

Unclear direction and roles

What is the problem we want to fix?

As a community we have failed to recognise that provision of housing is a system. This has resulted in the various parts acting in isolation and not joined up creating both duplication and gaps, along with confusion around: roles, regulatory and funding responsibilities and levels; customer need; and desired outcomes leading to poor performance.

The housing system has traditionally been viewed as a "continuum" made up of distinct housing types with clear boundaries, designed under the assumption that people progress in a linear manner towards more aspirational housing outcomes, typically with home ownership as the end point. Conventionally, this continuum does not contemplate the broader services outside of the strict interpretation of housing that contribute to and enable housing outcomes, like mental health and disability among many others.

In reality, housing is nonlinear; subject to individuals' varied aspirations and comprised of many parts, that are constantly influenced by changes in other parts of the system. For a person this can mean moving in and through a range of housing options depending on their individual circumstances and the choice these circumstances allow. In addition, the value that a home provides to individuals, families and communities is commonly understated, and seen as just a place to live in, as opposed to the much broader role it can play in its social, cultural and economic benefits to both the individual and community.

By viewing housing as a series of distinct siloed offerings there has been a missed opportunity to address the system-wide issues in a holistic and collaborative manner. The conditions have encouraged providers to operate only in their area, creating competitive, not constructive relationships with other providers. Here, competition has undermined the joining up of different parts of the system needed to solve individuals' complex and long-term housing issues.

The social housing landscape has undergone major change in the last few years. Public housing remains the State's primary provider of social housing, however property management transfers to community housing have established a new system that is more multi-provider. Meanwhile, there has been little progress to define providers' roles within the new system. Frequently the same services and products have been offered by different generic social housing providers – duplicating overheads (government spending) without adding value for the customer and at times confusing them.

In the homelessness sector, funding arrangements have incentivised activity-based outputs over meaningful outcomes, and subsequently reinforced a service mindset that prioritises customers' short-term outcomes. In the social housing sector, the SA Housing Authority's role as a funder, regulator and competitor of community housing needs clarity. The for-profit industries of home ownership, financing, development and private real estate have pursued commercial interests and as such have rarely been included in conversations about if and how they could be involved in the bigger picture.

No long-term strategy and a lack of financial certainty have diluted common direction for the sector as a whole. Despite the resources invested, working in isolation has led to an inability to resolve complex housing issues and poor customer outcomes.

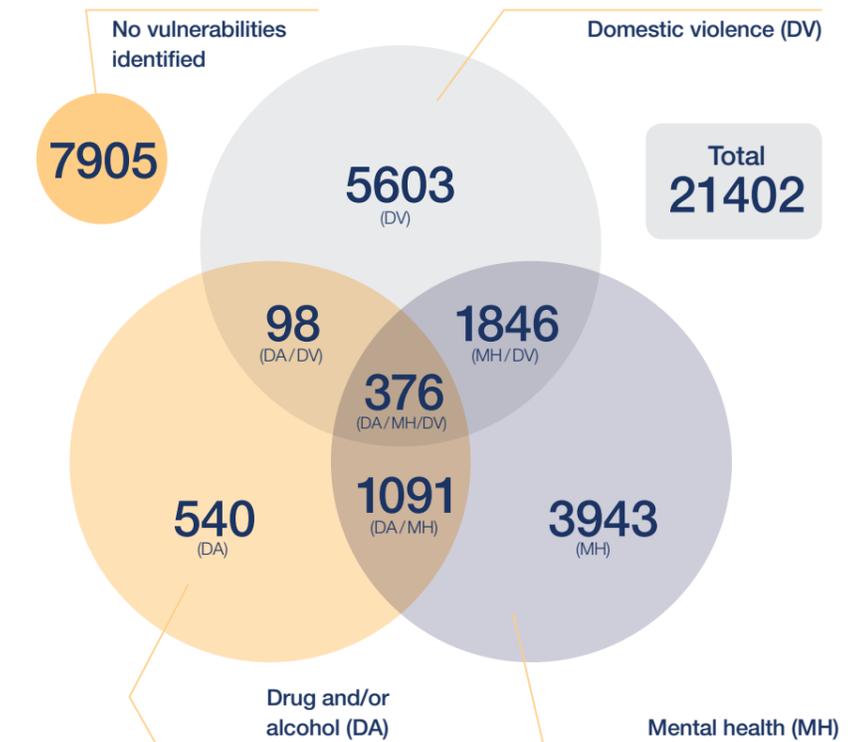
Why is it important?

- Meaningful progress will not be realised unless a clear and common direction is articulated and taken ownership of
- A collaborative system has the capacity to deliver better outcomes for customers
- Governments are expected to act and be perceived as as model providers, funders and regulators
- Duplicated services and products that don't provide distinct options fail to create real choice and use resources efficiently.

Who is impacted?

- All people trying to access housing services or products across the eco-system, from private rental, to home ownership, social housing and those experiencing homelessness
- This covers broad demographics and specifically includes: women and children affected by domestic and family violence; children and young people; Aboriginal people; people experiencing repeat homelessness; people currently exiting institutions and care into homelessness; and older people.

People who accessed SA Specialist Homelessness Services 2017/2018



In SA, there are 60+ social housing offices alone where people can walk-in to access this type of accommodation.

