

NSW Homelessness Action Plan Extended Evaluation

Final Evaluation Report for Long-Term Accommodation and Support for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

- **Domestic Violence Support, Western Sydney Service (3.12)**
- **Illawarra HAP Domestic Violence Support Service (3.13a)**
- **Hunter Integrated Response to Homelessness and Domestic Violence for Women (3.13b)**

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2009 the NSW government released the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014* (HAP). This plan set the direction for state-wide reform of the homelessness service system in order to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It aimed to realign existing effort towards an increased focus on prevention and early intervention, including ensuring sustainable long-term accommodation and support. A range of homelessness support services have since been funded through either the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) or NSW State funding.

One service model that has been implemented under HAP is *Long-Term Accommodation and Support for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic and Family Violence* - hereafter referred to as 'HAP DV'. The link between domestic violence (DV) and homelessness is indisputable. Research confirms that housing affordability is a major issue for women who separate from violent partners and in 2012, DV was the most common main reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services (SHS) in Australia. The effects of DV include undermining the victim's financial security and thus their capacity to sustain suitable housing, as well as a range of potential psychological, physical and material difficulties for women and their children that can require long-term support. The potential and unpredictable influence of perpetrator tactics long after women have left the violent relationship creates particular challenges for support services. A specific response to this issue and the demand upon crisis and medium term temporary accommodation was therefore urgently needed.

The HAP DV pilot projects were delivered by three auspice agencies that are non-government organisations, one project located in each of the following regions:

1. *Greater Western Sydney* - Long term accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence in Western Sydney. Encompassing the local government areas of Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith – implemented by Wimlah Women's and Children Refuge (DVS WSS).
2. *Hunter Region* - Support services to assist women escaping domestic violence maintain tenancies in the Hunter region. Encompassing the local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Dungog, Maitland, Cessnock, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Upper Hunter - implemented by NOVA Women's Accommodation and Support Service (HIR).
3. *Illawarra Region* - Support services to assist women escaping domestic violence maintain tenancies in the Illawarra region. Encompassing the local government areas of

Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven; implemented by Wollongong Women's Refuge (WWR).

This document provides an overview of the extended evaluations of these three HAP DV Projects. Separate evaluation reports have been completed for each project (Breckenridge et al 2013 a. b. & c). The evaluations were undertaken by the Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies (CGRVS) in partnership with the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) within the University of New South Wales (UNSW).

Methodology

The evaluation is a mixed-method inquiry combining a synthesis of service monitoring data with qualitative interviews. Ethics approval was granted by the UNSW Human Research and Ethics Committee (HC12442) and data collection was subsequently conducted over four months, between September and December 2012.

The primary sources of data were formal self-evaluation reports as required by Housing NSW; administrative data including client numbers and outcomes, budgets, process records, promotional materials, client case plans and service provider contracts; interviews with clients, auspice agency staff, service providers and other key stakeholders; extensive written client feedback and annual service reviews conducted by the projects internally; independent project evaluations undertaken in Greater Western Sydney and the Hunter HAP DV projects. In total 58 in-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted.

Critical factors for success

Whilst the data identify a number of key individual factors contributing to the success of the HAP DV service model, it is the powerful *combination* of program elements and their relationship to one another that has appeared to optimise housing outcomes. Specifically, the co-existence of access to safe and affordable housing (through Start Safely or social housing); flexible support underpinned by an individually tailored and coordinated case plan; the possibility of intensive assistance for up to 12 months; and brokerage dollars to fund further goods and services not constrained to a narrow definition of housing purposes. Whilst each element alone offers support and possible solutions to homelessness as a result of DV, it is the combined presence and relationship of these to one another that significantly strengthens the service model.

In addition, ten (10) individual factors have proven to be critical:

1. ***A housing focus but not housing constrained:*** The capacity to address non-housing issues that underpin the clients capacity to sustain a tenancy
2. ***Brokerage:*** the availability of flexible funding to respond to client needs in addition to case work support, in a timely manner

3. **Brokerage aligned to a case plan:** the linkage of brokerage expenditure to case plans that address both housing and related DV needs
4. **Goal-directed support with a shared DV/housing focus, that is ongoing, intensive and flexible:** The ability to provide support that is ongoing for up to 12 months and can increase or decrease in intensity in response to critical issues
5. **Eligibility screening and assessment placed within Housing NSW:** Systems that require an exchange between Housing and DV services
6. **Sector-development: capacity-building across the service system:** Project resources that can be allocated to a range of local services for client work, collaboration and coordinated planning
7. **Sector development: inter-agency influence, education and knowledge exchange:** Structures that support client-focused collaborative learning
8. **Local adaptation of the overall service model:** The ability to respond to local needs and issues in implementation and optimise use of the particular service system
9. **Case management focused on client capacity-building, learning to use the service system and the creation of community belonging:** A focus on skills and independence for clients
10. **Strong management, coordination skills and practice expertise in auspice agencies:** Centralised, effective coordination and oversight at the local level

Key challenges

There were a number of eligibility questions and inconsistencies that led to a lack of clarity for implementation. In addition some women escaping domestic violence who need support to prevent homelessness are not eligible to receive HAP DV assistance. This requires further investigation and consideration by the lead government agencies (Housing NSW and Community Services).

Also related to intake and eligibility assessment it was found that Housing NSW front-line screening and assessment workers are critical gate-keepers for HAP DV and that they require ongoing training, supervision and adequate screening tools.

The relatively rigid division in the model between high and low needs packages aligned to social housing or Start Safely eligibility, runs counter to the overall philosophy of the HAP DV service, which is to provide customised, client-centred support and this poses unnecessary challenges for practice. In many cases the link between a particular housing product and designated support need is not substantiated.

Administrative and resource management responsibilities can be burdensome and also place the relationship between the auspice agency and other local organisations under stress. There is merit in further investigation of ways to simplify administrative and financial processes and to ensure continuing transparency and collaborative decision-making structures.

Approximately 416 women were supported jointly by the projects in one financial year, with at least 660 accompanying children. The wellbeing of children is critical to women's capacity to sustain their housing and the projects' work to support children should be adequately reflected in any future budgets and performance measures.

Finally, there were challenges in all three regions in finding and securing housing for HAP DV clients in both social housing allocations and private rental availability.

Cost effectiveness

Conclusions about cost effectiveness cannot be drawn in the absence of robust and long term outcomes data. However, as discussed here and in the three individual project reports the information that is available on expenditure, client outcomes (in terms of sustaining tenancies) and qualitative data on overcoming the effects of domestic violence, indicates well-targeted expenditure.

Differences in expenditure regarding the ratio of operational to client costs and average amounts spent per client are attributable to local characteristics, including the strength of the service network, local implementation decisions, demographics and affordable housing options. Average spend per client cannot be used as an indicator of outcomes or the quality of services provided and should be read with caution. The information on expenditure therefore reflects differences between the regions rather than comparative cost effectiveness. All projects when broadly compared to a selection of similar support services are positioned low to mid-range in terms of costs per client. In the light of the reported housing outcomes these figures underpin a positive 'value for money' assessment.

The most significant finding around cost differentials is that the service model appeared to be based on an assumption that clients who receive the Start Safely subsidy have fewer and less complex needs than those in social housing, but this assumption was not confirmed by implementation. Each of the projects found that the complexity of needs did not have an indexed relationship to housing status and that the needs of Start Safely clients were often complex and sustained, requiring intensive support. Consideration of past or ongoing perpetrator tactics which are outside the control of either the women or the projects is important in this.

Key lessons learnt

It is strongly indicated that *flexible brokerage* funding is a critical component of a sufficient and effective service response to meet the needs of women and children who are at risk of homelessness due to domestic or family violence. Further, *local control* to enable client-centred, individualised application of project resources is a highly effective means of meeting client needs. Underpinning local control, the *strong and transparent governance* of brokerage allocation is important, in order to retain accountability to both DV and homelessness goals. Shared accountability for outcomes between the Homelessness and DV sectors and a dual housing/DV knowledge base supports this good governance and *centralised, skilled coordination* of the project by the auspice agency ensures a fast, consistent and well-managed response to clients.

However, financial and other administrative procedures between the auspice agency and service providers need to be as streamlined as possible to *minimise onerous paperwork* and *improved planning for brokerage expenditure* would provide guidance to projects to assist in the allocation of their resources.

Overall, access to HAP DV services could be greatly improved by the development of up-to-date *DV screening tools and staff training in Housing NSW*, to increase the speed and accuracy of initial approvals and a *review of eligibility criteria* at the program level is necessary to increase appropriateness and consistency of their application. Also the service model could *consider extending the service period* beyond 12 months so that women with ongoing needs, including particularly Indigenous women are not denied essential support to enable them to maintain their tenancy and stay safe.

Conclusion

The HAP DV projects represent a significant development in the provision of housing support for women and children who experience domestic and family violence. They extend the basic 'case management with brokerage' service model that has emerged in recent years, by enabling greater flexibility and adding more formal structures for local integration and control of resources. Some aspects of the model are enhancements of existing practice, for example local inter-agency partnerships and collaboration. Other elements are new, such as the purchasing of client support services and administration of brokerage funds by the HAP DV auspice agency. The evaluation has identified vulnerabilities in the model but where these are managed well, the outcomes appear robust.

The particular combination of affordable housing with flexible case management and brokerage support that the service model enables is demonstrably successful. Applying the model with local adaptations, each project effectively supported women and children to establish and sustain long-term housing and thereby prevented homelessness. Women reported that the foundation of sustainable housing with intensive client support underpinned their capacity to remain separate from the perpetrator and to sufficiently

recover from the effects of the abuse in order to gain and begin to implement skills for independence. This finding suggests optimism for the ongoing effects of the project interventions to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty as a result of DV. The DV specialist oversight of the projects ensures that the existing substantial and robust evidence-base for an appropriate response to DV is drawn upon in order to address complex needs of women and children in this situation. This is likely to be more effective in preventing homelessness as a result of DV than a purely housing or homelessness response.

It has not been within the scope of the current evaluation to measure long term outcomes for women or their children, but this could be a significant future research inquiry that would add to the evidence base for best practice in the field.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of HAP

In 2009 the NSW government released the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014* (HAP). This plan set the direction for state-wide reform of the homelessness service system in order to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It aimed to realign existing effort towards an increased focus on prevention and early intervention, including long-term accommodation and support.

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

Under the plan there are three headline homelessness reduction targets:

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

In order to achieve these targets the HAP initiatives include approximately 100 NSW Government-funded local, regional and state-wide projects. As at June 2012, 55 of these projects were funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) with the remainder being funded and implemented by the state Government.

All HAP 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 homelessness and these provide the focus for many of the HAP projects.

1.2 HAP evaluation strategy

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:

1. *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.
2. *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.
3. *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 regarding HAP activities.

The evaluation strategy will assist with measuring progress towards meeting 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.

1.3 Overview of service model and projects included in this evaluation

For the purposes of this Final Evaluation Report of the HAP DV Model, Section 1.2 will provide an overview of the general service model and brief comment on implementation differences between the three HAP DV projects where relevant, as well as drawing together the similarities in relation to the HAP DV projects' service model as a whole. The individual project evaluations reports provide detailed information regarding the specific implementation of the model in each region.

Project descriptions

The extended evaluation undertaken by the Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies (CGRVS) and the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) focuses on the *Long-Term Accommodation and Support for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic and Family Violence Project* (hereafter referred to as the 'HAP DV Project'). The target group are women (with or without children) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to domestic or family violence. HAP DV projects are delivered by three auspice agencies that are non-government organisations, one project located in each of the following regions:

1. *Greater Western Sydney* - Long term accommodation and support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence in Western Sydney. Encompassing the local government areas of Auburn, Bankstown, Blacktown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith – implemented by Wimlah Women's

and Children Refuge. The project is also referred to as Domestic Violence Support, Western Sydney Service (DVS WSS).

2. *Hunter Region* - Support services to assist women escaping domestic violence maintain tenancies in the Hunter region. Encompassing the local government areas of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Dungog, Maitland, Cessnock, Muswellbrook, Singleton, Upper Hunter - implemented by NOVA Women's Accommodation and Support Service The project is also referred to as Hunter Integrated Response to Homelessness and Domestic Violence for Women (HIR)
3. *Illawarra Region* - Support services to assist women escaping domestic violence maintain tenancies in the Illawarra region. Encompassing the local government areas of Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven; implemented by Wollongong Women's Refuge (WWR).

Aims, program elements and eligibility criteria

HAP DV Projects provide integrated housing support for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Specifically the projects combine the following program elements:

- Access to social housing or suitable private rental accommodation through the provision of the Start Safely Private Rental Subsidy¹
- Integrated case management support services
- Flexible brokerage packages

In delivering the projects, the non-government auspice agencies in each region are responsible for the implementation of three key strategies:

1. *Integration of Service Provision*: There is a suite of domestic violence support programs operating across NSW and each auspice agency is responsible for linking with and building on the existing DV local service system. However, providing an integrated service also involves forging partnerships with mainstream services in order to provide assistance with identified client needs including amongst other things housing, health, mental health, drug and alcohol difficulties, education, training and employment, pregnancy and parenting support, financial counselling, child support and legal advice.

¹ 'Start Safely' is: *a subsidy to provide short to medium term financial help to women and women with children who have experienced domestic or family violence so they can secure private rental accommodation and do not have to return to the violent situation* (Housing NSW 2012). To access this subsidy, women escaping DV must first of all be deemed eligible for social housing which involves an income and assets test. They must also be homeless or at risk of homelessness, be able to demonstrate an ability to afford and sustain a tenancy at the end of the subsidy period (24 months) and be willing to receive support services where relevant.

2. Coordination and Case Management: Each auspice agency is responsible for maintaining the overall budget; coordinating partner agencies to implement collaborative case management; joint service planning; project data collection; and administration. The auspice agency coordinates cross-agency supports to clients and allocates support hours and brokerage funding based on client needs identified in a formal case plan.
3. Brokerage: Brokerage packages consisting of fixed levels of funding to meet specific client needs are available to support successful implementation of case plans managed by the service providers. This brokerage enables access to services that are otherwise unavailable and supports sustainable long-term housing outcomes. The service provider is responsible for expenditure of brokerage, case planning, case management and coordination.

Through these activities the HAP DV projects address the following objectives:

- To improve women and children's safety
- To reduce the length of time families who have experienced domestic violence spend in crisis accommodation services
- To increase housing options for women and children who have experienced domestic violence by providing integrated support services to women to improve their ability to access the private rental market and maintain their tenancies.
- To increase social housing options for women and children who have experienced domestic violence by providing integrated support services to women to improve their ability to maintain social housing tenancies.
- To increase collaborative service delivery across government agencies in responding to homelessness.
- To identify and resolve impediments to the effective provision of tenancy support services and make recommendations to reform the existing service system in the longer term
- To reduce turn-away rates from domestic violence crisis accommodation services.

HAP DV within the service system

Within an overall service system response to homelessness, the HAP DV projects provide a uniquely tailored intervention that is specifically designed to address domestic violence as a causal factor for homelessness. Beyond the Specialist Homelessness Services (that provide crisis and medium term supported accommodation) HAP DV is one of three significant NSW government responses to women and children who have experienced domestic violence and who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The other two initiatives are the *Start Safely* Private Rental Subsidy and *Staying Home Leaving Violence* (SHLV). A number of other domestic violence support programs exist in NSW, funded either through government or

non-government initiatives and these variously address such things as court support, advice and information, refuge placement, health-related DV screening, counselling, family dispute resolution and police responses. These programs are not housing focused and they are delivered inconsistently across the State. For the purposes of this evaluation the three long term housing responses – namely Start Safely, SHLV and HAP DV - will be discussed below.

1. *Start Safely* is a time-limited private rental subsidy that is available through Housing NSW to women who are escaping domestic violence and meet the income and assets test for social housing. It enables eligible women to establish and sustain private rental accommodation. The recipient must be capable of independently managing her rental payments once the subsidy ceases, after a maximum period of 24 months. It is a financial subsidy only and does not include direct client support, case coordination or case management. Eligible women can access Start Safely without engaging with a HAP DV project or any other support.
2. *SHLV* aims to provide an integrated service response to women who have separated from a violent partner but intend to remain in the family home or another home of their choice. SHLV provides specialised case coordination, case management and limited brokerage for increasing client safety by upgrading home security provisions. The program is designed to prevent homelessness as a result of domestic violence by enabling clients to remain safely in their home and have the perpetrator removed/kept away through the intervention of the courts and police. The program is funded and overseen by Community Services and it is implemented through a range of local service providers. This program does not provide a rental subsidy but SHLV clients who intend to remain in a rental property may apply for Start Safely. Whilst a wide range of individual client supports are provided through the personalised case management process, the program's primary focus is safety planning, home safety audits and upgrades, and contributing to a coordinated justice response to domestic violence. The projects support women to apply for Exclusion Orders and liaise closely with the courts and police. Limited brokerage is focused on home security upgrades. Eligibility criteria are broad, encompassing any woman (and her children) escaping domestic violence who has separated from the perpetrator. Significantly, an income and/or assets test is not applied. There are currently 23 SHLV projects across NSW which leaves some geographical areas without access.
3. *HAP DV projects* provide eligible women and children with appropriate housing (through either Start Safely or social housing) alongside an integrated support package which includes case management and highly flexible brokerage funding. HAP DV packages are income tested and dependent on an initial assessment of the complexity of women's housing and support needs by Housing NSW. SHLV clients are not eligible for a HAP DV package as they are already deemed to be accessing an appropriate service. Women

with personal assets such as a mortgage are also screened out of the program due to failing the assets test.

The service models of HAP DV and SHLV share similarities as a result of identified best practice, however they differ in their specific target groups and the focus of their interventions. SHLV is a primarily justice, police and safety response to women in present danger. It is available to any woman escaping domestic violence without an income or assets test. HAP DV is a holistic, housing-focused response that engages with women who may be dealing with the longer term impact of domestic violence. Where there is potential overlap for individual clients the projects coordinate and ensure duplication does not occur. The existence of both programs responds to the research evidence that there is a need for multiple, diverse responses to women's and children's needs regarding safety and long term recovery from domestic violence.

The unique components of HAP DV within this context are its capacity to provide more intensive, flexible and targeted support than any other program currently in place. It achieves this through its capacity to 'buy in' specialised services; to provide variable financial and material support; and to host case management within the most appropriate organisation. Evidence of the effectiveness of this model is indicated throughout this evaluation report.

1.4 Regional implementation of the model

There were adaptations to the specific implementation of each project in response to local issues, however the findings across all three were consistent in terms of overall service model, client outcomes, partnerships and impacts on the service system. The following section will briefly detail variations in implementation of the HAP DV model for each of the three regions.

Greater Western Sydney HAP DV Project (DVS WSS)

The key service delivery component as described in the service specifications, is a coordinated or 'wrap-around' case plan. However in contrast to the other regions, client participation in a wrap-around service is not compulsory for DVS WSS clients. While all clients who are in Social Housing (high needs clients) must participate in case management with a DVS WSS support service, participation with a support service (DVS WSS or other service) is optional for Start Safely subsidy recipients (low needs clients).

A component that is unique to the GWS project is *supported referral* and this provides one-off brokerage to women leaving a violent relationship. There are two predominant groups of women who are eligible to receive supported referral. First, women who choose to opt out or are assessed as not needing ongoing case management are eligible for a one off amount of brokerage to assist them maintain their tenancy and second, women who are already receiving some form of case management from another organisation but who still require

some financial assistance to re-establish in new accommodation after leaving a violent relationship. For this latter group, supported referral is intended to 'value-add' to the response provided to women by another agency to ensure they maximise their chance of remaining housed.

Illawarra HAP DV Project

A unique feature of the Illawarra HAP DV Project is a more centralised implementation of the service model. From the point of referral, the HAP DV coordinator undertakes all client assessment, allocates service providers for case management, oversees quarterly case reviews for each client and approves brokerage allocation. All case management is provided to the client by registered service providers who are not employed directly by the project. The project management committee determined fixed brokerage levels at the beginning of the project and an estimate was made as to how many case management hours would go into a low needs and high needs package.

Hunter HAP DV Project (HIR)

The Hunter region has only minimally varied the original service model. Nova Women's Accommodation and Support Service, as the principal agency, is responsible for maintaining the brokerage budget and for coordinating partner agencies to implement: coordinated case management; joint service planning; data collection; and administration. Brokerage packages are available to support case plans, managed by partner agencies, for identified clients. The agency applying for brokerage packages is responsible for client case coordination. Due to a lack of service capacity and support in one of the local government areas, two workers were employed by the Hunter project to undertake outreach work specifically for the project.

1.5 Project governance

Community Services and Housing NSW are the lead government agencies for the HAP DV Program. Other government agency partners are the Office for Women's Policy and NSW Health. Each of the three HAP DV Projects is delivered by a non-government auspice agency reporting directly to their regional Community Services office, as contract manager. A reference group consisting of regional project partners provides advice to the auspice agency on management and implementation issues. In addition, the existing Regional Homelessness Committees (RHCs) meet regularly to plan and coordinate across a range of issues, including overseeing collaborative responses to HAP initiatives and other housing programs on offer.

The service providers for each project are the direct client support and case management workers/organisations who access the HAP DV support packages on their clients' behalf. These are mostly external to the auspice agency but sometimes, as in the Hunter, case workers have been employed as part of the HAP DV project team.

Housing NSW 'Access and Demand' teams are the gateway for screening clients in relation to eligibility for housing products and a primary source of referrals.

In addition to the above structure, the model includes a requirement for the auspice agencies to convene local Coordination Groups (CGs) comprising eight to ten members from Specialist Homelessness Services, mainstream services and partner government agencies in the local government area. These groups are intended to provide assistance to:

- assess case management brokerage applications from referring agencies / services
- input to the development of a coordinated case plan for a referred client
- identify barriers to sustaining housing in the longer term

Amendments to some aspects of this original governing structure occurred in response to local conditions and working relationships.

Greater Western Sydney governance

In GWS the auspice agency, Wimlah Women's Refuge, and the Western Sydney Group that convene each Regional Coordination group are directly connected to and mentored by the NSW Women's Refuge Movement (WRM). WRM provides a robust management structure for Refuges through a central working party which may provide advice and oversee governance in individual refuges. Each refuge has a management committee that reports to the central working party that manages the WRM.

The GWS project employs a Coordination Officer. This position coordinates the entire program; provides secretariat assistance to the five coordination groups; reviews case work; reports statistics and other issues to the funding body; manages budget and brokerage; provides mentoring/training; raises awareness of the program; manages recruitment of new Services; and carries out a general 'troubleshooting' role.

The project operates over a very large geographic area. Hence there are five coordination groups and each coordination group maintains between 6 and 10 services as members, from a total of 42 services. Regional Coordination Groups, which meet quarterly, have the purpose of coordinating support to clients within each region. These groups also hold Regional Allocation Meetings, to nominate and prioritise clients as new properties become available or as high need clients are nominated by Social Housing providers.

Illawarra governance

In the Illawarra region, the auspice agency Wollongong Women's Refuge (WWR) set up a reference group consisting of project partners who provide advice to WWR on HAP DV project management and implementation issues. WWR employs a full time coordinator and part time administration officer to oversee project operations. Once clients are referred and

accepted into the project they work with a registered service provider to address their specific needs through the implementation of a case plan.

In accordance with the original guidelines, the auspice agency convened two coordination groups for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas respectively. As the project progressed, adaptation to the role and function of these groups occurred in order to optimise efficiency and client outcomes. The role of assessing and overseeing case plans was found not to be an effective use of time and resources. In a documented annual review of the project (Illawarra Forum Inc. 2011) a majority of local services indicated some frustration with the time taken to process requests for assistance and recommended a change to this 'intake' procedure. Subsequently the coordinating groups themselves opted to change their role to one of promotion and education regarding the project and entrusted individual client assessment and case plan approval and review to the project coordinator. Members of the coordination groups may still be called on to give advice, problem-solve and offer other case-based assistance.

Hunter governance

In the Hunter region, the auspice agency (Nova Women's Accommodation and Support Service) convenes five Assessment Groups across the Hunter.

The Assessment Groups are responsible for:

- Case management brokerage applications from referring agencies / services
- Developing a coordinated case plan for clients with other key support providers
- Identifying barriers to sustaining housing in the longer term

The auspicating agency is responsible for maintaining the brokerage budget and for coordinating the engagement of partner agencies to support clients with Case Management Support packages through an Assessment Group. It is also responsible for all reporting and data collection as required; and attends the cross agency working group with representatives from Community Services, HNSW and social housing provider Compass Housing. The cross agency working group meets every two months. The Nova manager sits on the Regional Homelessness Committee.

1.6 Project budget

The formal service agreement for the HAP DV projects is monitored and managed by Community Services, within the Department of Family and Community Services of the NSW Government. This service agreement indicated fixed-term funding of \$640,000 per annum over three years. Therefore the accumulative, total planned 3-year budget per project was almost two million dollars (\$1,920,000). The annual funding covered operating costs and staff salary for the auspice agency, plus case management and brokerage costs for a target of 20 low need and 10 high need packages of direct client support. There does not appear to

have been a formal agreement as to how the client support packages should be costed and therefore each project devised their own targets. A general guide of \$10,000 for low needs and either \$20,000 or \$30,000 for high needs packages was discussed and these became the starting points.

However, the experience of implementation showed that clients' support needs were not necessarily aligned with their housing product status and all of the projects were flexible to varying degrees with support package allocations.

Section Five of this report provides further detailed analysis of costs and expenditure for each of the HAP DV projects.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The link between women's homelessness and domestic violence is undeniable. Existing evidence demonstrates that domestic violence continues to be the main reason that women seek support and assistance from refuges and other specialist homelessness services (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW] AIHW 2010b, 2011a, 2011b and 2012). Although refuges offer a suite of support services, most requests from women for accommodation from these services are unable to be met (AIHW 2010a; Baker, Billhardt, Warren Rollins & Glass 2010; Spinney 2012). The increasing awareness among DV and housing workers that domestic violence can lead to long-term homelessness for some women and their children, combined with the demonstrated lack of affordable medium and long-term housing options, has encouraged policy makers and practitioners to re-consider the range of services which may best reduce the risk of homelessness when women leave their violent partner (Healey 2009, Spinney 2012). Accordingly, developing and supporting a greater range of housing options is now accepted as critical to keeping women and children housed and safe (Baker, Billhardt, Warren, Rollins & Glass 2010; Spinney & Blandy 2011; Spinney 2012).

This review will present current evidence documenting the experience and possible range of effects of domestic violence, essential to assist in the design, delivery and evaluation of DV homelessness programs. Incorporating a contextual understanding of the key dynamics and characteristics of domestic violence is central to the likelihood of success for housing program strategies. In particular, it is important to take account of the external variable of perpetrator tactics and the long-term personal effects of living in a relationship where the perpetrator has exercised coercive control.

2.2 The prevalence of DV

The following select national data demonstrate the extent to which women and children are affected by DV:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey (2006) found that 39.9% (3,065,800) of women reported experiencing some form of violence in their life (p. 6). Of the 4.7% of women who were physically assaulted in the 12 months prior to the survey, 31% were assaulted by their current or previous partner (p. 9)
- The Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) found that over one-third of Australian women experience physical, sexual or psychological violence, or threats from a partner or ex-partner during their lifetime (Mouzos and Makkai, 2004). Specifically, 34% of women who had ever had an intimate partner reported experiencing at least one form of violence during their lifetime from a

partner; 31% experienced physical violence and 12% experienced sexual violence from a partner (p. 44 Figure 11)

- Indigenous Australian women may be up to 35 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to experience domestic and family violence (Council of Australian Governments 2010). For example in NSW in 2006, 20 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were record as reporting physical violence in the previous year, compared with 7 per cent of the general female population (Department of Aboriginal Affairs 2008).
- In Australia, one in four children witness or live with domestic violence (Spinney & Blandy 2011b; Desmond 2011)

International statistics demonstrate consistent prevalence rates. For example, the World Health Organisation's multi-country study of women's experience of domestic violence shows that this problem is experienced around the globe (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2005, p. 83). Aggregate figures for partner and non-partner violence from this study showed that:

- More than a quarter of women surveyed (except for the Japanese sites) had been physically or sexually assaulted at least once since the age of 15 years, with rates as high as 50% for some countries
- In the vast majority of cases the violence was perpetrated by a male intimate partner and in most sites between 20 and 33% of women reported having been abused by their partner in the previous twelve months.
- Further, Marcus and Braaf (2007) found that many studies report heightened or differential levels of risk and vulnerability for women from different groups such as, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities and women with alcohol and other drug problems.

2.3 Gender 'asymmetry' and DV

The polemic of 'gender symmetry' in domestic violence is becoming increasingly prominent, both in academic scholarship and in popular culture (Flood 2006). While both women and men can be victims of violence, the Australian Personal Safety Survey (2006, 6) found that all respondents were three times more likely to experience violence by a man than by a woman. Moreover, where men are victims of violence the perpetrators are generally more likely to be other men; and when women are subjected to violence in families and their interpersonal relationships, their assailant is predominantly male (Australian Personal Safety Service 2006, Mouzos & Makkai 2004). Hence there are important differences or 'gender asymmetries' between men's and women's typical patterns of victimisation and perpetration. Moreover the data that does exist, in relation to domestic and family violence towards men, indicates that men's experience of domestic and family violence, in heterosexual relationships, differs significantly from that of women's, most notably in that:

- Men rarely live in a state of ongoing fear of their female partners who are perpetrators of domestic and family violence (James 1999; Flood 2006). In contrast, women are far more likely than men to be subjected to relationships of coercive control which may feature frequent, prolonged and extreme violence, fear for their lives, sexual assault and extreme psychological abuse including financial control (Breckenridge and James 2011; Marcus and Braaf 2007 and Flood 2006)
- Studies which indicate men and women assault each other in equal rates have been criticised for their methodologies, including failing to investigate assaults post-separation, which is a critical period for assaults against women, and does not differentiate initiating acts of violence from acts of self-defence (Mulroney and Chan; Flood 2006; and, Marcus and Braaf 2007).
- Many men who identify as victims of domestic violence are often also perpetrators (Marcus and Braaf 2007).
- The literature confirms that poverty is a more frequent outcome for women leaving violent relationships than for men. In their comprehensive report, Braaf and Barrett-Meyering (2010) found that women's economic security was affected differently to men's post separation because up until very recently with the establishment of Stay at Home programs, women inevitably had to leave the family home to escape violence; very frequently left behind the majority of their worldly belongings; and usually retaining on-going care of children. Moreover, many women also inherit the perpetrator's debts.

2.4 Short and longer term effects of DV

Domestic violence can result in multiple physical and mental health difficulties for women and their children which may require immediate intervention as well as longer term support.

- VicHealth (2004) identified violence perpetrated by a partner as the leading contributor to death, disability and physical illness in women aged fifteen to forty-four, constituting a greater risk than other acknowledged risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.
- Domestic violence can also increase women's long-term risks of a number of health and psychological problems including injury, chronic pain, drug and alcohol abuse, disability, and depression (Campbell, 2002; Heise et al., 2002).
- While many women do not disclose DV as the cause of injury to health and welfare service providers, the AIHW Report - *Injury research and statistics* found that nationally, over the period 2002–03 to 2004–05 there were 16,093 cases of women hospitalised as a result of some form of interpersonal violence. Irrespective of the type of assault,

female victims were most commonly reported to have been assaulted in the home [35%] and by their spouse or domestic partner [40%] (Pointer and Kreisfeld 2012).

- An Australian representative study of women who report gender-based violence found that this cohort of women are more likely to experience mental illness over the course of their lifetime, with risk of mental illness increasing for women with multiple exposures to gender-based violence (Rees et al. 2011).
- Children, too, can develop psychological difficulties from living with or from directly experiencing violence in the family home (Kennedy et. al. 2010).
- A recent longitudinal study found that women affected by intimate partner violence faced higher health costs than women with no history of intimate partner violence, not only during the period of time that abuse was perpetrated but for three years after the violence ended (Fishman et al. 2010, p. 923).

2.5 Making the links between DV and homelessness

Women and children who leave their home to escape a violent relationship experience ‘considerable social and personal disruption and financial disadvantage’ (Chung et al., 2000, p. 46). The extent of this disruption should not be underestimated, with some women having to move multiple times before gaining longer-term safe housing (Chung et al., 2000, p. 48). Moreover, some women and children are more vulnerable to on-going housing difficulties post separation. Tually et.al (2008) in their Australian AHURI synthesis report found that women escaping DV with little financial independence, who are Indigenous, come from a CALD background, or who live with a disability are overrepresented in homelessness figures and research.

There is agreement in the key literature that homelessness among women and children who have experienced domestic violence is substantially caused by a ‘social failure to fully accept and deal with the criminality of the perpetrator’s behaviour’ (Spinney and Blandy, 2011a, p. 12). Research exploring the links between domestic violence and homelessness demonstrates that both ‘rigorous and enforced’ legal sanctions are required to enable women and children to remain in housing (Chung et al., 2000, p. 27). Yet there is considerable variation between and within Australian states and territories in legal provisions and judicial, advocacy and financial support to assist a woman to remain in their home or maintain safe and stable housing after separating from a violent partner (Wilcox 2009). This variation also includes whether or not there is a specific mechanism for adjusting or transferring tenancies where exclusion conditions are in force (Australian Government, 2009). Moreover Desmond (2011) articulates a critical concern that on-going safety issues for women and children must be considered alongside the prevention of homelessness.

The emergent literature suggests that a number of key factors affect housing options available to women who separate from a violent partner. For example:

- Insufficient refuge accommodation to respond to the number of women and children requiring crisis accommodation post separation from the violent partner
- A severe general shortage of available and affordable housing, including a shortage of social housing and affordable rental accommodation in Australia
- The shortage of long-term affordable housing prevents women making the transition from temporary accommodation in homelessness services to permanent housing
- Poverty, often resulting from the abusive relationship itself, is also a significant obstacle to remaining in the home and to sustaining this housing
- Moreover, certain groups of women such as Indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse and refugee women, women with disabilities and women from rural and remote areas may be additionally disadvantaged with reduced access to refuge accommodation and other housing options meeting their specific needs.

Indigenous women, family violence and homelessness

A range of researchers argue that Indigenous experiences of both DV and homelessness need to be considered differently from that of white mainstream interpretations. The causes of family violence in Indigenous communities are now increasingly accepted as stemming in part from the history and impact of colonisation (Spinney 2012). On-going trauma from the displacement of Indigenous people from their traditional lands and kinship groups, the removal of children from their families and the on-going negative relationship between Indigenous people and the criminal justice system all contribute to heightened levels of inter-personal violence, an under-reporting of such violence and an over-representation of Indigenous people in prison populations. While legal definitions of domestic violence can and do vary and preferences are apparent within the literature for various terms to describe violence between partners (for example, battering, spousal assault, intimate partner violence) the differences between these and Indigenous conceptualisations of domestic violence are not merely semantic. In an Indigenous community context, the term family violence is often preferred as it acknowledges the wider range of possible relationships including families, extended families and kinship networks in which violence can occur (Victorian Government 2004). Cripps (2010) suggests that the unique and complex relationship between Indigenous people and the criminal justice system means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are less likely to report domestic and family violence in order to protect the extended family from intrusion, or to avoid adversely affecting their community.

The literature also universally acknowledges that Indigenous people are one of the most vulnerable groups of homeless people. Indigenous Australians are over-represented in every category of homelessness. For example, in NSW, over 7% of homeless people are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, while representing only 2.2% of the general NSW population (FACS 2012). It is also commonly agreed that many Indigenous people live in housing that does

not meet their needs. Indigenous Australians are six times more likely to live in overcrowded conditions than non-Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2008). This same report refers to overcrowding as one of the biggest causes of “hidden homelessness” among Indigenous Australian communities, potentially contributing to ill-health and family violence. Given that Indigenous Australian women may be up to 35 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to experience domestic and family violence (Council of Australian Governments 2010) a growing range of researchers suggest that for intervention schemes including homelessness programs to be effective they have to be culturally and community appropriate and involve Indigenous people in their design and implementation (Cripps 2010; Weeks and Oberon 2004).

For Indigenous women separating from a violent relationship the following considerations are important:

- Separation from a violent perpetrator may mean leaving a community and traditional lands, leaving the women marginalised from all sources of support
- Indigenous women may use SHS such as refuges as a short term strategy. Where they are able to predict potential times of disruption, such as funerals or other difficult life events, women may seek refuge accommodation as a temporary measure.
- Indigenous women have identified the potential usefulness of culturally appropriate funded ‘safe houses’ run by the community, located in the community to maintain existing sources of support and break the cycle of violence.
- Strong formal relationships between Indigenous service providers, government departments and community agencies for the provision of services and ongoing support are needed?

2.6 What we know about women, DV and the provision of homelessness services

It is widely accepted by specialist and non-specialist DV workers that domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness (Chamberlain, 2006; Tually et al., 2008). Workers’ experiences are often confined to their professional interactions with women who become homeless immediately after separating from a violent relationship. However, some women experience on-going difficulties from the DV post separation and workers may engage with them some time later when their homelessness may not be readily attributed to past DV. For example, evidence indicates that violence and abuse have played a major role throughout the lives of older single women experiencing homelessness later in life (McFerran, 2010). Hence, making the link between DV and homelessness is not always a straightforward matter, in large part because there is not one agreed definition of homelessness in Australia. Many operational definitions fail to capture the complexity and fluidity of the situations of women with children who experience domestic violence (Flatau et al., 2006). Researchers argue that most definitions of homelessness do not adequately encompass women experiencing what is now termed ‘housed homelessness’ (Nunan and Johns, 1996, p. 27) because their home is unsafe (Chung et al., 2000; Tually et al., 2008). The *Supported Accommodation*

Assistance Act 1994 which has been the overarching legislation governing service system responses to homelessness for the last 18 years, defined homelessness as ‘inadequate access to safe and secure housing’ and this is considered by both researchers and practitioners to helpfully capture the complexities that women leaving a violent relationship face. This includes experiences along a continuum from living with the perpetrator, to crisis accommodation, short term temporary housing, forced itinerant living due to the need for personal safety and longer term homelessness as a result of financial and psychological consequences of the violence. An exposure draft of the new Homelessness Bill 2012, which is intended to replace the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*, was released on 5 June 2012 and may contribute to definitional clarity once accepted. The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) that provides a framework for the funding of housing and homelessness assistance, does not feature a definition of homelessness.

Perhaps more pertinent to the HAP DV program is the definition used by a recent information paper from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) which describes homelessness as a living situation that ‘does not allow [the person] to have control of and access to space for social relations’ (ABS 2012). At first sight this does appear to accommodate DV situations where the woman is still living with a perpetrator. However, although the ABS acknowledges that such women could on these grounds be considered homeless, it has ‘for statistical purposes’ chosen to count them as ‘at risk of homelessness’ (p15). These variations invite confusion and potential for women and children experiencing domestic violence to be overlooked in the implementation of support programs derived from legislation, ensuing policy initiatives and service agreements.

Setting aside these definitional concerns, research demonstrates that there are two primary groups of women who may become effectively homeless *post* separation from their violent partner:

Women affected by DV who use homelessness services

Domestic and family violence is the main reason that women seek assistance from specialist homelessness services, including women’s refuges. Research indicates that:

- In the three most recent Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) quarterly reports, domestic and family violence was **the** most common main reason for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services in Australia (AIHW 2011a, 2011b and 2012).
- The largest group of clients of specialist homelessness services (including clients and accompanying children) in the 2010-11 year were women with children (AIHW 2011 cited in AIHW 2012)
- In the 2010-11 year women with or without children commonly sought assistance from SHS services because of domestic violence and to address this they often required

personal support services including specialist counselling. The SAAP high and complex needs census (Commonwealth of Australia 2010) identified the 13 most common client needs with the first being related to housing, followed by money management/finances and then exposure to/effects of violence. These top three were the areas where agencies were most likely to encounter clients who had high support needs

- Specialist homelessness services provided 212,400 support periods (AIHW, 2010b: 8) to 125,800 clients (plus 79,100 accompanying children) (AIHW, 2010b: 9), of whom 78,200 were female (AIHW, 2010b: 21)
- In 2003-04, a report focusing specifically on female SAAP clients and children escaping domestic and family violence found that 33% of all clients accessing the program were women escaping domestic violence and 66% of all accompanying children were with female clients escaping domestic violence (Marcolin, 2005: 1).
- Shortages of long-term affordable housing prevent many women who do access refuges or other specialist homelessness services from making the transition to independent and stable living (Erebus Consulting Partners, 2004).

Women made homeless by domestic violence who do not use refuges

It is important to recognise that most women living with DV seek help from informal sources such as family, friends or a doctor for treatment of physical injuries. Most do not use refuges and other specialist homelessness services (Chung et al, 2000; Tually et al, 2008). Those women who do access refuges represent a small proportion of those experiencing domestic violence and of those who separate because of domestic violence (Chung et al., 2000). While women can and do receive support and assistance from refuges excluding accommodation services, data is not readily available on the proportion of women who seek help from homelessness services because of domestic violence and cannot be accommodated. However it is documented that:

- Over half of all women seeking accommodation from SAAP services are turned away (AIHW, 2010a, p. 45).
- In addition, the short-term or temporary nature of refuge accommodation renders many women and children homeless as they are forced to take up unsatisfactory accommodation or return to their violent partner.
- Chung, Kennedy *et al.* (2000, p. 47) found that factors increasing the likelihood of a woman and her children continuing to live in, or return to, a violent situation included being unable to access refuge accommodation and having to remain in the refuge when she was ready to leave, because she could not obtain permanent housing. In addition, many women move through a series of unsatisfactory housing options including caravan parks and motels. In some instances these unsuitable options are offered by the

agencies providing women with assistance. While providing temporary respite, this system in itself does nothing to prevent long-term homelessness.

It is also the case that the number of women who have left a DV relationship and access specialist homelessness services may 'fly under the radar'. This contributes to the under-reporting of service usage by this particular cohort. For example, if a woman has not accessed a domestic violence refuge at the point of separation from her violent partner there is a risk that she will not be seen as 'escaping domestic violence', and may be classified simply as 'homeless' if she subsequently requires crisis accommodation. As a result, there are many women who become homeless after having experienced domestic violence and who access specialist homelessness services, who are not taken into account in estimates of victims escaping domestic violence.

Research has documented how this problem affects women in a range of circumstances who do not fit the access criteria of some domestic violence refuges that categorise victims according to whether they are 'in immediate danger from domestic violence' (Murray, 2009, p. 10; Robinson and Searby, 2005, p. 16). Other women may be eligible but are affected by the frequent lack of available refuge accommodation. This means that women who are not able to use domestic violence refuges include both women who leave the home and stay elsewhere as described above and women who remain in their home post crisis for a period of time but are unable to sustain this housing longer term and so present at a later date as homeless. This latter group of women may then subsequently find themselves viewed as primarily 'homeless' and thus, outside the target group of some DV services which focus on women immediately escaping from their violent partner in crisis circumstances. Their difficulty in accessing services may be further compounded if women are childless or no longer have children living with them, given the concentration of domestic violence services that target women with children (Murray, 2009; Robinson and Searby, 2005). Equally, certain cohorts of women may not be appropriately housed in a particular refuge for a range of other factors including disability access requirements, mental health issues, current drug and alcohol dependency and, the number of children requiring refuge accommodation. This evidence lends support to the suggestion that steps need to be taken to ensure women are able to access DV specialist homelessness services and other specifically targeted support, irrespective of their access path.

2.7 Risk factors contributing to homelessness among domestic violence victims

Evidence suggests that problems of homelessness and insecure housing may affect women and children in various ways, both at the point of crisis and separation from the violent partner, as well as subsequently (Tually et al., 2008). While there is no 'typical' profile of a woman who becomes homeless as the result of leaving a violent relationship, there is agreement in the literature that poverty and a lack of income are major risk factors, in addition to safety considerations (Tually et al., 2008; Braaf and Barrett-Meyering 2011). A substantial number of women who leave the violent relationship and their home almost

inevitably become poorer and both their short-term and long-term housing conditions deteriorate. Further, women may struggle to access private rental accommodation or public housing where in both cases demand is far greater than available supply. Women who have independent financial resources are in the best position to reduce the impact of domestic violence on their housing situation (Chung et al., 2000); for example, by being able to afford to arrange short-term accommodation in a motel or apartment while they seek longer-term arrangements. Women who have wealthy partners but do not have access to these resources may be asset rich but unable to meet immediate housing needs (Chung et al., 2000).

There is tacit agreement amongst the emergent research that individual risk factors are not only related to the characteristics of individual women escaping DV. Rather homelessness risk factors can be strongly influenced by variations in policy and program responses to domestic violence (Hopkins and McGregor, 1991; McFerran, 1990, 2007). So, while an individual woman's situation and choices are central to the decision whether to stay or leave the home, women's options are primarily determined by the broader policy and program context (Tually et al., 2008). A similar point has been made by Bessant (2001), who considered 'risk discourses' in relation to 'youth at risk' of homelessness, showing how these are not objective categories but are dependent on changes in, for example, a policy and/or economic context of risk.

More recently research evidence has demonstrated that many of the 'risk contexts' which affect housing sustainability for women who separate from violent partners are similar regardless of whether women stay in their homes or leave. Access to effective and responsive services has been shown to be a key factor in service provision for victims of violence. An effective integrated service system puts the client at the centre and will facilitate effective assessment and referral ensuring that women access the services that can assist them to attain safety.

In addition to legal, judicial and policing elements, the literature identifies the following key measures required to address the risk of victims' homelessness:

- Integration of service response and state-wide coordination of responses to domestic violence, including developing and trialling common screening and risk assessment tools, which can contribute to a shared understanding, shared language and shared response
- Information about housing options and support to women to enhance their capacity to make decisions before and after the point of crisis
- Financial and other assistance to secure women's homes and install other security measures as needed
- Brokerage funding and/or other forms of assistance with one-off costs resulting from leaving the violent relationship

- A separation payment or a period of financial support, similar to that provided to victims of natural disasters or victims compensation, to support housing sustainability
- Assistance (advocacy and support) to maintain housing, including assistance to negotiate with financial institutions and utilities for lower or more flexible payments; no or low interest loans; and help with maintaining private rental, as well as improved access to social housing for women who do not stay
- Legislative and policy improvements to make family law settlements fairer for women leaving domestic violence
- Outreach services to assist and support women who stay home.

While 'there is no one pathway' into homelessness for the victims of domestic violence (Tually et al., 2008, p. 8) the literature indicates that it is possible to identify a number of income and housing related 'contexts of risk' in addition to specific risk factors primarily associated with gender and economic inequality (Chung et al., 2000) which contribute to homelessness:

Contexts of risk – Ineffective responses to crises

For several decades, the accepted practice by police and other services at the point of domestic violence crisis has been for the woman and children, rather than the violent partner, to leave the home (McFerran, 2007). The need for women to flee to a refuge to ensure their ongoing safety has remained the accepted orthodoxy among both specialist and generalist service providers who were not aware of, or resourced to support, other options. Information and appropriate and targeted assistance has not been available to victims to make staying in the home a viable option – particularly by generalist workers (Field and Carpenter, 2003; McFerran, 2007). Moreover, anecdotal reports from DV workers and women themselves, indicate that police can be reluctant to remove the violent offender during and post the violent crisis and magistrates have traditionally been reluctant to make orders to remove violent partners even though the option to make these types of orders has been available in most jurisdictions since the 1980s (Edwards 2004).

Contexts of risk – Reduced economic security

The experience of domestic violence contributes to poverty, financial risk and financial insecurity for women, sometimes long after the relationship has ended (Braaf and Meyering, 2011). As a result, issues relating to poverty and economic security are at the core of housing challenges for women at the time of separation, and in its aftermath. Women are more likely than men to experience substantial financial hardship after divorce due to a number of factors, including their disadvantaged position in the labour market compared to that of men, and the fact that women often retain custody of children (Beer et al., 2006; Smyth and Weston, 2000). Domestic violence puts women at an even greater disadvantage after separation, with for example, women who report experiencing severe

abuse three times as likely as women who report no abuse to receive less than a 40% share of the assets in property settlement (Sheehan and Smyth, 2000).

Violent partners have been shown to have a negative impact on victim's finances, regardless of whether women leave or remain in the home when ending the relationship (Braaf and Meyering, 2011; Branigan, 2007; Evans, 2007). Vic Health (2004) estimates that financial costs which may contribute to homelessness for both women who leave the home and those who stay include:

- Losses associated with financial abuse, including after separation (e.g. failure to pay bills or child support, withdrawing money from joint accounts without agreement, running up debts, or sabotaging sale of property)
- Legal costs (e.g. associated with family law, immigration, victim compensation, civil and criminal justice matters)
- Costs associated with property damage and property disputes
- Wide ranging and serious medical costs for women and children.

Costs such as these are likely to be coupled with the loss of the partner's financial contribution to household income. They may also be accompanied by a failure of financial institutions, landlords, utilities and others to take account of women's changed situation after separation (Braaf & Barrett Meyering 2011; Chung et al. 2000).

Women may continue to experience economic hardship related to the abuse for many years post separation (Braaf and Meyering, 2011; Chung et al., 2000; McFerran, 2010; Tually et al., 2008). This may be due to lengthy and multiple legal battles – including the expense of family court actions. Ongoing health issues, including the need for counselling for both women and children, can place a drain on finances (VicHealth 2004; Rees et al. 2011). Cycles of homelessness and abuse-related barriers to employment, can impact women's ability to save and build assets. The cost of raising children for sole mothers, particularly where perpetrators fail to pay some or any of their child support obligation, or women fear further violence if they pursue such payments, can also burden women's long-term financial outcomes. The lack of ongoing income because of these issues may directly affect a woman's capacity to continue making mortgage or rental payments or secure safer medium- and longer-term housing options.

Contexts of risk – Lack of access to affordable, appropriate and well-located housing

There is currently a severe and growing shortage of available and affordable housing in Australia (National Housing Supply Council, 2010). Stone and Reynolds (2012) suggest that housing-related disadvantage in Australia affects a broad range of households across the housing system. The gap between supply and demand has put pressure on house and rent prices, causing problems in both housing affordability and supply for low-income

households. Of significance is a decline in public housing availability, despite recent government investment in social and subsidised housing through the Social Housing Initiative, Nation Building and Jobs Plan, and the National Rental Affordability Scheme (National Housing Supply Council, 2010). This situation has led to lengthy waiting lists for access to social housing, depending on the specific geographic area and dwelling type (Burke, 2002; Champion et al., 2009).

Research indicates that alongside availability, housing affordability is a major issue for women who separate from violent partners (Chung et al., 2000; Tually et al., 2008). For women who leave the home it may be difficult to find housing that is both affordable and suitable. Women may experience on-going manifestations of domestic violence, such as financial abuse and the withholding of financial support, or the refusal to allow women to attend work or earn money, resulting in their having extremely limited access to money after separation (Braaf and Meyering, 2011). Women may face the costs of relocation and finding new accommodation, the replacement of furniture and other items in the home and, for those who work from home, the loss of workplace (Braaf and Meyering, 2011).

Clearly the issue of ongoing affordability of safe housing remains a key obstacle for some women, regardless of whether they stay or leave their own home after separating from their violent partner (Chung et al., 2000; Edwards, 2004; McFerran, 2007). Limited financial assistance is available through non-DV specific forms of assistance, such as Centrelink rent assistance for low income private renters (Australian Government: Centrelink, 2010) and up until 2nd July 2012, the Mortgage Assistance Scheme administered by Housing NSW (Housing NSW, 2008). In addition, in 2009 the NSW Government introduced the Start Safely Private Rental Subsidy Scheme. Start Safely, detailed earlier in this report can be delivered in conjunction with other Housing NSW private rental assistance products, including: Rentstart; Tenancy Guarantees; Tenancy Facilitation; and the Private Rental Brokerage Service (NSW Human Services: Community Services, 2011). Schemes such as these directly enhance the longer-term housing sustainability for a proportion of women leaving violent relationships.

Contexts of risk – Non-economic factors that influence housing stability

For those women who are able to afford to remain in the home and where safety issues are properly addressed, there are clear benefits from establishing housing security for reasons of familiarity and consistency in other areas of their lives (Chung et al., 2000). Braaf and Barrett Meyering's (2011) study of women's economic wellbeing following domestic violence found that some women who had been forced to leave their homes said that they would have liked to have had the option of staying, while women who had been able to remain reported benefits including having long-term accommodation, their own furniture and goods, retaining their social networks and keeping their children in the same schools.

For some participants who stayed in their own home though, on-going lack of safety remained a significant concern.

While many women who leave the home find secure housing, this may not occur until after multiple moves to temporary accommodation, such as with relatives, in refuges and motels (Tually et al., 2008). Transitional housing models assume that by increasing 'self-reliance and independence', (by assisting the development of living skills or facilitating access to vocational education for example) women will have an increased potential to obtain permanent housing. However this is not the case for all women, as the experience of homelessness in itself can be traumatising, making the acquisition of new skills difficult in some circumstances (Tually et al., 2008). Women who choose to leave the home may have difficulty obtaining permanent accommodation, not only because of the lack of affordability but also because of factors such as the shortage of appropriate housing, lack of a rental history, discrimination against single parent families and pets, the partner's previous damage or failure to pay rent and the increasing lack of access to social housing (Tually et al., 2008). Women who have a more tenuous attachment to the workforce – including those who are not working full time, have casual employment, are older, sole parents, self-employed or not employed – are at greater risk of insecure housing (which in turn makes finding and keeping employment very difficult) (McFerran, 2010). Further, transience for women who are forced to leave the family home can range from weeks to years (Chung et al., 2000).

2.8 Relevant DV and homelessness policy responses

The following national and NSW policy plans and agreements significantly influence homelessness and DV service provision:

1. The Commonwealth White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*, indicates support for 'Stay at Home' homelessness prevention approach (Australian Government, 2008)
2. Commonwealth and state/territory governments have recently jointly endorsed a *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*, which aims to coordinate action across jurisdictions. The National Plan supports policies which increase the number of families who maintain or secure long-term safe and sustainable housing post-violence; hold perpetrators accountable; and, ensure justice responses are effective (Council of Australian Governments, 2010).
3. The *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* (the 'NPAH') The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness contributes to the National Affordable Housing Agreement outcome, to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion. The agreement focuses on three key strategies to reduce homelessness including the prevention and early intervention aimed to stop people becoming homeless; to break the cycle of homelessness; and, improve and expand service response to homelessness.

4. The NSW Homelessness Action Plan - the 'HAP' (2009-2014). The NSW Government has committed through *NSW 2021* and the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* (NPAH) to achieving specific targets for reducing homelessness in NSW by 2014. To date, the *NSW Homelessness Action Plan* (the 'HAP') has guided the whole-of-government strategy for how the different parts of the homelessness service system contribute to reducing homelessness. The *NSW Homelessness Action Plan* (2009-2014) is currently under evaluation however the first three of these policies are still to be evaluated.
5. The Going Home Staying Home Reform Plan (FACS 2013) - Going Home Staying Home ('GSH') is a reform initiative which explicitly aims to make specialist homelessness services easier to access; as well as providing and delivering a better balance between early intervention, crisis and post-crisis support. The plan aims to ensure resources are allocated based on need – both in terms of location and client groups – rather than history, and focus on the quality of the services. The stated aims of the GSH will provide a framework for presenting an analysis of the findings of this evaluation.

The above mentioned policy documents share the following common underpinnings:

- Goals oriented towards the prevention of homelessness and early intervention to break the cycle of homelessness
- Promotion of client-centred, flexible responses that are able to be tailored to meet local needs
- Understanding that women and children leaving domestic violence are vulnerable and have complex needs
- Greater collaboration and coordination of services, especially for vulnerable clients with multiple and complex needs is required.

Over the last few years, significant effort has been made towards better integration and coordination of different elements of the homelessness service system, as part of a whole-of-government strategy to address homelessness (FACS 2013). There has also been growing recognition that 'one size' does not fit all women and that multiple, tailored responses are required. Traditionally homelessness provisions for women and children leaving domestic violence have focused on crisis intervention, emergency and mid-term (refuge) accommodation and the provision of social housing in the longer term. Whilst these remain critical there are continuing difficulties with insufficient refuge places to meet need and a lack of social housing for the number of women exiting refuges. Many women are forced to return to the offender, or begin a cycle of poverty and insecure housing, placing themselves and their children at risk of homelessness and other harms.

As described in section 1.2.3 the Start Safely rental subsidy has responded to this gap in the service system by providing the option of medium-term financial support for women and children living with DV, in order to enable them to establish sustainable private tenancies

instead of waiting for suitable social housing. In recognition of the complex needs of many of these families the HAP DV projects offer case management and brokerage assistance for both social housing and Start Safely clients, to support their transition into long term, safe accommodation.

Alongside these provisions, Australian and State/Territory Governments have recently indicated their strong support for efforts enabling victims of domestic and family violence to remain safely in their own home rather than be forced to re-locate. The NSW Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program is one such strategy. Some women have accessed this increasingly effective response whereby the perpetrator is required to leave and the woman and children remain in the family home in both the short and/or longer term where finances and safety permit (Faulkner, 2009; McFerran, 2010; Tually et al., 2008). There is evidence that for some women, staying in the home for a period of time, while not always ideal, is preferable to leaving at the point of crisis (McFerran, 2007). Staying for a period may allow women to plan their move and thus, potentially avoid some of the losses often incurred in a rushed departure at the time of crisis. While this 'Stay at Home' strategy is not without risk (Robinson and Searby, 2005) it has the potential to offer a bridge for some women to enable a planned housing transition instead of enforced homelessness; for example, for those in a situation of 'limbo' where they are unable to access public housing or Start Safely while waiting for a property settlement (Braaf and Meyering, 2011; McFerran, 2007).

Moreover, particular groups of women may benefit in different ways from staying in their home in the longer term where their immediate and on-going safety is able to be managed. For example, women with disabilities may live in dwellings that already meet their particular needs, including modifications for disability (Edwards 2004). Other groups of women may choose to remain in their home rather than experience barriers to alternative housing options such as discrimination in the rental housing market due to their age, ethnicity, current employment or single parent status. Children may also benefit from a stable living environment and continuation of local schooling. While evaluations of Stay at Home Programs are limited, the available evidence suggests that there are two overarching factors contributing to the possibility that women can leave the violent relationship and remain safely in their own home or the home of their choice:

1. A coordinated or integrated early intervention response that includes ensuring women are informed about their options before the time of crisis and separation
2. Legal, judicial, policing and home security provisions that exclude the perpetrator from the home and maximise safety.

It is worth noting however that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women may face particular cultural difficulties remaining in the family home due to complicated extended kinship relationships; their location in small communities where the perpetrator and

perpetrator's family may be residing; low income; or a desire not to engage with the criminal justice system.

2.9 Conclusion

In summary, research evidence demonstrates three findings, that:

1. domestic violence combined with a lack of available and affordable housing is a major cause of women's homelessness
2. the short- and long-term effects of violence on women and their children requires individualised, multi-sectoral responses
3. increased opportunities must be provided for victims of domestic violence to remain in housing, with appropriate support to ensure sustained housing outcomes.

However, there is limited available research evidence either nationally or internationally to demonstrate the long term effects of programs that address DV and homelessness with the unique combination of program elements, aims and response strategies such as those utilised in the NSW HAP DV projects. Overwhelmingly, the focus of innovative DV responses has been the development of the 'Stay at Home' programs where the primary focus is an integrated criminal justice response to better enable women to leave the violent relationship and remain in their own home. While these programs are only feasible for those women who can safely remain in their own home or a home of their choice, the focus on case management, support for enhanced security provisions and limited brokerage have influenced other housing initiatives such as HAP DV.

The NSW HAP DV Projects are an example of the development of DV-related homelessness and housing support (beyond refuge accommodation) where women are not able to safely stay in the family home. In common with other HAP strategies, the DV projects provide intensive support to sustain a tenancy in recognition that women who have experienced violence face significant challenges. The HAP strategy of brokerage funds and case work reflects a growing emphasis in current policy that is strongly supported by the research evidence and emerging practice, on integrated and flexible responses to homelessness (Brown et. al, 2010; CHP, 2012). The challenge is for further research and funded program evaluation to build a more detailed body of evidence of the longer-term outcomes for women and their children to remain in safe, longer term housing after separating from a violent partner.

3 Evaluation Scope and Methods

3.1 Ethics process

The evaluation is a mixed-method inquiry combining a synthesis of service monitoring data with qualitative interviews. Ethics approval was granted by the UNSW Human Research and Ethics Committee (HC12442) and data collection was subsequently conducted over four months, between September and December 2012. Project information and consent forms are included at appendix A.

3.2 Summary of methods - administrative data accessed; stakeholder and client interview processes.

The primary sources of data were:

- Formal self-evaluation reports as required by Housing NSW
- Administrative data, including client numbers and outcomes, budgets, process records, promotional materials, client case plans, service provider contracts etc
- Interviews with clients
- Interviews with auspice agency staff
- Interviews with key stakeholders including client support service providers; Community Service lead agency staff; regional homelessness committee members
- Extensive written client feedback and annual service reviews conducted by the projects internally.
- Independent project evaluations undertaken in Greater Western Sydney and Hunter HAP DV projects

All HAP project staff members were invited to participate in either a focus group or telephone interview. Participants were asked their views on the strengths of the project, the experiences of implementation, benefits to clients, and recommendations for on-going improvement of the program. The interviews were designed to clarify and extend the information provided in the self-evaluation reports. Contract managers, members of the Regional Homelessness Committees and auspice agency staff were directly recruited and provided assistance in identifying other key stakeholders. Clients were invited, via an email or phone call from HAP DV project workers, to participate in an in-person or telephone interview – dependent on client availability and safety. The project team explored client demographic characteristics, experiences of the program, their perception of benefits from the HAP DV service (both in the short and longer term) and how their support package could be improved. Appendix B contains all interview schedules used in data collection. A total of 58 in-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted.

Table 3.1 Comparative numbers of interviews undertaken in each HAP region

	Clients	Participating agencies	Other stakeholders ^a	Total
Hunter	4	7	8	19
Illawarra	7	10	6	23
Western Sydney	6	8	2	16
Total	17	25	16	58

a. Private Rental Brokerage Specialist staff, contract managers, Housing NSW staff

A table of interview participants by organisation/cohort from each of the three HAP DV projects is available at Appendix C.

A systematic review and thematic analysis of all data has been applied, including reference against the current literature. Illustrative quotes from interviews, focus groups and written evaluations are presented throughout this report. The interview data have been de-identified and all names are pseudonyms. Direct quotes are indicated by the use of *italics*.

Limitations

The following limitations need to be taken into account when considering the data:

- The evaluation relies heavily on self-reported information.
- A relatively small sample of clients (17 in total) was accessible within the available time-frame for data collection
- It was not possible to contact those who had commenced engagement but then dropped out of the project.
- Long-term outcomes are unavailable (see following section)

These challenges to data collection need to be considered however, alongside a contextual understanding of the inherent difficulties in collecting data from clients escaping domestic violence. Maintaining client safety and confidentiality are fundamental requirements of domestic violence service provision and it is therefore crucial that evaluation strategies be tailored to ensure that these elements are incorporated into the research design to minimize any potential risks to services or clients. A well-documented challenge which can affect the collection of data from DV victims is that service providers, when acting as gatekeepers, may be concerned that the process of participating in an evaluative interview may cause unwarranted anxiety or distress to their clients. Related to this, clients from each HAP project had provided regular evaluative comment through a comprehensive written/interview feedback process integrated into the project model. Moreover, two regions (GWS and Hunter) had also undertaken comprehensive independent evaluations. Hence it is feasible that staff may feel professionally obliged to protect clients from the fatigue of being 'over evaluated' or the clients themselves may choose not to opt in or

actively opt out of repeated feedback processes. It is also probable, as with all evaluations where workers are gate-keepers, that agencies may have selected clients with positive experiences. These concerns when combined may understandably affect the selection and availability of clients for interviews as well as the sample size and thus shape data collection.

While client interview numbers may have been affected by the evaluation timeframe and the specific issues previously canvassed, the potential for a biased sample as a result of these limitations is ameliorated by the fact that the evaluation participants have diverse roles and responsibilities in relation to the project and are located in separate parts of the service structure. Each participant was asked to comment on the operations of the other stakeholders and to provide their individual perspective of outcomes and issues. Further, extensive documentation of prior reviews and client feedback broadens the scope of the evidence. In the analysis of this multi-layered data there is strong consistency across most stakeholder comments and the statistical information and this underscores the rigor of the findings.

Outcomes

Short and medium-term client outcomes have been reported in the monitoring data and these form part of this evaluation. Long-term client outcomes are unavailable for the following reasons:

- Constraints of the short evaluation timeframe
- The projects being in operation for only two and a half years.
- Validated outcome measures have not been administered to clients from the commencement of service at regular intervals over time.

When considering the data, it is important not to overestimate the power of workers/projects alone to shape client outcomes in an evaluation of DV service provision. In reality, the final outcomes for women and children leaving DV are frequently and primarily determined by on-going perpetrator harassment and violence which may also necessitate lengthy and expensive interactions with the criminal justice system. Sullivan (2011) emphasises that evaluations must acknowledge that patterns of re-victimisation which critically affect client outcomes are the responsibility of perpetrators and not the clients or services.

Cost effectiveness

Whilst we have provided an analysis of program costs and qualitative descriptions of the use of resources, the absence of robust outcomes data and comparative measures means that an economic evaluation (cost-benefit analysis or cost effectiveness analysis) is not possible. Section five of this report addresses these issues in full.

4 Findings – Service Model

4.1 The effectiveness of the service model for client outcomes

Client outcomes

The HAP DV projects addressed homelessness by offering assistance to women and children who had previously been in housing that was unsafe, insecure and inadequate. Through the work of the projects, the majority of clients successfully established and maintained safe, ongoing tenancies. Although there are methodological difficulties with attribution, in that the evaluation took place over a short period of time and the data available was largely self-reported, the service model is underpinned by a robust theoretical framework and this supports attribution of client outcomes to the intervention. In addition, a diverse range of respondents provided qualitative data and this further strengthens the findings.

The data indicate that all three projects were highly successful in establishing sustainable housing options for vulnerable women and children. Interviews with clients and service providers clearly demonstrate that for many women the pressure to return to the DV perpetrator due to lack of affordable housing and/or minimal personal or practical resources to manage complex and overwhelming stresses, was significantly ameliorated by the provision of the projects' close support and timely brokerage. Thus for many families, both 'housed homelessness' (living in an unsafe home) as well as other forms of homelessness were averted.

Variations between projects

In the absence of more robust (including longer term) client outcomes data it is not possible to draw conclusions about the effects of variations in regional implementation regarding outcomes. However, it is very clear that differences between the three projects were largely a reaction to local needs and conditions and that this flexibility and the individual responsiveness of the service model were critical factors for its overall success.

In accordance with the service specifications each of the projects offered three key strategies.

- *Integration of Service Provision:* There is a suite of domestic violence programs operating across NSW and each HAP DV auspice agency is responsible for linking with and building on the existing DV local service system. However providing an integrated service necessarily also involves forging partnerships with other mainstream (non-DV) services to provide assistance with identified client needs including issues such as housing, health, mental health, drug and alcohol difficulties, education, training and employment, pregnancy and parenting support, financial counselling, child support and legal advice.
- *Coordination and Case Management:* Each auspice agency is responsible for maintaining the overall budget; coordinating partner agencies to implement collaborative case

management; joint service planning; project data collection; and administration. They coordinate cross-agency supports to clients and allocate support hours and brokerage funding based on client needs, identified in a formal case plan.

- *Brokerage*: Brokerage packages of limited funding are available to support the case plans, managed by service providers for their HAP DV clients. The service provider is responsible for expenditure of brokerage, client case management support and coordination. Brokerage enables access to goods and services that are otherwise unavailable and supports sustainable long-term housing outcomes.

As described in Table 4.1 the main implementation differences between the projects were:

1. budget allocations per client
2. designation of clients as high or low need
3. number and role of coordination groups and
4. types of direct support offered.

The relative size and complexity of the Hunter and Greater Western Sydney areas compared to Illawarra unsurprisingly influenced the implementation of the projects. Whilst the overall funding was identical for each region and there was one coordinator employed for each project, the regional demography and service system resources were quite different. This meant that local adjustments to optimise use of the funding were absolutely necessary. The different unfolding experiences of implementation as the projects progressed were drivers for continuing review and adaptation.

Table 4.1: Local implementation variations

	Western Sydney	Illawarra	Hunter
Budget allocations per client	Initial project tender application recommended: \$10K for Start Safely, \$20K for social housing. Once program started, new model: money is not allocated based on Social Housing or Start Safely status of client.	Amounts initially set by management committee: Brokerage applications approved by the project coordinator up to a maximum of \$4000 for high needs packages and \$1500 for low needs packages over 12 months.	Budget allocation per client: \$7-8K. High needs and low needs designations not used in implementation
No of coordination groups	5	2	5
Role of coordination groups	Coordination officer reviews all brokerage requests over \$100 (anything under can be approved by manager of the service)	Coordination groups concentrate on capacity building and regional training as opposed to client case planning. Brokerage and case plan approval centralised with the coordinator.	Role of coordination is to evaluate and decide on applications for brokerage and conduct case planning
Services offered	Services provided as per service specifications, <i>plus</i> supported referral: brokerage only without support worker hours	Services provided as per service specifications	Services provided as per service specifications

4.2 Critical factors for success

A powerful combination of elements

The data identify a number of key individual factors contributing to the success of the HAP DV service model. However it is also apparent that the unique *combination* of program elements available through each project, directly contributed to their overall effectiveness.

Specifically, the combination and inter-relationships of the following four elements optimised housing outcomes:

1. Access to safe and affordable housing (through Start Safely or social housing)
2. Flexible support underpinned by an individually tailored and coordinated case plan
3. The possibility of intensive assistance for up to 12 months
4. Brokerage dollars to fund further goods and services not constrained to a narrow definition of housing purposes

The reliability and possibility of intensive support over a 12 month period enabled good case planning; subsequently, the individually tailored case plan that was focussed on housing outcomes but not narrowly constrained, ensured timely and appropriate brokerage

expenditure; and all of these things were underpinned by the availability of a 'bricks and mortar' safe place from which to rebuild a life, following (and often within a continuation of) domestic violence. It is the combined presence and relationship of these elements to one another that significantly strengthened the service model.

The cornerstone of the service model - enabling sustainable accommodation for women and children leaving violence--is fundamental to the prevention of homelessness. Women experiencing DV often struggle to leave the perpetrator or may return to the perpetrator because of the difficulties involved in securing and maintaining tenancies. For many years, social housing provided by Housing NSW has been the primary response to women's homelessness after leaving DV and the availability of this option has been limited by competing demand. The introduction of the Start Safely subsidy and extension of its availability to two years offers more housing options to greater numbers of women. It is worth noting that Start Safely was hailed as a resounding success by a huge majority of evaluation participants across all regions:

[It's] the best thing ever introduced. When I say that [explain the subsidy] to clients you should see the relief on their face. Because it is hard enough to get into the housing system as it is, because it's such a long waiting list down here. Joanne (Illawarra worker)

However, for a number of women a safe place to go is insufficient on its own. Their capacity to take up and sustain these housing options requires personal support, the ongoing development of skills and confidence, an ability to tend to the immediate needs of their children and medium-term financial and material assistance. The HAP DV projects brought all of these key elements together.

As noted in the individual reports, each project shared critical elements in supporting women and enabling them to sustain their tenancies. These elements are described below.

A housing focus but not housing constrained

The project resources have been clearly anchored to housing outcomes but have not been limited to a narrow band of housing activities. It is often the case that despite the rhetoric of 'holistic' care and support, prescriptive definitions and guidelines for project implementation do not take a holistic view of human experience and need. This can work counter to project aims and undermine the achievement of desired outcomes. By adopting a narrow view of how project money can be spent, this type of approach excludes critical interventions that do not immediately appear to fit specific funding purposes or could be construed as the responsibility of another program. The HAP DV projects have avoided this common pitfall by allowing services from areas outside of the housing sector - such as education, legal, health or counselling support - to be accessed using the resources of the project. This has occurred either through the use of brokerage funding for specialist services

or by placing case management/client support hours within non-housing agencies such as mental health or community centres. This is a bold and innovative aspect of the model.

Brokerage

Access to brokerage funding was a crucial factor in establishing and maintaining a tenancy. Many of the participating agencies described HAP DV brokerage as transformative in enabling extra support and specialist services when required, including an enhanced capacity for truly integrated service delivery.

Brokerage use was flexible. Most women left their home and their relationship without any belongings and the brokerage was largely utilised to purchase essential furniture and whitegoods. This was critical, since prior to HAP DV support, women described returning to violent situations because they couldn't secure housing or if they could they were unable to furnish it and provide a safe place for their children. A number of women were in rental arrears from a previous property and the projects helped to settle this outstanding debt and advocate on behalf of the client, sometimes also paying the bond on a new property. In other instances the brokerage funding has enabled women to continue to pay their rent even when they have a competing bill or urgent expense. Overcoming the difficulties of accessing services in a timely way in more rural areas was also mentioned and the difference that brokerage can make by allowing private services to be purchased at critical points in a client's life. For example there were situations where specialist legal services and psychological assessment of children were purchased by brokerage funds.

This flexible use of the funding responded to the understanding that many women and children leave a violent relationship traumatised, with limited assets and few resources, having experienced years of financial abuse and control. Some may also have inherited debt or a bad tenancy record from the perpetrator. Overall, brokerage meant material and direct service needs could actually be met, rather than planned for or discussed with no immediate action and where harmful delays might incur escalating problems and cycles of debt.

Brokerage aligned to a case plan

A strong relationship between the case plan and brokerage expenditure supported the most effective use of the brokerage money. It was not used because women specifically sought individual payments, but because support workers identified goods and services that would help to meet their housing-related goals and needs. This close relationship with the case plan maintained a planned, considered approach to the allocation of limited financial and material support. The GWS project trialled a short period of time when they enabled women's access to brokerage without a case plan and accompanying support. This significantly improved fast and efficient allocation of financial assistance where direct case work was not needed, but also resulted in applications from women who may not have been directly affected by DV. In order to sustain a focus on the prevention of homelessness

as a result of DV, it was necessary to require a closer link between brokerage applications and goals within a coordinated case plan.

Goal-directed support with a shared DV/housing focus, that is ongoing, intensive and flexible

The capacity to provide intensive and extensive support through a coordinated case plan linked to sustainable housing goals whilst specifically accounting for the effects of domestic violence was extremely effective in assisting women to maintain their tenancies.

There are three points in this success factor. First, that goal-directed support could be stable for 12 months if required, secondly that there was the capacity to increase or decrease the intensity of support provided and thirdly, that the support was influenced by a dual knowledge-base of DV and housing needs.

The model allowed for intensive support when it was needed (sometimes daily) typically dropping back to less concentrated support over time. However, this reduction in intensity did not need to be in a seamless progression but could ebb and flow in response to crises and variables in individual situations, which may have been triggered by perpetrator actions or legal processes outside the women's control. Service providers appreciated the opportunity to have this intensive focus on women's needs over a substantial time, as well as at critical points and linked this to better outcomes for the client.

Eligibility screening and assessment placed within Housing NSW

The location of initial screening and assessment within Housing NSW has been significant for collaboration and integration. In spite of pressures on this arrangement in the Illawarra due to concerns about inadequate levels of DV training/knowledge in the Access and Demand teams, it has been important to continue this role within Housing since it then requires ongoing engagement and joint problem-solving. A short term solution to the issue would be to move responsibility for initial screening to the auspice agencies. However, a developmental approach will have longer term benefits for integrated practice and a 'no wrong door' approach and these gains are already being seen in some areas. A critical component of any strategy to enhance the awareness and practice of Housing NSW staff must be the review of existing procedures and ensuring adequate screening tools. This is an urgent need.

Sector-development: capacity-building across the service system

Initiatives to increase integration and collaboration in the homelessness and DV sectors have frequently achieved less than anticipated because organisations often do not have the resources required to connect with other services in new ways and change or extend client interventions. In contrast, the HAP DV projects provided training, coordination and leadership of multi-agency meetings, specialised professional support and the option of funding for support hours, goods and services. This critical focus on client-centred

collaboration that is properly resourced was emphasised by the evaluation participants as highly satisfying, especially in contrast to other purely information-sharing forums or inter-agency networks. The HAP DV projects were thus a positive experience for the partnership agencies involved and expanded their capacity for integration and coordination.

Also, some workers expressed the view that without the resources of the HAP DV support packages their organisation may not have been able to work effectively with a client with complex needs, or even provide a service at all. Thus, existing services have been able to increase their case loads or work more intensively with known clients through becoming registered service providers for HAP DV. This has not only provided timely, preventive intervention for vulnerable individuals who would otherwise not have received an appropriate service, but re-oriented the organisations to homelessness within the context of their core work and so expanded the 'reach' of housing support.

Sector development: inter-agency influence, education and knowledge exchange

Knowledge exchange driven by the projects across a range of organisations is a clear factor for success. The data demonstrate that non-housing workers have increased recognition of the importance of tenancy support and become more attuned to the housing needs of their clients. Similarly, services that may not have focused on domestic violence previously have gained insight into the specific needs and challenges faced by this client group. In addition, service providers have reported increased knowledge and confidence in case management practice, due to the structured support of their auspice agency. The combination of a service provider selected for their particular knowledge relevant to the client (such as an Aboriginal worker, a worker from a mental health organisation, someone with specific language skills, or a worker with drug and alcohol experience) and the auspicing agency's domestic violence knowledge, offers integration of necessary skills that increases the model's overall ability to affect positive change. This then drives inter-agency and cross-sector professional skill development. The focus on education and shared thinking within a coordinated structure has also influenced possibilities for integrated practice and future collaboration.

Local adaptation of the overall service model

All regions brought a flexible approach to implementation. Although the original HAP DV service model set out prescribed roles for all participants involved in service delivery, it has been possible to negotiate various local adaptations such as changes to the coordination groups, enhanced centralisation of case plan and brokerage approval and temporary variations to eligibility criteria. This variation has depended upon local relationships and the particularities of the service system in the region. The ability to respond flexibly to these local conditions has optimised project efficiency, good practice with clients and increased many workers' satisfaction with their participation in collaborative approaches. The coordination and governance structures of the projects have enabled direct reporting of barriers to service delivery to Housing NSW, Community Services, the service providers and

other stakeholders. A shared understanding and joint responsibility for decisions to adapt the service model have also further underpinned inter-agency learning and development.

Case management focused on client capacity-building, learning to use the service system and the creation of community belonging

Evidence demonstrates that a substantial number of women who leave a violent relationship struggle to counter the effects of having lived in a situation of on-going coercive control with the accompanying traumatic stress of chronic, intermittent violence. Women have usually been isolated by the perpetrator and may have become effectively 'de-skilled' by perpetrator tactics such as denigration and psychological abuse. Enforced isolation may also result in women not being aware of services available to them, particularly if they have been compelled to move locations a number of times by the perpetrator or have needed to move to escape the violence.

In common with other case management models, the approach in the HAP DV projects involved shared planning and decision-making with the client. This can be an important means of re-skilling and empowering women who have experienced DV. For example the Illawarra project invited women to choose their service provider from an approved list (or recommend an addition to the list) and thus prioritise the skill-set they believed their provider should have. Thus, from the start of the HAP intervention they were involved in setting goals and deciding priorities. In all regions women were given the option to plan and allocate brokerage money themselves before approval by the project and they also received intense support to gradually re-gain skills in how to effectively utilise help services, manage their finances and plan for long term independence.

The flexibility of criteria for brokerage use and the approach taken by case workers to empower their clients, enabled women and children to engage in their community through social activities and learning opportunities and thereby develop a sense of belonging to their local area and build skills for sustainable, independent living. Building these community connections further enhances the likelihood of women feeling safe and settled in their home and strengthens motivation to maintain their tenancy.

Strong management, coordination skills and practice expertise in auspice agencies

The auspice agencies were required to negotiate and manage agreements with a diverse range of NGO and private organisations. They also led coordination structures, monitored and reviewed client support packages and overall brokerage expenditure and in some instances provided a form of professional peer supervision to the service providers. These are unusual roles for a service delivery organisation and may have invited conflict over the allocation of funds or accountability procedures. However, the projects have demonstrated these activities can be effectively carried out with strong management, advanced coordination skills and expertise in direct practice.

4.3 Key challenges in this approach

The following six challenges were identified as detracting from the potential effectiveness of the HAP DV model overall:

Eligibility questions and inconsistencies

The eligibility rules for HAP DV support packages were described by service providers as sometimes too strict to enable support for all of the women who could otherwise have been assisted. This referred specifically to the exclusion of women whose direct experience of domestic violence was more than six months ago, women with personal assets, women who did not have an existing tenancy lined up and women categorised as unsuitable for social housing because of the outcomes of previous tenancies (which may have been brought about by the actions of an ex-partner). It appears that ambiguities arose and a lack of clarity in the guidelines was not always resolved consistently. These concerns pointed sometimes to uncertainty within Housing NSW regarding the correct interpretation of eligibility criteria, sometimes to obvious limitations of the service model and sometimes to different understandings or expectations of HAP DV from non-housing agencies. The analysis of this issue suggests that most of this confusion could be resolved by a more thorough understanding of the effects of domestic violence within Housing NSW and following this, consistent application of the criteria, communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Notwithstanding the above corrective measures, women with personal assets would still fall through a gap in the overall model. A woman, who shares a joint mortgage with the perpetrator, wishes to leave that home for a safer place and does not have a separate income or cash resources, must make herself (and her children) homeless. When she does this she is still not eligible for HAP DV as she has assets tied up in the property even though there may be ongoing legal difficulties and no access to those assets. She must therefore either remain homeless in crisis accommodation or elsewhere, or return to the perpetrator. This requires further investigation and consideration by the lead agencies of the overall HAP program eligibility criteria.

Housing NSW domestic violence skills, knowledge and screening tools

Related to the effective application of HAP DV eligibility criteria was the issue of Housing NSW staff knowledge, skills and access to adequate screening tools. HAP DV service providers, auspice agency staff and Housing NSW staff all raised concerns regarding the capacity of Housing NSW Access and Demand Teams to identify and screen clients for domestic violence, levels of complex need and overall suitability for HAP DV. High staff turnover, large workloads, a limited number of workers with specialist DV knowledge and a lack of appropriate screening tools appeared to hinder the effective implementation of the model. While considerable effort has been made by all parties to address this concern, it remains an issue that generalist housing workers may struggle to effectively screen and identify DV clients when they do not have the necessary tools and training. Housing NSW

front-line screening and assessment workers are critical gate-keepers for HAP DV eligibility and make an essential contribution to the success of the service model. Ongoing specialist training, supervision and adequate tools are required to ensure that this role is undertaken well.

The sharp division between high and low needs clients

The original model for the HAP DV service was designed to facilitate assessment for and delivery of two distinct types of support package – high needs (linked to social housing) and low needs (linked to the Start Safely private rental subsidy). In practice, the assumptions behind who would benefit from which package and the budget needed for each type of package have proven to be problematic. It was assumed that women who received Start Safely would have fewer or less complex needs than women eligible for priority social housing. However, many women who received Start Safely had complex or ongoing support needs and moreover, higher expenses for housing since they were ultimately subject to the private rental market. An important factor that is outside the women's or indeed the project's control is the unpredictability of the DV perpetrator. On-going harassment, violence, manipulation of the legal system and continuing problematic engagement of perpetrators with the children can significantly impact the housing support needs of HAP DV clients, whether they live in social housing or private rental accommodation.

The projects responded to this issue either by essentially disregarding the distinction between high and low need budgets and support levels, or by expanding and contracting approved packages according to need. Where less money than expected was spent on an individual client, this has come back into the projects to be re-directed to provide a service for additional clients or to assist existing clients with more extensive needs. Thus higher numbers of clients can access smaller amounts of support at the same as others can receive highly intensive intervention that is not available from any other part of the service system at that time.

The sharp division between high and low needs packages runs counter to the overall philosophy of the HAP DV service, which is to provide customised, client-centred support and this poses unnecessary challenges for practice. In many cases the link between a particular housing product and designated support need is not substantiated. In the end, flexibility in the implementation of support packages was demonstrated by all projects and this optimised outcomes and increased the number of clients assisted.

Administrative and resource management responsibilities

The service model required a single NGO to take on significant responsibilities, including financial management, service provider agreements, activity monitoring and regional leadership of the project. Although each of the auspice agencies demonstrated their competence in taking on these responsibilities, some participants expressed disquiet about

the expectations inherent in the auspice role and the relationships between the auspice agency and other organisations. There are two issues here: the first is the burden of book-keeping and bureaucratic requirements to both the auspice agency and the service providers; the second is the relationship between the auspice agency and other local organisations which, unlike other collaborative endeavours, positions the auspice agency in a position of power to release funds and control practice.

Across all three regions, these concerns have been managed to varying degrees through different forms of transparency and collaborative decision-making. Permission from the Lead Agency to tailor the model to local circumstances has enabled effective adaptations to be put in place. In the Illawarra for example concerns about overly bureaucratic requirements and accountability measures were raised in regular stakeholder reviews. Changes to project procedures and reporting systems were then made. This included a significant change in the role of the coordination groups that has worked to the benefit of clients. In the Hunter the auspice agency began to provide mentoring to the sector in financial management and record-keeping procedures, as demand for this became apparent. Other concerns in the Hunter regarding the auspice agency's initial control of eligibility screening and the question of quality control through monitoring case work and client outcomes have not yet been resolved. In GWS a lack of guidance for the initial allocation of brokerage funding led to significant administrative challenges in managing and carrying forward unspent funds. The subsequent adjustment to the packages was effective, and this speaks to productive relationships and competence in implementing the service model. However, future projects with similar models would benefit from a more comprehensive planning process around likely expenditures.

These examples indicate there is merit in further investigation of ways to simplify administrative and financial processes and to ensure continuing transparency and collaborative decision-making structures.

Lack of acknowledgement of children

The service monitoring requirements explicitly exclude numbers of children being assisted, which may demonstrate a lack of relevance or priority of children's needs for the HAP DV homelessness prevention strategy. Nevertheless, the auspice agencies collected these numbers and in the 2011/12 financial year at least 660 children were supported across the three projects. It can reasonably be assumed that a significant proportion of the service providers' time will be spent on considering these children and supporting women to respond effectively to their needs. The number of children in a family is also likely to directly affect brokerage expenditure. Children's stability, education, health and wellbeing are often major factors in a woman's capacity to sustain her separation from the perpetrator. These issues are also highly significant in her willingness to seek and engage well with support services and strongly influential for her own mental health and personal capacity. The flexible, tailored use of case management hours and brokerage resources in fact appears to

have responded well to children's needs and this is a particular strength of the model. The challenge however, is to retain this flexibility and to recognise the work involved for the auspice agency and service providers so that it continues to be adequately reflected in any future budgets and performance measures.

Lack of affordable housing

There were challenges in all three regions in finding and securing housing for HAP DV clients. A lack of available and appropriate social housing is an ongoing, significant barrier to securing tenancies for high needs clients. The scarcity of affordable housing in the private rental market offers little alternative, exacerbating the demand on social housing. The projects also reported that the private rental market discriminates against single mothers or women escaping DV who are perceived to be unreliable or 'risky' tenants. The difficulty in finding affordable housing was discussed most predominantly in the Hunter, followed by GWS and then Illawarra.

Workers in the Hunter region reported that the priority waiting list for social housing tenants seeking a three-bedroom home was currently five to ten years. The auspice agency explained that the ten properties they were allocated for the entire Hunter region over the duration of their three-year contract were allocated to clients within the first 12 months of the project. In addition, the private rental market in the Hunter is highly competitive. It was stated that open inspections for private rentals were often attended by upwards of 50 applicants and clients often had difficulty attending due to a lack of available transport and child care. These homes were not only too expensive and less desirable because of their lack of access to public transport, but also the competition for tenancies pushed HAP DV clients out of contention.

The above issues were also identified in GWS along with an extra challenge of Mission Australia housing initially not being ready for women to access. In addition, problems of engaging real estate agents who hold a prejudice against survivors of domestic violence were emphasised. In light of this range of concerns the coordinator from the auspice agency developed relationships with community housing providers and Housing NSW, which resulted in more properties becoming available. The project also developed a 'Real Estate Strategy' which entailed the appointment of an experienced tenancy worker for the specific purpose of developing relationships and forming partnerships with agents to engage, inform and educate them. The ultimate goal was to create a referral list of real estate agents who could support clients to find rental accommodation and this strategy is in the early stages of implementation.

In the Illawarra social housing is located in pockets, dispersed around the region and this is difficult for women and children who can be forced to relocate away from their family and other support networks, adding to social isolation and distress. In the private rental arena the workers indicated it is extremely hard to find accommodation that is both affordable

and suitable for women with children who live on a very low income. They concurred with other projects that prejudice against single mothers, domestic violence survivors and unemployed people is another major barrier to securing private rental housing.

In line with social housing approvals and Start Safely criteria, the HAP DV service model requires that client support packages only commence once a tenancy has been secured. The evaluation team has been made aware that there may be occasional exceptions where a Start Safely approval has occurred prior to a tenancy being established and the Start Safely officers have offered some pre-tenancy support, but this is understood to be ad hoc and not usual practice. In all three regions there is a high need for services to assist clients to secure a tenancy. This would either be a separate service prior to HAP DV project involvement or alternatively the HAP DV support package could be allowed to commence earlier - when a woman is first seeking accommodation. Part of the role would be offering help to attend open inspections, support to be removed from 'bad tenant' lists, guidance on how to complete rental assistance and tenancy applications.

It should also be noted that if clients do manage to obtain a private rental property, sustainability is not guaranteed. Some tenancies have ended prematurely due to 'the property being sold, the lease not being renewed or the rent being increased after the subsidy has ended, making the tenancy no longer affordable' (Hunter Portal Report December 2011).

4.4 Considerations for specific target groups

Members of the Regional Homelessness Committees and specific HAP DV coordinating groups included representatives from a range of services with established experience of working with diverse client groups including for example Aboriginal organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse organisations, women's organisations and mental health organisations. This structure enhanced promotion of the project to specific populations within the target group of women and children who are escaping domestic violence and this offered the potential for supported referral pathways. In addition, the service model was implemented in a manner that enabled unique tailoring of each response to the individual client and this increased the appropriateness of the direct support provided to diverse clients.

Indigenous populations

Specifically with respect to Indigenous Australians, the data demonstrate that the projects successfully reached a proportion of these communities. All of the regions reported working with Aboriginal organisations to engage clients and this has been the main access strategy. Client numbers from the 2011-12 year in each project approximated the available Indigenous homeless figures from the 2006 census (table 4.2). However, whilst women escaping DV clearly represent only a portion of the overall Indigenous homeless numbers,

Indigenous homelessness is generally considered to be underestimated. There may therefore be a greater gap than at first appears between the HAP DV Indigenous client numbers and the Indigenous homeless population. Furthermore, extensive engagement in the evaluation by the Aboriginal service sector did not occur and the absence of more detailed qualitative data invites some caution in the interpretation of these figures.

Table 4.2: Indigenous HAP DV clients and Indigenous homelessness

	Illawarra	Greater Sydney	Western Hunter
Percentage of HAP DV clients who identified as Indigenous 2011-12²	9.9%	5.25%	9.4%
Percentage of homeless people in the region who identified as Indigenous (2006)	9.6% ³	5.2% ⁴	9.7% ⁵

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) believes Aboriginal homelessness is underestimated and that to more accurately reflect real numbers, 'differences in understanding of the concepts of home and homelessness' must be taken into account (ABS 2011b). Further, patterns of help-seeking and service usage by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who experience domestic violence are known to be different from other populations and this would suggest different service models are required. The Regional Homelessness Action Plan (RHAP) for the Illawarra recognises that '*social housing administrative processes can negatively and unnecessarily impact on the success of Indigenous tenancies*' (NSW Government 2010 p23) and this is echoed in the GWS plan. This supports the notion that Aboriginal women may require different screening and assessment processes and whilst the sustained, flexible and intensive case management approach of the service model has potential to offer a suitable response, greater consideration of special needs continues to be necessary. Difficulties with racial discrimination in the private rental market, lack of community awareness of the HAP DV service and insufficient Aboriginal workers were all mentioned as barriers to Aboriginal access to the projects.

Culturally and linguistically diverse populations

The project data monitoring portal requires very minimal information to be collected on migrant or non-English speaking cultural groups. The only relevant demographic category

² Final quarter portal reports

³ NSW Government 2010, Illawarra Regional Homelessness Action Plan (RHAP)

⁴ Cohen 2012:34

⁵ Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2009:70

the projects are asked to report on is numbers of clients 'born overseas - non-English speaking' without further explanation. Therefore the number of culturally and linguistically diverse clients is obscured, since for example a woman may be born in Australia but identify strongly with a non-English language, culture, religion and/or ethnicity. She may face inter-generational cultural issues or be experiencing cultural abuse from her violent ex-partner and these situations would not be reflected.

Notwithstanding these concerns the data for 2011/12 indicate that women born overseas (non-English speaking) make up 5% (GWS) 6% (Illawarra) and 5% (Hunter) of total clients. It is known that GWS has a culturally diverse demographic profile and Western Sydney in particular has *a significant number of people from ... culturally and linguistically diverse communities who are homeless* (GWS RHAP: 37) which suggests the figures might be lower than expected for that region. The GWS process evaluation (Cohen 2012: 75) finds that migrant women require more support due to barriers to help-seeking and therefore hours of case work and brokerage expenditure per client may be more intensive, limiting the overall numbers in comparison to women with less complex needs.

Representation of multicultural workers on the coordination groups and regional homelessness committees, as well as inter-agency collaboration and referral are the major access strategies that have been implemented to assist these populations. The three projects' particular use of brokerage funding also indicates a response to the specific needs of non-English speaking clients (such as through language classes or support to attend cultural activities).

4.5 The impact of the projects on service system change

Gaps in the system

The HAP DV projects filled important gaps in the service system in order to maintain tenancies or rapidly re-house women and children affected by DV. As indicated in the literature review there are currently limited options for these families to transition to independent, safe and sustainable housing either from the home with the perpetrator, from crisis accommodation, or from other homelessness situations. Through the provision of flexible support with brokerage and an emphasis on inter-agency shared planning and review, HAP DV was able to link women to suitable housing and successfully establish the foundations of stable, long-term tenancies. This is a specialised housing support service and whilst the SHLV program provides some common elements of support (refer to section 1) the particular focus and intensity of assistance within HAP DV is currently not available in any other part of the service system.

Workforce development and increased capacity

It is acknowledged that community and housing services may already work in collaboration. However, the HAP DV projects enabled stronger and in some cases new professional

relationships to emerge. One element of these strengthened relationships has been an enhanced workforce capacity within the local service system. Some service provider organisations felt that HAP DV increased their workers' professional skills and confidence for this specific domestic violence and homelessness goal-directed work. In addition, some services expanded their overall ability to take on DV and homelessness clients through the support package funding, which consolidated their staff group and increased their capacity to provide more intensive support for situations of complex need. This effectively extended the 'reach' of overall homelessness prevention strategies across a wider section of the whole service system, both within and beyond housing support programs.

Through these enhanced relationships and effects on the workforce, there has been a meaningful exchange of professional knowledge. This means there has been increased awareness by non-housing programs of the significance of stable housing to other aspects of health and wellbeing and a need therefore to focus collaboratively on supporting tenancies and at the same time, increased awareness by some in the housing sector of the longer term, complex impacts of domestic violence. This is a positive exchange that supports integration.

Minimising waiting lists and breaks in service provision

The domestic violence NGO sector in general is often a low paid, highly stressful work environment relying on the personal commitment of workers who have specifically chosen this field of practice (perhaps not unlike specialist homelessness services overall). It is therefore characterized by high staff turnover and service gaps due to waiting lists. However, the HAP DV service model ameliorates this effect by sharing the work across a range of service providers from different organisations, providing a central coordinating role and structurally supporting collaborative practice. In all projects the coordinator positions have fortunately been stable for the majority of the pilot time-frame. This has been significant for the ability of the projects to monitor and support ongoing case management and to underpin individual support if the direct service provider has changed or left and created a break in service. A few clients struggled when their service provider left or was away, but the coordinators have been able to move closer or step back according to this need.

A high proportion of respondents to the evaluation (including clients, the coordinating agency and service providers) maintained that the capacity for the project to provide intensive, consistent, long term (12 month) support has been a major factor in achieving sustainable housing outcomes. In addition to this intensity and consistency of client support, identified gaps in mainstream services could be met by using brokerage to purchase timely private assistance, such as mental health assessments, counselling and children's educational support. This also meant that specific expertise tailored to the individual client could be accessed, rather than having to rely on only one provider. Thus, arguably 'best

practice staffing' is achieved through diverse providers, consistent coordination and the capacity to buy-in essential expertise.

Early intervention

A shift to 'early intervention' is used as an indicator of success for service systems aiming to address homelessness and this may be sought as a measure of the HAP DV project outcomes. In the context of domestic violence however this can cause some difficulties. A common conceptual framework behind a range of domestic and family violence interventions is an application of the trans-theoretical or 'stages of change' model (Prochaska et al., 1991). Current interpretations of this model emphasise a cyclical rather than linear process of behaviour change whereby individuals gradually develop self-efficacy and decision-making capacity to implement preferred life choices through a repeating spiral of interventions. In addition the domestic violence research literature emphasises the variability of a woman's capacity to leave a violent relationship as a result of multiple emotional, practical and physical risk factors that are in constant change, being influenced largely by the perpetrator. The perpetrator is an external factor outside of her control but heavily influencing her options and outcomes. This makes it extremely difficult for women to decide to leave, plan the practicalities and carry this out successfully in a seamless process. In this context, 'early intervention' is not a one-off intervention that defines the nature of longer term outcomes. Rather it is a series of repeated opportunities. Commencing this series of supported opportunities early is indeed an important goal in preventing homelessness from domestic violence. However, service systems must be prepared to *repeat* their engagement and targeted activities in order to achieve the desired outcomes. This is especially true for children who are adversely affected by their experiences of domestic violence. The small number of HAP DV clients who have commenced support packages and then returned to the perpetrator must be considered in this context. A longer-term outcome evaluation is required to investigate the effects of the project on homelessness for these women.

Rural and remote populations

This program is not immune to the perennial problem of lack of services in more rural or remote areas. It has been important for auspice agencies to have the ability to purchase services by the hour from small, local providers and thus create a tailored package for women in isolated locations (such as the client who could engage with a local private psychologist rather than have to travel to a regional centre to meet with a service provider). Being able to use brokerage money for personal transport, to pay removalists, or other access strategies has also been helpful. The service model cannot solve all access difficulties for more isolated clients but its flexibility has sometimes been able to ensure more timely and appropriate support.

5 Findings – Cost Issues

5.1 Introduction

This section describes a broad review of costs and outputs as presented in project self-evaluation information. We have focused on three aspects of this data:

- Approximate balance of auspice agency operating costs as against total cost of direct client support packages.
- Average amount spent on direct support packages per client
- Types and amount of brokerage spending

It should be noted that the findings presented here are estimates only, to be taken as indicators for further investigation. This information cannot be used as a reliable measure of cost benefit or cost effectiveness, which would require a closer audit of precise costs, outputs, off-sets and outcomes over a longer period of operation.

As more fully described in the literature review, there are significant issues to be considered in any cost analysis of community service projects, including the challenges of accounting for multiple, often hidden variables and indirect costs and a lack of agreement on how to define costs (Baldry et al., 2012; Ko Ling Chan and Cho, 2010). In addition, domestic violence services may encounter a range of particular concerns associated with the unpredictability of service activity over long periods of time due to varying injury/lethality risks and the need to repeatedly respond to the effects of ongoing cycles of chronic abuse (including specifically financial abuse) even after separation and relocation. In integrated programs there are also particular difficulties with measuring cost efficiency when so many factors are outside the control of the project or its workers.

Using the NSW Community Services reference paper for deriving indicative unit costs (Human Services NSW, 2010) we have examined the possibility of conducting activity based costing from a top-down approach. However, this method runs into some difficulties with the available data and cannot be adequately implemented. The limitations of this specific evaluation significantly constrain the possibilities for effective cost analysis. These limitations include the short time frame for collection and analysis of data, inconsistencies across various data reports including variable data definitions and differences in project record-keeping.

In the light of these constraints and in order to provide some useful, broad information on costings, the evaluation team has assumed that taken together, the self evaluation reports completed by the three projects in the first half of 2012; the June 2012 quarter portal reports; and the completed 2011-12 cost analysis template provide the most accurate up-to-date data. Although these are based on slightly different reporting periods, when taken together and as retrospective reports they can account for adjustments to final client

numbers following the end of reporting periods, translations from calendar to financial year and any late expenses that may have occurred. The financial year 2011-12 is selected as a sample year that best represents project implementation under full operational conditions. This followed the establishment period and a reasonable time for initial adjustments and problem-solving in the light of experience. Also, this 12 month period provided the most complete data sets and so offers more representative findings.

The following information is provided based on these assumptions and limitations.

5.2 Summary of cost analysis

The service specifications for each of the three projects indicate a fixed-term funding amount of \$640,000 per annum over three years. Therefore the accumulative, total planned budget for each project was almost two million dollars (\$1,920,000). This annual funding was provided to cover operating costs and staff salary for the auspice agency, plus case management and brokerage costs for a target of 20 low need and 10 high need packages of direct client support.

There does not appear to have been a formal agreement as to how the client support packages should be costed and therefore each project devised their own targets. A general guide of \$10,000 for low needs and either \$20,000 or \$30,000 for high needs packages was discussed in Hunter and GWS and these became the starting points.

GWS initially used the \$10,000 and \$30,000 guide with no specific allocation within this of separate amounts for case management hours as opposed to brokerage funding. However, they formed the opinion that the distinction in funding allocation between levels of need was not useful and ultimately abandoned it to respond to client need as assessed. Similarly, Hunter did not apply low and high need categories and after a short time settled on a general guide of \$10,000 in total per client.

In the Illawarra the management committee devised a formula for allocation of case management hours and accompanying brokerage funding (table 5.1). In doing this they approximated the \$10,000/\$20,000 split. They also took Community Services' suggested flat rate of \$70 per hour for case work and estimated a maximum number of hours per client over a 12 month period. This left brokerage funding amounts of \$1500 for low needs and \$4000 for high needs. The project maintained the distinction between social housing (high needs) and Start Safely (low needs) clients, but also adopted some flexibility where service providers applied for additional amounts based on changes to the case plan.

Using the initial guide for high and low need allocations of \$10,000 and \$20,000, the requirement to deliver 30 packages costing around \$400,000 per year means we can broadly estimate the *expected* expenditure for 12 months, full implementation of each

project was approximately one third auspice agency operating costs and at least two thirds direct client support packages.

Table 5.1: Illawarra budgeted expenditure, client service packages

Package type	Amount per package	Breakdown of case management and brokerage money per package	Total annual amount
Low need	\$9,980	Case management: \$8, 480 Brokerage: \$1, 500	x 20 packages = \$199, 600
High need	\$23,800	Case management: \$19, 800 Brokerage: \$4, 000	X 10 packages = \$238, 000
All 30 high and low need packages combined: \$437, 600			

The actual annual breakdown of expenditure as reported by the auspice agencies in the self evaluation reports and the 2011-12 cost analysis templates is represented in table 5.2. A summary table of income and costs for each project is at Table 5.3 and a fuller table is available at Appendix D.

All projects reported some underspend during the first two financial years of operation and this related to local conditions for establishment of services and in some cases a slow start to referrals, which required increased promotion and negotiation with Housing NSW offices. However, both Illawarra and GWS resolved their under-spend by the end of the pilot time-frame and were over-delivering in terms of client numbers. For Hunter, a lack of local service providers to allocate cases to, meant they eventually employed two case workers to carry out HAP DV case work. But this had already delayed expenditure. In addition a lack of affordable housing in the region excluded women from accessing HAP DV support packages since they did not have a tenancy to be supported and therefore did not meet the eligibility criteria. Hunter therefore continued to carry an underspend. However the project was also over-delivering in terms of client numbers by the end of 2011/12.

This evaluation did not have access to detailed annual, audited finance reports. However, table 5.2 and 5.3 show the following client package expenditure for 2011/12:

- Illawarra reported an approximate 25:75% ratio of operating costs to direct client support packages. This is likely to be an underestimate of direct client costs since the auspice agency operating costs include the salary of the project coordinator who engaged directly with clients for initial intake and for collection of client feedback after one month and at exit from the service, as well as overseeing case plan reviews. After a significant period of low client numbers in the first 18 months of operation due to issues with Housing NSW screening and assessment limitations, the Illawarra achieved its targets. By the end of 2011-12 the project had in fact exceeded expectations of support package numbers and overall direct client expenditure.

- Hunter reported a 36:64% ratio of operating costs to direct client service packages in the 2011-12 financial year. This is likely to be an even more significant underestimate of direct client costs than in the Illawarra, since the auspice agency staff and operating costs include the salary of a 'project officer' and 'outreach case worker' employed by the project who engaged directly with clients. If an estimation of costs for a portion of these salaries is included in direct client work the ratio would more accurately approach at least a 70:30 split⁶. The information provided above, along with reported client numbers, suggests the project required a 6-month establishment phase before full client operations appear to be under way (suggesting time and expenditure on setting up systems, working relationships and equipment) and this is supported by qualitative data discussed in other sections of this report. In addition client numbers have been consistently low and this has led to an overall under-spend, discussed below.
- Greater Western Sydney reported a 56:44% ratio of direct client support packages to operating costs in the 2011-12 financial year. This is also likely to be an underestimate of direct one to one client support overall, since the auspice agency staff costs include the salary of a full time coordination officer who engaged directly with clients and service providers for seeking feedback and overseeing case plans/brokerage expenditure in addition to managing the overall coordinating group structure. If part of this coordinator salary is included in direct client support, the ratio is likely to more accurately approach a 65:35 split.⁷

In the sample year 2011-12 all three projects therefore met expectations of the ratio of operating costs to client support package costs and in the light of the reported client numbers, they also exceeded expected outputs for this expenditure.

⁶ The precise FTE and salaries spent on direct client work by auspice agency staff is unknown. However a conservative estimate of \$50,000 to cover some of the reported project officer and outreach case worker time would support this 70:30 ratio.

⁷ Where an estimate of \$60,000 is calculated, to account for the greater part of this cost

Table 5.2: Actual annual funding and expenditure, 2009-12

Illawarra			GWS			Hunter		
2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
(6months only)			(6months only)			(6months only)		
Funding:	Funding:	Funding:	Funding:	Funding:	Core funding:	Funding:	Funding:	Funding:
\$320,000	\$657,029	\$671,482	\$79,139	\$656,000	\$671,482	\$320,000	\$656,400	\$671,482
	Plus carry fwd:	Plus carry fwd:			'Other': \$188, 283	Plus interest: \$	Plus interest:	Plus interest:
Total	\$139,144	\$32,311	Total actual	Total actual	Total funding:	2,463.84	\$22,790	\$28,644
expenditure:	Total income:	Total income:	expenditure:	expenditure:	\$859,765	Total funding:	Total funding:	Total income:
\$180,856	\$796,173	\$703,793	\$77,909	\$424,673		\$322,463.84	\$679,190	\$700,126
					Total actual			
Carry fwd to	Total	Total			expenditure:	Total actual	Total actual	Total actual
next yr:	expenditure:	expenditure:			\$859,149	expenditure:	expenditure:	expenditure:
\$139,144	\$763,861	\$703,793				Not available	\$433,739.43	\$570,187
	Carry fwd to	No carry fwd.						
	next yr: \$32,312							
Auspice agency operating costs (including core staff)								
Not available	Not available	Staff costs:	Not available	Not available	Staff costs ^a :	Not available	\$166, 033.26 ^b	Staff costs:
		\$66,754			\$267,672			\$124, 178
		Operating costs:			Other operating			Other operating
		\$106,233			costs: \$110,717			costs: \$82,121
		Total: \$172,987			Total: \$378,389			Total: \$206,299
Break down of client support package expenditure								
Case mgnt:	Case mgnt:	Combined	Services: \$1810	Services: \$78,	Case mgnt/client	Not available	Services	Case mgnt hrs:
\$31,744.50	\$251,450.66	figure available	Goods: \$4785	341	support: \$270,		(including case	\$69,245
Goods and	Goods and	only: \$530,806	Crisis payments:	Goods: \$50, 106	875		mgnt):	Goods:
services:	services:		\$1021	Crisis payments:	Services: \$58,798		\$65,695.21	\$195,401
\$6,661.50	\$98,672.60	Total: \$530,806		\$40, 878	Goods: \$94,269		Goods:	Services:
Total: \$38,406	Total		Total: \$7,616	Total \$169, 325	Payments: \$48,		\$196,848.05	\$69,982
	\$350,123.26				571		Crisis payments:	Payments:
					Other: \$8,246		\$5162.92	\$29,261
					Total: \$480,759		Total	Total: \$363,889
							\$267,706.18	

Percentages of annual expenditure on client support packages and project operating costs respectively (Figures rounded down or up to the nearest whole number).								
Illawarra			GWS		Hunter			
Client package costs 21.25%	Client package costs 45.84%	Client package costs 75%	Not available	There is insufficient information to analyse the break-down of direct client support to auspice agency costs.	Client package costs: 56%	Not available	Client package costs: 62%	Client package costs: 64%
		Auspice agency costs: 25%			Auspice agency costs: 44%		Auspice agency costs: 38%	Auspice agency costs: 36%
		This is does not take into account the project coordinator's direct client work and is therefore likely to be an under-estimate of client package costs.						When adjusted to include direct client work conducted by the project coordinator and outreach worker the ration is more reliably a 70%:30% split.

- a. Not including case management/client support staff
- b. Due to incomplete data in the self evaluation this figure has been arrived at by simply subtracting the reported brokerage costs from the total expenditure to reach this figure

Table 5.3 : Income and expenditure summary, 2011-12

		Illawarra		GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Project income - Inputs							
Income	HAP funding	671,482	95	671,482	78	671,482	96
Income	Other Government funding		0		0		0
Income	In-kind		0		0		0
Income	Third party donations		0		0		0
Income	Other (predominantly carry forward)	32,311	5	188,283	22	28,644	4
Total Project income		703,793	100	859,765	100	700,126	100
Expenditure							
Total Staff costs		66,754	10	267,672	31	124,178	22
Total Operating costs		106,233	15	110,717	13	82,121	14
Total Goods		530,806*	75	94,269	11	195,400	35
Total Services		0	0	329,673**	38	139,227**	24
Total Payments		0	0	48,571	6	27,919	5
Total Other		0	0	8,246	1	1,341	0
Total client support plus brokerage costs		530,806	75	\$480,759	56	363,888	64
Total Expenditure		703,793	100	859,148	100	570,186	100

* There is insufficient data to separate case management from brokerage expenditure. This is therefore a combined figure of dollars spent on client support hours plus brokerage goods and services.

** This figure includes client support hours plus brokerage money spent on one off services

5.3 Cost effectiveness of the approaches

Conclusions about cost effectiveness cannot be drawn in the absence of robust and long term outcomes data. However, as discussed here and in the three individual project reports, the information that is available on client outcomes in sustaining tenancies and other areas indicates value for money in each of the projects.

Differences in expenditure regarding the ratio of operational to client costs and average amounts spent per client are attributable to local characteristics, including the strength of the service network, local implementation decisions, demographics and affordable housing options. Average spend per client cannot be used as an indicator of outcomes or the quality of services provided and should be read with caution. The information on expenditure therefore reflects differences between the regions rather than comparative cost effectiveness.

Clients assisted

Hunter: A total of 117 clients were supported during the 2011/12 financial year. The Hunter project assisted 53 new clients and continued to support 64 from the previous year. As at June 30 2012, the total number of clients assisted to date was 120, plus 236 children

Illawarra: A total of 81 clients were supported during the 2011/12 financial year, plus 160 children. WWR assisted 43 new clients and continued to support 38 from the previous year.

GWS: A total of 218 clients were supported during the 2011/12 financial year (including the one-off 'supported referral' category unique to this project). WWS assisted 156 new clients and continued to support 62 from the previous year. As at June 30, the total number of clients assisted to date was 324, plus 422 children.

Summary information on clients and average expenditure is presented in Table 5.4. This information should be read with the following contextual factors and limitations in mind:

- The Hunter project reported that a lack of specialist services (especially in smaller towns) limited the number of referrals they received and resulted in lower expenditure in some areas.
- The Hunter project also discovered very early in the life of the project that the financial allocations for high and low need packages were inappropriate. Aligning complexity of need to social housing or private rental did not in fact match the reality of client circumstances and therefore the support packages were tailored individually and amounts were expended according to client need. Therefore analysis of the split between high and low need packages became irrelevant.

- In Illawarra and Greater Western Sydney, clients did receive high and low needs packages; however there is insufficient data to separate high and low need actual expenditure.
- The Greater Western Sydney project was constituted by a larger number of services and groups than the other projects. It was not possible to ascertain the impact of the size of the project on operational costs or client numbers, but it is notable that the project supported significantly more clients than the other two projects.
- The Greater Western Sydney project introduced a brokerage-only component named 'supported referral' that was not implemented in the other two regions. As a consequence of this innovation, more women received smaller amounts of brokerage funding without intensive support and this had an impact on average expenditure per client.
- Illawarra focused a large proportion of its budget on intensive client support, keeping closely to agreed support package distinctions.

Table 5.4: Indicative average client expenditure, 2011-12

	Illawarra		GWS		Hunter	
Clients n=	81		218		117	
	CSP ^a	WP ^b	CSP ^a	WP ^b	CSP ^a	WP ^b
Total	530,806	703,793	480,759	859,149	363,889	570,187
Average per client	6,553	8,688	2,205	3,941	3,110	4,873 ⁸

a. Client support package

b. Whole project

Housing outcomes

Sustainable housing outcomes were achieved in each of the projects. For the selected snapshot year of 2011/12 the Illawarra and GWS demonstrated they had either successfully housed or maintained the existing 'at risk' tenancies of 100% of their clients. A small number of these tenancies in the Illawarra (6) were ultimately relinquished where clients decided to seek other living arrangements. Notwithstanding these few clients, the figures

⁸ The Hunter project has reported an average overall spend of \$6,000 per client taking account of all expenditure and activity to June 2012. However there is no equivalent data to indicate average per client spend for all regions for the same time period. The snapshot year 2011-12 has been selected for reasons explained in 5.1.

indicate strong outcomes in terms of homelessness prevention. This included enhancing the home environments and life circumstances of a large number of children.

The Hunter project also established sustainable tenancies for many clients, but faced greater difficulties with a lack of affordable housing in the region. This was by far the most dominant concern overall for the Regional Housing Committee. Case management and brokerage significantly assisted in stabilising the lives of HAP DV clients in terms of health and wellbeing but for a proportion, support did not include the establishment of secure long term housing and as such these were potentially fragile gains. This problem is well beyond the project's sphere of influence and highlights ongoing concerns of the inability of housing products and support to prevent homelessness without the concrete provision of safe and sustainable accommodation. The Hunter experience suggests they may need to remain engaged with their clients for a much longer period than the 12 month timeframe, in order to provide continuing support while awaiting suitable housing options.

As already mentioned, each of the three projects had different referral rates, client populations, regional service systems, available housing stock and locally accessible professional resources. They implemented a slightly different version of the service model in response to these particular circumstances in order to ensure responsive, flexible and client-centred support. This innovation generated different costs and average per-client expenditure, as indicated in table 1.4. The projects did not (and could not) have control over many of these local variables and it is therefore ill-advised to draw conclusions of comparative cost-effectiveness without a long term outcomes study that accounts for regional variations across the whole service system.

5.4 Important findings re cost differentials for different client groups

The most significant finding around cost differentials for different clients is that the service model appeared to be based on an assumption that clients who receive the Start Safely subsidy have fewer and less complex needs than those in social housing. However, this assumption was not confirmed by implementation. Each of the projects found that the complexity of needs did not have an indexed relationship to housing status and that the needs of Start Safely clients were often complex and sustained, demanding more extensive support than some social housing clients.

5.5 Cost benchmarking

There is very limited information on cost analysis in the domestic violence, homelessness or case management formal literature that helps to inform a reliable assessment of 'value for money' in relation to the HAP DV projects. Relevant benchmarks are not available since there are significant variables between models of service delivery, even within specifically DV housing support programs. For example Coy and Kelly's (2011) financial analysis of per-client expenditure in the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Scheme (IDVA) in

London, found an average cost per client of 501 British pounds (approximately \$771). However, these programs offered 'support' which did not appear to include the kind of comprehensive case management or brokerage funding provided by the HAP DV projects.

Closer to home, the New South Wales Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program does provide case management and brokerage services. This support is specifically to enable women and children who experience domestic violence to safely stay in their own home, focusing on security issues and a policing/justice response to DV. There are currently no published cost analyses of SHLV projects to draw upon, however a crude calculation of fixed annual project funding divided by the minimum annual target for client numbers (not actual numbers of clients supported) indicates an annual *budgeted* cost of a maximum \$5,000 per client, including all case work hours, brokerage and operational costs⁹.

An evaluation of the *Brighter Futures* child abuse prevention program in NSW has estimated that for families managed by a non-government provider (including case management and brokerage) there is an average total cost to the program of \$22,785 per family and for a limited support period of 6 to 12 months, an average cost per family of \$10,991 (Hilferty et al p172).

An AHURI report on the cost-effectiveness of homelessness services (Flatau et al 2008 p9) found the total costs per client across a range of housing support programs varied from \$1,912 (Re-entry Link - support for people exiting prison, without accommodation) to \$3,483 (Supported Housing Assistance Program, to sustain existing social housing tenancies). This was set against a cost of \$25,923 for medium/long-term SAAP clients, one example being women staying in refuges. Offset costs were then calculated to give a measure of value/cost-effectiveness, finding that significant net savings occurred.

The difficulty here is that whilst these costings are relevant in that the programs variously address the intersections of homelessness, domestic violence and child protection, there can be no meaningful comparison between the different types of services and cost calculations in relation to client outcomes, complexity of need, length of support and offset costs. The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (SCRGSP 2012) also notes that lower costs per unit may in some cases indicate efficiency but can also indicate lower quality of service provision, thus undermining the project's aims. A far more comprehensive and longitudinal outcomes study including detailed economic analysis would be required in order to provide reliable findings.

However, when broadly compared to the costings of the support services described above, it can be said that the HAP DV projects are positioned low to mid-range in terms of

⁹ SHLV figures indicate \$150,000 total annual budget per project and a *minimum* expectation of 30 packages of client support per year, depending on complexity and necessary length of engagement. In reality, greater numbers of clients often receive support.

expenditure per client. In the light of the reported housing outcomes these figures underpin a positive 'value for money' assessment.

The capacity to address both housing and 'non-housing' needs within an overall focus on sustainable housing goals was an especially important element of the success of the HAP DV service model. Based on a sample of client experiences and the auspice agency reports, there are indications that the use of tailored case management in conjunction with relatively generous and flexible brokerage funds maximised the effectiveness of a range of support services. Through placing clients at the centre of the intervention this not only prevented homelessness but also supports early intervention more broadly, especially in the lives of children adversely affected by domestic violence. Baldry et al (2012) point to the lack of intensive support early in the lives of vulnerable individuals that would prevent significant costs to multiple service systems as they age and become increasingly in need of higher and more complex layers of support and this is a key point for consideration.

As Baldry et al also suggest, homelessness services may carry an inequitable cost burden from failures within health, corrective, community services and justice system responses. The HAP DV service model supports integrated service delivery and critically, the individual's capacity to seek help and engage optimally with these non-housing services. This matches clients to the correct service and enables better access. As an effective service model that directs resources in a timely and adequately supported manner, it can be said to be value for money.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of key lessons learnt

The HAP DV projects represent a significant development in the provision of housing support for women and children who experience domestic and family violence. They extend the basic 'case management with brokerage' service model that has emerged in recent years, by enabling greater flexibility and adding more formal structures for local integration and control of resources. Some aspects of the model are enhancements of existing practice, for example local inter-agency partnerships and collaboration. Other elements are new, such as the purchasing of client support services and administration of brokerage funds by the HAP DV auspice agency.

It should be noted that the original service model involved quite specific prescriptions regarding eligibility and low/high need classifications and these were subject to questions of interpretation and judgement. Not surprisingly, each of the regions took time to establish coordination groups, set up service provider lists/connections and commence referrals. This process was further complicated by a need for newly defined relationships between the NGOs, Housing NSW and Community Services. The three-year pilot time-frame worked well as a period to identify and resolve many of these issues in relation to the model and systems of implementation.

The three separate evaluations of each regional pilot project identified key lessons from implementation in their local context. Common themes in relation to the overall service model are presented below:

1. Flexible brokerage funding is a critical component of a sufficient and effective service response to meet the needs of women and children who are at risk of homelessness due to domestic or family violence. It should be housing focused but not housing constrained.
2. Local control to enable flexible application of project resources is a highly effective means of meeting client needs. Sustainable housing for the target group is supported by addressing a holistic range of client needs and homelessness programs must therefore be able to select the best match of service provider to the client, spend money on non-housing items or support services and not be confined to rigid cut-off times.
3. Strong and transparent governance of brokerage allocation and expenditure is important to retain a DV and homelessness focus
4. Although both case planning and brokerage are well established means of supporting women leaving violence, there was little specific evidence guiding the financial allocations for initial support packages and the amounts turned out to be unrealistic. This led to significant administrative challenges in managing and carrying forward

unspent funds. Future projects with similar models would benefit from a more comprehensive planning process around likely expenditures

5. Access to the project could be greatly improved by the review and development of up-to-date DV screening tools and staff training in Housing NSW, to increase the speed and accuracy of initial approvals
6. Financial and other administrative procedures between the auspice agency and service providers need to be as streamlined as possible to minimise onerous paperwork and delays in client access to support
7. Centralised, skilled coordination of the project by the auspice agency supports a fast, consistent and well managed response to clients in need
8. The eligibility criteria for accessing HAP DV support exclude some women in need and the specific criteria for high and low need packages do not appropriately reflect the complexity of real life circumstances. In addition, interpretations of the eligibility criteria have been varied. A review of these at the program level is therefore necessary to increase appropriateness and consistency of application
9. Integration and collaborative practice happen most effectively when equally underpinned by two elements:
 - a. *Shared accountability for outcomes* – Both the Homelessness and DV sectors share accountability for HAP DV outcomes. In addition, local structures for the formal participation of other stakeholders ties them to project success
 - b. Financial resources managed at the local level - as indicated in point 2 above
10. A key strength of the model is its flexibility, especially in responding to women's changing needs over time. Although the regions anticipated that needs would become less intense as case plans progressed, there was also capacity to increase intensity where needed. However, the time limits on support meant that women with ongoing needs which last longer than 12 months could be denied essential support to enable them to maintain their tenancy and stay safe. Alignment with the Start Safely timeframes would be appropriate to address this issue. It is also worth noting that for engagement of Indigenous clients a longer timeframe is often required. Therefore Indigenous women may effectively receive a shorter period of support than other clients within a 12 month period.

6.2 Implications for the future response to homelessness

The HAP DV service model is evidence-based in terms of the DV literature. It is also innovative and progresses the recently released *Going Home Staying Home* (GHSH) Reform Agenda (FACS 2012). The evaluation findings have implications for the GHSH strategies in the following ways:

GSHS reform strategy 1: Service delivery design: ensuring the right service design

The service model brings critical components together in a structure that enables highly individualised responses. A shift from a sole organisation being contracted as service provider to local control of the purchasing of client support, across a broad range of organisations has proven to be effective for clients and the service system as a whole. Continuing the development of this model, including long term outcome studies will provide a rich evidence base for ongoing reform of service design.

GSHS reform strategy 2: Streamlined access for clients: helping clients access the services they need

The service model relies on an integrated approach to DV and housing, in which NSW Housing has the capacity to identify and respond to DV; and the DV sector is informed about NSW Housing services and products. Both sectors gain by attending to these issues. We found evidence that Housing NSW DV screening tools need improving and can draw on the considerable amount of screening and assessment research that is now available. In addition, the eligibility criteria should be reviewed to consider the needs of women who are currently falling through the gaps and the time-frame extended to align with Start Safely.

GSHS reform strategy 3: Better planning and resource allocation: locating services where they are needed most

HAP DV is a service which may prevent some women and children using refuges or various others types of emergency accommodation. For those who do use the Specialist Homelessness Services, it supports rapid rehousing where appropriate accommodation is available. Each region for the HAP DV pilot received the same funding regardless of local context including service system, population, demography, affordable housing, or DV prevalence. Consideration of these factors in planning future projects would support optimum reach and effectiveness of the available resources.

GSHS reform strategy 4: Industry and workforce development: enabling organisations and staff to deliver the reforms

Industry and workforce development often becomes overly focused on professional training. Whilst this is important, especially for Housing NSW DV screening, it can often be unconnected to everyday work tasks and outcomes and is not effectively translated into practice. The service model enables collaborative learning and knowledge exchange that actively evolves relationships for integrated practice through the structures and resources of the project. This has built regional capacity across the service system. Retaining an education, coordination and oversight role within the auspice agency and coordinating groups is an important element of workforce development. Systemic problems with the family support and DV workforce, including a lack of specialist services outside of

metropolitan centres, could not be substantially addressed by the HAP DV projects and these problems had an impact on their capacity to provide services in some cases.

GHSR reform strategy 5: Quality, contracting and continuous improvement: ensuring ongoing improvement in quality and outcomes

In relation to the contracting of local service providers, best practice tools and guidance regarding processes and reporting formats will strengthen the speed and efficiency of service delivery. This may include case plan review processes and other quality assurance measures. Some specific aspects of this have been attended to well by the current projects but an overall approach to ensure consistency in the model, whilst allowing for regional variation of implementation may be required. Local implementation would emerge most effectively from the coordination groups rather than being imposed.

6.3 Implications for women and children who experience domestic and family violence

The existence of HAP DV support as part of the overall service system contributes to a situation whereby DV victims do not have to choose between either continuing to live with the perpetrator or the likelihood of chronic homelessness and insecurity. Therefore as a result of the program more women will be able to leave and more children will be protected from the harms of living with violence. A place to live and/or a rental subsidy alone is an insufficient response for many women and the intensive support made possible through HAP DV makes a substantial contribution towards achieving these outcomes.

Once DV victims have made the choice to leave the perpetrator, the cycle of increasing debt and poverty that prevents them from building sustainable, independent futures can be interrupted by the timely and effectively tailored interventions of the service. The prospects of long term recovery from the effects of the violence are thereby increased. Flexibility, local control of resources and non-housing responses to housing needs are all key, innovative aspects of the service model that have made it possible for women to grasp the opportunity for a future free from violence, set goals and realistically take steps towards independence. In this way they have been able to move out of situations of housed homelessness, crisis accommodation, couch surfing, street homelessness or vulnerable tenancies, into sustainable long term homes.

Bringing the DV and Housing sectors together in the HAP DV service model forms a dual knowledge base for enhanced integrated practice. The model is aligned with the research evidence on women leaving violence. Domestic violence affects women's capacity for financial independence not only by reducing their material circumstances but by harming their sense of self-worth and value. Tailored, combined DV and housing case plans are responsive to these harms because they are designed to enable individualised support to address the complex effects of family violence on women's sense of self, as well as meeting

their practical housing needs. The DV specialist oversight of the projects ensures that the existing substantial and robust evidence-base for an appropriate response to DV is drawn upon in order to address complex needs of women and children in this situation. This is likely to be more effective in preventing homelessness as a result of DV than a purely housing or homelessness response.

Access to HAP DV packages is dependent upon assessment of eligibility for social housing or Start Safely by Housing NSW. Whilst this has benefits for an integrated response, Housing NSW domestic and family violence screening and assessment processes and materials can be improved to increase identification of eligible women and streamline their pathway to the project. Also, a review of the HAP DV eligibility criteria could address the gap that currently exists in available support to women who do not meet the assets test for Start Safely or social housing. These two measures would increase the number of vulnerable women and children able to achieve sustainable tenancies.

Future responses to women and children experiencing domestic or family violence will benefit from replicating the core elements of the HAP DV service model.

6.4 Other insights gained that can enrich the evidence base

1. The finding that the need for resources and intensive case management is not necessarily linked to housing product eligibility is important (i.e. low needs/Start Safely and high needs/social housing) and this reflects the particular circumstances of women leaving a violent relationship. The literature demonstrates that on-going perpetrator harassment and the victim's corresponding involvement with the criminal justice system are factors which directly undermine women's housing. These factors can create circumstances of complex or high need, no matter what living situation a woman has. Such concerns may not be problematic at the time of the initial assessment and may emerge or escalate at a later date over disputes in child access and custody or the breaching of an Apprehended Violence Order. In addition, the model does not recognise differences between populations and experience where complexity of need relates to entrenched disadvantage, such as for Aboriginal women and some migrant refugee communities. Overall, complex need is not confined to social housing tenants. Equally, not all women in social housing necessarily require high levels of support. Thus using the housing product as an indicator of need is unhelpful.

The HAP DV projects allocated resources flexibly and prudently, not spending more brokerage and case management funding than was needed simply because the support packages allowed. A lower expenditure for one particular client enabled services to allocate additional money as needed, elsewhere. This allowed the services to exceed client targets and in GWS a new category of assistance (supported referral) was introduced, which allowed this project to assist a much larger number of clients to

maintain their housing through smaller amounts of targeted and timely brokerage. This underscores the benefits of flexible, local allocation of resources.

2. The emergent evidence base recognises benefits in implementing a multi-dimensional response to the needs of women leaving a violent relationship. A strength of the HAP DV service model is the role and expectations of the coordination groups. Participating workers and their organisations bring a wealth of experience and skills to the group as a whole and in turn their capacity to respond to women leaving domestic violence who are at risk of homelessness is enhanced by their participation. This has resulted in improved relationships and knowledge and should result in better service provision and more coordinated responses across the service system, beyond the HAP DV projects. Given many initiatives to improve collaboration between agencies flounder, this can be regarded as a significant achievement.
3. Although the projects were required to report on activities, outputs and outcomes and it was clear they had invested considerable effort in complying with these requirements, there are problems with data quality. There were also apparent inconsistencies with the way that data were collected. It is not clear that onerous reporting requirements actually improve the quality of data collected or contribute to robust outcome data and this is perhaps an area for consideration in relation to a comprehensive and long term evaluation strategy for the HAP program as a whole.

6.5 Future research that could strengthen the evidence in the area

There is a plethora of research focussing separately on domestic violence and homelessness as well as a growing literature exploring the links between the two. Many researchers however now argue that there is a discrepancy between the production of such research and the utilisation of the findings by practitioners. In part this may be due to the limited number of knowledge translation strategies readily available in the health and welfare sectors and the relative lack of research-practice partnerships or 'practice-informed research'. For practitioners, a collaborative research process can enhance the quality of data collection and increase the likelihood that practitioners will 'own' and implement the practice outcomes. Future research adopting a participatory and action research approach could address this challenge.

Specifically, future research could productively focus on:

- **Workforce development:** Much of the evidence on case management comes from the health sector, with clients who have psychiatric illness. There is little research on whether specific skills are needed for effective support work with women and children who have experienced family violence.

- **Outcomes:** In the absence of long-term outcomes data, economic evaluations that monetise the benefits of the projects, and allow comparison of the cost-benefit ratio with other service models, are not possible. There are well-known difficulties with evaluating interventions that target women and children who have experienced domestic violence, however if economic evaluations are a priority, rigorous research into outcomes is needed. This should include the intersection of child protection issues and how the model could best effect outcomes for children
- **Equity and diversity:** Investigation of the needs of different population groups in relation to the HAP DV service model would shed light on particular access and equity considerations. This is especially important where key issues intersect such as disability, Aboriginality, poverty and age.

Appendix A - Project information and consent forms



Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies

Social Policy Research Centre

Approval No HC12442

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM (for clients)

Evaluation of women and children leaving violence projects

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a study looking at the effectiveness of projects that have been funded to provide long-term accommodation and support to women and children leaving domestic and family violence. You are being asked because you used one of the services provided by these projects. We are interested finding out whether or not you found the services helpful.

Who is conducting this study?

Researchers from the University of New South Wales are conducting the study on behalf of the NSW Department of Families and Communities-NSW Housing. The study has been commissioned as part of the evaluation of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan, to help in designing new policies.

If I take part, what would I have to do?

If you decide to take part in the study, we will ask you to take part in an interview about your experiences with the services. It will take about an hour and will be held at a time and place that's convenient for you.

What would we talk about?

You will be invited to talk about:

- ***Where you're living now, and the services and support you've received***
- What you found helpful about the service or program
- What you didn't like about the service or program
- What kinds of services you think should be available to help people who have had similar experiences to you

We will ask your permission to make a sound recording of the interview to help us take better notes.

What if I don't want to take part? Can I refuse any questions?

Taking part in the study is voluntary. You don't have to take part if you don't want to and you can refuse to talk about any particular question.

Your decision whether or not you take part will not have any effect on your future relations with the University of New South Wales or the NSW Government, or any service you are using.

Do I receive anything for taking part?

Yes, to thank you for taking part, we will give you a \$30 Coles Myer voucher.

What about keeping my answers confidential?

No information that identifies you or your family will be used in reports or publications. What you tell us will be completely confidential and won't be told to anyone other than the researchers involved in the study, except as required by law.

The findings from the evaluation will be published by the research centres at the University of New South Wales.

What if I have complaints about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, you can contact the Ethics Secretariat at the University of New South Wales, Sydney 2052 or ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au by writing or ringing (02) 9385 4234, quoting this reference number: HC12442. Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be told of the outcome.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Information on the evaluation will be available from early 2013 from on the Social Policy Research Centre website (www.sprc.unsw.edu.au) and through the organisation that told you about the evaluation.

Further information

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Dr Jan Breckenridge: j.breckenridge@unsw.edu.au, 9385 1863.

Would you like to talk to someone about how you're feeling?

Sometimes people feel upset when they talk about their lives. If you would like to talk to someone about any problems you are experiencing, you can call:

Lifeline (13 11 14)

A free 24-hour counselling service

or

Relationships Australia 1300 364 277

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Participant Information Statement and Consent Form (continued)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Evaluation of women and children leaving violence projects

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. **Your signature indicates that, having read the information provided above, you have decided to participate.**

.....
.....

Signature of Research Participant

Signature of Witness

.....
.....

Please PRINT name

Please PRINT name

.....
.....

Date

Nature of Witness

OR

REVOCATION OF CONSENT

Evaluation of women and children leaving violence projects

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise any treatment or my relationship with The University of New South Wales, the NSW Government, or any services I receive.

.....
.....

Signature

Date

.....

Please PRINT Name

The section for Revocation of Consent should be forwarded to Dr Jan Breckenridge, Centre for Gender Related Violence Studies, University of New South Wales 2052.

Appendix B - Interview schedules

Extended evaluation of Long-Term Accommodation and Support for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Violence provided under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan

Discussion guide for interviews with service providers

1. Can you tell me a little about the work that you do, and your role in the HAP DV project?
2. How were you introduced to the project?
3. How would you describe your experience of working in the project? (*prompts*: meetings, governance, guidelines)
4. In your experience, what are the benefits of the HAP project model? What outcomes has it produced for clients?
5. Has involvement in the HAP DV project changed your relationship with other services in the area? (*prompts*: improved communication, greater understanding, more streamlined referral)
6. In your experience, are there any elements of the project model that could be improved?
7. Brokerage uses? (What have you used it for, with how many clients, does the org record uses with individual clients, what is the process for applying for and providing brokerage?)
8. In your experience, what are the benefits of access to brokerage funding? Are there any ways that the program could be improved? (*prompts*: eligibility criteria, wait for approvals, availability of resources)
9. In your experience, what are the benefits of the Start Safely scheme? Are there any ways it can be improved? (*prompts*: amount, duration, eligibility criteria, wait for approvals)
10. Can you describe a case where all aspects of the service worked extremely well? What made this possible?
11. Can you describe a case where you were not able to provide an effective service for a client? What would have made a difference?
12. What advice would you give service providers in another area who were considering implementing a similar project?
13. Is there anything you would like to add?
14. Clients to interview?
15. How does the agency present the two programs – what is written about the 2 programs? Are they separately promoted? What do they say is available to clients from each project?
16. How do they make decisions about clients going into each program? ie eligibility / screening criteria?

17. What brokerage money is available in each program and how is it used?
18. Do any of your SHLV clients access Start Safely or HAP brokerage money – explore any overlaps.

Extended evaluation of Long-Term Accommodation and Support for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Violence provided under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan

Discussion guide for interviews with clients:

1. Can you tell me a little about where you're living now, and who you're living with?
2. How long have you been living here? (if less than 12 months) How did you find your home? What was important to you when you were looking for somewhere to live?
3. I'm going to ask a few questions about your experiences of receiving services from (agency/service). Can you tell me how you first found out about this service?
4. What's been your experience with (agency/service)? What services have they provided, or helped you find?
5. How useful has that support been?
6. Could you tell me the areas in your life that the (agency/service) has made the most difference? (*prompts: feelings of safety/security, plans for the future, overall well-being, better physical/mental health*)
7. (Explain what Start Safely is). Have you ever applied for or received Start Safely?
8. How did you find out about Start Safely, and what was your experience of applying for it?
9. (for those who applied but didn't receive it) Why didn't you end up receiving Start Safely?
10. (for those who have received it) Are you still receiving Start Safely? How important has it been to you?
11. Thinking about the last few years, what person or service has been most helpful for you?
12. If you could change anything about the services available to people who have had similar experiences to you, what would it be?

Appendix C - List of agencies participating in the evaluation

	Organisation	Number of workers interviewed
Greater Sydney	Western Women's counselling service	1
	NSW Housing	2
	Bonnie's Refuge	1
	Drug and Alcohol Women's network (DAWN)	1
	Green Valley Liverpool Domestic Violence Service	1
	Wimlah Women's and Children's Refuge	1
	The Women's Cottage	1
	Muslim Women's Association	2
Hunter	Jenny's Place	1
	Yacaaba Information Centre & Counselling	1
	Singleton Family Support	1
	East Lakes Family Support	1
	Nova	3
	NSW Housing	1
	Community Services	1
	Regional Homelessness Committee (focus group)	6
Illawarra	Shoalhaven Youth Accommodation	1
	Wollongong Emergency Family Housing	1
	Warilla Refuge	1
	Wollongong Women's Housing	1
	Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW	2
	Ulladulla District Community Resource Centre	1
	Nowra Family Support	1
	PRBS workers Housing NSW	2
	Community Services	2
	Auspice agency staff	2
Housing NSW regional office	2	

Appendix D - Income and expenditure, 2011-12

		Illawarra		GWS		Hunter		
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Project income - Inputs								
Income	HAP funding		671,482		671,482		671,482	
Income	Other Government funding							
Income	In-kind							
Income	Third party donations							
Income	Other		32,311		188,283		28,644	
Total project income			703,793		859,765		700,126	
Total project expenditure			703,793	100	859,149	100	570,187	100
Expenditure								
Staff costs	Coordinator plus admin	Staff	61,248					
Staff costs	Admin and support	Staff			199,229		14,009	
Staff costs	Staff related on-costs		5,506				110,169	
Staff costs	External consultants / professional services		0		68,443			
Staff costs								
Total Staff costs (excluding case management)	Total Staff costs		66,754	9.5	267,672	31	124,178	22
Operating costs	Meetings, workshop, catering		1,133		2,557		73	
Operating costs	Staff training and development		1,293		13,049		10,188	
Operating costs	Motor vehicle expenses		13,240		11,284		2,212	
Operating costs	Other travel		0					

		Illawarra			GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Operating costs	Host Organisation Management Fee and Administration costs		76,009		67,148		69,548	
Operating costs	Other		14,558		6,679		100	
Operating costs	Other		0		10,000			
Operating costs	Other		0					
Total Operating costs	Total Operating costs		106,233	15	110,717	13	82,121	14
Brokerage Outputs								
Goods	Groceries				16,487			
Goods	Home establishment packs (eg linen, beds, mattresses, whitegoods, furniture, crockery/cutlery, cleaning equipment, lawn mower, tools)				62,868		96,190	
	Household items (linen, crockery/cutlery, curtains, cleaning equipment, lawn mower, line trimmer, tools)						31,302	
	One off start up (groceries, crisis payment)						3,500	
	Medical items (eg essential medication, dental, spectacles)						3,285	

		Illawarra			GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
	Employment Assistance (eg interview clothes etc)						3,964	
	Safety & security (security upgrades, repairs)						6,441	
	Computers/laptops						10,704	
	Children's items (e.g. school uniforms/textbooks. Social integration/ Community engagement/cultural and sports activities for children (e.g. swimming lessons, dance lessons, parenting groups)						15,183	
	Motor vehicle expenses (Petrol, green slip, repairs)						24,832	
Goods	Educational/vocational items (eg computers, protective equipment)	Clients assisted			1,973			
Goods	Children's items (eg school uniforms/textbooks, pushbikes)	Clients assisted			10,579			
Goods	Safety & security	Clients assisted			1,081			
Goods	Health items (eg essential medication, spectacles)	Clients assisted			1,282			

		Illawarra			GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Goods	Petrol	Clients assisted			0			
Goods	Other							
Goods	Other							
Total Goods	Total Goods				94,270	11	195,401	34
Services	Psychological services (eg. drug & alcohol/ trauma counselling)	Sessions delivered			1,803		4,916	
	Case management workers hours				270,875		69,245	
	Child care						12,017	
	Case management (external) travel						9,751	
	Education/training (eg specialist educations services, school/TAFE fees, employment assistance, driving lessons)						15,279	
	Furniture storage/Removal costs						18,754	
	Health/ well being services (eg pysio, gym membership, nutrionionist, rehabilitation, dental/medical)						2,734	

			Illawarra		GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Services	Life skills (financial counselling, Rent It Keep It, tenancy management skills, property maintenance and care services, property care mentors)	Sessions delivered			21,717		991	
Services	Specialist health services (eg rehabilitation, dental/medical)	Sessions delivered						
Services	Legal services	Sessions delivered			4,832		5,542	
Services	Education/training (eg specialist educations services, school/TAFE fees, employment assistance, driving lessons)	Courses			15,070			
Services	Urgent home repairs	Clients assisted			6,651			
Services	Child care	Hours			8,724			
Services	Removalists (eg furniture, rubbish)	Clients assisted						
Services	Initial housing hygiene clean	Clients assisted						

			Illawarra		GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Services	Furniture storage	Length of time						
Services	Brighter Futures	Referrals						
Services	Disability Support							
Services	Other							
Total Services	Total Services				329,672	38	139,227	24
Payments	Rent arrears	Clients assisted			28,642		13,684	
Payments	Utilities bills	Clients assisted			11,961		14,235	
Payments	Bond assistance	Clients assisted			3,261			
Payments	Motor vehicle expenses (eg registration, maintenance)	Clients assisted			4,707			
Payments	Other							
Total Payments	Total Payments				48,571	6	27,919	5
Other	Transport fees for clients, not staff (eg. bus/rail)				3,881		1,341	
Other	Accommodation (eg emergency, temporary)							
Other	Identification documents							

		Illawarra			GWS		Hunter	
		2011/12 Units	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Value	Percentage	2011/12 \$ Net Value	Percentage
Other	Social integration/ Community engagement/cultural and sports activities for children (eg swimming lessons, dance lessons, parenting groups)				4,365			
Total Other	Total Other				8,246	1	1,341	1
Total Brokerage and case support costs*	Total clients assisted	Households	530,806	75	209,884	56	363,889	64
Total Expenditure			703,793	100	764,880	100	570,186	100

*This figure includes all expenditure for brokerage and case support hours combined

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