

**AUCKLAND CONVERSATIONS
23 MARCH 2017
AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION**

Greg Ward:

Well once again good evening, tena koutou, and welcome to another Auckland Conversations event. As many of you will already know these events are a wonderful opportunity to inspire and stimulate your thinking about the challenges facing Auckland. Certainly one of the biggest challenges facing the city is homelessness. So tonight we focus on housing first, a new approach to homelessness.

Thank you for joining us tonight. It's fantastic to see such a good turnout and welcome to those joining us for the live streaming. I'm Greg Ward. I'll be your MC and moderator for the evening. We do have a great line up including our guest speaker Dr. Sam Tsemberis and our four panellists who I will introduce shortly. We're also delighted to have the mayor, Phil Goff join us tonight and Counsellor Penny Hulse is also with us.

First the housekeeping. In the very unlikely event of an emergency, an alarm will go and you will be guided slowly from the room by the ushers. Bathrooms, as you leave the room they are on your right. Finally, anyone with a mobile phone please could you turn out to silent.

We have special welcomes this evening for all the councillors and local board members joining us. Now these include Councillors Desley Simpson, Wayne Walker and John Watson. We'd also like to acknowledge our event sponsor Heart of the City. Thanks also to the Auckland Conversations partner sponsor Resene and another big thank you to our programme supporters. They include Brookfields Lawyers, Boffa Miskell, Architectural Designers in New Zealand, the New Zealand Institute of Architects, New Zealand Planning Institute and the New Zealand Green Building Council.

Now a reminder of what you can look forward to this evening. The format tonight will be a presentation from our guest speaker Dr. Sam Tsemberis followed by a discussion with our four panellists. You are welcome to tweet during the event using #aklconversations, #aklconversations for the tweeters. You can also ask questions via Twitter. The #aklconversations feed will be monitored and if time allows we'll include questions during the panel discussion and the Q&A.

We always try to ensure the Auckland Conversations events are inclusive and accessible. With that in mind, a full transcript and captioning of the presentations and discussions will be available on the Auckland Conversations website in the next few days.

Shortly, we'll be joining the conversation but right now it's my pleasure to introduce the Auckland mayor Phil Goff. A round of applause.

Phil Goff:

[foreign language 00:03:27] Thank you very much for the introduction Greg and can I start off first by welcoming Dr. Sam Tsemberis here tonight. I think we first met a couple of years ago Sam in parliament when we talked about the very things that we're talking about tonight. I want to thank you for the inspirational work that you did with Pathways in New York and actually being the founder of the Housing First philosophy which we are celebrating tonight. Welcome back to New Zealand.

Can I also acknowledge our distinguished panel tonight? Viv Beck, chief executive of the Heart of the City, Moira Lawler as the chief executive of Lifewise, Rau Hoskins from Te Matapihi and Graham Bodman from Auckland Council and Graham, also for your long track record of working in social housing. To all of the NGOs and to the individuals present here, NGOs including Lifewise, Auckland City Mission, Affinity Services, LinkPeople, Vision West and no doubt many others, thank you for your vision for a better city without homelessness and thank you for your commitment to striving for that goal.

Can I acknowledge our counsellors Penny Hulse here today, Wayne Walker I saw. Wayne is somewhere here. John Watson and Desley Simpson. I think we've got some local board members here Pippa Coom usually comes to these things, sitting here right in front of me. Can't see for looking. Welcome Pippa and Adriana Christie and Richard Northey from the Waitemata local board and perhaps some other members that I haven't acknowledged.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think back to the Auckland that I grew up in. I've got to say as a young person in the city, I wasn't aware of homelessness nor was I aware of begging. It's something that actually came as a shock to me when I visited places like Skid Row in New York and the embankment in London. I was appalled by what I saw in those places. I celebrated the fact that I'd grown up in a New Zealand which was still then committed to a strong welfare state where state housing was seen as a guaranty of every New Zealander having access to a decent roof over their head.

We were confident perhaps too confident that we could fairly meet the needs of all New Zealanders. Perhaps the sense that I had of that time was too idealised, but today we see the harsh reality of people sleeping rough all over our city with City Mission calculating that there are around 179 people sleeping rough within a three kilometre of the Sky Tower. Chronic homelessness seems to be much more embedded and the problems that contribute to that mental illness, addictions and poverty.

The homelessness problem is of course much broader than that. Maybe according to the 2013 census involving over 20,000 people who could be broadly defined as being without a home in Auckland. With the unprecedented growth of our city and the failure of housing supply

to keep up with demand, Auckland has become in housing terms the fourth least affordable city in the world. That was not a title we were seeking.

The Kiwi dream of home ownership seems more and more remote. Rental prices rising at four times the average rate of inflation means that a lot of our low income families are paying more than half of their household income in rent. At the bottom of the heap, we're seeing people doubled up in houses, sleeping in garages, in cars and out on the streets. Housing New Zealand is no longer seen as a key player in ensuring stable and affordable houses for all and the number of state houses per capita has diminished sharply and steadily over time.

Tonight I'm not focusing on the wider housing challenge but I do note that our failure to build more than a fraction of the affordable houses we need today is a significant contributing factor to that. I have a housing task force looking at how we can lift both the pace and the scale of building to better balance the supply of housing with the growing demand for it.

What I want to focus on in the last couple of minutes of my comments is the joint initiative that Minister Amy Adams and I announced this morning. We formally announced our commitment to Housing First working in partnership with five community organisations all of whom have a track record of commitment to housing the homeless and competency in doing so. Housing First is a proven effective way to address chronic homelessness.

As you know, it works on the philosophy that the very first thing that you must do to deal with homelessness and the problems associated with it is to place a person or a household in a stable place they can call home. Equally important the next step to ensure that you build around that individual or family the wraparound services to deal with the problems that contributed to their homelessness whether its alcohol or drug addiction, mental illness or simply poverty.

Our goal with Housing First and what we announced this morning is to work with those five housing organisations over the next two years to house over 470 homeless Aucklanders. The success of what we do in this pilot programme is critical so that we can ensure the sustainability of the Housing First programme here in Auckland.

We know from experience internationally and we know from experience much closer to home the people's project in Hamilton that a successful Housing First approach will result in over 90% of those people who were sleeping rough and that we have housed will still be in that house 12 months down the track. The pilot is funded by government to the tune of 3.7 million and by Auckland council to the tune of a million dollars with a hope of further commitment in this coming budget from council of half a million dollars a year so that we can provide the coordinating services for the Housing First project.

This money from central and local government is a vote of confidence in the organisations and the social sector that we are partnering with. It's a start and it is significant but over time clearly we need to do much more. I hope in fact by the success of this programme that we can draw in the private and the business sector to support financially our Housing First programme. All of us want a city that we can be proud of. A city that is inclusive and a city that is committed to ensuring a decent life for all of its people and a decent life starts with stable, affordable and healthy housing.

I welcome the government's commitment. I thank the social sector for their commitment and I thank Auckland council. Can I just single out two counsellors involved in the committee that will be dealing with this? Counsellor Penny Hulse and Counsellor Cathy Casey who have a longstanding commitment to dealing with this problem. Thank you counsellors and thank you Graham for you and your team for your support and your vision. I hope that all of you find the panel discussion tonight informative. I know that we will find the comments that Tsemberis makes tonight not only informative but inspiration as indeed his work has been over many, many years. Working together, I believe that we can create a city that all of us can be truly proud of. Thank you very much.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Mayor Phil Goff. Well now it's my pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker for the evening Dr. Sam Tsemberis. Sam founded Pathways to Housing in New York City back in 1992. He's on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Centre in New York. During his time there he developed the Housing First model.

Housing First provides immediate access and this is the key. Immediate access to permanent support of housing for people who are homeless and who have added challenges such as mental health or addiction problems. The Housing First approach has been operating internationally since the early 1990s. The good news is it's been evaluated as one of the most effective programmes available for addressing homelessness. Ladies and gentleman a warm round of applause please for Dr. Sam Tsemberis.

Dr Sam Tsemberis:

Thank you Greg. Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentleman, members of the council, it's a great pleasure to be here this evening to be celebrating with you this initiative of Housing First Auckland. It's remarkable to be back in your very beautiful country. Only 18 months after the initial visit here where the idea of talking about Housing First was conceptual and seemed like a good thing to do. Here we are 18 months later with a government commitment, an NGO commitment to start this rather significant and impressive initiative. Having met over the last four days with the people who will be working in it, I can assure you that we're in for some great results.

I thought that it might be useful to ... I wasn't quite sure because explaining Housing First it's very simple. I was thinking maybe it would be useful to talk to you a little bit about why it took so long, why we've had homelessness for as long as we've had and how we're going to go about solving it. Just to give you a bit of a historical perspective that might help us also to avoid the mistakes of the past and take the lessons learned going forward.

There are many reasons we've had homelessness since the early 80's in America and 90's in Canada and Europe and it's trickled over into Australia and New Zealand. I would say there are two major reasons that I'd like to focus on this evening. One of them is that because homelessness has been part of the landscape for so many years, decades that we have learned now an entire generation of people sitting in this room.

People under 25 have grown up believing that homelessness is part of the landscape and that they have learned also from the teaching of their parents that it's better not to look at

people who are homeless. We have all of us learned to avoid staring out of politeness, out of respect, out of the pain that it causes to see someone on the street suffering. We have learned to look away. Similarly the people who are homeless have also learned to hide. So there's been a mutual social contract unspoken where we have not really been looking at this problem.

I'm happy to say that this initiative to me signals the beginning of looking the other way. It's a difference between the child being told no, no because the child's response actually is what has shut down. When you're walking down the street and you are with a child who is nine or younger, their natural response is shock and "Why is this person here?" The parent will say, "Don't look now. Let's walk the other way. Avoid this." In that communication, they have learned over time to walk away. Shutting down a part of their humanity, that their natural human response of the shock that we all initially felt but have learned to turn off. That's the price I think psychologically that we pay in tolerating homelessness. It's costing us part of our humanity in allowing it to continue.

So I want to thank each and every one of you who are here tonight because you are not looking the other way. You are here to talk about this issue, to face this issue, to celebrate a community wide commitment to looking at homelessness and acknowledging that there's a problem and looking at it is step one to progress. So thank you for that.

The other problem, the major problem is really historical. It goes back to when homelessness started to begin with and why it started and what our response was. Now the mayor said he grew up in an Auckland where there wasn't homelessness because homelessness wasn't really part of the lexicon until the early 80's. Homelessness was episodic. There were people that were homeless during the Great Depression but this era of homelessness as we have it in the western world is really credited to a Mr. Ronald Reagan from California.

If any of you had the opportunity to see his biography he is at one point in this public broadcasting corporation biography of Ronald Reagan credited with the creation of homelessness. How did it happen in the early 80's? Well the Reagan administration had a policy of supply side economics trickledown theory. Some of these terms that you've heard about if you make wealthy people wealthier then the wealth will somehow fall out of their pockets and the rest of us will also benefit by the pennies that we can find on the street just following rich people. I'm oversimplifying it. I'm not an economist. I'm a psychologist.

That theory resulted in a public policy that was a disaster on many levels but particularly for social services and what was called in the States public housing or social housing, affordable housing. The government in the United States stopped building public housing in the early 1980's under that administration. They went from building 350,000 units a year to 50 where it continues to remain today. No administration since then has ever recommitted to that. The failure to support people who are poor by having social or public housing was taken as a warning to those that were on the margins.

Not surprisingly we began to see people who were homeless literally on the streets of the major cities. Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, New York and the people that were most

immediately and most brutally affected by this policy were people that were on fixed income. This same policy was adopted by Maggie Thatcher, Mulroney in Canada years later. There was a kind of a similar policy approach in western countries and that approach began to create income disparity across these countries.

The United States difference between the rich and the poor in the 70's was somewhere around 30% and now it's up around 55. New Zealand looks more like Scandinavia in that regard that there's some income disparity but it's on the lower end of the scale. I would encourage you to think about the policies that would keep that disparity as low as possible because as income disparity increases, homelessness increases. Poverty increases and also a government's commitment to building social services decreases. It's a perfect storm for those that aren't doing well.

When the people who suffered with the lack of economic support began to appear on the street, what was clear about them was they had additional problems besides poverty. People with mental illness, people with addiction and there was a public outcry to do something about the people that were literally raining out of the sky and onto the streets. The response was an emergency response like the Red Cross after a hurricane that we were having significant problems and these people looked ill and we have to take care of them.

These armies of caretakers that include social workers and nurses and doctors did what they know best. Doctors without borders only they didn't have to go outside their own borders to do the treatment. It was a small nation in internal exile in their own country that needed the treatment. They did the best they could to treat them believing that treatment was the way back to housing. They had assumed that it must have been the mental illness or the addiction that caused the housing not a misguided social policy that resulted in homelessness.

So the industry that built up over the years to address homelessness was actually founded on a misdiagnosis of what the problem actually was. No amount of fixing people, of curing people, of counselling or addiction treatment was going to help them to pay the rent or to have access to housing. So the intervention was helpful but did not address the core issues of the problem.

The investment in emergency housing, transitional housing, all kinds of programmes aimed at improving the individual often also believed to have made some poor decisions on their own so was not only improving their clinical status but it was also about improving their judgement in some way. Somehow the person was responsible for their homelessness and we sought to help them understand what responsibility was about.

It worked well for many who could tolerate and manage the treatment and eventually get into supportive housing but not for all. There was a small group of people that remained stubbornly on the street. Could not or would not manage the treatment first then housing approach. This group of people that actually represents only a small percentage of all people who are homeless, maybe 15% or 20% is the group that in the public's mind and then in the media's reporting and in the public policy realm became the group that represented homelessness and the problems of homelessness which it only represents a portion leaving out

families, youth and other groups that are homeless or at risk of homeless as well. This is the group that most people think of as the issue with homelessness.

This group that stayed out of the treatment system that could not make it can be thought of as outliers. They didn't fit in for any number of reasons. Outliers, we have a great debt to outliers in all social sciences because outliers [Dr. Singh 00:26:44] teach us the normals in the population teach us the rules. If you do this then if you give the person aspirin, their fever goes down. That's the norm. It's the outliers that teach us what doesn't work and this group of people who had remained homeless for a long time were the outliers in a social service treatment response that taught us what was wrong with the existing system. These were the folks that helped us to understand the flaws in our logic in approaching a complex problem with a treatment first approach.

It was this group that was fundamentally responsible for helping us to develop the Housing First approach because this group understood and could articulate what it was that made sense to them from their own perspective. The first thing about Housing First is that it was not ever an intervention that was designed in a conference room or in a planning room and visited upon homeless people.

Housing First is fundamentally an approach to working with people who are homeless that includes them in every aspect of the conversation. What they want, what their preferences are, what their priorities are and the programme is actually designed to honour those preferences. It's a ground up intervention that the people on the streets of New York City would be very pleased to be here this evening seeing it being adopted all the way in New Zealand but it came from the streets by people living on the streets. Frankly, I think that's why it's so effective. It's a very consumer driven, client driven approach that works well in most businesses including the social service business.

The programme has five dimensions. Client choice is a core part of it. The person is invited to articulate their preference in the sequence that they want and what matters to them most. That's how we got to Housing First. Most people who were homeless these outliers that we spoke to were most interested in a place to live first. So housing first not because we thought it was a good idea, it was the thing that was most urgent to the people on the streets.

The philosophy of self-determination is a very core dimension of the programme. Self-determination means empowerment to make decisions and be heard. Self-determination means having a voice, a democratic process of working with people where they have a say so in the treatment. It also includes a dimension that some have called distributive justice which is if you're working with people who are poor and they have other problems in addition to the poverty, it's useful to address the other problems as well but if you're going to provide a comprehensive approach, you also need to address the poverty. It's not enough to just give counselling to someone who was poor and suffering with addiction. You also need to pay the rent.

The type of housing that people wanted when given the choice was a place of their own. People wanted a real home. They didn't want to live in a programme. They didn't want to live in

housing were also social workers lived for treatment. They wanted to live in housing and go to treatment maybe. There was a clear feeling of not wanting to be identified as needing special housing or being in some other ways identified as people in need of treatment. The idea of social inclusion is woven strongly into that.

So people had their place typically an apartment of their own and they had people visiting and supporting and treatment and helping them with all of their other needs. The programme that is Housing First but not housing only and includes all of the supports that the person needs.

If people lose housing, if they need to relocate, if they are evicted because from the streets their friends moved into the house with them because they couldn't refuse them, the treatment team will work with the person and find another place. A place that often people do better at the second time because they've learned a lesson from the first time. It's not a programme that is punitive so that if people make a decision which they're encouraged to do and make a mistake and fail at it, their failure is seen as an opportunity to learn how to do it better the next time.

In fact people that go to a second apartment in this programme often do better than they did in the first so that the learning is part of it we have to allow the dignity of failure for the person to have that opportunity to learn. The commitment is not to the apartment. If the person loses housing, the support team will follow them. If a person gets arrested, if the person goes to the hospital, whatever disruptions there are in housing, the commitment is to stay and work with that person for as long as they need it so that the Housing First sometimes misname is really fundamentally about people first. It's a commitment to work with that person in a constructive, helpful way until they find their way and don't need our help anymore.

Another dimension of the programme is recovery orientation and a support for social inclusion. This is particularly relevant here because of the cultural sensitivity and respect to the Maori culture. I have not learned enough about it but the little I have learned about Maori culture it seems a wonderful fit from a values perspective with an approach that it's about self-determination that includes whanau, whanaungatanga and other concepts that are about family, kinship, connectedness. It is very much in the spirit of community and social inclusion.

This is an important consideration given that the people who are really targeted by this Housing First initiative Auckland vast majority Maori descent. It may look different and it may be shaped in other ways in terms of housing choice and the way that the services and the type of services are determined but these principles of choice and separation of housing and recovery orientation are general enough and I believe can be applied and adjusted to fit the cultural needs and preferences of the people that they serve and the people that are working here.

Just a couple of more comments about this approach which is one is that it's an evidence based approach. I think the reason that I'm here talking to you today is that this programme has been studied a great deal in small and large studies. The largest I would say most recently was a study that was done in Canada where there was a national implementation with five cities not five organisations like we have here but similar structure. A large number of

people, 2000 Canadians plus were randomly assigned to either the treatment first then housing approach that I described earlier or to the Housing First and then treatment approach. They were followed for 24 months.

The results of that study show that the people in the Housing First approach were stably housed quickly and stayed housed about 80% of the time. The people in the stairway approach only made it to about 40% of the time. This was a huge difference in outcomes for social science studies that are usually much smaller percentages. There were significant improvements in the quality of life of the people in the Housing First programme. There were some cost offset settings.

One of the things that isn't commonly understood about homelessness is that its really, really expensive. It's really expensive for the people who are experiencing homelessness. They have nowhere to put their food. They have to buy food all the time from the grocery stores or things that they cannot store. Everything is an expense for them. They are struggling daily economically but strangely what we think of as homelessness and disconnection it comes also at enormous cost to taxpayers in the sense of the services that are not perhaps visible on a daily basis are typically acute care services that are very expensive.

People get sick or they into accidents, they are in emergency rooms. They are in inpatient services. They are transported by the police. They are going to soup kitchens and other programmes. If you tally up the cost of someone being homeless that is needing services over the course of a year, it can easily come to \$100,000 or \$200,000 a year in services alone. This Canadian study and other studies that have looked at the frequent users of acute care services report the same kind of data.

Putting a person in an apartment with the support services which ranges anywhere between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per person per year and results the tremendous cost offset on the reduction of the acute care services. So, yes, it's an intervention that may cost money, but is it actually costing us any money overall? The answer is no. It's actually saving us money in addition to everything else.

One of the challenging conversations about Housing First is, can we find enough affordable housing in Auckland to house 450 people in the course of the next two years? The question of the affordability of housing is a large and important question. The answer you've already heard from the mayor is that we don't have enough social or affordable housing overall. If we're going to address the 20,000 people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness but an initiative that is only focusing on 400 people, 200 people a year we can find 200 vacant apartments tonight.

So the scale of the programme because it's focused very narrowly on this small subsample of homeless folks is totally manageable with the right rent supplements in the current housing market. It will solve homeless for those 200 individuals. It will not solve the larger issues and policy issues of affordable housing in Auckland or New Zealand that is a separate and very important conversation. We don't need to solve the large question in order to help these people on the streets today.

One of the more promising aspects of this intervention is that because you have been so sensible in managing not to have the kind of income disparity experienced by other nations, the actual number of people that are chronically homeless in your city and in your country is rather small. Small is great because it's a solvable and manageable problem. I think tonight you all are beginning the initiative that will actually end chronic homelessness in New Zealand. I wish you all the best. Thank you very much

Greg Ward:

Thank you Sam. That was a fantastic presentation offering really valuable insights and we do appreciate your time here on Auckland tonight. As Sam pointed out we are just at step one on the journey towards finding a solution. Well its time now for this evening's panel discussion where we can talk more about homelessness in the Auckland context. It's time to invite the four guest panellists to the stage. We'll bring them up one by one.

I would like to invite first Viv Beck. Welcome along Viv. Viv is the chief executive, maybe give her a round of applause as well. Viv is chief executive of Heart of the City, the business association representing and promoting businesses located in the city centre with the overall aim of fostering its economic success. Heart of the City is committed to developing a central city that's a thriving place. a thriving place to do business that's accessible, vibrant and generally a great place to be so welcome along.

Our second panellist is Rau Hoskins. Welcome along Rau. Rau is the chairperson of Te Mataphi, the national Maori housing sector body. He's also a board member of Community Housing Ngāti Hau and urban design panel member for Auckland Council and the Tamiki regeneration company. Rau is the founding director of Design Tribe Architects. He specialises in the design of both urban and rural papakainga or Maori housing projects.

Number three on the list today welcome along Moira Lawler. Moira is the chief executive of Lifewise with responsibility for a diverse range of health, education and social services and collaborative community projects. Moira has a background in community and economic development. She's a board member of the Community Housing Aotearoa, the peak body for community housing providers. Lifewise is working with the Auckland City Mission to provide the first Housing First programme in the Auckland city centre and finally Graham Bodman from Auckland council. Graham is general manager arts, community and events at Auckland council. Graham has responsibility for council's operational homelessness response and support activity. He's been leading Auckland council's contribution to Housing First initiative. Prior to joining council, Graham worked in the social housing sector with particular interest in developing new solutions to address homelessness in Auckland. Thank you all panellists for your time this evening.

Let's begin with a question for Sam. Sam, we all know that homelessness is far more complex than simply rough sleeping. What do you say to people who are expecting or looking forward to a fast solution?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Looking forward to a ...

Greg Ward:

A fast solution. [inaudible 00:43:46] for you there.

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Okay. That's right.

Greg Ward:

What do we say to people who may be looking for a fast solution to the problem?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Ending homelessness for almost anybody is a fast solution if you are providing housing first you can house someone in a week or 10 days. Its immediate but ending homelessness is not the same as solving poverty or addressing addiction because the solution to some problems is at a different timeframe than the solution for other problems. So that I think it's important not to expect or even have the person who is moving into housing expect which sometimes they magically do that "Okay I'm housed. The problems are over."

Being housed simply gives you a really good platform to actually begin to addressing some of the more serious problems that are almost impossible to begin to address when the person is homeless and worried about survival. There are quick fixes and others that need the support services that the programme provides. It takes longer.

Greg Ward: Okay. So the good news is the pace may not be a problem. Let's look at one of the options and this is an option that many people talk about night shelters. What are your thoughts on the value of night shelters to address homelessness?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

I think night shelters are good for a night but they're not really the kind of solution that is ending homelessness. There's this concept of managing homelessness which is "What are we going to do about the homeless tonight? What are we going to do about the homeless immediately?" I would call that managing homeless. So let's get a soup kitchen. Let's get a shelter. Let's get some blankets. Managing homelessness, that could go on for forever and the person would still be homeless. There's a difference between managing homelessness and having a programme that is aimed at ending homelessness. So if the shelter is where the person is staying while you are immediately looking for a place for them to live that seems like a useful purpose for shelter but not as an alternative to permanent housing.

Greg Ward:

Sam and I were speaking earlier about the difficulties defining homelessness and we were talking about the fact that across Auckland we now have the sad sight of so many families living in cars, some families living garages because we have a housing crisis. So to what extent if any will housing first accommodate for the growing numbers who find themselves in a general housing crisis?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Housing First got started by working with the folks who are on the street and had complex problems but it has been used with families very effectively. It has been used with victims of domestic violence that have typically been required to go to shelters but now they go to an alternative housing. It has been effectively used with young people 18 to 26 so that the housing needs remain the same for all of these different populations. The kinds of support services people will need are different depending on who you're housing. I think that Housing First means you're giving affordable housing to people and some of those people will need supports. It's only a matter of political will about taking it to scale.

Greg Ward:

When you head the numbers before about the numbers facing housing crisis, what went through your mind given the size of Auckland?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

I think there's a housing planning. I don't know that New Zealand has an affordable housing strategy over the next three to five years but listening to the mayor I had the impression that the population is outgrowing the housing supply and there's a gap there that absolutely needs to be addressed.

Greg Ward:

Sam, thank you. Moira, could we turn to you now. Moira as we've just heard leads likewise. It's one of several agencies under the banner of the new Auckland Housing First Collective. I guess maybe we could get from you a brief overview of the collective and how Housing First as a model will be used in the Auckland context. Thanks Moira.

Moira Lawler:

[foreign language 00:48:38] Greg. Essentially as the mayor said there are five organisations involved in full projects across Auckland. That's Lifewise, the Auckland City Mission, Affinity, LinkPeople and Vision West. As the minister announced this morning we've been funded for two years really to demonstrate what is possible with the Housing First model across Auckland. It's the choice of the providers actually to put together a collective to do this in a more inclusive and joined up way.

What the collective will do is enable us to have common training, common assessment frameworks, common reporting and monitoring tools, common communications and an ability to learn from each other. It's not just about sharing, it's also about taking a hold of systems approach because we know each of our agencies from our work with homelessness that there

are system issues that need to be addressed. Sam was referring to some of those earlier. The collective enables to look across the work in each of our projects at those system issues and start to identify the improvements that are going to be needed to be successful.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Moira. The collective obviously has several agencies, several providers. Are there any obvious challenges you will face as you get under way working together?

Moira Lawler: I don't think the challenges are so much in the establishment of the collective although of course things are moving at pace. It's important across our organisations that we build the relationships that will be required but I think in some ways that the easy but we really strongly committed to that and I think it will really enhance our work. I think one of the challenges is the term of our funding. This is a two year demonstration project. So being able to evaluate and show what's possible in that timeframe will be challenging but it's a challenge that we're really committed to meeting.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. One more for you Moira. Homelessness in Auckland is clearly visible. Anyone who walked like I did tonight through Queen Street would see evidence of homelessness. What about the rest of Auckland? To what extent will the Housing First approach reach all of Auckland?

Moira Lawler:

That's a good question because there are four projects funded in this new programme in the new funding. They will work in central Auckland and west Auckland and in south Auckland primarily. They will also focus on chronic homelessness. I guess one of the challenges potentially with the programme is managing expectations. We are not funded to work with the 20,000 people that have been identified as severely housing deprived. We are being funded to demonstrate what's possible with identified cohorts and part of that work that we will be doing, part of the opportunity actually for our work to make an international contribution is in the development of a Kauppa Maori framework for Housing First so we're really excited about the potential in that.

Greg Ward:

Moira, thank you. Rau, let's come to you now. Homelessness in Auckland is very much a multicultural issue. Figures out last year from Auckland city mission show that more than half, around 53% of rough sleepers are Maori. Around a third or 33% are European, 9% pacific and the rest unknown. Given that big number more than half being Maori, what options do you believe will be available to the service providers trying to help the people you work with?

Rau Hoskins:

Yes it's ironic that in 1840 when [Ngati Whatau 00:52:17] invited the establishment of European settlement here in Auckland that there were zero Maori homeless. In fact, they were building the homes for the settlers at that time. It's an indictment on the colonisation process obviously that we are in that situation right now. I think the options that are before us are very encouraging

though. I think the fact that [Ngati Whatau 00:52:43] in particular are closely involved with the collective through Affinity is very encouraging.

I think that the work that's been done already with the collective to customise the Housing First approach to include the Kaupapa Maori framework is very encouraging. I guess where we're heading with that approach is the opportunity for Maori to be looking after Maori, Iwi to be looking after Iwi. I think from a manaakitanga perspective, manaakitanga, the responsibility to look after visitors to your city. It's great to seeing [Ngati Whatau 00:53:20] still looking after the people of Taranaki.

Greg Ward:

So there were some optimism from you. An acknowledgement that progress is being made. What are the key things that need to get done well in this first year?

Rau Hoskins: I think the ownership of mana whenua. There's 19 Iwi groups across Auckland and I think the ownership of as many of those groups as possible in this model and their support for the model. I think their ongoing engagement with these issues particularly as we look at the wider issues of Maori housing stress that includes making sure that Iwi who are in settlement mode or post settlement can be readily involved in papakainga developments in urban and peripheral areas of Auckland. I think the support frameworks are there but I think the challenges to really build on the potential that we have with really close working relationships such as evidenced with the collective that's been established.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Rau. Let's come back now to Sam. Sam, a question for you. If we could look at the role for private landlords because they do have a role in the Housing First approach. Can you first elaborate on what that role might be? Secondly, what would you say to a property owner who might be thinking "Well this is all a little bit risky."? So first the role.

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Private landlords have just like the NGOs sort of doing the work of government. Private landlords are in some ways in this model doing the work of social housing. We don't have enough social housing and the social housing that there is available has a tradition of keeping waiting lists. Now somebody homeless is not going to be successful in a waiting list kind of framework because there's no place to send them the notification that their name has come up on the list three years later. That was not an option.

Unless we have a different understanding about a prioritisation scheme for social housing so it can be included in Housing First which is possible. You can set aside as small percentage of units that is direct access without the list. Private landlords have been the main source of housing because we needed housing right away. The delivery of the programme is immediate access and the private market was where we found affordable in the low end of the market affordable. The way that we were able to work with landlords in that range is that managing properties on the lower end of the income scale is a bit of a challenge in that people are employed and they're not employed.

Issues of steady rent collection and tenancy and support for the tenancy are without saying out loud a constant worry of the landlord. The programmes are going to offer the landlord the assurance of guaranteed rent, the assurance that there's someone to call if there's an issue with the tenancy and that if there's a damage to the unit that they'll be compensated or will be repaired. Those are really stepping over and above what any good tenant would do and it gives the programme an advantage in renting some of those units from private landlords.

Greg Ward: So your message of reassurance would be there was a guaranty and there was someone to call?

Dr Sam Tsember:

Absolutely.

Greg Ward:

Sam, thank you. Viv, thanks for your patience tonight. Question for you now. You head of course the Heart of the City. Your focus is business. We know your organisation has been active in advocating for solutions to end homelessness. We know that collaboration from all corners is going to be critical. Can I ask first, how can downtown businesses and property owners, how can they play a role in resolving the problem? I should say that talking to you a short time ago I got the feeling you think progress is already being made.

Viv Beck:

Yes I do and thank you for the opportunity to be here. Homelessness is one of the most prevalent issues raised with us by business and property owners in the city centre. We were determined to find a way to be part of the solution and that's how I came to hear Sam 18 months ago and get to know Moira. Interestingly reflecting back, only about nine months ago to the Lifewise big sleep out. I was invited to be on a business panel talking about this very topic. I certainly didn't profess to be an expert but I checked my notes before I came along here to say what I see in response to the question, how do we move beyond the once a year sleep out to working collaboratively to end homelessness?

What I see and I guess in typically pragmatic business fashion, I said, "We've got to set the goal and we've got to all be determined to end it rather than manage it." So that was quite nice to hear you talk about that. It struck me that there were a lot of things that was sort of about managing rather than ending. So point number one let's get the common goal. Work at a plan. What do we need to do? Who needs to be involved? How much will it cost? Then let's just get on with it now. That was one thing from that evening that I recall.

The other one that I thought was a bit of a game changer actually was that Housing First had been put up by Lifewise as a solution and we had a new City Mission Chris Farrelly on board. He stood up that night and said, "You know what? It doesn't matter what brand we're from, if this is going to help people and end homelessness, we should get in behind it." That to me was a really bright light of hope that we could actually work together to end this.

I'm really happy to be here on this panel tonight because in just about nine months we have actually seen action. I know there'll be people in the audience that say, "But look out there what's happening." The reality is that we have got the social service providers working together

towards a goal to end homelessness, fantastic. We have government money committed. Admittedly it might not be long term but we'll work on that. The mayor and Auckland council have absolutely jumped in behind us.

Can I say in response to the earlier comment by the mayor, businesses have gotten behind this. They have actually through the city centre targeted rate committed \$2 million to the upgrade of James Liston Hostel for emergency housing. Business is playing a role and I think that there is an opportunity for us all to continue to work together. We want to see these 472 people housed in that pilot period. We want to find sustainable ongoing funding and we just want to see results. I'm feeling really optimistic and I hope the people here who are not yet seeing anything do feel some comfort that there really is action underway.

Greg Ward:

Just briefly you do see some future continued role by business and property owners?

Viv Beck:

Absolutely I do. I think that they're working together to a common goal is actually I think the way to go.

Greg Ward:

thank you very much Viv. Graham Bodman, Auckland council. Welcome along. Graham, of course you and your colleagues are working with Auckland's homelessness and many ways so a couple of questions for you tonight. How can local government support a Housing First approach and also do you think that central government still has a role to play?

Graham Bodman:

Well thank you Greg. Yes local government does have a role to play. In fact, we're playing that role right now. The mayor talked about it earlier on where we've partnered with ministry social development to put in a million dollars to cofound this two year pilot of the Housing First which is quite a significant contribution and I think it's the right thing to do. So there's a funding option. We've been working for instance with Lifewise over the last few months to actually give some funding to help them do the investigation to actually develop the case to actually support Housing First. We've been working certainly in that bonding space.

There's also I think a role that we've gotten local government to run civil leadership. The mayor has been very supportive and they've got an opportunity like we are today. This is the Auckland council event to actually shine the light on the problem and the exciting work has been taken to actually work collaboratively with local government, central government, the NGO, the business community and others to make a really significant push to really make a positive difference. I think that's tremendously exciting. So there's a number of ways that local government is helping.

Just in terms of the central government, yes, absolutely central government has got a role. In fact, they've contributed the lion's share of the funding towards supporting Housing First initiative and rightly so. Of course, housing and I was going to say homelessness isn't just an Auckland problem, it's actually a nationwide problem. It's a big problem in Auckland. It's a societal problem so it's bigger than any one of us actually. Yup, we've all got a role to play.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Graham. Well that's it from the panel for now. But they are now available to you for questions. We have about 20 minutes for questions. I'm happy to have them directed to anyone at the panel. If you do have a question tonight, please keep it brief. Make it very clear. You'll be handed a microphone and anyone who does want to ask a question just please raise your hand now. We have three ushers moving around the room. Each of them has a live microphone so as soon as you get the microphone, You'll be on air and already we have one with the hand raised in the right hand side. Your question, thank you.

Angela Maynard:

Yes. My name is Angela Maynard. I'm from Tenant's Protection Association Auckland. I see one problem with this whole programme and that is in the residential tenancy sect. There is no security of tenure which means that at any time anybody can get a 90 day notice without a reason. They cannot go to the tribunal. They cannot challenge it. They're out. Well that's fine in terms of if there's more accommodation for them to find somewhere else. When you're involving the private sector which I believe [inaudible 01:03:59] is. I think that remains a huge issue. I'm not going to ask anyone on the panel what they're going to do about it because really it's outside of their power. I'm going to ask Phil Goff. Is he still here? No. Oh God! Well ...

Greg Ward:

He's not here either.

Angela Maynard:

Well maybe somebody could convey this to him because when he was the person that introduced the residential tenancy act in 1986. At the time, the housing workers throughout the country said there has to be a just cause for eviction but he didn't take any notice of us. So this has plagued residential tenancy law ever since. What we need is a reason for an eviction.

Greg Ward:

Thank you for those comments. Let's just see ...

Angela Maynard:

I haven't quite finished.

Greg Ward:

Let's just see if the panel would like to respond.

Angela Maynard:

Can I just finish? Because this is really important.

Greg Ward:

Well we have a lot of people here so [inaudible 01:04:56] questions.

Angela Maynard:

I'm not going to leave. Pay me one minute and that is ...

Greg Ward:

You've got 30 seconds.

Angela Maynard:

That is he's now in a powerful position working with Amy Adams where he can put pressure on her to do just that, to amend the act so that Housing First is a programme that can work better.

Greg Ward:

Okay. Thank you for your point. Would anyone on the panel tonight like to respond to that?

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

History is a valuable thing and clearly he's the right guy to fix the mistake he created.

Greg Ward:

Any other questions? Please raise your hand nice and high. We have three ushers with microphones and I think we have someone coming now in the theatre. Right and front, front row. Microphone is on the way.

Speaker 1:

Hi!

Greg Ward:

Do you have a question for a panel member?

Speaker 1:

Yes. Well I want to speak not particularly to anyone but everybody can chip in what they think. One of the things is tiny houses on government land where people rent could be a solution before making ... while apartments and everything are being built. I've talked to quite a lot of homeless people and the problem is that they can't get government assistance unless they have a permanent address. That's what a lot of them are saying. It's impossible for them to get a benefit.

So that's a big problem for them. Also, there needs to be a situation where there's an agency that when people are tethering on losing their home, that they can call and get emotional support and everything because the tsunami or problems arise when they're actually kicked out. People can reach out to somewhere before they fall off the cliff.

Greg Ward:

Okay, thank you. Moira, is that something you can respond you? I'm guessing you see this in your role.

Moira Lawler:

Yes. Agencies like ours, like the agencies involved in the collective provide addresses for people so that they can receive the support that they're entitled to and in fact there are tiny house models overseas. Sam may want to comment. I mean I have been part of conversations locally about tiny houses and I'm open to any option that increases the housing mix. As long as the housing is permanent because I have seen examples of people building communities of tiny houses and for me it's the community building that as important as the style of house.

Greg Ward:

Sam, tiny houses, was that something you would care to comment on tiny houses? Okay. Short in that case more questions. We have one down here. I'm not sure where the microphone is and we have a couple over there. Do we have a microphone on the far left? Yes we do. On the far left, I'll take a question there.

Andrea Rose McGregor:

My name is [Andrea Rose McGregor 01:08:04] and there've been references to involving the people who are currently homeless. What process is they're going to ... how are we going to go about it?

Greg Ward:

So what's the process? Is it something Graham you could talk about the process for managing them.

Graham Bodman:

I think it actually will be better responded to by Moira in terms of the operation response.

Greg Ward:

Sure.

Moira Lawler:

Yes we've been involved in actually using a human centre design process to get to the stage of what we want to prototype in the Housing First model. That process has included quite extensively people who are both currently rough sleeping and people who have lived experience of rough sleeping. There's a lot of engagement in terms of working with people around what doesn't work now, what might work in the future, what might you like to see but also core to the Housing First model is the employment of people with lived experience into your team so that advice and expertise is part of your programme.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. One more on my left. Do we have a microphone on the left still? Just coming down now. Hi!

Victoria Brown:

Just a quick question. I'm Victoria Brown. My niece and great niece we've been providing food every Tuesday night for the last 10 months to Auckland and we're feeding about 140 homeless people. In that time we've provided coats, suits, clothing, sleeping bags, you name it. In that time not one agency, not Lifewise, not the police, not Ngāti Maniapoto, not the mayor has come to help and responded to our emails or anything to help.

I think it's great but I hope I don't stand here another two years and be saying the same question "Will it change and how can we a small organisation of private families tap into this work that's being done?" Because we've seen no one off. We've seen one person get off the street in 10 months and it's actually unacceptable. I think the fact that most of them are married and the young man up there I thought your comments were actually out of step given Ngāti Maniapoto did nothing for them.

Greg Ward:

All right sir, you'd like a question to the panel? Rau, would you like to respond to that?

Rau Hoskins:

It's not really a question.

Greg Ward:

Thank you for your comments. I think we have someone in the middle here. Please do if you can have a specific question. We know there's a lot of passion and emotion but we would really welcome specific questions.

Victoria Brown:

[inaudible 01:10:53]

Greg Ward:

How can you tap in?

Victoria Brown:

No, that is a question.

Greg Ward:

Okay.

Victoria Brown:

We're a private family.

Greg Ward:

How to tap into the outlets available?

Victoria Brown:

Because we're working people.

Greg Ward:

We'll try to address that for you now.

Victoria Brown:

Thank you very much.

Moira Lawler:

There are range of groups across Auckland. I'm aware of ones in central Auckland but I know there are a myriad of small and mid-sized groups across Auckland doing outreach, doing support. I share the dream that would be beautiful to be at the stage where that was not necessary. You know the definition of homelessness that we are working with is the concept that homelessness will be real brief and non-reoccurring because people will always leave homes for sometimes perfectly valid reasons. Young people leave a house that's unsafe etc. so there will be people who end up on the street.

Our vision is that they will quickly be able to access services that provide them with secure housing. What is the role for the informal groups in this programme? We haven't worked that out yet and so we will be as we get the collective moving it off the ground engaging with others in terms of what is your part to play because as I say this is a whole system approach. That's where we're trying to head.

Greg Ward:

Thanks Moira. Now I should point out that we do have limited time tonight. We'll certainly take more questions but clearly there are some issues here that may go beyond our ability to answer

them tonight. We can't answer everything. So for those who are interested I will give out a couple of addresses. You might like to pursue this with council later. This isn't just a council issue but I do have a couple of useful email addresses. The first one is Auckland Conversation at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. I'll repeat that Auckland Conversation at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. Otherwise, please do a Google search for the Shape Auckland website where you can add your own comments. We had a couple of questions down here. My apologies. That first one is Auckland conversations at Auckland council. Now we have a ...

Speaker 2:

[inaudible 01:13:15]

Greg Ward:

We have one here. Is there a microphone? All yours.

Speaker 3:

Hello my name is [inaudible 01:13:24]. We bound work to Paea marae to feed the homeless. My question is, Tapui Marae didn't just talk about it. They actually went out and action that in. Help the homeless and housing, they took on a lot government support and other funding supporters to help the struggles and the issues around all of homelessness. Is there any of those strategies that are being taken from Tapui to be implemented in the policies that you are looking at trying to go move forward because they're very successful but they got closed down and really understand why because they were very, very successful.

Greg Ward:

Okay, thank you. Strategies. Rau, is there something you'd like to comment?

Rau Hoskins:

Tapui Marae going through building renovations and they had to discontinue their service. It was passed on to Manurewa Marae so they're getting back on their building renovations. I think the hope is that as this part has progressed is that all our [urban 01:14:41] Marae will actually be involved in a governor's role to actually make sure that the issues that they're experiencing particularly south Manurewa Marae so that they actually feed in their experiences that they're having at the coalface.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. Now down the front.

Speaker 4:

The homeless man that I know out in west Auckland living in shacks or in sheds in the bush because they want to be somewhere where they can get a job occasionally. I can see the psychological reason for building a house, getting somebody into a house first but the house has to be somewhere where there are jobs. Lots of jobs down the country where some of these men come from ... sorry. There are houses in places but they're out of jobs and that's why they've come to west Auckland and living in shacks and so on.

Greg Ward:

Once again, is there a question there for the panel?

Speaker 4:

Dr. Sam who has put the priority on a house and I'd like to hear what he says about the job situation. He's assuming that there is a job.

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Part of the conversation about where the person lives in this programme is to ask them exactly that. That's what that choice refers to. Choice also refers to location. If the person has a strong preference to live in not only in other part of the city but in another city all together, we would help them find housing that would support what their other needs are. Sometimes it's a job. Sometimes its being close to another family member but where there is an emphasis on honouring the person's preference is for location. We don't do such a great job ourselves of finding people jobs when they're housed. That's difficult. I think we could pay more attention to that.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. Question on the second row.

Speaker 5:

Hi! I just had a question about I think it was just over 400 people that are going to be helped in this two year pilot. How did they feel about this programme? Do you have their full support?

Greg Ward:

Moira perhaps?

Moira Lawler:

That's a good question. Certainly in the programme that we've been developing as we said earlier we have spent a lot of time listening and talking with people who are currently homeless in Auckland city centre. The Housing First model is designed to be effective with people who are long term homeless and for whom other models have not been effective. For example, in the work that we did looking at people that Lifewise and City Mission is currently working with, people who have come to us for support. We did a quick look at the set of people that are currently in our services.

On average those people had been homeless for seven years or more. We are talking about people who meet the definition of chronically homeless. Our programme is of course a voluntary programme. There's no compulsion. What we will be doing is working with that group of people who are long term homeless, who have more than one issue in their life that is preventing them from sustaining housing and offering them a service within the numbers that we can manage to work with. We've certainly had plenty of feedback from people who are saying, "We're ready. When do you start?" That will be more of the issue with us, not finding people that want to work with us.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Moira.

Dr Sam Tsemberi:

Can I say something?

Greg Ward:

Yes of course.

Dr Sam Tsemeri:

I think that the 400 will probably come out of a larger group. The programme is really not anything mandatory. The programme begins with an invitation to the person. So here's this programme. This is the work that does. Would you like to participate in it? We would find out I think how the person feels about it by their response to whether or not they want to be included in the programme.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. Down the front we have a question.

Pippa Coom:

Tena koutou panel. Kia ora Sam. Thank you for the Auckland Conversations. Pippa Coom, chair of the Waitemata local board. I would just like to acknowledge the many people in the room who've been working in the space probably for many years and also in saying that just to say how fantastic I think it is that this has happened so fast. I was at the presentation that Sam gave at Lifewise. I'm sure it was only 18 months ago and to see this happening so quickly is really awesome. I did just want to acknowledge that and it's very exciting that this come together.

In thinking of a question because I notice getting in front of a statement but I just thought it would be nice just to really acknowledge what has happened here and how exciting it is. I guess the question was, how are we going to bring everybody along with us by sharing the message of Housing First and clearly there's lots of agencies working in the space and individuals and how we can bring them on board with information sharing so that people can really understand what Housing First is all about so we can really share in this vision and get on board.

Greg Ward:

Thank you.

Moira Lawler:

I think that's one of the key opportunities of the collective and why we're so pleased that both government and council have agreed to support the collective because we've seen this work well in other countries. This becomes a movement. This is not individual organisations running little programmes. This is a movement of Aucklanders who are concerned enough about this issue to want to be involved and the collective is a key part of keeping the communication going, keeping the conversation going, keeping the invitation for people to get involved.

Viv Beck:

Can I just add to that? I think it is fantastic in really short space of time we're all talking about Housing First. I think that's a secret of it. The different groups have actually acknowledged. I agree with the people that are raising those questions but certainly looking from the outside in those have been things on my mind. I'm seeing the group work through some of those things quite genuinely and looking to learn as we go along but we've got enough body of people that are really talking about Housing First as an opportunity to end homelessness and tailoring it to our particular circumstances. I think it just needs to carry on from there and have that common goal. It seems to me that that's how it got where it is so quickly.

Greg Ward:

Thank Viv. Now we have a question on my left.

Speaker 6: Kia ora koutou [foreign language 01:22:24] First, I want to [mihi 01:22:41] to my fire. I'm part Ngāti Whātua as well now I'm peer support worker for Housing First Lifewise. Yeah. I was part of the ...

Speaker 7:

[inaudible 01:22:54]

Speaker 6:

Yeah. [inaudible 01:22:56]

Speaker 7:

I taught in school.

Speaker 6:

I guess it's a validation that part of the process was engaging with those with lived experience and we did that over six months designing and looking at what other specific views from lived experience. Now I'm employed and there's one other you may know him as well [Robert 01:23:23]. Yeah, this is just the beginning fire and we'll have [inaudible 01:23:31] later. We will. Kia ora koutou. Thank you.

Greg Ward:

Well come to the front but we've got one at the back at the moment, right at the back. Thank you.

Speaker 8:

Just understood if there are any exclusion criteria, what would they be?

Greg Ward:

Exclusion criteria.

Speaker 8:

Exclusion criteria considering the population you're servicing, this generally exclusion criteria for programmes. I'm just curious as to what they might be.

Dr Sam Tsember:

I don't know that it's been established. I think that the focus has been primarily to identify among people who are homeless those that would be least likely to make it back into housing on their own. I think we've been more focused on how to identify the people that have been homeless the longest and have multiple problems. It almost as if people are doing too well this would not be the programme for them if they don't need case management. Everyone will need rent so it's not just about ending poverty in affordable housing. It's actually the person would have to have some need of additional support without which they wouldn't be able to get in to housing and keep it.

Speaker 8:

[inaudible 01:25:03]

Greg Ward:

He feels that wasn't quite answered.

Speaker 8:

That's not quite the answer to the question and the question is, if there are exclusion criteria, what would they be?

Moira Lawler:

I think, are you're saying is there anyone that would be so hard or complicated or difficult that we wouldn't work with them. is that what you're asking?

Speaker 8:

Yeah.

Moira Lawler:

the answer is no. I guess what Sam was saying is part of the strength of the model is that it separates the tenancy management from the wraparound support. So, are there things people might do that would get them evicted? Sure because this is real world. This is not some kind of cotton wool programme. If you don't act legally within your tenancy, yes you could get evicted. What the wraparound support does is work with you in terms of "Okay, that didn't go so well. What are we going to do next?" The game is to ensure people get into housing and stay housed.

Speaker 8:

Cool, fantastic.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. Time has gone by in a flash. We have time for just two more. Now we have a patient woman down here waiting for the first question and one at the back. So if you have a microphone on its way. Thank you.

Speaker 9:

Sorry, I actually agreed to let someone else ask a question. Now that I have microphone, I'll ask the question now. I work with people that are mentally ill and it's a small social enterprise. I had the chance to have two people who were homeless live with me for a while. They were both drug addicts. Now they both got evicted off of the place that they got allocated to due to drug abuse. My question is related to, what happens with drug addiction? This is a very serious issue and I constantly work with people that struggle with mental illness and an addiction. They get kicked out of their places. What is going to happen now?

Greg Ward:

What happens with drug addiction? Can we address that?

Dr Sam Tsember:

We are hoping to house people that have serious drug addiction and mental illness. That's the goal. What happens is the same thing that happens with a lot of people. Some people may actually start reducing their drug use because they have to pay 25% of their income now towards the rent. So a little less have a cash flow problem and which ... and then they have groceries to buy for the fridge. There's a natural cost of living with getting housed that helps people to reduce. They certainly get better psychologically just because they're in a safe, secure space.

People do lose their apartments and the most frequent reason for housing loss eviction is drug use but not just severe drug use, its drug use with others. There's lots of people in Auckland that are using in their apartments and don't get evicted. They use moderately. The eviction usually is because the person has a social way of using and other people come in to the apartment. Sometimes they won't leave and it becomes a lease violation. The person is still a client of the support services so that they've been evicted doesn't mean they've lost the programme. Addiction is a long term process and the programme is committed to helping the person find the next place if that's what they want to try and do or go to treatment for their drug use. We leave the decisions up to them and support them the best we can through that recovery process. We're dug in for the long haul and expect a bumpy ride. That's how we know we've identified the right people for the programme.

Greg Ward:

Thank you Sam. The last question for the evening comes in the back row.

Speaker 10:

Hi! I know you've just got funding now but what's the kind of timeline from here on out as a commoner to understand what the next steps are and do the two year start right now or do they ... what's next I guess?

Moira Lawler:

Yes the two years start right now. Some of our providers are already housing people. Others of us are still getting off the ground. Across the providers, the teams have been recruited. Having Sam here as part of the training made available to those teams so it's all system go basically.

Greg Ward:

Thank you. Graham, just very briefly I know there will be many more questions here tonight that we can't address. Could you perhaps recap, remind us what the options are for continuing feedback through your organisation or council?

Graham Bodman:

Certainly Greg. I guess one way of giving feedback is actually through the current annual plan process that's currently being consulted on through to the 27th so thought next Monday. You can go on to Auckland council's webpage or Shape Auckland as you mentioned before and actually make a formal submission. Certainly the email address you gave previously Auckland conversations at aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and we will respond to any other queries that come through or come and have a chat afterwards.

Greg Ward:

Graham, thank you. Thank you panel members and thank you our live audience tonight. Thank you for being patient. We certainly appreciate all the questions we heard. I'm sure some of those answers will provide valuable insights for all of you. Now as we wrap up, I would like to invite councillor Penny Hulse to the stage. Thank you.

Penny Hulse:

[foreign language 01:31:26] Thank you for a wonderful evening. Thank you for the extraordinary audiences that we seem to have at these conversations. Pleased you all for being here and showing your compassion and interest by attending. Something shifted in Auckland I think last winter when Tapui marea opened its doors and brought the homeless in. Suddenly we saw a different face of homeless and it no longer I think as Sam said became the accompaniment to walking down Queen Street.

I think our tolerance for homelessness just changed. So that's why this is so exciting. It's such a great innovation and I just want to respect the hard and probing questions that we've had. This is in no way dismissing that. That's how we roll. That's Auckland. We test each other and we probe and thank God for that. We don't just consume and then go away and God it wasn't that good. So we have probed around the edges and we've had extraordinary answers. I want to acknowledge our panel and what you see in front of you is actually the reality of what collaboration and cooperation looks like in the new Auckland.

For that, I'm very, very grateful. I just want to acknowledge Viv. She came into my office about 18 months ago and I was a little bit overwhelmed with this glamorous blond gorgeous woman coming into my office to talk business. It always makes me feel very west Auckland and out of place. We went straight to homelessness and the difference with heart of Auckland is its pragmatic compassion. This is not sprinklers and spikes to keep the homeless people out. This is what can we do and how can we make it work and we're seeing you right in the middle of this. I just loved it.

[inaudible 01:33:21] I just want to acknowledge Ngāti Whātua's act and compassionate partnership in this area. That conversation we just saw [inaudible 01:33:31] is exactly why this works. Someone asks a tough question, the person who answers is an old school pupil and suddenly we realise ... hang on a minute. We're joined up. We know each other. We've got the solution. We're working, collaborating. It's fine. We know who to go to. We know how to make this happen.

Moira, I've known you for a long time from your work out west. I think the collaboration and cooperation is in this woman's DNA. It's through your endeavours that we're bringing so much of this together in a way that is both functional and has huge authenticity and integrity. Graham, I'm so proud of the work that we do in this council. Thank you. I just want to leave on one really pragmatic thing. I think we can actually move on with our tenancy. The residential tenancy act I'm very keen that we wrap that into and have talked with the man. I'm sorry he had another engagement otherwise he absolutely would be here.

We can wrap some of those challenges into the discussion that I'm picking up about our residential warrant of the fitness process and I think we can actually nail down some of those other issues there which is long overdue. Just one last thing. Completely practical that we are working on and I'll be taking to local government New Zealand tomorrow is the issue of meth contaminated houses. What a lot of bollocks that is. I'll be really blunt and say that it is for me this is a whole bunch of houses that our wonderful people could move into immediately.



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A lick of paint and a bit of wipe down and we could live in there. It's moral outrage masquerading as science and it just needs to be put in its place. So the best quote for me from the night was the definition of ending homelessness is putting people in houses. Let's cogitate on that as we go. It's utterly doable. Again, thank you so much to our extraordinary panel for the huge amount of work that's being done to our funders. To Susan for the hard work that you do. For Greg, for holding this together. Thank you. For everyone who has made this work, let's go safely and let's make this movement work. Thank you all so much.