

## Appendix 10: Permanent Supportive Housing



Launch Housing supports the provision of more permanent supportive housing options for people with an experience of chronic homelessness: who are prone to episodes of mental ill-health and tend to be heavy users of health, criminal justice and crisis-related homelessness and housing services.

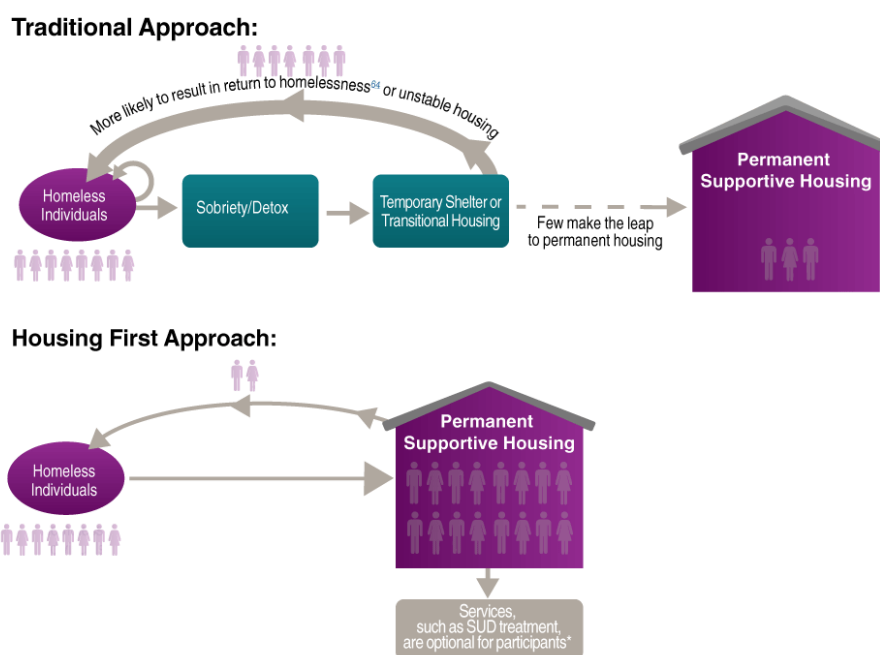
### Permanent supportive housing has a number of key features

#### It brings housing and support together for high-needs groups

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) refers to the provision of ongoing, long-term housing coupled with supportive services for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness, the unstably housed, individuals living with a long-term disability, and individuals and families who face multiple barriers to accessing and maintaining housing.<sup>i</sup>

#### Uses a 'Housing First' approach

Unlike the traditional approach that requires a move from short-term to transitional housing as a stepping-stone to permanent housing, PSH is based on a 'Housing First' approach which aims to get people with a co-occurrence of homelessness and mental health directly into permanent housing.



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**A flexible approach that supports both ‘high-density’ 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 is provided ‘on site’.

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With ‘scatter-site’ models, people live in separate houses or units and support workers visit the person’s home to help deliver or coordinate needed support. The evaluation of the Camperdown Common Ground in Sydney<sup>ii</sup> argued that both scatter-site housing and high-density models were of value for different groups of tenants who had experienced homelessness.

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**Permanent supportive housing is especially beneficial for those with an experience of chronic homelessness**

**A targeted approach is required**

There is good evidence to show that approximately 50-60% of people experiencing chronic 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.<sup>iii</sup>

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An evaluation of Brisbane Common Ground demonstrated it is an appropriate model to assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness and complex support needs to access housing and then to sustain their housing.<sup>iv</sup>

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A 2015 review of Launch Housing’s Elizabeth Street Common Ground found that 91% of residents reported mental health as a major issue, 72% reported substance use as a major issue; and 66% lived with a combination of mental illness and substance use.<sup>v</sup>

**Support is flexible and provided on-site**

The critical components of PSH comprise the provision of long-term housing and voluntary supportive services for the residents, including access to mental health care and medical services.

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Support services are accessible and flexible, and target housing stability; support services not only cater for tenants’ diverse needs, but also retain flexibility to cater for changing needs over time.

**The approach works for singles and families**

PSH has evolved to meet the needs of multiple vulnerable groups with histories of homelessness, including families, young people, older people and people with disabilities.

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Family Supportive Housing combines affordable housing with tailored support services and is designed to lead to stability and independence.

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**PSH has demonstrable financial benefits for governments**

International evidence confirms that PSH reduces people's use of institutional and emergency services and is likely to result in overall savings for governments in the medium to long term.

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The evaluation of Common Ground Brisbane showed that although the cost of providing the housing and support was about \$35,000 per annum per person, this still represented an overall cost saving to government of almost \$15,000 per person per year.

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<sup>i</sup> Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519590/>

<sup>ii</sup> Bullen, J., Whittaker, E., Schollar-Root, O., Burns, L., & Zmudzki, F. (2016). In-Depth Evaluation of Camperdown Common Ground: Permanent housing for vulnerable long-term homeless people (SPRC Report 03/16). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Australia.

<sup>iii</sup> Source: <https://www.mercyfoundation.com.au/our-focus/ending-homelessness-2/common-ground-permanent-supportive-housing/>

<sup>iv</sup> Parsell, C., Petersen, M., Moutou, O., Culhane, D., Lucio, E., & Dick, A (2015a) Evaluation of the Brisbane Common Ground Initiative, Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland

<sup>v</sup> Launch Housing, 2015, Elizabeth Street Common Ground, 5th Anniversary Report, Launch Housing, Melbourne.