

The Impact of Temporary Supported Accommodation (TSA) on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Residents

TSA aims to reduce the number of people in Queensland who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by funding services that assist people to: obtain and maintain housing and maximise their capacity to be independent, self-reliant and connected to appropriate social and community supports. Temporary Supported Accommodation (TSA) is used to describe the provision of temporary shelter together with case management support to people who are homeless. This case study presents the findings of an impact assessment designed to consider how to maximise resident wellbeing.



Key findings

The Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) identified a number of aspects of TSA that impact on the mental health and wellbeing of residents. The issues raised are well aligned to the available literature.

- **Provide structure and meet basic needs:** Providing a safe, stable structured environment where residents can sleep, eat well, access health care and develop a routine provides a foundation for resident wellbeing and progression to independent living
- **Support access to health care:** Approximately two-thirds of residents have a current mental health issue, half experience underlying health conditions and a third have problematic drug or alcohol use. The ability of TSA to identify physical and mental health issues and provide access to supportive health services is a key contributor to resident wellbeing
- **Provide physical environments that support wellbeing:** The physical environment can have a significant impact on wellbeing. During the pandemic the density of accommodation decreased with residents allocated their own room rather than having to share. This appears to have increased residents' sense of safety and security.
- **Address financial insecurity:** An ability to access and manage finances has a significant impact on both wellbeing and the ability to sustain a tenancy.
- **Promote self-help and Independence:** When residents first access TSA there is usually an immediate need for support to stabilise, sleep, eat well and manage health. Stakeholders felt that there is, however, the potential to create dependence unless people are also supported to learn to live independently, e.g. developing cooking, budgeting and conflict management skills.
- **Support learning and leisure:** Opportunities for leisure and learning new skills helps build self-esteem and confidence and facilitates connection. Stakeholders thought that the ability

of residents to access leisure and learning opportunities in the community they would transition to increased retention.

- **Create a sense of trust and safety:** Levels of trust are often low to start and take time to build. Residents thought that providing a female only accommodation increased women's sense of safety.
- **Provide Support:** The ability of workers to support and advocate for residents, both in and once they moved on from temporary accommodation, significantly increases the likelihood of sustaining that tenancy. Stakeholders felt that whilst continuing care and mobile support was available, it was often not long or intense enough to provide all the support required.
- **Tailor support:** Different population groups are affected in a range of ways and require tailored approaches and different types of accommodation. In 2021, 21% of residents were female, with feeling safe identified as a key wellbeing issue. 8% were under the age of 25, with the transition from youth to adult services identified as a gap. 4% were over 60, with loneliness cited as a key wellbeing issue for this group. 17% of residents identified as indigenous, no figures were available for residents from CALD or refugee communities, but language was considered to be a barrier for this group.
- **Build social networks and relationships:** The ability to build relationships and social connections in the community is a significant factor in both supporting resident wellbeing and sustaining tenancies.

What happened as a result?

'The MWIA helped give clarity to the pressure that services, tenancy providers and the department were experiencing during their Covid uplift to accommodate clients and co-locate services into a new building. It helped all stakeholders to reframe the impact, look into the positives of the shift and start to look towards the future for different accommodation / housing models. Eventually working together as one team in a new building helped change the narrative for services, their staff and the people we work alongside.' Chris Deighton, Director, Homelessness Programs, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

Further Information

This case study was produced as part of the Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment (MWIA) Demonstration Project, funded by the Queensland Mental Health Commission. The aim of the project was to demonstrate how a focus on mental wellbeing can improve outcomes for individuals, organisations and communities