

Post-COVID plan needed for women and children who have escaped domestic and family violence and people experiencing homelessness

As COVID restrictions start to ease, the 2,200 homeless people temporarily accommodated in hotels are beginning to ask what happens next. And homelessness services don't have answers. Two in three homelessness service clients were unable to access housing prior to the pandemic and so without funding for housing from the NSW Government there is concern that people will have no option but to return to unsafe situations or end up in cars, couch surfing or on the street.

"The NSW Government has done a great job assisting people experiencing homelessness into hotels and it has really shown that NGO services and the government working together can act quickly to provide safe and good quality accommodation." said Katherine McKernan, CEO Homelessness NSW,

"This is also an opportunity to provide long term safe and affordable housing but we need the NSW Government to act quickly to acquire and fund social housing."

"One of the unforeseen opportunities emerging from COVID is that there is a real opportunity to end the cycle of homelessness for many vulnerable people whilst at the same time injecting much needed economic activity into the construction and allied industries."

'Women escaping domestic violence need permanent housing to enable them to ensure a safe environment for themselves and their families.' said Renata Field, DVNSW spokesperson.

'It is great to see the NSW Government extending rental subsidies, during COVID, for women who have experienced domestic violence. However many women and their children will still find private rental accommodation is unaffordable or not available which means, with such limited social housing, they will end up either homeless or having to return to a violent home.'

Homelessness services and the NSW Government have worked together to provide more than 2,200 people accommodation in hotels and motels across the state to help keep them safe and healthy and reduce the spread of COVID-19. This has included women and children escaping domestic and family violence, families, young people and people sleeping rough.

Quick facts

- The NSW Government and homelessness services have assisted over 2,200 people to access hotels and motels during the COVID19 lockdown period
- The NSW Government has provided \$34 million to support people in hotels and motels and for rental assistance during the COVID19 lockdown period
- Continuing to provide the hotel assistance until a vaccine is identified could cost up to \$182 million, funding that could instead be used to acquire existing stock ([Equity Economics Report](#))

- Investment in social housing would reduce homelessness and help support the 85,000 construction jobs and 97,000 small to medium enterprises at risk due to the economic impact of COVID19 ([Equity Economics Report](#))
- Prior to COVID19, in 2018/19 2 in 3 clients accessing homelessness services remained homeless after support, and 21,000 people were unable to access crisis accommodation, despite needing it ([AIHW data](#))

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