



Afternoon Session F

Discussion Paper 12

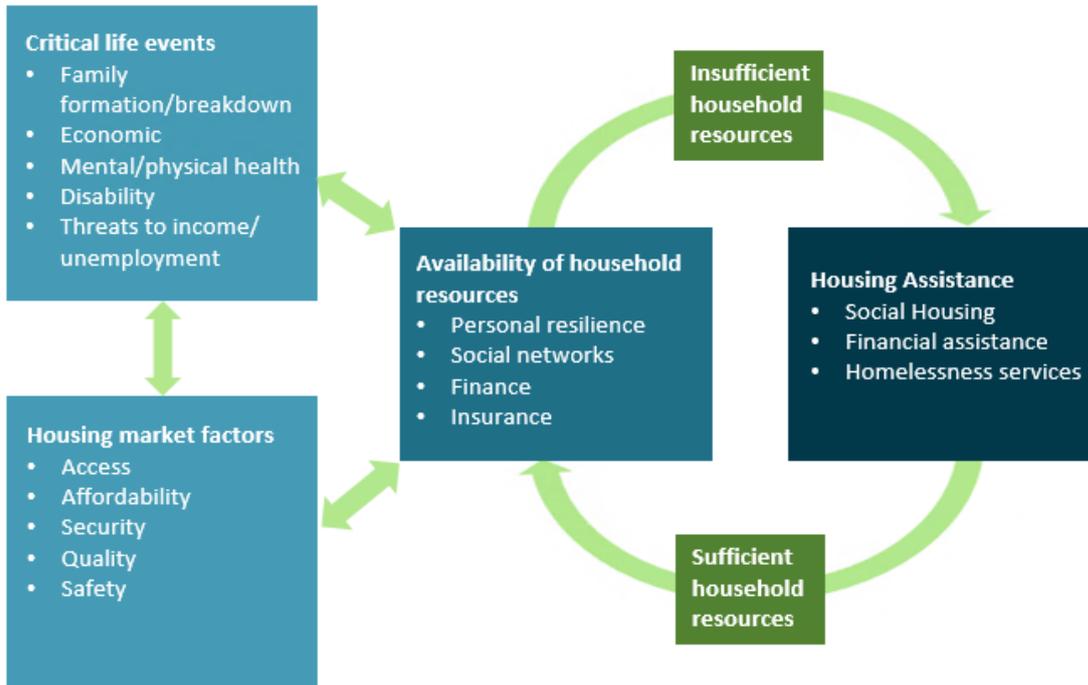
Homelessness - *System or chaos?*

- a) **How can homelessness be prevented?**
- b) **What early intervention mechanisms need to be in place**
- c) **What are the pathways out of homelessness and how can they be most effective?**

CHALLENGE OUTLINE:

1. The AIHW argues that housing crisis and homelessness arises from the interplay between:
 - a. housing market factors,
 - b. critical life events,
 - c. the availability of household resources and
 - d. the adequacy of housing assistance.
2. Background paper number 3, prepared for the summit identifies that all four of these domains magnify the risks of homelessness for Aboriginal Victorians.
3. While Government reform will continue to focus on Government housing assistance (social housing, rent assistance and homeless services), ultimately prevention of homelessness and sustainable pathways out of homelessness will also require changes to housing markets, support in managing life events and a strategy to reduce poverty and boost the material resources available to Aboriginal households and the wider Aboriginal community.
4. In particular, the failure of the Victorian housing market (very high house prices, market rents which are unaffordable for low income people, a collapse in public housing's population share) is significantly implicated in unacceptable levels of Aboriginal homelessness in Victoria.

Drivers of requests for housing assistance



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

1. Reducing rates of homelessness will depend upon a multitude of factors:
 - a. An increase in supply of social housing
 - b. More affordable private rental options for low income families
 - c. Higher rates of home ownership so that when adverse life events strike there is the security of a stable home to fall back on
 - d. A reduction in the prevalence of family violence, mental health problems and drug and alcohol use.
 - e. Better income support and higher education attainment.
 - f. More support for Aboriginal specific homeless support services.
2. Effective early intervention will require
 - a. A far clearer line of sight to accessible homeless services for people experiencing homelessness for the first time – visible and accessible system entry points for help.
 - b. More assertive outreach to assist people in the early stages of homeless crisis.
 - c. Better access to emergency and transitional accommodation.
 - d. Resourcing to reduce turn away rates for homeless clients.
 - e. Improved crisis management support and counselling, including sustainable case management where required.

- f. Better support with sustaining tenancies, building social support networks, improving life skills, and better managing health conditions that reduce resilience.
 - g. Better planning, advocacy and support for people experiencing major transitions, including from care, from the justice system, from mental health facilities.
 - h. Better use of rental and bond assistance for rehousing following relationship breakdown.
3. Pathways out of homelessness depend on recognition of the role all domains play in housing security:
- a. An affordable and accessible private housing market
 - b. Better support in navigating critical life events
 - c. Higher incomes and social supports
 - d. Better case management of homeless people - sustained and integrated housing and homeless assistance that travels with the person through their career of homelessness so solutions are sustainable.