

Southern Homelessness Services Network

*2024 SHSN Networking
Forum and Expo*



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1. About the Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN)

The **Vision** of the Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) is an end to homelessness in Southern Region of Melbourne.

The **Mission** of the “Victorian Homelessness Networks is to facilitate, inform and support regional homelessness services and stakeholders to work together to co-ordinate services to people who are experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness.”

The Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) comprises all funded Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in the Southern Region of Melbourne including services providing crisis, transitional, long term, family violence and youth support and accommodation. Our members include Launch Housing, the Salvation Army, NEAMI, Wayss and Sacred Heart Mission. The SHSN also supports allied service sectors working in homelessness. The SHSN is a resource for the homelessness sector in the South.

The key strategic SHSN objectives are:

1. Working together to end homelessness
2. Acting as a conduit between the DFFH and the regional services sector on issues and trends to inform policy
3. Strengthening the coordinated homelessness service system in the best interests of clients

2. About the SHSN Networking Forum and Expo 2024

On 30 October, the SHSN hosted a Networking Forum and Expo at No.1 Events at the Malvern Valley Golf Course. The purpose of this report is to document the activities of the Forum and the feedback received to inform SHSN advocacy and the planning for future forums.

The purpose of the SHSN Networking Forum and Expo was to

- To foster networking and information sharing among members –through speed networking, workshops and expo tables/displays.
- To gather feedback/input about the SHSN and issues of interest such as training, communication/newsletter feedback, ideas for future forums, etc.

The audience for the Forum was homelessness agencies in Melbourne’s Southern Region and agencies working with the same target group (allied services) such as health, mental health, legal, youth, material aid and migrant services as well as local, State and Federal Governments. The Forum was promoted through the SHSN and associated networks including the SHSN newsletter and email list.

The program for the day was based on the successful interactive format used at previous events. The program highlighted key themes from the SHSN Strategic Plan 2024-25 as well as providing ample opportunities for networking and agency information sharing.

The Forum Program was organised into six parts (see the Agenda at Attachment A) –

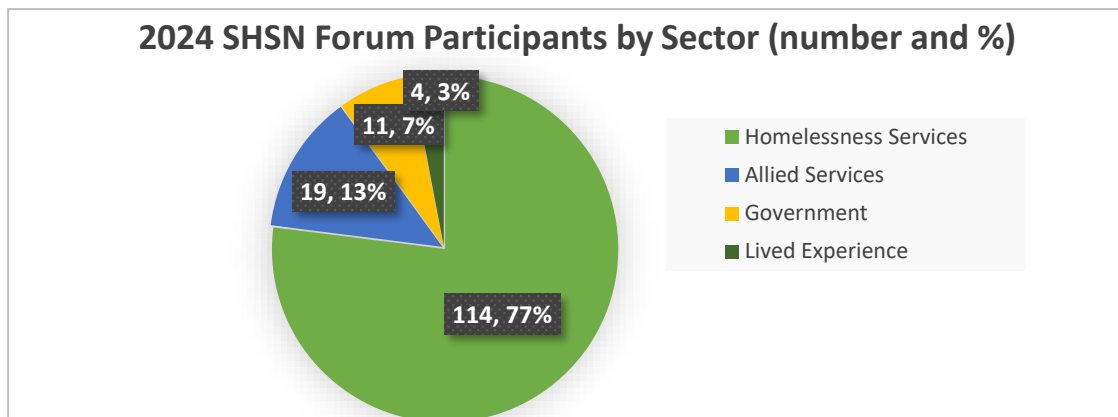
1. **Introduction to the SHSN (Network Coordinator)**
2. **Keynote speaker – Sherri Bruinhout, Executive Director Homelessness and Housing Support, Homes Victoria**
3. **Lived Experience Panel Discussion**
4. **Speed Networking**
5. **Workshops**
6. **Expo stalls (held before and after the main program)**

Forum registration was online using Humanitix.

2.1 Forum Attendance

198 forum registrations were received with 148 attendees on the day (including speakers and facilitators). The 2024 Forum was fully booked and was the largest forum that the SHSN has run. Figure 1 shows that the majority of forum participants were from the homelessness sector and SHSN member agencies (77%, 114 people). The remainder of the participants were from allied services, predominantly health and mental health and local and State Government. All SHSN member agencies participated in the 2024 Forum.

Figure 1. SHSN 2024 Networking Forum Participants



2.2 Expo Stalls

Participating agencies were invited to hold an expo stall to provide information to participants about their agency and programs. The following 11 agencies held an Expo stall:

- Launch Housing
- Melbourne City Mission
- Sacred Heart Mission
- Salvation Army Youth Services
- Windermere
- wayss
- Wintringham
- Frankston Mental Health & Wellbeing Local
- Children's Resource Program - Wayss
- Vincentcare – Olive's Place
- Better Health Network - Rhed

2.3 Forum Presentations

Ruth Gordon, SHSN Coordinator provided an overview of the activities of the SHSN over the last year. Ruth's presentation is at Attachment B. Sherri Bruinhout, Executive Director, Homelessness and Housing Support, Homes Victoria provided an overview of Victorian Government's work in homelessness and kindly answered questions from Forum participants. Sherri's presentation is at Attachment C.

2.4 Lived Experience Panel Discussion

The Lived Experience Panel was made up of four people with lived experience of homelessness in the Southern Region. The Panel participants were:

- Maurya Bourandanis
- Vasileios Tsialtas
- Sim Crawford
- Chris Reid

The panel was facilitated by Prof Robyn Martin, RMIT University, who has recently completed research on lived experience of homelessness for AHURI and worked with some of the panellists as part of this research. Each panellist brought their own perspective and had the opportunity to discuss particular points that they wanted the participants to understand including:

- the impact of the lived experience of systems
- the impact of participating as a lived experience expert
- the feeling of being stuck making it hard to grow and thrive
- the different forms of lived experience and participation

There was opportunity for the audience to reflect on the panel discussion and ask questions. The notes from the Lived Experience Panel are at Attachment D.



3. Forum Workshops

On registering online for the Forum through Humanitix, participants were asked to nominate their top three workshop preferences from a list of workshop topics and nine topics were selected. Each workshop was facilitated by someone with specific expertise in this area with a prepared set of workshop questions. The workshops could not have been run without the support and assistance of the facilitators and volunteer scribes.

The Workshop topics were:

- Family violence
- Mental health
- IAP/Entry points issues
- Rough sleeping
- Chronic Homelessness
- Young people
- First Nations homelessness
- Lived experience
- Transitional Housing & Support

Below is a summary of the workshop discussions. (See Attachment E for more detailed notes from the workshops).

3.1 Summary of Workshop Discussions

Family Violence and Homelessness

A number of key issues and challenges around family violence and homelessness were identified. These included lack of data around family violence and homelessness, lack of youth specific family violence supports, lack of safe housing options for women escaping family violence and the lack of options for people with pets.

Solutions identified included more collaboration across FV and homelessness sectors and allied sectors, better access to THMs and better support whilst in THMs, The Orange Door doing Assertive Outreach, purpose built transitional housing across the road from family violence case management services and child specific Family Violence workers at IAPs.

Mental Health and Homelessness

Key issues and barriers regarding mental health and homelessness included the disheartening lack of housing, making it hard for people experiencing homelessness to access mental health services. There are no referral pathways for people experiencing homelessness in need of mental health support – only the Emergency Department. There are long waiting times for people to access mental health services and they may not take people with AOD issues (dual diagnosis).

Suggestions to overcome these barriers included building more housing, more outreach to provide services where people are, improved referral pathways between services, invest in programs that work, embed lived experience in all aspects of our work and have flexible responses, particularly in terms of catchments and length of support periods.



Family Violence Workshop



IAP/Entry Points Workshop

IAP/Entry Points Issues

A wide range of issues and challenges affecting entry point services were identified including lack of resources, particularly for young people and family violence, staffing and sustainability issues and needing better short term accommodation options and better coordination. Lack of understanding from other sectors about the work of IAP and what they can offer clients was also identified as a challenge together with the poor communication channels available for staff to contact IAP about their clients.

Solutions included service re-design as it is no longer fit for purpose, more funding, data and case studies illustrating client journeys in the system, having the Minister shadow shift at IAP, better recording of entry point closures and unmet demand, consistent opening hours across entry points, encourage clients to share their experiences with Ministers and Council to Homeless Persons and looking at a centralised IAP database so clients do not have to repeat their stories.

Rough sleeping

The main barriers for rough sleepers are the lack of suitable housing options, financial problems, AOD issues and system and client fatigue. The solutions are more housing and more wraparound support (Housing First) and more access to supported accommodation (eg Common Ground models).

Chronic Homelessness

A range of system challenges were identified for people experiencing chronic homelessness including safety concerns for more complex clients, long wait times for referrals for complex clients to mental health/AOD and outreach psychiatric services and long wait times for social housing and increased cost of living. Other issues raised were staff burnout (especially given the challenges supporting people without any housing), IAP opening hours not being suitable for clients and too many breaches/evictions from community housing which is generally not suitable for people with complex needs.

The main solutions for people experiencing chronic homelessness are to build more public housing (not community housing) specifically for this cohort and more permanent supportive housing. This includes more housing and support for LGBTIQ+ people.

Young People at risk of and experiencing homelessness

A range of issues and barriers for young people were identified such as lack of work experience as a barrier to employment and then housing, 16-17 year olds not being eligible for social housing, lack of supported accommodation and youth specific one-stop shops, entry points not being youth friendly, and lack of services responding to intersectionality, eg neurodiversity, CALD.

Solutions identified in the workshop included keeping young people in their communities by making THMs permanent housing and using the Kids Under Cover model, private rental incentives for landlords to take young people, increase support periods to reflect young people's needs, a mental health passport so services are available when young people move areas, extra youth refuges particularly in the Frankston/Rosebud areas as well as sharing young people's experiences with the broader public.

Building relationships with real estate industry and landlords was seen as critical and a proposed regional youth advisory/advocacy committee were seen as key next steps in addressing young people's homelessness.



First Nations Workshop



Young People Workshop

First Nations Homelessness

First Nations people experience higher rates of homelessness due to the lasting impacts of colonisation, including systemic racism and inequality and many First Nations households suffer from poor housing conditions, overcrowding, and inadequate infrastructure, which worsen health and safety issues. There are limited specific support services for this cohort - mainstream services often lack cultural appropriateness, and Aboriginal organisations frequently face resource constraints.

Solutions include culturally appropriate housing, collaborative approaches to build partnerships between Aboriginal-led organisations and non-Aboriginal agencies and more funding to housing projects and homelessness services tailored for First Nations communities.

Advocacy strategies includes advocacy for funding and prioritisation of Aboriginal-led initiatives to ensure solutions are community-driven and done in a self-determined way, engaging allies and working at the agency, network and State level to develop culturally safe and appropriate responses to end First Nations homelessness.

Lived Experience of Homelessness

The challenges identifies around Lived Experience included the lack of best practice frameworks and guidelines to guide agencies, resourcing to implement lived experience approaches including peer workers and lived experience panels and advisers and appropriate remuneration, lack of appropriate supervision and support for Lived Experience staff and policies and procedures that stigmatise lived experience rather than promote its value.

The workshop recommended that the SHSN develop or support good practice Lived Experience frameworks and processes (eg Mental Health Lived Experience Framework), advocate on appropriate remuneration and other systems supports for Lived Experience. Lived Experience work is everyone' responsibility from client-facing staff to leadership and government. Scaffolding needs to be in place to support Lived Experience including frameworks and guidance for agencies and regular monitoring and reporting.

Transitional Housing and Support

The workshop identified a wide range of issues and challenges affecting transitional housing and support including insufficient and inappropriate stock, lack of oversight, gender transparency to nomination rights and neighbourhood/community fatigue. Solutions include more stock and more appropriate stock for different needs including young people, older people and people with disabilities as well as more appropriate supports, the need for holistic support models, including cultural supports and flexibility regarding stock. The workshop recommended exploring different models of support, directing taxes/investment to more housing, implementing short term fixes as well as the need for long term planning around transitional housing and support, private rental caps/subsidies and increasing community awareness and understanding of homelessness.

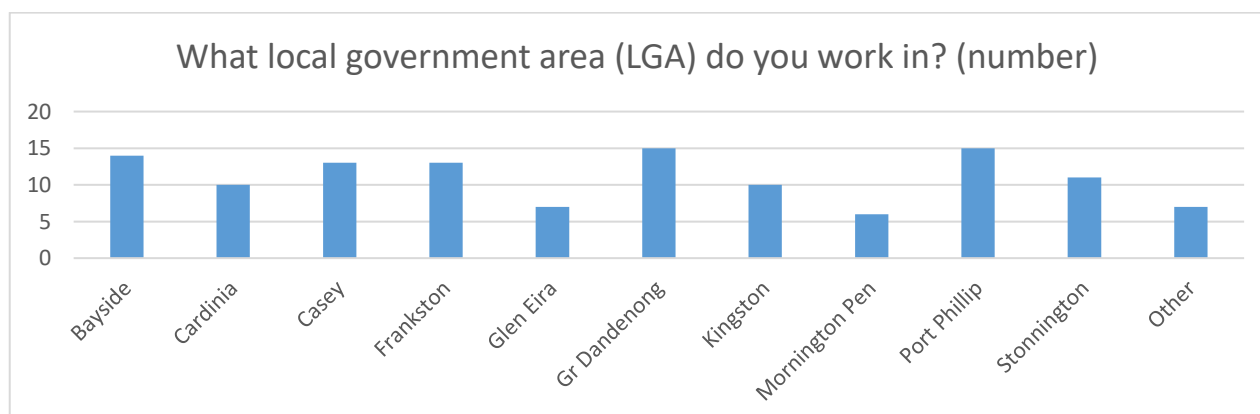
4. SHSN Forum Feedback

Forum participants were invited to complete an online forum feedback form using Microsoft Forms. 50 forms were completed representing a response rate of 34%. Quotes from the surveys are included in this section. The respondents were from:

- Homelessness agencies (80%)
- Allied agencies (12%)
- Lived Experience (4%)
- Government (4%)

Survey respondents worked across the whole Southern region with higher representation from the City of Port Phillip and Greater Dandenong and lower participation from Mornington Peninsula and Glen Eira (see Figure 2 below). Other included other regions and LGAs and Statewide services.

Figure 2 2024 SHSN Forum participants – areas worked in

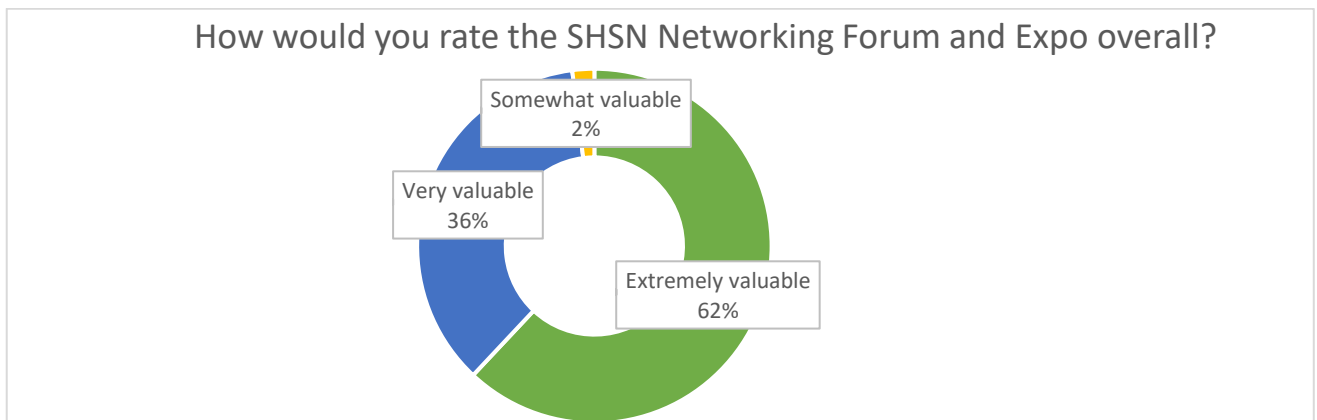


4.1 Overall Forum Feedback

98% of respondents said they would attend another SHSN Forum in the future with only one respondent saying they might attend.

The majority of respondents rated the SHSN Networking and Expo “very or extremely valuable” (98%) with no respondents finding the event not valuable (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Overall rating for 2024 SHSN Forum and Expo

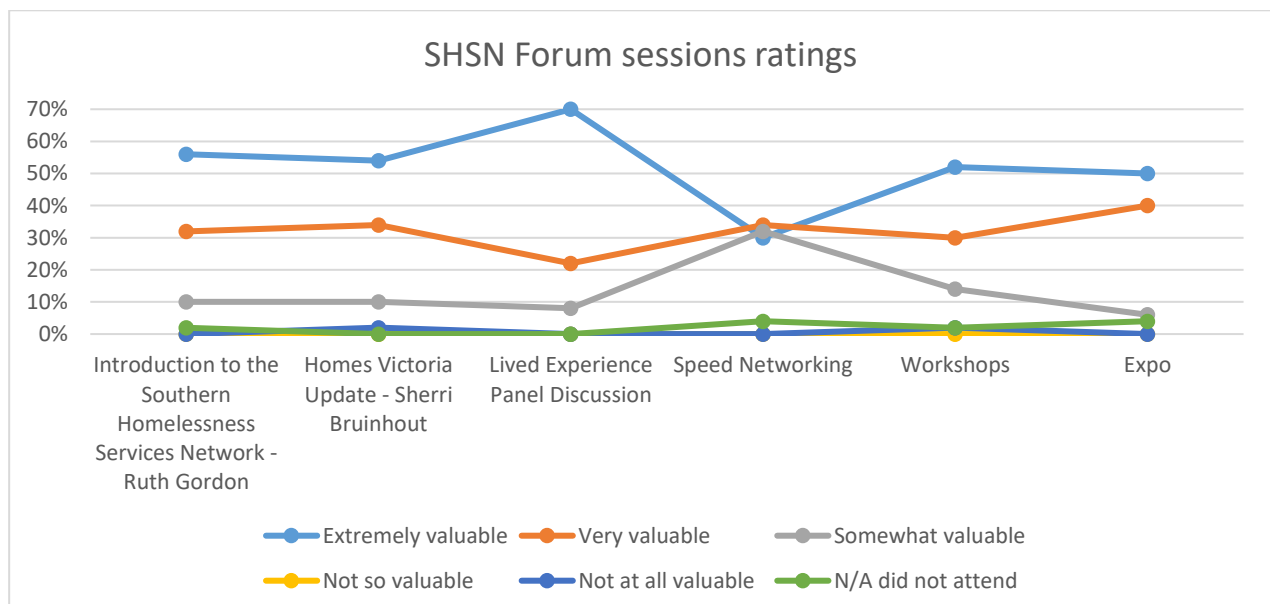


The Forum length was generally agreed to be about right for most survey respondents, tending towards a request for slightly more time rather than less.

The majority of respondents found all of the forum sessions extremely valuable or very valuable (see Figure 4). Only two respondents found two sessions not valuable. The Lived Experience Panel Discussion was rated the highest with 70% of respondents finding this session extremely valuable and 22% finding it very valuable, with 92% finding it extremely or very valuable.

98% of respondents found the presentation on the Homes Victoria Update and the Introduction to the SHSN presentation valuable or higher. 96% of respondents found the workshops and the speed networking valuable or higher. 96% of respondents found the expo valuable or higher while the remaining 4% of respondents did not attend the expo.

Figure 4 2024 SHSN Forum ratings



4.2 Most useful aspects of the Forum

Nearly half of the respondents mentioned that networking was the most useful aspect of the Forum. Information sharing, speakers, workshops, expo, updates and learning about other agencies and services were also important aspects of the Forum for respondents. Participants found the Homes Victoria update, workshops and the Lived Experience Panel most useful. Respondents enjoyed the variety of activities offered and found it well-organised and smoothly run.

I enjoy the workshops, they offer an opportunity for brainstorming, hearing from other organisations and discussing what other organisations are seeing on the ground.

The workshops and to be able to talk to others about an area of passion

Sherri Bruinhout's presentation was wonderful. To see the data/stats and know that there was oversight and a plan moving forward in the homelessness space and we were being seen and heard.

Sherri was inspiring and made me feel like real change is possible.

Listening to Sherri discuss the data and that they know what is happening out here in the agencies and homeless world.

Lived experience was amazing!!"

I really enjoyed the lived experience panel most of all. I enjoyed the networking opportunities, the speed networking and the workshops.

Absolutely loved hearing lived experience views. I think it was helpful to meet everyone from the sector at the end in a more informal setting

The lived experience people gave insightful and interesting perspectives on the various systemic and economic barriers that they've faced from a first hand experience. These people need to be valued and listened to and treated with respect and admired for their contributions to help shape future government programs and funding.

Developing a stronger understanding of pathways for clients, and building connections with workers from other organisations with shared experiences

Meeting the variety of services available to refer my clients to for support.

The "forced" networking was really wonderful. I enjoy networking but sometimes find it hard to start conversations but the colour system worked.

Great opportunity for all the organisations to come together and share their experience and expertise--excellent networking

Also great for networking and meeting some people in person for first time, not just on teams

Putting faces to names and being able to speak to the current housing crisis with peers who are passionate defenders of human rights.

Hearing about good news stories and sharing resources.

Great to have all the stalls and have everyone in the same room together

Highlighting of First Nations specific housing options (awesome!)

I found everything about the forum useful. It was just the right amount of every category. Nothing went too long, it was relaxed informative and people seemed to also have fun. I know I did. The food was good too.

4.3 Suggested Improvements

The main suggestions for improvement were the noise levels in the room during the breakout sessions (workshops and speed networking) made it difficult to hear, though this was improved after last year's feedback with the addition of an extra space. (Note that it is challenging finding an appropriate venue that is within budget, without charging participants which has been the SHSN approach to holding forums).

Several respondents mentioned the lack of a break during the program would be an improvement.

Hearing about new innovative programs.

A break between talks and networking would have been good. I felt low energy going into the networking after all that information.

More networking would be great, longer workshops and perhaps some understanding of what will be done with the workshop findings?

This year was better set up for Expo part than last years.

More integration with other services (mental health, AOD, disability etc). it would be great to present this information to service workers outside the housing sector

More clear information on the data, as the data presented by Homes Victoria (decrease in homelessness?) advised differently to what other data shows (increase in homelessness?)

More acknowledgement of the impacts of housing insecurity on minority groups, i.e. first nations people, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people etc.

Maybe more opportunity from people from specific services to raise their hand and say "I work for this organisation, ask me anything"

The speed networking can be tricky! You do end up spending too long talking to the one person, or wanting to talk more to one person but being time restricted

Full day event with more shorter workshops where you can sit and collaborate with others with activities or listen to speakers.

More time for workshops/ being able to attend more than one

I feel I am providing the same feedback and hearing the same things in workshops each year. I feel presentation on practical activities would be more useful. Give us something we could take back to our practice

I would prefer to move away from the workshops. We repeat the same things over and over again, and advocacy is a specialist area. Not that we don't believe that it is an important action (as it is) however for operational staff on the ground this is not top of our list - plus there are many forums, sector meetings and working group activities underway across the region. We know what the problems are, but in our roles it is not our role to work on these issues. Having this time to hear from further presenters would be beneficial - on topics that are useful in our work and that we can implement to improve our practice with clients.

A new venue would be great - car parking is a huge problem and for those of us that are travelling a long way hard to get to at the start time.

Rotate location - something in Frankston/Dandenong/Casey area

Some more youth specific speakers and content

Needs to be longer!

Earlier lunch time so there is more space for casual networking without the speed networking

Maybe one more formal discussion after the lunch, to end the day.

2024 was close to perfection, hard to identify any potential improvements

Nothing really, it was a great event and the food was really nice.

This was my first time at the forum, and I loved it. can't think of any improvements needed.

I don't think it can be improved, as long as it continues to be simple, current and informative. This forum has the right balance of events to keep attendees engaged and interested from start to end.

4.4 Use of information from Forum

Participants were asked how they plan to use the information from the Forum in their work. The responses in the feedback survey were varied from using the information to make better referrals and collaborating for better client outcomes to sharing information and learnings with their colleagues and more networking. Some respondents said they would follow up with contacts made at the Forum and share resources with their colleagues in their agencies.

Supporting clients experiencing housing problems more effectively.

Updating service information, following up on some of the opportunities discussed with other services (site visits, possible collaborations), discuss some possible improvements discussed at our workshop.

All the information is useful when responding to Homelessness, it is also great to learn about different housing services that may be able to support the community I work with.

One of the lived experience presenters talked about THMs (and other models) are not long-term housing; there is restrictions on engagement and activities that can be undertaken in this housing options. It was good to be reminded and to use this to motivate people to aim for improved long term housing options - people should have long term housing where they are in control of their service engagement and day-to-day functions.

Going to contact someone I met in the workshop to find out more about their process as I am looking to implement something similar in my service

To inform my direct work with clients, but also how I discuss these topics with other professionals

I will use my knowledge gained and networking information to make appropriate referrals. It helps me to feel more confident in my role. Thank you so much for a wonderful day. Thank you to all the people who put in the hard yards to make it such a great event. I'm going to be remembering this one for a while!

Validates practice and pathways/ understandings

I have already told my colleagues lots about it and I will contact the people I met from Windermere/Detour/Kingston etc

I plan to connect with some of the contacts I made and share information about our program.

Looking at opportunities to foster relationships with organisations supporting young people in our area

Using some of the connections and new networking connections to enhance my and my team's practice.

Sharing the resources and knowledge with others in my team who could not attend

Speaking strongly on the need for accurate data keeping and how this affects funding.

Keep the variety of services available in mind for when I need to refer my clients.

Better referrals for clients. Information sharing with team leaders and coworkers.

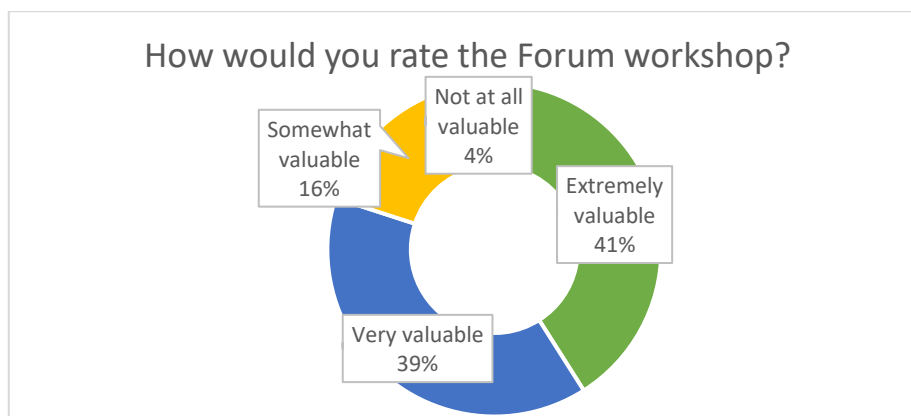
Foster relationships with people I networked with - possible referral to Ngwala for housing support "

I have already done a referral to one of the services I met on the day

4.5 Workshops Feedback

49 respondents rated the workshops with 96% of respondents finding the workshops valuable. 80% of respondents rated the workshops extremely or very valuable and only two respondents rated the workshop not so valuable (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Forum Workshop Rating



The majority of feedback on the workshops was very positive with participants finding the opportunity for discussion and connection energising and stimulating. Again the noisiness in the room was raised as an issue. Some workshops had large numbers and some had small numbers and this affected the information exchange and group dynamics. Some suggested having the opportunity to participate in more than one workshop or having a longer session for the workshops. Positive feedback was received about the workshop facilitators.

We had some creative ideas for system improvement

Really great to hear how IAPs work and their pain points

Good mix of facilitation as well as letting conversation take a natural pathway at times. Good to make connections with others with the same area of passion

It was a smaller group and everybody was able to contribute. The facilitators were informed and did a great job of keeping the conversation flowing.

A fantastic workshop, great conversation and interesting to hear about the challenges people are facing when working with rough sleepers.

Needed more time and structure

We all discussed how we work with rough sleepers and discussed how often people don't want the options like rooming house/caravan park etc

It was very good and well facilitated. Lots of great ideas in the room, need to find \$ to implement

Very good to discuss issues and barriers

Facilitated well and conversations were great

Need to be organised with content to deliver. Last year's one was fantastic.

I have already covered this earlier in the feedback. These sessions are not a good use of time. We know the issues, but we are not paid to solve these - we are paid to support our clients. There was also no information provided on where our information/suggestions would go and what would be done with them next.

Same feedback presented as always. There could be other forums for discussing advocacy. Frontline workers are stretched beyond belief and don't always have the space in their minds for this and then feel guilt about not being able to provide housing options when there are no housing options

Was more a discussion than a workshop - would be good to incorporate some activities as discussions were mainly between 1-2 people in the group

Good questions, probably could have benefited from presenters directing questions at individuals to allow for more collaboration from the quieter people

Probably could have had more time for discussions in the workshop. It felt rushed as it was towards the end of the day.

The IAP group contained a very passionate bunch of staff, and I could see the solutions focus at the end which is always helpful. The facilitators were fantastic mediators :)

Do hope follow up on closures of entry points due to staff shortages and correct records of non-servicing due to this and hang ups. I can wait over an hour to speak with a worker on the phone. Services shouldn't feel threatened by voicing situation by funding bodies and transparency of what consumers are up against trying to getting a service.

Perhaps too short and rushed. Good content and facilitated well.

It was hard at times to hear what everyone was saying however, it was very invaluable to hear what was being shared

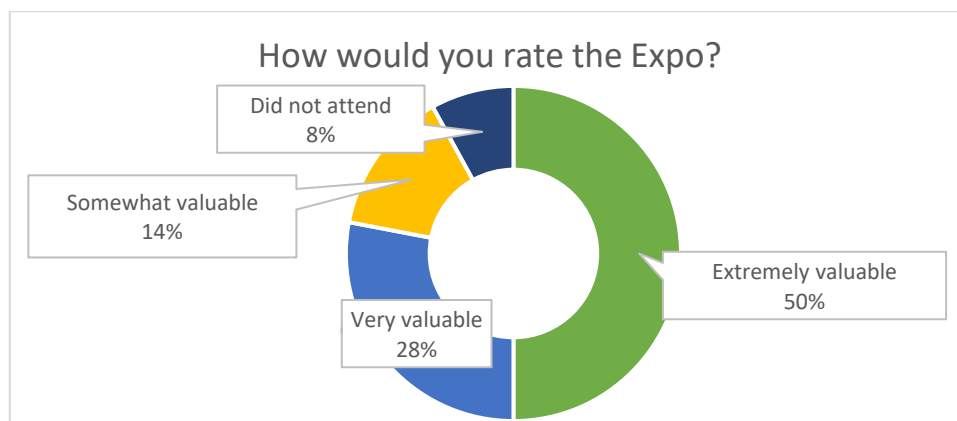
Good start in raising, unpacking and problem-solving issues. Would be great to continue the discussion to advise decision makers.

I think it should have been explained beforehand that the workshops would be more collaborative. There was an assumption from participants that the presenters were going to be giving us a presentation/information, not facilitating a discussion. But the facilitator did a great job of facilitating and it sparked great discussion.

4.6 Expo Feedback

92% of respondents reported visiting the Expo stalls. 92% of respondents found the expo valuable. 78% of respondents rated the expo extremely or very valuable and only no respondents rated the expo not valuable (see Figure 6). Four respondents did not attend the expo.

Figure 6 Expo Rating



Feedback on the Expo was positive with most respondents finding it useful and good for networking. A larger space with better acoustics was used for the expo this year. Ideas for improvements included having a greater variety of stalls, covering all council areas of the region. Note that all participants were invited to hold stalls on registration. The knowledge of the stallholders was appreciated by participants as well as brochure and resources to take away and share with other staff.

Expo stall holders found it useful to hold the stall and reported few issues with the organisation of the stalls.

More time to explore

Great group of organisations and a real buzz about the place.

Very good, better set up than last year allowed crowd to flow well

The information both on the stands and from the staff was enormously helpful and educative.

Got to meet and talk to people working on the ground so could make instant connections

great to have service resources to take away

Great info, lots of stuff to take away, loved the Parity magazine and the Windermere colouring book

Awesome chance to network and know about other services

really good, wealth of knowledge from all the stall holders

great to see a range of services show casing their services, nice mix and balance

The expo stalls were a key highlight and a great opportunity to network and gather information on other organisations

It was very valuable and I was able to collect brochures to share with my team.

Perhaps some more time allocated for the expo.

It would be great if more organisations/services had participated

Most stalls had locations or target audiences that were not relevant for my services

Great to have access to this information however not all were in the lgas we support. That is not a criticism as we often refer to other LGA's so good to know what is available.

All the stallholders were great, very engaging.

Good stuff! Loved the brochures. The Launch Housing snakes and ladders game was a bit depressing but got me engaged with the stall and chatting to the workers. I liked that one of their characters used they/them pronouns!

Overall a great day and I got plenty of chances to meet others in the sector and learn about other services. The room with the expo stalls got a bit noisy at times and it was hard to hear, particularly if you're someone that struggles with sensory overload. Otherwise it was a really informative and well organised event.

Sharing info on our services with participants, building networks via these discussions.

Would be good if there was more information about who was to set up where. We set up with another Salvation Army service. There was actually room for us to have our own stall this time but we didn't know this and were squished in a corner.

No issues at all, it was easy to set up our stall and there was plenty of room, it was just a bit too noisy in the room as mentioned before, maybe a slightly bigger space would have helped.

I found the expo stall really easy to manage and being able to chat with other professionals about what we do was really valuable.

It was very easy and gave frontline staff the opportunity to provide info on SHM to sector colleagues

4.7 SHSN Practitioner Group Feedback

The SHSN Practitioner Group is an online group that meets several times per year. The SHSN Practitioner Group offers a way to connect and learn between the annual SHSN Forums. Some questions about the Practitioner Group were included in the survey.

Just over half of the survey respondents were aware of the SHSN Practitioner Group, with about one third unaware and a small number unsure. Just over half of respondents said they are interested in the Practitioner Group and nearly one quarter said they might be interested. 20% of respondents said they would not be interested in the Practitioner Group.

Respondents offered the following topics for consideration by the Practitioner Group (which could also be considered for the 2025 Forum):

- Housing needs for complex clients i.e Disability & Mental Health that don't qualify for NDIS accommodation. Mental Health & AOD housing options
- Info about IAPs and how they work
- Complex mental health presentations in crisis. Police and hospital services.
- The lady from the government department stated that housing was being built in the South East but didn't elaborate on the suburbs or what organisations would be responsible for filling them and referral pathways.
- Transitional housing
- Homes Vic – VHR
- CHP's Person Centred Practice model - hearing more about this as a practical learning opportunity. Presentation on the new Homelessness Guidelines (when they are finally released).
- Trauma informed practice, attachments, addiction, housing-
- Training in using AIHW reporting so we are all on the same page and data is valuable
- access to crisis accommodation options. Ways to improve our services
- youth themes, THM and public housing
- Focus on children's experiences, their needs, voices, and visibility in the homelessness sector
- Resources sharing for robust supported accommodation options
- Local Gov. Local Housing agencies, workers and their ideas on dealing with the current situation.
- Health issues and improving health services for people
- Programs like H2H, J2SI, Pride in Place, Ngwala, tips and tricks for the VHR I would love to hear more about options for people (particularly young people) experiencing homelessness to access funding for neuropsych assessments. Getting a diagnosis seems so out of reach for most people, let alone someone that is experiencing homelessness. FRMP used to fund but not anymore.
- Housing options for YP with complex issues that may also be exhibiting anti social behaviours impacting neighbours and putting them at risk of eviction, current THM stock and models not suitable.
- Zero project update
- More about the intersection between mental health and homelessness and how we can address this cycle

4.8 Final Comments

A number of respondents made further comment about the Forum, Expo or SHSN overall which were generally reiterating their positive feedback about the Forum including many positive comments about the venue and catering and more feedback about the noise levels in the main room during the breakout sessions. Some recommendations were made about including more diverse presenters and providing for people who are neurodivergent. Specific comments included:

I appreciate the opportunity for services and local government to come together. It can be isolating working in Homelessness response in local government as it is often one portion of our portfolios so we do not have capacity to attend many networks / training on Homelessness. I enjoy coming to this expo each year and am looking forward to 2025's.

Expo area could have been in a bigger to 1) facilitate more stalls and 2) make it less loud/crowded (and therefore more neurodivergent/mental health/disability friendly).

It would be more neurodivergent friendly if the overhead lights in the main room were dimmed or off, with the room being lit by the natural light from the windows.

More diverse presenters (i.e. more people of colour, First Nations people, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people etc).

I think it would have been more beneficial if the lived experience workers were able to present their experiences/research/requests of the service themselves, rather than being asked questions. I think a lot of the time lived experience workers from all sectors are asked the same questions (what would you want to have happened differently, what advice would you give workers/government etc) and we all know the answers, but I want to hear exactly what the presenters WANT to present.

Greater acknowledgement of the impacts of queerphobia on LGBTQ+ clients need for and access to housing supports, and a commitment from services to better educate themselves and do those secondary consults to ensure they are supporting their LGBTQ+ clients better.

Use a location that has gender neutral bathrooms (if they aren't already at the location, you can put signs up on the existing bathrooms that say ""gender neutral bathroom"" and ""gender neutral bathroom with urinals""). + include people's pronouns on their badges, or provide a designated space on the badges to list your pronouns. These small changes make an event more trans friendly.

Catering could have included more vegan options that are more than just salad or salad in bread.

Perhaps slightly louder microphone and speakers/screens closer to the back

A break in the morning for refreshments would have been welcomed. The length of the day was suitable, and catered lunch was appreciated.

It was a wonderful event. thank you to all who contributed to making the event successful.

Beautiful venue, some of us had difficulty hearing at the back though (my fault for being late!)

Great food and venue - I would suggest smaller group activities to allow people to collaborate more as the speed networking discussion was a bit unstructured which made it a bit awkward

It actually beggared belief and was incredibly deflating working in Dandenong after Sherri Bruinhout was asked why wasn't Dandenong one of the LGAs where housing was going to be built given the amount of homelessness in the area. Sherri then said-- Is Dandenong in Southern? as I'm not from this area, someone then said yes, it's in Southern.

The parking at the venue wasn't great- we had to walk a long way due to the parking being so far away and I would be concerned if someone with disabilities was attending

Accoustic music at the entrance of the venue [would be good].

You do a great job organising and it was managed well! Congratulations!

It was a great day, and you did an amazing job organising. I think the venue is good - can get noisy, but I don't think you can do much with that.

I found the forum extremely valuable and received a lot of insightful information from workers, the lived experience people and I was able to collect informative brochures to read later and to share with my team.

The gluten free dietary needs food was great too.

Good selection of food to meet various needs.

Great lunch and good venue. Great atmosphere too.

Great day, beautiful location, great food and wonderful speakers. Thank you for all the effort - it was a really valuable day.

Beautiful venue, excellent catering and plenty of food. Really great speakers and good turn out so great opportunity to meet others in the sector. Well done!

Loved it. Would come to another in a heart beat.