



This evaluation has been provided with a grant from the City of Fremantle



WHAT IS 20 LIVES 20 HOMES?

The 20 Lives 20 Homes (20 Lives) program is a local place-based response to homelessness in the Fremantle area. It is focused on providing supported and sustainable housing for 20 individuals who have been identified as the most vulnerable* within the homelessness population of Fremantle.

Supported through philanthropic donations 20 Lives is an extension of the *Housing First* initiative 50 Lives 50 Homes (50 Lives) collaborative impact project. 50 Lives is in the process of transitioning into a broader Zero Project to expand the model to other communities and adopt an Advance to Zero methodology aimed at ending rough sleeping. *Housing First* principles are key to driving the aims of 20 Lives, prescribing safe and permanent housing as a priority, provided prior to, and not conditional upon, addressing other health and well-being issues.

20 Lives is a pilot program with highly experienced Outreach Case Workers and service support provided by St Patrick's Community Support Centre with Ruah Community Services coordinating the backbone response and providing managed after hours support with a Case Worker and a Homeless Healthcare Nurse visiting clients through the After Hours Support Service (AHSS), and Foundation Housing piloting an innovative rental brokerage project to assist in sourcing private housing stock.

The 20 Lives initiative is highlighted in the recently released WA Department of Communities 10 Year Strategy on Homelessness as an innovative example of a place-based adaptation of the 50 Lives model in WA.

AIMS OF 20 LIVES

- 1 To broker and sustainably house 20 of the most vulnerable* street present homeless people in Fremantle, into long term housing.
- 2 To remove barriers to successful long-term housing, through a person-centred and trauma informed approach.
- 3 To work with the individuals to put in place the wrap-around services required for their success.



WHO HAS 20 LIVES SUPPORTED?

(As at 31 August 2020)

21 PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN TOTAL:



62% MALE
38% FEMALE



47 YEARS AVERAGE AGE
(RANGE: 33-63)



74% ABORIGINAL AND/ OR
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

TIME SPENT HOMELESS



6.9 YEARS

ON AVERAGE SPENT HOMELESS

equivalent to

53,077 NIGHTS

COLLECTIVELY SLEEPING ROUGH

(At the time of undertaking the VI-SPDAT*)

*VI-SPDAT Vulnerability Index -Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool

This snapshot has been prepared as part of the independent UWA evaluation of the 20 Lives 20 Homes project

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20 LIVES PARTNERSHIP

St Patrick's Community Support Centre

St Pat's, is a NFP organisation working in the Southern Metropolitan area of Perth with people either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Within the partnership, St Pat's provides Outreach Case Workers for the 20 Lives program as well as their usual services, and lodging facility.

Ruah Community Services

Ruah, a NFP organisation, provides the backbone support for the 20 Lives program with a part time Project Worker to assist in the coordination and management of the project. Ruah also coordinates after hours support through the AHSS.

Foundation Housing

Foundation Housing is a NFP community housing provider specialising in tenancy management, support and property development. Accommodation options include lodging houses, units, apartments and family homes. Foundation Housing is providing extra housing options through the Private Rental Brokerage Project.



Outreach Case Workers, St Pat's

WHERE HAVE PEOPLE BEEN HOUSED? (AS AT 30 AUGUST 2020)



9 people are in lodging/boarding houses with a License to Occupy (LTO), including one couple



2 people are couch surfing – waiting for homes to become available



5 people are in private rentals through the Private Rental Brokerage Project



1 person has reunited with family, and is now supported by 50 Lives and recently employed



3 people are in public housing through the Dept. of Communities



1 person is incarcerated and no longer in the 20 Lives program

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY 20 LIVES

An important element of the *Housing First* model is that wraparound support is provided to people to access suitable housing and then sustain their tenancy, once housed. This is a key element in assisting people to adjust to new circumstances and to remain in their housing long-term.

"We offered the property to (client) and he was over the moon stating he would move anywhere in Perth as long as he had a roof over his head. (client) couldn't be more happier in his unit and is doing really well."

– 20 Lives Outreach Case Worker

20 Lives support provided to people has included:

Connecting people to financial advice such as Jacaranda Financial Services

Intensive case management with 20 Lives Outreach Case Workers

Assistance with applications for housing, personal ID documents benefit applications as required

Assistance with practical household items through St Pat's Emergency Relief as well as whitegoods and vouchers through Ruah

Health services: Silver Chain Homeless Healthcare Alma St Mental Health Street Dr Crossroads Palmerston & +AOD* Services

Access to home visits and support through the Ruah AHSS

* Alcohol and Other Drugs

HEALTH USE AND COSTS PRIOR TO 20 LIVES

Of the 21 individuals supported via 20 Lives, 13 individuals were matched within our administrative dataset. The below figures and costs are thus based on their data only and may not be reflective of the entire 21 individuals supported through 20 Lives.

In the three years before consenting to 20 Lives, these individuals had the following hospital interactions:



80

Emergency Presentations



25%
Injury /
Poisoning



19%
AOD Use



13%
Circulatory/
Respiratory



28 Ambulance Arrivals to ED



26 Inpatient Admissions



23%
AOD Use



15%
Circulatory/
Respiratory



15%
Mental Health
& Behavioural

totaling

46 Inpatient Days



Aggregate Cost
Over Three Years

\$215,806

OR

Per Person Per
Year (n=13)

\$5,533



Costs based on Round 22 of the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority (IHPA) of \$857 per ED presentation and \$2,697 per inpatient day in WA. Ambulance costs based on the Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2018 of \$828 per arrival.

SUPPORTING HEALTH NEEDS

People supported by 20 Lives often have multiple issues they are dealing with aside from being homeless, including health, mental health and/or AOD issues. Supporting people to access health services in the community has been a key area of support for the 20 Lives program.

"So there's a good collaborative – but also a good link with street mental health services, that's huge. We can do referrals to other mental health services but having a good link there and, also, we've done a few case management meetings with them but it certainly helps."

"Three clients and we got two pending to Silver Chain, so that's an additional service that came out because of COVID-19, that's made a huge difference but also making sure their health is followed up..."

"I think linking in with –the social work department, (we) worked really closely with them to ensure that we get discharge summaries so then we can make sure that they'd follow up with appointments...and just speaking with, health care (workers) so they know straight away that their clients are coming to talk to us and we'll go and talk to them.."

- Outreach Case Workers commenting on collaborative healthcare for people in 20 Lives

HOUSING OPTIONS TO DATE

With a shortage of public housing in WA and the importance of choice embedded in the *Housing First* model, 20 Lives has supported people to access a range of housing options including public housing, private rentals and lodging/boarding houses.

From a *Housing First* perspective, preferred housing is long-term, either through low-cost social housing or private affordable (low cost) rental. The 20 Lives partners have experienced difficulties sourcing this type of housing in Fremantle and surrounding areas. The shortfall of housing, both rentals and government funded social housing, has meant other options have needed to be sourced such as lodging/boarding houses.

Some NFP providers of lodging, such as St Pat's offer a low-cost lodging option and have been flexible in the offered LTO arrangements, such as an option for up to 12 months LTO at a time. However there are also private lodging operators, less flexible, and more expensive.

The partners all agree that housing choice is an important element for 20 Lives clients, whether in a lodging/boarding house, a one-bedroom apartment or house, it must ultimately be the choice of the client which home will suit them best. Unfortunately, with only three public housing places available and five private rentals offered, preferred choice can mean waiting an extended period for a home. While some people happily choose to live in lodging by choice as their preferred option, others agree to reside in a lodging house as an interim arrangement until their choice of home becomes available. 20 Lives uses a lodging protocol to identify lodging most in line with people's preferences.

Foundation Housing have found other barriers and challenges sourcing private rentals, such as very low vacancy rates of 1-2 bedroom properties, an upward trend in pricing and larger properties financially out of reach of this cohort i.e. currently one-bedroom flats are approximately \$250 p/week in the private rental market.



Public Housing - Dept. of Communities: A traditional long-term arrangement for social housing. There is a shortage of these properties available, for example the current priority wait time for a one bedroom property is 1.3 years.



Foundation Housing - Private Rental Brokerage Project: The Dept. of Communities has provided brokerage funding to trial this scheme. To encourage private landlords to make properties available, with incentives such as a guaranteed lease payment for 12 months, an agreement to keep properties well maintained and no property management costs.



Lodging/ Boarding Houses with a License to Occupy (LTO): Lodging/boarding houses are generally not a preferred option within a *Housing First* model, as they don't offer permanency, provide little security and lack privacy. For some people however it is an active choice, as they enjoy the simplicity of a single bill, responsibility only for their own room and the close company of others. Lodging houses do provide occupants with their own room but shared communal areas i.e. kitchens and/or bathrooms and a single bill for rent that includes utilities. Tenure, through an LTO, is typically provided for a defined period (usually 3 months) but may be extended at discretion of the landlord. The LTO includes conditions to be met including expectation of appropriate behavior, no/limited alcohol, no/limited visitors. Tenants can leave without a notice period but may also be evicted quickly if they do not comply with the LTO.

"The 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle journey has been a positive one in many ways, not least of which are the learnings for us as an organisation, to be flexible in our approach as a registered community housing provider, and service provider, around Housing First.

One of the first people we engaged with in 20 Lives, expressed a strong personal preference to move into lodging style accommodation. He explained that lodging would meet his needs best as it balances a community to live with, a small space of his own which is easier to manage, with access to shared facilities managed by the service provider. He would have one accommodation-related bill each period which reduced stress around managing his money. As a result we offered this resident a 12 month LTO - the first time we had ever done so.

Recently, he has successfully signed his second 12 months LTO, and the intention is that he makes this his long term home, for as long as he is willing and able to remain. The extended LTO, has provided a greater degree of security of housing to this resident.

What I can say is that in the year or so since he has been with us, he has thrived."

- Michael Piu, CEO St Patrick's

IN THEIR WORDS - 20 LIVES CLIENTS

CASE STUDY ON SUPPORT RECEIVED THROUGH 20 LIVES

Background: Patti* is an Aboriginal woman in her forties and has lived in the Fremantle area much of her life. Patti has experienced long term homelessness since her early teens along with periods of incarceration in both adult and youth detention. Patti has been sleeping rough since exiting prison three years ago.

Key issues prior to be housed: Patti has experienced trauma throughout her life and has ongoing mental health issues. Other health conditions include liver disease, hepatitis C, heart disease, AOD.

20 Lives Support: Through 20 Lives, Patti has been assisted to process required government applications and has tenancy in a private lodge with a LTO agreement. This gives her a bedroom with a shared bathroom and kitchen, the rent and expenses are paid from her pension. She is hoping to be offered a Dept. of Communities property, so she can have her own privacy with long-term housing secured. Patti is receiving support from the 20 Lives Outreach Case Workers as well as AHSS, Street Doctor and received emergency relief from St Pats.

Current Situation: Patti has commenced an online tertiary preparation course while in prison. She had completed her first semester with mostly high distinctions. However, on being released from prison back into homelessness, she was unable to continue her studies without a computer. The 20 Lives Outreach Case Worker has assisted Patti to re-enroll and continue her studies.

"Yeah, and studying is something I wanna get back into to finish it off, and then once I finished the next two semesters, I can get my degree in whatever field I choose. I like bookkeeping, I love accounting, I love numbers...What a dream it would be." – **Patti, housed in interim lodging with support from 20 Lives**

"It's changed my life. Like I said I've had a lot of people say, if you try, I know you can get your life together and ram, ra, ra, but when you're living on the streets and you got nothing, you try telling someone to go and get into a drug and alcohol program or you do this, they just wanna know where they're gonna sleep the next day."

- **Bill,* recently housed through 20 Lives**

"...And I didn't feel bad coming in to see people for the help at St Pat's and through that help coming in and walking through the door that the help was there if you want it and I'm very grateful to St Pat's and with 2020 and again with Sally and Lance (20 Lives Case Workers) and I'm very grateful to have my home and I love it."

- **Ben,* recently housed through 20 Lives**

* Not their real names

CASE STUDY ON HOUSING THROUGH PRIVATE RENTAL BROKERAGE

Background: Greg* is an Aboriginal man in his early sixties. He raised six children as a single parent on limited income in a public housing property. Once his children had grown and moved away he was required to relinquish the property. To avoid homelessness initially Greg purchased a small caravan and mostly lived in the bush, with no utility services. He was not able to keep the registration up to date and the van fell into disrepair, so Greg was couch surfing with family for a time. Over the last few years Greg has mostly been sleeping rough as well as supporting his now adult children as much as he could.

Key issues prior to being housed: AOD, unemployment, chronic health conditions including diabetes type 2, depression and other mental health issues.

Current situation: Greg heard about St Pats through a friend, and met the 20 Lives team. He was able to be housed in a 1 bedroom unit by June 2020, brokered through Foundation Housing. Greg is very thankful for the 20 Lives program and the support he has received, but he has found living in his unit lonely at times. For a brief period he moved out to stay with family but now is back in his unit and feeling content. He is receiving ongoing support from the 20 Lives Outreach Case Workers and the AHSS. Greg has also disclosed that he is seeking re employment.

"...Yeah, this is mine and this is what I need. And I think - just thankful that it did come through, and I'm more than impressed that I can ... look after myself. I could shower, I could go to sleep, no stress, get my own food, just do the things ... for myself, and I've never had that for a lot and lot of years... It's like absolute relief..."

– **Greg, recently housed through 20 Lives and Foundation Housing**

CASE STUDY ON LODGING AS AN ACTIVE CHOICE

Background: Reg* is an Aboriginal man in his mid-fifties. He has been living street present for over 20 years after a traumatic childhood in foster care following the death of both his parents. The loss of his parents was confounded by a culturally insensitive and mentally abusive foster home, leading to the development of severe mental trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, and extreme social isolation. Reg has stated that the impact of mental abuse has left him feeling vulnerable and not “belonging” anywhere.

Key Issues prior to 20 Lives: Lack of suitable long-term housing. Other issues include AOD, mental health, trauma, financial issues and Reg has been incarcerated many times. Such an unstable living condition over a long period of time undoubtedly impacted his mental health, perpetuating the trauma experienced in childhood, and strongly contributed to Reg’s alcohol abuse and frequent incarceration.

20 Lives Support: As one of the first 20 Lives participants, Reg was supported to complete his VI-SPDAT and assisted with establishing Centrelink and other support mechanisms. He was assisted to complete a lodging protocol and brokerage was provided to overcome the huge financial barriers initially keeping him on the streets and establish his residency with stable long-term lodging accommodation for the first time in over two decades. Reg can now access the Disability Support Pension. He has also been assisted with medical checks through the Street Doctor services, and regular counselling to help address his AOD and mental health problems. 20 Lives Support Workers also assisted Reg to develop strategies to maintain his housing and reduce his anxiety.

Current Situation: Reg has maintained stable residency in a NFP lodging house for over 12 months, with a second LTO for another 12 months recently signed. He is starting back on a path to healing. Being in lodging was an active choice for Reg as he did not feel able to manage a house and live on his own. He is successfully completing everyday activities such as cooking and maintaining his room, Reg is also continuing with his regular medical checks and counselling to work on managing his mental health, AOD issues and wellbeing.

“ (I’m) ...feeling happy and content, especially having a roof over my head and a bed to sleep in”.

- Reg, recently housed in lodging by choice through 20 Lives

* Not his real name

SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN 20 LIVES DURING COVID-19

Since the commencement of the 20 Lives program, WA has been faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. This has created challenges for the NFP sector in provision of care and support for this vulnerable population group. Whilst the general Australian population is saturated with information about COVID-19, this does not necessarily reach people who don’t have homes or internet/media access or may have cognitive or literacy difficulties.

As part of street outreach, 20 Lives has assisted all participants in the program to get into some form of accommodation so they didn’t have to sleep rough. Through a coordinated response, during the lockdown period both over the phone and face to face intensive support was provided by the Outreach Case Workers including the St Pat’s Doorstep Dinners program. The AHSS also provided a mix of phone and home visit support during this period, with measures taken to protect both workers and clients in line with St. Pat’s COVID-19 protocol. People were provided with complete and updated information of the risks/impacts of COVID-19 as well as emotional and psychological support.

Another issue that has arisen alongside COVID-19 is the shortage of available housing stock. The vacancy rate in the Fremantle area has lowered to less than 2%, and 1.5% in the greater Perth metropolitan area. This may be attributed to an increase in FIFO workers now having to reside in WA to work and expats returning.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS

The 20 Lives program is the first example of a place-based trial of the *Housing First* approach, expanding from the larger *Housing First* program in WA; *50 Lives 50 Homes*. The WA 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness recommends *Housing First* as a priority for ending homelessness, and the 20 Lives program is an example of how this can work with community buy in and support evidenced through the cooperation of providers, government agencies and philanthropic organisations.

A critical element of 20 Lives and *Housing First* is the element of pragmatic choice in where one lives, by using the Lodging Protocol, 20 Lives has ensured people have choice embedded in their self-determination. The Private Rental Brokerage Project, unique to 20 Lives, has also assisted somewhat in elevating housing choice for this group, despite the low vacancy rate of private rentals.