to support, places like New York have a right to shelter (which comes with a bunch of perverse outcomes).
- If we took the debate to the UN, the US would be the first country to veto it. A rights-based argument isn't going to get us where we need, not in the UK, and not in Australia.
- We need the public and political leaders to back this.
- Western democracies see homelessness as largely an issue to be managed, to manage the people on the streets as efficiently as possible. To not let homelessness cause too much disruption and to not let it cause too much cost.
- Is that what's meant by an end, a managed system, no we need to be more ambitious than that.
- We need to remember where we have come from. Too much of the debate has forgotten the massive evolution that has occurred in Western societies, of the state accepting social issues like this as a problem, that people have rights, and that civil society has a role - alongside the state in dealing with this.
- As a result of this, we're now at a point in time where it is possible to end homelessness, but we keep stuffing it up.
- Government accepting rights and building the capacity of the NFPs (largely through funding) is where we are at. We are yet to line all the ducks up in most countries to make ending homelessness possible and to make it possible to implement a rights-based approach.

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<sup>110</sup> <https://www.citybridgetrust.org.uk/about/history>

### Stakeholder Management in the Homelessness Sector

- Talk about values, not beliefs. Particularly why talking to religious agencies. Beliefs can separate, but values can bring you together, and then you have a common language.
- With the FamVin Alliance - 160 organisations across borders, who claim St Vincent De Paul as their inspiration for working with homeless people.
- Getting their attention takes seeking to do something bold. Big hairy audacious goals help - housing 10,000 people in six years was DePaul's goal.
- When the Pope heard about this 10,000 people in five years goal he sought to broaden it and include more agencies, across the Jesuits not just the Vincentians. As a result, more wanted to be involved in something big, success begets success, and momentum builds.
- We generally talk 80% about tasks, and 20% about stories, to capture people, we need to do this the other way around.
- To start, do something practical that brings people outside their organisation or order - think bigger than the agencies and feed into a bigger global narrative.

### Global South

- In developing countries, ending homelessness means a very different thing. It needs to be seen in the historical context, when people talk about Housing First and housing led, the focus in developing countries is eating, any form of shelter and not dying first.
- It helps to talk about the global narrative. We can count the number of people living in slums around the world and can count the number of refugees in the world, but currently have no way to understand how many people are experiencing homelessness in the world right now. You can't solve what you don't measure.

### Ending Homelessness

- We all know what it takes to end homelessness but we can't get the ducks in a row.
- There are enough people who know what to do. We need that surge in capacity, focus and funding.
- Regarding coordination, there needs to be a 'privy council' approach, longer term, beyond the life of one government, like the Beyond Blue initiative in Australia and its work on destigmatising depression in Australia. Beyond Blue was established through the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) process, it needs to transcend levels of government, and particular government administrations.

**Commonwealth Government Recommendation 16: A National Initiative** - the National Cabinet consider the establishment of a national initiative to support efforts to end homelessness, similar to the way in which the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments got together to create the Beyond Blue initiative which has been so successful in helping to destigmatise depression and anxiety.

### Is ending homelessness possible?

- Yes, you can easily end it by criminalising it, by making it illegal, or by moving it.
- You can manage it - the current strategy.
- You can seek to end it for individuals through programs, like Housing First or you can seek to end it, for individuals and communities. What we should do.
- So yes, absolutely, and it's ridiculous that we haven't already. Once we do there will be many benefits, some currently known and some currently unknown.

### Top three things needed to end homelessness

- Line up the ducks.
- Focus on prevention, a serious cross-departmental focus, and there has to be political will.

- People and politicians need to see progress if they are going to invest more. People want to be part of success.

### **Toby Lowe - Centre for Public Impact**

- Date: 1 June 2023
- Title: Visiting Professor in Public Management



#### Background

- The Centre for Public Impact (CPI) is a global organisation, based in London, that acts as a partner for governments, public servants, and the diverse network of changemakers working to reimagine government so that it works for everyone.
- This change is needed because the systems, structures, and processes of government today are too often not set up to respond to the complex challenges we face as a society - like homelessness.
- CPI focuses on two complementary sets of practices:
  - Sensemaking is where you create space for a diverse group of changemakers to collectively make sense of complex challenges.
  - Action-learning is where you work closely with government changemakers to adopt an experimental, iterative mindset to day-to-day activities.<sup>111</sup>
- Their work is predicated on the decreasing trust the community has for government. Most debates have been about what government does, rather than how it should be.
- Traditional government approaches to problem-solving and policymaking - linear evidence-gathering, analysis, planning, design, implementation and evaluation - are not effective in complex settings.
- In addition, the idea that those at the centre hold knowledge, power and the answers, must be challenged. In the context of complex social challenges, in particular, those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.
- Toby spent 15 years working across the public and voluntary sectors in the UK - including in homelessness. What that gave him was deep and abiding frustration with performance management systems, which held back the ability to help people, and where very few people tell the truth about what's going on.
- Toby is on secondment to CPI from Newcastle Business School, where he has been working to develop an alternative model for public sector management - one which enables public service to work more effectively in complex, dynamic environments.
- Research has focused on outcomes-based performance management and how it creates gaming. There is about twenty years of research that tells us the same thing, it creates gaming, and they all say we should find the technical way to measure this without gaming. Essentially it is good theory, badly applied requiring a technical fix.
- It's Toby's view however that it's just bad theory, and no matter how it's applied, people will always find a way to game the system.
- It's bad theory because it relies on the idea that outcomes are created by using a linear process, that if you follow you get certain outcomes.
- It's a demonstrable fact that outcomes don't get delivered in this way, primarily because organisations aren't in control of all the factors.

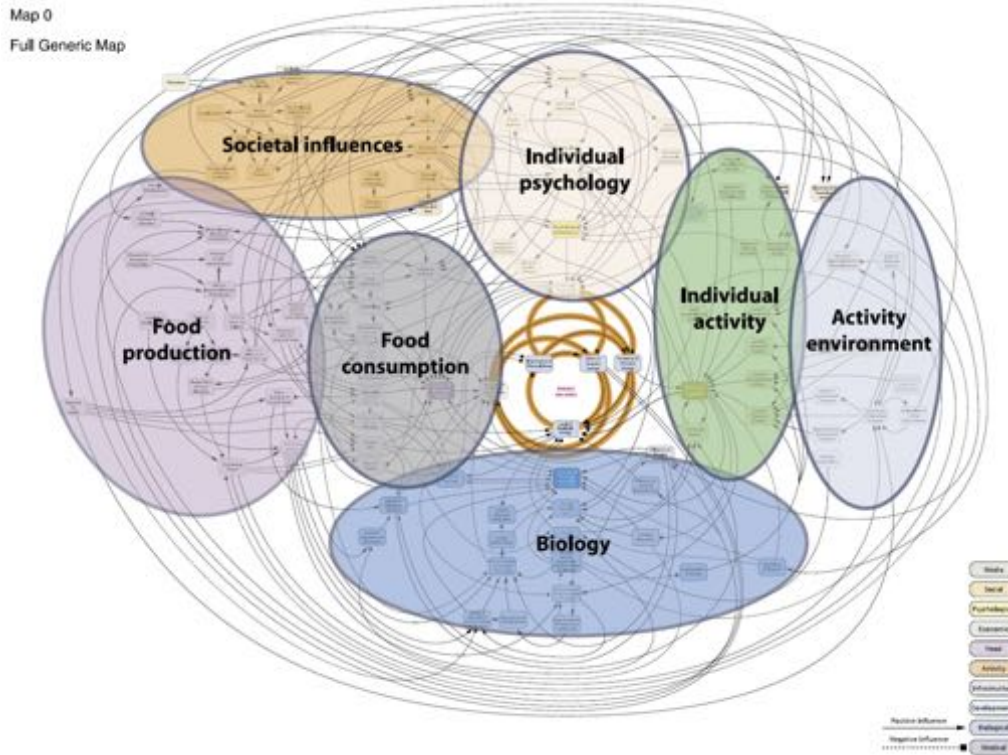
#### How is an outcome actually made?

- Outcomes are a result of complex systems that aren't linear, you can't control but you can influence, through learning and adapting.

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<sup>111</sup> <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/about-us/what-we-do>

- Toby talked about the system map of obesity (see figure below) which demonstrates that government systems are less than half of the factors that influence obesity. The government had control over four factors out of 108.
- If you hold public sector leaders accountable for what they can't control, they focus on what they can control on the data.



(Images: *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices report, London, UK*)<sup>112</sup>

- Public services should be about action research, exploring together what might work in a person's life. It moves the public service out of program delivery mode, and undertaking experiments to determine what it takes to achieve outcomes. CPI has developed a guide for human-centred learning.<sup>113</sup>
- CPI also argue that learning systems should happen at every system scale, there are multiple types of systems - from the individual, organisation, place and country all stacked on top of each other.
- In order for an outcome to be achieved, everything we do, how we organise the way we do our work, should be focused on helping us to get to that outcome. This is the benefit of ending homelessness strategies.
- Efforts through the Advance to Zero campaign in the Australian context are communities of practice, utilising the AtoZ framework, acting as learning systems.

#### The Collective Impact Approach

- Collective Impact has value in helping to bring all the players in the system together. It is a helpful reaction against competitive tendering and the effects of neoliberal thinking across a wide range of services; the risk is as soon as performance management processes that stress data measures of performance, it will start to get gamed.
- The alternative is to focus on learning for outcomes.

<sup>112</sup> <https://foresightprojects.blog.gov.uk/2017/10/04/dusting-off-foresights-obesity-report/>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/assets/pdfs/hls-practical-guide-gateshead-casestudy.pdf>

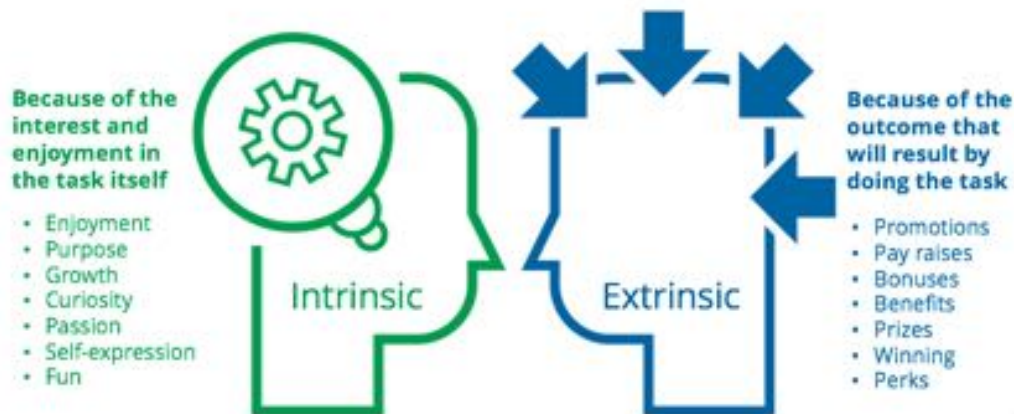


- The Plymouth Alliance is one example where the government commissioned three years of systems leadership, with no KPIs, it just had governance principles, where all parties are mutually accountable for delivering better outcomes, and focus on putting the needs of citizens first with complete financial transparency.<sup>114</sup>

#### Motivations and Contracts for Ending Homelessness

- Motivations are key to how outcomes are delivered.
- Too often the focus is on extrinsic motivations - driven by external reward or punishment, we set targets and there are consequences if they are not met as shown below.
  - The problem with this is in human service delivery, we don't really have accountability at the moment, we have the performance of accountability.
- Organisations need to recognise more the power of intrinsic motivation - when people undertake an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than particular consequences or rewards.

### INTRINSIC VS. EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO



(Images: Newman Tuition, UK)<sup>115</sup>

- When commissioning contracts to support efforts to end homelessness, the accountability should be for demonstrating what was learned and how that was adapted, by running a learning process with authenticity and accountability - rather than focusing on how many improvement projects, or outputs are delivered.
  - The AAHE is currently contracted by the SA and WA governments to deliver what the Institute for Healthcare Improvement has laid out as Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) improvement cycles. It's important therefore to account for why each PDSA project is undertaken, and to account for how this learning process has created change.
- You have to choose between a KPI or target-based system and a learning system.
- If you choose to have a learning system it works better, achieves better outcomes and saves money.

#### Mindsets over Frameworks

- You need a shared purpose to organise and coordinate work - this is where things like the AtoZ Framework are helpful.
- However, it will be challenging to implement if the mindsets that people bring are not helping. This is something the CAEH has focused a lot on.

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.humanlearning.systems/uploads/Plymouth%20Alliance.pdf>

<sup>115</sup> <https://newmantuition.co.uk/motivation-intrinsic-vs-extrinsic/>



(Image: Mindsets over Frameworks, Nesta and the Centre for Public Impact, London, UK)<sup>116</sup>

- It's not that frameworks aren't useful as the famous quote from George Box goes: 'All models are wrong, some are useful'.<sup>117</sup>
- If you collapse your common aim into narrow metrics, the evidence is this will fail.
- If you make all the people in the system feel they have a place in that system you will be more successful.
- Learning cycles provide a planning process and give guardrails to the iterative nature and messiness of working in complex systems.
- The following figure shows the mindsets that Community Solutions and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness have developed to inform their work.



essentially,  
all models are wrong,  
but some are useful  
George E. P. Box

	<b>Bias for Action</b>	You favour progress over perfection and focus on what you can do rather than on what you can't do. You start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can. You test ideas quickly in the field, focusing on executing, learning and improving. You recognize: this quality improvement approach helps groups get unstuck and inspires new thinking.
	<b>Fail Forward</b>	You move forward despite the possibility of failure. You celebrate failures as points of learning and use that learning as stepping stones towards success.
	<b>Growth Mindset</b>	You see problems as challenges we just haven't figured out "YET". You believe that with continued effort and learning, anything is possible. You welcome feedback and new ideas.
	<b>Abundance Not Scarcity</b>	You believe there is the potential for more of everything in life and enough to go around. You see hope and opportunity in every situation and gifts and potential in every person. You share what you have and celebrate the success of others.
	<b>Mission Focussed</b>	You are focussed on your goal and will do whatever it takes to get there. You are not overly focused on models, plans, or strategy or worried about blame or who gets credit. You are focused on the end-state and you are willing to innovate, disrupt, and change in order to achieve your mission. You know your "why" and you have grit.

(Image: Key Mindsets or mental models for Built for Zero, CAEH)

**AAEH Recommendation 7: Mindsets** - Develop an agreed set of mindsets that underpin the efforts to end homelessness through the Advance to Zero Campaign.

#### Social Impact Bonds<sup>118</sup>

- SIBs have provided significant benefits in that they helped create a bit of the universe where different rules apply. SIBs are about creating the initial space when people see how the bubble could work differently.

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project-updates/measurement-in-local-government-values-principles/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://tribalsimplicity.com/2014/07/28/george-box-models-wrong-useful/>

<sup>118</sup> Further Background on SIB's can be found in Appendix D.

- Sometimes the greatest risk we face is the status quo. I.e. the million-dollar Murray example.
- You'll be amazed at what you get away with if you treat innovations as an experiment. You could frame SIBs as being about learning what it takes to deliver better outcomes in different communities. And there is no shame in failure, only in not explaining your lessons so you can learn from them.
- There is a need to be careful about too much of a focus on outcomes-based measurement. Social impact bonds have created interesting systems change efforts but they are essentially trying to do the wrong thing, better. They perpetuate the illusion of control. e.g. in the UK a lot of the SIBs had to beg to get their contracts changed because COVID came along. There will always be something that comes along, you can't control complex systems, only influence, and if you try, what you will be left with is the only logical outcomes - game the data, game the system.
- SIBs are not a panacea. And most significantly they corrupt the data, and you can't trust the result on the ground. It's not uncommon to hear about managers asking their staff to lie in the data, there's got to be a better way. And there is.

#### Research and Evaluation

- Sometimes the way we evaluate efforts forces these behaviours, or gaming the system. We need more developmental evaluation<sup>119</sup> approaches and principles-based evaluation.<sup>120</sup>
- To be asking questions about how you get actors to recognise what is going on, and to adapt, rather than asking if this intervention is cost-effective should we do more of it. This is the wrong question.
- It's also important to remember that there is a difference between evidence-based policymaking and evidence-based service delivery (program scale). We use the wrong evidence base at the different levels way too often - for example in mental health just because CBT or talk therapy works for individuals, does this mean it's always the best form of therapy to roll out at a policy level?

#### Is it possible to end homelessness

- From a complexity theory perspective, complex systems can't be solved, but the definition of rare, brief and non-recurring, is a definition that helps acknowledge that and creates the standard for it. It identifies the change that can be made to the systems that impact the people in these systems.
- We absolutely need to lift the standard higher than people dying on the street.
- We need to have a shared conversation about purpose and treat everything as action-based learning.
- Outcomes-based measurement turns the purpose into a set of metrics that undermine the meaning of the purpose. Ending homelessness is possible if you talk about it as a shared purpose.

#### Top three things needed to bring about an end to homelessness

- Change how we do public management.
- Reframe public service delivery as action research.
- Make public service bespoke, person-centred to the person being served.

#### Leeds, England

##### Alex Fox - Mayday Trust

- Date: 18 May 2023
- Title: CEO



#### Background

- Mayday Trust is passionate about providing person-led and strength-based support to people experiencing tough times and strive to create a paradigm shift to the process-led systems that surround public services.

<sup>119</sup> <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/developmental-evaluation>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/evaluating-impact-principles-focused-evaluation>

- They transformed themselves from a traditional charity providing accommodation services, to a person centred advocate for systems change.
- The trust’s theory of change was that we’ll do things differently, evaluate that and persuade others to do things this way. This attitude was born out of a belief that the existing way of working in homelessness isn’t working, and is in fact re-traumatising people.
- They didn’t want to be part of a service improvement organisation that improves the existing system.
- They have completely transformed themselves - many organisations and people talk about doing things differently but very few do.
- Some others have taken up this strengths based way of working.
- Pat the CEO who led this transformation retired with ill health recently and Alex took over. Some of the old staff were struggling to come on board with the radical vision.
- Mayday Trust has a completely digital office, everyone works from home.

**Relationships First**

- When seeking help through a tough time people often become trapped in services and face barriers created by the systems set up to help.
- Support systems can leave people feeling forced to sacrifice their dignity or revisit trauma in order to evidence need or access help, sometimes feeling controlled by services trying to ‘fix’ things instead of being met on a human level.
- Mayday takes an approach that seeks to listen to those they walk alongside and that starts with putting relationships first.
- The service is designed to look and feel different at every stage of engagement. They work with people going through tough times, not just through homelessness.
- They call this the Person-led, Transitional and Strengths-based (PTS) response, it is a work in progress, a way of demonstrating you can do things differently (see table below).
- The PTS response is for people looking for support through a tough time. The first goal is always to build a trusting, equal and purposeful relationship. That relationship is led by the person seeking support, in locations and on a timescale that works for them.
- The PTS response was evaluated over a two-year period by the New Economics Foundation. The findings showed that the approach was effective, potentially cost-saving and creating real and lasting impact.

<b>We form trusting relationships as our first and foremost goal</b>	<b>We focus on strengths and potential</b>	<b>We empower people to challenge and change what’s not working for them</b>
<b>This means we:</b> We see the whole person and are led by them  We have honest conversations	<b>This means we:</b> We concentrate on what is meaningful to each person  We are purposeful: we aim to have and measure impact	<b>This means we:</b> We challenge injustice and address any inequalities in our own work  We support people to influence change locally and nationally

*(Image: The Value of PTS Responses, Mayday Trust, Leeds, UK)<sup>121</sup>*

<sup>121</sup> <https://maydaytrust.org.uk/pts-response-at-mayday/>

### Relationships First and System Change

- Mayday Trust focuses on person centred system change because they believe that individual program level interventions can't make systemic change, it's the system that does this, because by necessity interventions end. People's lives are complex, they need the system to work for them not the other way around which is how it all too often works because of the way services are funded.
- The cost of not providing person centred services grows cumulatively until it reaches a tipping point where systems start to harm people rather than help them. The million dollar Murray example (referenced earlier) is a case in point.
- Mayday have coaches not case managers, planning is based on what clients want, rather than what traditional 'case managers' are funded to provide.
- As part of PTS Mayday have developed a 'Human Learning System Model' focused on person centred learning loops with the people they are seeking to help, based on learning not control focused most on who the system is working least well for.
- This is similar to the improvement or plan, do, study, act, cycles that the Advance to Zero and Built for Zero movements utilise. See Appendix D for further background

Area of Work	Traditional Support Work	Strengths-based and Person-led Work
<b>Initial Meeting</b>	Appointment to attend at an office or centre. Eligibility and risk assessment. Support planning based on little knowledge.	Meet somewhere safe and known for person and coach. Get to know each other. Build a trusting relationship.
<b>Support offering</b>	Support based on service's priorities. Timetable and time limits set by service.	Person defines and can change their goals. Broker opportunities and personal budgets. Build community connections.
<b>When Services Don't Work</b>	Focus on engagement and compliance. Manage 'challenging' behaviour. Defend service against 'reputational risk'.	Identify what would work better. Support person to challenge and change what doesn't work.
<b>Ending Support</b>	Signposting to other services. The goal is to close the case. Few other relationships when support ends.	Person can pause and vary level of support. Person chooses how to end support. Service feels less important as life gets fuller.

(Image: Strengths-Based and Person-Led Work in Context, Mayday Trust, Leeds, UK)

### Data Led vs Person Led

- You can't have a person led approach and then the data and evaluation are micromanaged from above. You need to empower those working directly with people experiencing homelessness.
- There is more flexibility at the intervention level when the data collection is done well at the system level, this is because it's delivering what you need to change the system, but provides flexibility on the front line to be more person centred.
- People who are let down by multiple service systems are often labelled as facing severe and multiple disadvantages. The intrusive questions that come with this are challenging.

### Basic Needs

- We need to recognise that what people want is somewhere to live, something to do and someone to love. It's about relationships first, and we've got to help achieve those three things.
- The disability sector is much better at asking: 'what do you need to live a good life?'

- The sector is learning quickly that risk aversion in the way services are run has meant that many people with a disability hadn't ever ridden a bike, because how do you assess the risk of that for insurance?
- Another example of person centred relationships working is in drug and alcohol support. One of their coaches would speak to a person who has heavy drug use, rather than focus on the drug use, they focused on building a relationship, through this they discovered that they were interested in indoor climbing. The coach then got the person to teach them how to climb, this led to them wanting to reduce their drug use, because they were enjoying the coaching and it was impacting on the climbing. The person then engaged in a climbing club and eventually, the coach withdrew support and the person thrived. Relationships first.

**AAEH Recommendation 20: Person Centred Training** - Partner with organisations like the Mayday Trust to deliver more person-centred training in Australia.

#### NHS/Social Care - UK Context

- Homelessness services in the UK are not part of the 'Adult Social Care' system.
- The social care system is separate again from the National Health Service (NHS), the UK version of Medicare in Australia which covers primary health care but also the acute hospital system.
- The NHS is funded locally but operated by local boards or networks. It is an organising and commissioning body and then there are local independent trusts.
- When the NHS was set up in the 1940s, it excluded what was considered 'women would do for their family'. This adult social care system is locally funded and managed, as is the children's social care system.
- Mental health - sits mostly in the NHS, within a largely medical model. The right to treatment sits at the crisis end.
- Local councils run the adult and children's social care systems and their revenue is severely restricted. They have the responsibility, but not the funding.
- The Blair Government brought in a new public sector management system that sought to work closely with the private sector but failed to engage with social policy in a major way. They never had a plan for social care, because it's not popular like the NHS.



- More and more social care is provided by the private sector, in particular aged care or disability care homes.
- The homelessness sector is seen as part of both the adult social care and housing systems, and both are funded by local councils.
- Homelessness is what happens when these other systems fail.

- If you are homeless, it's a label and you are pushed to talk to the housing department, and this excludes you from the adult social care system, and the NHS sits off separately again.

Is ending homelessness possible

- Yes

What are the top three things needed to bring that about?

- Support people to live a good life by helping them to have: somewhere to live, something to do, and someone to love.

### Emmaus

- Date: 18 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Donald Forrester, CEO Leeds Emmaus
  - Verity James-Sinetos, Development Adviser
  - Mark Johnson, UK Federation Manager
  - Alex Fox, Mayday Trust, CEO



### Background

- Emmaus Leeds is a charity that provides a home and work for people formerly experiencing homelessness, through a furniture and white goods donations and resale social enterprise. They have a retail shop, an online trading side of the business through eBay and other online marketplaces, and a workshop to repair furniture and white goods.
- They have accommodation on site, and rely heavily on volunteers, but also have paid staff.
- Emmaus is a federation of 31 regional groups in the UK, run at a grassroots level, and all completely independent of government. The model grew out of France.
- There are 29 rooms, 26 on-site, and three move-on rooms for people who want to move on from the service and transition into independent living.
- They focus on homelessness and demonstrate what action is possible without becoming dependent on government, without the need to chase government contracts and government objectives that too often don't meet the objectives of the organisation.



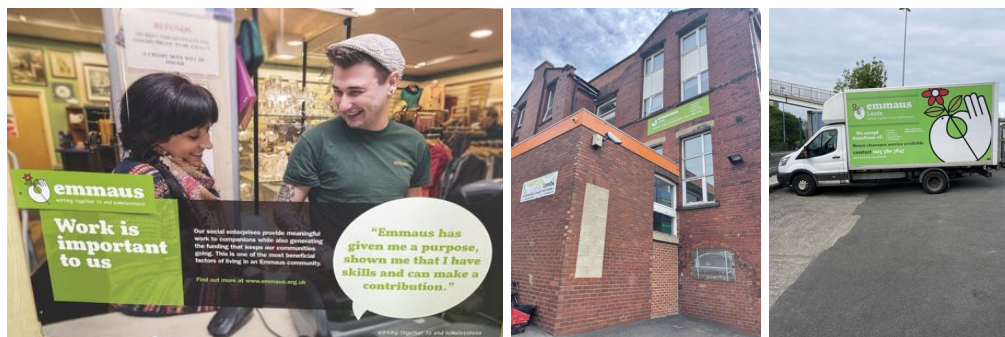
(Images: Visit to Emmaus Leeds, Donald Forrester CEO Leeds Emmaus and Alex Fox CEO Mayday Trust, Leeds, UK)

## UK Housing Subsidy

- Financially Emmaus raise about \$700k per year, \$500k from the social enterprise, and \$200k from the housing benefit (enhanced - social security payment). Together with the free products and volunteers, they are able to make the social enterprise and the homelessness support work.
- As part of the Emmanus model people living and working there sign off from the unemployment benefit, to get the housing benefit, which means you don't have to comply with the mutual obligations.
- The housing benefit doesn't go to the individuals.
- 'Exempt Accommodation' is a particular type of housing in the UK, where people are exempt by the cap placed on how much of the person's income/welfare payments can be charged for rent.
- Crisis has done some advocacy work on this, about how the support is often very poor, and as a result, the BBC's Panorama program did an exposé on this recently.<sup>122</sup>

## Employment and Homelessness

- Traditional training and employment programs don't always work for people experiencing homelessness, and so Emmanus provides 'a bed, and a reason to get out of it'.
- In the UK, there seems to be a lot more effort in joining employment services up with the adult social care system than is the case in the equivalent sectors in Australia.
- There are challenges with this model, they call residents 'companions', but are they workers or volunteers, are they tenants or employees, it depends.
- The legal framework in the UK is you are only one of these, workers, volunteers, or employees. They are not employees so they are exempt from minimum employment standards.
- Companions have legal status in the UK.



(Images: Visit to Emmaus Leeds, UK)

## Social Enterprise

- Emmaus works because they own the building, so they don't pay rent, they don't pay their employees as they are volunteers, and they don't buy the stock they sell as it's all donated. It's a classic social enterprise.
- In the UK, unlike in Australia, there are multiple different types of businesses: you can be a not-for-profit charity, a for-profit business, or a community interest company. You don't have to choose.
- In Australia there is not the same flexibility, instead, social enterprises must use a number of the existing legal structures to achieve their objectives as a social enterprise.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000f1wr>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.alrc.gov.au/news/legal-structures-for-social-enterprises-a-nationwide-conversation-on-law-reform/>



- Community Interest Companies have their own regulator, and the majority of their surplus has to be put into the social good. This model, along with charitable companies, are asset locked, i.e. cannot be sold or liquidate all the assets. But they can be paid well.
- Emmanus is a charity that trades, however, they call themselves a social enterprise because that's what people understand.
- Social enterprise can be about leveraging additional resources into the homelessness sector.
- The social enterprise economy in the UK is the envy of the world, one of the things that has really driven that is support for social procurement.
- Social procurement is where governments and organisations use their buying power to generate social value above and beyond the value of the goods, services or construction being procured.<sup>124</sup>
- The UK is leading the way in using toilet paper, coffee, equipment and other goods and services to drive social impact.<sup>125</sup> Social procurement is a hugely untapped resource in Australia.



(Image: City Mag 2021, From SA Social Enterprise Council)<sup>126</sup>

**Commonwealth Recommendation 13: Employment Pathways** - As part of the development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan consider ways of better-integrating employment service and homelessness support systems to provide more employment pathways - including improved support for social enterprises.

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/understanding-social-procurement>

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.cheerfulpodcast.com/rtbc-episodes/purposefulbusiness>

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.sasec.org.au/page-18252>

**State Government's Recommendation 9: Social Procurement** - Better utilise the significant investment in housing maintenance contracts by adding social procurement components to support employment opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness.

**Business Recommendation 6: Use Social Procurement** - Consider the ways in which procurement activities can be better leveraged to support local efforts to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.

#### Change Please

- Change Please is another prominent social enterprise in the UK that focuses on ending homelessness through coffee.
- They operate in eight countries. They sell wholesale coffee beans, as well as operate a range of cafes.
- They talk about how the housing part is easy, it's how you make it sustainable that gets tough. Providing employment opportunities is part of that.
- They are not a coffee business that tries to do good. They are a charity and social enterprise that seeks to end homelessness through coffee.



- They were drawn to set up the charity when they heard that 15% of homeless people in the UK try to pull their own teeth out because of the pain.<sup>127</sup>
- They support 5% of the UK homeless population - in one form or another. That's about 700-800 people a year and it's not just training. It's sustainably helping them into employment and out of homelessness
- They have found that 44% of people experiencing homelessness want to work and can work.

**Business Recommendation 5: Support Social Enterprise** - Businesses can support events and other efforts to enable greater collaboration and partnerships between homelessness agencies, employment service organisations and the social enterprise sector.

#### Is ending homelessness possible

- Yes, it's about ending cruelty - that's what it means, everyone has a safe home, that they can live in, that they can love in.

#### Top three things needed to end homelessness

- Companionship - we work for them, not the other way round.
- Use the power of Social Enterprise.
- Working Together to end homelessness, has been our tagline, and while we're not a campaigning organisation, we rely on Crisis and Shelter to be our voice, we seek to do it in our own way with the 26 lives we help at a time.

<sup>127</sup> <https://dentistry.co.uk/2018/07/12/homeless-forced-pull-teeth/>

### Hannah Lamplugh - Child-Friendly Leeds

- Date: 18 May 2023
- Title: Strategy and Influence Lead, Children and Families Directorate, Leeds City Council



### Background

- Leeds has the ambition to be the best city in the UK for all children and young people to grow up in – to be the leading child-friendly city.
- Child-Friendly Leeds has the vision of bringing everyone who shares this ambition together across the city, from enthusiastic individuals to third-sector organisations and large businesses.
- Child-Friendly Leeds was launched by the Queen in 2012, which at the time saw Leeds sit towards the bottom of many child wellbeing indicators - as a result of the initiative, Leeds now sits near the top of many of these same indicators in the UK.
- Since its launch there have been a growing number of partners across the city that have committed to work together to create better outcomes for children and young people.
- The organisation started out with a real focus on the building blocks model<sup>128</sup> developed by the United Nations Children's Fund or UNICEF,<sup>129</sup> that placed a focus on protecting the rights of children being everyone's responsibility. Over time it has developed its own approach and focus and has been very influenced by Results Based Accountability,<sup>130</sup> restorative practices,<sup>131</sup> and working with, rather than to and for, children.
- They value every contribution, encouraging everyone to make a difference by working to build a more socially connected and economically successful city with children at the centre of the inclusive growth strategy.
- They have developed a network of ambassadors to promote this vision and by actively seeking to listen to the voices of children, young people and their families and using that feedback to improve their practice/services.

### Foundations

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/cfc-framework-eng.pdf>

<sup>129</sup> It was originally called United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in full, but is now known as the United Nations Children's Fund and is an agency of the United Nations responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide.

<sup>130</sup> See Appendix D for further background on Results Based Accountability.

<sup>131</sup> Restorative practices is a social science that studies how to improve and repair relationships between people and communities.

- The catalyst for its formation was really a charismatic individual, Nigel Richardson, the Director of Children's Services for the City of Leeds who encouraged an approach that listened and responded to the views of children and young people.
- They recognised that children's services were inadequate, and that to improve as a city they needed to work in a different way. They needed to galvanise support from civil society, to develop new relationships with the universities, businesses and others.
- They agreed and documented '12 Wishes' and then sought to communicate them widely, initially and in a recent refresh of the wishes, holding big annual events to get people together to interact with the wishes and how they might contribute to bringing them about. They had kids develop an illustration for each of the wishes.
- People or agencies then take offers to take a lead in a certain area - like bullying for example. They identify 'people of influence' to take on the lead role for each of the wishes.
- One of the wishes is transport, as a consequence, the cost of public transport hasn't increased for children, though it has for adults. This was because it was a priority and because one of the Councillors took on the role of a person of influence or champion.

#### Wishes/Surveys

- The organisation started with what young people were telling them, and what children needed to make Leeds the best city. This took the form of a survey, and they have just conducted another one. The top three issues identified were:
  - Mental Health - this wasn't in the first survey in any great detail and now it's the number one issue.
  - Climate change - wasn't in the first survey at all.
  - Feeling welcome, valued, and celebrated for being different.
- The documentation of these 'wishes' has been quite influential. The wishes include:
  - Children and young people have safe spaces to play, hang out and have fun.
  - Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are involved in decisions that affect their lives.
  - Differences are celebrated in Leeds so children and young people feel accepted for who they are. They do not experience bullying and discrimination.
  - Everyone takes more action to protect the environment from climate change.<sup>132</sup>
- When it comes to homelessness, there is little surveying done of the experiences of people with a lived experience of homelessness and other systems, and little done to explore what an end to homelessness looks like for people with a lived experience. What would the wishes of people experiencing homelessness be?

#### Action Planning

- All planning starts with a vision, and plans need to be simple and everyone needs to be aware of the vision. If not they are not aware and it doesn't work.
- Everyone needs to also be aware of the plan or it's not a plan, it's just a document that sits on a shelf.
- It also needs to be a plan on a page and a definition in a sentence.
- Child Friendly Leeds had three measures that everyone is encouraged to obsess about. These three obsessions are:
  - to safely and appropriately reduce the number of children looked after (by the state);
  - to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training;
  - to improve achievement, attainment and attendance at school.
- The monthly reporting is key to this, as it really drives engagement.

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/childfriendlyleeds/cfl-the-story/12-wishes>

- Child Friendly Leeds knew it was working because a broad range of people could describe what these obsessions were.
- What is the equivalent for ending homelessness?
- The organisation developed a one-minute guide to set this all out - a simple and short fact sheet for every element of the initiative. Ensuring these fact sheets are written in a similar way, to be accessible, is surprisingly important.
- The Child Friendly Leeds streamlined 'plan on a page' has now been adopted by many other parts of Leeds Council because of its simplicity.

#### Charter/The Promise

- Child Friendly Leeds have developed what most would consider to be a charter, or what they call 'The Promise'. It is like a charter of rights, but more personal language is used.
- Social workers are responsible for ensuring all the looked-after children and young people they work with understand the promises and are provided with information about the promise in an appropriate format.
- The promise has been developed in a range of different formats including story books for younger children, fold-out cards and posters.
- Child Friendly Leeds promise to:
  - help and support you to stay safe and have a healthy lifestyle;
  - involve you in all decisions about your life;
  - have high aspirations for you and encourage you to reach your full potential;
  - support you throughout your education and to plan for the future;
  - listen and make sure you know what will happen next;
  - celebrate your achievements;
  - make sure you have lots of different people to support you;
  - help you have new experiences and develop your own interests.
- Surveys show that 80% of children in Leeds know about it.

#### Ambassadors

- Child Friendly Leeds have over 700 people registered as ambassadors, they do regular workshops with them, and the ambassadors in turn host their own workshops focused on delivering on the 'Wishes' and how they can be met.
- The ambassadors say they like to focus on the wishes because they are tangible and as simple as the plan is, it's still too complicated for people who don't come from or work in the child protection or education system to engage with.
- A key element of value that this group of ambassadors provides is the intersectional partnerships with different organisations that they enable.
- A key part of the ambassadors' work is that it's about leveraging additional help for the agencies working to improve child wellbeing (or end homelessness) rather than being focused on the organisation (or the Child Friendly Leeds Campaign).

#### Child Friendly Leeds Team

- The team is made up of 11 staff - and they have a very small operational budget.
- The 'Voice and Influence' group provides advice and guidance to all staff across local government services, and supports the advisory groups.
- The 'Children and Disability' group do a lot of work with parents, they host a special education youth forum and develop campaigns for change, time limited, one off, targeting young people from all walks of life, or bus drivers, librarians, employment officers, etc.

- There is a 'Universal' group that organises the youth parliament, youth mayor, getting the hospitals to ensure they have young engagement activities. They organise 'take over forums', where the young people share their priorities, on what they want to work on.
- All groups are focused on supporting agencies to consider child centred approaches.
- One example of this is the local museums that set up the 'Preservative Party' to engage young people in curating stories they are interested in from Leeds history. The young people chose to highlight the story of murdered homeless man David Oluwade.
- There is a 'Communications' group that leads the social media, website, blog site and engagement all focused on championing what is happening in the city, it very much takes a strengths-based approach.
  - One of the challenges with communications is to promote the successes of the sector, not CFL or the Council or the backbone, or any one agency.
  - This group also runs a series of events, including a biennial Child-Friendly Awards event, administers a grants program for playgroups in areas where they don't exist and supports the champions or ambassadors.



## David Oluwale


**David Oluwale was a British Nigerian and Leeds resident, who drowned in the River Aire on 18th April 1969 after suffering years of harassment by members of the Leeds City Police force.**

David Oluwale was born in Nigeria around 1930. In 1949, David stowed away on a ship to Hull. He was discovered and put to work on the boat for 2 weeks. When it reached the UK, David was arrested for not paying for his ticket.

David lived and worked in Leeds as a labourer. He loved to socialise in the Mecca Ballroom and the King Edward Hotel.

In 1953 David was charged with disorderly conduct and assault on police following a dispute over whether he had paid his bill at a restaurant and bar in King Edward Street. During the arrest David suffered a head injury. After spending two months in Armley jail, he was transferred to Menston Asylum due to severe distress. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia and underwent electroconvulsive therapy. This is a procedure which sends an electric current to the brain, inducing seizures. He remained in the psychiatric hospital for eight years.

After his release he was not the same. He struggled to find work and became homeless.



## David in the 1960s: Who Cared?

**From 1965-67 David went back to Menston, now re-named as High Royds Psychiatric Hospital.**

When he left High Royds in 1967, **homeless, destitute and without care**, David was targeted by Police Inspector Geoffrey Ellerker and Police Sergeant Kenneth Mark Kitching as he slept in doorways in the city centre. They would spit at, beat, verbally abuse, and once urinated on David, consistently **harassing him**. They chose to target David because of his status as a black, homeless, immigrant with mental health problems.

On the morning of 18th April 1969, a bus driver saw two officers chasing a man down Call Lane towards the river. **David's body was found on 4th May 1969**, drowned in the River Aire, at Knostrop. He was buried in a paupers' grave.

A few months later, Gary Galvin, a young Police Cadet, reported Police Inspector Ellerker and Police Sergeant Kitching to Senior Officers, after hearing of their harassment of David.

This prompted an enquiry against them and charges of assault, perjury and manslaughter. In 1971 **they were found guilty of multiple assaults** and sentenced to three years and 27 months respectively. Judge Hinchliffe directed the jury not to consider the manslaughter charge. He said the evidence offered was not sufficiently credible.

(Images: Leeds City Museum, Youth Curated Overlooked Exhibition, Leeds, UK)

### Top Three Things Needed

- Clear vision and measures.
- Clear needs to engage people (the wishes).
- Support Community Champions.

### Manchester, England

#### *Greater Manchester Housing First*

- Date: 19 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Emily Cole, Program Lead, Greater Manchester Housing First
  - Mike Huges, Project Manager, Greater Manchester Housing First



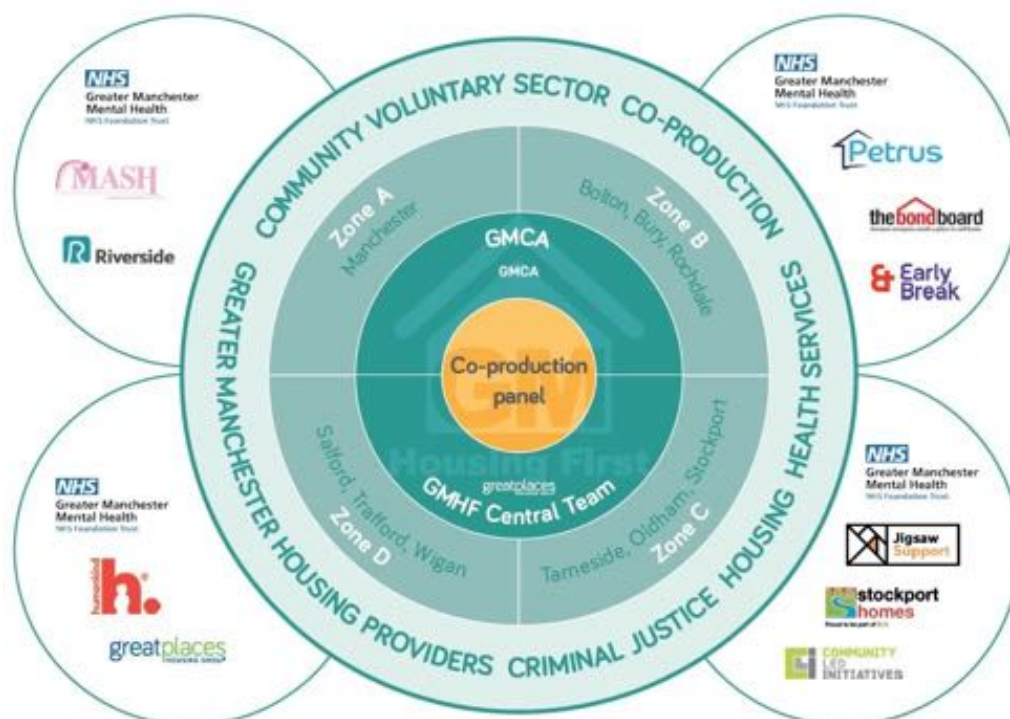
### Housing First Trial in the UK

- The Greater Manchester Housing First (GMHF) program is a three-year pilot project that aims to provide safe, secure homes for more than 300 people who are homeless or at the risk of being homeless across the region.
- It is one of three national pilots - West Midlands/Birmingham, Liverpool, Greater Manchester - all have metropolitan mayors who have greater powers than other places with the UK government's devolution agenda.
- There are three different models being rolled out with Manchester receiving \$28m in 2018. The UK Treasury was not willing to roll it out without trialling it, even though there have been countless evaluations showing it works.
  - It was originally funded for three years and then extended until 2025 to support the implementation of the Conservative's manifesto which says they will end rough sleeping by 2025.
  - Labour is talking about giving more local powers to continue to roll out the Housing First model, but nothing has been announced yet.
- There is a different approach being taken in each place.
  - The Manchester pilot is the most housing led one, with ten very different council areas, with very different approaches - but supported by one agency.
  - In the West Midlands it's a very decentralised set up and does not have as 'higher fidelity' as Manchester.
  - In Liverpool the pilot is run by the combined authority, with seven local authorities underneath all doing their own thing.



### Greater Manchester Housing First

- The pilot in Manchester is co-ordinated by a Central Team at Great Places (a Housing and Homelessness services organisation) and they are supported by Zone Leads, Team Leaders and Housing First workers who work for the delivery partners.
- The pilot was organised into four zones and the partnership was set up with a lead delivery partner in each zone.
- It worked really well having health included in the service.
- One of the things they worked hard to ensure occurred is that all Housing First workers, in the different organisations are paid the same, with the same job description.



(Image: Great Places, Manchester, UK)<sup>133</sup>

#### Social Impact Bond

- Before the Manchester Housing First trial there was a social impact bond, put together by the Greater Manchester Authority, focused on entrenched rough sleeping Social Impact Bond.
- See Appendix D for further background on Social Impact Bonds (SIBs). Communities in Australia have implemented SIBs in relation to homelessness.
- SIBs are seen in the UK as offering opportunities for innovative new service delivery models to be trialled while minimising risks for governments and service providers.
- The Manchester SIB was not a Housing First project, though it followed the principles and was housing led (but the caseloads were much higher).

#### Commissioning

- Great Places led the development of the tender bid that was ultimately successful in winning the contract to run the pilot.
- Great Places developed a commissioning framework, to make sure that all the sub-contractors they engaged shared similar values.
- They made sure the local mental health service which is part of the NHS - though it frustrates many as a homelessness agency, really should not have to fund government health agencies just so that their clients can have their health needs met. Mainstream health services are just not accessible.
- Going forward, they are going to try and get the health system to pay for this.

#### Co-Production

- Another success is the lived experience engagement or what the organisation calls co-production. They have a panel with a range of people on it including front line workers, people with a lived experience of homelessness, mental health, alcohol and other drugs and more.

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.gmhousingfirst.org.uk/about>



- The Chair of the panel is on the Governance Board of the initiative.
- Initially there was a representative from the panel on the selection group for all the initial staff recruitment and appointments as part of the Housing First pilot.
- Future planning of the service model also involves the co-production panel.

#### A Bed Every Night

- 'A bed every night' is a shelter response model, it is not shelter like years ago where you have to be out at a certain time each morning. They are supportive models, and the difference between housing and shelter is becoming more blurred.
- So much of the funding is going into the 'A bed every night' effort which is about realising the right to shelter.
- People are beginning to ask though, if you fund people staying in temporary accommodation for so long, at what point does this become supported housing?

#### Challenges

- In terms of the data used to measure homelessness, they rely on a street count undertaken one night of the year, so the data quality is really poor.
- Rough sleeping homelessness was going down in Manchester, but it has just started to pick up again.
- The mayor is particularly up in arms that it's increasing, given they had fought so hard to get a Housing First program up.
- Fundamentally homelessness is a structural issue, there isn't enough housing.
- There is so much demand, doing Housing First as a program intervention, without the systemic effort is a bit like 'shuffling deckchairs' on the Titanic.
- The government has set home building targets and they have not met them since the 1970s, yet they keep selling houses.
- The problem is the scarcity, GMHF is providing a gold plated service, with some in and some out. Those that are out are getting such a different level of support, next to nothing. It's not fair, so you are left to triage.
  - To support this Greater Manchester use the 'New Directions Team Assessment' tool, based on the CHAOS index.<sup>134</sup>
  - As in Australia with the use of the VI-SPDAT, they don't solely rely on the score the tool sets out. They rely on the judgement of the practitioners in the local system. However, for them, there has been very little consistency in the completion of the survey.
- The biggest problem is the organisation set up a Housing First program in a broken system, adult care (disability, aged care etc), health and housing. You need to change the system too.
- The adult care system is very broken. You have to wait ages for the assessments, and then to get a package of support, disability, daily living skills, etc and even when you do there are gaps, there are many areas where no one is providing the services. In addition, these services are mostly focused on the elderly, disability, etc, so the adult care providers aren't trained to deal with trauma.
- Housing First is a multi-agency response, and you need the other systems to engage, but when you get funded as a Housing First initiative, the rest of the system steps back.
- Housing First is supposed to be working with the most complex people, but it hasn't always panned out that way.
- The Housing First program is a cheaper version of social care, so you take on the health needs and care needs of others, and you end up taking on the role of these other systems. Then you end up not being able to take new clients, and you're full.
- The key question is how do you mainstream Housing First? By seeking to end homelessness, not just provide a gold plated program for those that can get in, as important as that is.

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/NDT-Assessment-process-summary-April-2008.pdf>

## Prevention

- Ending homelessness requires prevention, this is really hard, particularly without data.
- Then there is the difference in types of prevention - we're mostly doing crisis prevention (not discharging people from prison into homelessness).

## Ending

- The rough sleeping initiative is better because of the Housing First pilot, but it acts as a sink, it sucks people in because that's where the services are.
- Many in Manchester feel that ending homelessness isn't really the agenda, the UK government says they are seeking to end homelessness but that is really just marketing.

## Is ending homelessness possible?

- Emily Cole, Program Lead, Greater Manchester Housing First
  - Yes, I wouldn't do this job if we couldn't do this, it's ridiculous that we live in a rich first world country, this is why we do what we do.
- Mike Huges, Project Manager, Greater Manchester Housing First
  - Yes, but even if it weren't possible overall, we can definitely stop recurring homelessness, we demonstrated that during the pandemic, we showed what happens when you get everyone in.

## Top three things needed to end Homelessness?

- We need to build more housing like they did in Finland - they built the housing, and this is an economic issue.
- Cross sectoral governance and funding - to hold the other systems to account, homelessness is the result of the other systems failing, family, justice, housing, and health - need a whole system response. This requires joined up government.
  - The Rough Sleeping Strategy in the UK was signed by all the government agencies, but that's because they all wanted to get a budget bid up or their piece of the reform initiative pie for their department - but rarely do they show up for the long haul, to help with delivery.
- Leadership and Partnerships, no one organisation on their own can solve this, you need political backing, the mayor is a massive supporter of Housing First in Manchester.
  - The mayor chairs the Greater Manchester Homelessness Program Board.

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

- Date: 19 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Esme Davies, Commissioning and Project Manager, Homelessness Team, Greater Manchester Combined Authority
  - Emily Cole, Program Lead, Greater Manchester Housing First
  - Mike Huges, Project Manager, Greater Manchester Housing First



## Nationally/Housing

- Homelessness is not a political issue nationally, not in the way it is locally. When it is, it's about housing generally, not about the housing of people experiencing homelessness.

- Westminster has set a target for 300,000 houses per year, but community housing providers have reduced the number they are building based on the cost inflation from the Grenfell Tower tragedy.<sup>135</sup>
- Targets are set, but because of NIMBYism, where developments are opposed, the only other alternative is to build on the 'green belt' the protected space between the outskirts of existing cities, and the farmland and wilderness between it and the next villages. It's comparable to what we would call in Australia more urban sprawl, which has its problems.
- And so the city is stuck with little progress in growing access to housing.

#### Local Governance

- GMCA has a homelessness program board for the Housing First pilot, and it sets out the relationship with everyone.
- The big question at the moment is what will the Housing First legacy be, and what will the funding look like in 2025.
- Another challenge GMCA are facing is that the Regional Authority is equal in status to the other local authorities - they have to work collaboratively - but the regional authority needs the agreement of the local authorities to make any changes. This makes it challenging when the local authorities are very different.
- This challenge makes it particularly hard to deliver Housing First across local authorities when client choice comes into it and the housing is in different authorities.



(Image: Great Manchester Combined Authority Area, Manchester, UK)<sup>136</sup>

- The organisation has tripartite agreements, with local, regional and health providers. Through these, they work on issues like hospital discharge. It's super political, as homelessness always is.

<sup>135</sup> The Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017 saw 72 people die in the deadliest residential fire in the UK since the Second World War. An inquiry into the disaster concluded that the building cladding was responsible for the fire spreading so quickly. The tragedy led to the cheap type of cladding used being banned in the UK, and many other countries, including Australia.

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.circularonline.co.uk/news/englands-largest-waste-authority-joins-forces-with-gmca/>

- Knowing who to speak to in what room and getting these aligned is a challenge. But streamlined governance is important too. Further devolution might make the boundary issues line up, or it could make it worse.

#### Mainstreaming Housing First

- Housing First, and its choice and control elements, need to be mainstreamed.
- Housing First was never just a rough sleeping program, it was invented out of the revolving door of people in mental health service, and it works, it ends homelessness for those people.
- Regarding caseloads,<sup>137</sup> they:
  - were 15-20 people per worker for the SIB housing led program.
  - are 7-5 people per worker for the Housing First Pilot.
- The challenge is we need a Housing First system - one that is person centred and trauma informed.
- Ending homelessness is not just about Housing First, it is about ending poverty.
- There are significant challenges in seeking to mainstream or systematise Housing First, in that you can mess up the effectiveness of what was working at the program level. Professor Sarah Johnsen from Heriot-Watt University looked at this through the Pathfinder program. She identified three groups of people for whom Housing First is not an appropriate solution:
  - “Individuals who lack capacity, due to cognitive impairment associated with a severe learning disability or brain injury for example, who are therefore unable to comprehend fully the consequences for breaching (standard) tenancy agreements
  - Individuals who are so unwell that their healthcare needs exceed what can realistically be catered for with Housing First.
  - Individuals who do not want Housing First (at the point it is offered, at least) because they do not want the responsibility of an independent tenancy (even with Housing First support) or, in some cases, would rather not live alone.”<sup>138</sup>
- The European Network of Homelessness Agencies, FEANTSA, has sought to provide some guidance on this too.<sup>139</sup>

#### Prevention

- To end homelessness, we don't just need Housing First, we also need that prevention effort.
- The fact that the number of people who need a Housing First response as we do is a sign of failure.
- Of course there are those who have such a small amount of social capital that they will always need a Housing First support response.
- Housing First is just one tool of the community homelessness problem, it won't end homelessness itself. It's not a panacea, we need to be turning off the tap. We need prevention too. Housing First is too late in an ideal world.
- Fixing this is essentially a political problem.
- Rough sleeping is going up, and it is hard to take money away from the crisis end of the system and put it into prevention, you need to run both systems for a bit, and shift the support over time.
- Evidencing prevention is so hard. How upstream do you go?
- The Youth Sector have done this better because they go upstream to schools, where do you stop with adults?

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<sup>137</sup> Caseloads refers to the number of individuals or families a homelessness case worker is assigned to support in a given period of time.

<sup>138</sup> <https://researchportal.hw.ac.uk/en/publications/gaining-and-preserving-pioneer-status-key-lessons-from-the-housin>

<sup>139</sup> [https://www.feantsa.org/download/feantsa\\_handbook\\_en\\_final-2-15169925525089897430.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/feantsa_handbook_en_final-2-15169925525089897430.pdf)

### Supported Housing vs Scatter Site Housing First

- Vulnerability means scattered site models won't work for everyone.
- Finland has done well because they have both supported housing and scattered site Housing First.
- Outside researchers, and other organisations say we can't do scattered site, or must do Housing First in a very particular way, don't know how to operationalise.
- We need to localise, and we need to tailor to the situation on the ground.

### Strategy and Health

- The strategy should be to run high fidelity programs but recognise this is only one part of the systemic responses needed, to create a Housing First system that needs prevention and other things, for example, an inclusive health agenda.
- This health agenda is likely to be a much bigger priority for places like the UK and Australia, as compared to the US because they have such different health systems, they need to incorporate health into the homelessness system as it's the safety net for both. In the UK and Australia, people fall through two very separate health and housing/homelessness safety nets.
- In many ways you will only get to the Housing First system when you achieve functional zero, unless you get massive government investment like Finland.

### Is Ending Homelessness Possible?

- Yes, it would be really hard to survive in this space if you didn't.

### Top three things needed to bring it about

- Housing
- Benefit Reform - people need more money in their pocket.
- Greater access to drug and alcohol, mental health services and others by greater funding and coordination.

### Health, Lived Experience and Homelessness in Manchester

- 19 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Gill Leng, Independent Consultant, and former Civil Servant
  - Rachel Brennan, Participation & Progression Director, Groundswell
  - + Brody the dog

### Background - Gill Leng

- Gill worked for the Ministry of Housing and Public Health England during the pandemic and has a long history working in the health, housing and homelessness space. These days she works as a freelance consultant, providing a lot of support to councils.
- In 2004 Public Health England was established as an independent body to support systems change taking a health in all policies lens. See Appendix D for further background on health in all policies.
- Gill worked there as a national adviser on health and homelessness, to support the development of a good evidence base on what works to inform government policy.

# Groundswell

Out of homelessness



## Background - Rachel and Groundswell

- Rachel has been at Groundswell since 2019 and has extensive experience working in homelessness, including managing the homeless health service in Manchester. She was a 2017 Churchill Fellowship focused on homeless healthcare in Norway, Denmark and the USA.
- Groundswell is a UK charity creating solutions to end homelessness that come directly from people with lived experience.
- A mantra of theirs is that participation is essential because people have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives; this leads to better insight and better decisions.

## Health Now

- Health Now has helped Groundswell to strengthen its peer work efforts.
- Health Now is a nationally-funded effort to improve health inequalities, focused on addressing one of the biggest things that people experiencing homelessness identified as a barrier to accessing healthcare - the feeling of worthlessness and low self-esteem.
- Volunteer Peer Advocates with experience of homelessness work to improve the confidence of people facing homelessness in using health services and increase their ability to access healthcare independently.
- "It's the health, the whole health, and nothing but the health, there are other organisations and services that focus on other things, but it's the health that tends to be forgotten."
- It is an advocacy service for people experiencing homelessness utilising an assets-based and strengths-based approach for people, it's not a systems change effort.
- Groundswell consists of about 50 staff and 40-50 volunteers. Many of the current case workers were previously volunteers.
- Regarding the use of volunteers, the saying they have is give a lot, get a lot - it's got a real focus on people who can't work - it gives them meaningful things to do and helps with recovery.
- Volunteering is particularly valuable for people who have no right to work.
- People aren't ready to work in a lot of places, and if they work too soon, they lose benefits/get evicted, which puts them back into a cycle of homelessness.

## People's Commission on Ending Homelessness

- Once a year, Groundswell hold a 'speakout event' when they invite everyone from agencies in Westminster to hear directly from people with lived experience about what is and isn't working in their local system.
- It's a bit of a people's homelessness commission - to support local authorities to understand how the local system and services are operating.

## Lived Experience Challenges

- Lived experience engagement can be expensive, time-consuming and emotionally exhausting. Some even question if the 'juice is worth the squeeze' i.e. is all the time and effort worth the value that is gained from it. The answer is absolutely, but there is no denying it is hard.
- In the UK the voice of the patient is quite strong in health care. Less so in Australia. That said, there's a strong view that the views of health consumers in the UK are not listened to enough.
- Lived Experience reps need to be linked into a bigger group, it can't be one group, i.e. lived experience, it needs to be front-line workers, it needs to be health advocates, and it needs to be cultural perspectives.
- After some bad experiences national organisations like Shelter in the UK are doing a much better job of using lived experience stories and images with respect. There is still lots of really bad practice out there, that is sometimes exploitative and essentially enabling poverty porn.

- Poverty porn is a controversial topic, it's a term used to describe poverty-related advocacy that many believe is presented in such a way that it exploits the circumstances of those affected in order to generate sympathy for increasing charitable donations, selling newspapers, or support for a particular cause.

#### Manchester Homelessness Partnership

- The Partnership is a local Manchester effort that brings together people with a personal experience of homelessness with organisations from different sectors, to co-produce solutions together to end homelessness.
- The Partnership was formed in 2016, in response to growing concerns about high levels of people sleeping rough in Manchester city centre - some of the key leaders were faith groups.
- It started with a charter, which was itself an outcome of a conference run to build buy-in for the work, it helped get everyone on board, the head of police, fire, etc.<sup>140</sup>
- The Partnership set up a series of working groups, and all the work streams had a chair and a co-chair who was trained in co-production. They saw themselves as experts in learning, not experts in doing.



(Image: Manchester Homelessness Partnership)<sup>141</sup>

#### Ending Homelessness - Policy Responses

- In 2018 the Conservative Party or Tories in the UK Parliament made a commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027, they then reduced this to 2024.
- They have spent a lot of money, but can't tell you what impact it has had.
- The COVID response, called 'Everyone In' was amazing in terms of the ability to meet people where they were, interagency cooperation and involving people with lived experience. There was a burning platform and a unified vision, to keep homeless people safe in order to keep everyone safe.
- There were lots of things learned, principally that homelessness is a public health issue.
- A challenge was the ability to get lived experience voices recognised as important to be involved when you are operating at pace and at scale.

#### Intentionally Homeless Concept

- There is a bizarre concept in the UK, as a consequence of the way homelessness legislation is drafted, of people who are 'intentionally homeless'. The concept is intended to mean someone who deliberately did something to cause themselves to lose their home. For example, caused antisocial behaviour or did not pay rent when they could afford it.
- Wales and Scotland got rid of this concept because they have the power under devolution - England still has it.<sup>142</sup> It is understandably controversial.

<sup>140</sup> <https://charter.streetsupport.net/manchester-homelessness-charter.pdf>

<sup>141</sup> <https://mhp.org.uk/>

<sup>142</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/homelessness/intentionally\\_homeless](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/intentionally_homeless)

## Health and Homelessness

- The biggest problem is the government see homelessness as solely a housing issue: they don't see it as a health issue.
- Just as we have health in all policies agendas, we need a home in all policies agendas too.
- The National Institute of Care and Excellence (NICE) has developed guidelines on integrating health and homelessness, these guidelines champion the role of the peer, in service design and delivery.<sup>143</sup>
- The guidelines were developed with support from the College of Emergency Medicine and Groundswell in partnership with people with lived experience.
- It might not be possible to ever get the health system to think about homelessness. They have bigger problems and there is a lot of stigma attached to homelessness.
- The homelessness sector wants the NHS to ask people about their housing status. But we don't need to ask about homelessness, we need to ask about home, their home environment, have you got a place to sleep, is it safe, etc.
- Determine if people are at risk of homelessness before asking about home. It's how you do it.
- One night of sleeping rough is catastrophic for your health and within a month the level of mental and physical stress that homelessness causes can be 'institutionalised'.
- That's why you can't just end homelessness with housing, it's about recovery. To have the life, skills, confidence, the self-esteem to sustain housing.

## Deaths

- What happens when we fail to address these things is death. And we don't talk about that enough.
- *The Guardian* newspaper conducted a major campaign in 2019 on deaths in the UK called 'empty doorway', this really helped raise the profile and led to greater health action on the challenge of homelessness.<sup>144</sup>
- The challenge is how we talk about deaths, reporting on death data can sometimes just be poverty porn, you need to make it real, about people.
- These profiles from *The Guardian* led to better death data being collected and reported on in the UK.<sup>145</sup>



**AAEH Recommendation 21: Deaths Data Media Campaign** - The health, housing and homelessness network should consider partnering with *The Guardian Australia* to undertake a similar campaign in Australia.



(Image: Cemetery I walked past just before this meeting in Manchester, UK)

<sup>143</sup> [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK579613/pdf/Bookshelf\\_NBK579613.pdf](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK579613/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK579613.pdf)

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/series/the-empty-doorway>

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2021registrations>



## Housing First

- Housing First is a model of care, it's an option for some people.
- It worked in Finland because they have a lot more funding for every element of the social care system. Including generally more enlightened policies around supervised drug use.
- Adult social care is not free at the point of access in the UK. In fact, there have been almost 30 white papers in the past 20 years and yet it's still a mess.
- The adult social care system is the equivalent of the Aged Care system and NDIS in Australia, with some big differences.

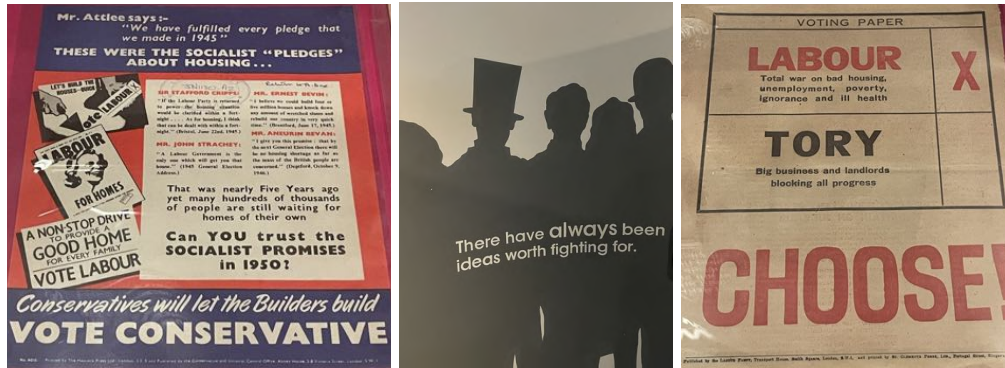
## Is ending homelessness possible?

- Street sleeping, yes, all homelessness probably not.

## Top three things needed to end homelessness?

- Rachel Brennan, Participation & Progression Director, Groundswell
  - Involve people with a lived experience of the system, through meaningful participation in everything from policy to direct service delivery, and have as diverse a range of people involved as possible.
  - Supporting people to navigate complex health systems by having individual support and the systems level advocacy.
  - Have services working together, and wrapping around the person. Not just at the individual worker level, to sustainably support multi-disciplinary working arrangements it needs to be commissioned/property resourced.
- Gill Leng, Independent Consultant, and former Civil Servant
  - Have a Scandinavian model of support, that recognises things will happen in people's lives and support those who are in crisis now, and who have undergone trauma.
  - Ensure integration of health with social care, by ensuring health is not just seen as a medicalised model.
  - Design and support a workforce that has the skills to support the end state we need - i.e. support the workforce to become properly qualified.





(Image: The People's History Museum, Manchester, UK)

### Donna Hall - The Wigan Deal

- Date: 25 May 2023
- Title: Professor at the University of Manchester and Chair of the New Local Government Network



### Background

- Donna has a background in strategy and policy. She has written hundreds of policies, and the strategy regarding the Wigan Deal is the only one that worked. Rather than describing a set of activities, it described a relationship.
- The Wigan Deal came about because when she was the CEO of the Wigan Council and the Global Financial Crisis sparked austerity, they had to save \$160m from the council budget, almost half of their overall budget. They knew that if they just went through and cut services it would have a devastating impact on the community and would ultimately be self-defeating as it would drive up costs in other areas.
- The Deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works here to work together to create a better community.
- The local government committed to a series of pledges and in return asked residents and businesses to play their part too. So far through working together, they have saved over £115m. They now have the second lowest council tax rates in their region and believe they can continue to improve services by asking citizens to help by committing to the Deal.
- As part of the Deal, the council asked the community to do things like:
  - Keep active at whatever stage of life;
  - Register with a GP and go for regular check-ups;
  - Quit smoking. Drink and eat sensibly and encourage your children to do the same;
  - Take time to be supportive parents or guardians;
  - Take advantage of training and job opportunities, setting high aspirations for yourself and your family;
  - Support older relatives, friends and neighbours to be independent for as long as possible;
  - Recycling and using online services.
- In exchange the council undertook to do things like:
  - Ensure there are a wide range of facilities within local communities including parks, open spaces, leisure, safe cycling routes, good quality housing;
  - Ensure easy, timely access to good quality GP services, seven days a week, to screen, diagnose and treat and prevent disease as early as possible;
  - Support families to ensure their children have the best start in life;

- Helping those who are unemployed into work or training.<sup>146</sup>
- The Deal is based on the notion that the long-term health and well-being of residents will only be secured if organisations and individuals work together to take charge of the needs of the community.

#### Public Sector Reform

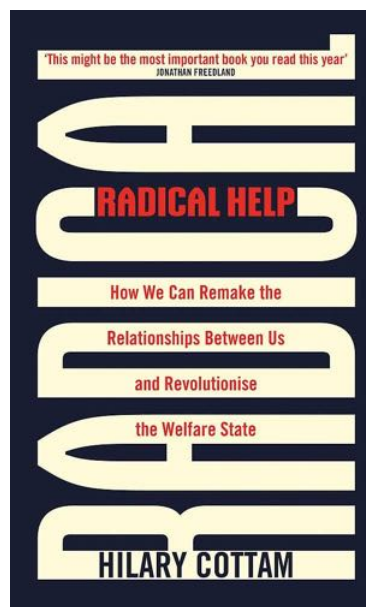
- The Wigan Deal is fundamentally about public sector reform. If you want to end homelessness, then you will need to reform the way the public sector works.
- Donna has argued that the traditional model of delivering public services is based on assumptions and processes from the turn of the century when society was less complex, less diverse, and a lot less connected.<sup>147</sup>
- The complexity of the challenges faced in Wigan and other communities seeking to drive large scale change like ending homelessness meant the authority can't respond with the same thinking and ways of working as before.
- The council also can't achieve its goals unless it works closely with residents and stops passing them around a fractured system of expensive and reactive public services.

#### Place-Based

- By allocating resources around the actual, specific needs of a place and its people, the council will be able to free up more of the frontline, spend budgets more flexibly and effectively, and deliver life-changing outcomes for residents.
- This new way of working breaks down the silos between public services, promoting collaboration and prevention, instead of uncoordinated, overlapping services working in isolation to patch people up and pick up the pieces repeatedly.
- This integrated, place-based working is key to supporting residents to lead happier and healthier lives, improving community resilience and saving public money otherwise spent propping up a broken system.
- Instead of a drive towards more institutions and outsourcing, Wigan is integrating public services at a local level. This means organising resources around neighbourhoods of 30,000-50,000 residents, rather than around policy areas.

#### Relational Approach

- A major inspiration for the Wigan Deal was Hillary Cottam and her book *Radical Help* about how we need to revolutionise the welfare state.
  - The author describes a situation similar to the million-dollar Murray homelessness example but in relation to families.
  - The book explains how one community looked at the support being provided to 25 families, they worked out that up to half a million was spent on programs per family and at the end of each year, the families had either stayed in the same situation or it had gotten worse. The community flipped this around and worked with the families in place to work through what they



<sup>146</sup> <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/The-Deal.aspx>

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.lgcplus.com/politics/governance-and-structure/donna-hall-manchesters-reform-will-change-lives-for-generations-03-12-2018/?blocktitle=opinion&contentid=22122>

needed, and how these resources could be better invested, by building trusting relationships.

- As a result of these insights, when the Wigan Deal was established they invested in recruiting Robin Fairlow, an anthropologist, to train the staff in the council and the NHS on how to really listen, and understand the realities of people's lives.
  - To see them as a people. This is an asset-based relational coaching model and it enables a person-centred, asset-based, and most importantly a relational approach.
  - It is very similar to the person-centred approaches the homelessness sector seeks to implement in the Advance to Zero context.
- Pause, was an initiative that came out of the Wigan Deal which identified that there were 500 babies born from 70 parents in a very short period of time and that very often the children were removed straight away.
  - The KPIs of the system was to rapidly get the child placed into a foster care home, rather than support the woman with the learning difficulties (and trauma) that ultimately were behind their multiple pregnancies.



#### Evaluation

- The Kings Fund, evaluated the Wigan Deal. A headline summary of the results was that it added seven years of life expectancy to one of the most disadvantaged communities in the UK.
- The council had to tell the evaluators that there is no way to directly link the seven-year life expectancy result directly. This system's change focus and results are very challenging for some evaluators.
- The evaluators lived with the council team for a year. Key lessons were:
  - Commit to a framework, rather than dictate activity.
  - Clarity of purpose and consistency of purpose is central to success. Sticking with it and not constantly coming up with new initiatives or getting distracted makes all the difference.
  - In human service delivery we don't make widgets, we change complex systems, so you can't evaluate in the same way.
  - There is a need for upfront investment in the training and support to change.
- The evaluation by the Kings Trust showed that the Wigan Deal worked:

***“Wigan’s journey shows it is possible to achieve substantial savings while protecting or improving outcomes, but only if services are genuinely transformed and upfront investment is available to help bring about new ways of working. The Deal is not a panacea, but it does illustrate the kind of work that is needed to shift to a new model of public service delivery in which patients, service users and communities are involved as active partners in improving health and care.”<sup>148</sup>***

- Key to the Deal's longevity has been that the mayor and the chief executive have ensured it transcended administrations and individuals because the focus was on the relationship. It's a framework to build everything. It was a social contract rather than a set of actions.

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/wigan-deal>

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Don't know as I'm not a homelessness expert, but it is possible to support people to live their best lives, people want to live in communities, and we can and should be able to facilitate that for everyone.

Top three things needed

- Be aware of the impact of trauma. Walk in people's shoes, understand their lives, their issues and what they need help with, usually trauma etc.
- Employ relational working across the system, everyone, mental health, police, don't apply eligibility criteria that lead people to back on the street, keep going, be relentless.
- When there is something physically stopping people from getting a job, their teeth, clothes, or tattoos on their face, don't brush them aside and sweep the hard issues under the carpet, engage and work through them.

## Glasgow, Scotland

### Simon Community

- Date: 23-24 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Lorraine McGrath, CEO
  - Various members of staff, clients and peer workers.



Background

- Simon Community provides a large range of homelessness services, primarily outreach, but also health and drug and alcohol services and a homelessness hub.
- They are one of few providers that only provide homelessness services.
- There are a range of Simon Communities across the UK which take the name from Simon of Cyrene, the man compelled by the Romans to carry the cross of Jesus as he was taken to his crucifixion.
- Whilst the name has a religious background, they are not religious today, and the background to the name was because in the 1960s the police would leave you alone if you were perceived to have a faith background, whereas other support services were moved on.
- The Simon Community have done a lot of work to not reinforce stereotypes and stigma from their fundraising, they have been very influenced by the Frameworks Institute guidance about how to talk about homelessness that was commissioned by Crisis - and like them, they lost a fair bit of funding once they instituted it.<sup>149</sup>



*(Image: Street food service providing support to people the majority of whom were not sleeping rough, Glasgow, Scotland)*

<sup>149</sup> [https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238822/our\\_common\\_experience\\_summary\\_report\\_2018.pdf](https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238822/our_common_experience_summary_report_2018.pdf)

- Stigma about homelessness, and rough sleeping continues to be an issue. Glasgow has a number of food services provided on the street, where people are required to line up and wait while supervised by security guards. I observed this being provided by one service. There are some who are quite concerned about how stigmatising this kind of service provision is.

#### Glasgow's progress

- The Community have managed to get numbers in Glasgow down sustainably to about ten people per night, and they are consistently resolving or preventing about 80 people per week. They have managed to maintain this level post-COVID. I think this is quite extraordinary, however, they face a significant number of people in shelters or temporary accommodation.
- When I arrived in Glasgow, there were a number of people in the public domain who presented as homeless, including a large presence at the street food services. However, being a little jet lagged when I arrived I took a walk through the city centre in the early hours of the morning and there were no visible signs of rough sleeping. This contrasted sharply with many of the other UK and North American cities I had visited.
- Pre-COVID there were about 30-50 people sleeping rough in Glasgow on any given night, though in Lorraine's view it was never as bad as many people thought.
- There remain about 700 people in hotels, but off the street. The average length of stay is getting longer, it's costing a lot and it's growing.
- Data is tracked by the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership. Within Glasgow the Glasgow City Council and the Local National Health Service have integrated the planning and delivery of all community health and social care services for children, adults and older people, along with homelessness and criminal justice services. This work is directed by a Glasgow City Integration Joint Board, with the Council and Health Board delivering services under the banner of the 'Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership'.
- The Partnership comprises around 12,000 social workers (Glasgow City Council) and health (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde) staff. It is led by an integrated Executive Leadership and Senior Management Team. This has been one of the factors that has supported the progress being made in Glasgow.



*(Image: The Simon Communities Homelessness Hub, Glasgow, Scotland)*

#### The Hub

- One of the other major continuators has been the Homelessness Hub operated by Simon Communities.
- When you walk into the Hub the environment is more comparable to a bank, than your traditional homelessness service or 'day centre', there are no signs on the wall about rules, it is very light, and you are greeted by a concierge.
- The interview rooms are largely all open-air booths, something the clients said they wanted, as they weren't as worried about privacy as they were about feeling they were boxed in.

- The organisation has volunteers staffing the front desk in the Hub, and they have volunteers as part of the outreach team that is based out of the Hub. There is always a complex case worker at the Hub, and the case managers based in the Hub have a caseload of 7-10.
- Multidisciplinary service coordination happens around one table at the Hub.
- One of the success factors of the Hub and Simon Communities efforts more generally is the focus on providing flexibility and empowering frontline staff.
- Flexibility and empowerment make sure great staff know that they can do whatever they need to do to get better outcomes, by giving them the power to make decisions on the ground, with and for people.

**State Governments Recommendation 6: Coordination Hubs** - Support the establishment of hubs or the co-location of service coordination efforts, backbone activities and other system change efforts.



*(Image: The Service Coordination Table/Co-Working space at the back of the Simon Communities Homelessness Hub - where the sky is the limit, Glasgow, Scotland)*

#### Pharmacy on Bikes

- One innovative element of the Hub and outreach models is the Phoenix Service, which has pharmacists prescribing and distributing medication on bikes around Glasgow. It has been successful in preventing overdoses and maintaining better mental health. They don't do needles or methadone, it's more about making sure people are regularly taking their mental health medication and other health conditions so that they are more likely to both engage with housing services and sustain housing when offered.
- The funding comes from a range of sources, but is very stop-start so they haven't been able to sustain the service at different points, and have not had the resources to properly evaluate it.



*(Image: One of the Pharmacy on Bikes team about to set off, Glasgow, Scotland)*

### The Alliancing Model - Background

- In May 2019, Glasgow City Council issued a tender to establish an Alliance partnership that would work together with the council to transform homelessness services.<sup>150</sup>
- Based on the understanding that the status quo wasn't getting the results they wanted, the Alliance partnership was an innovative approach and a major shift from the traditional commissioner/provider relationship.
- The idea behind the Alliance model is that organisations across the city are meant to leave their own agendas at the door and focus on working together with a 'best for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness outcomes' perspective.
- The Alliance is the first of its kind in the UK and brings together the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), third sector and independent organisations, and local people with personal experiences of being homeless.
- The Alliance approach involves multiple non-government partners coming together to develop integrated service networks with supporting behaviours and practices.
- The goal is to better integrate fragmented homelessness service systems with a large number of program-based contracts, to place-based alliance contracts comprising providers working together in a formal and structured way, both at a system and geographical level.
- South Australia (SA) has copied the Glasgow Alliancing model and established five alliances across SA.
- Similar to the Glasgow model, in SA, participants in the Alliances are expected to exhibit the relevant alliance behaviours, including shared accountability for outcomes and working together through the governance structure to make decisions unanimously and collaborate on the basis of what is best for client outcomes rather than in the interests of their respective organisations.<sup>151</sup>
- There have been significant criticisms of the way in which the Alliances were brought about - or commissioned - in both Glasgow and SA.

### The Glasgow Alliancing Model

- The Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness (GAEH) was established in February 2020. Despite the intention, the GAEH only represents one part of the overall homelessness system - there are 27 commissioned service providers across Glasgow, and only six of them are part of the GAEH. About 12 are then commissioned from the Alliance.
- Lorraine said that she still believes in the principle behind the alliance model, but that there has been little progress, and the way the commissioning occurred was a disaster. One of the core principles of the alliancing was to operate on a best-for-people outcome, rather than best-for organisations and that principle hasn't really been delivered on.
- In addition, built into the funding model is an intention and requirement to save funds, the rationale being people would be using fewer crisis services. The opposite has happened, and so they've not got decreasing investment into the alliance, with additional alliancing costs, and all the other opportunity costs of focusing on alliancing rather than delivering better outcomes.
- Luckily the two biggest successes in Glasgow have been sheltered from the disruption caused by Alliancing. First, the legislative and structural reform being driven by the Scottish Government, and second the local outreach, service coordination, and rapid rehousing of people identified as sleeping rough.

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<sup>150</sup> <https://www.glasgowalliance.org/the-alliance/#aboutus>

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/our-housing-future/future-directions-for-homelessness/sa-homelessness-alliances>



### Lived experience

- People with lived experience are not the only staff that have support/welfare needs, working on the front line of homelessness is hard, particularly because most work in a system that is broken. The Simon Communities approach is to provide support to both equally.
- There are people with personal caring responsibilities, vicarious trauma,<sup>152</sup> 'we don't single out one part of our workforce'. For that reason, Simon Communities don't have peer workers, they have workers, and some have lived experience.
- There are continuing mental health issues, there are living experiences, but in homelessness it's different. People have lived experiences in the past, we don't need to keep pushing that label.
- The other reason for this approach is you shouldn't assume a vulnerability. Some peer workers have issues that are far less than other staff members.
- Voice is more than just a person in a room in a meeting, people tell us things in their actions, where they choose to access services. That is all voice, the only way to contribute is not to turn up to a meeting, we need to think about lived experience voice is a more nuanced way.
- Data is voice. The fact that people will only engage with some services and not others is telling us something. This hasn't been well explored.

### Change Team - Lived Experience and Front Line Staff

- The Change Team are a network, which acts as the collective reference point for policy and practice. It is facilitated by the Homelessness Network Scotland which holds the grant funds and makes the payments for people's time/expenses.
- Having frontline staff in the room, alongside lived experience, ensures the support is in the room, but also helps to contextualise the experience.
- Lived experience engagements need to be well facilitated, where there are people who can support leadership, guide the conversations, avoid getting into a loop with stories, and enable pre-briefs to manage expectations and de-briefs to help the process.

### Awareness

- People are much more aware of housing instability because of the cost of living crisis. We don't talk about homelessness, the community and people experiencing homelessness themselves.
- You can't talk to a group of people who don't conceive of themselves as being at risk of rough sleeping homelessness, even though they are.
- There were a number of people in the Perth suburbs of Glasgow who were homeless, in a caravan, in a parent's garage, and said they weren't homeless.
- A lot of the challenge in that Perth, Glasgow community was driven by holiday lets (i.e. AirB&B), which makes housing more expensive.
- People still think about homelessness as the alcoholic or drug-addicted person on the street, and they don't think that will ever be them.
- If you talk about ending homelessness, all they see is ending rough sleeping. That makes getting into prevention hard.

### Permanent Supportive Housing

- There isn't a lot of Permanent Supportive Housing or Common Ground type housing in Scotland. Edinburgh has a Common Ground<sup>153</sup> type service, and the Youth Foyer model<sup>154</sup> exists there too.

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<sup>152</sup> Vicarious trauma is used to describe how working with or supporting people who have experienced trauma affects people who are there to support them too, sometimes it's also referred to as secondary traumatic stress.

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.mercyfoundation.com.au/our-focus/ending-homelessness/common-ground-permanent-supportive-housing/>

<sup>154</sup> <https://foyer.org.au/foyers-in-australia/>

- This is a gap and this is one reason why the temporary accommodation numbers are high.
- The government is often keen to define housing as a flat, with a front door, a key and a kitchen - but this isn't necessarily what everyone wants.
- That pushes people back into the adult care system, mental health, and disability system, that we know doesn't meet their needs well. Then the cost goes up, as people cycle through them, getting more and more unwell, and costing more and more.

#### Housing First

- There are all these debates about service delivery considerations, scattered site, single site, services and landlords being separate or combined. None of this matters, what matters is a place where people feel safe and can call home, and what that looks like to them.
- People get institutionalised, and we need to nudge people towards housing, but we need broader conceptions of what home looks like.
- Someone can pay for congregate living if you can afford it, i.e. retirement homes, serviced apartments (shared gyms, concierge), but if you're a vulnerable person somehow you're not aspiring for more independence. This is wrong.

#### MAP - Managed Alcohol Program

- MAP is a service that utilises a managed alcohol program model pioneered in Canada.<sup>155</sup> It is tailored to suit the needs of a particular group of people that neither the health system nor the housing/homelessness systems are able to properly support.
- It is in a suburban setting, tenure is for as long as people want, and it helps people for whom abstinence and rehab models aren't or haven't worked. It's a harm minimisation model.
- Mental health integration is challenging because the mental health systems and the drug and alcohol systems are like oil and water, they just stay separate no matter how much you push them together sometimes.
- The MAP model has 24/7 on site support with at least two care workers on site all the time. It has been very successful in reducing alcohol consumption. MAP does not take people who are over a certain level of liver failure, as they are too high risk and rehab is the only viable model for them.
- Australia needs more services like this, particularly those that meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are dealing with alcohol addiction.



<sup>155</sup> <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/projects/map/index.php>



(Image: The MAP Accommodation Service, Glasgow, Scotland)

**State Government Recommendation 11: Better Rehab** - Invest in the establishment of long-term managed alcohol models of supportive housing generally but also specifically culturally appropriate models to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait people experiencing homelessness who are also grappling with addiction.

#### Prevention Legislation

- Homelessness is a circumstance, not a care need, disability is a care need, and ageing is a care need. The entire homelessness sector shouldn't exist.
- Scotland already has a strong history of legislation in support of efforts to end homelessness, and the latest round of reform is looking at prevention legislation that will have an ask-and-act obligation. Wales is also looking into this.<sup>156</sup>
- Other things that ought to be considered are greater transparency on evictions.
- Loneliness is one of the drivers of people showing up again and again in crisis services.
- There needs to be greater effort put into building communities' prevention capabilities.

#### Is it possible to end homelessness?

- It's the wrong question, all homelessness is preventable so there is no need to end homelessness. You don't need to end what you have already prevented.
- There's a bit of semantics there but the first-order priority is prevention, not ending. Talking about ending is an acceptance that it needs to happen.

#### Top three things

- Political leadership - in particular, that genuinely recognises the value of local community. Building community is the strongest way to ensure the bonds are there to counteract a predisposition to homelessness, from intergenerational addiction, unemployment, poor education opportunities, all forms of exclusion, health inequalities, and more.
- Change perceptions that homelessness is inevitable - we shouldn't accept that there will always be homelessness. We'll always have housing instability because things happen in people's lives, but all homelessness is preventable, if we achieve that there is no need for the homelessness sector to exist.
- Provide caring before care is needed - the most powerful thing we can do to help make this happen is to empower people in local communities to do it, to give them the authority and the resources to address the root causes of homelessness before it even manifests itself.

<sup>156</sup> <https://homelessnetwork.scot/2023/03/03/the-big-ask-acting-now-to-prevent-homelessness/>

**Charles Maasz - Glasgow City Mission**

- Date: 23 May 2023
- Title: CEO

Background

- Glasgow City Mission is a Christian charitable organisation whose remit covers Glasgow, Scotland. It is dedicated to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and providing practical help and support to homeless and disadvantaged people.
- The City Mission movement was set up as a response to the move from a rural to an urban economy.
- The Mission was established in 1826, at a time when all financial capital was provided from London and Glasgow and there was no welfare state. The Glasgow docks were full of people who were enslaved or formerly enslaved and people were coming down from the highlands.



*(Image: The Glasgow City Mission and Meeting with Charles Maasz, Glasgow, Scotland)*

- In the absence of a state that sustains, the sustaining falls to the church, community or activists.
- Glasgow City Mission doesn't take on commissioned services. They directly fund their work through individuals, charitable trusts and foundations. They view themselves as a Christian ministry. They have always worked really closely with agencies like Simon Communities.

- The Welcome Centre is one of the main services operated by the Mission. It provides a place to gather, get support and food. It expanded during winter to become an overnight Welcome Centre after someone died in Glasgow whilst sleeping rough.
- Their model broke down during the COVID Pandemic, and so they developed a model more focused on triage, providing dignifying, welcoming, and stabilisation support - whilst connecting people to accommodation solutions, particularly hotel rooms.
- They particularly support people with no recourse to public funds (essentially refugees, who are not recognised or are being processed).

#### Nature of Homelessness

- People in the revolving door of homelessness are in a revolving door of chaos, toxic relationships, trauma, addiction, recovery, and housing is just one component of this is.
  - There are some who have breakdowns in suburban settings, get housing and are back on their way relatively quickly with little to no support.
  - There are some who run around the city who know what they can get from every centre and they get trapped in that cycle of dependency.
- Health and social care are mind boggling separate from housing (building, maintenance, tenancy etc.) in the UK. Service coordination provides a no-wrong-door approach to help address this. That's why the Simon Communities Homelessness Hub is so important.

#### History of Homelessness

- We often think of the US as the home of capitalism, but it's not, it was born in the north of the UK. Adam Smith came from the north, Manchester in particular, the first industrial city.
- Before this, in the feudal era, the time of the landed gentry, no one was disposable, there would be a function for everyone in the society - even for those who would have disparagingly at the time been referred to as 'the village idiot'.
- The system we now have is a capitalistic and individualistic system, one that devalues the rural communal populations, breaks up traditional communities, and is where institutionalisation started.
- Humans are conceptually able to support 40-50 people - to have a sense of belonging to a group that size. Beyond that, our sense of collectivity starts to break down - in particular the sustaining of collective support, the capacity to enrich, and support healthy, functioning and contributing human beings, where there is a place for everyone.
- It's the eradication of deep community that creates the problem, because without that you get Social Darwinism (survival of the fittest), the strong, unscrupulous, and privileged can get on, and anyone with any human frailty is left behind.
- These are the origins of the malaise that besets us today.
- The solutions lie in rebuilding community and social capital.
- The evidence is there, look at the community that's doing the best, it's Finland, and they have a more communitarian culture, and their version of Housing First relies much more heavily on communal type living than individual housing units.
- You can see it in the place-based responses too, that are rebuilding or enabling community.

#### Alliancing Model in Glasgow

- The big problem with the Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness (GAEH) was the way it was created, there was a competitive tender process, which led to some pretty major players in the system being excluded.
- Competitive tenders take people and organisations who exist to uphold humanity and turn them into beasts competing in the Hunger Games.

- The system already cooperated, that needed to be recognised, but what we got was a process that pulled everyone apart, there needed to be a process that respected mutuality and didn't centre everything on competition.

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Absolute zero - no, but end it so it is rare, brief and non-reoccurring, yes!

Top three things needed

- Address trauma, we probably had a lot worse trauma happening in the past, but community was there to walk with people, to support them. That is missing now.
- Develop deeper communities, to support people on the journey and recovery, that's why we need supportive housing that builds community.
- Homelessness will be solved when you address inner healing.

### *Pat Togher - Glasgow Health & Social Care Partnership*

- Date: 23 May 2023
- Title: Assistant Chief Public Protection Officer and Complex Needs



Background

- In Scotland Local Authorities and Health Boards are required by law to work together to plan and deliver adult community health and social care services. They are regional-based, generally lined up by the health board area, and generally align with the council areas. There are 32 of them.
- This new way of working is called 'Health and Social Care Integration'. In Glasgow, they have established the Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership as a requirement of this 'integration'. This work is directed by the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board.
- The key priorities include:
  - prevention, early intervention and harm reduction;
  - providing greater self-determination and choice;
  - enabling independent living longer; and
  - public protection (i.e. avoiding abuse and protecting rights).
- Its scope includes all community health and social care services for children, adults and older people, along with homelessness and criminal justice services. It includes social workers from the Glasgow City Council and health workers from the NHS.
- The nurses for example will have a local health board (NHS) contract, while the social workers will be employed by the council but both are managed and work under the HSCP.
- There is a National Care Service being developed in Scotland, that provides some risks for the HSC partnership and is unique in having homelessness integrated.

Legislation

- In Scotland housing legislation has been recognised as world leading. It provides for a right to provide emergency accommodation, and within seven days, housing with cooking facilities.
- There is a new 'Unsuitable Accommodation Order', that was brought in about two years ago which said you need to have people in independent housing, not communal settings, where people didn't have their own kitchen, etc. It was in large part because of the success of considerably reducing rough sleeping.

- Glasgow Council doesn't run the properties, they are managed by registered social landlords. Around 2005, the Council had about 80,000 properties and handed them over to the registered social landlords, from about 15 to more than 68 now.
- Some think the Scottish Government got away with making councils responsible for homelessness without providing the funding because there's a culture of doing that in the UK. Westminster does not properly fund the NHS boards, they all received block funding, not activity funding.
- New legislation called the Relaxation of Local Connections was introduced in the last six months, to enable anyone in Scotland to access services wherever they are, so the intent is a no-wrong-door approach, but this is going to mean people move from the regions to the big metro areas.
- It starts in November and in Glasgow, it's created about 100 extra people costing about £200m - but the block funding hasn't changed. On top of this, they're seeing big influxes of migrants and refugees as a result of the Ukraine crisis.

#### Data

- Twice a year HSCP conduct street counts, it's a multi agency exercise, conducted late at night.
- They know from their data, that they require 4,500 lets or properties, and there was a shortfall of 1,600 for the coming years. HSCP know the scope and the exact need because of the detailed data work they have done.
- Investing in data and data infrastructure has been critical to their progress.
- As a consequence, data are not debated in meetings anymore: solutions are.
- Transparency in the data is also essential, ensuring the reporting goes into the public domain has been far more helpful than first thought.
- HSCP track 'throughput' or how long it takes people to move through the system, about eight months, from presentation (homelessness application) to permanent housing allocation.
- They're obviously working to improve this, but they know this because they have invested in the data, and have used researchers to help identify the need.
- One of the challenges of access to housing is Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), they need about 60% of their vacancies and probably get about 40% allocated for all forms of homelessness. The rest goes to low-income people.
- Even when HSCP have increased the outflow substantially, they have been swamped by the inflow.

#### Progress

- Progress can be attributed to a positive relationship with the Scottish government personnel - this has been key.
- Glasgow has between 1.6m to 800,000 people depending on which catchment area you use and when I met with Pat, they had 13 people sleeping rough and were down to five at one point in time. At any point in time, there are usually at least 50-60 people who you will find in the public domain that are begging.
- It takes a lot of energy to maintain this state of rare, brief and non-reoccurring homelessness, and there are lots of people who don't believe it.
- Ending homelessness isn't about a response when people are at risk or at the point of need, it's about preventing them from getting to that point.
- We're rubbish at preventing people from getting to the point of need, we need to be out in the community, working in the touch points in the health system.
- We know that the person's first engagement with the homelessness system, their involvement with the health system increases rapidly, and we know that there are intervention points that we need to take.
- You need a different conversation - to shift the conversation from 'do you have someone to go to tonight', to 'are you at risk of homelessness', and help earlier.

- When people are giving up their pets because they can't afford them, that's the warning. How do we use that intelligence as an opportunity to help people, before the next crisis hits? This area of where the touch points in the system are that can be most effective, is not well researched.
- To get to the figures we're looking at you need to focus on what you are getting wrong for that small number of people who are perpetually on the street, who are churning through the systems.
- HSCP have made our services more porous, and accessible. That's been a big factor, and the Simon Communities Hub has really helped with that.

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- I have to say yes, you need to be ambitious and have a focus on outcomes. There needs to be a better option than offering people accommodation, we need to provide homes.

Top three things needed

- Address poverty, for people at the sharp end.
- We need more investment, for building sound and attractive accommodation.
- Continuation of consistent partnerships.

### *Homelessness Network Scotland - Dinner*

- Date: 23 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Grant Campbell, Head of Partnerships and Consulting and Chair, Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness
  - Lorraine McGrath, CEO, Simon Communities



Background

- Grant was the CEO of Glasgow City Mission for many years, and also worked for Crisis for a time.
- The Homelessness Network Scotland is a membership-based body, and has run some very successful campaigns in response to COVID which included 'Everyone Home' which called for:
  - More Homes for Good Health - which has led to new duties for the wider public sector to prevent homelessness.
  - No Return to Rough Sleeping - which has seen a continued push to end communal-style night shelters.
  - No Evictions into Homelessness - including a range of measures such as local councils having targeted use of Discretionary Housing Payments to help tenants avoid eviction.<sup>157</sup>
- Homelessness Network Scotland has developed a clear strategy for ending not managing homelessness. It seeks to get everyone more invested in ensuring homelessness is not an outcome in our world.

Prevention Trumps Ending

- There is a culture in the sector and in society, that consciously or subconsciously accepts that homelessness is part of everyday life.
- We don't talk about ending suicide we talk about preventing it. We generally talk about the prevention of domestic violence not ending it.
- There are many who believe that ending homelessness isn't ambitious enough, that we ought to be able to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place, and then we wouldn't need to end it.

<sup>157</sup> <https://homelessnetwork.scot/everyone-home/>



- Anything for which the job involves eradication, the job is then to prevent.
- In malnutrition we build all the preventative factors - food labelling, chloride in the water for the teeth, we have worked out what the protective factor is and put it in the system. Seat belts. No smoking. The predisposal factors for homelessness are - mental health; debt and financial insecurity, physical health, and family breakdown. Though mental health has changed, it's not changed nearly enough. Training young people to have mediation skills would be one thing that could help.
- We try to fix things rather than put the protective measures in place in the first instance. We need to stop trying to fix things and stop them from getting broken in the first place.

The homelessness sector self-perpetuates the complexity and the charity mindset.

- The Hub is modelled to look like a modern bank that is designed to take all the tellers out from behind security barriers and to engage with the customer.
- People respond to the environment they are in. There is a message being sent by the places you operate in.

Do you think it's possible to end homelessness:

- Yes, and when it does occur it's brief, rare and non-reoccurring, we accept that there will be a system and that it is possible to change that system.
- Not interested in managing. There's never enough money in the world to meet the crisis need. There's an injustice problem in our societies and homelessness is what manifests as an inevitable consequence of that injustice.

Top three things needed

- Resources
- Prevention, in its broadest sense - for which legislation can help.
- No wrong door, multi-disciplinary approach, that doesn't just define it as a homelessness policy area but sees people as a whole.

### Janine Kellett - Scottish Government

- Date: 24 May 2023
- Title: Head, Homelessness Unit, Scottish Government and intern.

### Housing Support and Homelessness Unit



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

Housing as a Right

- Scotland has a strong rights framework, particularly in relation to homelessness support (or case management). They have dedicated legislation which is helpful, but the way it is drafted it does push people into shelter, rather than housing.
- In hindsight the government's advice is to start with a duty to prevent. This is what England is now doing, Wales has already done it and Scotland is now considering how to implement it.
- The government has strongly encouraged night shelters to move towards more permanent housing options. This is a work in progress.



Prevention Duties

- When you ask the people in the system, they feel powerless, and not sure where to go.

- People don't perceive themselves as homeless - to address this what is required is providing care before care is needed. Prevention duties are a way of ensuring this.
- Implementing the prevention duties is about strengthening the rights framework that is well established in Scotland, but has required lots of iteration.
- A prevention duty would require people to take action, an 'ask and act' duty in health services, anti-poverty services, justice (corrections and police), housing services, child protection and in domestic violence services. It could also extend to services like schools, libraries and community centres.
- The duty would be required by the Scottish Government but implemented largely by local governments, which makes the comparability to Australia challenging.
- Who would be responsible for enforcement is still being worked through, as is what level of support would need to be provided to these other agencies to know about their duty to ask, and how to help when required. This approach seeks to learn from the experience in the child protection system where mandatory notification or child welfare concerns have flooded child protection agencies, and given the impression that all agencies need to do is notify but not act themselves.

#### Targets and Political Champions

- Scotland has set and not met targets in the past, Ministers are more wary about setting targets these days.
- Targets vs goals - Targets are great for focusing resources and efforts. The goal and having a common aim are more important than the specific timeframe target. Getting across-the-board support for the aim is the most important thing, the targets are most often used as political footballs.
- If you want to get progress, in the way that Scotland has had, you need a political champion, a politician that wants to make a difference - and has the trust and the relationship with the sector.
- Champions more broadly are really important, channelling the big personalities is key. The third sector generally has no shortage of big personalities.

#### Whole of Government Responses

- In the UK and in Scotland, it was the Prime Minister and the First Minister who said governments are committed to ending homelessness. That gave licence to everyone else. Having central government engaged is key to making progress.
- Any modern society should be able to eradicate rough sleeping - but to do so you need a strategy in place to solve, not manage it.
- Any general homelessness strategy needs the following components in it: 1) prevention 2) rapid rehousing including Housing First for people with multiple and complex needs 3) in relation to acute rough sleeping the aim needs to be to eradicate or to end.
- Bringing about a system that is person-centred requires joining up homelessness services with other services. It also needs central government coordination, because health ministers have their own problems, and housing agencies have their own challenges - of which homelessness is only one small part.
- Scotland's new First Minister has three priorities, poverty, equality and opportunity. This is great, the UK government's homelessness strategy on rough sleeping doesn't once mention poverty.
- National performance targets have been set across the government. The health system is very target driven.
- The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group - has been pivotal in getting broad buy-in, this group has all the key players on it and helped inform the development of the Ending Homelessness Action Plan.

#### Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes

## Top three things needed

- Prevent where you can, it is better for the person and cheaper for the state.
- Have a housing-led approach, rapid rehousing and Housing First (Housing First is one subset).
- Eradicate or end rough sleeping by focusing on things other than housing justice, but on mental health services, the justice system and the collaborative, multi agency responses!



(Image: From the 'Ending Homelessness Together: High-Level Action Plan', Glasgow, Scotland)<sup>158</sup>

## Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness

- Date: 24 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Jack Rillie, recently departed Alliance Senior Manager
  - Lorraine McGrath, CEO



## Background

- The Glasgow City Council issued a tender in 2019 to establish an Alliance partnership which would work together with the council to transform homelessness services.
- Based on the understanding that 'more of the same won't do', the Alliance consortium model is an innovative shift from the traditional commissioner/provider relationship - which has often been characterised as a master-servant relationship. The Alliance model is supposed to enable the two to work together more as equal collaborators.
- The Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness (GAEH) was established in February 2020. As most commissioning processes are, it was quite traumatic for the sector, as it set key agencies up against each other and some were 'winners' and some were 'losers'.
- One of the key principles behind the Alliance model, much like collective impact, is that organisations across the Alliance are meant to leave their own agendas at the door and work together with shared responsibilities and make the changes that are in the best interests of the people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- One of the goals of the Alliance is a desire to change negative perceptions of this population of Glasgow citizens.

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00543359.pdf>

- The Alliance is the first of its kind in the UK and brings together the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), third sector and independent organisations, and local people with personal experiences of being homeless.

#### The Experience of the Alliance

- Jack was the second Alliance Senior Manager for the Glasgow Alliance but has left the role now, the Alliance has struggled to keep a senior manager.
- Jack's view was that the Alliances are trying to do collective impact but have been caught up in a lot of contracting and that this was a big mistake.
- The principles of the Alliance model are right, but the way we went about it was wrong. In particular, because it's mainly the other service systems that need to be more responsible - not the specialist homelessness system. There also needs to be a willingness to change.
- Some have questioned if the Alliance was commissioned to transform services or for the winning consortium to act like a cartel.
- What is driving this is the competition inherent in government tender processes.
- The task of ending homelessness is to design out of existence the need for the homelessness services industry. Or as some cynics have described, an ending homelessness agenda is a way of stopping the homelessness industrial complex from constantly expanding to meet the expanding needs of the homelessness industrial complex.

#### Is it possible to end homelessness

- Not right now. It's not currently possible unless we rethink our approach at a national government level - particularly to the structural drivers.

#### What are the top three things needed to end homelessness?

- See it as a public health issue - enable access to the whole system.
- Resourcing, you need the funds - understand the true costs of homelessness and the impact investment can have, then make the investment.
- People don't really understand the drivers of homelessness. To address this, we need to work more closely on child poverty, family mediation, the mental health system and others.

**Business Recommendation 9: Social Impact Investment** - Become a social impact investor, these types of investments can play an important role in increasing access to affordable housing for those experiencing homelessness.

#### Helsinki, Finland

##### Y Foundation

- Date: 23 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Juha Kaakinen, former CEO of Y Foundation (pictured with me)
  - Juha Soivio, Responsible Coordinator, Apartment First Network

#### Background

- There is a very black-and-white view amongst many on Housing First in Europe. Finland has taken a different approach.



- The Finnish National Programme to reduce long-term homelessness was launched in 2008, its key target group was homeless people with multiple problems living outside and in hostels, whose main substance use was alcohol.
- At the heart of the Finnish model is a shift in focus from temporary to more permanent housing solutions.
- The country has been incredibly successful. In fact, Finland has made the most nationwide progress towards ending homelessness of any country in the world. But it is still yet to end homelessness.

#### Progress

- Over the period 2008-2022, the number of homeless people living alone in Finland has decreased by 54% and the number of long-term homeless people by 68%.
- The decrease in homelessness in Helsinki is the main explanation for the trend in the country as a whole.

#### Ending Homelessness in Finland

- Rather than accepting the old myth that homelessness is inevitable: "There will always be homeless people", homelessness has been seen in Finland as a limited social problem that must and can be solved. Ending homelessness has become a widely accepted, socially important and worthy cause.
- We sometimes speak of the homelessness sector as something self-evident, something that has pretty much always existed, but that's not true. The homelessness sector is born out of failure; failures of society, or systems, failures to provide housing and support for those who need it, lack of compassion and accepting inequality as somehow a natural consequence of the way we run our economy.
- The homelessness sector cannot end homelessness on its own, no matter how much we improve our own efforts.
- The positive trend in the overall homelessness rate in recent years has also made the elimination of homelessness a fully realistic goal in Finland.
- It is concerning to many inside Finland that some comments by foreign researchers and analysts have referred to Finland's low homelessness rates and concluded that homelessness has been effectively eliminated. Such an interpretation is certainly not adequate and does not reflect the experience of people working in the field of homelessness in Finland.

#### Definition of Ending Homelessness

- Juha Kaakinen who has since retired as the head of the Y Foundation, has been appointed by the Finnish Minister for Homelessness, to be a Rapporteur. He has prepared a paper titled 'Home: A report on the measures needed to end homelessness by 2027'. Whilst not published, Juha was kind enough to share a version translated into English. In it, he proposes the following definition of ending homelessness be adopted in Finland.<sup>159</sup>

*Homelessness has been effectively eliminated in Finland, with the annual cross-sectional statistics showing fewer than 300 homeless people. Of this number, no more than 100 in temporary accommodation (lasting less than one month) and no more than 200 temporarily living with relatives or acquaintances due to forced circumstances (lack of own accommodation).*

*By definition, there are no longer people living outside in Finland in this situation and no one is discharged from institutions as homeless. In addition, the period of residence in any temporary housing solution, including existing emergency shelters, emergency accommodation, dormitories or on the basis of fixed-term tenancy agreements, is limited to one month, after which a permanent housing solution must be provided.*

<sup>159</sup> <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410903/report-homelessness-can-be-eradicated-by-2027-with-close-cooperation>

- Statistics do not tell the whole truth about homelessness, not even in quantitative terms. In practice, there is a much larger number of people experiencing homelessness than the official statistics show.
- There are also uncertainties associated with the collection of basic data. The current statistical approach in Finland does not capture all hidden homelessness for example.
- There was some excitement a number of years ago when some outside Finland interpreted the data as Finland having ended family homelessness. Whilst close, this is not the case.
  - 150 families are in crisis accommodation, this includes some children who aren't homeless, but have been removed from their families and are in state care. The family data does not however include people homeless as a consequence of family violence, this is measured in a different system and largely in Finland it is the perpetrator of family violence that generally needs to leave the home, not the victims.
- It is true that rough sleeping homelessness appears to have increased in recent years. This is the result of a number of factors.
  - Partly as a result of temporarily accommodated and rough sleeping data not being measured separately, and as some new shelters have been opened, against the Housing First principle, the numbers have increased. The City of Helsinki can track these numbers separately but doesn't report publicly on them.
  - People move between types of homelessness all the time and this is difficult to grasp in the statistics. This results in variation between the categories of homelessness are reported annually by ARA - the Finnish Housing Finance and Development Centre.

#### Built for Zero

- When I queried why Finns haven't created or invested in more transparent, frequent or specific data the response was it has not been needed. Through strong structural reform and policy alignment, Finland has been able to get the results without it.
- However as they get closer to the goal of ending homelessness, as Finland proposed to define it, this data will become increasingly important.
- When I asked why Finland hasn't adopted other elements or lessons from the Built for Zero efforts, whilst it's fair to say it's not well understood, the primary reason is that they haven't felt they've needed to, again given the progress they are making.

#### Housing First and the Golden Cage of Fidelity

- It's often thought that Housing First came just from the US or Finland, but it developed concurrently.
- There is also a different approach from the US Pathways model,<sup>160</sup> which has more of a focus on fidelity to a program model, to the Finnish principle of Housing First which emphasises systems change and pragmatism much more.
- Juha Kaakinen summarised the Finish Housing First principle as follows.<sup>161</sup>

*The right to housing and the necessary support is part of a decent life and a fundamental right. The resolution of social and health problems is not a precondition for the provision of housing, but housing is a condition that also enables the resolution of other problems of a person experiencing homelessness. The starting point is therefore the allocation of housing to a homeless person on the basis of an own tenancy agreement of indefinite duration, without any preconditions. Housing should always be accompanied by the necessary support. The model emphasises the individual's right to self-determination and voluntariness; no change of lifestyle is required, but the approach is rehabilitative and support services must be actively offered to those who need them. However, housing and services are separated and living in the same dwelling can continue even if the need for support ends.*

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.pathwayshousingfirst.org/>

<sup>161</sup> <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410903/report-homelessness-can-be-eradicated-by-2027-with-close-cooperation>

- It's important to remember the US Housing First program model came out of the mental health space. Housing First is not for everyone and homelessness is becoming increasingly diverse as housing instability pushes more families, and older and younger people into homelessness.
- There is an obvious risk in fidelity debates that we lock ourselves in the golden cage of fidelity
- Working with homelessness is difficult and not always rewarding. We have to work with a lot of uncertainty, on estimates and probabilities. There are no absolute truths, and that's also the case for Housing First.
- Housing First, at least in the beginning, was more an educated guess of what could, probably would, and ultimately seems to work.<sup>162</sup>
- We know that Housing First works, it is successful about 80% of the time. But if the goal is to end homelessness, we need to find ways to meet the needs of 100% of the people in the system. Researchers have conducted 11,000+ peer-reviewed studies on Housing First programs into the 80% that high-fidelity Housing First programs work for, but there are next to no studies about the 20% that it didn't work for and why.
- Service needs become apparent after people settle in housing, it's hard to define that upfront. Support varies. This is why flexibility and pragmatism are needed.
- There are some supportive housing services that have a 1-1.2 per tenant staff ratio. These are high-needs tenants with a history of violence, but there are other supportive housing models that need very little support.
- In Finland they have tried to avoid the golden cage of fidelity when it comes to Housing First.

#### Housing First, Fidelity and Politics

- It's a dangerous strategy to go to political leaders and say Housing First works, invest in Housing First programs and you'll end homelessness.
- In Ireland they have invested significantly in high-fidelity Housing First programs, and it hasn't seen the results at the system level.
- The risk is Housing First ends up becoming one high-quality service model amongst others and that we lose sight of the main goal: ending homelessness.
- Is this about focusing more inward or outward?
- If we want to end homelessness we need to focus outwards.
- We have to be careful in our advocacy regarding Housing First, or will burn the political leaders who back us and undermine both what works about Housing First and our ultimate goal of ending homelessness.
- It is our responsibility to develop Housing First even further so that it helps to end homelessness in the best possible way.
- We don't have to lose anything of the basic philosophy and principles of Housing First, but there are things that seriously have to be reconsidered; we have to update Housing First to modern times. This is the work that Finland is undertaking now.
- When I asked Juha if he had his time again, would they still call it Housing First, given all the confusion between Housing First as a program and Housing First as a system change effort, he reflected 'probably not, we'd just call it ending homelessness'.

#### National Housing First development network.

- Juha Soivio operates the development network established in 2008, it trains the staff, and service providers across Finland that are tackling similar problems, so the goal was to develop new ways of doing things. It's very much a community of practice similar to the Advance to Zero Campaign in Australia. Providing:

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<sup>162</sup> <https://housingfirsteurope.eu/blog/looking-to-the-future-juha-kaakinen-on-the-importance-of-perspective-when-developing-housing-first/>

- Common training, sharing good practices, etc.
- Advocacy in services - workshops on practice improvement, help to map what is effective etc.
- Research - engaging researchers, doing reports to share knowledge etc.
- The network is funded by philanthropy/lottery funding, but they are seeking government support.
- The Y Foundation also helped set up the European Housing First Hub, with one coordinator being based at Y Foundation and the other in FEANTSA in 2016.
- In recent times the Y Foundation has stopped directly supporting the European Hub.

#### Scattered Site vs Single Site Housing First Models

- Tackling homelessness requires both strongly subsidised, dispersed housing and small, Housing First units for those who cannot cope in scattered housing.
- It should be borne in mind that some of the people experiencing homelessness with high and complex needs would have lived their lives in the past in psychiatric hospitals.
- Fortunately we have moved away from institutions, but we need housing services developed where people with serious psychiatric illnesses (including substance use issues) can live safely and for long periods without having to spend years in emergency housing services, where they are exposed to a wide range of violence and abuse.

#### Choice and Control

- Some argue that single site models are not Housing First despite them being such a large part of the progress that has been made in Finland.
- Yes, it should be permanent housing, your own apartment with your own rental contract, but the idea that a client could freely choose from different affordable apartments, from different parts of the city, is absurdly idealistic. We need to be pragmatic about this.
- How can we accept the idea that a former homeless person is the greatest possible risk for another former homeless person? We have seen in some supported housing units the importance of community, a community of people with similar experiences.
- We need scattered site models, we need single site and we need to transition out of shelter over time. It's not really that complicated.

#### Converting shelters

- A major part of the success in Finland has been the conversion of temporary shelters into permanent supportive housing.
- If you don't start, you'll never start. It will always be hard, but it doesn't need to happen overnight, but it does need to happen. Don't be an absolutist.
- Our efforts didn't just focus on converting shelters, but also hostels, dormitories, and boarding houses, and making sure people had tenancies, making sure they had choice and control. In Finland, it's not homelessness if you have a tenancy.
- The Salvation Army shifted one of their key shelter sites into housing, they took 15 staff who were employed primarily as security and put them towards a 50-person strong support team. It wasn't easy, they often had to get new staff, as they couldn't move to the new model.

#### Prevention and Legislation

- You don't need legislation to end homelessness, housing legislation can often just define who is in and who is out. For example in New York, they have had a right to shelter for a long time, but law and order responses are driving this to be an obligation to always be in shelter. As a result, some advocates are talking now about creating a bill of rights for homeless people, to create a right to sleep rough. This isn't very helpful.



- Finland has been investing in housing tenancy prevention interventions, and there were some legislative changes required to make it possible to provide grants, but there's no rights framework established.
- The challenge is these services are there, but getting them out of the offices, and to go and meet people where they are is challenging - i.e. outreach.
- One of the most interesting examples of prevention around the world is the Upstream Initiative in Geelong, Australia, a place-based collective impact effort, working with families and schools to prevent youth homelessness.<sup>163</sup>

#### Role of Government

- There has long been a broad political consensus in Finland on ending homelessness.
- Since 2008, there have been eight different coalition governments, each of which has decided to pursue national programs to end homelessness.
- Practically all parties represented in the current Parliament are committed to the goal of eradication. The fact that recently there has been no need to justify the target of halving and eradicating homelessness is a good illustration of this single-mindedness.
- Housing has been seen as a human right.
- The eradication of homelessness is a social objective, the ownership of which is unequivocally in the hands of the public authorities.

#### Collaboration and Place-Based

- The success of the Finnish model highlights the importance of a culture of working together, in particular across government and working in consultation with the sector.
- Much of the progress and the original Housing First principle came about from an expert working group. The current minister has commissioned Juha to conduct a review of Finland's current strategy.
- "More detailed plans must therefore be drawn up in the regions where there is the best expertise on regional needs. The national programme will create the conditions for the implementation of regional plans."

#### Research and Evaluation

- Research and evaluation are so important, but all too often they can stifle innovation. Randomised control trials are not the only way of demonstrating impact, as important as they are.
- Despite increased research in recent years, we still know too little about the causes of homelessness, the process of becoming homeless, homelessness systems and also the effectiveness of different housing solutions.
- Ongoing research projects and evaluations, as well as available international research data, are increasing understanding of the homelessness problem, but there is still a need for research that is translated, and is of practical use by the sector.
- A multidisciplinary research agenda will be of significant benefit in achieving the objective of ending homelessness.

#### Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Yes, this is the driving force of our efforts in Finland.
- None of the challenges described above is insoluble.
- Homelessness is a time-limited issue, it requires a limited number of resources to solve, it should be treated like an epidemic, and we need to end it with focused effort. Homelessness is not an ongoing issue like disability.

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<sup>163</sup> <https://upstreamaustralia.org.au/about/>

- Housing instability is an ongoing issue, but homelessness should not be an ongoing thing. It shouldn't exist.
- In the future when we have ended homelessness, the question routinely asked by services will be "How do you really want to live"?
- You go to homelessness conferences, depending on who you talk to homelessness is both increasing and decreasing.
- If we can't solve this problem, how can we deal with the bigger problems humanity faces - like refugees fleeing war and climate collapse? Compared to these problems, ending homelessness is simple.

#### Top three things needed

- Work in a pragmatic but directly defined way, be clear on what ending homelessness means and what you need to do, how many houses, what models, and what support workers. This is a very Finnish trait to work in this clear but pragmatic way.
- Political will - in Finland we have been lucky that we've had this and it's been a political consensus. Building political will is central to ending homelessness, and building it requires trust.
- Organisations being open to self-criticism, and focusing on improvement, it's easy to say someone else has to provide funding, it's harder to look at how we can do our own work better.
- Working together, collaboratively, we've gotten very good at having a civilised way of not working together.

**Universities Recommendation 8: Prevention** - We still know too little concerning the interventions needed to drive prevention. Greater research in this space would have significant impact, particularly research that supports AtoZ community efforts to stem the inflow of people onto by-name lists.

#### **Blue Ribbon Foundation - Sininauha Oy, 50b Mäkelänkatu**

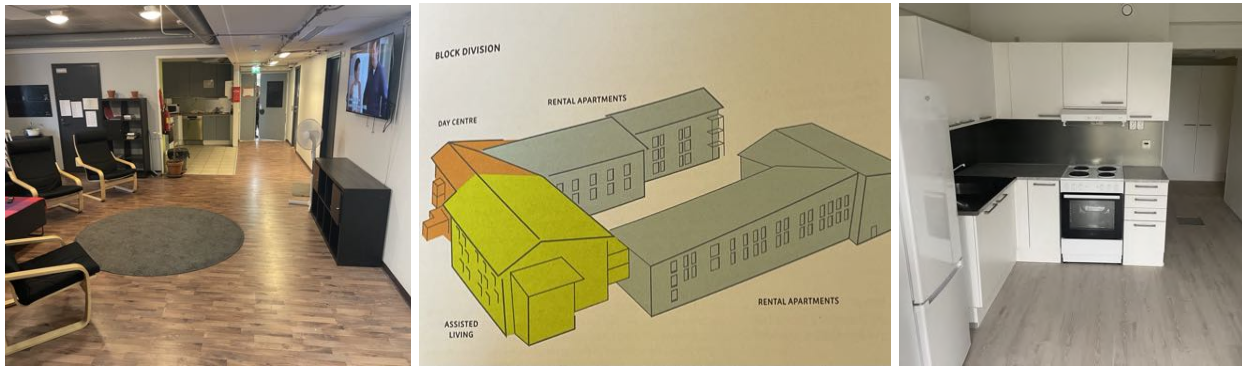
- Date: 26 May 2023
- In attendance:
  - Johanna Helander, Head of Unit, Housing Service
  - Various staff and residents



#### Background

- The Blue Ribbon Foundation is a homelessness and substance use non-profit foundation founded in 1957. They are the largest Housing First operator in Finland.
- Their service, Sininauha Oy, is one large multi-storey building that has over 130 people living there in their own homes, each resident has their own contract, their own kitchen and bathroom and the building also has a shared dining room for residents.
- There is also a day centre on the ground floor providing basic food and drinks seven days a week 9-3 pm. It has showers, laundry, lockers etc.
- They always have at least two staff on-site at any time, and often more than 15.
- On the top floor they have a more intensive support service for people whose needs are less acute and are transitioning to independent living in traditional housing. If they are part of this top-floor, extra support program, there are activities that residents are obliged to participate in.
- For the rest of the building you don't need to comply with any requirements other than no smoking in the room (though only loosely enforced). Alcohol use is allowed (it's their home), and clean needles are provided on-site. There are no time limits for how long people can stay. Some people come and go, one person has stayed for 15 years.

- They also have a youth shelter on site, which is effectively a room with support staff in it, there are no beds, just mattresses, and it can accommodate up to ten people at night.
- The young people can come and go all day.
- The building is owned by Blue Ribbon, but the services are all funded, largely by the City of Helsinki.



(Images: The permanent supportive housing service at 50b Mäkelänkatu)

### Sanna Tiivola - No Fixed Abode

- Date: 29 May 2023
- Title: CEO, Sanna Tiivola

#### Background

- No Fixed Abode is an advocacy and service provision and membership-based organisation.
- They run a peer and volunteer centre, somewhere for people experiencing homelessness to drop in and receive a range of supports.
- No Fixed Abode ran a newspaper for many years, a lot like the Big Issue<sup>164</sup> that they supported people experiencing homelessness to sell, but it has now closed down as another magazine has come along.
- Each year they have a big roast dinner in front of the parliament, with people experiencing homelessness, to raise awareness.
- No Fixed Abode also organises the Night of the Homeless on the 17th October as an annual awareness-raising event, a bit like Homelessness Week in Australia.
- They do lots of advocacy, with donations and also run some direct homelessness services. They provide accommodation and support on two sites, one is temporary accommodation (because this is a condition from the council) and one that has about 28 homes.
- Involving people who have a lived experience of homelessness is key to their advocacy.

<sup>164</sup> The Big Issue magazine is a fortnightly, independent magazine sold on the streets by people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage in Australia.  
<https://thebigissue.org.au/our-programs/the-magazine/>

## Housing First

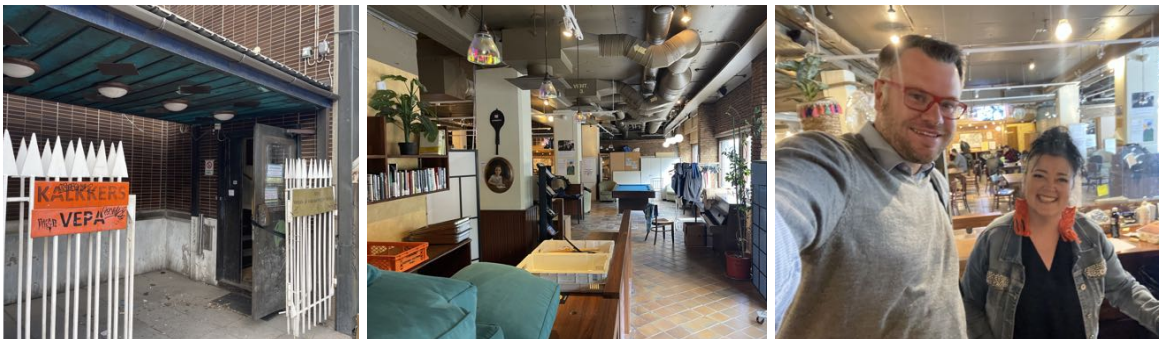
- No Fixed Abode believe that the improvements in homelessness in Finland have come about because of the Housing First principle. It started in 1986 when there was a group of homeless people who got together to say 'we want to get rid of the shelters'.
- Y Foundation and their influence made it happen, but the idea came from the people experiencing homelessness themselves, who went on to set up No Fixed Abode.
- A scattered housing model takes a long time to roll out, it's hard to get and hard to get the support for it. In the meantime, people suffer.
- A challenge with the Finnish Housing First approach is that there can be large numbers of vulnerable people all on one site. The evaluations have highlighted this, there are challenges where staff spend a lot of time dealing with conflict and not enough time on housing and support. But the ability to have people on site all the time is transformative.
- Some people don't want to leave the single site Housing First services and that is their choice, but some do, and there is not enough scattered housing for them to go to. But when they do there is a lot of loneliness and some move back to single site or supportive housing.
- The Housing First principle is that you can live there until the end of your life - if you choose.

## Ending homelessness

- The last government set a goal of halving homelessness by 2025 and ending it by 2027.
- Right-wing parties have been in favour of ending homelessness policies, this has been important.

## Why the increase in recent times?

- The municipalities or local governments are forcing more temporary accommodation
  - This is in part because some social workers find it hard to accept that people can stay if they are drinking, if there is violence if they are not paying rent or if there are other problems etc. But this is the work. As a consequence of this, there has been a need for these people to go somewhere and so there has been the re-creation of shelters by local governments.
- The increase in the number of refugees has also had an impact. Also seeing more young people come into the system due to the challenging macroeconomic situation and increasing relationship breakdown and people coming through the alternative care system.



*(Images: Visiting the No Fixed Abode Office and meeting with Sanna Tiivola)*

## Is it possible to end homelessness

- The definition for Finland is there are no more than 300 people experiencing homelessness.
- You can't end the phenomenon of life happening, but we can put the structures in place to ensure the support is there.
- So yes, if the structures are made that way, if the standards are in place.
- There was one city in the middle of Finland, Kuopio, where they have 'emergency homes', no shelters and no temporary housing.

### Top three things needed

- Quality Housing - Structure the housing system so that there are enough housing places.
  - We ought to have the type of housing that people want, there needs to be more innovation in the system. We don't want to have very poor-quality housing like the trailer parks in the UK. The built form is also not as important as the building of a sense of community.
  - Amsterdam has a situation where people sleep on boats, and it has been designed by them and is high quality. In Denmark they have a trailer park of type for people with very high drug use which has helped people to reduce their use, there was a lot of community. Innovation funding is important, but for building a supportive community not just housing.
- Quality Support - Grassroots services need to be available at these places, they need to meet people where they are, they can be professionals, they can be peer workers, but they have to have the skills to meet the people where they are.
- Prevention - from other systems, particularly the child protection system (Finland instituted free tertiary education for children from alternative care - which has had a big impact).

### *Jarmo Lindén - ARA - Housing Finance and Development Center*

- Date: 29 May 2023
- Title: Director, Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus (ARA)

### Background

- The Housing Finance and Development Center (ARA) is primarily responsible for the implementation of the Finnish Government's housing policy.
- They are enabled by legislation and are a national housing corporation, and can be thought of like the new agency being created in Australia – 'Homes Australia'.
- ARA falls under the administration of the Ministry of the Environment, and they provide grants, subsidies and guarantees related to housing and construction, and supervise the use of the ARA housing stock.
- In Finland, 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP - essentially the size of the economy) goes toward housing benefits. This is the second highest in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD - the kinds of countries Australia seeks to compare itself with).
- Finland also consistently ranks amongst the happiest places in the world.
- Finland has always had a culture of young people moving out of the 'forest', and into their own homes - as has all of northern Europe, whereas the opposite is true in the south, they have bigger houses and have lived in those houses for multi-generations.



### Housing

- Since the 1980s ARA has completely shifted the focus away from home ownership and towards affordable rental housing, and social housing. This was driven by EU policies that required a focus on vulnerabilities and market failures.
- Finland recently abolished all tax relief for interest paid on investment properties.
- ARA provides rental subsidies, and agencies like Y Foundation use these funds to develop housing, and they have obligations to not sell the housing.

- There is a growing private 'buy to rent system' developing in Finland and this is not necessarily seen as a good thing in many people's view. Its development has slowed recently because of increasing interest and building costs.

#### Housing First

- In 2008 the mandate started at a political level. It has maintained a non-partisan status since then.
- The debate is between progressive broad social housing mandate-focused governments and conservative-focused governments who seek to focus on just the most vulnerable with a narrower conception of who social housing is for.

#### Role of Y Foundation

- There is trust between the government and Y Foundation, it is an NGO but the government has in many ways delegated much of its policy-making in the homelessness space to the Y Foundation to help with this.
- Shelter transformation was key to their efforts, this took some convincing with some of the providers, but it definitely needs to be the focus.
- Housing First was not mentioned in government policy until 2019. Finns are quite pragmatic people and not overly focused on theory.

#### Data

- Since 1987 ARA has published an annual report on homelessness, there are some who question the accuracy, but it is very influential based on the trajectory of the data and informing funding allocation.
- ARA provides definitions and resources and asks the local governments to implement data collection.
- This data transparency is important.

**Universities Recommendation 6: Impact Report** - Establish an annual ending homelessness report card, including an independent rating on the progress and the comparative efforts of each jurisdiction in Australia seeking to end homelessness.

**Local Government Recommendation 5: Capital Cities Dashboard** - The Australian Council of Capital City Lord Mayors should work with the AAHE to establish a real-time/monthly homelessness public dashboard for capital cities outlining the status of their efforts to end homelessness to support advocacy efforts.

#### Reason for increasing temporary and rough sleeping in Finland

- There has been a tendency in local governments to build shelters, particularly in response to COVID.
- ARA doesn't report on rough sleeping separately from temporarily sheltered. The municipalities provide the data to the ARA and some measure it separately and some don't. There are also a number of people who are hard to identify as they don't sleep rough in the cities, they sleep in forests in makeshift shelters.
- In the first year or so of the COVID pandemic there was an increase in long-term homelessness in Finland, this was picked up in the ARA data and led to changes that have seen homelessness get back on track. The data transparency works.

#### Definition of Ending Homelessness

- A 50% reduction was the first goal, ARA got 25% of the way there, and are still working on it.
- In Finland, the only real definitional they are grappling with this has been what Juha Kaakinen - former CEO of Y Foundation - recently set out in the 'Home' paper he drafted for the new minister. That is that there are not more than about 300 people and no rough sleeping (absolute zero).

## Prevention

- We need to sit up and listen to the early warning systems - when someone is struggling to pay rent, that's the point to intervene and prevent homelessness, not respond after they've been evicted.
- We're giving grants to municipalities to act when we get the early warning notice, i.e. when there are families or people struggling to pay rent, we know who these people are.

## Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes, if we have a good system that both responds and prevents the flow into homelessness.

## Top three things needed

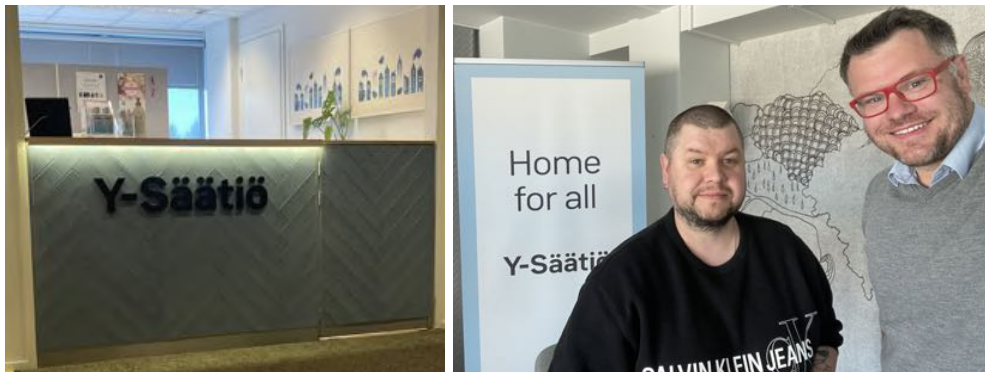
- Invest in early intervention services, and listen to the early warning signs.
- Make services available where and when they are needed. We need services to get out of the office, to go to where people are, this means pop-up services because our service systems are quite complicated to navigate and access. The cost of not providing these services in a flexible way is people don't access them, they get more unwell, the issues are unresolved, and homelessness results - costing us all more.
- Housing - including housing for refugees. This is a big problem, and more needs to be done at the EU level.

## Juha Kahila - Y Foundation

- Date: 29 May 2023
- Title: Head Of International Affairs

## Data

- The annual data collected by ARA is good enough to help meet the ending homelessness goals. The goal is not to collect data, it's to end homelessness.
- On why the rough sleeping and temporarily sheltered data has increased in recent times, this is because when COVID hit people got thrown out of couch surfing, there was nowhere to go, so the Helsinki Council and others started reopening shelters. In the data released publically, they also don't differentiate between rough sleeping and temporary shelter. The trend in rough sleeping is down.



*(Image: Visiting the Y Foundation Office and meeting Juha Kahila)*

## Housing First

- The Housing First response from 2008 was in part because the Y Foundation wanted a quick response, to help deliver results to back the political leaders who had invested in the approach.
- Time is running out to demonstrate the effectiveness of Housing First at the system level. Governments have been increasingly backing Housing First, but it's not delivering the results with a

rigid focus on high-fidelity programs that solve an individual's problem but won't solve the community problem.

- It's dangerous to say to political leaders that Housing First alone will end homelessness.
- Has the Pathways Model been shown to have reduced homelessness in a community with the Pathways Model only? No. The Pathways Model ends homelessness for the most vulnerable exiting from the mental health system. For others, there are other responses needed in a Housing First system.
- In Italy in Bologna, there are lots of three or four-bedroom apartments, and if homeless people who know each other want to move into a place with a shared kitchen and bathroom - why not.
- A rigid high-fidelity Housing First model would say no to this, but you have to work flexibly with the stock in your system and work overtime to change it. In the Bologna example, they found that over time, people didn't want to move out of these apartments to single housing because of the isolation issues.

#### Research

- Research is part of the problem of pushing the debate down a high-fidelity path, it's too focused on programs and not systems.
- We shouldn't confuse evidence-based for a country and for a community, with evidence-based for a program.
- It's very easy to demonstrate causality from a program intervention, it's very hard to do the same at the population level change. There are few places that have or are ending homelessness, and those that have didn't do so by focusing on fidelity.
- A highly impactful program can have very little impact on a system if it's not at scale, or only solving part of a systems problem.
- The reason for the high fidelity focus in Europe is partly to do with the research community and partly to do with the loudest voices winning out. Despite our progress, we are pretty softly spoken in Finland.

#### Built for Zero

- Finland hasn't given much thought to the functional zero measure, they went with the 200 people in shelters and or other forms of homelessness and absolute zero for rough sleeping based on the analysis of what they thought would be possible.
- Data is really important in big cities, and they have given more thought to that element. For example, Helsinki has a by-name list of a type. They have monthly data collection, although they don't share it publicly. In part because their numbers are reducing and it's heading in the right direction.
- Helsinki has set out a policy to end rough sleeping by 2025, their numbers are reducing, and they are on track to that goal.
- The goal is to end homelessness, not to do Housing First or to collect data.
- More broadly, it's important to note that Finland is ending homelessness they haven't ended it - yet. They are getting close, and they haven't claimed that they have. Others have made that statement.

#### Family Homelessness

- Finland could make a claim to have ended family homelessness, but it gets complicated. The national data was showing they had ended family homelessness, but that was really families with children.
- When you take into account the families that are experiencing homelessness and their kids are in the child protection system - then there is still family homelessness, but it's a small group.

#### Coordination

- Coordination is a part of the culture in Finland, and it has not always been widely recognised outside Finland how important this has been to their success.



- They are going to have to do a lot of work to rebuild this with the shifting of a lot of social or well-being services to a new regional level of government in Finland.

Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes

Top three things needed

- Be flexible with fidelity, have the courage to try different housing options, and ask people what they want.
- Prevention has to go hand in hand with Housing First. It needs to involve grassroots services (i.e. easy access, getting out of offices and meeting people where they are).
- Collaboration is so important. There are so many organisations that work in their own silos in their own funding streams. You need intentional effort to break these down.

Stockholm, Sweden

*Housing First Europe Hub*

- Date: 1 June 2023
- In attendance:
  - Samara Jones, Convenor



Background

- The Hub is based in Brussels, and was established by a wide group of organisations and funded in large part by FEANTSA (the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless) and the Y Foundation from Finland. It is not an incorporated organisation, they are auspiced by FEANTSA.
- Between 2014-2016 the Hub worked on the creation of a guidebook to Housing First, with principles.
- System change is the driving force of their work, to support an end to homelessness, and not just manage it.
- Housing First is a compass, it points the way, it's not a blueprint. It's not a step-by-step checklist.
- The Hub focuses on:
  - Research and Capacity
  - Advocacy
  - Training
- Having a network function for building capacity is hard work and not well funded and not always done well, it can be done badly which doesn't motivate people to change practice. Having a good facilitator of these networks is really important.
- Finland has a funded national network to provide the support, permanently funded from their poker machine takings.

Shifting from Crisis Takes Time

- We need to move away from emergency responses taking up all of the resources, funding and energy.
- We also need to recognise that this will take time: Finland transformed its shelter system from 2,200+ places in the 1980s, to 600 places in the early 2010s to roughly 52 shelter places today. Of course, if there were still 2,000 shelter beds we would fill them.
- The Scottish story started when they abolished what is known there as 'priority need' and it took ten years to implement. Priority need drove an overreliance on temporary accommodation. Then they instigated the unsuitable accommodation order which stipulated no more than seven days in temporary shelter. And now they are looking at duty to act legislation. They are on a journey.
- We need to act with urgency but strap in for the long term.

### Housing First as systems change

- Housing First is the most evaluated homelessness intervention ever, and yet we still don't know what impact it has on systems.
- Housing First works for 70-85% of people but what about the remainder, you can't end homelessness without helping everyone.
- Some think that it is confusing to talk about Housing First as a system-level intervention.
- Others questioned how Housing First can be a systems change effort when the Housing First cohort isn't representative of all homelessness (it's disproportionately not women and young people).
- The Housing First Hub's response is if we go too broad, too fast, you can lose focus on the change we are seeking to make.
- Some talk about Housing First as a systems change effort because there is a belief among some that ending homelessness isn't possible. They get too much pushback, even though they essentially mean the same thing. Others just focus on ending homelessness using the Housing First approach.
- Be clear on what you mean by system change, it's not housing system change, or racism and system change, it's about system change to end homelessness.
- Housing First is a leverage point to create system change.
- When faced with criticism that Housing First is just shuffling deckchairs on the Titanic, in that it's taking limited housing from other deserving groups, the Housing First Hub's response has been that it needs to be about growing the stock of housing and not about dividing the existing stock up further.
- Housing First needs to be done in the context of multidisciplinary coordination.
- It's important to be clear - a systemic approach to Housing First is about ending homelessness, you can't do one without the other. i.e. you can do Housing First and not end homelessness, but you can't end homelessness and not do Housing First.

### Who is Housing First not for?

- Rapid rehousing is the terminology used in the UK to differentiate between Housing First and general homelessness services.
- Some argue that permanent supportive housing (or single-site models) is not Housing First.
- Others say that people are choosing congregate Housing First models because they have high health needs. The European Housing First principles don't specify the scattered site or congregate living as being either Housing First or not Housing First.

### Built for Zero

- They don't think the Built for Zero approach has been taken up with great enthusiasm in Europe because the data-driven/by-name list approach isn't as needed. Europe has the local authorities, who have sorted this out, for example, the Chain system in the UK which has a single data set for all outreach providers across London.
- In Belgium everyone is required to register where they live, this requirement has been in place since the 18th century. So they don't need a by-name list.
- Most governments in Europe require data collection as part of the main system, there is no great enthusiasm for creating a separate system. There is also not a great understanding of it either.

### Is it possible to end homelessness

- Yes.

### Top three things needed

- Culture shift in accepting that we can end homelessness.
- We need the structures in our systems, housing, social care, health care, etc., that fund and support our efforts to end homelessness.

- Housing First - it shows us the way, it is the compass, for directing us there, its foundation is based in human rights and rights are helpful in moving from a charity mindset. If we take the charity mindset we buy into the deserving poor and undeserving poor arguments.

**Martin Kositzka - BAG**

**Wohnungslosenhilfe/Homeless Assistance**

- Date: 2 June 2023
- Title: Vorstandsvorsitzender/CEO



**Housing as a Human Right**

- In 2020 there was no way of measuring homelessness in Germany so they started measuring it themselves. The Government then passed a law that says there must be an annual data report.
- Germany has laws for rent control, they can only rise no more than 15-20% over three years, and only up to the local comparative rent. When re-letting you can't raise rents by more than 10% in 'tight' rental markets.
- Germany has committed to ending homelessness by 2030, and when they did that the Chancellor and Minister acknowledged that housing is a human right.
- The challenge is they've made laws but they are not implemented in a way that brings about required outcomes. Laws and policies are great, but you need a way to measure the results.
- The organisation are campaigning to see that people may only be evicted if reasonable alternatives to housing are available.

**Elisabeth Hammer - Neunerhaus/House of Nine**

- Date: 2 June 2023
- Title: Geschäftsführer/Managing Director, Austria



**Background**

- Elisabeth is based in Vienna, and is the managing director of Neunerhaus, and has been implementing Housing First since 2012.

**Housing First vs Ending Homelessness**

- At House of Nine (Neunerhaus) we ask ourselves all the time are we taking a systemic response to end homelessness, or are we just finding better ways of managing homelessness?
- The operating environment is extremely challenging, and those of us who work in the sector often have a feeling of a lack of power, but we have the resources to influence the other systems that impact on ours. This requires system change effort, not just service-level interventions.
- When direct support for people experiencing homelessness becomes the overwhelming focus, and we leave no space for seeking systemic change, that is ultimately self-defeating.
- Our reaction to broken systems is often to turn inwards, creating replicating systems.
- The homelessness sector keeps growing bigger and bigger.
- The argument isn't that we stop offering direct support services, we need to recognise the contribution we could make to influencing the wider structural factors that impact on homelessness.
- House of Nine has a huge knowledge base, we know about the barriers that affect marginalised groups. This knowledge is crucial to the work of seeking to end homelessness.
- There are two ways to liberate ourselves and drive a focus on systemic change:
  - Policy - through all of us;
  - Implement specific projects that address systemic issues. How various organisations can be brought together.

## Arriving Home

- A Housing-First project in all nine regions in Austria. Coordinated and managed by Neunerhaus, it's a coordination role to position not just one organisation, but an alliance of organisations operating the initiative.
- One of the greatest successes was having the Minister of Social Affairs as an active partner.
- The next biggest success factor was the involvement of community or as they call (limited profit) housing associations, including their policy and peak bodies.
- Homelessness is a structural problem. Housing First as a systems approach helps to address that.
- Some public servants in Europe are now saying that they know now that we can no longer ignore Housing First. This is a pragmatic basis on which to begin to address the systemic issues.
- Receiving funding from the social sectors means operating within the boundaries of the social sectors, and working with the people and agencies you know. We need to cooperate with people who have different mindsets to us, we need to think and act outside the box to end homelessness.
- We can make change by showing how it's done, not just by arguing our case.

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Yes.

Top three things needed

- Focus on the system.
- Share and influence policy-making. Innovation is most powerful when it operates at the boundaries of different sectors, or when high-quality service delivery impacts and influences policymaking.
- Talk about ending homelessness - some people talk about ending homelessness as being unreasonable. It's not, it is unreasonable not to end homelessness. It's not just a matter of human rights, it's a matter of social cohesion, of societal breakdown.

## *European Platform for Combatting Homelessness*

- Date: 1 June 2023
- In attendance:
  - Yves Leterme, Chair
  - Stefan Olsson, Deputy Director General - Employment



## Background

- The European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH) is part of the European Commission, the European Union's (EU) politically independent executive arm.
- What is driving homelessness in Europe is the financialisation of housing as a result of interest rates being so low.
- The Global Financial Crisis diversified the European homeless population and then austerity cut a lot of the support programs.
- One of the things the platform has come up against is that you can't end what you can't count.
- At a high-level conference in Lisbon co-organised by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU on 21 June 2021 national ministers as well as representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, civil society organisations (FEANTSA and others), signed the Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness and launched the European Platform On Combatting Homelessness.<sup>165</sup>
- The signatories pledged to work together under the umbrella of the Platform and to deliver actions within their respective competencies. They agreed on the following objectives:

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<sup>165</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=24120&langId=en>

- no one sleeps rough for lack of accessible, safe and appropriate emergency accommodation;
- no one lives in emergency or transitional accommodation longer than is required for a successful move-on to a permanent housing solution;
- no one is discharged from any institution (e.g. prison, hospital, care facility) without an offer of appropriate housing;
- evictions should be prevented whenever possible and no one is evicted without assistance for an appropriate housing solution when needed;
- no one is discriminated against due to their homelessness status.
- There are challenges with the ambition. Homelessness is about the credibility of political leadership, a characteristic of European society.

#### European project

- Some believe that the EU is one of the greatest achievements of humanity in human history.
- It started with economics, steel production, necessary for the production of war. Then the open borders, then added the four freedoms as shown below.



(Image: *The Four Freedoms of the European Union Single Market, The European Parliament*)<sup>166</sup>

- But the EU has always been connected to economic not social issues. Europe was an economic ambition in the beginning and then we added social ambitions. We have inertia on the new ambitions. Humans are more than a worker, and a consumer, they are a citizen, they should have the opportunity to live their lives.
- The next stage of the EU is to help all people realise their citizenship.
- If we can't end homelessness this goes to the heart of the social model that has been built since the second world war, can it be sustained?
- Can the European project be taken seriously if we don't meet these goals and deliver for everyone, particularly for those who are sleeping on the street?
- The Platform's priority is about recognising that counting and the monitoring of this goal, are central to the ability to achieve this.

#### Järvinen Mrika - ARA, Finland

- Date: 1 June 2023
- Title: Prevention Project Worker - ARA

#### Housing Advisors - Prevention Program

- ARA has funded a housing advice or counselling program that is a preventative service that works with people before homelessness becomes an issue. They work on anti-social behaviour (partying), hoarding, help with rental debts, and referrals to other services (gambling, financial advice) - the main job of housing advisors is to prevent evictions.
- Housing advisers work in either local government agencies or NGOs and have a social work degree.

<sup>166</sup> <https://world101.cfr.org/how-world-works-and-sometimes-doesnt/building-blocks/european-union-worlds-biggest-sovereignty>

- ARA runs a community of practice or network to support the housing advisors who generally work alone, they provide training and support to facilitate this community of practice.
- Housing advisers are not lawyers, they are social workers, and they have to refer to legal aid services when required.
- Privacy concerns mean that they have to advertise to get people to find their way to them. Hence ARA is established as a national service - it's essentially the 'Lifeline' for housing. The reasons people seek help are quite diverse as shown in the following image.



(Image: Shared Presentation re Homelessness Prevention workers, ARA, Finland)

- The debts can be paid for by the local agency, but this is a once-in-a-lifetime payment, and before the payment is made, the housing adviser needs to work with the person to address the root cause of whatever the issue might be (i.e. gambling, alcohol etc) - the recipient needs to be on a recovery pathway.



(Image: Shared Presentation re Homelessness Prevention workers, ARA, Finland)

- Finland has very good data on how many evictions there are (see above), and what the costs of these evictions are, for all concerned.
- As a consequence of their interventions, about half of the pending evictions don't actually happen.
- ARA have also studied eviction costs which range from €1,600 to €21,400 - the average cost is €6,300 + average rental debt of €4,300 = €10,300 loss of income for housing providers. Providing housing tenancy officers is substantially cheaper when you consider all the follow-on costs to the housing organisation, the individual and the community.

- Case Study - the person with the gambling problem, didn't mention his gambling problem until the third time. There was a once-in-a-lifetime agreement made to pay off his debt, if he went to a gambling rehab service, he did and after that never got another housing debt, and avoided an experience of homelessness.
- Prevention needs to be a bigger part of homelessness systems, efforts at the moment are overwhelmingly geared to responding to the problem, increasingly resolving it, but not preventing it.

**Commonwealth Recommendation 12: Prevention** - Invest in a National Homelessness Prevention Service, modelled on the Finnish Housing Advisers Prevention model.

**Hedi Walter - A Way Home Canada**

- Date: 1 June 2023
- Title: Training and Program Implementation Manager
- It is possible to prevent young people from ever experiencing homelessness so that they don't ever need a youth homelessness service. But it requires working upstream.
- If we are to prevent youth homelessness, we need more non-paid professionals in young people's lives.
- We need professionals who are there to help and not be experts who think they know young people better than the people that are living their own lives.
- The more certain you are about something the less curious you are, and curiosity is so important to ending homelessness.
- Maslow says we need food, shelter and clothing, then we need education, health and home. We think this is wrong. In Youth Services they focus on belonging as much as food. They focus on Purpose.
- Loneliness is killing people at the same rate as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
- At a Way Home Canada they try to work so far upstream that they aren't just supporting the young person they are supporting the family. This also applies to adult homelessness, you should not just support the individual but the community they are part of.



(Image: From Hedi's presentation to the FEANTSA Forum, Stockholm)

- The goal is to provide everything before we get to a Housing First response.
- The 'Family and Natural Supports' program is about focusing on the things that young people are saying is where this all starts, miscommunication and conflict, which sometimes leads to violence or abuse.

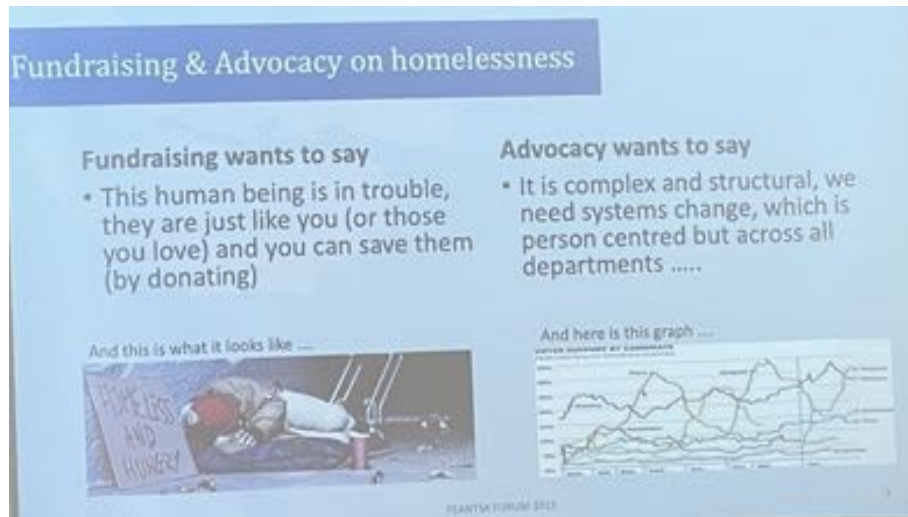
- As the Canada Homelessness Observatory points out, the focus of prevention can't be so narrow that young people keep getting sicker and sicker and we seek to prevent just that, that can't just be the goal of the response system. We have to go further upstream and prevent them from getting sick in the first place, to reconcile with their families, who aren't all abusers.

**Mike Allen - Focus Ireland**

- Date: 2 June 2023
- Title: Director of Advocacy

**Fundraising vs Advocacy**

- Most NGOs will have a Fundraising Department and an Advocacy Department and never the two shall meet. If they are in the same organisation they should all be pulling in the same direction, but we're so often not - we're telling different stories.



*(Image: From Mike's presentation to the FEANTSA Forum, Stockholm)*

- The fundraising team tell the rough sleeping story. We either consciously or subconsciously trot out the same redemption story, where the person telling their story, shares X misery and thanks to the Y service.
- Advocacy wants to tell the structural story and the harsh reality is most of the time, no one cares, people care about people, not about systems and structures.
- Why does this matter? It matters quite a bit because the type of problem you project impacts on the solution. If homelessness = rough sleeping, then shelter is the answer, and soup and sleeping bags.
- In Ireland we have built more shelter in the last ten years than housing.
- When you talk up the trauma, the vulnerability, and the needs of people experiencing homelessness, why would you be surprised when the NIMBYism reaction occurs, it's partly our fault.
- Most people employed in fundraising roles come from other sectors, and have little understanding of homelessness, we need better induction processes to help people fundraise to end homelessness, not perpetuate it.
- We need better guides. Focus Ireland has developed the following to help manage the tensions between fundraising and policy:
  - First, recognise the tensions.



- Understand and agree where it matters - this isn't a culture wars debate, just narrow down to the areas where you can really focus on reducing the tension.
- Keep close to your services and clients - bring the services into the picture more, this isn't a battle between the policy boffins and the communications people, bring into the front line and lived experience voices, and ask them what they think of the messaging.
- Use values-based communications - if you send a message that triggers protective values, i.e. we're all at risk of homelessness, we're only two paychecks away from homelessness - its A) not true, some are much more at risk than others but B) it's also likely to trigger a protective, financially conservative donor view, which means you won't get as many donations.
- People providing dignity services (washing clothes on the street, providing soup kitchens, etc.) will get offended if you say the only meaningful response is Housing First, some say long-term response, but that is too slow. The best language to use in this situation is 'ultimately the only lasting response to ending homelessness is Housing First'.
- We have to be careful about advocacy campaigns that commit the same sins as fundraising campaigns which is simplifying the solutions to homelessness as being just housing. It's not that simple, it's also about income, racism, support, and the distribution of housing, not just the supply of it.
- We need to resolve the distribution issues by not seeking to cut the cake up into smaller and smaller pieces, we're trying to make a bigger cake.
- The Frameworks Institute's work on homelessness<sup>167</sup> is contextual, it might work in England, but in Ireland there is much more of a desire to want to challenge the system.

**AAEH Recommendation 22: Better Communication and Fundraising Guide** - Develop a 'better communication and fundraising guide' for ending homelessness modelled on similar resources that have been developed in Europe to help better understand and manage the tensions between fundraising and seeking to change community attitudes about the nature of homelessness and how it is solvable.

**Freek Spinnewijn - FEANTSA**

- Date: 1 June 2023
- Title: Director

**Background**

- FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations working with the homeless. It is a peak body or what they call an umbrella for not-for-profit organisations which participate in or contribute to the fight against homelessness in Europe.
- FEANTSA has more than 100 member organisations working across Europe, in almost all of the EU member states.



**Status of European Homelessness**

- It's bad, getting worse in most places.
- The financialisation of housing had a massive surge because interest rates were so low for so long.
- The touristification of European cities and AirBnB has also had a significant impact.
- Refugees and migrants are also having a big impact, more than 50% of Europeans experiencing homelessness are migrants - this is particularly pronounced in Poland with its more than 3 million Ukrainian refugees.

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/services-and-interventions/talking-about-homelessness-introduction-to-framing/>



### How you look at homelessness matters

'Managing Homelessness' Framework	'Ending Homelessness' Framework
Homelessness is mostly about rough-sleeping	Rough-sleeping is the marginal extreme of homelessness, only affecting around 2% of homeless people
Some level of homelessness is inevitable	Homelessness is caused by public policies that can be changed
Homelessness is caused by addiction and mental illness	Homeless is caused by problems in the housing system, and falls most heavily on those with addiction and mental health issues
Giving out soup, sleeping bags, hot drinks is what homeless organisations do – and it makes a real difference to the situation.	Emergency humanitarian aid is essential, but the only meaningful response involves providing a home (and support to that end)
Homelessness is a social problem	Homelessness is a housing problem as well as a social problem
People who are homeless need our compassion	People who are homeless are 'rights holders'

(Image: Freek's Presentation at the FEANTSA Forum, Stockholm)

#### European Developments

- There is a European Platform on Ending Homelessness, all member states, and the European institutions (Commission, Parliament, etc.) have committed to that goal and they have set a timeline of achieving it - by 2030.
- FEANTSA believes that policies should strive to end homelessness, as opposed to 'managing' it. This requires a shift away from the current situation in most countries, where temporary accommodation is the predominant response to homelessness. It means ensuring access to adequate housing, relevant support services and investing in prevention.
- To this end, FEANTSA has developed a handbook on ending homelessness.<sup>168</sup>

#### Campaigns

- FEANTSA have also conducted a number of campaigns to support this.
- Hotels to Homes: has focused on the impacts of tourism on homelessness.
- The Homelessness Bill of Rights campaign aimed to encourage cities to recognise the rights of homeless people.



(Images: From Freek's presentation to the FEANTSA Forum, Stockholm)

<sup>168</sup> [https://www.feantsa.org/download/enfr\\_2006toolkit\\_5b1\\_5d-2-34521781459519216752.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/enfr_2006toolkit_5b1_5d-2-34521781459519216752.pdf)

- The 2012 “Poverty is Not a Crime” campaign brought together activists from across Europe to call on governments to stop criminalising and penalising homeless people.

#### Right to Housing Watch

- The Right to Housing Watch is a network of FEANTSA supporting the progressive realisation of the right to housing.
- They have developed a guide to housing rights in Europe, including which countries recognise housing rights in their constitutions, as well as the legislative measures that have been taken to recognise the right.<sup>169</sup>



#### Mentoring Program

- FEANTSA run a mentoring program to provide a space that connects young professionals working in the homeless sector with experienced professionals from across Europe, designed to encourage sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise.
- Building leadership is important if you want to create lasting change.

#### Policy, Exceptions and Ending Homelessness

- We need to stop focusing on the exceptions to the rule and focus on the rule.
- Social work is obsessed with finding the exception - someone proposes something and the first thing someone else does is say it wouldn't or doesn't work for X group for Y reasons.
- We should seek to make it work and if it doesn't then find a solution, don't make policy for the exception because it makes the policy unworkable.
- We should do this with data - there is a challenge in that policymakers can be making good policies and still see homelessness increasing. Political leaders need to be prepared for this and supported through it to stay the course.

#### Definition of Ending

- Ending homelessness may appear to some to be an unrealistic dream, but FEANTSA believes that if the objective of ending homelessness becomes part of integrated homelessness policies, then it can be made a reality.
- FEANTSA have done a lot of work on defining what an end to homelessness looks like.<sup>170</sup>
- We need to see ending homelessness as an investment in social inclusion and social cohesion.
- Ending homelessness does not mean criminalising homeless people, or making judgements about their situation. It means investing time and resources in long-lasting solutions to homelessness and providing real, personalised alternatives.
- We need to move on from investing in short-term measures, which after several decades have just 'managed' homelessness and have not solved it.

#### Take the Time to Get this right

- We are going to make a few mistakes, we need to recognise this because when we do it helps depoliticise the issue.
- Don't underestimate the importance of consensus between policymakers across silos, between public service and political level, allowing for small failures along the way.
- This is what is refreshing about Finland, they had bumps along the way, but they stayed the course. When they had problems they didn't throw their approach out the window or tweak it, and they had the trust of political leaders, and the credibility with the sector to bring them along.

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.housingrightswatch.org/page/state-housing-rights-20>

<sup>170</sup> [https://www.feantsa.org/download/091016\\_fea\\_001-09\\_eng-1776137439380047920.pdf](https://www.feantsa.org/download/091016_fea_001-09_eng-1776137439380047920.pdf)

- It's not rocket science.

Is it possible to end homelessness?

- Yes but not by 2030 - which is when the European Commission has committed to as part of their ten-year strategy.
- We have to be careful to not sloganeer regarding ending homelessness, while the situation is bad and getting worse in most places, it is getting better in some, Finland, Denmark, Scotland, etc.

Top three things needed

- Invest more in affordable housing targeted to people experiencing homelessness.
- Recognise that homelessness can't make up for the failures of other service systems - especially migration. Take the time to get it right.

## Appendix B - The Itinerary

The following Table identifies who I met with where, over the course of my Churchill Fellowship:

- 112+ people
- in 81 meetings, roundtables, sessions, dinners and site visits
- 12 cities
- six countries
- over eight weeks

Name	Title	Organisation	Date
Chicago, Illinois, USA			
Molly Brown	Professor of Clinical Community Psychology & Director of the Homeless Advocacy Research Collaboration Lab	DePaul University	9 May 2022
Doug Schenkelberg	Executive Director	Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	9 May 2022+ 13 May 2022
Carolyn Ross	CEO	All Chicago	9 May 2022
Steve Brown	Senior Director, Social & Behavioral Health Transformation & Advocacy	Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences	9 May 2022
Mark Angelini	CEO	Mercy Housing	9 May 2022
Lydia Stazen	Executive Director	Institute of Global Homelessness	9 May 2022 + 13 May 2022
Guy	Lived Experience	N/A	9 May 2022
Jake Maguire	Principal	Community Solutions	10 May 2022 + 4 May 2023
Liz Drapa	VP Field Operations & Consulting	Corporation for Supportive Housing	10 May 2022
Roseanne Haggerty	President and CEO	Community Solutions	11 May 2022
Niñon Lewis	Vice President	Institute for Healthcare Improvement	11 May 2022
Donald Whitehead	Executive Director	National Coalition for the Homelessness	11 May 2022
Amber Chandler	Systems Improvement	Community Solutions	11 May 2022

	Advisor		
Dawn Moskowitz	Strategy Lead, Catalytic Projects	Community Solutions	11 May 2022
Ramina Davidson	Strategy Lead, Zero for All Proof Points	Community Solutions	11 May 2022
Anna Kim	Principal Communications	Community Solutions	11 May 2022
Ciara Devlin	Head of Place-based Programmes	Crisis UK	12 May 2022
Kate Farell	Housing Led Programmes Lead	Crisis UK	12 May 2022
Jessica Venegas	Principal Strategic Partnerships	Community Solutions	12 May 2022
Aras Jizan	Portfolio Lead, Built for Zero	Community Solutions	12 May 2022
Marie Morison	Director, Built for Zero	Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness	12 May 2022 + 8 May 2023
Amanda Andere	CEO	Funders Together to End Homelessness	12 May 2022
Emily Krisciunas	Director	Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness	13 May 2022
Felix Matlock Jr	Mercy Housing	Regional Vice President of Resident Services	13 May 2022
Julie & Chariot	Mercy Housing	Residents, Miriam Apartments	13 May 2022
<b>Washington DC, USA</b>			
Linda Kaufman	Retired	Community Solutions	15 May 2022
Jeff Olivet	Executive Director	U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness	16 May 2022
Michele Jolin	Co Founder and CEO	Results for America	16 May 2022
Norman Suchar	Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	16 May 2022
Triina Van	Homeless Services Coordinator,	Arlington County Department of Human Services	17 May 2022
Nan Roman	CEO	The National Alliance to End Homelessness	17 May 2022

Jerry Jones	National Field Director	The National Alliance to End Homelessness	17 May 2022
Kristi Schulenberg	Director: Centre for Capacity Building	The National Alliance to End Homelessness	17 May 2022
<b>New York, New York, USA</b>			
Paul Howard	Senior Director, Community Health Portfolio Lead	The Institute for Healthcare Improvement	19 May 2022
Laurel Blatchford	Senior Adviser: Place Matters	Blue Meridian	19 May 2022
Deborah DeSantis	CEO	Corporation for Supportive Housing	19 May 2022
Cynthia Stuart	Chief Operating Officer	Supportive Housing Network of New York	20 May 2022
Fred Dust	Founder and CEO	Dust and Company	20 May 2022
<b>Seattle, Washington, USA</b>			
Ashley Barnes	Director of Anchor Communities Initiative	A Way Home Washington	23 May 2022
Rian Watt	Strategy Lead, International and & Initiative Large Scale Change	Community Solutions	23 May 2022
Patrick Szymanski	Associate Director of Housing	Downtown Emergency Service Center	24 May 2022
Drew Duplantis	Project Manager of the Clinic at Hobson Place	Downtown Emergency Service Center	24 May 2022
Philip Welkhoff	Director, Malaria	Gates Foundation	24 May 2022
<b>Los Angeles, California, USA</b>			
Beth Sandor	Director Built For Zero	Community Solutions	3 May 2023
Leslie Wise	Strategic Consultant, Housing for Health	Community Solutions	3 May 2023
Chris Ko	Vice President, Impact and Strategy	United Way Greater Los Angeles	4 May 2023
Emily Bradley	Director, Strategic Investments,	United Way Greater Los Angeles	4 May 2023
Chrisitna Miller	Senior Advocacy Officer	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	4 May 2023

Seyron Foo	Senior Program Officer	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	4 May 2023
Jeoff Krentel	Senior Evaluation Officer, Homelessness	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	4 May 2023
Jonathan Sanabria	Research Coordinator, Homelessness	Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	4 May 2023
Hazel Lopez	Senior Director of CES and Community Engagement	The People Concern	4 May 2023
Ciara DeVozza	Outreach Team Manager	The People Concern	4 May 2023
Evelin Montoya	Housing Navigation Manager	The People Concern	4 May 2023
Molly Rysman	Chief Program Officer	Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority	4 May 2023
Toronto, Canada			
Patricia Mueller	Chief Executive Officer	Home First	8 May 2023
Michael Lyster	Director of Housing and Shelters	Home First	8 May 2023
Gayle McFadden	Site Manager 222 Spadina Avenue	Home First	8 May 2023
Leslie Gash	Executive Director	Toronto Shelter Network	8 May 2023
Trish Lenz	Manager, Coordinated Access	Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, City of Toronto	8 May 2023
Jennifer van Gennip	Co-Chair	Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness	8 May 2023
Alana Jones	Manger	Borden Place	8 May 2023
Andrew Bond	Medical Director + Chair	Inner City Health Associates + Canadian Network for the Health and Housing of people experiencing Homelessness	8 May 2023
London, England			
Matt Downey, CEO	CEO	Crisis	11 May 2023
Francesca Albanese	Head of Research and Evaluation	Crisis	11 May 2023
Sarah Walters	Head of Best Practice	Crisis	11 May 2023




Alice Barley	Senior Philanthropy Lead	Crisis	11 May 2023
Lisa Naylor	Community Strategy and Improvement Manager	Crisis	11 May 2023
Nick Bradshaw	Brent Service Manager	Crisis	11 May 2023
Holly Cooper	Housing Practice Lead	Crisis	11 May 2023
Ryan Fuke	Outreach Lead, Brent	St Mungo's	11 May 2023
Ligia Teixeira	CEO	Centre for Homelessness Impact	11 May 2023
Greg Hurst	Head of Communications and Public Affairs	Centre for Homelessness Impact	11 May 2023
Rob Anderson	Head of Implementation and Policy	Centre for Homelessness Impact	11 May 2023
Bill Tidnam	CEO	Thames Reach	12 May 2023
Rick Henderson	CEO	Homeless Link	15 May 2023
Joanne Prestige	Head of National Practice Development	Homeless Link	15 May 2023
Patrick Duce	Programme Lead (Homelessness)	World Habitat	16 May 2023
<b>Leeds, England</b>			
Alex Fox	CEO	Mayday Trust	18 May 2023
Donald Forrester	CEO	Emmaus Leeds	18 May 2023
Verity James-Sinetos	Development Advisor	Emmaus Leeds	18 May 2023
Mark Johnson	UK Federation Manager	Emmaus Leeds	18 May 2023
Hannah Lamplugh	Strategy and Influence Lead, Children and Families Directorate,	Leeds City Council	18 May 2023
<b>Manchester, England</b>			
Emily Cole	Program Lead	Greater Manchester Housing First	19 May 2023
Mike Huges	Project Manager	Greater Manchester Housing First	19 May 2023
Esme Davies	Commissioning and Project Manager, Homelessness Team	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	19 May 2023

Rachel Brennan	Participation & Progression Director	Groundswell	19 May 2023
Gill Leng	n/a	Independent Consultant, and Former Civil Servant	19 May 2023
Donna Hall	Professor + Chair	University of Manchester + New Local Government Network	24 May 2023
<b>Glasgow, Scotland</b>			
Lorraine McGrath	CEO	Simon Community	23-24 May 2023
Charles Maasz	CEO	Glasgow City Mission	23 May 2023
Pat Togher	Assistance Chief Public Protection officer and Complex Needs	Glasgow Health & Social Care Partnership	23 May 2023
Grant Campbell	Head of Partnerships and Consulting + Chair	Homelessness Network Scotland + Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness	23 May 2023
Janine Kellett	Head	Homelessness Unit - Scottish Government	23 May 2023
Jack Rillie,	Former Alliance Senior Manager	Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness	24 May 2023
Toby Lowe	Visiting Professor in Public Management	Centre for Public Impact	1 June
<b>Helsinki, Finland</b>			
Juha Kaakinen	Former CEO	Y-Säätiö/Y Foundation	26 May 2023
Juha Soivio	Coordinator, Apartment First & Networks Developer	Y-Säätiö/Y Foundation	26 May 2023
Johanna Helander	Head of Unit, Housing Service	Sininauha Oy/Blue Ribbon Foundation	26 May 2023
Sanna Tiivola	Toiminnanjohtaja/Executive manager	Vailla vakinaista asuntoa ry/No Fixed Abode	29 May 2023
Jarmo Lindén	Direktör   Director	ARA - Asumisen rahoitus- ja kehittämiskeskus/Housing Finance and Development Center	29 May 2023
Juha Kahlia	Head of International Affairs	Y-Säätiö/Y Foundation	29 May 2023

Mirka Järvinen	Prevention Project Worker	ARA	1 June 2023
Stockholm, Sweden			
Samara Jones	Convenor	Housing First Europe Hub	1 June 2023
Martin Kositza	Vorstandsvorsitzender CEO	BAG Wohnungslosenhilfe/Homeless Assist - Germany	1 June 2023
Elisabeth Hammer	Managing Director	Neunerhaus/House of Nine - Austria	1 June 2023
Yves Leterme	Chair	European Platform for Combatting Homelessness - Belgium	1 June 2023
Hedi Walter	Training and Program Implementation Manager	A Way Home Canada	1 June 2023
Mike Allen	CEO	Focus Ireland	1 June 2023
Freek Spinnewijn	Director	FEANTSA	1 June 2023

## Appendix C - Social Media Blog

The following is a record of the social media (Facebook and LinkedIn) posts I made whilst on my Churchill Fellowship. Shared with the intention of giving a sense of the thoughts and emotions I experienced while on this journey.

 **David Pearson** is in Chicago, Illinois. 10 May at 13:10 · 🌐

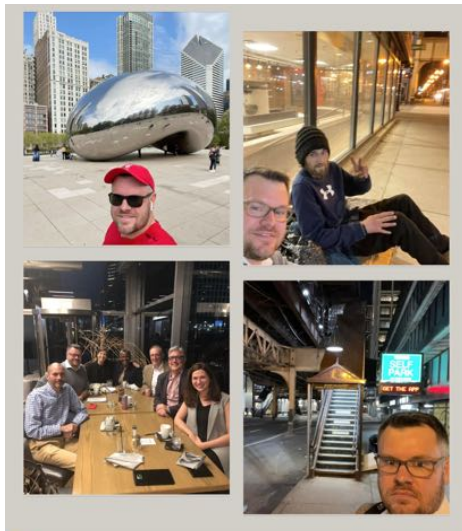
Just had an amazing, inspiring and heartbreaking first day in Chicago as part of my [Winston Churchill Fellowship](#).

Started with a run to the bean to work off the jet lag.

Had an inspiring meeting with a host of leaders in the homelessness, housing, health, research and advocacy sector - organised by the amazing Lydia at the [Institute of Global Homelessness](#). All agreed that ending homelessness is possible but that it takes collective will from community and government!

Had a great chat with Guy below, who agreed to let me share his story and our photo. Guy and I have an eerily similar story. We're the same age, both have 4 year old daughters, both lost our mum's (or mom's as they spell it over here) at a young age. Where our stories differ is that he's been sleeping rough for the last 8 months. Started when his wife left him, led to drinking, lost his job as a result of a DUI, gov evicted and has now lost almost half his body from sleeping rough this last winter. He's scared all the time, of the violence inflicted on people sleeping rough by others and of the cops that he might be arrested for some of the things he's had to do to survive. Heartbreaking and yet he is hopeful still that the future might bring change and maybe even the opportunity for housing and a new beginning.


Catching the iconic elevated loop train home now - with a full head and heart.



 Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 154 others

12 comments

[Homelessness is Solvable](#) / [How we can End It In Australia](#)

 **David Pearson** is in Chicago, Illinois. 11 May at 22:00 · 🌐

Day 2 of my Churchill Fellowship, had the opportunity to spend the day with the amazing [Liz Drapa](#) from the [Corporation For Supportive Housing](#). Supportive housing is literally housing with support (usually onsite)- there is a system of this type of housing in the US, we have previously little of it in Australia. Visited the La Casa Norte facility that has on the ground floor a health clinic, a community food bank (where you can shop for low cost groceries, a drop in service, community meeting spaces, kitchen, on-site support etc... very impressive.



 Matthew Pearson, Rebecca Baker and 53 others

5 comments

David Pearson is at Maccormic Convention Centre. 12 May at 16:35 · Chicago, IL, United States · 🌐

They say never meet your hero's as you're bound to be disappointed. Today, nothing could be further from the truth, as I got the chance to catch up with and spend some time with the person that inspired me more than anyone else to dedicate some, most and now all of my working life to the cause of ending homelessness - Rosanne Haggerty. Her and the entire team at [Community Solutions](#) are such an inspiration in how they are humbly, passionately and diligently setting about demonstrating that ending homelessness is possible.

Was also such a treat to get to meet in 3D for the first time - despite working closely together for over two years - my boundlessly energetic colleague and friend [Rian Watt](#).

Feeling very inspired, supported and so incredibly jet lagged! 🥰🥰



👍❤️ Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 82 others

5 comments

David Pearson is with Rian Watt at Maccormic Convention Centre. 13 May at 14:09 · Chicago, IL, United States · 🌐

Was so great to spend time, compare notes and share resources amongst the international large scale change leaders involved with [Community Solutions](#) and ending homelessness over the last two days. Finished up with some deep pan Chicago Pizza. #soooooogoodgood #sooofull

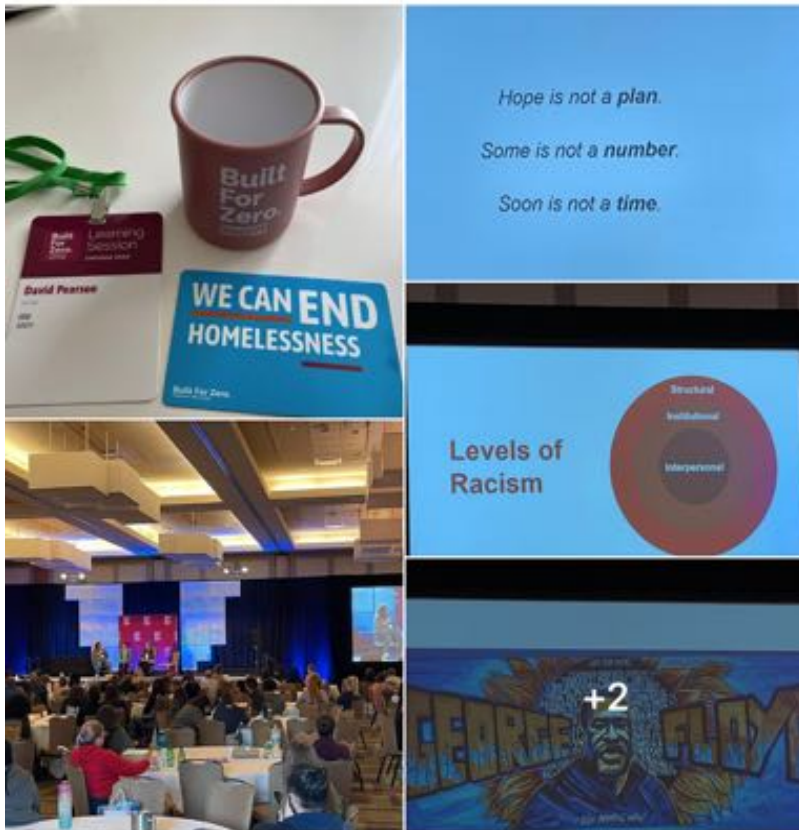


👍❤️ Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 39 others

8 comments

David Pearson is 🍷 feeling hopeful at Maccormic Convention Centre. 14 May at 12:35 · Chicago, IL, United States · 🌐

This week I had the privilege of attending the [Community Solutions](#) national learning session where the over 100 Communities that are either working towards ending homelessness or have done it in the case of 14 communities. Impressive stories to share, presenters and a very powerful 25-minute run through of the history of racism in the USA - from the disposition of the First Nations people from their land, to the transatlantic slave trade and more recently the murder of George Floyd.



Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 28 others

David Pearson is 😞 feeling exhausted in Chicago, Illinois. 15 May at 00:34 · 🌐

Spent today catching up with the wise, supportive and always helpful Lydia Stazen at the [Institute of Global Homelessness](#).

Then visiting a range of permanent supportive housing properties operated by [Mercy Housing](#) and got to meet the wonderful tenants Charlotte and Julie. They described the sense of community that this type of housing fosters being so important to ending their experiences of homelessness for good!

They have a mobile health clinic that comes and visits them, case managers on site, 24hr concierge / front desk, common rooms, art therapy, social activities, a gym and a computer room all on site - as well as their own room with bathroom, kitchen and importantly their own lease, where they can stay for as long as they need. Julie was super proud to show me her apartment key! Very cool to see the impact this kind of housing has - we need much more of this type of housing options in Australia.

Had a knock off drink with the CEO of the Chicago Coalition for the Homelessness - Doug Schenkelberg - taking about lived experience community organising and homelessness on the banks of the Chicago river + a few chats about US politics given we were in the shadow of Trump Tower...

Then managed to squash in dinner and a show at the famous Second City comedy club. Then crashed very hard.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 51 others

8 comments

David Pearson is 🌟 feeling inspired in Washington D.C. 16 May at 07:38

Goodbye Chicago, hello Washington DC.

Nine hours of walking & visiting so many of the nations monuments it left me inspired and feeling that that task of ending homelessness is comparatively easy compared to realising the founding promise of the United States of America - that all people are created equal - a task that is as ongoing here as it is back home. The task of ending homelessness is even greater here in Washington than it was in Chicago - people sleeping on the streets sadly everywhere!

All up visited the:

- Lincoln Memorial
- Washington Monument
- Jefferson Memorial
- WWI, WWII, Korean And Vietnam war memorials (there were veterans everywhere just sharing stories, was very moving)
- Martin Luther King Jr Memorial
- FDR Memorial - inc powerful section on the New Deal
- Ford Theatre (where Lincoln was shot) & Theatre Museum that explores the civil war and what would have happened if the promise of the civil war been fulfilled.
- Black Lives Matter Plaza - felt very fitting to finish here given the theme of the day.

Putting my feet up now...



Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 59 others 11 comments

David Pearson is 🌟 feeling connected in Washington D.C. 17 May at 19:47

Had a series of really helpful meetings with leaders on homelessness in the Biden Administration today, including Jeff Olivet the head of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness - I think we need something like this in Australia, and just as theirs reports to the White House ours should report to the PM. As Jeff said, if you recognise that homelessness is the result of multiple systems failures than the response cannot be driven by a single system (housing agencies). This sentiment was echoed by staff from the Housing and Urban Development Department. Both highlighted how a 'whole of government, whole of community' strategy is so important and that 'ending' rather than seeking to just address homelessness needs to be at the heart of it.

Managed to also squash in lunch with the co-founder and CEO of Results for America Michele Jolin - to talk all things social innovation, systems change and working in and with government to drive change.

Spotted so much homelessness when walking around DC. Pretty confronting to see a stroller parked out the front of one of the tents at the end of the day.

Think I'll need some new shoes after this - according to my iPhone I've walked 25km's 🤔 over the last two days.



Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 59 others 6 comments

David Pearson is feeling excited with Jill MacKenzie at Adelaide Airport. ...

David Pearson is in Manhattan, New York. ...

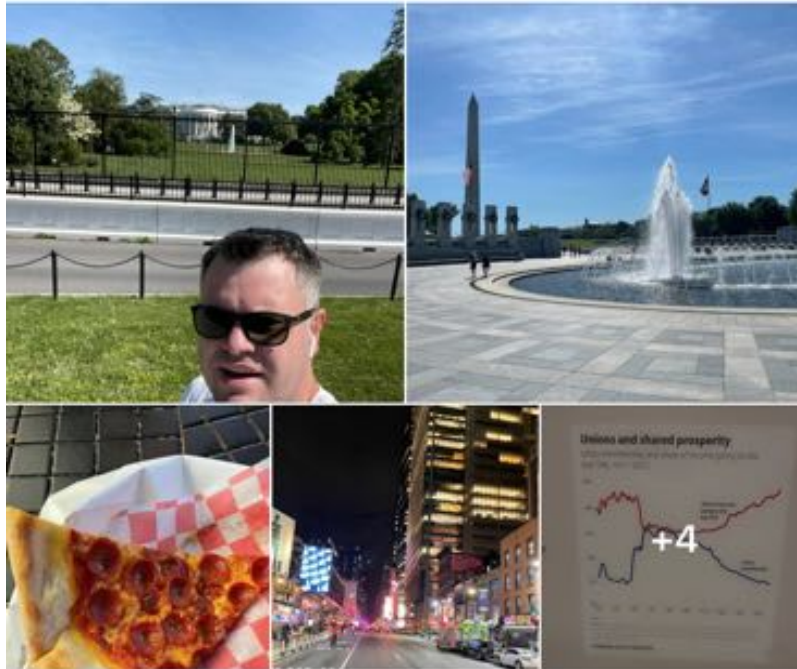
20 May at 07:15

Had some really helpful meetings with the team at the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) to compare notes on policy development, advocacy, capacity building, comms and organisational strategy.

Was also so cool to learn more directly about the efforts of the folks from Arlington County who achieved functional zero veterans homelessness in 2017 and have sustained it ever since. Oddly enough, having a plan, and getting everyone to agree to it, was central to the success. Who would have thought. For the record, very few communities in Australia have something as basic as this...

Said goodbye to Washington DC with a run through the mall and hello New York City with some PIZZA 🍕!

Also managed to squash in a visit to the Museum of American History - with a few insights into homelessness there too.



Matthew Pearson, Peter Sandeman and 52 others 3 comments

David Pearson is feeling positive at New York, New York. ...

21 May at 11:44 · New York, NY, United States

Walked almost 20kms around Manhattan in the last two days.

Had lunch in one of the largest and now former bank vaults in the US with the very generous Deborah DeSantis CEO of the [Corporation For Supportive Housing](#) - strategising about how to grow the supportive housing system in Australia.

Had a similar and super helpful catch up with the New York Supportive Housing Network.

Was also cool to be able to catch up with Fred Dust and talk about strategies for engaging philanthropy and the importance of strategic communications, including the 'key elements of meaningful conversations' (per his new book) when seeking to make change.

Also managed to stop by / walk past:

- the 9/11 memorial - sad but also feels like such a long time ago now, especially as we've lived through trump and are living through a pandemic (they've just passed through the one million lives lost to COVID in the USA millstone 🙄).
- resting place of Alexander Hamilton (helped draft the US constitution and had a killer musical written about him).
- about 200 weed buses!
- little island (a park built over the river, by someone with a lot of money) but very cool.
- the naked cowboy in Times Square (strange but funny) and the naked cowgirl/grandma (also pretty much naked - so didn't take a photo 🙄)
- and much more

Just awesome to walk around this incredible city.



Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 36 others 4 comments



**David Pearson** is at **United Nations**.  
 25 May at 08:08 · New York, NY, United States · 🌐

Had an incredibly inspiring visit to the United Nations - the passion of our tour guide was infectious and there was a beautiful cross section of people from all over the world on the tour.

Was very cool to visit the General Assembly whilst in session, discussing migration and refugee issues.

Was hard to listen to the question from the young African guy about how five permanent members of the security council were chosen and why there is no representatives from Africa. Those with power and privilege all too often protect their power and privilege.

Interesting learning about the Economic and Social Council - this is where 70% of the UN's work occurs but receives very little attention. The roof was never completed because the work of social, economic empowerment is never finished.

Fantastic to hear the story of the creation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals - the world's strategic plan. Thanks to the efforts of the [Institute of Global Homelessness](#) and others, work is underway to incorporate housing and homelessness explicitly into the goals. For now, the work of ending homelessness is part of many of them, most significantly - No Poverty!

As we walked through the General Assembly, the tour guide asked us to reflect on which of the goals we thought we could most contribute to over our lives. [#EndHomelessness](#)



[🌐](#) [👤](#) Jill MacKenzie, Matthew Pearson and 52 others · 5 comments

**David Pearson** is 🥰 feeling thankful in **Seattle, Washington**.  
 26 May at 15:33 · 🌐

Goodbye New York - hello Seattle. The last stop on this first leg of my [Winston Churchill Fellowship](#) (part two is in November: Canada, England, Scotland and Finland).

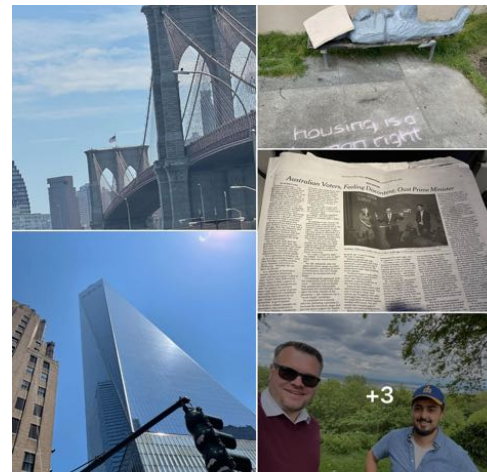
Was cool to read the New York Times coverage of the Australian election results on the plane. Though the five hour flight turned into a almost ten hour odyssey, due to a long list of delays - so was rather sleepless on my way to Seattle. 🤔

Staying with my sister and her awesome wife was neat. So good to see them both and just hang out + catch up on sleep!!!

Caught up with A Way Home Washington to hear about their efforts to end youth homelessness utilising what we in Australia call the Advance to Zero Homelessness methodology. Was fascinating to hear how they have been adopting, driving, learning and making progress with ending youth homelessness. Something no communities have yet done back home, but I know some want to. Having young people engaged and part of the process every step of the way has been key! Not rocket science, but not always done / done well.

Next up, was catching up with the awesome [Rian Watt](#) at the Community Solutions international Seattle headquarters (i.e. his house 🥰). First order of business was a brisk walk through the nearby park discussing and catching up on all things homelessness, tools development, coaching plans, event planning, and all round general scheming. Was awesome to do this in person and to realise how much energy Rian has!

Finished off a wonderful day with dinner with Rian, his (definitely) better half Jenny, my sister [Rebecca Baker](#) and sister in law [Michelle Baker](#). Good times.



[🌐](#) [👤](#) Matthew Pearson, Joanna Krips and 46 others · 1 comment

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling motivated with Rebecca Baker at Seattle, Washington. 27 May at 14:35 · Seattle, WA, United States · 🌐

Have completed my final visit and meetings as part of the first part of my Winston Churchill Fellowship. That went quick.

Visited the Seattle Downtown Emergency Service Centre's - Hobson's Place - permanent supportive housing service, which includes a full health clinic.

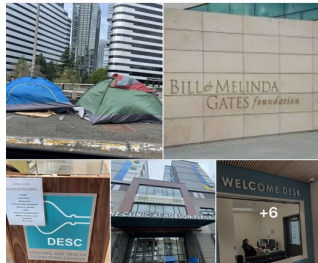
Impressive set up and array of services on site, including:

- sobering up and detox support
- group therapy spaces
- computer room
- art therapy
- employment services
- 24/7 front desk staff
- Access to primary care
- an ambulance bay so people suffering an overdose can be diverted away from emergency departments and to the health clinic
- and much more.

We need more places like this in Australia - with integrated services for the general community but also residents who are recovering from the trauma of chronic/long term homelessness. A number of the permanent supportive housing sites in Seattle are redeveloped shelters (shelters being temporary and providing no ongoing security).

Had some really insightful conversations with the team there. The situation with homelessness is tragically bad in Seattle. There are people camping out everywhere - including in the sides of freeways. So much so that many residents and bussiness have become so frustrated there's a group of people who are claiming that 'Seattle is dying'. The team at DESC assured me it's not, it's just that people who would ordinarily be living their 'worst lives' in the privacy of their homes, grappling with trauma, addition, escaping violence etc, are doing so on full view of the public now - because of the housing affordability crisis.

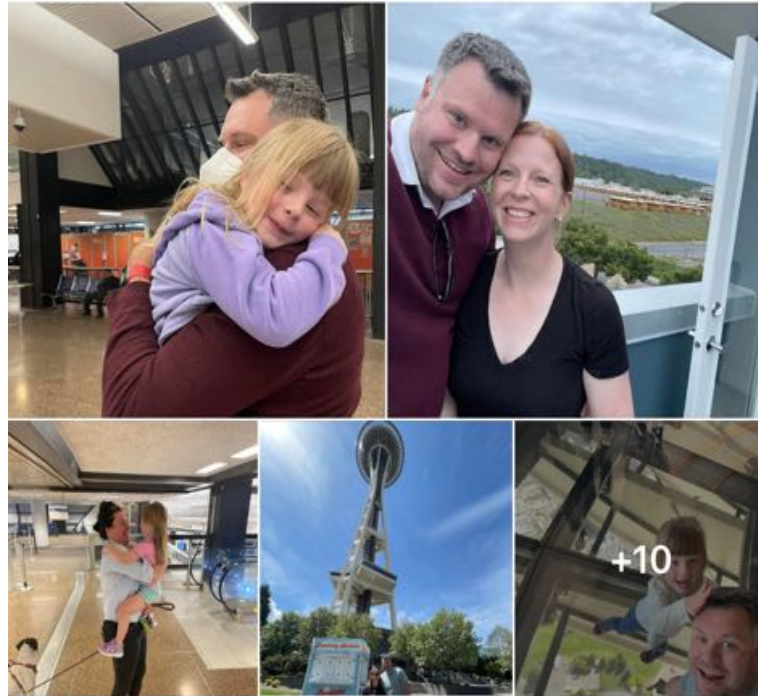
Also managed to catch up with the Philip Welkhoff from the Bill and Mellinda Gates Foundation. The parallels between the work they are doing on eradicating malaria and ending homelessness are profound. In essence it's system change work they are doing and the key bits of advice based on their success in saving countless lives is - recognise you'll need to change the power structures, that you'll need good data and that it needs to be informing local decision making.



Jill MacKenzie, Joanna Krips and 49 others 7 comments

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling loved with Jill MacKenzie and 2 others in Seattle, Washington. 28 May at 15:08 · 🌐

So good to be reunited with my favourite humans and have some tourist adventures in Seattle with friends new and old!



Rebecca Baker, Joanna Krips and 138 others

13 comments

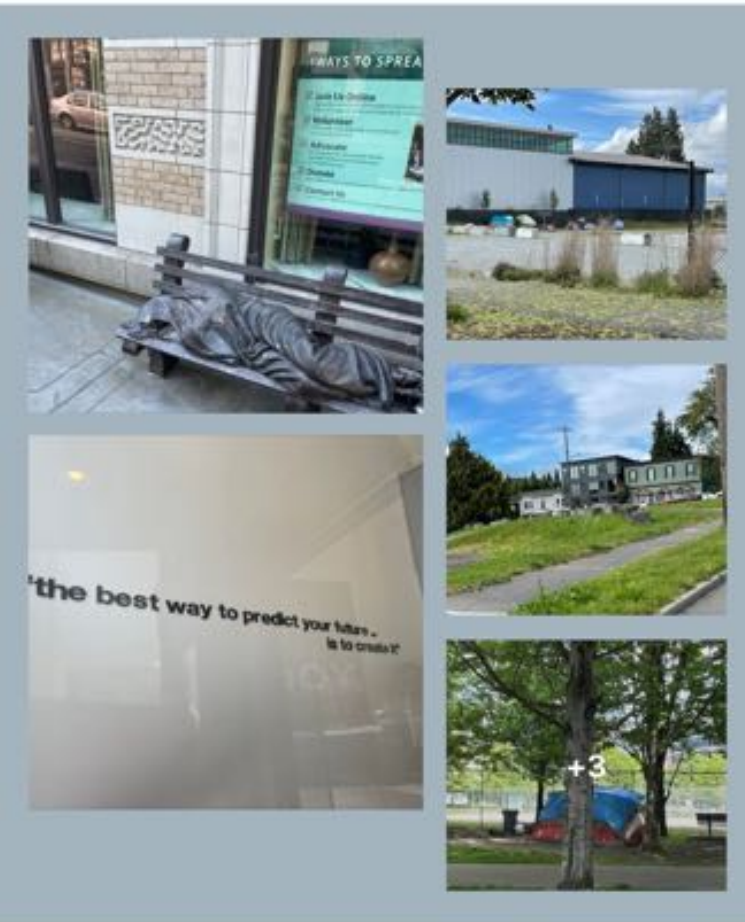


David Pearson is 🙏 feeling determined.

20h · 🌐

...

And that's a wrap... after almost three weeks of traveling and exploring the successes and failures of efforts to end homelessness across the United States - I'm heading home. Feel very privileged to be able to do that and to have had this opportunity - equally confronted by the scale of the crisis in so many of the cities I visited, and determined to make a difference back home. Was sad to see so many barriers or 'hardening' of public spaces to make it more difficult for people sleeping rough in Seattle on the way to the airport.



👍🙏🌐 Rebecca Baker, Joanna Krips and 38 others

6 comments

**David Pearson** is 😄 feeling excited with **Jill MacKenzie** at **Adelaide Airport**.  
 2 May · Adelaide · 🌐

And I'm off... on my five week adventure to USA, Canada, England, Scotland, Finland and Sweden to soak up and learn as much as I can about countries, communities and organisation's efforts to not just address the needs of people experiencing homelessness but to end it.

Bags are packed, Uber is booked and reading for the plane all sorted. Feels so retro to be reading on paper!

Have to admit feeling a little anxious about leaving my amazing family behind for so long. Longest time I've been away from Sophie in her 4+ years and Jill in our 18+ years together. But feeling excited by what I can learn and how it can help & and so grateful to family, colleagues and the [Winston Churchill Trust - AU](#) for making this happen.

Jill MacKenzie, Joanna Krips and 142 others  
 29 comments

**David Pearson** is with **Leslie Wise** in **Los Angeles, CA, United States**.  
 6 May · 🌐

Had a really interesting and confronting couple of days in Los Angeles. They have some big challenges, the scale of homelessness here is as devastating as the wealth inequality is enraging.

A key message has been if we want to end homelessness for everyone we need to find a way to stop seeing housing primarily as a financial asset, as a vehicle for wealthy people to grow their wealth, but as the most foundational of human needs.

What's happening in LA is not an aberration from the norm, it's a sign of things to come, LA's homelessness problem is a fast forward of the USA's homelessness problem, which is itself a sign of things to come in Australia and other places around the world - unless we can change the path we are on.

Spending time with some of the leaders, in government, philanthropy and on the front line of this public health crisis was a real privilege.

Jill MacKenzie, Joanna Krips and 36 others  
 13 comments 1 share

David Pearson is in Toronto, ON, Canada.  
15 May at 05:15 · 🌐

Have left Toronto now, but learned so much.

Very interesting to visit the new hotel conversion to permanent supportive service with Homes First CEO Patricia Mueller. We need more accomodation conversation's like this in Australia.

Was very nice to see the amazing social innovation leader [Allyson Hewitt](#) and stumbled upon the Centre for Social Innovation.

Very grateful to the ever supportive [Marie Morrison](#) for organising a dinner with some inspiring homelessness sector leaders in Toronto working on some tough - but very similar - challenges.



👍👍 Joanna Krips, Moira Durney and 18 others

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at Crisis Skylight Brent.  
12 May · London, United Kingdom · 🌐

Left Canada now in London. Wow. It's changed a bit. - but it has been 13 years!

Spend the day with two amazing organisations and feel like I have met some fellow travelers that I'll be in touch with for many years to come. Caught up with the amazing teams at [Crisis](#) and the [Centre for Homelessness Impact](#). Two organisations that if the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness is ever able to have half the impact they have had I'll be a very happy camper! So inspiring to spend time with such impressive people who so intimately 'get it' re the mission to end homelessness and everything that entails....

Also, so cool to catch up with my cousins. Feeling the love with some amazing humans today. Although do miss the pretty cool humans back home - aka [Jill MacKenzie](#) & [Sophie MP!](#) 🥰



👍👍 Jill MacKenzie, Van Tran-Williams and 29 others

David Pearson is 🤔 feeling challenged in Peckham, London. 15 May at 03:08

It's hard to change what you don't measure. In Australia, we don't really measure how much homelessness there is. In the UK they know they have a lack of accurate and consistent data on all forms of homelessness but they're working to understand and measure the true scale of the problem and use data to help meet the shared aim of ending homelessness.

Was great to catch up with a range of people and organisations this week in London as part of my Churchill Fellowship including the CEO of Thames Reach Bill Tidman. Data visualisation of homelessness has progressed a little since the maps of place based poverty on his office walls - thankfully!



Joanna Krips, Moira Durney and 26 others

David Pearson is in Westminster, London, England. 15 May at 21:29

As I approach the halfway mark of my Churchill Fellowship - was good to meet up with the big man today between meetings in London.

He once said, "there is no doubt that it is around... the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human society, are created, strengthened and maintained".

The concept of home has never been far from my mind professionally and personally on this trip.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 12 others

David Pearson is 🤔 feeling overwhelmed at City of London. 16 May at 20:09 · London, United Kingdom · 🌍

Very confronting to stumble upon the COVID memorial in London, the scale of lives lost takes your breath away. I couldn't see the other end of this memorial.

The pandemic impacted homelessness in many ways and strangely enough very positively in many instances. In parts of the UK and Australia, it showed how quickly it is possible to make large-scale change when the funding and desire are there. It improved the quality of many crisis and temporary accommodation services in the UK it seems but unfortunately, just as in Australia, there hasn't seen the follow on investment in social housing at the scale that we both so desperately need.

Also great to discuss, see and hear about many in the UK engaging with and starting to adopt much of the data, improvement, coordination and permanent supportive housing efforts that characterise the Built to Zero movement or what we call Advance to Zero in Aust.



Jill MacKenzie, Moira Durney and 9 others

David Pearson is 😊 feeling confident in London, United Kingdom. 17 May at 07:37 · 🌍

Learned today that the next time someone asked me isn't homelessness a choice, to ask if it's a choice why don't you see wealthy people sleeping on the street....

It's a choice to prioritise tax cuts over housing investment.

It's a choice to prioritise profit over people.

Ending homelessness requires us to take a bit more profit out of the system and create a bit more room for people.

Fantastic last day in London, caught up with Depaul International and Depaul UK, Habitat for Humanity and some new and old colleagues from Crisis. Even feel I might have mastered the train system. Confidence levels are high on all fronts...



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 30 others

5 comments

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired in Leeds city centre. 19 May at 00:01

Have arrived in Leeds... was keen to come here as they are doing some really incredible community-wide work through their Child-Friendly Leeds initiative that I think the various efforts to end homelessness in Australia can learn a lot from.

"How we work is as important as what we do" - Hannah Lamplugh, Leeds City Council.

They have 700 ambassadors committed to supporting efforts to make Leeds the UK's most child-friendly city. Imagine if we had that for every alliance, zero project and collaboration seeking to end homelessness in Australia.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 14 others 1 comment

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at Leeds City Museum. 20 May at 19:23 · Leeds, United Kingdom

Visited the Museum of Leeds yesterday. I didn't need to look far for inspiration on why ending homelessness is both possible and necessary.

Leeds started because the Romans needed a place to cross the river between York and Manchester. So they build a bridge there.

On that bridge in 1969 - a homeless man was hounded to his death by the local police. Named David Oluwale.

The brilliant exhibition below tells his story and how Leeds has claimed it as one of their own in their fight for racial justice and an end to homelessness.

A chance visit to the museum has reminded me that ending homelessness is not just about fighting poverty and inequality, it's also about fighting racism, sexism and homophobia.

We must remember history, so we can learn from it.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 4 others



David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at **Emmaus Leeds**.  
 22 May at 01:36 · Leeds, United Kingdom · 🌐

Departed Leeds already - was awesome to get to meet someone whose writing on the future of community services I've been following for some time - Alex Fox CEO of the Mayday Trust.

"Homelessness is what happens when other systems fail (child protection, mental health, family violence, disability, etc) and too often what happens is we push all of these problems onto housing agencies... we need to look at this from a person-centred perspective, people are looking to live a good life that means: somewhere to live, something to do and someone to love. It's that simple".

Was very cool therefore to also visit social enterprise and homelessness agency **Emmaus Leeds**. They have a very successful model that provides somewhere to live, something to do, and it seems they're not doing too badly on the last one!

In the UK, employment services are much more integrated into the homeless support system, and social enterprise is a big part of that. We can do a lot better on this front in Australia.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 17 others

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at **Manchester Peoples History Museum**.  
 24 May at 01:23 · Manchester, United Kingdom · 🌐

People often ask me what the biggest driver of homelessness is and I usually say it's as diverse as the people experiencing homelessness. Every individual's story is unique.

The truth is the biggest cause of homelessness is overwhelmingly poverty.

The cause of poverty is inequality.

The cause of inequality is politics, the inability or unwillingness of our political leaders to address it.

It was super interesting therefore to visit the Manchester People's History Museum and read about how the fight for housing rights has since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution been interconnected with the fight for worker's rights, for the rights of women and many more.

There indeed have always been ideas worth fighting for.



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 10 others

2 comments

David Pearson is in Manchester, United Kingdom  
 25 May at 01:37

Had some really interesting meetings in Manchester regarding their Housing First efforts. Learned a lot. Housing First is long established evidence-based way of ending individuals homelessness, but to end community homelessness you also need preventative efforts. Have heard it said many times that Housing First isn't for everyone, but it sunk in what that really means today.

Also, had a fantastic meeting with these awesome humans and Brody the dog. Covered all things health, homelessness, public health, lived experience, health in all policies, co-production, research and much more.

Was supposed to be a one-hour meeting, but ended up being about six - lost track after the amazing Indian street food. Thanks Rachel Brennan and Gill Long. Always great to catch up with another Churchill Fellow (Rachel did one on homelessness and healthcare!)



Jill MacKenzie, Georgia Heath and 18 others

David Pearson is feeling relaxed at Stirling Castle, Stirling, Scotland.  
 26 May at 14:45 - Glasgow, United Kingdom

Arrived in beautiful Scotland, and took the day to 'try' and not think too much about homelessness- though hard not to when in Glasgow, a city of about 600k people, that has roughly 10 people sleeping on the street on any given night.

They still have a big challenge with temporary shelter which isn't a home, but to have a city that size reduce and sustain a reduction like that is incredibly impressive. Can't wait to find out more.

In the meantime stopped by Stirling Castle - home of Scottish Kings and Queens - plus did a cruise of the bonnie Loch Lomond, listening to the song about it:

O you take the high road, and I'll take the low road  
 And I'll be in Scotland afore ye  
 But me and my true love will never meet again  
 On the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond

Good fun, amazing history & so beautiful.



Rebecca Baker, Moira Durney and 25 others

7 comments

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at **Simon Community Scotland**.  
 26 May at 22:23 · Glasgow, United Kingdom · 🌐

I have spent the last few days in Glasgow and just as you think that people can't be more hospitable, and generous in their willingness to share, something happens to just top all the rest.

Lorraine McGraw and the whole team at Simon Communities Scotland have just been the most amazing hosts. Have learned so much, and importantly reaffirmed so much about the direction we are on in Australia.

\*Homelessness is a circumstance, not a care need, and one that can and should be prevented. Disability is a care need, housing is a care need, ageing is a care need, and mental illness is a care need. Homelessness is what happens when these care needs aren't met.

The entire homelessness sector shouldn't exist.

Sure people will have housing instability, which is a housing support need that ought to be met. But what we need is to envisage local systems that meet those needs and prevent homelessness by providing care before care is needed. If we set that end state as the goal, whilst it will take political leadership, collaboration and more, achieving it is possible." (my summary of Lorraine's sage advice)



👍❤️ Jill MacKenzie, Selina Tuaily and 23 others

3 comments

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling inspired at **Simon Community Scotland**.  
 28 May at 00:45 · Glasgow, United Kingdom · 🌐

Departing Scotland now. Got myself an Iron Bru while working on my report...

Here I saw I think the most impressive table focused on ending homelessness I've ever seen! It's widely credited with being the most significant factor helping them reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Glasgow to about 10 on any given night.

Essentially rather than having a service coordination meeting (as we call them in Australia) for everyone in the system to come together once a week - they work there, on and off, all week. Outreach workers, housing agencies, health providers, justice, substance use, and mental health workers are all based in the hub and work around one hot desk table and have conversations. The workers want to be based there most of their week rather than back in their relevant agencies because around this table the sky is literally the limit! It's at this table that ALL housing and important SUPPORT allocations are coordinated and made. It's not rocket science it's just so inspiring that they made it happen and it takes a whole system willing to work differently, collaboratively, to provide better outcomes.

Finland 🇫🇮 calls next. Second to last stop before home 🏠🥰



👍❤️ Moira Durney, Selina Tuaily and 10 others

2 comments



David Pearson is in Helsinki, Finland.

29 May at 00:23

Arrived in Helsinki Finland - the one country in the world that can say it is ending homelessness.

In the mid-1980s, there were around 20,000 people in Finland experiencing homelessness. According to national estimates, in 2021 this figure had reduced to around 3,950 and it continues to decline.

Really interesting to spend time with Juha Kaakinen longtime (now former) head of the Y foundation, the agency that's been central to Finland's efforts in this regard. So helpful in separating the fact from the myth. They have their own version of 'housing first' which much more closely resembles the common ground type housing we have in Australia.

Such a beautiful city. No homelessness that I've seen (it's there though), and no begging, the closest thing I've seen to poverty is people collecting bottles and cans for the contained recycling scheme.



Jill MacKenzie, Debra Sarre and 8 others



David Pearson is feeling energised in Helsinki, Finland.

30 May at 22:19

For the second time on my Churchill Fellowship, I had a lunch meeting in a former bank vault.

Really interesting to learn more about the way the Finnish Government has sought to support an ending homelessness agenda, that has put the idea of housing first at its core. This has meant shifting focus away from helping first-home buyers into ownership, and ensuring the basic safety net is there to stop people from dying on the streets.

Had some fantastic meetings with a range of homelessness leaders in Finland. While learning a lot I feel like I'm really getting my confidence up about what we need to do back home...

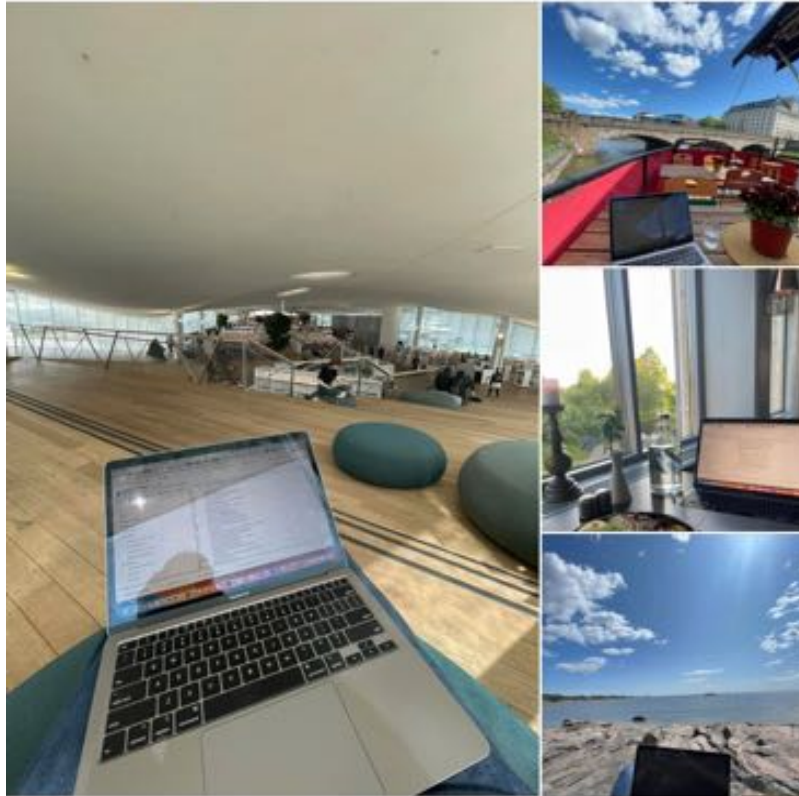
Coincidentally - Finland has rated the happiest country on earth for the fifth year in a row apparently....



Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 24 others

David Pearson is 🤔 feeling thoughtful in Helsinki, Finland. 1 June at 02:53 · 🌐

Departing Finland for Sweden - the final stop on my Church Fellowship.  
Spend some time (in some pretty interesting places) to consolidate what I've been learning, make sense of it all and work on my report....  
Also small matter of missing my flight to Stockholm as I realised 3/4 of the way to the airport (on the 1hr train journey) that my passport was still in the safe in my hotel room. Got the next flight with little drama - thanks Finnair - so was all good and gave me time to.... work on my report some more. 😊



👍👍 Rebecca Baker, Moira Durney and 21 others

David Pearson is in Stockholm, Sweden. 2 June at 20:53 · 🌐

Arrived in Sweden - They have the world's 12th highest GDP per capita and ranks very highly in quality of life, health, education, protection of civil liberties, economic competitiveness, income equality, gender equality and prosperity.

Here for the FEANTSA - European Homelessness network Conference. Took the afternoon to explore Stockholm it's such a beautiful city, they have done such a great job of protecting their heritage here.



👍👍 Jill MacKenzie, Rebecca Baker and 38 others

8 comments

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling grateful in Stockholm, Sweden. 4 June at 06:27

My brain is absolute mush. It's completely full... but so stoked to be at the European Federation of Homelessness Organisations conference, learned so much, and met so many amazing people.

One key lesson was that Housing First efforts can't just be about good evidences based programs it's also got to be about changing systems. To do that you need to seek to end homelessness, because whilst you can do housing first and not end homelessness, you can't end homelessness and not do housing first.

Great to learn about the areas Australia is quite leading in and about the areas we can learn a lot from what's happening in other EU countries. Prevention legislation with a duty to ask and act was an interesting one.

Pretty cool way to finish up my Churchill Fellowship, it felt like a reunion with many of the people I met around Europe + many more.



Heather Croall, Daney Withane and 3 others

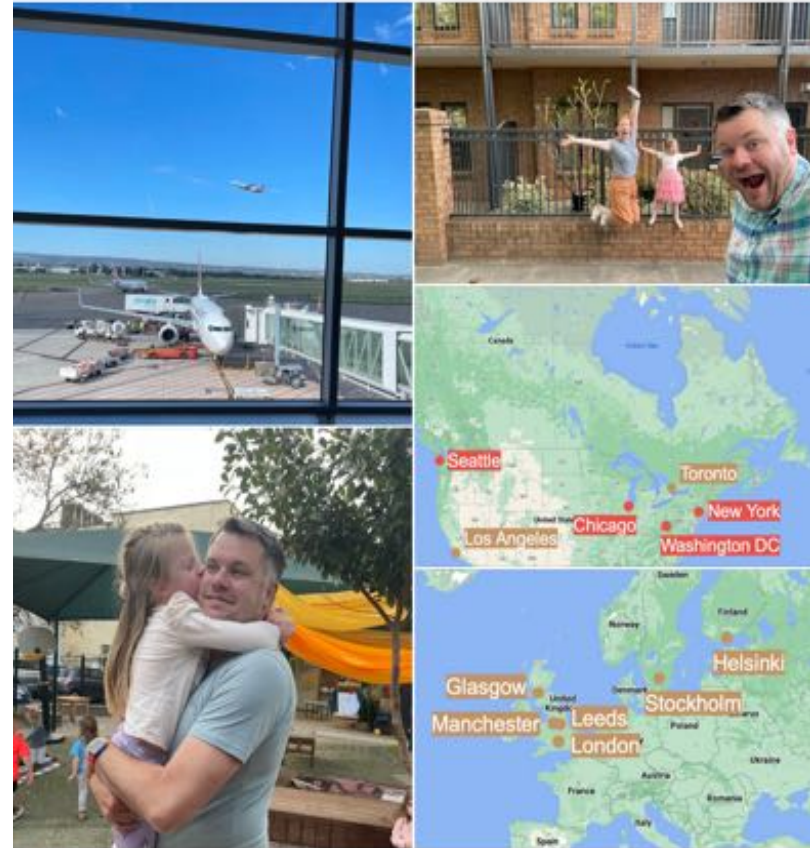
1 comment

David Pearson is 🥰 feeling grateful with Jill MacKenzie at The Forest of Dreams. 7 June at 12:37 · Adelaide

Well, that's it: 8 weeks, 6 countries, 12 cities, 81 meetings, visits, etc and 112 people later - I've finished the travel/learning part of my Churchill fellowship.

After so much talk about finding homes for others, I'm so grateful to be back in mine.

Now to write the report...



Rebecca Baker, Peter Sandeman and 140 others

17 comments

## Appendix D - Key Concepts and Further Background

The following provides further background on key concepts in ending homelessness, in Australia and around the world.

### By-Name Lists<sup>171</sup>

A by-name list is a comprehensive list of every person in a community experiencing homelessness, updated in real time. Using information collected and shared with their consent, each person on the list has a file that includes their name, homelessness history, health, and housing needs.

By maintaining a by-name list, communities are able to track the ever changing size and composition of their homeless population. They know current and detailed information on every homeless person in a given subpopulation.

Communities use by-name list data plotted on graphs to understand the impact of different ideas designed to reduce homelessness and see if these ideas work. Because they are constantly tracking who is experiencing homelessness in their community, they are able to see if their interventions are working. And they're able to tell quickly, allowing them to course correct if they aren't seeing improvement.

In Australia, we add an extra level of richness to the data, by seeking to ensure that the VI-SPDAT tool is used to collect information on the needs and vulnerabilities of each person experiencing homelessness in our community.

A by-name list is therefore not just a static list of names that one or even a handful of agencies have, or even a dynamic list that only a handful of agencies have. Every community in the US and Canada that has ended homelessness, has first developed what's called a 'quality by-name list'.

### *A Quality By-Name List*

In short a quality by-name list means that you have the vast majority of providers feeding into the list, you have it shared, and community owned, and you have had the list certified as quality. In Australia, the AAEH certifies community efforts to create a quality by-name list utilising the by-name list scorecard developed with Community Solutions and available on the AAEH website.

The scorecard assesses:

- community participation and coverage;
- policies and procedures;
- data infrastructure to track data points related to system-wide inflow and outflow.

Some communities start by creating a by-name list focused on a specific population, like single adults. Others create lists that account for all households experiencing homelessness in their community. The goal is that eventually, communities will build one list accounting for all people experiencing all forms of homelessness. The AtoZ Campaign in Australia focuses on starting with rough sleeping homelessness, with local communities then deciding when and for which groups to include to expand their by-name lists .

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<sup>171</sup> <https://community.solutions/what-is-a-by-name-list/>

### **A System Measure**

The goal is not data collection, the goal is to take the people on your by-name list and make sure each person gets connected to housing, or to prevent people from coming onto the list in the first place. So, we track how people move through the homeless response system in order to determine if our efforts are helping us get closer or further away from the goal of ending homelessness - or to make it a rare, brief and once off event. The by-name list gives a way to measure this by ensuring that everyone on the list is categorised according to where they are in the system. In Australia, we call these the Functional Zero data points, and they are:

#### **Inflow: the new people**

When a person loses housing and enters into homelessness, they're part of what we call inflow. Inflow data points are:

- Newly identified: People new to homelessness;
- Returned from housing: People who experienced homelessness before, got connected with housing, and now are homeless again;
- Returned from inactive: People who experienced homelessness before and exited to unknown destinations (left town, were institutionalised for 90+ days etc.), and now are homeless again.

#### **Actively homeless: the people without housing right now**

People who are currently homeless are categorised as:

- Actively homeless: This group contrasts with people whose current status is Housed or Inactive.
- Temporarily Sheltered: Those who were experiencing rough sleeping homelessness, but have moved into temporary housing/shelter. This is a new data point in the Australian context because the Advance to Zero Campaign focuses on ending rough sleeping as a first step, and we don't consider moving off the street into temporary housing the outcome we seek, what we seek is permanent housing.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mobility: There are groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia who are sleeping in the public domain and who are not seeking housing, but are vulnerable and need support (including from cultural sources as well as government and/or non-government services - for example, support to return to country). This is a category that has not been operationalised by any communities in Australia as yet, but is being explored by some.<sup>172</sup>

#### **Outflow: the people who are no longer homeless**

Outflow data points are:

- Housing placements: People who are connected to permanent housing;
- Moved to inactive: People who exit out of homelessness without support from the homeless response system, such as finding their own housing, moving out of the community, or entering a long-term stay in an institution;

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<sup>172</sup> More information about this can be found here:

<https://saaeh.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Aboriginal-Mobility-Data-Project-Report-FI-NAL-1.pdf>



### Functional Zero

The by-name list collects the data we need to determine if we are getting closer or further away from the goal of ending homelessness, but it doesn't calculate this - for that we need a measure, that's where the concept of Functional Zero comes in.

Functional Zero is “a milestone, which must be sustained, that indicates a community has measurably ended homelessness for a population. When it's achieved, homelessness is rare and brief for that population. Communities in Built for Zero are confirmed for achieving functional zero using their quality, by-name data, which is updated at least monthly”.<sup>173</sup>

Functional Zero needs to be measured slightly differently depending on the population group that your campaign or local zero project is focused on. The US calculates Functional Zero this way for chronic homelessness:



(Image: Community Solutions, USA)

And this way for veterans homelessness:



(Image: Community Solutions, USA)

The Australian definition used by the Advance to Zero campaign is that functional zero is what happens when a community's six-monthly average housing placement rate is greater than the number of people sleeping rough.

In order to reach Functional Zero, the average number of housing placements must be more than the number of people sleeping rough in a community for a minimum of three consecutive months.

The graph below is an example of a community having reached Functional Zero in the US, using their calculation for the chronic homelessness population definition of functional.

<sup>173</sup> <https://community.solutions/built-for-zero/functional-zero/>

## Bakersfield/Kern County, CA reaches functional zero for chronic homelessness



(Image: Bakersfield/Kern County, California, reached FZ for chronic homelessness in January 2020, and have continued to sustain it, Community Solutions, USA)

### Other Progress Measures

Functional Zero is a progress measure because ultimately we want to end all homelessness and we want to achieve and sustain absolute zero homelessness. We know however that absolute zero is not possible to sustain until we address significant structural challenges in our society, policies, politics and economy. For these reasons, a number of progress measures have been the focus of efforts in the US, Canada and Australia to end homelessness. Functional Zero is the most significant of these, but there are a number of others including:

- QBNL - when communities can answer yes to all the questions on their population-specific by-name list scorecard.
- Shift Reduction - A “*shift constitutes a measurable, meaningful reduction in homelessness for a community. More specifically, it means that a community has driven the number of people experiencing homelessness below their median for six consecutive months. A shift in the median tells us when there has been a fundamental, sustained change in the level at which the system operates*”.<sup>174</sup>
- Others - a range of other progress measures can be adopted by local communities, for example, the first time a milestone like 100 people having been housed from the by-name list, the first time a shift reduction in inflow occurs (i.e. successful prevention efforts).



(Image: Community Solutions, USA)

<sup>174</sup> <https://community.solutions/what-is-a-shift-a-by-name-list-and-what-do-they-have-to-do-with-ending-homelessness/>

## The VI-SPDAT

The VI-SPDAT or Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool is a pre-screening tool that is used to better understand the housing and support needs of individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness. By better understanding the needs of people, services can more effectively match individuals or families to the most appropriate housing option, healthcare service and/or other community support.

The VI-SPDAT's purpose is not to simply collect information about homelessness nor is it as a research or data collection tool, but to help ensure all individuals and families who are homeless in a community get the right response. It helps communities build their 'By-Name List' (BNL) which is an essential component of working to end homelessness in every community. De-identified collective information can then be used to support better system planning and to advocate for the precise housing and support needed to end homelessness in your community.

The VI-SPDAT is being used throughout Australia by communities that have already made a collaborative commitment to ending street homelessness in their community. It is an essential tool for communities to use as part of the Advance to Zero Campaign.

The context in which the VI-SPDAT is used in Australia, and the tool itself, are different from the tool used in the USA. In particular, because OrgCode the creators of the VI-SPDAT and the AAEH have worked together to develop a new version of the tool explicitly for use in Australia.

OrgCode has indicated they will no longer be supporting the use of the VI-SPDAT in the USA and has partnered with the AAEH to support the development of a new version of the tool - to be called the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT).

More information is available about this at: [www.aeah.org.au/atoz](http://www.aeah.org.au/atoz)

## Continuums of Care and Coordinated Entry

The National Alliance to End Homelessness describes Continuums of Care or CoCs as:

*a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. In 2007, 461 CoCs submitted applications for federal homeless assistance funds in all 50 states, plus DC, Puerto Rico, and Guam. CoCs represent communities of all kinds, including major cities, suburbs and rural areas.*

*In 1995, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) began to require communities to submit a single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants in order to streamline the funding application process, encourage coordination of housing and service providers on a local level, and promote the development of Continuums of Care (CoCs). By requiring communities to submit a single application, HUD hoped to encourage a more structural and strategic approach to both housing and providing services to homeless people. A CoC would provide this more strategic system by providing homeless people with housing and services appropriate to their range of needs.*

### **Parts of a Continuum**

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a CoC is “a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. It

includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness". HUD identifies four necessary parts of a continuum:

1. **Outreach**, intake, and assessment in order to identify service and housing needs and provide a link to the appropriate level of both;
2. **Emergency shelter** to provide an immediate and safe alternative to sleeping on the streets, especially for homeless families with children;
3. **Transitional housing** with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed; and
4. **Permanent and permanent supportive housing** to provide individuals and families with an affordable place to live with services if needed.

CoCs are tasked to track and manage the homeless community in their area. One of most important activities entrusted to CoCs is the biannual point in time count of the homeless population and an annual enumeration of emergency systems, transitional housing units, and beds that make up the homeless assistance systems. These counts provide an overview of the state of homelessness in a CoC, and offer the information necessary to redirect services, funding, and resources as necessary. The CoC also manages these services, offering both prevention strategies and homeless assistance programs to assist those at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.<sup>175</sup>

A CoC differs from the overall homelessness response system, or what we would call in Australia a Zero Project, because they are made up of contractually bound partnerships as a condition of Federal funding. Zero Projects, take a Collective Impact approach comprising (ideally) everyone with an interest or a stake in improving the homelessness response system.



(Image: Housing Response System, Community Solutions, USA)

### **Coordinated Entry**

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Program requires communities to implement a coordinated entry system that covers the geographic area of their CoC. This is because an effective coordinated entry process is a critical component to any community's efforts to meet the goals of Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

What it looks like in each community is different.

HUD says<sup>176</sup> that the primary goal for coordinated entry processes is that assistance be allocated as effectively as possible and that it be easily accessible no matter where or how people present.

<sup>175</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/>

<sup>176</sup> <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Coordinated-Entry-Policy-Brief.pdf>

Most communities lack the resources needed to meet all of the needs of people experiencing homelessness. This, combined with the lack of well-developed coordinated entry processes, can result in severe hardships for people experiencing homelessness according to HUD. Communities often face long waiting times to receive assistance or are screened out of needed assistance.

### Collective Impact

- The Collective Impact approach is a structured form of collaboration whereby organisations and individuals from different sectors all work together on a common agenda for solving a specific problem.
- Collective Impact is based on the understanding that existing approaches to creating change (i.e. programs) are too often ineffective for solving complex issues.
- Collective Impact has its limits and critics, but what approach doesn't? I think it's most useful when it is seen as a framework to be informed by, rather than a strict methodology to be followed.
- My first exposure to the concept was reading the seminal piece on it in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*<sup>177</sup> in which the authors set out five conditions for change:

## The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact



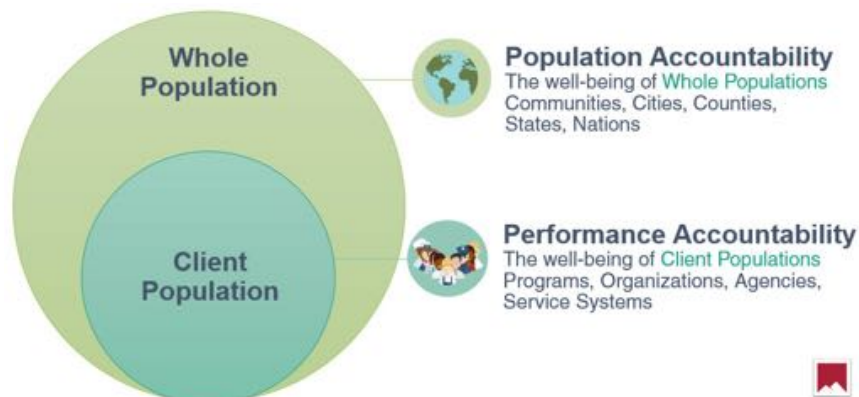
(Image: United Way, Northern California)<sup>178</sup>

<sup>177</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)

<sup>178</sup> [www.norcalunitedway.org/collective-impact](http://www.norcalunitedway.org/collective-impact)

## Results Based Accountability (RBA)

- Closely connected to Collective Impact, RBA was developed by Mark Friedman and detailed in his book *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough*.<sup>179</sup>
- RBA provides a “disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve the quality of life in communities” as well as “the performance of programs, agencies and service systems”.
- Application of the core components of RBA enables organisations and communities to put each of the “Collective Impact” conditions into operation, helping these groups to turn ideas into action.
- RBA is also used by organisations to improve the effectiveness of their programs.
- Its population versus performance distinction is why RBA is unique.



(Image: Clear Impact, USA)<sup>180</sup>

- This distinction is important because it helps determine who is responsible for what.
- “Population accountability organizes our work with co-equal partners to promote community well-being. In contrast, Performance Accountability organizes our work to have the greatest impact on our customers. What we do for our customers is our contribution to community impact.”

## Permanent Supportive Housing

The AAEH seeks to advance the development of a supportive housing system in Australia as an approach for change that:

- leans in to address the root causes of inequity;
- breaks down silos;
- creates smarter and better-integrated systems;
- builds more resilient communities; and
- helps inform efforts to end homelessness.

Permanent supportive housing is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable chronically homeless people. It pairs housing with case management and supportive services.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> <https://clearimpact.com/product/trying-hard-is-not-good-enough-by-mark-friedman/>

<sup>180</sup> <https://clearimpact.com/results-based-accountability/>

<sup>181</sup> [www.mercyfoundation.com.au/our-focus/ending-homelessness/common-ground-permanent-supportive-housing/](http://www.mercyfoundation.com.au/our-focus/ending-homelessness/common-ground-permanent-supportive-housing/)

There is good evidence to show - through data collected during Australian connections weeks - that a significant proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping homelessness will require permanent support to sustain housing. This is because they may have several health conditions, such as chronic illness, disability, mental illness and/or a history of having had a traumatic brain injury. Others who experience this type of homelessness will also need permanent housing to end their homelessness, but may only need short-medium term support or no additional support at all.

For the small group of Australians who have high (and often, complex needs) and who experience long-term homelessness we need a systemic response to their permanent housing and support needs. We need an adequate supply of 'permanent supportive housing'. We don't need a great amount of this type of housing, simply an adequate amount for the current number and future number of people with high and complex needs who will not sustain permanent housing without permanent support.



(Image: Key Components of Supportive Housing, Corporation for Supportive Housing, USA)

### Types of Permanent Supportive Housing

There are a number of ways that Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) can be created and managed. The two primary ways are 'high density' models (for example, Common Ground) and 'scatter site' models.

High density models, like Common Ground, involve people living in one apartment complex, using a mixed tenancy model (e.g. not everyone who lives there has support needs or has experienced homelessness) and some of the support they need to sustain their tenancies are provided 'onsite'. There are workers onsite who can assist tenants with support as well as helping to coordinate other professional health, mental health and support services for the person.

With 'scattered site' models, people live in separate houses or units and support workers visit the person's home to help deliver or coordinate needed support.

### Improvement Science/Continuous Improvement

- The 'science of improvement',<sup>182</sup> sometimes called Improvement science and often referred to in Australia as 'continuous Improvement' or just improvement is an applied science that emphasises innovation, rapid-cycle testing in the field,

<sup>182</sup> <http://www.ihl.org/about/Pages/ScienceofImprovement.aspx>

and spread in order to generate learning about what changes, in which contexts, to produce improvements.

- It has been a central feature of the US, Canadian and increasingly Australian efforts to end homelessness.
- Community Solutions has pioneered the use of improvement science in the work of ending homelessness, working closely with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI).
- It is characterised by the combination of expert subject knowledge with improvement methods and tools.
- It is multidisciplinary — drawing on clinical science, systems theory, psychology, statistics, and other fields.
- Continuous improvement starts by identifying a clear aim for improvement and a measurement plan and then immediately begins with small tests of the changes we think will lead to improvement over a short period of time.
- As these small tests are refined and successfully implemented in the given context, we begin to broaden the testing and scale up the changes.
- There is an emphasis on starting improvement efforts on a small scale and leveraging all the generated learning to plan for spread and, later, scale up.
- IHI's methodology can be traced back to W. Edwards Deming (1900-1993), who taught that by adhering to certain principles of management, organisations can increase quality and simultaneously reduce costs.
- Based on Deming's work, the Model for Improvement was created by Associates for Process Improvement (API) as a simple, effective tool for bringing about positive change.
- The Model for Improvement asks three questions —
  - What are we trying to accomplish?
  - How will we know that a change is an improvement?
  - What changes can we make that will result in improvement?
- It then employs Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles for small, rapid-cycle tests of change. IHI uses the Model for Improvement in all of its improvement efforts.



(Image: AAEH, adopted from IHI and Community Solutions)

## Public Health

- Public health is the field of study that focuses on promoting and protecting the health and well-being of communities and population groups through various preventive measures and interventions.
- A feature of public health interventions is that they not only address immediate health needs but also target the underlying social determinants of health to break the cycle of homelessness and improve overall community well-being.



- Homelessness is a public health issue as much as it is a housing issue. The massive responses to better address homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated this, as does the estimated 424 deaths of people experiencing rough sleeping homelessness in Australia each year, often from preventable illnesses.

### Social Determinants of Health

- The social determinants of health (SDH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes (see illustration below). They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.
- These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.
- Housing is a huge influence on SDH.
- Research shows that social determinants can be more important than health care or lifestyle choices in influencing health.
- For example, numerous studies suggest that SDH account for between 30-55% of health outcomes. In addition, estimates show that the contribution of sectors outside health to population health outcomes exceeds the contribution from the health sector.



based on work for First Nations Health Authority at Gathering Wisdom VI Drawing Change

(Image: The Social Determinants of Health, Environmental Health Australia)<sup>183</sup>

- The SDH have an important influence on health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries. In

<sup>183</sup> <https://www.eh.org.au/resources/knowledge-centre/social-determinants-of-health>

countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health.

- Addressing SDH appropriately is fundamental for improving health and reducing longstanding inequities in health, which requires action by all sectors and civil society.<sup>184</sup>

### **Health in All Policies**

- Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an approach that aims to integrate health considerations into all decision-making processes across different sectors and policies, recognising the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.
- By promoting collaboration and cross-sectoral action, HiAP seeks to improve population health outcomes and address health inequalities more effectively.

### **Homelessness Prevention**

- There are many types of homelessness prevention.
- Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness.

### **Adapting the public health model**

Homelessness prevention - as set out by the Homelessness Hub in Canada<sup>185</sup> - adapts the public health model of prevention, which has been used since the 1940s to reduce the risk and harms associated with illnesses. The public health model provides a range of prevention interventions that should take place simultaneously.<sup>186</sup> The following explanation is from the Homelessness Hub in Canada.

#### **Primary prevention**

- Primary prevention refers to structural-level initiatives that apply to everyone, in order to reduce the risk of homelessness and build protective factors. From a health perspective, primary prevention includes immunisation programs or anti-smoking campaigns. The framework breaks down primary prevention further to describe an array of strategies that impact the population at large:
  - Universal prevention – policies and interventions that target the broad public. While these strategies do not always have homelessness prevention as their goal, they have the effect of reducing the risks of becoming homeless by creating greater equality, which is vital to homelessness prevention. Examples include having an adequate supply of affordable housing and poverty reduction strategies, such as greater access to affordable child care.
  - Selected prevention – prevention efforts aimed at members of a particular group, such as school-based programs and anti-oppression strategies for individuals facing discrimination, in particular Indigenous Peoples. It also includes programs aimed at low-income people, such as the basic income program currently being piloted in Ontario.
  - Indicated prevention – applies to all those who are disadvantaged to ensure they do not become homeless in the first place. Examples of

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<sup>184</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1)

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention>

<sup>186</sup> <https://saaeh.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Health-Housing-Homelessness-PAPER-3.pdf>

indicated prevention include support for families experiencing violence and individuals facing mental health and addiction challenges.

#### Secondary prevention

- Secondary prevention intervention strategies are aimed at those who are at imminent risk of homelessness (i.e. received an eviction notice) as well as those who have recently become homeless, with the aim of avoiding homelessness or moving out of homelessness as quickly as possible.
- Secondary prevention includes a range of options including emergency financial assistance, family mediation, and domestic violence victim support, to name a few.

#### Tertiary prevention

- Tertiary prevention initiatives support individuals and families who have previously experienced homelessness to ensure that it doesn't happen again.
- The Advance to Zero efforts and Housing First are types of tertiary prevention providing chronically homeless individuals with housing and supports to maintain housing stability.
- These classifications exist along a continuum. In order to effectively prevent homelessness, all three forms of prevention must occur simultaneously.
- Most of the prevention programs that exist in Canada and internationally fall into the secondary prevention category.
- While these interventions are crucial to support those in crisis, secondary interventions alone cannot prevent homelessness.
- Structural and systemic interventions that work at the level of primary prevention are needed to provide the policy, practice, and funding backbone for individual interventions to be successful.

#### ***Typology of Homelessness Prevention***

The typology described below outlines the various policies, practices, and interventions needed to prevent homelessness in Canada. Prevention requires an integrated systems approach, where all categories work in union with one another.

Moreover, each of the five categories has implications for primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. As described above, the classifications are not discreet; homelessness prevention requires an increased level of coordination between all levels of government, collaboration between systems and institutions, and cooperation at the community level.

The typology is as follows:



(Image: Homelessness Hub, Canada)<sup>187</sup>

#### Structural prevention

- Legislation, policy, and investment that builds assets, and increases social inclusion and equality.
- Examples: Increase the affordable housing stock, anti-discrimination policy, practice, and training, poverty reduction strategies, and income supports.

#### Systems prevention

- Addressing institutional and systems failures that contribute to the risk of homelessness.
- Examples: Barriers to accessing supports, such as transportation challenges, disability, linguistic barriers, cost, citizenship requirements, difficulty with system navigation, etc.

#### Early intervention

- Policies and practices to support individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness or who have recently become homeless.
- Examples: Family mediation, shelter diversion, case management.

#### Evictions prevention

- Programs and strategies designed to keep people at risk of eviction in their homes and avoid homelessness.
- Examples: Landlord/tenant legislation, rent supplements, emergency funds, legal advice and representation.

#### Housing stability

- Initiatives and support for people who have experienced homelessness that allows them to exit homelessness quickly and never experience it again.

<sup>187</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention>

- Examples: Housing First, help obtaining and retaining housing, support for health and well-being, education and employment, and enhancing social inclusion.<sup>188</sup>

### Social Impact Bonds

- The NSW government supported the first social impact bond (SIB) in Australia. They described it as ‘a financial instrument that assists to bring together capital and expertise from the public, private and not for profit sector’.<sup>189</sup>
- SIBs provide a funding mechanism to enable social service providers to enter into outcomes-based contracts with governments. When a service provider enters into an outcomes contract, a portion of payments are dependent on the results achieved by the program.
- I worked on the commissioning of the first Social Impact Bond in South Australia which led to Australia’s first homelessness SIB, ‘Aspire’.<sup>190</sup>
- The general structure of a SIB is outlined below:
  1. Government enters into an outcomes contract to pay for services on an outcomes basis (rather than fee-for-service or block funding).
  2. Investors provide upfront capital to fund services and share performance risk.
  3. A service provider delivers services to support people with specific needs.
  4. Outcomes for the individuals enrolled in the program are measured, often compared to a baseline.
  5. Government makes payments according to the outcome results achieved.
  6. Outcome payments are used to repay investors and provide them with a return.



(Image: Social Ventures Australia)<sup>191</sup>

<sup>188</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/prevention>

<sup>189</sup> <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/deliver-community-and-sector-assistance/SBB>

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.treasury.sa.gov.au/Growing-South-Australia/social-impact-investment/Aspire-evaluation-report-final.pdf>

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.socialventures.com.au/impact-investing/social-impact-bonds-and-outcomes-contracting-services/#:~:text=What%20is%20a%20social%20impact,results%20achieved%20by%20the%20program.>

- Whilst providing an innovative way to finance and create better social impact measures, there are growing concerns that SIBs are in fact doing more harm than good. In particular that they are costly, inefficient, undermine democracy and ultimately don't fulfil the objective they started out with.<sup>192</sup>
- I recognise a lot of these harms, but also many of the benefits, the harms of the status quo are substantial and also need to be taken into account.
- For now, I think they are a net benefit, because of how broken and unaccountable for outcomes our existing systems are - but recognise that this is changing quickly and that there are other ways to bring about the benefits that SIBs offer.

### Community Wealth Building

- Community wealth building is a progressive approach to economics and economic development. It seeks to change the way that our economies have come to function by aiming to retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. This is in contrast to the predominant economic model, whereby wealth is created by property ownership, regeneration is based on speculative property development and large companies extract wealth for the benefit of distant shareholders.
- Community wealth building achieves its aims by harnessing the economic and social power of locally rooted institutions. These are commonly referred to as anchor institutions. Typically, this means local councils, health boards, universities, colleges and housing associations, and potentially, the private sector too. The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector also plays a fundamental role by using its local intelligence and influence as a conduit for change and as an important part of the generative local economy in its own right.
- Whereas the UK is the fifth most unequal country in the world, Finland sits in the fourth spot for the most equal country in the world, right after its neighbouring Nordic countries.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the\\_downside\\_of\\_social\\_impact\\_bonds#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_downside_of_social_impact_bonds#)

<sup>193</sup> <https://cles.org.uk/what-is-community-wealth-building/>

## Appendix E - Recommendations Index

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