



Homelessness and *our* Poverty of Ambition

Cameron Parsell

Why?

- At least four questions:
 - 1 do we have *technical* and *policy* knowledge?
 - 2 is there the *political* will?
 - 3 can it be ethically justified?
 - 4 how much will it *cost*, and even if we answer yes to all of the above, will it cost *us* too much?
- 1 year living on the streets (sleeping rough) costs us \$48,217 per *person*
- 1 year living in permanent supportive housing (a tenancy, not a client) costs us \$35,117 per person

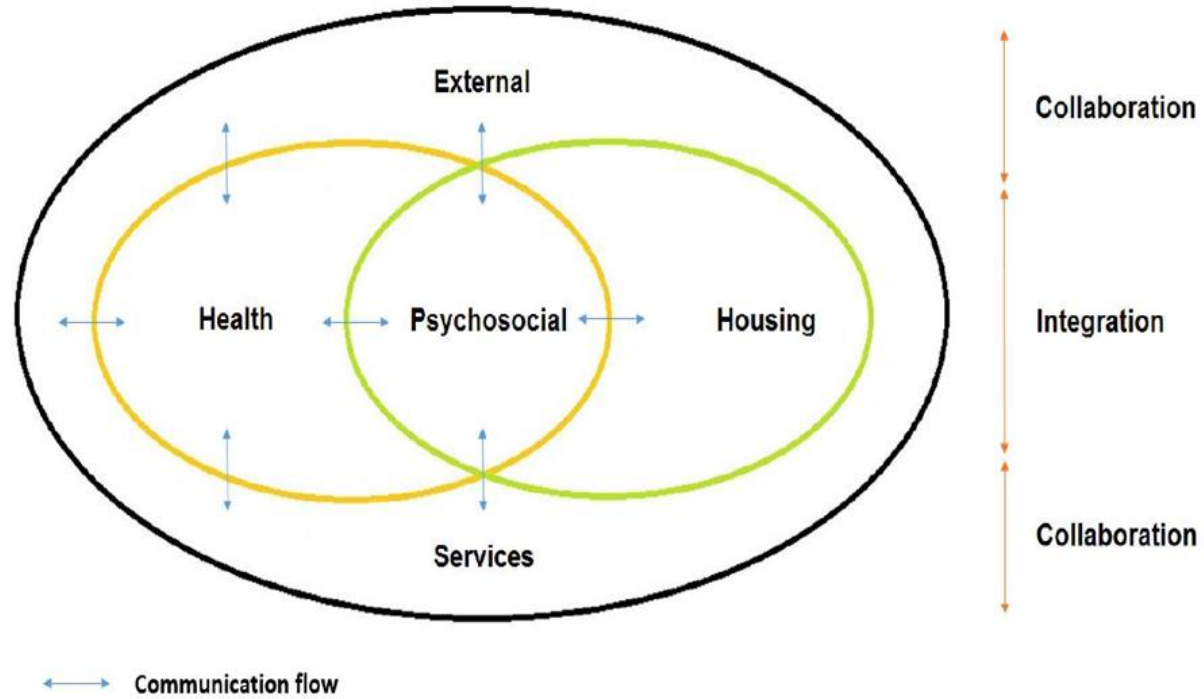
The question is not how?

- Technical knowledge is not our problem
- We have the knowledge to prevent and end homelessness

Housing Outcomes

- Assertive street outreach: Purposeful. Justice or Annoyance?
- Australia between 85 and 90 per cent sustain housing
- Similar results in North America
- Home: Control, Autonomy, and Normality
- Wellbeing, mental health, primary health, and access to healthcare improved, but...
- Don't need to fix what may cause homelessness to end it

Prevention



Complex Systems... not complex clients

- Reject the proposition that people are not housing ready
- Vulnerability Index Tool: Screening in the hardest to house
- Chronic homelessness and housing exclusion exist because our systems and practices are too complex, or at least too inflexible

Policy Problem, not an Economy Problem

- The Australian Homelessness Monitor concludes that policy is both the cause of and solution to homelessness
- Macro economic forces are not the strongest contributor, rather policy, including policy inaction, contributes to rising homelessness
- Policy change holds the key to ending homelessness
- Wicked policy problems emphasises the complexity of the individual, at the expense of normative decisions about access to (and withhold of) resources
- Government silos

Cost Data

- The figures I presented to start with sound like advocacy, not hard evidence
- Given that a body of evidence demonstrates that we can end and prevent homelessness, the cost of \$48,217 to be homeless compared to \$35,117 to be housed is rubbery at best
- We generated the figures through analysis of government administrative data (records)
- Two time windows: 12 months pre supportive housing, and 12 months post supportive housing (N=41)
- In the 12 months pre-supportive housing people were chronically homeless

Cost Data

- Health:
 - -emergency; admitted; mental health, and ambulance
- Police:
 - -offences; victims of crime, and watchhouse
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General:
 - -courts
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General:
 - -prisons; probation, and parole
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare:
 - -SHS, including accommodation and brokerage

Data

	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Episodes	1,029	359	-669 (65%↓)
Minutes	27,152	10,560	-16,592 (61%↓)
Cost	\$372,498	\$129,958	-\$242,540

Data

	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Occurrences as Offender	50	24	-26 (52%↓)
Cost per offender = \$2,453	\$122,650	\$58,872	-\$63,778
Offences as Offender	57	28	-29 (51%↓)
Occurrences as Victim	24	11	-13 (54%↓)
Cost per victim = \$243	\$5,832	\$2,673	-\$3,159
Occurrence Police or Corrections transport to Hospital	5	1	-4 (80%↓)
Nights in Police Custody	45	27	-18 (40%↓)
Cost per night in custody = \$830	\$37,350	\$22,410	-\$14,940
Total cost of Police	\$165,832	\$83,955	-\$81,877

Data

	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Admitted patients	\$1,064,167	\$472,673	-\$591,495
Mental Health	\$372,498	\$129,958.	-\$242,540
Emergency	\$102,510	\$104,860	+\$2,350
Ambulance	\$41,600	\$40,950	-\$650
Subtotal Health Difference	\$1,580,775	\$748,441	-\$832,335
Corrective Services	\$32,296	\$1,452	-\$30,844
Court	\$23,400	\$13,217	-\$10,183
Police	\$165,832	\$83,955	-\$81,877
Subtotal Criminal Justice Difference	\$221,528	\$98,624	-\$122,904
Specialist Homelessness Services	\$174,613	\$5,249	-\$169,364
Total Cost Difference	\$1,976,916	\$852,314	-\$1,124,603

What are we doing?

- Tenants used \$1,976,916 pre, compared to \$852,314 post
- Pre: Average annual spend of services \$48,217 per tenant
- Post: Average annual spend on services \$20,788 per tenant
- Annual cost of supportive housing per tenant = \$14,329
- $\$20,788 + \$14,329 = \$35,117$ (per tenant annually)
- \$35,117 compared to \$48,217. Or, it costs us \$13,100 to keep someone excluded

What are we doing?



What are we doing?

- “We have begun operating mobile shower vans where we have three in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.”



What are we doing?

- “Orange Sky Laundry is a catalyst for conversation... sit down on one of our 6 orange chairs and have a positive and genuine conversation between our everyday volunteers and everyday friends on the street”
- Young Australians of the year 2016

What are we doing?

- Create and watch content



What are we doing?

- Dignity First
- Orange Sky Laundry received \$165,800 for a mobile laundry van and \$132,000 for a van fitted with two showers to service the Brisbane area (2016)
- Another charity received \$305,000 to buy and convert a bus so it can be used for a mobile shower and laundry service (2016)
- Orange Sky Laundry received \$115,770 to fund the purchase and 12 month operational costs of a mobile laundry/shower van to be based in Townsville (2017)

What are we doing?

- What homeless people really need is a home, not a clean shirt or bowl of soup (March 2017)
- “As a society we should instead redirect our efforts toward providing immediate access to housing to end homelessness”



How can we understand it?

“I am finding it hard to write this email while hiding my disappointment at a report that starts detailing an event for a very worth charity only to knock the wind out of them for over half of the article. Solving homelessness is not going to be solved by securing x Millions of dollars and then with a click of your fingers it is instantly fixed. Nick and Lucas, if you manage to read this, please keep a stiff upper lip. Those who can't or won't do anything often criticise. You guys are legends. Please keep up the excellent work”
(email 26/02/2017)

“So, I really understand your concerns about Orange Sky Laundry of offering too many services which are really only a bandaid and also serve to make people more comfortable, but I think their great gift is to attract a generation of young people to experiencing the joy of giving and generosity of service to others”
(02/03/2017)

How can we understand it?

- Responding to an immediate need
- Good intentions beyond reproach
- Emotive response as justification
-
- The givers' needs are emphasised

Why are we doing this?

- Different
- Less than
- Embodiment of their homelessness
- The other
- Reify difference
- Low expectations
- Can we do better?
- Are we achieving justice when we actively work to ameliorate a problem that we know we can solve?

Don't

- Assume that failed placements justify opening up access to shelters
- Celebrate ending chronic homelessness in later life (too much), when we know our failed systems initially set it up
- It's a societal problem
- Chronic homelessness and long-term marginalisation in later life linked to childhood poverty and trauma

Optimism

- Housing First forces us to commit to principles, and have seriously compelling reasons when we forget them:
 - Housing as a right
 - Choice
 - Autonomy
 - Normality
 - Embed within our systems, not more pilot or trials
 - Aspirations for something more
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- People want more than what any service – be it wrap around, integrated, or as people love to say now, person-centred – can offer