

Inquiry into homelessness Shepparton

Wednesday, 11 March 2020



Rob Bryant, Founder and Secretary

Maria Hutchison, Director



Tania Maxwell, State Member for Northern Victoria



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hnLHizYKKO>

Members Statement 19 June 2019

Quote from Magistrate Aumair, Bendigo



“You are a shining example of what individuals with a criminal history, associated drug addiction and homelessness can achieve when they are supported in safe and secure accommodation – surrounded by peers who have travelled a similar path some of whom are recovering from addiction themselves but have made the choice to stay firmly on that path and to assist others do the same.

It is so important that as a community we recognise the value of places like The Cottage as an alternative to jail. Safe, secure and supported accommodation is key to protecting the community by assisting those people ready and willing to rehabilitate – to make positive changes in their lives and recover from their addictions.

The Cottage is located in Shepparton. We need something like it in Bendigo and in other regional cities where the scourge of drug addiction and associated homelessness is contributing factor to an individual’s contact with the criminal justice system.

We see it in our courts everyday.

1 November 2019

Declaration and Purpose



*We commit to building a transformational model,
healing the challenges of disconnection. We
encourage self-leadership, empowering people to
experience freedom to be.*

History



2015 – 2016

Two local councils (Shepparton and Moira) refusal to grant planning permits to ACSO on 2 sites in Goulburn region (Mooroopna and Wunghnu).

March 2016

300 residents packed local hall wanting a solution to the “ice epidemic” and lack of rehabilitation options for their families.

December 2016

SHADAC (Shepparton Area Drug Action Committee) is formed and registered as not for-profit organisation.

History



June 2017

First resident enters The Cottage – 1 house with 10 beds.

July 2017

First resident enters The Cottage via court system and on bail.

April 2018

Neighboring house purchased requiring permit from council.

Oct/Nov 2018

VCAT hearing in response to refusal from council.

History



2019

VCAT ruling for 23 bed, safe stable accommodation

Department of Health issues \$100Kpa funding for next 3 years

Addition of The Cottage Conversations Training

Endorsed by Tania Maxwell (MP) in Parliament

2 x transitional houses added

The Cottage endorsed publicly by Magistrate as alternative to incarceration and/or homelessness for released offenders.

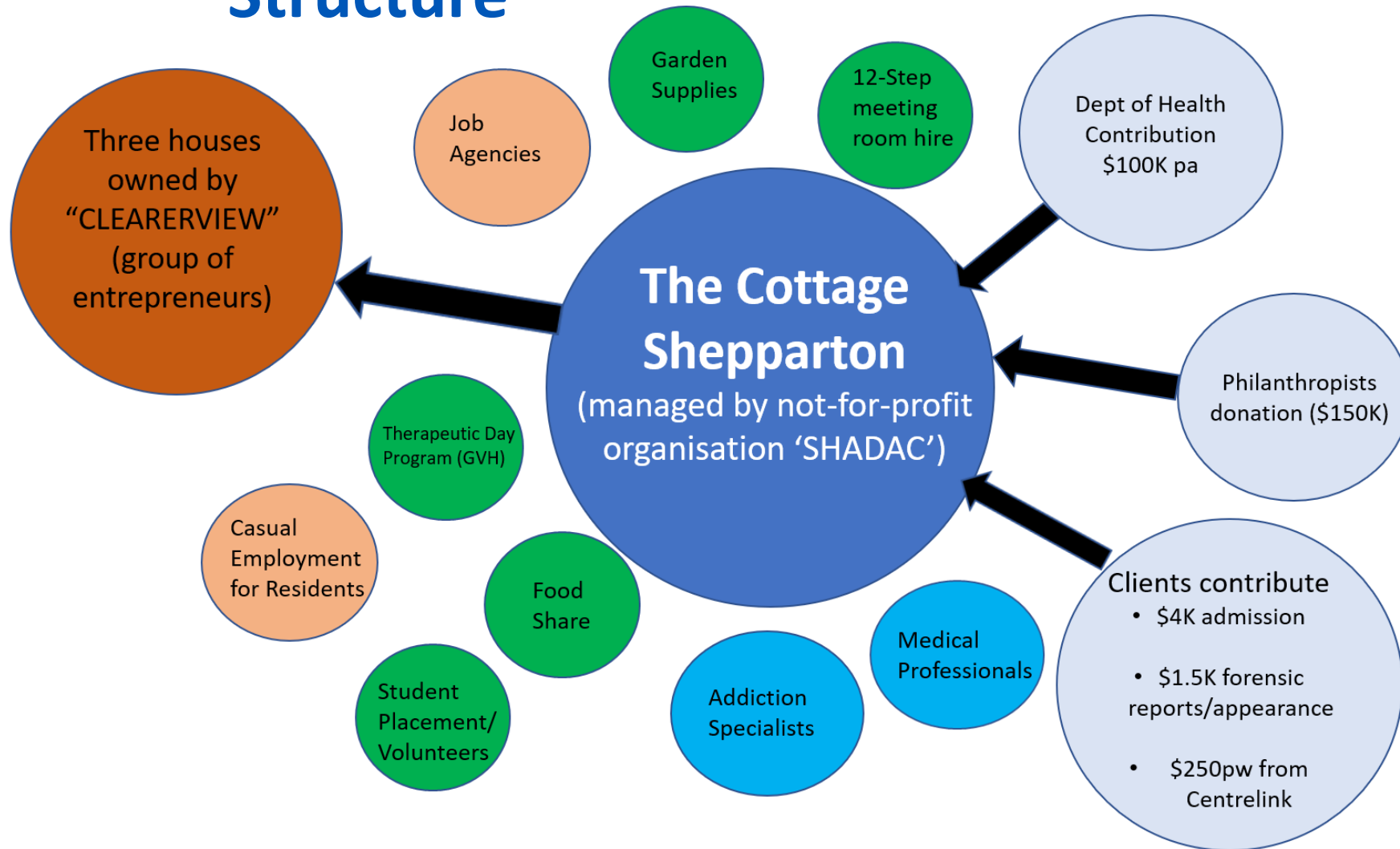
Current



- 180 residents have been assisted into self-leadership during the past 2 years.
- Of this 180 approximately 60% were at risk of homelessness or homeless.
- As at 11 March 2020 – 23 residents including 2 children – this includes 8 residents in Transitional housing.
- Planning underway to take The Cottage concept to other regional areas – beginning with Bendigo in 2020.
- Proposal in with Dept of Corrections and discussions with Dept of Housing.



Structure



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Our Approach – addressing homelessness and addiction



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Approach - How



Phase One = Physiological and Safety (initial 2 weeks)

- The Cottage provides a safe and secure environment, drug and alcohol free which allows the opportunity for residents.
- Residents can be supported through a medically supervised detox.
- Addressing the need for basic survival, a resident can have safety in knowing they have a roof over their head, 3 meals a day are provided and they will not be exposed to drugs and alcohol and/or its effects.

Approach - How



Phase Two = Love and Belonging (week 2-6)

- The Cottage provides a supportive environment for residents to connect with others who have come through a similar journey.
- The Cottage Conversations behavioural change workshops are compulsory training each day.
- Residents begin to build connection to the support infrastructure of the community and with each other.
- The Cottage provides daily structure in morning check-ins, routine and support to enable resident to begin making courageous changes in their approach to living.

Approach - How



Phase Three = Esteem – Self Leadership (from 6 weeks)

- The Cottage encourages Residents to start taking responsibility for the future of their lives.
- Residents are supported in becoming open and vulnerable through the program and environment to address their fears and limiting beliefs.
- Residents are supported to return to work if appropriate, reconnect with families, build support networks within the 12-step fellowship and greater community networks in the area.
- The Cottage provides a positive launching pad for residents to explore new possibilities and/or return to their lives empowered and less dependent on self-limiting substances and/or self-defeating behaviours.

Approach - How



Phase Four = Self-Actualised and Empowered Living (from 4 months)

- The Cottage provides transitional housing for residents to become tenants rather than boarders in transitional housing.
- Residents are supported to return to work if appropriate, continue reconnection with families, build support networks within the 12-step fellowship and greater community networks in the area.
- Weekly drug and alcohol testing and check-ins with The Cottage provides a positive connection to support.

Our Approach – addressing homelessness and addiction



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Our People – Matt G



Our People – Aaron G



Our People – Tamara & Elsa



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