

DISCUSSION PAPER



# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING POLICY

A proven approach to addressing challenges homelessness creates for individuals, families and communities...and for service systems experiencing high utilisation of acute, institutional and tertiary settings. Supportive Housing required a place based approach.

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# A Supportive Housing Policy

People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness often need multiple supports beyond housing. Supportive Housing is a proven approach that provides a stable housing solution supported by the provision of a range of services that are designed to support each tenants meet their obligation as a tenant and improve quality of life.

Through the creation of a Supportive Housing portfolio of programs and services, we can address the mutual challenges that homelessness creates for individuals and families, for government and non-government agencies and the community.



## Background

In 2021-22, over 41,000 people were assisted by a specialist homelessness service in Queensland. While they are facing an accommodation crisis, they are also presenting with a variety of other issues including financial difficulties (45.5%), domestic and family violence (30.1%) and relationship breakdown (20.0%), and health issues including mental health (14.8%), substance misuse (6.4%) and general medical (9.5%). Many people also lack any family or community support, or just need time out from their family or other situation.

Without addressing these other issues, the chances of a successful housing solution are greatly diminished. While the person is experiencing unstable housing and other unaddressed needs, they are increasingly using other expensive public resources such as hospitals and emergency services.

Queensland's Brisbane Common Ground which employs a localised supportive housing approach has been shown to save \$13,100 per tenant every year for government and community. Annual savings of \$830,000 estimated to be achieved for health services, \$122,000 for criminal justice and \$170,000 for homelessness services.

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**Cover:** People in their homes, and possible supportive housing building ideas.

**Left:** Brisbane Common Ground, South Brisbane.

*Photography by Katie Bennett.*

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<sup>1</sup> AIHW data – AIHW-HOU-331 Specialist Homelessness Services Data Tables 202-22

<sup>2</sup> University of Queensland Institute for Social Science Research – Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation, 2015.

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# The Supportive Housing System

## Supportive Housing in Action

Creating a supportive housing system requires a shift in how our systems across government and community services currently work for the most vulnerable in our community. These systems need to transform from a crisis management approach to fostering partnerships that prevent crisis, create long-term stability and achieve more positive and equitable outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

A supportive housing system would:

- » invest and partner to provide integrated and coordinated planning for housing, security and services to address all needs that negatively impact a person's housing stability (e.g. health, mental health, domestic and family violence, social isolation, legal, employment and financial) complements social, public and affordable housing.
- » complements current social, public and affordable housing.
- » fosters inclusive communities, and is place based.
- » provides options for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community.
- » collects, shares and analyses data on participants, programs, and outcomes.
- » has an overall economic benefit to taxpayer.

## Contributing to the System

Implementing the Supportive Housing Policy can contribute to a well functioning housing system that is:

1. Equitable, inclusive and diverse.
2. Able to foster safety, security, health and wellbeing for all.
3. Focused on housing stability through preventing crisis and integrating supporting services through partnerships and investment.
4. Able to contribute to reducing the high utilisation of emergency, acute and tertiary services such as justice, corrections, health, mental health, domestic and family violence and child protection and return to homelessness.
5. Is place based in all stages of design, implementation and evaluation.



## Foundations of the Supportive Housing System

Housing First Approach

Safe, Secure & Affordable Housing

Supportive Services tailored & flexible to the need of targeted population

Trauma Informed & Person-Centred

Collaboration & Partnership

Data-Driven & Evidence-based

Social Inclusion & Community Integration

# Policy Framework of a Supportive Housing System

## Alignment with Government priorities and outcomes

### 1. Queensland Government establish an Inter-Departmental Committee



To oversight and provide leadership for the adoption and implementation of Supportive Housing Investment, policy planning and implementation

#### Potential Membership:

##### Director General or Delegate of Departments of:

- » **Housing (Homelessness)**
- » **Treaty, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts**
- » **Child Safety, Disability and Seniors**
- » **Justice (including Domestic and Family Violence)**
- » **Establish membership representatives from NGO sector**
- » **Health representing (mental health, hospitals, drug and alcohol, chronic disease, public health)**
- » **Corrections**
- » **Youth Justice**
- » **State Development and Planning**

### 2. Functional, integrated systems



Create systems that improve preventative and integrated responses to emerging needs and demand for services in local communities.

**2.1 Foster shared outcomes** by breaking down the silo structures, relationships, resources, knowledge and assets that operate having an impact on the lives of individuals, families, children, young people and communities.

**2.2 Foster a shift in focus** to prevention, coordination, and long-term stability and wellbeing away from crisis.

**2.3 Enable systems** to be developed that will foster integration of services through data linkage, joint planning and implementation across departments and the sector.

**2.4 Advance equity** through use of data and experiences to identify and redress system disparities and inequity of access.

### 3. Planning & Investment



Create a shared planning and investment framework for Supportive Housing through the formalised inter departmental committee.

**3.1 Reduce silos** in government and NGO where individuals and families who have multiple needs, accessing multiple departmental and community services, and/or high utilisation of institutional care such as corrections and hospitals.

**3.2 Establish a formal protocol and agreement** for data linkage, planning and design of housing, tailored services and healthcare across government and NGO's.

**3.3 Develop a supportive housing growth plan** for investing, planning, implementing and evaluating place based local evidence using data, practice experience and observations of services and lived experience.

**3.4 Establish investment specifications** for an operational model for tenancy and property management, and methodology for services to demonstrate outcomes for stability and quality of life.

## 4. Quality of Life



Improve quality of life and outcomes for individuals, families, children, young people and communities

**4.1 Enable optimal health and wellbeing** of tenants through multidisciplinary approaches that support improved access to healthcare and appropriate services.

**4.2 Foster opportunities to be part of a community** of choice, able to actively participate in meaningful activities and opportunities to be connected with the community.

**4.3 Foster a sense of progress towards goals** for financial stability, educational attainment and work.

**4.4 Foster a sense of progress** for individuals and families about what matters most to them in their lives through more responsive and accessible systems and services to support their choices and options to participate.

**4.5 Promote strategies to build financial literacy** income and assets, and alleviate debt for those who have lived with intergenerational poverty.



Health and wellness support at home.

*Photography by Katie Bennett*

## 5. Addressing the Crisis



Address the growing prevalence of individuals and families living in crisis and the growth of investment required to respond.

**5.1 Establish a shared vision for dual investment** of affordable housing supply, embedded tailored support services and healthcare

**5.2 Refocus planning and program design** on stability and prevention across government and community services including government and non-government representation.

**5.3 Recognise systems in the community** that can provide data and experience to work jointly with government systems to provide continuity of services from crisis to supportive housing (e.g. homelessness know by name list).

**5.4 Determine eligibility for supportive housing** by using an evidence base, such as By Name Lists, we gain clarity of need by cohort.

## 6. Evaluation & Performance



Create the evaluation and performance framework for projects in line with evidence based and emerging evidence practices relevant to the individuals and families within targeted population groups and the cost benefit to the government across systems.

**6.1 Partner with academic institutions** with research and evaluation and systems change expertise in the target populations to improve access and outcomes across systems and in the lives of people

**6.2 Measure progress** across domains of wellness and asset growth

**6.3 Review cost benefit analysis** across sectors and aim for balance between crisis investment and prevention.

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# Implementation of Supportive Housing

Establishing a Supportive Housing Program focused on integration and partnerships to enable tenants to sustain tenancy and have an improved quality of life.

## Formation of Inter-Departmental Committee

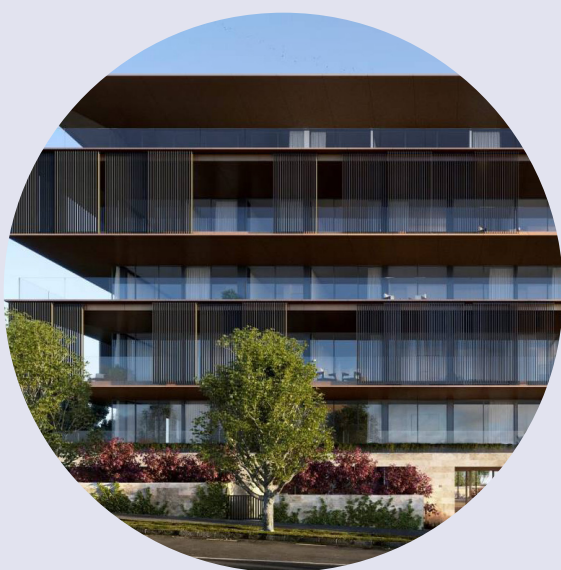
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### Tenancy Manager Role

- » Stability of tenure through formal leases.
- » Rent set at 30% of income through public housing, community housing or private rental subsidy.
- » Concierge and security for multiple dwelling facilities.
- » Commitment to coordination between tenancy manager, support provider and tenant to sustain tenancy prevent eviction.
- » Tenant engagement and participation.

### Security Concierge Role

- » Monitoring of safety within the building and surrounding according to scale of building and needs of tenants.
- » Welcoming and engagement with tenants and visitors to de-escalate potential conflicts.
- » Coordination within Tenancy Managers and Support Providers.



### Support Service Role

- » Privacy and confidentiality (accepting limitations of harm to self or others).
- » Multi-disciplinary approach where services are embedded with the tenancy and tailored to the identified needs of the targeted population group.
- » Agreed upon measures for improved quality of life.
- » Separation of the roles of tenancy manager and service provider and concierge.
- » Services are voluntary and not a condition of tenancy.
- » Service coordination around tenants needs.
- » Connection to community and culture.
- » Integrating healthcare when required.
- » Commitment to coordination with tenancy manager, support provider and tenant to sustain tenancy prevent eviction.

### Review and Evaluation

- » Enable linking of data and sharing practice experience.
- » Establish evaluation framework and regular review cycle to monitor progress of implementation and delivery of outcomes, through formal partnerships with academics.

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Possible Supportive  
Housing Building idea