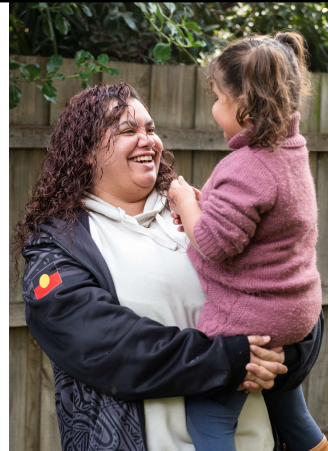


Acknowledgement of Country





COVID arrived in Australia early in 2020, with the first confirmed case confirmed on January 25 in Victoria. [<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/first-confirmed-case-of-novel-coronavirus-in-Australia>]

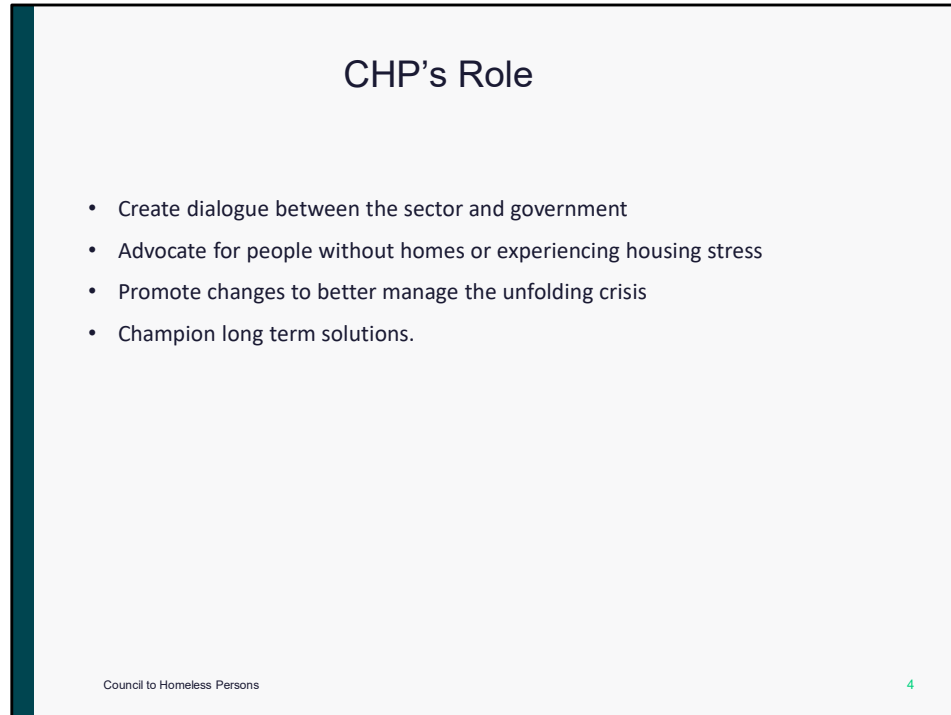
As we watched the spread of COVID internationally we saw significant lockdowns, significant infections and significant mortality. The sector was increasingly aware that people experiencing homelessness, living in severe overcrowding or in otherwise marginal accommodation would be particularly vulnerable – not just from a health and personal risk, but from requirements to “isolate at home”.

As Jenny Smith told media at the time “You can’t self-isolate on the street. You certainly can’t self-isolate without a secure home...”.

[<https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2020/03/you-cant-self-isolate-on-the-street/>]

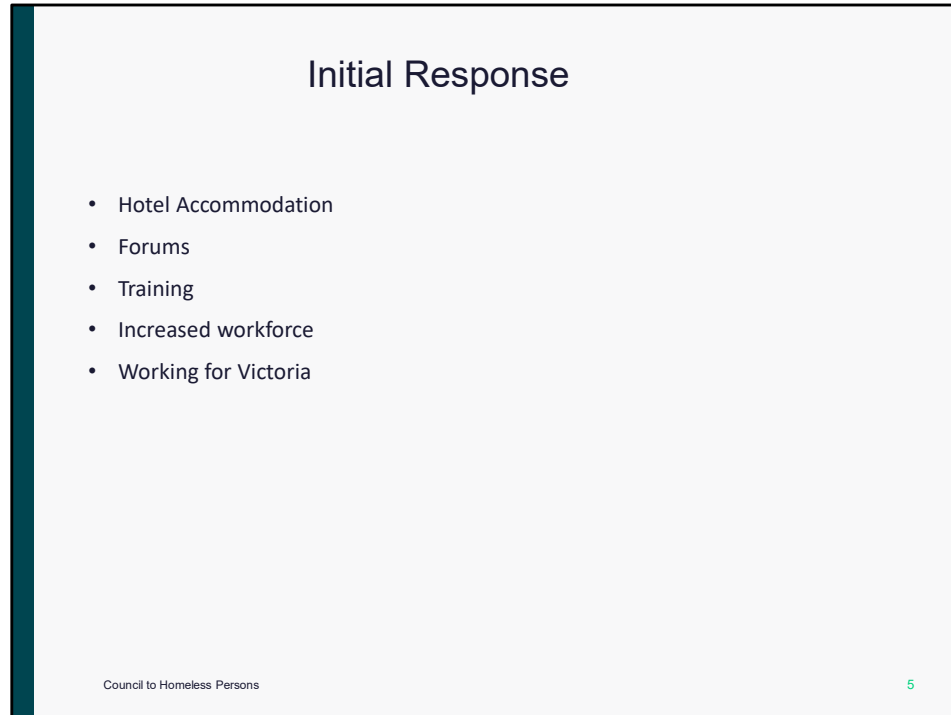
At the same time, the SHS was:

- supporting highly vulnerable people while managing their own safety
- having to change practice (both in person and through working remotely)
- facing significant increases in workload through a constantly increasing number of people needing assistance.



During the pandemic, CHP saw its role as one where we could:


- Connect the dots and create dialogue between the sector and government allowing information sharing opportunities, collaborative responses and ensure access to accurate information and advice.
- Advocate for people without homes or experiencing housing stress, who were at greatest risk from the impacts of COVID-19
- Advocate for changes to better manage the unfolding crisis through collecting and feeding up intel from on the ground as well as through evidence-based practice on solutions to being without a home
- Driving the long-term strategy to end homelessness for good and keeping being without a home as a priority in the public debate.



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The ongoing crisis



THE AGE

"That was the end of my world": a health shock sent Colin Johnstone onto the street. SCOTT McNAUGHTON

Council to Homeless Persons

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- While initially we may have hoped that the restrictions and lockdowns would be short and sharp, the pandemic went on - and as the pandemic went on, so did our advocacy for consumers and the sector
- During 2020-2021 alone, CHP attracted 750 stories, in print, online, radio, and television media outlets – particularly focused on advocating for people without homes or experiencing housing stress, who were at greatest risk from the impacts of COVID-19
- We were calling strongly for a strategy to ensure the 2000 people who were sheltering in hotels had an exit strategy that included both housing and support.
- We were delighted by the announcement of the From Homelessness to a Home program, founded on the Principles of Housing First and later the Homes For Families

initiative.

- To support the 2021 roll out of H2H, CHP worked with Victorian specialists to develop and deliver training to government, the sector, housing providers and other sectors.
- Frontline workers and managers were and continue to be supported through Communities of Practice, supported by CHP.
- Perhaps one of the most significant achievements, after years and years of lobbying government, was the announcement of the Big Housing Build. \$5.3 billion investment in social and affordable housing, delivering over 12,000 new dwellings.
- Solidified what CHP and the sector have been saying for years – you can't end homelessness without housing.

Advocates troubled by big cut to 'magnificent' program to house homeless

Cara Waters
May 11, 2022 — 11:48am

A program introduced during the pandemic to provide shelter for rough sleepers will be cut back in a move that homelessness advocates say could put people back on the streets.


The Council to Homeless Persons claimed a \$43 million a year cut to the From Homelessness to a Home program in the recent state government budget could see 1440 people miss out on support.

Funding cut reversed for 'brilliant' program that houses the homeless


Surveysa Hanley
June 7, 2022 — 4:29pm

Funding has been reinstated for a Victorian program introduced during the pandemic to provide shelter for rough sleepers that has been described as world's best practice for solving homelessness.

The sector **last month sounded alarm bells** over the Andrews government's decision to end the two-year From Homelessness to a Home program and warned the \$43 million cut in the May budget could have left 1440 people without support.



Council to Homeless Persons




KEY POINTS

- The Andrews government has four more months to fund the From Homelessness to a Home program further 12 months.
- The program provides housing and support for people, and has been described as 'world's best practice' for homelessness.

A circuit breaker: government backs down in fight over Victorian rough sleeper program


A massive Covid-driven investment saw the state's homeless population get the support needed to escape the cycle - but then the program was threatened

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Sonia Harrison was a regular rough sleeper until she was given a place and regular support on Victoria's From Homelessness to a Home program. Photograph: Ellen Smith/The Guardian

- However, despite the significant investment and goodwill, CHP still is fighting to embed the amazing lessons we have learnt from the pandemic
- CHP successfully lobbied government when the budget failed to refund H2H, risking approximately 1400 people not receiving the support they needed to sustain their housing.
- The program received an additional 12 months funding – and now we continue to lobby government for H2H to become a permanent solution for people experiencing chronic homelessness.



Key lessons

- Homelessness is a health issue
- Homelessness can be prevented and ended
- Need for long term plans and a National Homelessness Strategy
- Housing, housing, housing
- The strength of the SHS

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- We learnt so many things – including everyone across the world understanding the impacts of isolation, loneliness and how hard it is when you are removed from community and excluded from participation in things that make for a good life. The very thing that our consumers face on a daily basis.
- We saw that with proper protections for tenants, homelessness can be prevented (e.g. living wage, preventing evictions etc)
- With government commitment, a resourced sector, social housing and a long term plan – we can end homelessness
- To stop being without a home – we need housing.
- And we saw extraordinary work conducted by our sector.



In 2017, when CHP launched the industry transition plan, we wrote:

“We are living in a time of unprecedented change. Social and economic conditions, scientific and technological developments, and pressure on governments for tight human services funds are resulting in significant changes to the environments in which we live and work”...

The Plan was intended to identify our priorities for the future direction on the sector and to leverage the current good practice occurring across the SHS and address the challenges identified, in a strategic and systematic manner.

Since 2018 CHP has been working hard to implement the transition plan.

Organisational & Industry readiness goals
1. Embed person-centred models of practice
2. Build sector capacity in relation to outcomes
3. Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination
4. Build service capacity to deliver the contemporary suite of services to gain and sustain housing
5. Develop a consumer participation strategy
6. Strengthen consumer service pathways
7. Improve local service coordination
8. Build data provision and sharing protocols
9. Make effective use of new technologies
10. Develop SHS research priorities and complete research

Council to Homeless Persons 10

Goal 2:

Lirata engaged to:

- Develop CHP Outcomes Position Paper (2018)
- Convened working group and consulted with over 200 people in the sector.
- Delivered 'Getting outcome measurement right for the Specialist Homelessness Sector' (2020)
- Ongoing work from DFFH re Outcomes Framework

Goal 4:

SHS Learning Program now delivered by CHP –

Delivering the SHS Learning program – a combination of eLearn, virtual and face to face training and professional development sessions developed/delivered by subject matter experts

Continue to develop and deliver evidence based best practice training

Housing First Training

Housing First Europe Hub

Ongoing support to sector

Goal 8

CHP continues to resource the SHIP Champions/Data Working Group to improve data

integrity, improve SHIP/other CRM functionality and assist the sector to interrogate the data.
Risk assessment addition to SHIP
eReferrals
Update of Resource Register

Workforce capacity Building Goals
11. Build a SHS workforce development strategy
12. Develop workforce pathways
13. Develop an SHS workforce capability framework
14. Provide training & development to the SHS
15. Share and use data to inform SHS practice

Council to Homeless Persons 11

Goal 11:

Developed a Workforce Development Strategy positioning paper, extensive consultation and delivered final report. Soon to release research into capturing workforce data.

Goal 12:

- Cert IV Social Housing – Homelessness Addendum
- Building relationships with key education providers
- Working for Victoria
- Homelessness Sector Jobs Program (2022)
- Peer Resettlement Worker project

Goal 13:

- Development of SHS Capabilities Framework – to align with Centre for Excellence, DHHS Housing Officers and CHIA Vic
- Currently being embedded throughout SHS Learning Program
- Authorised by TP Governance groups

Goal 15: CHP continues to resource the SHIP Champions, Release and analyse DFFH LASN data, work with LASN's and other groups to better understand and utilise their data

