

Page 1

Q1

Name of organisation

The Haven Nepean Women's Shelter

Q2

Your name

Samantha C

Q3

Position

Executive Officer Client Services

Page 3

Q10

Describe the experiences of people struggling to access affordable and suitable housing in the context of your organisation's work.

Women and children experiencing homelessness due to domestic and family violence are spending longer durations in crisis accommodation services.

Q11

Describe the flow-on impacts of the housing crisis in the context of your organisation's work.

This impacts their employment and education stability. We have seen a decline in mental health and drug/alcohol relapse due to prolonged crisis accommodation and the detrimental impacts of applying for so many properties and being unsuccessful due to affordability or the stigma of DFV. Crisis accommodation is being extended beyond the 3 months, simply due to housing accessibility and affordability. Women and their children are ready to leave the shelter from a safety perspective, on track with case plans and have good trauma recovery supports in place. They just can't get a property. It is the same for social housing, community housing and private rental.

Once women are ready to move from crisis accommodation to stable medium-long term housing, the impacts of waiting lists, highly competitive rental market and being knocked back time and again, further reinforces their doubts about leaving the violent person. Some women just return.

Q12

Describe how current policy settings impact housing affordability and access to housing from your organisation's perspective.

the allocation of # people to the #bedrooms in social/community housing does not account for multi-generational families and families who have experienced DFV. Women we work with are often willing to share bedrooms with their children and siblings want to share rooms as a safety response. It is common for children of DFV to co-sleep with their safe parent or sibling. Some women would prefer a smaller dwelling, with cheaper rent and less rooms, but social/community housing won't allow that. If a woman gets a cheaper/smaller rental property and Start Safely subsidy deems the rent is "too low", then they lose the subsidy all together.

These policies demonstrate a misunderstanding of the living practices of women and children who have experienced DFV and women wanting to choose lower cost rents if possible.

Q13

Describe what actions your organisation believes should be taken by governments to most improve affordability and access to housing.

Consult with and take advice from peak bodies Homelessness NSW and DVNSW who speak the sector.

Q14

Respondent skipped this question

Is there anything else your organisation would like to share with the Commission?
