parity

A Call for Contributions – May 2018

The May "Revisiting Rough Sleeping" edition of *Parity*

Introduction

Rough sleeping has become an increasingly visible form of homelessness in Australia in recent years, especially in major cities, resulting in a heightened public awareness of the issue, and in a range of media and policy responses to it.

Alongside the growth in the prevalence of rough sleeping, there has been an increasing convergence of international evidence and practice around effective responses to chronic homelessness. This evidence base has had clear implications for the response to rough sleeping. This body of evidence, called Housing First, focusses on the primacy of housing in response efforts, alongside flexible wrap around support provided within a rights framework.

In Australia, Housing First models, like Street to Home, Common Ground, J2SI, 50 Homes 50 Lives, Way2Home and others were introduced across the nation as part of the Rudd Government's *The Road Home* implementation that had the aim of halving homelessness by 2020 and providing housing and support for all those sleeping rough.

It has now been ten years since this phase of response to rough sleeping. Given that rough sleeping has increased over this period, it is now time to explore what is driving this change, and to revisit and review past, existing and developing policy and service responses to rough sleeping across Australia and elsewhere. This is the aim of this edition of *Parity.*

The 2018 edition will build on the April 2007 edition of *Parity* "Gimme Shelter: Responding to Primary Homelessness", which focused on the conceptual and definitional issues of rough sleeping and enumeration, and the emerging "South Australian model" of responding to rough sleeping.

Parity aims to explore the effectiveness and appropriateness of our current suite of responses and ask what can be done better by engaging with emerging and innovative reforms to homelessness systems and services.

The hope is to provide a national overview of policy and service responses to rough sleeping, examine and discuss what they have in common, as well where they differ.

A Framework for Discussion

Introduction: Conceptual, definitional and enumeration issues
This chapter is to be devoted to the conceptual and definitional issues around rough sleeping.

- Is there conceptual clarity and agreement around what constitutes rough sleeping for the purposes of identification and enumeration as well as implementing appropriate service responses?
- How does the fact that some people "churn" in and out of rough sleeping, emergency, transitional or social housing as well as various forms of private accommodation, impact on the understanding of, and the response to, rough sleeping?
- What is the relationship between primary homelessness, chronic or long-term homelessness and rough sleeping, and does the sometimes conflation of these categories

effect issues like enumeration as well as the development and implementation of effective policy and service responses?

- Is there agreement and clarity on the number of people sleeping rough? What have the various (and sometimes very different) counts of rough sleeping told us about numbers over time?
- Likewise, is there agreement and clarity on what is driving the persistence of rough sleeping and indeed the increasing levels of rough sleeping that have been particularly notable in some capital cities?

Chapter 1: Policy Responses

This chapter is devoted to the national (where relevant) and state and territory policy initiatives and frameworks designed to respond to rough sleeping. While these may be an integral part of state or territory wide broader homelessness policies, there are also a number of stand-alone "responding to rough sleeping" initiatives.

There is most recently, the Victorian "Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan" and the related May 2017 Rough Sleeping in Victoria Situation appraisal. Similarly, the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-27 incorporates service responses designed to prevent and alleviate rough sleeping.

The aim of this chapter is provide a nation-wide overview and assessment of government policies connected to the response to rough sleeping. Given the importance of capital city local governments in the policy response to rough sleeping this chapter will necessarily also focus on local government policy responses to rough sleeping in their jurisdictions.

One question that merits examination is why the 2008 *The Road Home* initiatives have not succeeded in ending or markedly reducing rough sleeping?

Chapter 2: Service Responses

The aim of this chapter is to examine and discuss the service response to rough sleeping.

This encompasses both mainstream services like Centrelink, mental health, health and justice services well as the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) system and specific programs and services like Street to Home, J2SI, Way2home, 500 lives 500 homes, Common Ground and initiatives like the Zero Project in South Australia as well as SHS initiatives like Launch Housing's Rough Sleepers Initiative.

The essential question here is the effectiveness of these service responses in terms of providing the support and housing required to end a person's rough sleeping and homelessness.

- In assessing this, what are the constraints working to inhibit or limit the effectiveness of the various service responses to rough sleeping?
- Has the demand for the services established to respond to rough sleeping and chronic homelessness exceeded the capacity of these services to meet this growing demand?
- Is the universally recognised inability to access and provide affordable and sustainable housing the key blockage in the service system preventing an effective response to rough sleeping?

- Tackling rough sleeping is often the sole responsibility of Specialist Homelessness Services providing assertive outreach services. What are both the challenges and the opportunities in sharing the response to rough sleeping with other and perhaps mainstream services?
- What have been the challenges and opportunities experienced by those Specialist Homelessness Services that have tried to take a collaborative approach to assertive outreach, and how were those challenges addressed and opportunities realised?

Chapter 3: Practice Issues

There now appears to a general consensus that assertive outreach approaches are the most effective in engaging with rough sleepers and getting them to take up and persist with the service responses that have been developed.

- What are the main practice issues in engaging with rough sleepers and sustaining them through the provision of appropriate supports including service delivery and as well as individual worker practice?
- What are some of the practice issues for the provision of post–settlement support?
- What are the parameters on the provision of support in terms of its duration?
- How important is advocacy, especially around creating the network of services required for a collaborative approach to ending rough sleeping, as well as for specific policies for the implementation of Housing First?

Chapter 4: Regulating Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping and particularly the response of the various levels of government to rough sleeping has inevitably involved issues of regulation and compliance, particularly at the local government level, the level of government often most directly affected.

- How have different local and other levels of government attempted to regulate rough sleeping?
- How have the issues of regulation and compliance been negotiated? Have those sleeping rough been consulted and involved in the development of the regulations governing rough sleeping?
- How effective are legal and regulatory responses to rough sleeping?
- To what extent has regulating rough sleeping resulted in its de facto criminalisation?
- How do regulatory frameworks that seek to govern rough sleeping comply with human rights protocols?

Chapter 5: Conclusions

- Where does the response to rough sleeping sit in the context of wider homelessness policies?
- What policies are needed to end rough sleeping?
- What service and practice models work best to respond to and end rough sleeping?

Contributing to the May 2018 "Revisiting Rough sleeping" edition of *Parity*

Deadline: All contributions need to be submitted by COB Friday May 11th 2018.
Submissions: All contributions should be submitted as Word attachments to parity@chp.org.au
Word length: Contributions can be up to 1,600 words (including references). This equates to a double page spread in *Parity*. Single page articles can be up to 800 words in length (including references). Contributions of a greater length should be discussed with the *Parity* Editor.
Artwork: Contributors are invited to submit the artwork they would like to accompany their article. Inclusion is dependent on the space being available. If artwork is not provided and is required, it will be selected by the *Parity* Editor.
Questions: If you have any questions at all about contributing to this edition please contact the *Parity* Editor by email parity@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6201
Referencing
NB: Due to space considerations, contributors are encouraged to use endnotes when referencing their *Parity* articles. All works that are cited or referred to in an article should be referenced.

For example:
1. Johnson G, Kuehnle D, Parkinson S, Sesa S and Tseng Y 2014, 'Resolving long-term homelessness: A randomised controlled trial examining the 36 month costs, benefits and social outcomes from the Journey to Social Inclusion pilot program', Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda.
2. Parkinson S 2012, 'The Journey to Social Inclusion Project in Practice- A process evaluation of the first 18 months', AHURI Research Centre, RMIT University, Melbourne, p. 19.

CHP does not encourage contributors to list a bibliography of references used in the development of an article but are not cited in the article. There is simply insufficient space for the inclusion of extensive bibliographies.

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Assistance
Feedback, input and assistance can be provided with drafts if required. If prospective contributors have any questions at all they should contact the *Parity* Editor, parity@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6200 or 03 8415 6201.