

# Housing Connect Reform



**The Housing Connect Reform has commenced as part of Tasmania's Affordable Housing Action Plan 2 (2019-2023). The Reform is based on the Recommendations from the Review by Brotherhood of St Laurence and will refine the Housing Connect model to more effectively respond to housing crisis and homelessness in Tasmania.**

## **Communications**

A range of communication channels will be used to support the Reform project. This will ensure stakeholders are kept up to date on the progress of the reforms and are aware of the opportunities for consultation and collaboration.

Regular Communiques such as this will provide updates to key stakeholders on the Reform activities.

## **Inaugural Steering Committee Meeting**

The first Housing Connect Reform Steering Committee meeting was held on 3 September 2019.

The Housing Connect Reform Steering Committee has been established to guide the strategic direction of the Housing Connect Reform and oversee the successful delivery of the Reform milestones. Under the leadership of an Independent Chair, the Committee will manage the Reform budget and resources and monitor and manage risks to the successful implementation of identified Reform outcomes.

The Reform Steering Committee has representatives from the 5 collaborating Housing Connect partners, 2 representatives of Crisis Accommodation services (North/North West and South), Communities Tasmania, and an Independent Chair.

The Committee will meet monthly for the duration of the three-year Reform.

## **Governance**

As recommended in the Review, the Housing Connect Governance Structure (including delegated authority) has been reviewed and was endorsed at the inaugural Steering Committee meeting. Updated Terms of Reference (TOR) were endorsed for the Collaborating Partner's Group, Reform Steering Committee, Operational Manager's Group and Regional Management Groups (North and South).

The updated TORs clarify roles and responsibilities and levels of decision-making ability (delegated authority) for each group. The new Governance structure will ensure there are clear processes in place for making and implementing decisions about Housing Connect and the Reform agenda.

The review has also resulted in changes to the membership of these groups with Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) representatives added to the Collaborating Partners' Group, the Operational Manager's Group (OMG) and the Regional Management Groups (RMGs). The recruitment of SHS representatives for the OMG and RMGs will occur over the coming weeks.

## **Appointments**

### **Independent Chair**

A recommendation of the review was for the re-introduction of an Independent Chair role into the Housing Connect governance structure.

The Independent Chair provides a leadership and facilitation role for the two leading governance groups (Partner's Group and Reform Steering Group) and is an independent voice for Housing Connect. The Chair will also help to drive the Reform agenda and facilitate change.

Tracy Matthews has been appointed as the Independent Chair for the Housing Connect Reform Steering Committee and the Housing Connect Collaborating Partners' Group.

Tracy is a non-executive director and chartered accountant with experience across a broad range of sectors and industries. Tracy's areas of expertise include accounting, governance, audit and risk, funds management, business and strategic planning.

Tracy attended the first Housing Connect Steering Committee meeting to familiarise herself with the Reform project and will take on the position of Chair from the next meeting in October.

### **Specialist Homelessness Service Representatives**

To strengthen the Governance arrangements for the Housing Connect Reform project, two Specialist Homelessness Service representatives have been selected to join the Reform Steering Committee.

Following an EOI process, Lesley Ikin (Karinya Young Women's Service) and Janet Saunders (Hobart Women's Shelter) were selected for these representative roles.

Part of Lesley and Janet's role is to provide feedback to and seek input on the Reform from SHS in their regions (South – Janet, North/North-West – Lesley).

### **Reform Project Manager**

The Department has commenced recruitment for the Reform Project Manager who will lead the implementation of Reform activities over the next three years. They will also be focused on achieving greater consistency in state-wide service delivery. The Reform Project Manager will become the key contact for all reform activities and will report to the Housing Connect Reform Steering Committee with line management provided by the Director Housing Programs, Communities Tasmania.

### **Brotherhood of St Laurence**

The Housing Connect Lead Agencies (Anglicare Tasmania and Colony 47) are engaging Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) as consultants for parts of the Reform. BSL will work in collaboration with the Housing Connect Reform Project Manager and key stakeholders to develop a new Housing Connect service model and Practice Framework and establish a Community of Practice.

## Housing Connect Design Principles

The first project milestone was achieved at the inaugural Reform Steering Committee meeting, with the Housing Connect Design Principles established and endorsed.

The intent of these design principles is to strengthen and enhance the basis of the Housing Connect model. They provide a strong base to test ideas and activity and will be used to help shape and implement the Reform agenda.

### The Housing Connect Design Principles are:

1. Incorporate a person-centred service 'offer' maximising consumer choice, voice and agency
2. Adopt a *Capabilities Framework* encompassing Advantaged Thinking
3. Incorporate 'top down' and 'bottom up' governance
4. Develop a 'no second night out' response for households sleeping rough, including young children and those escaping domestic violence
5. Incorporate the *Housing First* model comprising integrated packages of housing and support for highly disadvantaged households who lack the capabilities to sustain independent living
6. Strengthen early intervention assistance targeting 'at risk' cohorts
7. Commit to *Collective Impact* and co-production principles across portfolios and non-housing services
8. Maximise utilisation of robust evidence to inform optimal practice leading to effective and efficient service delivery

The development and endorsement of these Principles is the first of the four key milestones achieved for the Reform.

- Develop and endorse Housing Connect Design Principles (by 29 November 2019).
- Develop and endorse a refined service model (by 27 November 2020).
- Redistribute Housing Connect funding to support the refined service model (by 31 March 2021).
- Develop and endorse a Practice Framework for the new service model (by 30 September 2021).

## Further Information

If you have any questions or feedback relating to the Reform, please contact:

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