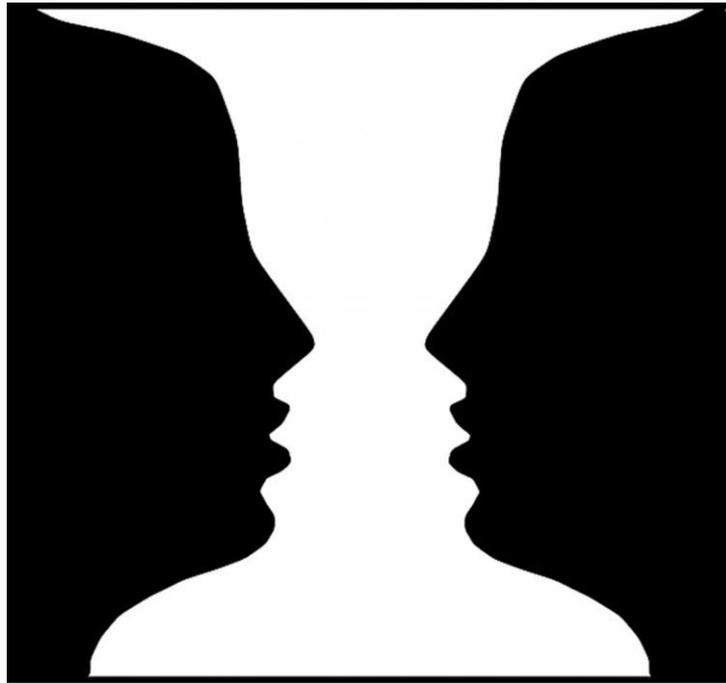




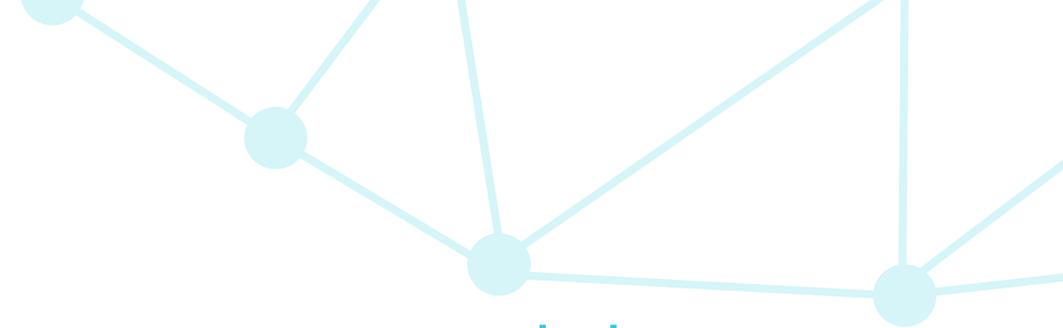
House to Home Project

Karina Ko

Problems as Opportunities



Vase or faces?



Problems as Opportunities

Entrepreneurs are familiar with this – problems mean that there is a need, a gap, and that presents opportunities to meet the need, to provide something of value.

Orange Sky Laundry

For example, there is a problem where people who are homeless often can't wash their clothes, or have a decent conversation with someone because of stigma.

This was an opportunity for action for two guys in Brisbane to found a mobile laundry service - free for the homeless. While the people are waiting for the washing to be done, people can connect, and talk. The two guys who founded orange sky laundry were named Young Australians of the Year this year!

Opportunities for...

Action, creative solutions, change...



Orange Sky Laundry



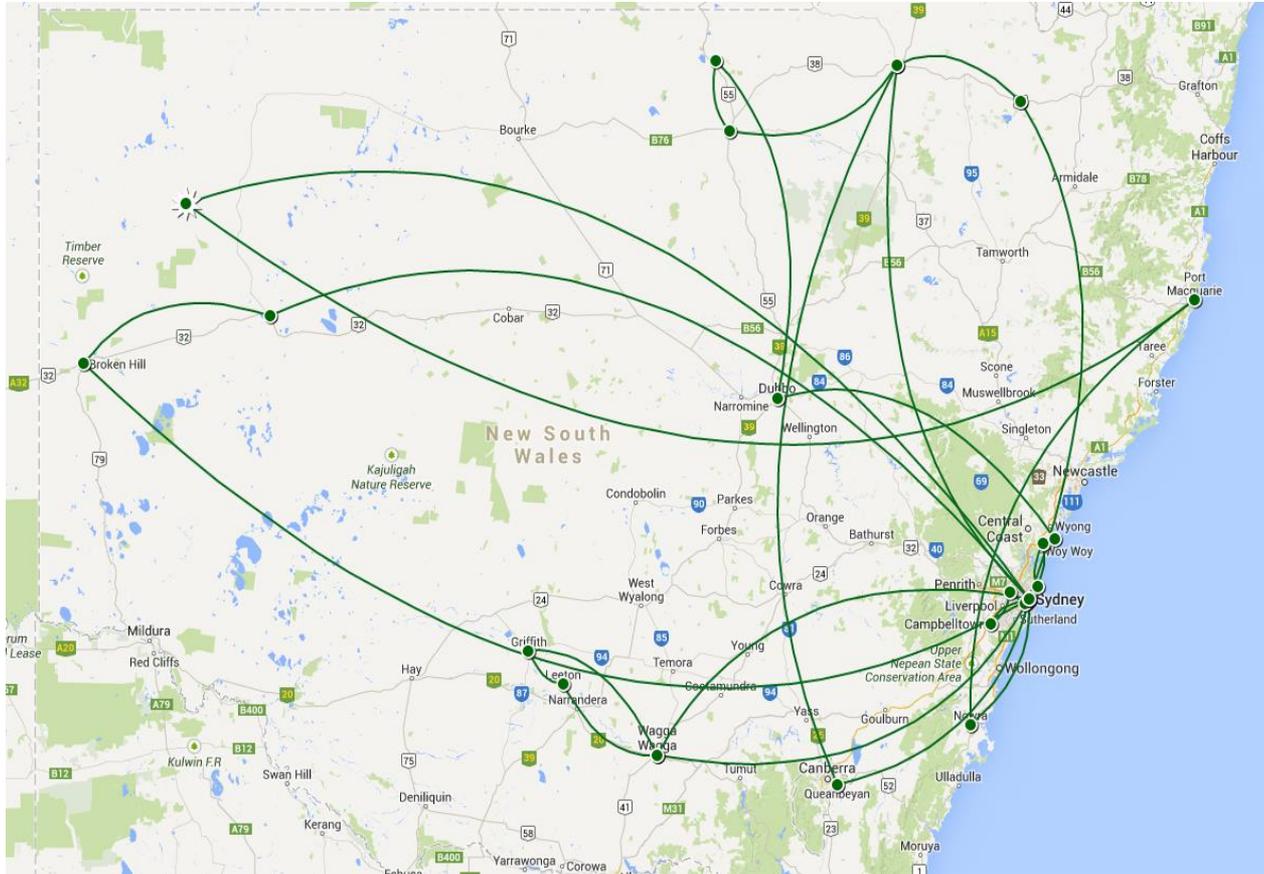
“The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity.”

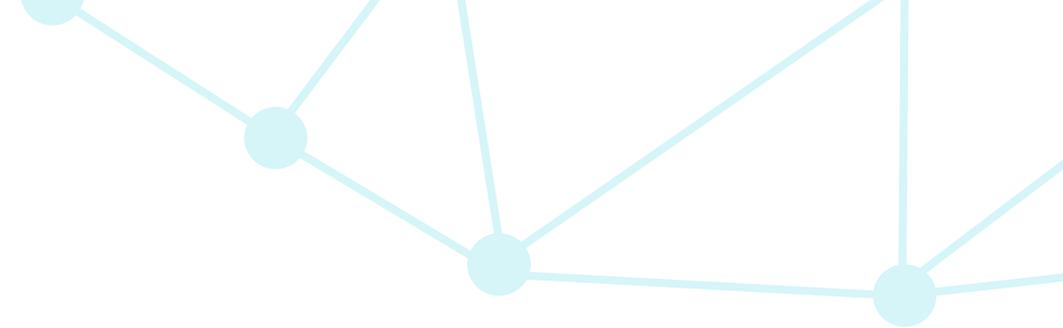
Some years ago, I listened to a very memorable podcast. The person was teaching entrepreneurship at Stanford. One of the first things she taught students is this: “The bigger the problem, the bigger the opportunity.”

We sometimes come across this idea in our own lives – we might experience a deep dissatisfaction with ourselves or our lives, or experience a big disruption to our lives, such as losing a job, and it's tough but it can also be a life-changing opportunity, the push we needed all this time to try something else, for example, change a bad habit, change the way we think, or go in a different direction.

The Recovery Conference is about looking forward, working together and taking action. So I encourage you, as I talk through some of the issues we found through the ‘House to Home’ project to see them as opportunities – and think about what can be done about them – and what you can do.

Consultations across NSW





Consultations across NSW

BEING consulted over 520 people across NSW. Almost all had a lived experience of mental health issues. We did this face to face, and through online and printed surveys.

We travelled across the state, from Sydney, to regional centres to rural and remote places. We also went into crisis accommodation, forensic hospitals, mental health units in hospitals. Most of the people were renting, either privately or through public housing. Some people owned their houses, some lived with their family, some were homeless –couch surfing, sleeping rough, living in a motel.

We explored what 'home' means to people, and the relationship between someone's living situation and their wellbeing and mental health.

Some of the key distinct issues for mental health consumers were:

- Safety
- Inclusiveness
- And housing stability

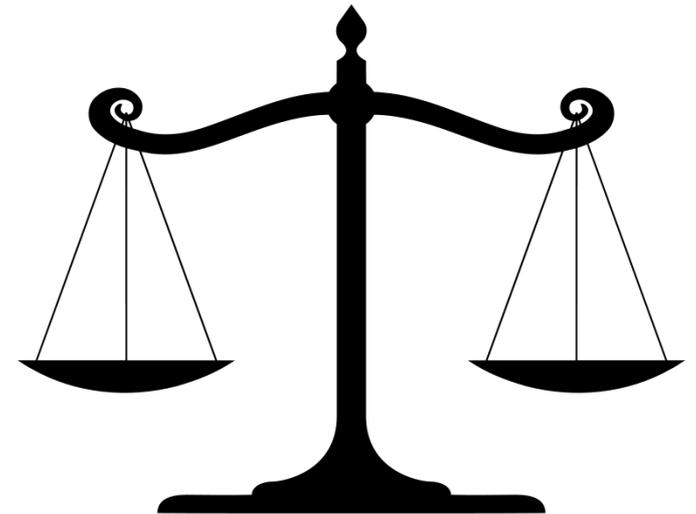
We decided to focus on these topics for the Recovery Conference because they were some of the key themes that came out people's feedback.

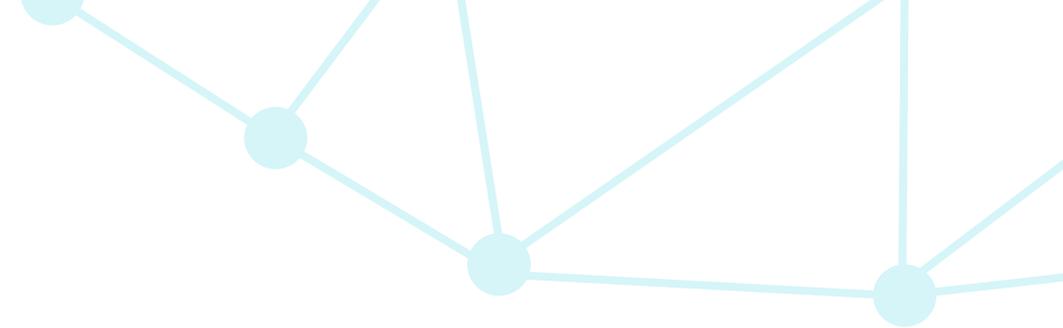
Inclusiveness



Illustration by Tuomas Ikonen

Respects my privacy Looks out for me





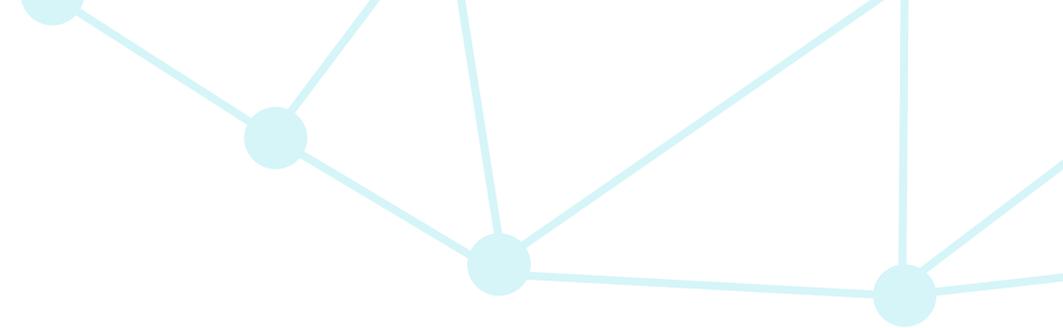
Inclusiveness

Many people told us that they felt socially isolated. They want neighbors who look out for each other but also to not come across as intrusive. This requires some balance.

Where do people draw the line about what's intrusive? It depends on the person. For some people, saying more than hello can feel intrusive. We found that neighbors was a big factor in how people feel about where they live.

There are opportunities here to make sure that people do have good relationships with neighbors.

Perhaps there are ways to make sure that people get along with their neighbors before they move in. Perhaps there are ways to encourage people to look out for each other, and not judge people for their mental health issues.



Inclusiveness

People can also feel isolated within their own home.

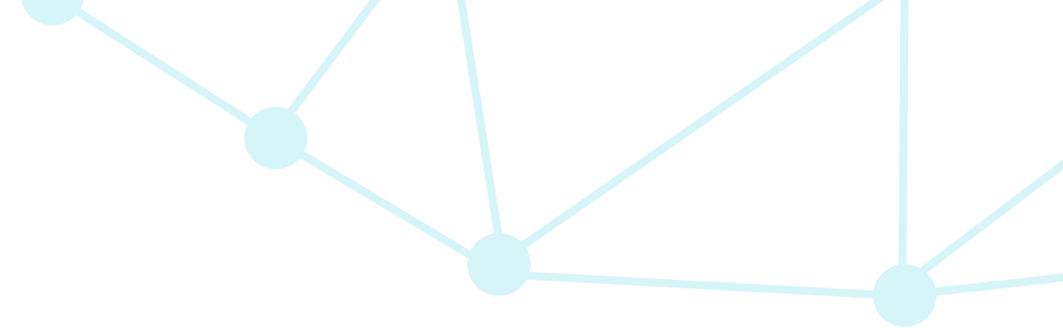
We heard from people sharing a home with flat mates, often strangers. And people can face certain challenges in living with others especially strangers, when they're dealing with their own mental health issues.

For example, one person was dealing with an eating disorder while living with her flat mates. She didn't know how to talk to them about this. Her flat mates left the kitchen messy all the time. This discouraged her from cooking and using the kitchen – which had a bad impact on her mental health. But she felt like she had to keep up appearances at home and pretend that she was doing fine.

I'm sure many of us know how it feels to have to wear a mask and pretend we're fine when we're really not - it's exhausting.

Is there an Opportunity here?

Perhaps this means that current ways of finding flat mates aren't suitable for everyone – and that there are opportunities to better connect people to share a home. Or finding ways for people to be able to live alone but at the same time within a community.



Inclusiveness

Upkeep

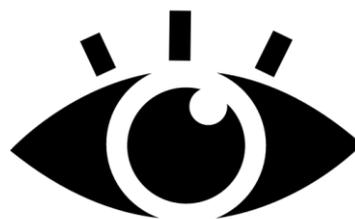
Another big issue for people was keeping up the place, for example, keeping the place clean, and maintaining the garden. Mess and clutter can affect people's mental health. And when someone's going through a tough time, they might not be able to keep up the place, and get overwhelmed by the mess, bills and gardening.

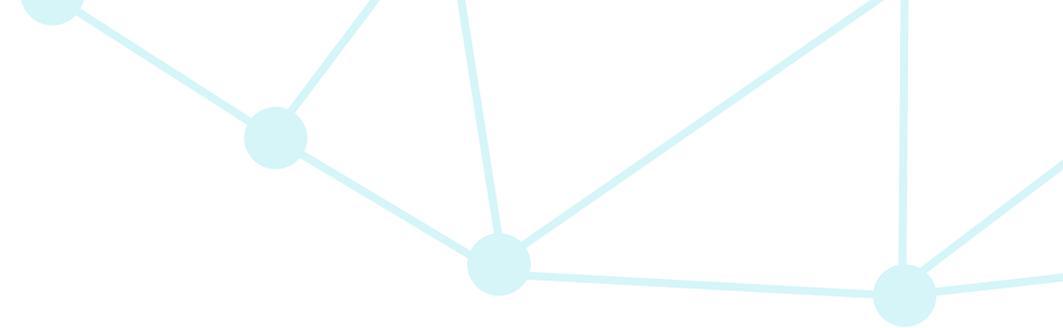
So it can become a vicious cycle until it gets so bad that the person feels too ashamed to get anyone to help out. People who live with partners can make an agreement with their partner that their partner will clean when they're feeling unwell, and they'll make up for it by cleaning when they do feel well. But people who live alone can't do this.

Is there an Opportunity here?

Opportunities to help people link with others and help each other out when they need it, and without any judgment, can help build sense of community too.

Safety





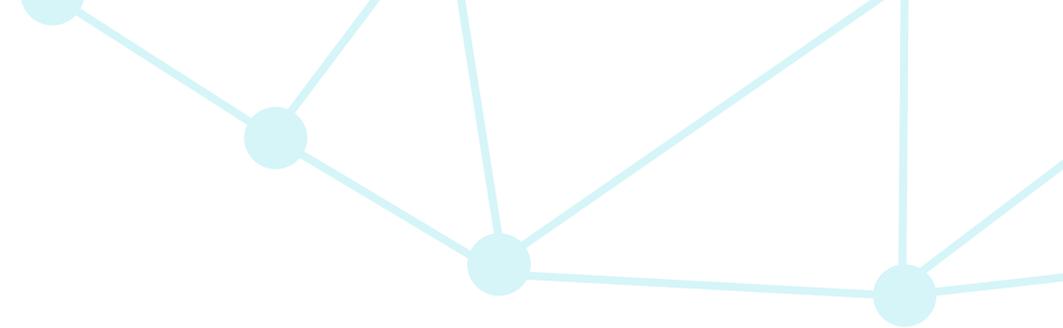
Safety

In our consultations we asked people about how safe they felt in where they were they living. Safety has a big impact on people's mental health.

We found that single women, including single mothers with children, are more likely to feel unsafe. This was a strong theme from people's feedback.

Women are more likely to feel unsafe when living in a neighborhood with drug and alcohol problems, congregation of people in facing disadvantages, or where there are obtrusive neighbors and bullying.

It makes sense that single women are more likely to feel unsafe when you look at the rates of violence against women.

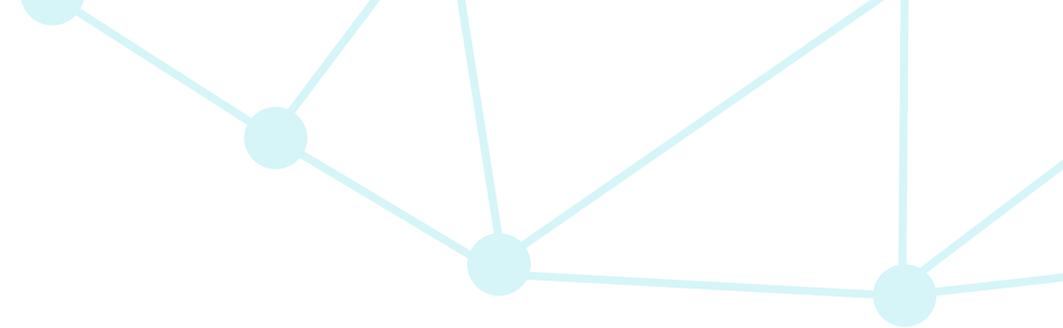


Safety

People may also feel unsafe because of the trauma they have experienced in their lives – and most people with mental health issues have experienced some trauma in their lives.

People felt that having security facilities helps them to feel safe, for example, having secure windows, locks and doors. People said it also helps having neighbors who look out for each other.

Other issues to do with safety were bullying and harassment by neighbors and others in the neighborhood. For example, some people felt that in their public housing complex, people were targeting people with mental illness to bully and harass.

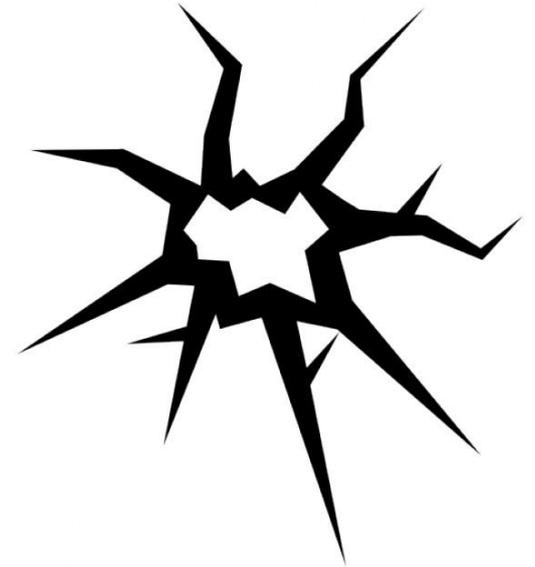
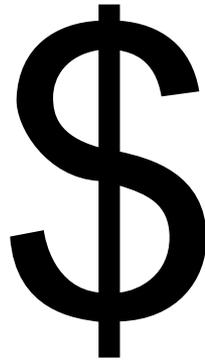


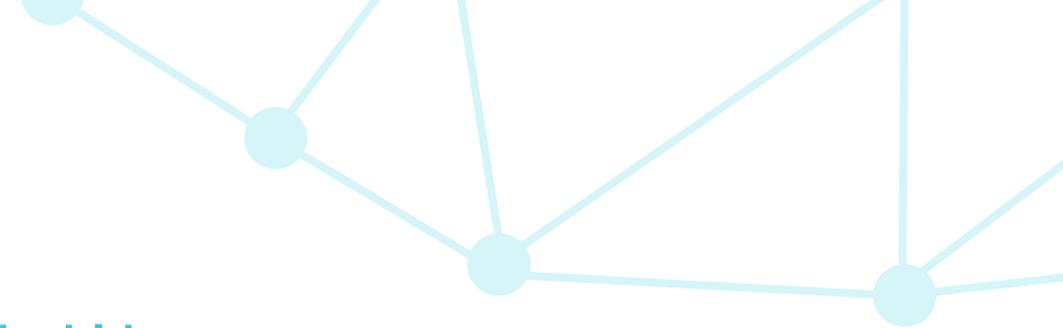
Safety

Is there an opportunity here?

- There are opportunities for other ways of providing affordable housing than congregating people together simply by their circumstances and the issues they are facing at the time.
- There are opportunities to find affordable ways for people to maintain the security of their home.
- There are opportunities to encourage people to look out for each other's safety in the neighborhood without invading people's sense of privacy and personal space.

Housing stability





Housing stability

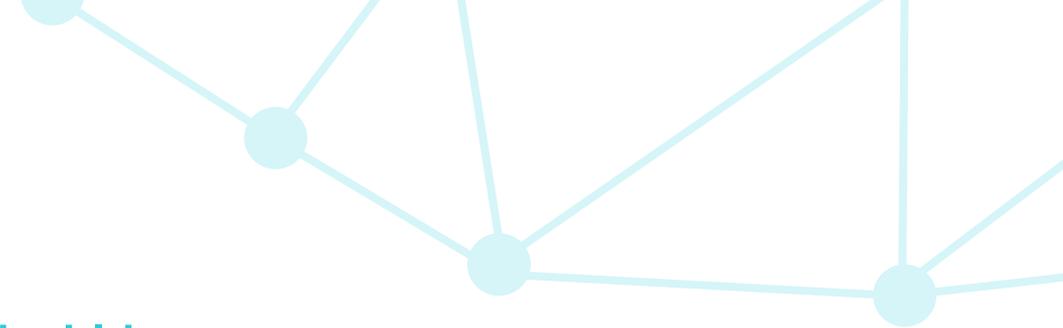
In our consultations we asked people if they could stay as long as they wanted where they were living. The uncertainty of not knowing whether you can stay can be stressful. Moving can also be stressful and can affect a person's mental health.

We found that people renting privately were more likely to say that they couldn't live for as long as they wanted in their place. Some people had good experiences and understanding landlords.

Some mentioned that they were often offered a short lease or affected by landlords selling property. They were often moving from one place to another.

Is there an opportunity here?

There are opportunities to ensure more people can stay in their home for as long as they want. For example, are opportunities to change how private rental works in NSW, or come up with more alternatives to public housing and private rental – e.g., more accessible shared ownership models?



Housing stability

Financial stress also affects whether someone can have stable housing. Housing is expensive in Sydney. We found that there are gaps in the system so that people aren't getting financial support at the right time.

For example, Some people were employed full-time and were in private rental, but couldn't take a break to look after their mental health. Some said it was because they were employed casually. They were afraid that if they took a break that they wouldn't be able to pay their rent.

Some said it was because they couldn't tell their employer about their mental health issues. So they even though they felt their mental health was deteriorating, they couldn't stop working if they wanted to stay where they were living. They didn't feel like they could get an support because they were in full-time employment.

Is there an opportunity here?

There are opportunities to fill these gaps so that people get the support when they need it, and not when they've slipped far enough to meet the eligibility criteria.



It's everyone's responsibility to do something about these issues.

Why?

- We can't leave it up to Government to address all these issues.

You might be thinking that you don't have enough power, or you may be tired from trying already.

It can be hard to make things happen. It takes time and energy, which might be hard to give when you're dealing with everything that's going on in your life. The Recovery Conference is about helping you connect with some people who you might want to work with, and some information about advocating for systemic change.

- Great ideas, and solutions can come from anyone.

In my role, I have seen many people express powerlessness, leaders in government agencies for example, may feel powerless because their work can be influenced by the Government and politics. I have also seen people, in seemingly less powerful positions, achieve changes that government agencies have been trying to achieve for years.

House to Home Project

What we're going to do





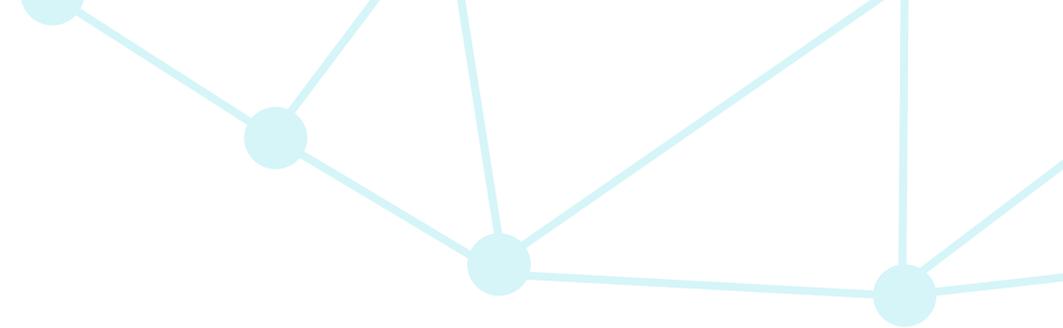
House to Home Project

What we're going to do

BEING have been formally analyzing all the data from our consultations. This step is really about making sure that we're following a good process in going through people's comments, and calculating statistics, for example, how many of the participants are renting privately.

We'll be then writing up a short report, and figuring out the best ways to share the findings and influence decision-makers.

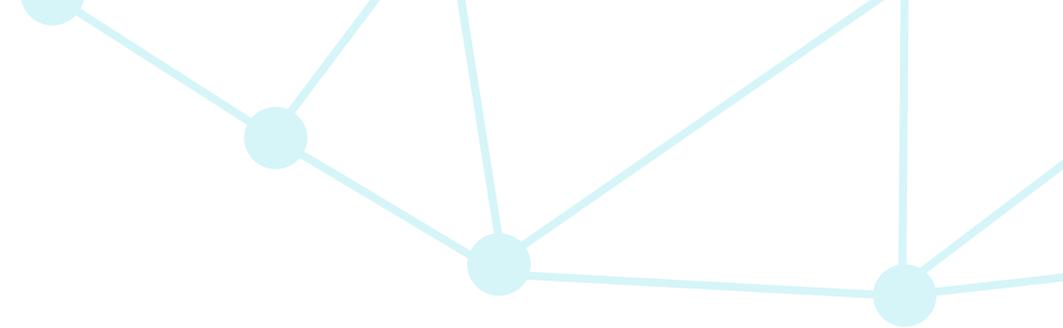
We'll be keeping people updated through our e-newsletter about how we go.



Video

'HOME' a short film by Milk Crate Theatre

To be released 2017



THANK YOU!

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