

**Exploring the connections  
between recidivism,  
homelessness and complex  
needs.**



**CRC**

# Homelessness Defined

- Primary homelessness i.e. Sleeping rough or with no conventional housing
- Secondary homelessness i.e. transient between temporary forms of housing such as shelters.
- Tertiary homelessness i.e. boarding houses, lack of tenure or poor amenities.

# Homelessness Defined

- Sleeping rough
- Emergency/temporary accommodation (shelters)
- Long-term living in institutions
- B&Bs, Hotels
- Informal – friends, squatting
- Intolerable conditions eg. overcrowding
- Involuntary sharing eg. Domestic Violence situation

# Systemic Factors

- Experience of incarceration
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Cumulative effect
- Institutionalisation

# Personal Factors

- **Mental Health** – 74% of NSW Prison Population with known conditions compared to 22% in general community
- **Intellectual Disability** – 18% of women and 27% of men scored below pass rate on ID screener. Of those, further 59% of women and 39% of men determined to have ID or borderline.
- **AOD Issues** – 80% of NSW Prison Population identified to have issues with Alcohol and Other Drugs.

# Housing

- Housing NSW (formerly NSW Department of Housing)
- Public Housing for low income tenants who meet the eligibility criteria for either:
  - General Housing
  - Priority Housing

# Housing

- Community Housing
- Supported Accommodation
- Crisis Accommodation

# Housing

## Private Rental

- Boarding Houses
- Backpacker Accommodation
- Own Tenancy

# Housing

## Housing NSW and Private Rental

- Rentstart: 3 weeks rent
- Private Rental Brokerage Service
- Tenancy Guarantee

# Greg

- Age 6 - Parents break up. Lives with Mum and new partner. Physically abused by mum's boyfriend
- Age 9 - abandoned by mum. Move in with neighbours. No contact with either parent. Starts smoking cigarettes and cannabis
- Age 15 - moves out from neighbours home into boarding house.
- Ongoing unstable accommodation: staying with friends (sometimes paying rent, sometimes not), boarding houses, caravan parks. Drug & alcohol use

# Greg

- Age 18 - first jail sentence.
- Age 27 - tenancy with Dept of Housing
- Age 32 – Jail; 12 month sentence. Flat trashed and stripped of all fixtures and fittings (debt to DoH)
- Age 33 – released. Accommodation Hostels, homeless refuges. Poly drug use.
- Age 34 – Jail; 16 month sentence (began methadone treatment)

# Greg

- Age 35 - released, living in hostels, emergency accommodation. First contact with CRC as a drop in client. Continued drug misuse – prescription medication
- Age 36 – Jail; 18 month sentence
- Age 38 - released to CRC halfway house, then rehoused by Community Housing.
- Age 40 – Jail; 9 month sentence
- Age 41 – moved back into former property

# **CRC Parolee Support Initiative**

- Established under the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord, an initiative of Housing NSW (formerly called NSW Dept of Housing)
- The Accord aims to assist social housing tenants with complex needs to receive the support services they need to live independently and maintain their tenancies.  
([www.housing.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au))

# Michelle

- Comes from a large family, Mum is an alcoholic and Dad died when she was a young woman.
- Minimal family support and she ends up acting as the “mum” for her younger siblings.
- Comes from a community where because of her ethnic origin she feels she is targeted by the Police.

# Michelle

- Started using Cannabis and Alcohol at 12.
- Heroin use started at 14 and dependent by 15.
- Dabbled in using other substances such as Benzos and Cocaine by 17.
- Poly substance user now.

# Michelle

- 14 when first convicted, had 20+ stints in Juvenile Detention.
- Minimum of 6 sentences in Correctional Centres.
- Never had independent tenancy, only ever lived in Boarding Houses at home or with friends/ on the street.

# **Parolee Support Initiative (PSI)**

PSI provides comprehensive support to parolees with an intellectual disability and/or mental health issues throughout transition period back into the community aiming explicitly for successful community integration.

# Parolee Support Initiative (PSI)

## The Program

- The project is a 2 year pilot program. – 5 staff, providing housing and intensive transitional support.
- Housing NSW Accommodation in Liverpool/Fairfield area.
- Intensive support program – up to 20 hours per week, 6 days per week for 6 months post release

# Parolee Support Initiative (PSI)

- PSI support begins 3 months prior to release with needs assessment and comprehensive support/case plan.
- Advocates and develops community supports.
- Agreements with Community Agencies in place to ensure continuity of care and support in order to accept clients on to the program e.g. Community Mental Health teams, Intellectual Disability Services, Probation and Parole.

# Links

- Homeless are 40 times more likely to be arrested and 20 times more likely to be imprisoned.<sup>1</sup>
- 70% of ex-inmates made the link between their homelessness and offending (Willis).<sup>2</sup>
- A quarter offended to get money for food or rent.<sup>3</sup>
- 50% identified being an ex-inmate was a barrier to securing accommodation.<sup>4</sup>

1. Baldry 2001  
2-4 Willis 2004

# Solutions

- Need to provide long-term supported accommodation.
- Increase the number of positions in existing post-release services or create new projects.
- Advocate for more affordable housing options/partnerships.