

# Housing Review

YFS works with people who are homeless – or about to become homeless – to help them find somewhere secure to live, and to develop the skills and supports they need to maintain a tenancy.



Housing and homelessness support is delivered through YFS' specialist housing team (Housing First), our intake, referral and advice service YFS Connect and through other parts of the organisation.

## Housing First

Housing First provides a mix of mobile support and supported crisis housing. Clients are primarily individuals and families who are already homeless when presenting:

- 70%** female
- 53%** young people (under 26)
- 21%** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 40%** of households include children
- 32%** were sleeping rough
- 56%** were in short-term or emergency accommodation, due to a lack of other options

## Outcomes

Housing First achieves positive outcomes for clients. Of 166 closed cases:

- 110** clients left the service in stable long-term accommodation
  - 55** went into private rental
  - 39** went into community housing
  - 16** went into public housing
- 25** clients left the service in short-term or rent-free accommodation
- 31** remained homeless or lost contact

## The Housing Review

The Housing Review was guided by the overarching question:

**How can YFS best help people get and stay housed?**

To answer this question, the Review considered:

- best practice in responding to homelessness
- drivers and causes of homelessness
- YFS' effectiveness at getting and keeping people housed
- the extent to which YFS' services work together to achieve housing-related goals
- cross-sector collaboration
- possible improvements to do this work better.

The Review drew on program data from 2019 and stakeholder consultations.



YFS Connect is a central contact point for people seeking access to resources and services within YFS. It is a high volume, crisis-oriented service.

**17,000** contacts in 2019

**65%** of contacts presented with a housing or homelessness issue<sup>1</sup>

**70%-80%** of client-facing time related to housing

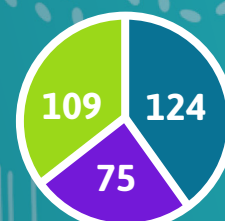
YFS Connect:

- provides information and advice
- advocates with real estate agents
- provides financial assistance to avoid eviction or establish new housing
- provides internal or external referrals.

As a result:

**308** housing outcomes were secured directly by YFS Connect using brokerage and many more people received advice and assistance.

## Outcomes



- Organised emergency accommodation
- Organised stable, ongoing housing
- Stabilised existing housing

<sup>1</sup>Of 11,000 contacts with presenting issues recorded.

## Other YFS Services

Housing is an issue across YFS.

**42%** of clients across 15 YFS services present with a housing issue

Housing issues add a layer of complexity. Other issues often need to be put on hold until housing is addressed, resulting in longer support periods.

**+5** additional support days on average for clients where housing is an issue

## Outcomes

YFS programs are successfully supporting clients to improve their housing circumstances:

**266** clients outside of Housing First and YFS Connect improved their housing situation (out of 540 that presented with a housing issue)<sup>2</sup>

## Strengths and challenges

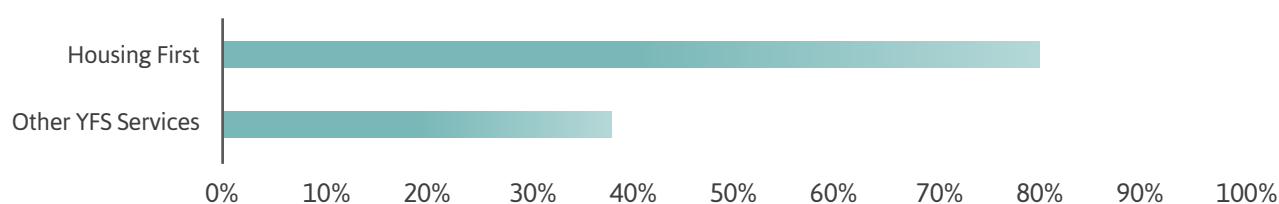
Housing First functions well as a crisis housing service. However, there are a number of structural barriers that limit effectiveness, including:

- housing affordability and availability
- limited supply of public housing, with long wait times
- poverty and unemployment
- discrimination and inequality.

YFS Connect fills an essential gap in Logan. It is one of the few options that provides open, same-day access with immediate support. However, the service is overwhelmed by the level of housing-related need in the community.

Housing and homelessness is recognised and addressed across YFS, but the specialist housing team achieves better housing outcomes than generalist teams. While most service delivery staff have a set of basic housing skills, they do not necessarily have the same detailed knowledge of tenancy laws, social housing criteria and sector relationships as housing specialists.

### Clients with improved housing circumstances



## Opportunities

### Internal collaboration

Within YFS, collaboration tends to be informal. There may be opportunities for mutual benefit through greater collaboration between Housing First and other YFS services by:

- linking secure long-term housing with ongoing support to address underlying issues
- utilising specialist housing skills and knowledge to achieve greater housing outcomes across the whole organisation.

<sup>2</sup>And where housing outcomes data was recorded

### Cross-sector collaboration

Collaboration on homelessness and housing is developing in Logan.

Greater collaboration across the service sector could:

- help to address structural barriers which hamper the efforts of various teams
- break down barriers between services making it easier for people to access the option that works best for them.