

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Wangaratta—Thursday, 12 March 2020

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WITNESS

Mr Darran Stonehouse, Lecturer, Social Work, La Trobe University.

The CHAIR: I declare the public hearings open again. This is the Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria. I just need to give you some formal words before we start. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by law, and that is under the standing orders of our Legislative Council but also under our *Constitution Act*. This means that anything you say is privileged and, as I said, protected. However, if you were to repeat that outside, you may not be offered the same protection. And any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the Committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded, as you can see, and you will receive a draft transcript of that. We really encourage you to have a look at that and make sure that they have made no errors, not that they do very often—very accurate.

I see that you have got a PowerPoint. We will go through that, and then we will open it up for Committee discussion.

Visual presentation.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Sure, thank you. Firstly, thanks to the Committee for inviting me to speak with you today. It is obviously great to have the Committee come to the region and hear from a lot of local services and local people who have had experience with homelessness as well. Hopefully the PowerPoint is okay. Academics have bad habits—hard to break.

I was saying to Fiona earlier that I was mindful that you are hearing from a lot of local services that are obviously experts on the ground in the day-to-day of what happens, so I thought it would be useful perhaps for me to take a bit of a bigger picture view, but still with a focus very much on what we know about homelessness and related housing issues in these communities in the Hume region.

I wanted to begin with a few key points that I think are particularly relevant to understanding homelessness in this region, so particularly the lack of crisis accommodation options in this region—I am sure others presenting to the Inquiry have made similar, or will make similar, points—and that is particularly the case outside of Wodonga and Shepparton. That is across all client groups or population groups, but there are also particular population groups which are even more poorly serviced in terms of crisis accommodation.

Secondly, probably one of the population groups we have seen becoming more prevalent in this region—and similarly I know in other parts of Victoria it is rising—is single-person households experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The limited housing options that those households have, particularly in terms of their overall income, their ability to afford private rental and the availability of crisis accommodation again particularly impact on that population group.

Overall we are seeing growing demand and diminishing access to transitional and also public and social housing, so growing waiting lists but also exit options becoming more and more constrained. Certainly in conversations with service providers they are always highlighting that lack of exit options, which obviously compromises the ability of people to move through the phases of the service system. So while the service system is designed to operate in a certain way, it does not always operate in that way for each person because of those blocked exit options.

Particularly I think an issue in this region that does not get as much attention as it probably does in more metropolitan regions but is equally impactful in terms of people's risk of homelessness, and also impacts on their exit options, is the increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible private rental market. In the study that I will talk a little bit about soon that we conducted in this region a couple of years ago that was highlighted quite strongly—that in many locations, including in places like Wangaratta, the access to private rental is becoming more constrained, and that is having a flow-on effect through other parts of the homelessness and housing system.

Lastly, we have seen a lot of interest and investment in programs targeting private rental, and I think locally they have done a really good job in trying to stem demand and also have certainly achieved some really

important outcomes for those individuals assisted through those programs, but we are not necessarily seeing overall that those programs are reducing rates of homelessness or reducing the numbers of people accessing services.

Ms LOVELL: But they might be stemming increased demand.

Mr STONEHOUSE: That is right; yes. There is some sense that the ability of those programs in the longer term to continue stemming that demand is going to get harder because of those other factors that I mentioned. Obviously the cost of private rental is increasing and the stock is not increasing commensurate with the numbers of people seeking it, so there is some question about the long-term viability of those programs in terms of achieving what they have been able to achieve at this point.

They are probably what I, based on the data and based on the evidence, would suggest are some of the key issues in the Hume region. I am mindful that those are also issues in other parts of Victoria and around Australia, but I think they are particularly relevant in this context.

A bit more detail that I wanted to share with the Committee today is based on some research that La Trobe and myself as someone representing La Trobe were involved in a few years ago now with the Hume homelessness network. This was a research partnership initiated by the homelessness network in this region because they had a real interest in trying to get a sense of what was actually happening across the region and trying to draw on various sources of data, including the data from their own individual agencies, to get a sense of what was happening but also to look into the future and get a sense of where things might be headed and what the needs might be so that they could engage in not only service planning but also advocacy and obviously lobbying and networking in partnership with governments.

So we drew on several sources to inform that, and as far as I was aware at the time that was a fairly unique approach, particularly in a regional area, to draw on both national and Victorian homelessness and housing research—existing research; demographic data and also projections up to 2031; DHHS data in terms of housing stock but also rental affordability; and also, as I said, the data, and quite a large volume of data, coming from the specialist homelessness services.

Overall within the research the main findings that we were able to generate from that were particularly identifying that Hume is affected by issues that are affecting what was termed the ‘affordable housing crisis’ more generally within Victoria and across Australia, so influenced by the demographic changes. So population growth in certain parts of this region, and in particular population ageing, are a major longer term consideration. As I mentioned earlier, there was an increase in lone-person households and also single-parent households, and there are particular vulnerabilities that those groups have in terms of their options for housing and the cost of housing for those groups. There was a lack of affordable and accessible housing, particularly in the private rental market, as I mentioned, and reduced access to public and social housing, again particularly outside of the population centres. Obviously the department had been concentrating housing in some of those population centres because that is often where the demand is in terms of waiting lists, but even small reductions in access to social and public housing in some of the outer regional areas within Hume have an impact on people’s options in those areas.

Substantial demand on homelessness services: part of what we found looking at the agency data and looking across different agencies was not so much the number of overall clients going up but certainly an increase in the number of repeating clients—so people who were obviously struggling to sustain an outcome in terms of secure housing—and also increased client complexity, so we were seeing services having to engage for much longer and in a much more intensive way with individual clients in order to get outcomes for them. That obviously has an impact on the service’s capacity. I do think in this region in particular those services are really quite effective in how they work together, and I think their coming together to participate in this research was an example of that, but they really are working at their maximum capacity and probably beyond.

Lastly, we found a problematic policy environment, and particularly I think what was highlighted through that research is the difficulty in sustaining a clear and coherent and longer term vision across all levels of government in terms of addressing homelessness and housing issues. I know I certainly would not be the first person to make that comment, but it is still a really prevalent issue in terms of agencies’ ability to plan for longer term changes and longer term demand.

One of the things we were able to do from conducting that research within Hume was to identify relative differences in need within the region. I just want to highlight here that we are talking about relative need within Hume. So in identifying some LGAs as high needs or demands, that is in comparison to other LGAs within the region based on a synthesis of those various sources of data: so the demographic data, particularly influenced by projections in terms of population growth and current population; and also bringing in data around rental affordability; adjusted rates of homelessness—we used a method of combining the data on homelessness from the ABS census but also drawing on the data from the services themselves and adjusting that based on population size to help inform this comparison of relative need across the region; and lastly, access to public and social housing. So different LGAs were placed in different categories of need and demand based on a combination of those various factors, and then we were able to identify some more specific issues within some of those particular LGAs. So overall each of those LGAs is affected by those broader, macro factors in some sense, but there are also some particularities within those specific LGAs that were seen to have an impact, particularly in terms of thinking about future planning and what the issues might be in the future.

Wodonga and Shepparton were highlighted as particular areas of high need and future high demand, particularly influenced by projections in terms of population growth. Also while those regions are comparatively well resourced in terms of access to public and social housing, the predictions do not suggest that that access is going to continue if we continue on the pattern that we are on at the moment in terms of new public and social housing stock.

Wodonga particularly was identified as being impacted by decreasing rental affordability, so the accessibility of the rental market in Wodonga is a particular concern. On Shepparton, while it is growing more slowly than some of the other LGAs, particularly Wodonga and Mitchell, and has comparatively more affordable private rentals, its population is obviously more diverse than other LGAs in the region, and that diversity in population brings different needs that are not necessarily well catered for within the mainstream or the existing social and public housing system.

Mitchell, at the lower end of the region, obviously has significant projected population growth, and that is something that obviously a lot of levels of government are mindful of and planning for, and it is certainly because of that a high priority for future affordable housing delivery. Lastly, and particularly relevant to the hearing today, Wangaratta and also Benalla were experiencing moderate rates of homelessness and moderate demand for social housing. Rental affordability was found to be deteriorating, particularly in Wangaratta, and future population growth in those areas was projected to mean that those issues are likely to continue or worsen in the future, based on current policy and current service delivery and funding.

In terms of responses or solutions, ideas for fixing or addressing some of those issues, again none of these would be ideas that you would not have heard elsewhere. I think that is a really important point to make—that we have a saturation of evidence in Victoria and across Australia. I am sure the Committee is well aware of the issues and what is contributing to those issues. It is a somewhat unusual position as a researcher to be researching in a space where there is an abundance of research and where sometimes it is difficult to find a niche for looking at new things and at things in different ways.

Particularly with some of these responses in terms of early intervention and prevention, we are seeing some examples of new and exciting projects, particularly things like the Geelong Project, which I know is in the process of being replicated in Wodonga, for example, and also across the river in Albury.

We certainly need to see an expansion in access to crisis services. I think there has been obviously a trend in policy and funding towards social housing and certainly towards private rental assistance and to particular population groups in relation to the response to family violence, for example, and I think that has led to a shift away from recognising the fundamental importance of appropriate, suitable and accessible crisis housing. We do know from research and the evidence that the absence of that for people experiencing homelessness only worsens the impact of being homeless and certainly prolongs their homelessness, and also makes it less likely that they will achieve good outcomes when they are eventually allocated social housing or move into the private rental market.

Certainly we need an increase in support services, but particularly I think looking at more flexible options and longer term supports than what we tend to see available in our region. Obviously recognising the particular needs of regional and rural communities—through this research what was highlighted I think was that each of

those LGAs have particular issues that are contributing to their experience of the housing problem, and those need different sorts of responses. So I think we certainly need to be moving toward regional plans that capture those specific issues and those specific needs.

Probably one of the last things I would like to highlight is that I am a big supporter of Housing First-type models. I am aware that the Committee visited the youth foyer this week, and I think there is much to be gained by looking at those kinds of models in regional areas in a much more substantial way than what we have to this point, and for different types of population groups as well.

I guess the last thing is I really believe that the focus on the private rental sector is ideologically driven across all levels of government and is a cultural preference that we have in Australia, and I think that needs to be revisited. I think we need to get away from viewing public and social housing as somehow a poor use of resources and look at it more as essential public infrastructure. I note the AHURI report recently, from the end of last year, that really emphasised the positive role that public and social housing does and can have in terms of that essential public infrastructure. I am not advocating that we stop looking at ways of assisting people in private rental, but perhaps we need to not do that to the exclusion or the detriment of looking at other forms of support.

The CHAIR: Thank you. That is great, and I think I suppose it reaffirms a lot of what we are hearing. I suppose you found that in your study as well, that this backed up everything—

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes, certainly. I think there were some surprises. There were some things that we were not necessarily predicting to find when we looked at different parts of the region, different LGAs, but certainly overall it is really providing some evidence that was lacking at that time at a regional level. So each agency obviously collects its own data and receives that data back in some form when they are receiving reports back from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in terms of their client supports, but that data is rarely aggregated to look at a regional picture.

The CHAIR: That is right. So just picking up on that, we have heard a lot about crisis housing—and one of the stories we heard today was about a young woman with two children who ended up losing her children because she could not find secure housing—and it all goes back; we hear stories going back. Do you have any idea of the numbers or what that shortage of crisis housing is in this region?

Mr STONEHOUSE: It is probably difficult to put a specific number in terms of the numbers of crisis houses or properties required across the region.

The CHAIR: If we doubled the number, would we meet demand?

Mr STONEHOUSE: I think we would make a significant impact, but I also think there is a need to recognise that certain models of crisis housing work better for certain client groups, and therefore it is important to look at what type of crisis housing. I do not think necessarily think we are likely to or should be going back to looking at large congregations or concentrations of people in crisis housing. They can be suitable in some instances, but I think rethinking what we understand crisis housing to be, and particularly its role in that overall housing system and that critical first role—

The CHAIR: I mean, if you are looking at a Housing First model, then crisis housing fits that kind of short term, but you still need somewhere for someone to go.

Mr STONEHOUSE: That is right, yes. And I think obviously prevention and early intervention needs to be a priority, but when those approaches do not work and people do become homeless there needs to be a much stronger safety net, I guess, to respond to those needs. And I have recently finished some research that was actually more focused on metropolitan regions but engaging in research with people who had had lived experience with homelessness, and certainly one of the key themes that came out of those interviews and that research was that overwhelmingly their situation and the duration of the homelessness was exaggerated and made worse because they could not access appropriate crisis housing at the point that they became homeless.

Ms LOVELL: But it is not actually about a shortage of crisis or transitional housing; it is actually about the shortage of exit points from there. So we have, probably, maybe not adequate but a reasonable amount of crisis and transitional housing, but that is being clogged up because people have no exit points. So it is not about

increasing the crisis end; it is about increasing the long-term end so that we can have people transitioning through them.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes, I think probably both ends are necessary. I know, for example, in this region there is a heavy reliance on the Housing Establishment Fund, HEF fund, to provide—

Ms LOVELL: But that is because the crisis and transitional housing is clogged up with people who are there for months on end.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes, but I think as well, outside of Wodonga and Shepparton—we are talking about the Hume region—there are no real crisis services, certainly no youth crisis services. There are no crisis services for single males. There are no crisis services for women and children who are homeless not because of family violence—

The CHAIR: Not because of family violence, yes.

Mr STONEHOUSE: And so once we start looking at those different population groups, there is very little that services can do to assist large families. So I do not necessarily agree that we have sufficient crisis accommodation in this region, but certainly the issue with the blockages of exit points is a big contributor to that.

The CHAIR: Yes, sure.

Mr BARTON: Thanks, Darran. I love how you looked at the numbers. I am just curious. We have seen a huge demand over the last 10 years, and a lot of it is driven by population growth, but it cannot all be just population growth, surely. Are there any other government policy decisions? What has changed that has made it—I am going to say—worse, because it is certainly not better? What has changed, from a government perspective?

Mr STONEHOUSE: My answer to that, I think, would be that we have—if we look more broadly at government policy and policy responses to other related social issues, social and economic issues, and we start to look at things like underemployment and we start to look at things like poverty and we start to look at things like the cost of housing relative to people's incomes—

Mr BARTON: No wage growth.

Mr STONEHOUSE: That is right, low wage growth, lack of increase to Newstart and those sorts of payments—we start to see those things influencing. And I mentioned previously the increase in single-person households. We know, for example, that much of that is driven—that client group is particularly difficult for services to work with because the option of private rental is very limited for that group. The option of public and social housing is very limited because most of the properties in this region are geared towards families—so they are three-bedroom properties. Now services are starting to try to find ways of responding to that, but that demand is still there and is likely to grow. So I think it is a combination of those factors. Obviously we have also things like, in terms of the demographics, changing family arrangements and family breakdowns and those sorts of things. Certainly family violence, as we all know, is the main driver. And so those things are more prevalent and certainly seem to be contributing to those high numbers, those sustained high numbers, of people seeking assistance.

Ms MAXWELL: Darran—great presentation, great overview—you touched on before that you had spoken to people at risk, or young people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Have there been any surveys done within this area by the young people themselves or anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness so that they can actually identify what their needs are, which would then certainly assist us to be able to identify how we go about achieving that? So it is driven by their needs.

Mr STONEHOUSE: To my knowledge there has not been in this region. Certainly I am aware that often individual agencies have various mechanisms for engaging with people with a lived experience of homelessness and using that information to inform their own understanding about how to improve services and those kinds of things, but as far as I am aware not in this region, at this local level, and not in the sense of being more participatory in the focus of people with those experiences being directly involved in that research. But I

think it is an important area of need because it does tell us something as researchers and as so-called experts, at one level, things that we do not necessarily understand in the same way.

So again, some of the things that I found in conducting that recent research, particularly relevant in the metropolitan region, because that is where I was focused, were the absence of safety and security, for example—the absence of being able to feel safe, and that included in crisis accommodation and in things like rooming houses. That had an ongoing impact on people—for example, somebody who had left a traumatic family circumstance, whether as a young person or in terms of family violence and then had to be accommodated in a rooming house or in a refuge environment which was not suitable or appropriate to their needs. So I think those sorts of stories and those sorts of narratives, those firsthand accounts, are absolutely vital, and there is certainly much more room for collecting and finding those stories and using that to add to our understanding of the issues.

Ms MAXWELL: And I am wondering whether the council would be the appropriate lead agency to do that, to be able to feed back what they are actually hearing on the ground from those who—whether it is families or whether it is young people—have that lived experience.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes. And I think the involvement of local government is important. Certainly, while it is not a preventer of doing that research from a university's point of view, there are some really important and difficult ethical hurdles that have to be managed in order to engage in that kind of research at a big scale and across a region. But certainly if there was interest from, for example, local governments to engage in that and to work in partnership with the universities or others who are capable of undertaking that sort of research in partnership with services and clients of services, that would be, I think, a really valuable source of information.

Ms VAGHELA: Thanks, Darran, for the presentation. The common theme from many speakers that we have had over here is that one of the contributing factors for homelessness is family violence. I would like to know, from your studies, whether for housing issues the effect that it had was more on one gender than the other.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes, definitely. I think there are different effects. Overwhelmingly the impact is on women and children in terms of obviously the incidence of family violence. Also, as I think a previous speaker was mentioning, despite changes in legislation and changes in the legal approaches, we are still seeing predominantly women and children leaving the home and becoming homeless as a result of family violence.

At the other end, we do have at times limited options to support and house, potentially, male perpetrators and to do that in a way that contributes to the safety of the broader family unit. So there are some different effects, and that is not to suggest that there are no males that are affected as victims of family violence, but certainly I am sure the services would also reiterate that overwhelmingly that is where the driver of demand for their services and for the housing that is associated with that is coming from.

Ms VAGHELA: This is just out of curiosity. If a young girl or boy has faced all the hurdles, finished school and gone to uni—do you meet many youngsters at uni who are facing homelessness and, having finally made it into uni now, cannot continue studying and might stop or have to discontinue their study? Do you come across many cases?

Mr STONEHOUSE: We do, certainly, yes, and there are a couple in particular that come to mind that I have known through my work in teaching social work at the university. They have come from different backgrounds and different pathways, experiencing homelessness or perhaps experiencing out-of-home care and eventually being able to come to university. But more generally, certainly, the issue of housing affordability is something that affects a lot of our students, has an impact on their financial situation and has an impact on their ability to focus on studies and that kind of thing. So it is certainly something that we recognise is a factor for many of our students. And I think particularly for us in this region, at La Trobe, a lot of our students—an increasing number of our students—are coming to uni from non-traditional backgrounds; they are often the first in their family or they are adults who are returning to study or coming to study for the first time, so they are often particularly vulnerable to that.

Ms VAGHELA: And are there many women there?

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes.

Ms LOVELL: Darran, we have heard a lot from people about the frustrations of the limitations of the homelessness sector to deal with their clients holistically—part of that because of funding in silos and partly because government funds for throughput, not for outcomes—and I was just wondering what your thoughts are on that and whether you would support a change in the funding model to encourage collaboration and to fund for outcomes for the individual clients.

Mr STONEHOUSE: My answer would be yes, but it depends on what those outcomes are, how they are set and how they operate. Previous to being at the university I worked in the homelessness sector on both sides of the border and experienced various government programs and various types of targets, outputs and outcomes, some better than others in terms of, I guess, matching what we might have felt at the organisation were the sorts of outcomes that we should reasonably be working towards.

Generally, yes, I think we need to be able to focus on outcomes because particularly, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of the pressure on services is clients re-presenting as homeless and needing support on a longer term or ongoing or periodic basis. So I think if the outcomes are reasonable, they are realistic, and they enable services and they resource services to be able to actually focus on those outcomes and deliver those outcomes reasonably, then I think that can be a positive thing. But it also has to be done in conjunction with addressing that lack of exit options that you highlighted in your question earlier. So overwhelmingly the access to that housing makes those outcomes much more achievable and much more sustainable.

Ms LOVELL: Absolutely. Also, you mentioned the youth foyers. I presume you had a look at the five-year evaluation of that program, which is quite stunning in its results. Have you got identified areas in the Hume region where we should replicate the youth foyers?

Mr STONEHOUSE: Everywhere.

Ms LOVELL: Absolutely; everyone wants them.

Mr STONEHOUSE: I mean, certainly it would make sense to look at the other main population centres but also potentially modified or smaller versions that might be suitable for some of the smaller towns in this region as well.

The CHAIR: Like Wangaratta?

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes.

Ms LOVELL: No, Wangaratta could do with 40 beds. The 40 beds is really the minimum number to operate the full model. But Wangaratta could use 40 beds; there is no doubt about that.

Mr STONEHOUSE: There are certainly some aspects of scale in terms of the resourcing and the supports that are obviously needed to sustain something like the foyers, where accommodation is part of a broader suite of services and the outcomes that you are working towards. But, yes, I think there is certainly—

Ms LOVELL: Wang is crying out for one. Wodonga is crying out for one.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes, that is right. And I think again probably—where I mentioned before about other types of housing options for other client groups—there are things that we can learn from youth foyers and also from local and international Housing First models where there are a lot of synergies and similarities with what youth foyers are designed and intended to do that could be modified but replicated with other population groups in other regions.

The CHAIR: You mentioned that if we are looking at outputs rather than—

Ms LOVELL: Outcomes rather than throughput.

The CHAIR: Outcomes rather than throughput—that one of the problems is that recidivism, so you get someone into a house and then three months later you are trying to find a house for them again. Did you see any programs in your studies or have you got any thoughts on how we can slow that recidivism and actually keep people maintained in a home, whether that is private rental or whether that is social housing? Someone is going to talk about incentives.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes. I think, for me, rather than specific models it is particular approaches. And I think what is, from my view, particularly important is the flexibility of the support rather than the name of the program or that kind of thing. I think in some ways we overcomplicate what support for homelessness might look like and what it might require. I am not suggesting that there are no particularly complex people that have really—

The CHAIR: But it might just be someone at the end of the line.

Mr STONEHOUSE: That is right. And again, I am just drawing from some of the insights that have come from other research that I have been involved in where a lot of the benefit of the support is really in the relationship that is built between the person and the support worker or the support provider—whatever form that takes. And again, I think we have moved away from that. We have moved toward, you know, a very outcome-focused case-management type model, which I think is an important part of the overall response but is not necessarily the best response for all clients, all people.

There is a lot of research, for example, at the moment around just supports that are based around what is called the ethic of care, so really just focusing on building that therapeutic relationship and regard with the person, recognising that many of the people that experience homelessness have had a traumatic experience of family and intimate-partner relationships and are often disconnected from other forms of support as a result. So that isolation and loneliness that they often experience does have an impact on their housing outcomes. I think it is supports which recognise that and which, you know, are really focused around flexible ongoing client-driven support—what is appropriate for that person at their particular point in time—rather than being driven by, ‘We can only support you for 13 weeks and we have to work toward this outcome and this outcome’. I think we need to have a combination of those different sorts of options.

Ms MAXWELL: Darran, I think that is a great segue; when we talk about outcomes those outcomes are so different for so many different people and can mean completely different things. An outcome for somebody might simply be that they are engaged with the service. Another outcome might be that they need a home. The other might be that they need a home but they need a case manager going in constantly and working with them. So I think we also have to be very careful and align programs that are driven by that young person or that individual’s needs to determine the outcomes that they are ready and open to accept, too.

Mr STONEHOUSE: I think that is a really important point. Certainly a lot of the evidence, for example, around Housing First models is that what makes them work, particularly internationally, is that flexibility of support and also the voluntariness of that support so that people are not feeling that they are compelled to engage. Generally what the research shows is that over time, once their stability and security is established through housing, they are much more likely to actually voluntarily choose to engage and to engage in ways that work for them and are of benefit to them.

I think, in response to the previous question about outcomes, I always get a little nervous when I think about outcomes, just in terms of what they are geared toward. I have certainly had experiences, from when I was practising, of programs that were delivered or designed with the best of intentions but often probably had people determining those outcomes who were not really realistic about what was involved. And so services can then be geared toward, pressured toward, working toward those outcomes—because their funding requires them to do it—which are not necessarily always in the best interest of or are not the most important needs of those particular clients. So outcomes are important, but they need to be, as I said previously, realistic, reasonable and flexible as well.

The CHAIR: Yes, you are not finding someone a home if you are finding that same person a home three times a year.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes.

Ms VAGHELA: Darran, the youth foyer model works for certain ages of people. What I would like to know is: say, once they have a model for a youth foyer, would there be a possibility of some sort of model where they are taking youth from probably the ages of 18 to 25 if they want to do an undergraduate or a graduate course? They could maybe have faced major disruptions in their life or come from a disadvantaged family or a low-income family. So similar to the youth foyer model, could something be done with federal, state and council where these kids actually get some sort of qualification through a university which will give

them a better chance of employment and a better life compared to just whatever they would have achieved at the youth foyer model? Have you thought about that? Do you think that would work or not?

Mr STONEHOUSE: I think it could, and I will probably go back to the answer I gave previously. I pointed out earlier that I think there are some general principles from something like a youth foyer model that could be applied across different population groups. And when I think of youth foyer I think of providing stability and security, particularly security in terms of knowing that there is accommodation available to them for an extended period of time, certainly longer than that which they would otherwise have in other parts of the homelessness or housing service system, and knowing that they have also got the support to work toward that ultimate goal of engaging with education, training and employment.

So yes, I think something of a similar type for a slightly older group that was maybe more focused on entry into tertiary education, as you mentioned, could be a viable and a useful option for some people.

The CHAIR: Darran, thank you very much. That was a great pitch, and we will look forward to seeing your next piece of research. That was more looking at metropolitan and crisis?

Mr STONEHOUSE: Yes. So the one I was referring to in some of those answers—not the ones referred to on the slide—was more focused on research conducted in Melbourne, but I am certainly interested in the possibility of replicating something similar in a regional area.

The CHAIR: Well, feel free to send through anything that you think might be useful to us. Thanks very much, Darran.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Thanks for your time.

The CHAIR: You will get a copy of the transcript in the next few days.

Mr STONEHOUSE: Great. Thank you.

Witness withdrew.