

Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce

Communique – December 2016

Background

The Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce (the Taskforce) brings social and commercial housing experts together with homelessness and family violence specialists.

The role of the Taskforce is to address the housing challenges facing people experiencing family violence, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Chair of the Taskforce is Jenny Smith, CEO of the Council to Homeless Persons, appointed by the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing Martin Foley MP.

The Taskforce includes 12 members from the non-government sector.

Meetings

Since it was established in May 2016, the Taskforce has met eight times to:

- agree on its work plan to July 2017 and establish three working groups
- receive updates on progress across the whole of Victorian Government family violence response
- provide feedback and advice to government on relevant family violence and housing assistance initiatives, including private rental brokerage, flexible support packages, rapid housing assistance and the design of the Support and Safety Hubs
- agree to take a co-design approach to its work, and include the voice of lived experience wherever possible.

Working groups

Each working group is co-chaired by senior executives from the Victorian community services sector and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Working groups include Taskforce members, DHHS and Department of Premier and Cabinet officials, and selected community services sector, academic and victim-survivor contributors.

The Evidence Working Group will monitor, evaluate and report back on the rollout of family violence and housing related initiatives to ensure future investment and programs make a difference.

The Housing Supply Working Group will quantify the number of additional social housing units required for people who are unable to gain access to and sustain private rental accommodation, including a specific focus on family violence victims.

The Support Services Working Group will provide advice on flexible support packages and family violence refuge redevelopment, as well as oversee initiatives designed to prevent homelessness and remove blockages in access to crisis accommodation.

Each working group has met at least twice to progress key pieces of work as follows:

- An independent evaluation of the \$152 million initial housing blitz announced in April 2016. The Evidence Working Group anticipates that a successful bidder chosen through an open tender process will begin the evaluation in early 2017.
- The Housing Supply Working Group has commissioned a report to estimate the shortage of long-term social housing in Victoria and is developing the scope for a more detailed long-term housing assistance demand and supply model, including a focus on family violence.
- The Support Services Working Group is providing guidance on an independent evaluation of flexible support packages and on the redevelopment of guidelines for providers of these packages. The group is also scoping work to better understand the experience of women and children who access refuges and is providing guidance on the redevelopment of family violence refuges to core and cluster models.

Contact

For more information on the Taskforce and its work, please email FVHT@dhhs.vic.gov.au