Homelessness Action Plan Extended Evaluation

Support for people at risk of eviction

Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service

Housing NSW
Final February 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service (CSATSS) operated by Mission Australia targets Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose tenancies are at risk or who are homeless but not considered to be sleeping rough. The CSATSS operates within the Coastal Sydney Region and has commenced a part time outreach service to Greater Western Sydney.

The CSATSS provides tenancy advice and support, brokered goods and services for a support period as determined by the need of the client and their individual situation although most support periods are of short duration with the majority of clients needing only low levels of support. The service commenced in April 2011 but was not fully staffed until late in 2011.

Total funding to the CSATSS from 2010/11 to 2011/12 was $1,530,026. Not all funds were expended, with total expenditure up to 2011/12 of $1,029,344.

A key feature of the model is the employment of Aboriginal staff and the capacity to support people to find housing as well as to sustain an existing tenancy. The service is currently structured to provide direct advice and support but is working to strengthen relationships with service providers to generate referrals and support structures to address the needs of more complex clients.

Effective working relationships have been established between CSATSS and Housing NSW Housing Managers to facilitate joint responses to Aboriginal people in social housing whose tenancies are at risk and to enable Aboriginal people who are homeless to complete applications for priority housing. A large proportion of tenants assisted by CSATSS have been provided support to relocate or transfer within the social housing sector. Only a small proportion of people were in private rental.

The CSATSS has met its target number of clients for 2011/2. In 2011/12 CSATSS assisted 174 clients against a target of 150. The CSATSS data on client numbers captures individual tenants or the primary person assisted only, no data is recoded on accompanying children or other household members although CSTASS do offer services to immediate person/s that live within the tenancy as their primary place of accommodation.

There has been a high success rate in relation to housing outcomes for CSATSS clients. In 2011/12, of the 174 clients assisted, 168 had sustained their tenancy (96.6%). Anecdotally, service providers interviewed felt that although the service was only in its first year of operation, it had successfully intervened to save a number of tenancies.

Key services provided by CSATSS include tenancy advice and support, assistance with budgeting and financial management skills, supporting tenants to establish a tenancy through financial assistance to relocate and support to complete housing applications, including providing confirmation of Aboriginality.

There have also been a range of beneficial non housing outcomes for clients of the CSATSS including reductions in stress, improvements in physical and mental health, family relationships, confidence and social support. The service has commenced collecting data on rental stress indicators to better understand the housing and non housing impacts affecting a tenancy. A living skills program was identified as a need and has just begun to be implemented by the service. Service providers and clients interviewed identified the value of Aboriginal staff who understood the context and issues facing Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness or whose tenancies were at risk.

In relation to expenditure, staffing and administration accounts for 89.3% of the CSATSS budget while brokerage accounts for 10.7%. In 2011/12 brokerage was primarily spent on goods to support home establishment and services to support relocations. The brokerage policy does not enable the service to contribute to payments towards rental arrears. This has been an area of contention with the service

reporting that this has limited their capacity to assist clients out of immediate financial hardship, necessitating referrals to other services to support rental arrears payments and identifying other financial supports that can be provided to increase client capacity to meet rent repayments.

In 2011/12 the total cost per client was $5846 (noting that 'client' may include other household members). For the period July to December 2012, 48% of clients utilised brokerage funds. The average brokerage/payments for the period were $1184 per client assisted. The overall cost is considered to represent reasonable value for money but is higher than other projects evaluated as a result of the higher levels of staffing and operational costs. While comparable benchmarks are difficult to identify the literature suggests that the cost of preventing eviction is less than the costs resulting from eviction, particularly in relation to Aboriginal homelessness.

There are some challenges for the effective operation of the model. These include the initial and ongoing challenges in securing buy-in from Aboriginal services in the Coastal Sydney region; this is a factor limiting referrals to and from the service. A greater focus on service promotion, development of referral relationships with mainstream and Aboriginal services and strengthening of referral processes and documentation over the next 12 months will strengthen service and client outcomes. It is noted that the service is required to enter client data into several data bases, however the evaluation found incomplete data and reporting that was unclear particularly in relation to level of client need and referrals to support clients with complex issues. This is an area that could also potentially be strengthened.

It is noted that the brief for the Aboriginal tenancy support service was ambitious, with expectations around strengthening the service network, securing housing for people experiencing homelessness and supporting people at risk to sustain their tenancies. These expectations exceed those of other tenancy support models where the primary focus is on sustaining an existing tenancy, however funding levels and staffing are higher than other models.

Overall, and particularly given that the service is in its first year of operation, it was concluded that the CSATSS is an effective means of assisting Aboriginal people to access housing and preventing evictions. Key factors in success include the ability of the service to assist Aboriginal people in a variety of homeless and at risk situations, strong working relationships with social housing providers and culturally appropriate service provision. The analysis would suggest that within existing funding there is capacity for the service to grow, for example by extending the geographic area of service or by increasing the ratio of clients to staff members.

The CSATSS has demonstrated the complexities involved in responses to Aboriginal homelessness and has added the value and expertise of Aboriginal staff in preventing eviction as part of a broader response to homelessness to promote better outcomes for people at risk.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan

In 2009 the NSW Government released the NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014 ('the HAP'). It sets the direction for state wide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The HAP aims to realign existing effort, and increase the focus on prevention and long-term accommodation and support.

The HAP also aims to change the way that homelessness and its impact on the community is understood; change the way services are designed and delivered to homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless; and change ways of working across government, with the non-government sector and with the broader community to improve responses to homelessness.

Under the HAP there are three headline homelessness reduction targets, which are:

- A reduction of 7% in the overall level of homelessness in NSW.
- A reduction of 25% in the number of people sleeping rough in NSW.
- A reduction of one-third in the number of Indigenous people who are homeless.

The HAP includes approximately 100 NSW Government funded local, regional and state-wide projects which assist in achieving the homelessness reduction targets. As at June 2012, 55 of the projects were funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness ('the NPAH'). The remaining projects include other programs or services that contribute to addressing homelessness.

The projects are aligned to one of three strategic directions:

- Preventing homelessness; to ensure that people never become homeless
- Responding effectively to homelessness: to ensure that people who are homeless receive effective responses so that they do not become entrenched in the system
- Breaking the cycle: to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again

Ten Regional Homelessness Action Plans (2010 to 2014) were developed to identify effective ways of working locally to respond to local homelessness and provide the focus for many of the HAP projects.

The HAP Evaluation Strategy has been developed in consultation with government agencies and the non-government sector. It involves three inter-related components, which are:

I. **Self evaluations** – The purpose of self evaluation is to gather performance information about each of the HAP projects across key areas in a consistent way, and to collect the views of practitioners about the effectiveness of their projects.

II. **Extended evaluations** – The purpose of the extended evaluations is to analyse and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of 15 selected projects and the service approaches to addressing homelessness that those projects represent. The service approaches covered by the extended evaluations are; support for women and children escaping domestic violence, youth foyers, support for people exiting institutions, tenancy support to prevent evictions and long term housing and support.

III. **Meta-Analysis** – The purpose of the meta-analysis is to synthesise the aggregated findings from the self evaluations and extended evaluations as well as other evaluations available on HAP activities.

The HAP evaluation will assist with measuring progress towards meeting the HAP targets as well as provide evidence of effective responses and lessons learnt that should be considered in the future response to homelessness in NSW.

1.2 Overview of service model and projects included in the evaluation

Robyn Kennedy Consultants were commissioned to undertake the extended evaluation of three projects grouped under the heading of supporting people who are at risk of eviction. These are projects that provide assistance to prevent people from being evicted from either social or private rental housing.   The three projects that were evaluated are:

- Tenancy Support Far North Coast managed by On Track Community Programs
- Tenancy Support Mid North Coast managed by Samaritans Foundation
- Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service managed by Mission Australia

This report is focused on the **Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service**. Separate reports are available on the other two projects.

All three projects are based around a case management model supported by brokerage to purchase goods or services or to assist in managing debts such as rent arrears. All projects aim to connect clients to services that are appropriate to their needs as well as addressing the immediate issues that place them at risk of eviction. Each service does however, have differences in operating models. Individual reports on each project describe the service model in detail.

1.3 Contextual factors from the literature

A literature review was undertaken on models aiming to support tenants at risk of eviction. The literature review is included in the Summary Report on all three of the tenancy support projects evaluated. As is outlined in the literature review, many jurisdictions both nationally and internationally have established tenant support programs in an effort to avoid the social and economic costs associated with eviction.

Studies confirm that the vast majority of evictions are caused by the failure to pay rent and the accumulation of rent arrears. This applies to both public and private tenants although rental arrears is a much more significant factor for private renters than public housing tenants while property standards, damage to property and anti-social behaviour are more significant factors for public tenants than private renters.   Tenant support programs therefore need to have a primary focus on assisting tenants to address rent arrears while also supporting tenants to address other factors that result in the threat of eviction.

There are a myriad of personal drivers for tenancy problems including mental and physical illness, relationship breakdown, loss of employment, hospitalisation/rehabilitation, experiences of family separation and domestic violence and incarceration of one of more household members. Anti-social behaviour by tenants is often related to personal vulnerabilities and difficulties such as mental health problems and drug and alcohol abuse. For many tenants on low incomes, bills and rent are juggled regularly and an unexpected expense such as a medical bill can "fatally derail" the ability to maintain rental payments. Private renters often have higher levels of rent arrears and debts and/or outstanding fines to utilities, store credit, banks and financial institutions. Public housing tenants at risk of eviction are more likely to present with high and complex needs and require additional support with respect to mental health support services as well as family reunification, drug/alcohol support/rehabilitation/

intervention and health/medical services. Research shows that Indigenous tenants are one of the demographic groups most vulnerable to eviction. Indigenous households in mainstream public housing are much more likely than non-Indigenous households to receive tenancy termination notices and to be evicted.

These findings suggest that to successfully avoid eviction, tenancy support programs need to provide different forms of assistance to clients to address the issues that underlie tenancy problems and to be responsive to the higher risk of Indigenous tenants. Referrals to other services such as counselling, mental health and drug and alcohol services and financial counsellors are a key element of many programs. Many tenant support programs also aim to improve family relationships, to build the capacity of clients in terms of their life skills, to increase their self esteem and to increase their confidence and trust in those delivering services. Tenancy advice and support designed to enhance the skills required to maintain a tenancy are also important particularly for Indigenous tenants where sustainable tenancies were also linked to culturally appropriate service provision. In order to meet the varying needs of tenants at risk of eviction, multi-agency partnerships are a key component of sustaining tenancies and successful tenant support programs include strong linkages with a range of service providers supported by coordinated referral processes.

The literature found that evictions generally took place before formal action commenced. Those at risk of eviction tend to move out quickly and early on in the process. Evictees often do not seek advice, information, support, or advocacy to defend their housing nor do they contact the landlord/manager to discuss the situation before it escalates further. In addition, evictees often do not make use of formal dispute resolution procedures to resolve the immediate tenancy issue. Tenants in the private rental sector are more likely to leave early than persons in the public rental sector facing eviction. These findings highlight the importance of tenancy support models assisting tenants as early as possible and wherever possible before any formal eviction process begins.

The literature review concluded that those at risk of losing their tenancy overwhelmingly maintain it with support and effective tenancy support programs enable improvements to housing circumstances to be sustained over time. Research has shown that tenancy support programs can also result in improvements in health, wellbeing, financial security, labour market outcomes, the ability to cope with serious problems and feelings of safety. Effective tenant support programs should enable these kinds of outcomes according to the needs and circumstances of tenants at risk.

The literature review found a number of elements that reflected a good practice approach to tenant support models aimed at preventing eviction. These included:

> **Early intervention** is essential as the risk to tenancies increases the longer the tenant is without the appropriate information and assistance. If intervention occurs at the point of crisis, for example when an eviction notice is presented to a tenant, the options for preventing eviction are more limited.

> **Case management** - a case management approach is adopted for each client. Case management has a focus on understanding the range of issues that may be relevant to the risk of eviction. Case management ensures that counselling, and specialised social services are coordinated and that all support services are kept informed.

> **Partnerships** – tenant support models require building of relationships with a wide range of organisations that form part of the case management of tenants at risk. This may include government and non government agencies. Clear service agreements and communication protocols with partner agencies around case management, referral practices and the provision of support services form part of effective partnerships.

- ➢ **Information, advice and advocacy** is provided to the client including on their rental housing rights and responsibilities and legal rights in order to ensure the fair and efficient implementation of tenant-landlord regulations. This information may be provided directly by the case manager or through a partner agency.

- ➢ **Practical support is varied and flexible according to individual need.** Practical support may include rent arrears assistance/utilities assistance, direct debit schemes or repayment schemes for rent and other payments, assistance and training in budgeting/money management and referrals to other support services.

In addition to these elements a good practice approach to tenant support for Indigenous tenants also requires knowledge of local Indigenous communities and the development of trust within communities as well as the use of service providers who are local and have credibility in the community; and support workers who are culturally sensitive and able to understand and acknowledge cultural issues including kinship obligations.

Evaluation of the Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service has been undertaken within the framework of research that has highlighted key objectives and elements of successful tenancy support projects, as briefly outlined above. A more detailed description of the research is included in the Summary Report.

2 EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODS

2.1 Ethics process

HAP evaluation projects were required to obtain ethics approvals from an appropriate body before commencing detailed consultation. The evaluation of support for people at risk of eviction was not required to obtain separate ethics approval as it was considered that the scope of approval obtained by other HAP evaluation projects from the University of NSW was broad enough to include the evaluation of support for people at risk of eviction. The evaluation has also been informed by the SAAP Ethical Research Protocols 2006.

2.2 Summary of methods

The methodology for the evaluation included:

- Consultation with the Regional Homelessness Committee
- Interviews with managers and staff of the service
- Interviews with Housing NSW regional staff
- Interviews with 14 primary clients (with 15 dependent children)
- Interviews with 13 service providers including referral agencies
- Review of various documents including forms used to assess and approve clients for assistance, HAP self evaluations and portal reports
- Review of financial and administrative data
- Review of a sample of client rental stress surveys

2.2.1 Client interviews

CSATSS were requested to assist in providing access to clients for consultation. The CSATSS Manager and Team Leader contacted clients to seek their participation in the evaluation. A copy of the key evaluation questions for clients was distributed by CSATSS and the consulting team commenced phone contact with clients. The majority of clients were rung by an Aboriginal consultant to arrange a suitable time to be interviewed and subsequently a phone interview was conducted. All interviews were based on a standard format. Clients who participated were provided with a $30 Coles or Woolworths voucher. Demographic and service usage data on interviewed clients is included at Appendix 1. All interviewed clients were Aboriginal.

2.2.2 Stakeholders and service providers

CSATSS were also requested to assist in providing contact details for service providers and key referrers for consultation, including details of Advisory Committee representatives. A list of participating organisations is included in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 sets out stakeholder responses to interview questions not otherwise presented in the body of the report.

2.3 Limitations

2.3.1 Contacting clients and service providers

Some difficulty was experienced in identifying clients and service providers for consultation. A number of clients and service providers did not return calls after several messages were left or phone details were incorrect or disconnected. This resulted in the consultants having to request more clients from CSATSS. Of approximately 25 client details provided by CSATSS, 14 were able to be contacted to participate in an interview.

2.3.2 Duration of project

The project commenced in April 2011 with project establishment and staff recruitment forming the bulk of work in this period. The first data portal report in which clients are recorded is September 2011 - this evaluation is therefore only able to assess achievements over a single year with the majority of service activity in 2012.

2.3.3 Data

The evaluation has drawn heavily on the data portal reports and self evaluation. In addition, monthly reports provided to Housing NSW were reviewed and de-identified information was reviewed on the MA data management system MACSIMS. Review of available data found some inconsistencies and gaps in information, such as incomplete records. For example, MACSIMS and SAAP databases were reviewed in relation to the reason for contact with CSATSS and the housing outcome but client records did not appear complete for all clients making any summation of trends difficult. Review of the CSATSS rental stress questionnaire showed different approaches to completion such as numbering against questions in some instances and tick or cross in others. In this case CSATSS interpretation of results was used in the report.

3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Service origins and description

The need for a program of support to prevent eviction of Aboriginal tenants was identified as a priority under the *Coastal Sydney Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2014* (2010). The project aimed to improve opportunities for Aboriginal people to access private rental and social housing and prevent risk of homelessness through eviction and other issues by providing a culturally appropriate, early intervention tenancy support service[1]. The service specification states that the service would 'also assist homeless people into long-term housing with appropriate support that wraps around the client' and includes the flexibility to purchase specialist services using brokerage funds where there is no provision to acquire these through existing services[2].

The project was originally opened for tender with the objective of being managed by an Aboriginal specific service. No services applied within the tender period and a select tender was subsequently conducted with Mission Australia being the successful tenderer. Mission Australia submitted a proposal which identified an approach that sought to work closely with Aboriginal services in a mentoring role with a view to handing the project over at the conclusion of the funding period if the project was extended.

Mission Australia is a key provider of social services including:

- Emergency relief
- SAAP crisis and medium term transitional housing
- MA Housing
- Children's services
- Youth services
- Disability services
- Aged care services and
- Community services

The CSATSS provides early intervention, case management support and brokerage to assist Aboriginal tenants access and sustain private rental and social housing. Initially the program focused on the 27 Local Government Areas of the Coastal Sydney Region but the service was extended on a part time basis to Greater Western Sydney in 2012. Housing NSW is the lead agency for the CSATSS project.

The project commenced in May 2011, with a period of establishment and staff recruitment resulting in the project effectively commencing in late 2011. Unlike other HAP people at risk of eviction projects, in real terms, the CSATSS model can only be assessed against progress made in a little over a year of implementation.

3.2 Objectives

The CSATSS program's main objective is to:

- Improve opportunities for Aboriginal people to access and sustain private rental and social housing, and prevent risk of homelessness through eviction and other issues, by providing culturally appropriate, early intervention tenancy support services.

- This will be achieved by:

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[1] National Partnership on Homelessness NSW Implementation Plan Project template
[2] Inner City Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service Tender details

- o Working in partnership with new and existing services to support mutual clients and provide tenancy support where necessary
- o Working in close partnership with the Aboriginal Assertive Outreach Service through the provision of general tenancy support.
- o Providing tenancy support services to Aboriginal people identified as at risk of eviction in social housing private rental, boarding houses and caravan parks,
- o Identifying, placing and supporting Aboriginal clients in suitable housing options in other areas of NSW where appropriate.
- o Linking Aboriginal tenants into mainstream services where appropriate and advocating for specialist services if necessary
- o Ensuring Aboriginal clients have access to required services by utilising brokerage funding in cases where services are unavailable
- o Driving an integrated response for Aboriginal people through case coordination approaches for clients who require multi-disciplinary support, particularly clients with complex needs who are chronically homeless, to make services more accessible and culturally responsive to Aboriginal people.

3.3 Target group

The client group for this service is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and reside in the Coastal Sydney Region. The definition of homeless in the context of this program is secondary homeless e.g. short term, couch surfing or interim accommodation. Part time outreach services operate in western Sydney.

The main client groups include:

- Families
- People with a disability, mental health issues and/or substance abuse issues
- People leaving care, custody or health facilities
- Young people
- Women and children who experience domestic violence
- Older people
- Chronically homeless people with complex needs.

In the initial stages of the project it was determined to focus on social housing tenants as the pathways for referral were clear and the project could likely achieve early successes. As early targets were met it was subsequently determined that strategies for the private rental market should be developed.

3.4 Service model

Mission Australia (MA) is the auspice organisation for the Coastal Sydney Aboriginal Tenancy Support Service (CSATSS). While CSATSS draws on the capacity of Mission Australia programs and services and receives support around core administrative functions such as financial management and higher level delegations, in practice the service is delivered as a stand-alone service delivering case management tenancy support to clients seeking housing or identified as at risk of losing their tenancy.

The service delivery approach has involved the delivery of tenancy advice and support by Aboriginal staff to Aboriginal people experiencing secondary homelessness or issues that are impacting their tenancy.

While the service delivery model sought to build a strong framework for referral to support services that would provide ongoing and sustainable service delivery to clients, in practice this referral network

is still emerging and has not been assisted by the challenges faced by the service during the start-up phase, where the service was unable to achieve engagement with established Aboriginal services who it had been hoped would be key partners and referrers to the service. A key factor here is that some local Aboriginal services had anticipated that the CSATSS would be based with an Aboriginal-specific service and there was some displeasure among service providers that this did not eventuate. This had resulted in a lack of engagement by some local Aboriginal services.

The service:

- delivers information about Housing NSW products and services,
- provides support to secure a tenancy or to relocate
- provides support with life skills including budgeting, health and wellbeing
- works with tenants to build confidence, connecting people to community and referral to support groups and services.
- provides advice in relation to tenancy law and tenants rights and responsibilities
- works in partnership with housing providers to support effective tenancy management for Aboriginal tenants, including support to resolve issues that may be impacting a person's tenancy
- makes referrals to other mainstream and Aboriginal specific services
- provides access to brokerage funds for a range of services 'not available elsewhere', these include purchase of household items for new tenancies, support with relocation costs, and engaging of specialist services to support tenancy objectives. CSATSS draws heavily on a range of Mission Australia products and services to add value to brokerage funding.

The project primarily works directly with the tenant – the focus being the issues that are causing risks to the tenancy. Work with children or other family members is not well reported in the service data, however CSATSS will work to engage support services around the family.

The primary service is based in an office in Marrickville. Since July 2012 outreach has been offered in Western Sydney. Two workers work two days a week - one week at Marrin Weejali (Blackett) and the alternate week at The Men's Shed (Emerton). Clients are welcome to drop in to offices but primarily workers meet with clients in an outreach or home visit capacity. Provision is made within the program for a support period of up to 16 weeks.

3.4.1 Referral

As discussed above, at the outset of the project, Mission Australia proposed a service delivery model that would be built on partnerships with established Aboriginal and mainstream services in the homelessness service sector. While some barriers have been experienced in the first year of project establishment, referral pathways appear to be developing and barriers to effective partnerships are being addressed as much as possible.

Services who have established effective referral pathways with CSATSS include:

- Housing NSW as a primary referrer, particularly Aboriginal specialist officers and Housing Managers
- Barnardo's as a key referrer of Aboriginal families
- The Haymarket Foundation - Haymarket Centre
- Fairlight Centre - Mission Australia
- Rawson Project - Mission Australia
- Community housing providers as an emerging referral partner
- The Block Community Centre (Redfern)
- NEAMI (Way2Home)

- Specialist medical practitioners

Services where referrals are received infrequently include:

- Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service
- Aboriginal Assertive Outreach Service

The service manager has recently commenced liaison with real estate agents with a view to understanding how the service can provide support to Aboriginal people seeking rentals in the private rental market and to identify supports that can be provided to Aboriginal private rental tenants who are at risk of losing their tenancy.

The number of referrals to the service varies widely depending on the organisation and their area of core service delivery; but referrals are received in the largest numbers from Housing NSW officers.

The referral process outlined by the CSATSS can include:

- Self referral, making contact with the service by phone, drop-in or as a result of community outreach work

- Referral from Housing NSW, via email with a client consent and referral form

- Referral through community partners via email or phone

As awareness of the service increases in the community, the number of Aboriginal tenants who are self referring is also increasing. CSATSS suggest that the majority of clients are self referred or are referred through their Housing NSW Area Housing Manager or Specialist Housing Officer. CSATSS noted that clients may be told about the service by their Housing Manager but they may then choose to self refer. As one referral agency commented:

"I've referred about 10 clients, but I've given information to between 20 to 30 clients."

Services interviewed as part of the evaluation included:

- Community housing providers   18%
- Non government organisations community /welfare/support   36%
- Housing NSW   46%

Of these, 91% referred clients to the services, while 9% identified that they accepted referrals for services purchased through brokerage funding and 9% accepted referrals and provided services within their existing resources. Some overlap is identified with some providers both referring to and accepting referrals from CSATSS.

These figures are in keeping with those provided in the data portal report (June 2012) which shows that the majority of assistance provided to tenants is provided directly by CSATSS staff rather than through external referrals.

3.4.2 Assessment

The assessment process involves the following steps:

- Completion of the referral form confirming eligibility, applicant details and accommodation status, tenancy history and reasons for the referral. The form is completed at the first interview with CSATSS or by the referring organisation.

- Following acceptance of the referral to the service, a tenancy management plan is completed in consultation with the tenant and includes an analysis of the tenant's current situation and identifies strategies to support the tenancy or to access housing in line with the tenant's goals.

- Application for brokerage is documented separately indicating how this contributes to achieving the strategies identified in the Tenancy Management Plan

- A Risk Assessment is completed for home visits.

- A rental stress questionnaire was introduced in mid 2012 and tracks the change for the tenant from the initial meeting and at the exit point from the service.

3.4.3   Coordination structures

While a list of Advisory Committee members was drawn up at the outset of the project with a view to providing some oversight and coordination of the service, the Committee is yet to be effectively established (as discussed in section 3.5 below), as such there are currently no formal coordination structures for the project.

3.4.4   Partnerships

The primary service partnerships reflect those identified in the referral pathways, with Housing NSW and other Mission Australia services being key partners.

Other partnerships have emerged informally as sources of support to the project and these include Aboriginal elder, Mick Mundine, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Company and The Block Community Centre (Redfern). Emerging partnerships with services in Greater Western Sydney (GWS) have developed as part of the extension of the project to the GWS region including Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service and Rick Welsh, Manager of The Shed in Emerton and participant in the Sydney Mens Aboriginal Network.

As achieving effective engagement with the community of Aboriginal services in Coastal Sydney has been a significant challenge, the service has responded by focusing on working effectively with Housing NSW, looking at other opportunities for service delivery for example, in Greater Western Sydney and strengthening the range of services able to be provided directly to tenants for example through the introduction of a living skills program.

Some feedback from services interviewed as part of the evaluation includes the need for the service to better promote their suite of services to mainstream organisations and to continue to focus on improving their service partnership through promotion activities:

"There is ... insufficient promotion and awareness of the service. They need to promote the service more widely as many people don't know that it exists".

"They need to maintain linkages with referral partners."

3.4.5   Brokerage Funds

Brokerage funding has been an area of contention for CSATSS with the CSATSS brokerage policy still in draft status at the time of the evaluation. Brokerage funds available through CSATSS do not currently include payment of rental arrears. Housing NSW representatives consulted as part of this evaluation indicated that the reasons for this approach were that tenants in Housing NSW properties

only need an agreement to repay rent arrears to save their tenancy and private rental clients in rent arrears can potentially access the Rentstart product Tenancy Assistance.

The CSATSS Service Manager noted that a lack of assistance with payment of rental arrears was a barrier to supporting clients as rent arrears was often a primary presenting issue for clients requiring assistance. CSATSS internal policy is to refer CSATSS clients requiring assistance with payment of rental arrears to other MA funding programs such as the Rawson project which has some capacity to pay brokerage for rental arrears and receives funding through Community Services.

Brokerage is allocated in accordance with an appropriate case plan and budget which is approved by the Service Manager (delegation up to $5,000) and Operations Manager - MA Adult Accommodation and Support Services Community Services (delegation above $5,000). At the time of evaluation the delegation of the Team leader to approve brokerage payment to a value of $1,000 had recently been introduced.

The Brokerage Policy establishes three primary focus areas for brokerage, being;

- Establishing a new and sustainable tenancy
- Relocation for cultural and or economic or support needs
- Alleviating rental stress indicators, by engaging services that are not already available through Housing NSW.

Brokerage assistance may consist of the following:

- Relocation expenses
- External services not available through Housing NSW
- Establishing a new tenancy, including but not limited to the following:
    - Refrigerator
    - Washing machine
    - Beds
    - Kitchen starter packs

The Brokerage Policy sets as a guide:

- For a single person assistance of around $ 1,000.00
- An additional expenditure of around $300.00 for each additional occupant.

The brokerage policy articulates the requirement for case managers to exhaust all existing government entitlements and benefits and availability of goods through charitable organisations before utilising brokerage funds.

Other funding sources that have been accessed to support the project include:

- Electricity (EPA) vouchers
- No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)
- Rawson Project brokerage
- Housing NSW products and subsidies

Almost all clients receiving assistance are in social housing, with a greater proportion of female tenants seeking CSATSS assistance. Relocations from Coastal Sydney to other areas of the state (and interstate in some instances) are supported in a range of ways for example through payment of removalist costs, storage of furniture or home establishment packs if these supports are believed to reduce the risk of homelessness.

3.5 Management and governance arrangements

The project specifications identify linkages with the Coastal Sydney Regional Homelessness Committee and the establishment of an Advisory Committee composed of key stakeholders as the primary governance and advisory mechanisms for the project.

The role of the Advisory Committee as identified in the service specification is to "advise on the development of the project and its implementation" and " inform on and support key implementation decisions which will allow the service to meets its required performance measures and contract compliance". The group was intended to have significant Aboriginal representation with Terms of Reference to be developed by the Committee in partnership with Housing NSW.

The proposed structure of the Advisory Committee as reflected in the self evaluation is reproduced below:
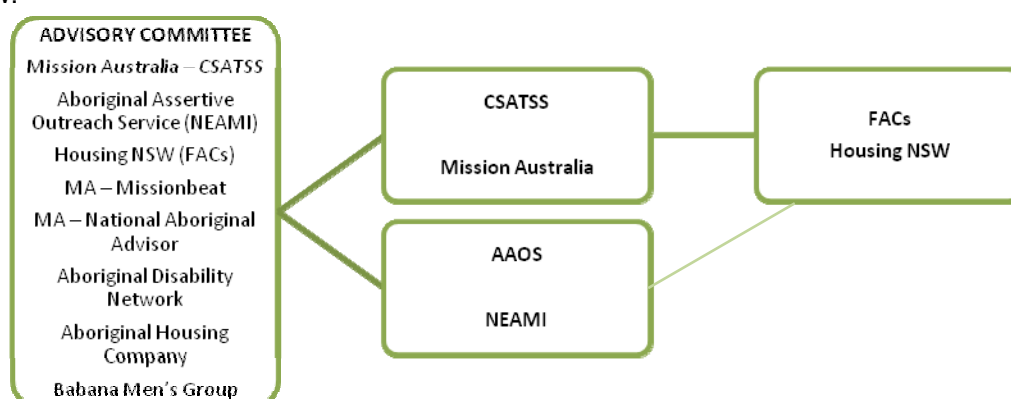
While Terrms of Reference and a list of Advisory Committee members was drawn up at the outset of the project, the committee has met only four times over the duration of the project with no two meetings having the same community members attending. In early 2012 it was proposed by Mission Australia that the Advisory Committee be abandoned as it was felt that sufficient guidance around cultural sensitivity was achieved through employment of Aboriginal staff (noting one case manager position also undertakes community engagement). However, this approach was not agreed by the funding body and attempts to reinvigorate the Advisory Committee occured in the later half of 2012. At the time of the evaluation CSATSS were unable to provide access to Advisory Committee members explaining that these were still in a state of transition.

Overall governance of the service is providde through the corporate structures of Mission Australia. Regular updates are made by Housing NSW to the Regional Homelessness Committee and feedback arising from these updates is passed on to the service via Housing NSW project staff.

3.6 Staffing

The CSATSS staffing model includes a commitment to employment of Indigenous staff and an approach that aims to build the capacity of the Indigenous workforce through identification of trainee positions within the service. The trainee positions shadow case managers in aspects of their role and provide a second employee for undertaking outreach visits. Over the past 12 months three trainees have progressed to case managers and have been retained in the service.

The current staffing structure[3] for CSATSS includes:

- Service Manager (Indigenous)
- Team Leader (Indigenous)
- Living Skills Trainer (non-Indigenous)
- Administration Manager (Indigenous)
- 5 Case Managers (one non-Indigenous, four Indigenous including one with a part-time role identified for community engagement)
- Administration trainee (Indigenous)
- Living skills trainee (position vacant)

The Service Manager is responsible for managing the CSATSS program for Mission Australia Community Services. Key functions include:

- Program management
- People management and performance
- Relationship management
- Administration including financial management

The Administration manager is responsible for providing administrative support to ensure the efficient running of the service. Key functions include:

- Administration
- Business Support
- Relationship Management

The Living Skills Trainer is a new position responsible for the development, coordination and delivery of appropriate Living Skills training to clients who are new to independent community living. Key functions:

- Develop, coordinate and deliver appropriate living skills training to clients who have experienced homelessness or who have not previously had the opportunity to develop these skills.

The Team Leader is responsible for coordinating the activity of the program and supporting management and staff deliver the service to clients. The position has responsibility for overseeing funding guidelines and reporting requirements for the service. Key functions include:

- Client support
- Program Coordination
- Staff development
- Administration

Case managers are responsible for provision of outreach welfare support to clients facing homelessness and structured case management of clients.

The key functions include:

- Client support
- Administration
- Program Support

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[3] Full-time equivalent unless otherwise stated

Trainees – Provide support to the service while completing related areas of study (Certificate III and IV Community Services).

It is noted that the staffing accounts for a significant proportion of the service's expenditure as discussed in section 5 of the report.

3.7   Budget allocation

CSATSS did not commence operation until April 2011. There was only small expenditure in 2010/11 of $12,000.   Funding utilised under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for 2011/12 was $1,017,165.   The budget is discussed in more detail in section 5.

4   ANALYSIS OF CLIENT AND SERVICE SYSTEM OUTCOMES

4.1   Client Services and Outcomes

4.1.1   Numbers assisted

Meeting targets

The service agreement for the CSATSS set a two year target of provision of housing access and tenancy support services to 300 clients. The project commenced late into the first year of funding due to an extended tender process and time was then invested in service establishment and staff recruitment. Only 6 clients were therefore able to assisted in the 2010/11 period. The target for 2011/12 was set at 150 clients and the service will receive funding through to June 2013 for an additional 150 clients.

As shown in the table below, in 2011/12 the project surpassed their service target, assisting 174 clients in the reporting period.

Table 4.1 Total number of CSATSS families assisted across the life time of the project

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	TOTAL
Target	-	No target set	150	150
Total number of clients assisted	-	6	174	180

Source: CSATSS HAP Self evaluation 2012, CSATSS data portal report June 2012

Demographic information

The table below provides a breakdown of demographic information on CSATSS clients 2011/12.

Table 4.2 CSATSS Client demographic data

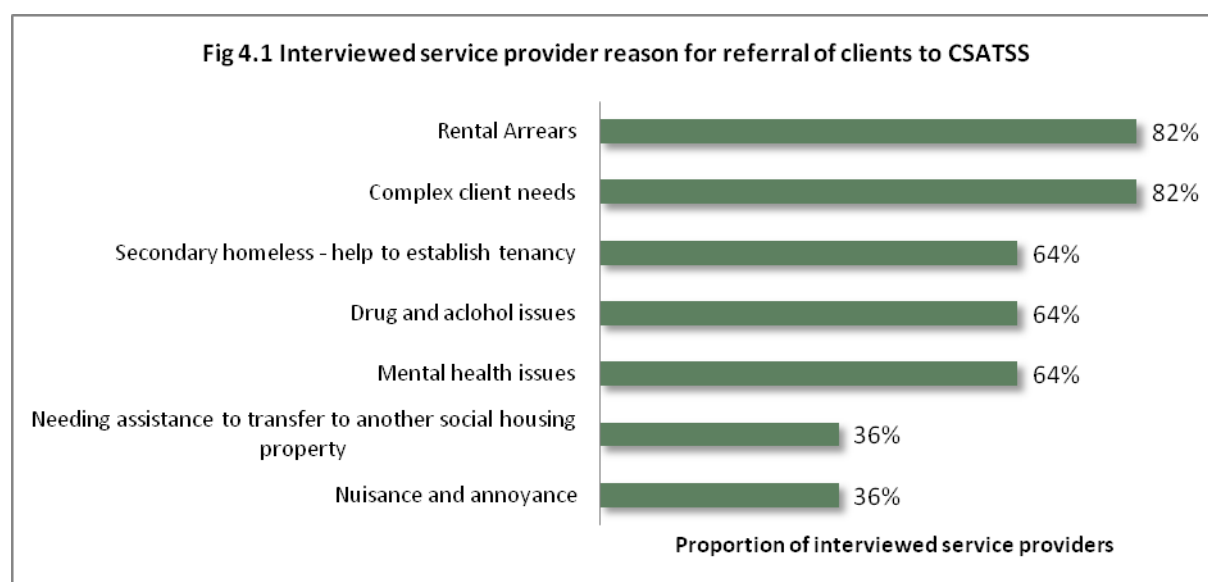|	2011/12
Gender	
Male	53
Female	121*
Age	
<15 years	0
16-24 years	25
25-64 years	149
>65 years	0
Not known	0
Ethnicity	
ATSI	174
Tenure	
Social Housing	116
Private rental	9
SAAP accommodation	15
Living with family and friends	6
Boarding House	-
Other	22

*Note this included 1 'unknown'

As shown in the table above:

- A greater proportion of clients assisted through CSATSS are female (70%) with the majority aged between 25-64 years (86%). This aligns with the client consultations undertaken for the evaluation, two thirds of participants were female tenants.

- Although the CSATSS data does not refer to accompanying children, the majority of clients consulted had children or young people living with them.

- As shown in the table the majority of clients assisted through the service are in social housing (67%), with a small number of clients in private rental.

- It is unclear from the data what type of tenancy is included in the category 'other', however providing assistance to access SAAP accommodation and providing support to people who are couch surfing is consistent with the project objectives of assisting people out of homelessness.

Issues contributing to homelessness of clients seen

As reported by service providers interviewed through the evaluation and supported by the data reported in June 2012, the primary reason for clients accessing the CSATSS was the experience of financial difficulty due to for example, receipt of a large unplanned bill which triggered rental arrears or the potential for rental arrears. Also shown in the chart below, a large proportion of referrals were related to rent arrears. Service providers also noted the complex issues facing many of their clients with drug and alcohol addictions and mental health issues of particular note.

As shown, a significant proportion of clients referred by interviewed service providers were seeking assistance for establishment of a tenancy or for relocation purposes, with interviews with tenants reinforcing this finding. Provision of brokerage or other CSATSS supports in order to support relocation is consistent with the purpose of the CSATSS project funding.

Fig 4.1 Interviewed service provider reason for referral of clients to CSATSS

Rental Arrears	82%
Complex client needs	82%
Secondary homeless - help to establish tenancy	64%
Drug and alcohol issues	64%
Mental health issues	64%
Needing assistance to transfer to another social housing property	36%
Nuisance and annoyance	36%

Proportion of interviewed service providers

4.1.2   Numbers receiving different services

As noted above, while interviewed service providers considered that a high proportion of referrals have complex needs, in practice most clients assisted by CSTASS required only low levels of support, defined as two hours of support per week for around 9 weeks (average duration of support in June

2012). As shown in the table below only 10 clients were identified as high needs across the 2011/12 year; on average these clients received 6 hours of support per week for an average support period of 9 weeks, although anecdotally service providers and staff identified longer periods of contact with high needs clients through a 'monitoring' phase.

Table 4.3 CSATSS proportion of clients by level of need 2011/12

Level of need	Number of clients	Support hours per week
High needs	10	6
Medium needs	40	3
Low needs	124	2

Source: Data portal report June 2012

The apparent discrepancy between the impression of referral agencies and the actual provision of service by CSTASS with respect to support is likely due to the fact that many referrals are self referrals and these referrals may involve lower levels of need that those referred by referral agencies. Patterns of support are likely to evolve over time – as networks with referral agencies strengthen it is likely that more complex needs clients may be referred.

Types of referral

Table 4.4 below indicates a significant proportion of service is delivered directly by CSATSS staff rather than through specialist referral partners.   The data shows that 98% of clients received 'direct' assistance by CSATSS in 2011/12 for non housing assistance while just over 20% were referred to relevant legal, health and financial services. The category 'other' includes referrals to assist confirmation of Aboriginality required to submit applications for priority housing and other government assistance.

Table 4.4 Clients assisted with non-housing services 2011/2012

Issue	Direct service	Referred
Legal	-	2
Disability support	-	-
Drug & alcohol	-	-
Other	69	12
Mental health	-	-
Education training employment	1	-
General health	-	2
Family & relationship counselling	-	-
Financial	100	21
Total	170	37

Sources: CSATSS data portal report June 2012.

The extent to which tenants are directly supported by the service may also reflect that referral networks are only beginning to emerge for the service, and could be expected to strengthen in 2013 with greater focus on communication strategies, especially with relevant mainstream services. One service provider commented:

"We identify needs of clients and refer them to another service who does case management and they refer to CSATSS – we were unaware that CSATSS provides case management. We need to know more about them."

Feedback from service providers also suggests that referral networks may also be person based rather than service based, this may be expected to change over time as awareness of the service grows.

"We did have an Aboriginal admin person working here who used to make a lot of referrals but she is no longer here."

Interviews with clients indicated that more people self refer, even when told about the CSTASS through a potential referrer. Discussions with the Service Manager confirmed this to be the case, particularly in relationship to referrals from Housing NSW.

Interviewed clients indicated that they found out about the service via:

- Word of mouth (e.g. friend)   36%
- Aboriginal Housing Provider   18%
- Family Support Service   18%
- Housing NSW   18%
- Aboriginal service 9%
- Other   1%

When asked about who referred them to the service, 57% of interviewed clients got in touch with the service themselves and 43% identified referrals from services such as the Aboriginal Medical Service, Barnardos, Penrith Aboriginal Housing Office and an Aboriginal worker at Housing NSW.

Help received by interviewed clients

The majority of interviewed clients waited less than a week for support to commence through the service.

- Less than 1 week   72%
- Less than 2 weeks   21%
- More than 4 weeks   7%

The majority of clients (92%) received help from CSATSS for 0 - 3 months, with 8% identifying a longer relationship with the service (3 - 6 months). The Service Manager indicated that some clients received follow-up phone calls or check-ups after 4 months, especially clients who had relocated or where they had been recently housed. Of clients interviewed, 73% reported that supports were provided for the right length of time, while 27% would have liked a longer period of time.

As shown in the chart below, the majority of clients interviewed had received assistance to relocate or find housing with smaller proportions assisted with white goods and furniture, food and help with budgeting and bills.

Fig 4.2 Type of help interviewed clients received from CSATSS

Type of help	Proportion
Help to move house or relocate	43%
Help to find housing	36%
Food assistance	29%
Help to buy furniture or white goods	29%
Help with budgeting	21%
Help with utility payment (electricity or gas)	14%
Transport	7%
Counselling to help with addiction, gambling	7%
Negotiation with real estate agents	7%

The need to relocate to find affordable housing as a result of change in family circumstance was noted by a number of clients.

"I needed to find a place for myself and the kids. My older adult children had moved out and I needed help to get a smaller, more affordable place."

"I was asked to leave the house by my partner and I have the 16 & 20 yr old daughters. I was homeless with the 2 older kids"

"My son was institutionalised near Gosford and I need to relocate. I can't manage the maintenance of my large house, I really need a smaller house. I needed help talking to Housing NSW."

For others, assistance needed was focused on establishing a new tenancy as a result of addiction and homelessness:

"I had left rehab and had no furniture or white goods. I had been on the street for so long and I had nothing."

"The CSATSS worker stays in contact and helped - as an ex addict it helps to know that support is there and people care. I feel OK talking to them."

4.1.3   Housing outcomes

Housing outcomes for clients assisted by the CSATSS have been positive with a very high proportion sustaining their tenancy. Over the two years since the projects inception over 96% of clients assisted have been able to maintain their tenancy during the 16 week support period as shown in the table below.

Table 4.5 Number of clients sustaining a tenancy

	2011-12
Clients assisted	174
Total sustaining a tenancy	168
Percentage sustaining a tenancy	**96.6%**

Source: Data portal reports June 2012

Of the clients interviewed, relocations, applications for priority housing and support to establish housing were the critical housing related supports received through CSATSS. Relocations involved moving both to and away from the Coastal Sydney area.

"CSATSS contacted Housing prior to us arriving in Sydney and had everything ready to go when we arrived, they kept in touch and constantly updated us with emails and correspondence relating to our housing search. They organised a priority housing meeting and attended to provide support."

"They helped me to relocate to the south coast, paying removalist costs."
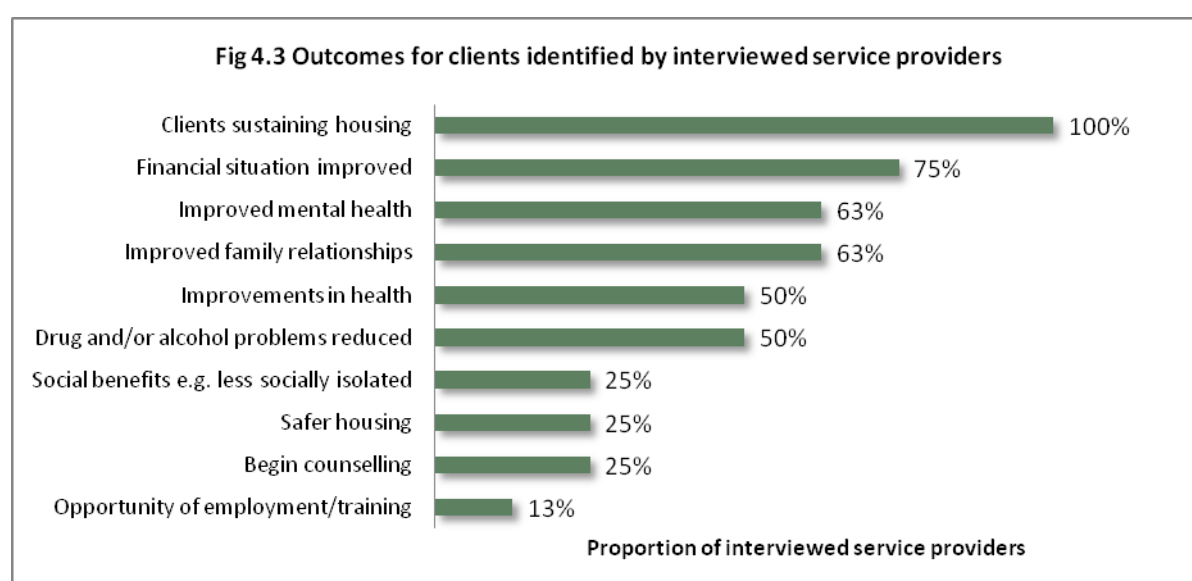
Helping clients complete applications for housing was also an important support identified by both clients and housing providers, who were more able to assist clients access housing quickly as applications were complete with all necessary information provided.

"They provided support letters to the housing company (Bridge Housing). The intervention helped a lot – I had another support letter, but it was sped up thanks to CSATSS."

"The most important help was writing a support letter to Housing NSW and speaking with a client service officer to secure an appointment for priority housing. They have offered to help once I get a house (e.g. some furnishings)."

Interviews with clients indicated that around two thirds that the help they received would reduce the likelihood of their tenancy being at risk again. Service providers who were interviewed also identified significant improvements in clients sustaining their housing as a result of receiving support from CSATSS. This is shown in the graph below which also shows a range of non housing client outcomes that service providers attributed to the support of CSTASS (discussed further below).

"We had a young mum who was $4,000 in arrears and disengaged. CSATSS were brought in and were able to provide support and help her maintain her tenancy. Another young mum was escaping domestic violence and had complex needs. CSATSS kept advocating for her with Bridge Housing to get her a property and they provided her brokerage. She has just been housed and that has contributed to her getting back on track."

Fig 4.3 Outcomes for clients identified by interviewed service providers

Outcome	Proportion
Clients sustaining housing	100%
Financial situation improved	75%
Improved mental health	63%
Improved family relationships	63%
Improvements in health	50%
Drug and/or alcohol problems reduced	50%
Social benefits e.g. less socially isolated	25%
Safer housing	25%
Begin counselling	25%
Opportunity of employment/training	13%

Proportion of interviewed service providers

4.1.4 Non housing outcomes

As shown in the graph above interviewed service providers reported a wide range of benefits achieved for clients in addition to sustaining their tenancy including improvements in physical and mental health, family relationships and drug and alcohol usage.

Clients also report a range of benefits as shown in the graph below including improvements in stress levels, support for children, worries about finances and health.

Fig 4.4 Non housing outcomes identified by interviewed clients

Outcome	Proportion
I don't feel as stressed	60%
My kids needs were met	40%
I am not as worried about finances	30%
I kept my tenancy	20%
I could manage my budget better	20%
I was able to find housing	20%
My health has improved	10%
I was able to pay my bills	10%
I was able to stay drug and alcohol free	10%

Proportion of interviewed clients

These results are supported by rental stress data collected by CSATSS as part of the tenancy management plan, with CSATSS identifying family dynamics (issues with relationships, children, other family members and family supports) as well as substance abuse, mental health issues, employment, transport and isolation as significant contributors to housing stress. CSATSS reported an improvement in overall rental stress indicators for the 113 tenants who completed the rental stress questionnaire. CSATSS reports an overall reduction in household rental stress of 66%[4] on exit from the program

Provision of financial assistance and education around how to manage budgeting or referrals to financial counselling were other valued services. Financial stress, including issues related to housing affordability, gambling, rental arrears, credit card debt and household incomes is also assessed through the CSATSS rental stress questionnaire and again, is an area where improvements can be seen for clients. Clients commented:

"The service was really good – I didn't know about the financial counselling service before I went to see CSATSS."

"They paid the bill and then helped with my budgeting – they helped set up a budget and Centrepay."

"They made an appointment with Anglicare for me and drove me there for it."

"They gave me financial assistance and food. They put me in touch with other services for counselling".

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[4] CSATSS rental stress questionnaires, consolidated table. Note these figures are as reported by the service. There may be issues with data integrity which are discussed in section 6 of the report.

While not identified clearly in CSATSS referral data, clients and services spoke of client referrals to organisations and other non-housing assistance as part of the package of supports provided by CSATSS. These supports resulted in improvements in health and wellbeing including staying drug free, engaging in personal and family counselling and connecting with education services.

"We referred a client who has been in his tenancy for 1 year. About 6 months ago he started doing TAFE and is now progressing very well. This client got counselling and is now being trained to help others with drug and alcohol problems. He has even been granted recognition of prior learning from TAFE because of his previous life experience."

4.1.5   Intended or unintended consequences

Supporting people to return to country or assisting relocations and transfers for a range of health, family and financial reasons appears to be a significant component of the work undertaken by CSATSS. In the main this would appear to be appropriate, although longer term follow-up would be needed to identify whether the relocation led to housing stability.

Tenants and service providers alike identify the value in having culturally appropriate community based assistance to assist clients negotiate social housing products and processes, assisting with appointments with Housing NSW and community housing providers and preparing all necessary documentation to facilitate an application for priority housing.

Aboriginal housing specialists within Housing NSW in particular valued the CSATSS team in their capacity to work with housing tenants who had been identified as at risk of losing their tenancies.

The organisational model of CSATSS with a two tiered structure of primary staff and trainees has resulted in employment outcomes and built capacity and knowledge around tenancy management.

The outcomes of the living skills project are too early to identify, however the initiative is consistent with the needs identified during consultations with Aboriginal services around the state as part of the development of the Regional Homelessness Action Plans.

4.2   Impact of the project on reducing/addressing homelessness

4.2.1   Impact of the project

Service providers consulted as part of the evaluation were strongly of the view that the CSATSS had helped sustain tenancies and moved people out of homelessness or risk of homelessness into secure housing, however the long term outcomes for clients were harder to define, given the service has only been operating for 12 months.

Service providers particularly spoke of the capacity to advocate for the tenant as well as providing a point of contact and practical support. A number of service providers felt that the model was an effective way in which to support tenants out of cycles of debt.

"I had a client that was always in arrears and suffered from various medical conditions. CSATSS assisted her with maintenance issues and dealt with those issues."

"They provide financial, emotional and practical support. This gets clients out of patterns that threaten their tenancies, it improves living skills and helps sustain tenancies."

In relation to the extension of the service to Greater Western Sydney, interviewed service providers confirmed the need for the service in this region and good outcomes for tenants assisted.

"The service has a huge impact. Tenants were being evicted especially out west where there is a large Aboriginal population. Large Aboriginal families were being evicted from Housing and then had to re-apply, which was difficult as they had a debt. CSATSS was able to intervene before tenancies were terminated and stop the evictions."

"Especially when they moved out to the Outer West. At the time there was an issue where many tenants were facing evictions. CSATSS helped prevent a lot of these evictions and they try to do that and use the dollar wisely at the same time."

When asked if they thought outcomes for clients would be sustained over the longer term, most service providers indicated they thought it was too early to tell and identified a need for the service to strengthen feedback to primary referrers so this data could be better captured. Strengthening the referral network, so services referred clients to CSATSS earlier would also improve the service outcomes.

"Outcomes depend on when we can refer clients to them. The service is new so they are only getting the dire cases which needed assistance long ago. Hopefully now we'll get better results as we can now get intervention at an earlier stage which is more salvageable."

Some providers felt the likelihood of outcomes being sustained over the longer term was good if the service capacity and supports were sustained.

"Don't know as service has only been in operation for 18 months. I would imagine yes - if the supports are in place."

"We referred a man to CSATSS and he is still in his tenancy with support. The client still has ups and downs with his drinking, but is willing to talk about it with the support team."

It was noted that for some clients, single periods of support were likely to need to be backed up with other support periods over time.

"This service is just new. So far cases have not come back. Some clients return to rent arrears, [and they may need to be] supported to get out of rent arrears [again]".

To determine if any trends in relation to a reduction in terminations for Aboriginal people in social housing could be determined, eviction data was supplied from Housing NSW Aboriginal Service Improvement Unit. This data identifies the number of exits of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal tenants and reasons for exit in Public Housing and AHO properties. While the data shows a small increase over the project period in exits for public housing tenants, a decrease was noted for Aboriginal Housing tenants. This data would need further monitoring and analysis over time to determine whether CSATSS was making a positive contribution to any reductions in exits from social housing.

Table 4.6 Housing NSW exit data for Indigenous households

Year	Public housing exit - Indigenous household	AHO exit
2009-10	10.7%	10.6%
2010-11	10.7%	10.9%
2011-12	11.2%	9.7%

Source: Housing NSW 2012 Aboriginal Service Improvement Unit.

4.2.2 Specific client groups

The data suggests that the primary groups receiving support are Aboriginal tenants with low to moderate needs requiring:

- assistance with relocation and transfers
- assistance to find housing
- practical assistance including support with financial planning to help maintain a tenancy

While the portal data reports small numbers of higher needs clients, service providers identified a number of complex cases including mental health issues, challenges for families with children with health issues or a disability where CSATSS support for the client was effectively reducing the likelihood that their personal and health issues would result in homelessness.

"We had a client with complex needs and living in squalor. He was in arrears with his rent and wanted a transfer to be closer to his son. CSATSS came and helped him clean his property and maintain it. His mental health issues decreased as he went back on his meds. We haven't been able to help this client in the past, even when we sent him a mental health team. The CSATSS worker is constantly in touch and lets us know what he's doing and planning for the client".

"We had a client in arrears with a daughter who had cerebral palsy. Client resigned to be able to care for her daughter and consequently went into arrears. She became disengaged. CSATSS was brought in to work with her. They developed a plan for her straight away and contacted HNSW straight away. Client was given food vouchers. CSATSS got her to re-engage and get her back on track."

While data is not captured by the service on accompanying children, most clients consulted had children living in their care and identified issues relating to family separation or needing to relocate to provide supports for their children as factors contributing to their risk of homelessness. This is supported by the rental stress data collected by CSATSS which identifies significant stressors resulting from family dynamics.

While the service indicates that case managers work with tenants to resolve family related and personal issues as part of the tenancy support, more detailed data collection is required to understand the types of support and relative effectiveness employed to improve family relationships and personal issues and the flow on impacts for stable tenancies.

4.3 Service system and delivery outcomes

Service providers who participated in the evaluation were primarily Housing NSW staff specialists, community housing providers and other mainstream services, some who provide Aboriginal specific programs. As described earlier in the report, CSATSS has faced significant challenges engaging existing Aboriginal services who were initially identified as primary referral points to the service in the project.

Of the providers who participated in the evaluation most identified strengthening of the service system as a result of the project with some seeing that the project fulfilled a long term need.

"There is improved referral, more connections between services and definitely better outcomes for clients."

Other services noted that outcomes in relation to strengthening the homelessness service system for Aboriginal tenants were too early to observe and more work is needed particularly in relation to making and receiving referrals.

"It has strengthened it [the service system], but more work is needed"

"Better communication is needed so that feedback is provided on client outcomes. Need to maintain linkages with referral partners."

Feedback from service providers was that relationships could continue to be strengthened through a focus on communication and raising awareness about the service with mainstream services.

"There needs to be a lot more updating on what's available. It would be good if members of the service could come to team meetings and let us know what's available and promote the service."

"There is insufficient promotion and awareness of the service. They need to promote the service more widely as many people don't know that it exists."

Other observations made by CSATSS staff and services was that while the outreach model was effective and should continue, having a welcoming office space might better support drop-ins.

4.4 Staffing Issues

4.4.1 Impact of staffing issues on the project

While initial difficulties were experienced in relation to finding appropriate staff for the project during the establishment phase and may have slightly delayed the project start-up, these issues were short lived and the service has been well staffed for the last 12 months.

4.4.2 Skills needed by staff

Core skills of staff needed to enable the model to operate effectively include capacity to deliver culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people, sector liaison and relationship building, strong operations management including data and record keeping, case management practice, referral processes and communication.

The service is performing well in terms of culturally appropriate practice however, review of service data and feedback from service providers is that there is a need to improve the documentation and reporting of client needs and referral processes and practices show a lack of consistency across the service and is an area for skill development.

4.4.3 Training required

As identified earlier, improvements in data collection and reporting are required. A number of data systems are used to support the work of this project and it was clear from review of data records that record keeping is not always complete. Identification of a single preferred data management system may avoid confusion and may improve the integrity of data. The data portal reports, MACSIMS, SAAP database and a monthly report for Housing NSW project managers were all being completed concurrently. The CSATSS Service Manager identified the time impost of maintaining multiple database/reporting processes. Focusing on a preferred database and ensuring quality of data being entered, supported by training, is a potential option.

Improved practice in relation to referrals and associated documentation is required and may be best achieved through cooperation with current referral partners, developing agreed referral protocols and processes, rather than relying on informal referrals and ensuring all staff are trained to apply the protocols with their clients. Current practice is informal via email or phone referrals. Referral partners reported that they rarely receive feedback or progress reports on referred clients and that this would be useful if it could be received in a structured format. Piloting such a process with primary referral partners could be useful.

5 COST ANALYSIS

5.1 Total project budget and expenditure

The table on the following page shows the total budget and expenditure for the CSATSS for 2010/11 and 2011/12. As noted earlier, CSATSS did not commence operation until April 2011.

As shown, over the life of the project up until 30 June 2012 total proportional expenditure was as follows:

Table 5.1 CSATSS Expenditure to 30 June 2012

Category	Amount $	%
Client service staff	201,623	19.6%
Admin and management staff	158,616	15.4%
Other staff costs	113,269	11.0%
Other admin expenses (non staff)	446,548	43.4%
Brokerage - goods	81,828	8.0%
Brokerage – services	17,335	1.7%
Brokerage - payments	9,287	0.9%
Brokerage – other	839	0.1%
Total	1,029,344	100%

In total, staffing and administration accounted for 89.4% of expenditure and brokerage 10.6%. As shown, brokerage is primarily spent on goods with a small proportion on services and payments. Section 5.3 below discuses the further breakdown of categories for 2011/12.

Table 5.2 CSATSS Budget and Expenditure 2010/11 to 2011.12

	2009-10 Budget	2009-10 Expenditure	2010-11 Budget	2010-11 Expenditure	2011-12 Budget	2011-12 Expenditure	Total Budget	Total Expenditure	Proportion of expenditure
Client service staff	-	-	-	9,096.27	334,948.87	192,526.34	351,176.45	201,622.61	19.6%
Admin and management staff	-	-	-	-	208,589.29	158,615.95	192,361.71	158,615.95	15.4%
Other Staff costs	-	-	-	-	184,575.28	113,268.67	184,575.28	113,268.67	11.0%
Other admin expenses (non staff)	-	-	-	3,083.33	638,396.14	443,464.46	638,396.14	446,547.79	43.4%
Brokerage - goods	-	-	-	-	122,439.12	81,828.03	122,439.12	81,828.03	8.0%
Brokerage - services	-	-	-	-	25,930.40	17,335.42	25,930.40	17,335.42	1.7%
Brokerage - payments	-	-	-	-	13,892.07	9,287.36	13,892.07	9,287.36	0.9%
Brokerage - other	-	-	-	-	1,254.41	838.62	1,254.41	838.62	0.1%
Financial Year Totals	-	-	-	12,179.60	1,530,025.58	1,017,164.85	1,530,025.58	1,029,344.45	100%

5.2   Issues with expenditure

Overall, there is some under-expenditure against budget for both brokerage and staffing/administration for the project. Total brokerage expenditure was $109,289 for the life of the project to 30 June 2012 against a budget of $163,515 while total staffing and administration was $907,873 against a budget of $1,366,509. Under-expenditure against budget can be largely attributed to the late start up of the project relative to other HAP projects.

There is also a broader question with respect to the budget break up. Compared to the other two Tenant Support projects – Far North Coast and Mid North Coast, there is quite high expenditure on staffing and administration. In relation to staffing it is noted however, that unlike the other two Tenant Support projects, CSATSS does all case work directly, while the other models involve at least at proportion of brokered case work.   Also included within staffing is provision for trainee staff (as shown on the attached spreadsheet) which provides employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. While these issues are noted, there is a question as to whether the level of staffing at 8.6 FTE staff is too high relative to case load, which was 174 clients in 2011/12.   It is suggested that this is an issue for further discussion between Mission Australia and Housing NSW as the lead agency.

5.3   Client costs for the project

5.3.1   Spreadsheet categories

The spreadsheet provided by Mission Australia attached to the project report provides expenditure data for CSATSS for 2011/12.   Table 5.3 below summarises 2011/12 expenditure by major category.

Table 5.3 CSATSS Total Expenditure 2011/12

Category	Amount	% of total
Staffing costs	$464,411	45.7%
Operating costs	$443,465	43.6%
Brokered goods	$81,828	8.1%
Brokered services	$17,335	1.7%
Payments	$9,287	0.9%
Other	$839	0.1%
TOTAL	$1,017,165	100.0%

As shown, staffing and operating costs accounted for 89.3% of total expenditure while brokerage accounted for 10.7%. As well as higher staffing costs, operating costs for CSATSS are higher than the other two Tenant support projects; this appears to be mainly linked to over $200,000 being allocated to national office overheads – this is a higher infrastructure cost than the other two Tenant Support projects.   The Summary Report provides further comparative analysis of expenditure.

The following table summarises key components of CSATSS brokerage/payments expended in 2011/12.

Table 5.4 CSATSS Brokerage Expenditure 2011/12

Category	Amount	% of total
Brokered goods		
- Home establishment costs	$81,572	74.6%
- Safety and security	$256	0.2%
Brokered services		
- Removalist costs	$16,828	15.4%
- House hygiene	$446	0.4%
- Specialist health	$15	0.01%
- Furniture storage	$46	0.01%
Payments		
- Rent arrears	$327	0.3%
- Bond assistance	$8,710	8.0%
- Telephone	$250	0.2%
- Transport for clients	$320	0.3%
- Social integration	$465	0.4%
- Client meeting	$54	0.01%
TOTAL	$109,289	100%

As shown in the table above, the primary brokerage expenditure category was home establishment costs accounting for 74.6% of costs followed by removalist costs (15.4%) and bond assistance (8.0%).

Unlike the Tenancy Support Program Far North Coast and Tenancy Support Service Mid North Coast, CSATSS has almost no expenditure on rent arrears as under the current terms of its agreement with Housing NSW as lead agency, CSATSS is not permitted to expend funds on rent arrears, as discussed earlier. This is a significant restriction on operation as the literature review and findings in relation to the other two Tenant Support Services suggest that the payment of rent arrears is a key means of securing at risk tenancies. Despite this restriction, CSATSS has had good results in relation to sustaining tenancies due in part to the ability to secure contributions to rent arrears from other sources. These issues are discussed further in section 6.2.3.

5.3.2   Cost per client

The data provided by CSATSS through the data portal report indicates that in 2011/12, 174 clients were assisted. "Client" includes adults and accompanying children in the case of families.

As shown in the spreadsheet the total project cost for 2011/12 was $1,017,165.

The average cost per client in 2011/12 inclusive of all costs was $5846. For the period July to December 2012, 48% of clients utilised brokerage funds. The average brokerage/payments for the period were $1184 per client assisted. While the brokerage component is similar to that for the other two Tenant Support projects, the overall client cost is significantly higher (as discussed further in the Summary Report), due to the higher staffing and operational costs associated with CSATSS, as discussed above.

Comparable benchmarks are difficult to identify although one study discussed in the literature[5] found that the recurrent per client cost of tenant support programs in Western Australia in 2005-06 were generally comparable to the provision of SAAP crisis accommodation but significantly less than SAAP medium to longer term accommodation as shown in the following table which also includes the per client cost of CSATSS. In the table, SHAP refers to the Supported Housing Assistance Program a tenant support program for public housing tenants at risk of eviction. The PRSAP refers to the Private Rental Support and Advocacy Program which provides tenant support to private rental tenants. Note that the data excluding the CSATSS is 2005-06 so it is somewhat dated and costs for 2011/12 for these programs may be higher than that shown in the table.

Table 5.5 Western Australia cost per client per program compared to CSATSS

Program	SAAP crisis 2005/06	SAAP medium to long term 2005/06	SHAP 2005/06	PRSAP 2005/06	CSATSS 2011/12
Cost per client per annum	$2,243	$15,470	$3,483	$2,145	$5,846

Source: Flatau et al (2008) – see footnote 1

As shown, the cost of CSATSS is higher than Western Australian tenant support programs although as noted, the Western Australian data is 2005/06 so some caution is needed in comparing the figures. It is also noted that service models, including the provision of full board in some, are likely to differ resulting in varying cost structures.   Note that the cost estimates shown in the table also only take account of the recurrent cost of programs.   As discussed in the literature review there are a range of costs associated with a failed tenancy. This may include the cost of crisis accommodation, increased demand for health, mental health, drug and alcohol and child and family services as well as individual costs such as moving costs and loss of rental bonds. Costs to landlords may include legal fees and unpaid and forgone rent. While these costs are difficult to estimate, the literature review suggested that the cost of preventing eviction is significantly less than the costs resulting from eviction.   These issues need to be taken into account when assessing value for money of the CSATSS. Overall, the cost per client for CSATSS is considered to represent reasonable value for money although as noted above, there may be potential to lower the cost per client if there was a lower ratio of staff to clients.

5.3.3   Effectiveness of brokerage funding

As stated previously in the report the length of service operation somewhat constrains assessment of effectiveness, however on the basis of the data available, it appears that brokerage interventions have contributed to outcomes that help to preserve or establish tenancies.

To some extent the effectiveness of brokerage funding may have been constrained by the inability to use the funds for part-payment of rental arrears although CSTASS has had the ability to access funds for this purpose from other sources.

Brokerage funds add most value to clients where they have helped them pay off debt, establish a tenancy through provision of household goods, or provide for relocation costs that ensure they are not moving into a position of homelessness.

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[5] Flatau, P., Zaretsky, K., Brady, M., Haigh, Y., & Martin, R. (2008) *The cost-effectiveness of homelessness programs: a first assessment.* Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Western Australia Research Centre

Service providers consulted as part of the evaluation felt that if brokerage funds were not available to assist clients with low cost practical assistance this may result in the need for more costly intervention in the longer term.

"It would put a huge barrier to helping some clients. Brokerage in the form of food vouchers and other goods allows them to deal with financial issues. A lot of clients won't work with you if not being offered anything. Once given something they then allow you to support them."

"Quite often tenancies are threatened because of arrears or other issues which require funds. Brokerage is often needed to get clients back on track."

Service providers noted the value of use of brokerage to overcome the crisis related issues that could compromise a person's tenancy.

"The program is to help people sustain their tenancies. It is cheaper to keep clients in their homes using brokerage; before they get into crisis accommodation. For example, some people that become unemployed have their tenancy threatened. If they receive brokerage, this can help get them back on track until they find employment."

6 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MODEL

6.1 Success factors for the model

6.1.1 Aboriginal specific service

Clients interviewed for the evaluation stated they felt supported in a non-judgemental way by an Aboriginal service that understood their personal and family situation.

"Being an Aboriginal organisation I felt very comfortable and supported, I can't praise [the worker] enough. We didn't feel like a number."

Service providers also identify the merits of an Aboriginal specific service, particularly one that has capacity to assist in confirmation of Aboriginality, work in culturally appropriate ways and respond to tenancy issues:

"They have the capacity to engage Aboriginal clients in a culturally appropriate ways."

"Assisting clients to prove Aboriginality is really valuable. They get clients back on track more quickly and link them in with the right services."

"What works are [Aboriginal] men... having blokes that just get on with it and can deal with some of the difficult clients ... E.g. a male client with mental health issues came into the office... using offensive language ... When this man deals with the guys at CSATSS he can just be himself and express himself the way he wants to and the matter does not get out of hand."

6.1.2 Working in partnership with Housing NSW

Significant effort has been put into establishing an effective working relationship between Housing NSW Area Housing Managers, specialist Aboriginal workers and CSATSS staff.

The service has been effective in breaking down barriers between Housing NSW and Aboriginal tenants in working to overcome the issues that can lead to tenancy failure.

"They do a lot of ground work and case management which is labour intensive and not the job of HNSW to sort out. CSATSS is doing what HNSW can't do to maintain tenancy."

Areas for improvement were identified that would further integrate case management of tenants including improved two way communication around referrals. Challenges were also identified for example, where Housing NSW clients self refer to the service - client permission is required in order for the CSATSS to inform Housing of the support strategies put in place for the client.

6.1.3 A broader project scope encompassing secondary homeless

While the project scope in relation to eligibility of people not currently holding a tenancy may have resulted in some early confusion, the capacity of the project to respond to people experiencing secondary homelessness is clearly important, with 25% of clients assisted as at June 2012 reported as being without a permanent social housing or private rental tenancy. Service providers also identified the value of the service in ensuring client housing applications were complete at the time of submission as being a significant contributor to enabling them to house clients quickly with priority status.

6.1.4　Practical brokerage

Practical brokerage that could be accessed quickly was identified by all stakeholders as a key strength of the service with 88% of services believing the project could not be sustained over the longer term without ongoing access to brokerage funding. Enabling the use of brokerage funds to support relocations was seen as an effective way to prevent people moving into homelessness as well as enabling relocation back to country for people in unsafe or insecure housing.

6.2　Challenges for the model

6.2.1　Collaboration with Aboriginal services

From the outset the service has struggled to work with existing Aboriginal health, medical and tenancy support services in the Coastal Sydney region. The Service Manager reported difficulties in engaging with Aboriginal services due the perception that funding for the project should have been directed towards an established Aboriginal service, potentially requiring a direct funding allocation.

On current staffing levels the service commenced service provision to Greater Western Sydney region in the second half of 2012. While barriers had been experienced collaborating with Aboriginal services in Coastal Sydney, it appears services in Greater Western Sydney are more open to partnerships through referral processes and co-location opportunities.

6.2.2　Service promotion

The absence of a clear communications plan through which to promote the service and establish partnerships with organisations providing services to Aboriginal people may have been a barrier for the service in the first year of operation and should be addressed as a matter of priority if the service continues beyond 2013.

6.2.3　Limitations on use of brokerage

As mentioned previously, the limitations placed on the use of brokerage funds for part payment of rental arrears has required CSATSS to secure funding from other sources for this purpose. While it is noted that public housing tenants may be able to secure their tenancy through an agreement to pay rent arrears, there may be limited capacity to make such payments. Additionally, not all private tenants may meet the eligibility criteria for Rentstart Tenancy Assistance. The experience of other Tenant Support projects is that access to funds for part payment of rent arrears is a key component of interventions to sustain tenancies particularly for private rental tenants, enabling services to gain buy in and work effectively with real estate agents.

6.2.4　Data

The evaluation reviewed data from the Housing NSW data portal, the MA data system MACSIMS, tenancy stress data and monthly reports prepared for Housing NSW project managers. An overall observation is made about the incompleteness of data sets, making use of data for the purposes of the evaluation challenging. The duplication of data collection systems, adding to workload in relation to data input, may add to rather than resolve the incomplete reporting that was identified.

6.2.5 Project scope

The project objectives and scope were ambitious with expectations around strengthening the service network, securing housing for people experiencing homelessness and supporting people at risk to sustain their tenancies. These expectations exceed those of other tenancy support models where the primary focus is on sustaining an existing tenancy noting that expectations have been recognised through higher levels of funding.

7   CONCLUSION

7.1   Summary of key lessons learnt

- The CSATSS offers a culturally specific and effective means of improving the capacity of Aboriginal tenants to maintain or secure social housing. Clients and service providers alike identify the value of culturally appropriate community based assistance to assist clients negotiate social housing products and processes, assist with appointments with Housing NSW and community housing providers and prepare necessary documentation to facilitate applications for assistance.

- There has been a high success rate in relation to housing outcomes for CSATSS clients. In 2011/12, of the 174 clients assisted, 168 had sustained their tenancy (96.6%).

- There are positive non housing outcomes for clients as a result of the CSATSS in relation to reductions in stress, improvements in physical and mental health, family relationships, confidence and social support and family functioning.

- Supporting people to return to country or assisting relocations and transfers for a range of health, family and financial reasons appears to be a significant component of the work undertaken by CSATSS. In the main this would appear to be appropriate, although longer term follow-up would be needed to identify whether the relocation has led to housing stability.

- Brokerage funds add most value to clients where they have helped them pay off debt, establish a tenancy through provision of household goods, or provide for relocation costs that ensure they are not moving into a position of homelessness. Service providers felt that the model was an effective way in which to support tenants out of cycles of debt.

- Effective working relationships have been established between CSATSS and Housing NSW Housing Managers to facilitate joint responses to Aboriginal people in social housing whose tenancies are at risk. The service has been effective in breaking down barriers between Housing NSW and Aboriginal tenants in working to overcome the issues that can lead to tenancy failure.

- There is more work to do for the service in strengthening referral pathways and processes through development of more formalised arrangements including provision of feedback to referral partners and support structures to address the needs of more complex clients. Current work to develop sector networks and relationships appears to be creating new referral pathways that will continue to grow in 2013.

- The cost of the CSATSS is higher than the other tenancy support services in part due to the current staffing structure and the strong focus on moving people out of homelessness into housing. Compared to the costs to individuals and the service system of eviction and homelessness for Aboriginal people, the service model does however, offer value for money.

- The CSATSS is currently well resourced and could effectively expand some areas of service provision such as geographic coverage within current funding parameters.

7.2 Implications for future responses to the client group

Aboriginal people continue to experience higher rates of homelessness that any other client group. This project has demonstrated the capacity for successful interventions with Aboriginal specific services and Aboriginal workers delivering culturally appropriate tenancy advice and support.

While a large proportion of the client group were reported to have low to medium needs, a number of clients, particularly those referred by other service providers as opposed to self referrals, have compounding issues including substance addiction, mental health issues and issues relating to family functioning.

These issues are complex and require appropriate case management and specialised assistance and improvements in integrated case management. Stronger referral pathways may be needed to achieve the intended improvements in tenancy support and security for those clients with more complex needs.

The need to retain funding for the project and continue service provision in GWS was identified by a number of service providers during the interview process.

7.3 Implications for the homelessness system in the region

According to service providers the model has begun to strengthen linkages between organisations that provide services to Aboriginal people; however these linkages are in the early stages and need further investment of effort to achieve service system outcomes.

7.4 Insights gained that can enrich the evidence base

The provision of culturally appropriate tenancy advice and support, including support to complete housing applications and submit transfer requests to enable people to return to areas of the state where they are more at home appears to be an effective way through which to assist Aboriginal tenants to remain housed.

Provision of small amounts of brokerage to support the establishment of a home through purchase of necessary goods may reduce indicators of rental stress including overcrowding and unsafe living arrangements.

Further insights may be gained from the employment of the living skills coordinator who works intensively with clients who have experienced longer periods of homelessness and need more support to maintain their housing, health and wellbeing.

7.5 Future research that could strengthen the evidence in this area

7.5.1 CTTT data on terminations

While data to demonstrate eviction rates is available through the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal for social housing and private rental, the CTTT do not collect data relating to Aboriginality, as such no CTTT data can usefully be applied to assess any impact on terminations in relation to Aboriginal tenants in social housing. Including Aboriginality status in CTTT data collections may assist in building the picture of evictions of Aboriginal tenants in various tenures across NSW.

7.5.2 Housing NSW eviction data

Housing NSW eviction data is available and should continue to be collected as a means of tracking performance over time and understanding the potential achievements of the service and other Housing NSW and AHO initiatives in relation to Aboriginal tenancies.

7.5.3 Longitudinal study of clients

The CSATSS operates for 16 weeks and data indicates that very few tenancies end in termination during the period that support is provided. For the future it could be useful to undertake a longitudinal study of a sample of clients assisted, particularly those receiving support to relocate or establish housing to determine whether tenancies are sustained in the longer term.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEWED CLIENTS DEMOGRAPHIC AND SERVICE USE DATA

This section contains results of the interviews with clients that are not otherwise presented in the body of the report.

Table A 1.1 Gender of interviewed client

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	9	64%
Males	5	36%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.2 Age of interviewed client

Ages	Number	Percentage
21 - 30 years	5	36%
31 - 40 years	4	29%
41 - 50 years	3	21%
51 - 60 years	1	7%
61 - 70 years	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.3 Family make up of interviewed client

Number of individuals	Number	Percentage
Children < 5	5	17%
Children 5 - 10years	5	17%
Children 11-15 years	1	3%
Young people 16 -20 years	3	10%
Parent	12	41%
Other	3	10%
Total	29	100%

Table A 1.4 Housing provider for interviewed client

Housing provider type	Number	Percentage
Public Housing	5	36%
Community Housing	2	14%
Aboriginal Housing Provider	4	29%
Real Estate Agent	2	14%
Other	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.5 Income source of interviewed client

Income type	Number	Percentage
Benefit - full (type)	18	67%
Benefit - part (type)	3	11%
Full time employment	1	4%
Part time employment	4	15%
Education/training	1	4%
Total	27*	100%*

* *NB: Some clients had more than one type of income*

Table A 1.6 Current location of interviewed client

Location	Number
Marrickville	2
Newtown	1
Dulwich Hill	2
Doonside	1
Redfern	1
Camperdown	1
Penrith	1
Malabar	1
Gerringong	1
Coonabarabran	1
Bidwill Western Sydney	1

Kings Park NSW	1
Total	14

Table A 1.7 How interviewed client found out about CSATSS

Source	Number	Percentage
Word of mouth (e.g. friends)	4	29%
Aboriginal Housing Provider	2	14%
Family Support Service	2	14%
Housing NSW	2	14%
Aboriginal service	1	7%
Other	3	21%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.8 Source of referral to CSATSS

Source	Number	Percentage
I got in touch with the service myself	8	57%
I was referred to CTASS (from Aboriginal Medical Service, Barnados, Penrith Aboriginal Housing Office, Housing NSW, Aboriginal worker at Housing NSW)	6	43%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.9 How long interviewed client waited for CSATSS assistance

Length of time	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 week	10	72%
Less than 2 weeks	3	21%
More than 4 weeks	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.10 When interviewed client got help from CSATSS

Number of months	Number	Percentage
Just started working with me	6	43%
About 3 months ago	4	29%
About 6 months ago	2	14%

About 12 months ago	1	7%
Not known	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.11 Length of CSATSS support

Number of months	Number	Percentage
0-3 months	11	79%
3-6 months	1	7%
Not known	2	14%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.12 Was this the right amount of time?

Response	Number	Percentage
It was the right length of time	8	57%
A longer period of time would have been better	3	21%
Not known	3	21%
Total	14	100%

Table A 1.13 Do you think that the help you received will reduce the likelihood of your tenancy being at risk again?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	64%
No	0	-
Not known	5	36%
Total	14	100%

APPENDIX 2: SERVICE PROVIDERS INTERVIEWED

- Neami Ltd (Aboriginal Assertive Outreach Service)
- Barnardo's
- Housing NSW x 5 representatives
- Bridge Housing x 2 representatives
- Haymarket Foundation - Haymarket Centre
- Fairlight Centre – Mission Australia
- Rawson Project - Mission Australia
- Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service

APPENDIX 3 SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEW DATA

This section contains results of the interviews with service providers that are not otherwise presented in the body of the report.

Table A 3.1   Description of organisation

Organisation type	Number
Community housing provider	2
Non government organisation community/ welfare/family support	6
Housing NSW	5
Total	13

Table A 3.2 Service coverage by service provider organisation

Location	Number*
Ashfield	2
Botany Bay	4
Burwood	1
Canada Bay	1
Canterbury	1
Hornsby	1
Leichhardt	2
Marrickville	3
Randwick	4
Strathfield	1
Sutherland	1
Sydney City	3
Waverley	3
All LGA's	2

* Some respondents covered more than one location

Table A 3.3 Relationship of organisation to CSATSS

Relationship	Number*
Refer clients to CSATSS	11
Accepts referrals – provide brokered (paid) support to CSTASS clients	1
Accepts referrals – provide support to CSTASS clients through own existing resources	2

Some organisations had more than one type of relationship with CSATSS

Table A 3.4   Main issues clients present with that lead to making a referral to CSATSS

Main issue	Number*
Complex client needs	9
Mental health issues	7
Drug and alcohol issues	7
Rental arrears	4
Needing to relocate	10
Property maintenance problems	5
Secondary homeless help to establish tenancy	8
Other	4

Clients generally had more than one presenting issues

Table A 3.5   Why clients are referred to CSATSS

Reasons for referral	Number*
Culturally appropriate – Aboriginal workers	12
Provide case management to complex clients	7
Availability of brokerage funds to get clients services they require	11
Direct assistance	8
Flexible nature of services	7
Only service available	1

Previous good experience with On Track	7
Quality of service	6
Geographic area they cover	5

* Organisations generally had more than one reason for referral

Table A 3.6 Support provide to CSATSS clients through organisations own existing resources

Services provided	Number
Visits to clients	1
Assistance to resolve issues and problems identified by the landlord or real estate agent	1
Advocacy/liaison on behalf of client	9

Table A 3.7 Outcomes seen in clients' lives as a result of CSATSS intervention

Outcome	Number*
Begun counselling	2
Financial situation improved	6
Clients sustaining housing	8
Drug and/or alcohol problems reduced	4
Improved family relationships	5
Improvements in health	4
Improved mental health	5
Opportunity of employment/training	1
Safer housing	2
Social benefits e.g. less isolated	2

* More than one outcome was generally noted

Table A 3.8 In your experience are these outcomes/improvements sustained over the longer term?

Response	Number
Yes	5

Not known	8

Table A 3.9   Perceived strengths of the CSATSS

Strength of program	Number*
Geographic coverage - a large area with outreach services	7
Quick response time	9
Good case coordination	6
Help clients by increasing the skills/knowledge	6
Not just cash rescue but about building clients abilities to manage their finances	6
Flexible nature of assistance	7
The strong service network	4

* Respondents generally noted more than one strength

Table A 3.10 Do you think that the benefits achieved through the CSATSS can be sustained without access to brokerage funds?

Response	Number
Yes	1
No	8
Not known	4

Table A 3.11 Research suggests that Tenants Support Programs reduce client reliance on more intense/crisis services. Do you think the CSATSS has had this type of outcome?

Response	Number

Yes	8
No	-
Not known	5