



Afternoon Session D

Discussion Paper 10

Family Violence - What are the short/medium/long term housing options that need to be available for people experiencing family violence?

CHALLENGE OUTLINE:

1. Notwithstanding the strong leadership demonstrated by the Aboriginal community, significant investment by the Victorian Government and the fact that the majority of Aboriginal families are loving and supportive, family violence in the community remains a major driver of homelessness and housing crisis.
2. The composition of support provided to Aboriginal homeless clients in Victoria in 2017-18 was dominated by family violence services, which account for 33.6% of service types provided to people seeking homeless assistance.
3. Family violence was also the most common reason for all Victorians seeking assistance from homeless services in 2016-17, accounting for 35% of demand.
4. Children in the community are seriously impacted by family violence and 22% of Aboriginal people seeking homeless assistance nationally have children under 10 with them.
5. Reducing family violence is fundamental to tackling homelessness and the Government has made this a priority.
6. Anecdotally, while the Victorian family violence reforms, including implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations are having benefits, they are not yet reaching the most disadvantaged families in the community.
7. While the family violence service system is better integrated, the emergency housing and social housing systems on which a crisis response depends appear to be failing.



Source: Mungabareena

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

1. There should be serious exploration of a 'Housing First' model response.
2. Attention needs to be given to security of victims and a way to quickly achieve safety enhancements to their housing.
3. There is a need for far greater utilisation of flexible support packages to assist survivors of family violence including addressing the need for housing security.
4. Policy must reinforce that victims of family violence should not be required to leave in order to be safe.
5. Where victims are displaced, we must continue to improve access of Aboriginal survivors of family violence to a range of services including emergency accommodation and outreach services, 24-hour support and appropriate case management provided by Aboriginal and mainstream services as part of crisis response.
6. It is also important to strengthen the service system to ensure that Aboriginal women and children are linked to a range of longer-term supports and services including counselling and healing services.
7. The housing service system should also recognise the complexity of family violence in the Aboriginal community where violence can be lateral – not only partner to partner, but sometimes involving abuse of Elders, young people and assaults against extended family members.
8. It is important to continue to integrate family services with specialist family violence service system to promote holistic responses which support healing and prevent housing crisis.
9. There is also a need to provide assistance to Aboriginal perpetrators of family violence to access appropriate services including housing, behaviour change programs, alcohol and other drugs services, gambling services, Healing and Time Out Services and support to attend court.