NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2010-11

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Introduction and summary of achievements

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report on activities under the ACT's National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) Implementation Plan during the 2010-2011 financial year. The 2010-2011 Annual Report outlines the progress of initiatives, achievements and performance measures that were described in the ACT's Implementation Plan.

Background

The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and its associated National Partnership Agreements on Homelessness and Social Housing form the framework to guide the ACT in delivering services across the housing continuum, from crisis and homelessness responses to stable affordable housing. The delivery of services has been augmented by the unprecedented investment in social housing that was provided through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan (NBJP).

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) between the ACT Government and the Commonwealth has a focus on reforms to reduce homelessness. The NPAH, which commenced on 1 July 2009, remains in effect until 30 June 2013.

The ACT developed an Implementation Plan for the period July 2009 – June 2013. This document describes the initiatives to be delivered during the life of the NPAH. More significantly, the Implementation Plan outlines the ACT's commitment to actively work towards a measurable reduction in homelessness by 30 June 2013.

The ACT considers that the targets of the NPAH are a shared responsibility. These targets will need to be met by both community and government and will not be achieved by new services alone. For this reason, the NPAH targets have been built into the Service Funding Agreements (SFAs) for all ACT funded homelessness, housing support and community housing agencies.

A review of homelessness specific and mainstream programs is underway in the ACT. This process seeks to examine current services and consider how they may be reformed, in the context of the new directions. The ACT entered into three year SFAs for most services with agreements that expired on 30 June 2009. The ACT's targets under the NPAH were embedded within all SFAs, as was a re-negotiation clause, to ensure that services may be realigned with reform directions, within the contracting period. Some individual or groups of services, which required more significant reform, were offered a one year SFA. A similar approach was taken for agreements expiring on 30 June 2010 and 30 June 2011, to allow the ACT to continue to realign service delivery during the life of the NPAH.

Context

The ACT Government's social inclusion agenda seeks to maximise the participation of homeless persons in economic and social life. Addressing homelessness is an essential part of this. It is necessary to ensure that the homelessness cycle remains broken, by providing people with the supports they need to overcome disadvantage.

Obviously, homelessness is a complex issue that arises as a result of the interaction of numerous contextual factors, such as poverty, community exclusion, education, employment markets and housing supply. Individual risk factors, such as addiction, relationship breakdown, mental illness and inadequate life skills, are equally significant. In acknowledgement of this complexity, the ACT commitment to reduce homelessness must therefore require a whole of community and government effort, underpinned by a reformed service system.

In this way, the ACT seeks to work towards the eradication of homelessness. This goal was articulated as long ago as 2004, when the ACT Social Plan described a target of no rough sleepers by 2013. The ACT considers that the NAHA and associated National Partnership Agreements on Homelessness and Social Housing, together with the NBJP, constitute a once in a generation opportunity to make a significant impact on its goal.

Key Achievements

The work that has been done in the ACT under the NPAH has included the development of a number of strong initiatives, which are already demonstrating real results in terms of improving outcomes for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It must be acknowledged that NPAH funding is a relatively small component of total funding for homelessness responses in the ACT. While individual programs funded by the NPAH have produced some excellent results, this funding source in isolation is not sufficient to achieve the goal of eradicating homelessness.

Nonetheless, the initiatives implemented through the NPAH form an important part of the ACT's progress towards this goal. For example, the *Street to Home* program continues to make an impact on the core group of rough sleepers in the ACT, and has responded to the needs of this group by engaging support from other services, such as mental health. In this way, the *Street to Home* service seeks to flexibly meet the needs of service users; this responsiveness may be seen in the operation of numerous other programs.

Similarly, the Youth Foyer Model – *Our Place* – has grown into a robust and innovative response to youth homelessness and disadvantage. The full service name includes the aim "Live, Learn and Achieve", which encompasses the holistic nature of the program. Already *Our Place* is demonstrably effective in providing support and opportunities for young people to engage in education, employment and training. All young people housed in the program (with the exception of a very new mother) are already engaged in this way.

Key Priorities for 2011-12

In 2011-12, the ACT will continue to work towards achieving the reform priorities that were informed by the NAHA and NPAH. These include a shift from a high proportion of accommodation support periods to increased periods of non-accommodation support. In addition, there will be a significant shift to a 'housing first' approach, with wrap around support to ensure that long term positive outcomes are achieved. A capacity for crisis accommodation will be retained, to ensure that the safety and immediate support needs of vulnerable Canberrans are met.

Key reform directions:

- Streamlining access to services and housing, achieved through the implementation and continued operation of a Central Access Point.

- Assertive engagement and persistent support for rough sleepers, hard to engage groups and vulnerable Canberrans.

- Sustaining tenancies to prevent repeat cycles of homelessness.

- Social Inclusion - building links to economic and social participation.

In addition to these key areas of reform, the ACT Government will also work towards a full reform of the youth housing and homelessness sector. This is currently underway, having commenced with extensive consultation with the sector. An open tender process for the proposed new services is due to close in early November 2011.

The ACT Government has also commenced a feasibility study into the Common Ground model, which will examine the model as it has been applied in other jurisdictions. The study will provide recommendations on how this model may be modified for the ACT context in the future.

NPAH Initiatives

A Place to Call Home

A Place to Call Home (APTCH) is one of the four core outputs to be delivered under the Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The program will provide 20 properties over five years, to house homeless families and provide those families with the necessary supports to sustain their tenancies. The ACT has constructed the properties in a way that will substantially reduce the responsive and planned maintenance costs. The properties are energy efficient, consistent with measures already being provided to Housing ACT tenants. These measures will reduce energy and repair costs for tenants. Energy costs are a significant factor for people on low incomes in the Canberra climate.

Most homelessness services in Australia underpin their service delivery with a 'pathway' approach, which graduates people from a crisis reponse through to transitional responses and then to long term housing. In contrast, the APTCH program exhibits a key principle of 'housing first', providing long term stable housing as a first step, complemented by the co-ordinated provision of services needed by each individual/family to sustain that housing by addressing underlying stressors that present as complex need. An important part of this principle is that housing is not contingent on people accepting or complying with a case management approach or other rules that may be required for accommodation in a homelessness or rehabilitative service.

In line with this approach, clients are identified for the APTCH program from existing specialist homelessness services and through Housing ACT's Gateway Services, on the basis that they will benefit from a 'housing first' service. Clients are initially housed under a head tenancy arrangement, with a review period of six months built into each agreement. The dwellings used for the program are public housing stock. It is anticipated that replacement properties will be allocated to the APTCH initiative as clients successfully transition to public housing tenancies.

Key Achievements and Challenges

Early in the life of the program, it was apparent that achieving a 'housing first' approach would be a challenge. The existing process for establishing need under the Public Rental

Housing Assistance Program (PRHAP) was not suitable for assessing need in a 'housing first' context. This difficulty was resolved by establishing an intake mechanism for the APTCH program, through the coordination and partnership of ACT Homelessness services, to identify suitable clients based on the criteria for the program's target group.

A key achievement of the program can be seen in the property substitution policy, which allows for properties to be substituted with equivalent Housing ACT stock. This ensures that dwellings can be made available in suburbs suitable for clients' needs, based on their existing connections with natural supports in the community. This policy may assist with meeting some clients' needs more fully, by acknowledging that current supports and connections within the community are valuable and should be maintained if possible. Being able to substitute properties used for the program helps to ensure that properties are available in different regions of the ACT, despite the limited release of land in particular areas.

Case Study

L (38) and her children B (14), G (13), A (2) and S (1) came to Doris Women's Refuge (DWR) in May 2009 after being referred by a community service agency. L also telephoned DWR independently to explain her situation and during this conversation L identified as Aboriginal.

L and her children were left homeless as a result of family domestic violence. They had moved back to Canberra to get support from her extended family. However, this resulted in homelessness and further domestic violence perpetrated against L by her ex partner. Her ex-partner was suffering from a mental illness (untreated and undiagnosed at the time) which contributed to the domestic violence against L and her children.

L and her children were accommodated at DWR for a period of about 11 months. During this time they were provided with intensive support.

DWR provided support for L's two older children in relation to schooling, sporting events, recreational activities, living skills, clothing needs and emotional support. This was successful as the children enjoyed opportunities that L would normally not be able to provide for them. DWR provided financial assistance for extracurricular activities such as basketball, dancing classes and items such as uniforms and shoes. DWR also supplied financial assistance for school tutoring to support the children's educational outcomes. The Child Resource Worker assisted the children with a number of school projects and assessments. DWR continued to provide culturally specific services to L and her children throughout their involvement with DWR.

L persistently worked on her issues associated with long term domestic violence and became much stronger, growing into a more independent and happy person. During L's stay DWR provided transport to support groups, and provided emotional support during and outside business hours. DWR also provided referrals for counselling for L and helped her to link back in with the Aboriginal community.

As an Aboriginal woman it was very important for L to maintain family connections for the sake of herself, her children and the family unit. DWR developed a safety plan with L around family visits and events. A positive outcome for L was that she worked very hard to rebuild a relationship with her mother and this improved the support networks for the family members. L also achieved a safer working relationship with the father of her children and his family.

L moved from DWR to another service that provided medium term accommodation when she was no longer requiring intensive supported case management. She had gained strength and was capable of living independently and making safe decisions regarding her ex-partner and the family violence that occurred with them in the past. Due to the strategies implemented with L and her children, including a comprehensive safety plan, DWR workers felt confident in her abilities to keep her family safe. There were also networks in place if a crisis eventuated.

The first property offered to L was in the southern part of the ACT. Due to family circumstances it was not appropriate and DWR assisted L to negotiate for an appropriate offer within HACT's structure. Shortly after, L was offered a property in northern ACT which was closer to her support networks and had additional space required for her children.

This property was offered through a DHCS program called 'A Place to Call Home'. A requirement for L being allocated this property was for DWR to offer her support for up to six months. In addition, DWR was to ensure that we deemed the tenant to be capable and able to live independently with little or no support and then to transfer the tenancy to HACT after six months. DWR worked with L to transition into HACT to alleviate any stressors. The support that was provided during the transition included a House Warming Grant, which was a new fridge and washing machine, and organising appointments with Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul for assistance with other furniture required. DWR also put up curtain rods and curtains for L as they were not provided.

During the program, workers provided ongoing emotional support to Lesley and her children. DWR provided financial assistance when required for L and referred to relevant services that can also provide financial assistance. DWR assisted with the two eldest children's educational needs with purchasing school packs, helping financially with extracurricular activities and providing a support letter for them to attend boarding school in Sydney. DWR would also provide transport and child care for L when ongoing educational opportunities took place at DWR.

L is currently living in this four bedroom property with her children and is providing a safe and positive home environment for the family unit and continues to improve their circumstances.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$1m	$1m	$1m	$1m	$1m	$ 5 m
State funding (million)	$1.5 m	$1 m	$1m	$1m	$0.5m	$ 5 m
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	20 properties over5 years

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of dwellings built	2	4
number of tenancies established	2	4
number of tenancies sustained for two years or more (n/a for 2010-11)	n/a	n/a

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number who are less than $500 in arrears or are on a complying repayment agreement	4	4
Percentage with lower than average tenant responsible maintenance	40	75
number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families allocated a property	2	3

The ACT delivered an additional four properties/tenancies in 2009-10 under the A Place to Call Home initiative. The additional properties/tenancies delivered in 2009-10 reduced the on track target for 2010-11 to 4 properties/tenancies. The ACT met this target in 2010-11.

Street to Home

The *Street to Home* initiative commenced operation in February 2010. The program works to assertively engage people experiencing chronic homelessness (particularly 'rough sleepers'), helping them to re-engage with support services to establish and sustain a successful tenancy. *Street to Home* coordinates the delivery of services to people on the streets, rather than requiring that they attend appointments in offices. The program provides support to up to 30 rough sleepers at any one time, where they are found. It engages in active outreach with rough sleepers (particularly young people) who do not engage with mainstream services. In this way, service users are supported to overcome barriers to find and maintain appropriate housing.

Partnerships with other services such as drug and alcohol, and mental health, have been established to provide coordinated services to this vulnerable group of homeless people. A responsive mix of services is provided, including housing, mental health, primary health and other support services.

A 'Who's New on the Streets' committee was established to help identify and monitor the support requirements of people who are sleeping rough. Committee membership includes representatives from Australian Federal Police, City Park Rangers, Youth Support Services, the National Capital Authority, ACT Mental Health, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Centrelink, and emergency relief providers. This has proved to be a good mechanism to identify those in need and obtain support for the individuals identified.

The program will also support rough sleepers to access legal support through a partnership with the Streetlaw homelessness legal service.

Key Achievements and Challenges

One of the main achievements of the *Street to Home* program has been the connection of the service to the St Vincent de Paul Night Patrol, enhancing the program's capacity to connect with vulnerable Canberrans.

Another highlight was the establishment of the 'Who's New on the Streets' partnerships with non-traditional homelessness support services. In this way, Park Rangers, Police and other services are able to facilitate linkages with the *Street to Home* program.

One such partnership, with the Early Morning Centre, has been particularly important in enhancing the services provided through the *Street to Home* program. The Early Morning Centre, a drop-in program that provides free food and assistance with referrals to other relevant services, now provides on-site lockers so that rough sleepers can safely store their belongings. Where appropriate, service users who present at the Early Morning Centre may be referred to the *Street to Home* program.

The program has also demonstrated good outcomes in terms of supporting people into accommodation. During 2010-11, 37% of rough sleepers receiving assistance from the program were supported into accommodation.

The 2011-12 ACT Government Budget recently allocated an additional $504,000 over four years, to expand the program. This additional funding will ensure that mental health support is available to all rough sleepers who need it.

The program was also recently allocated 6 Housing ACT properties to provide crisis and long term accommodation options for rough sleepers in the ACT. Long term accommodation is provided on a Housing First basis, with outreach support continuing until stabilisation is achieved.

Case Study

J, a young Indigenous man, first engaged with the *Street to Home* program after 3 years of sleeping on the streets. J, who is 31 years old and living with an active drug and alcohol addiction, became homeless after the breakdown of his 11 year relationship. J was no longer welcome in the home of family members and had exhausted his welcome at friends' houses.

J often slept in the parks throughout the city area, and when the weather was too bad to sleep outdoors, J sought shelter in the toilet blocks.

J had attempted on many occasions to access refuge in the local men's shelter; however, due to the lack of vacancies, he was only able to spend a few emergency nights. J was unwilling to leave the city area as he had no means of transport to get back and forth to the food and community services which he accessed at times. More importantly, J was unwilling to leave Canberra for shelter as this is where his children were living and J retained the hope of being reconnected with his family.

Through the *Street to Home* program, J was able to access some accommodation on a temporary basis. During this time, *Street to Home* worked with Housing ACT to approve J to be placed on the priority list for a home for him and his family.

J had outstanding parole conditions linking him to the area, as well as an upcoming court case, which he had been planning not to attend due to a lack of support. J's legal issues stemmed from an altercation he had while living on the streets, where he suffered repeated abuse, both verbally and physically, and in one incident needed to use force in order to flee from a potentially life threatening situation. *Street to Home* was also able to advocate for J to be represented by a solicitor free of charge, for both his upcoming court case and his family matters. J has had successful legal outcomes and with the assistance of his solicitors has been granted access to his children for visitations.

Street to Home suggested and J agreed, that he should begin seeing a doctor on a regular basis for his medical issues as well as undiagnosed mental health concerns, believed to be anxiety and depression. J had several physical health problems from both

his addictions, exacerbated by years of living on the streets. J was connected with a mental health worker and was offered continued medical appointments on a weekly basis, to address his physical health and substance use.

J was also living in chronic pain from problems with his teeth, which impacted on his ability to eat. There are dental programs that bulk bill or subsidise cost, but waiting periods for these are often up to six months. *Street to Home* workers were able to advocate for J to be seen by a private dental physician on an emergency basis, who agreed to bulk bill J through his Medicare coverage. This dentist not only addressed the immediate pain J was experiencing, but also set up a complete dental hygiene plan, which gave J access to all the dental work he needed, including a set of dentures to replace the teeth he had lost.

After working with *Street to Home* for 11 months, J was allocated a 2-bedoom house from Housing ACT. The *Street to Home* program was able to assist J in furnishing his house, and supplied him with all necessities to move into his property, including a room for his children when they visit on weekends. J continues to see his children and has said that he feels much safer and more secure in his life. J continues to access supports from St Vincent de Paul and other community organisations. He is currently trying to secure employment in the area.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)		$0.13m	$0.23m	0.359m	$0.374m	$ 1.093 m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of Rough Sleepers engaged by the service	20	50
number of Rough Sleepers who are provided support or other assistance by the service, or referred to another service provider	50	124

Building Housing Partnerships

The purpose of the *Building Housing Partnerships* program is to help break the cycle of homelessness and disadvantage in our community. The program aims to achieve this by facilitating, coordinating and delivering a range of support, assistance and living-skills programs for vulnerable tenants, including support to find training and employment.

The program consists of three components: Transitional Support and Head Tenancies; Supportive Sustaining Tenancy Service; and Helping Our Senior Tenants.

Transitional Support and Head Tenancies

In line with the ACT's reform directions, Transitional Support and Head Tenancies will shift in focus from a transitional housing program to a transitional support approach, which is not tied to a particular dwelling. Individual support packages can be established

to create supportive tenancies across a range of different types of housing tenures, including:

- Four places per annum under *A Place to Call Home*;

- Head leasing support for those who are vulnerable in public housing and require additional support; and

- Additional support funding to assist those in transitional arrangements out of homelessness and into long term accommodation.

A total of up to 16 dwellings will be provided under the Refugee Transitional Housing program, which is a joint partnership between CatholicCare, Companion House and Housing ACT.

In addition, the Transitional Housing Program (THP) provides transitional housing options through the use of Housing ACT stock that is awaiting redevelopment and is temporarily vacant, as well as some stock that is hard-to-let. The allocation of properties under the THP is managed by Housing ACT, with support provided by a range of specialist homelessness services.

The Transitional Housing Program (THP) was an innovative means for Housing ACT to maximise the use of its stock, whilst also providing additional accommodation to people who are homeless. In 2010 the program was reviewed and the model changed, with Housing ACT now utilising a range of homelessness services to provide tenancy management and support to clients under the program.

Key Achievements and Challenges

The establishment of the Central Intake Service for Homelessness, First Point, has provided an important source of data regarding the demand for homelessness services in the ACT. This data indicated that there was a significant need for services that could provide assistance for people who were waiting for longer-term accommodation. This led to the rapid release of 45 transitional properties.

The Head Tenancies program came about as a separate response to the support needs of Housing ACT tenants who are at risk of eviction (and homelessness), due to complex needs that impact on their ability to sustain a tenancy. The program provides tenancy management and support to people who may become homeless without this intervention. This focus has brought some challenges, as the management of the program crosses several business units of Housing ACT. It has been necessary to ensure that all areas involved in the program maintain clear processes and communication, to provide consistency in the way the program is managed.

Case Studies

Transitional Housing Program (THP)

C, a single woman, presented at the Housing ACT (HACT) shopfront, having been recently released from the Alexander Maconochie Centre. Previously, C had been a HACT tenant, and there was debt related to this previous tenancy. C had been incarcerated for a number of years, and as a result her child was no longer in her care.

At the time that C presented at the shopfront, there were no suitable vacancies available. She was referred to an Indigenous health service for health assistance, support and advocacy. C was then taken on as a client by the SCOPE program, provided by the YWCA. This program provided support and case management while C was rough sleeping and couch-surfing for a number of months, before a suitable vacancy became available.

C was referred to a THP property, with support provided by the YWCA Housing Support Unit. She was accommodated in this property with her partner.

The support service has continued to work with C to assist her in managing her debt issues and help with accessing drug and alcohol support, with the goal of having her child returned to her care. C has since expressed an interest in signing up to the property as a HACT tenant, with YWCA willing to support this.

Head Leasing (HL) program

Inanna has been managing LL for a number of years, in a property situated in a suburban street. However, this has led to intense neighbourhood distress, and it was decided to move her to Bega Flats, to minimise noise from cars at her home. It was also decided to house one of her adult children separately. During the past six months, LL has been subject to a Community Psychiatric Order and has been hospitalised a number of times. This is evidence of progress for LL, as usually she escalates and then commits crimes which impact further on her mental wellbeing.

In the last six months, Inanna has also supported LL's adult son to move to another one of the service's crisis flats, as his house was no longer habitable. This was a positive change, as he now lives within walking distance of his mum's house, and therefore does not overstay his welcome, which would further impact on the wellbeing of both clients. This support provided under the HL program demonstrates the ongoing nature of some of LL's issues. Inanna is also involved with other children who are living separately, in order to improve the quality of LL's life and assist her in maintaining her tenancy.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$0.057m	$0.075m	$0.079m	$0.081m	$ 0.292 m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of households supported	20	52
number of households able to achieve independent living	10	9
number of households able to maintain independence over time	5	8

Supportive Tenancy Service (STS)

The STS commenced operation on 12 November 2010, and is funded with a combination of ACT resources (that were formerly dedicated to sustaining tenancy services under the

Community Linkages Program) and Commonwealth Government funding. The service provides intensive case management for 700 clients across a range of tenures, including social housing, private rental and home ownership. The service has a strong focus on early intervention, targeted at those at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless. In addition to this early intervention focus, the service provides crisis support, outreach, information, advocacy, advice, referral, case management and engagement activities.

The STS provides support for people who are experiencing housing stress that may lead to their tenancies being at risk. It is a tenure-neutral service which can support private renters, mortgagees and tenants of public and community housing. The service supports people from a range of backgrounds and with a range of issues. It works in partnership with other services that provide specialised support to specific demographic groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the aged and young people

Key Achievements and Challenges

The service faced some challenges in coordinating service delivery across the ACT. To address this issue and provide overall guidance on the service delivery, a governance committee was set up, comprising of representatives from each partner organisation, and a representative from the department as required.

The STS operates from the Housing ACT Central Access Point (CAP). This co-location has provided the opportunity for the service to develop robust working relationships with the Housing ACT tenancy teams. Performance reporting for the STS notes that working in the CAP has assisted with opportunities for tenancy teams to make referrals and to work collaboratively with the service.

The STS has supported clients from a broad range of tenure types. The breakdown of tenure types for each adult supported during the most recent reporting period (January-June 2011) is shown below:

- public housing – 200

- private rental – 61

- mortgage – 2

- family – 13

- homeless – 20

- boarding – 1

- unknown – 6

During the most recent reporting period (Jan-Jun 2011) no service users had their tenancies terminated. This positive outcome for the program demonstrates a flexible approach to providing a range of supports to service users.

Case Study 1

Family of four (two children, aged one and three, with mother expecting a third child) was referred to the STS by First Point in early April 2011. The STS worker met with the father and identified the following issues:

- The family was living in a private tenancy ($390 rent per week) and was $4000 in rental arrears. A warrant of eviction was granted to the landlord in August 2010 for non-payment of rent; however, this was never executed. The landlord was requesting that the family move out immediately so that the house could be demolished.

- The family was not able to meet the cost of the rent in this property.

- Application for public housing was lodged in 2008 and the family was placed in the high needs category. The father stated that he had continually advised Housing ACT (HACT) regarding his current circumstances, but had received no update from HACT on the progress of this application.

- The father advised that he had recently lost his job and the family was receiving only Centrelink benefits. The family was not receiving Family Tax Benefit (FTB) because tax returns had not been completed for the past two years.

- The father was finding it hard to secure employment (in construction) without a car. He had a $1050 fine outstanding, for driving an unregistered car without appropriate insurances.

The STS worker sought advice from the Tenants' Union (TU) on whether the landlord could call up a previous warrant. The worker was advised that the landlord must reapply for a warrant through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT). The family was reassured that it could remain in its current accommodation for the time being. The STS worker then contacted a Centrelink social worker, and was advised that the family needed to complete the outstanding tax return information, before the FTB could be back-dated.

The STS worker referred the father to CARE Financial Services, regarding tax returns and budgeting. As a result, the tax return information was completed and the family began paying a portion of its rent, as per its financial capabilities.

The worker contacted HACT regarding the family's application, providing all necessary documentation for reassessment. The application was approved for priority. Before HACT offered the family a property, the family moved out of the private tenancy and was placed in a transitional property by the YWCA.

The family is currently residing in a HACT property and the father has regained full-time employment.

This case study demonstrates the support provided by the STS to people experiencing housing affordability stress, and emphasises the advocacy role of the service, which can ensure a beneficial outcome. As a result of the immediate collaboration between HACT, First Point and the TU, the STS was able to achieve positive outcomes for this family and prevent homelessness.

Case Study 2

The participant is a single father with a nine-year-old son. The referring issues included:

- tenant is in excess of $15,000 in rental arrears (pending rebate recalculation) for his public housing tenancy

- had not engaged with HACT for previous 6 months

- had not attended 4 previous ACAT hearings

- was un-contactable by HACT

- unconditional Termination and Possession order sought by HACT - adjourned at time of referral

Within the first 48 hours the STS had made contact with the participant and arranged for a home visit, made a referral to Care Financial Service and contacted Welfare Rights and Legal Centre (WRLC) to arrange a meeting.

This referral was made to the program at an extremely late stage, coming from the Tribunal advocate after being heard for an unconditional termination order and being adjourned under extraordinary circumstances. It is important to stress that this complicates matters and makes the likelihood of sustaining the tenancy considerably lower than if the referral was made at an earlier stage.

In working with the client it was identified that a rebate had not been submitted for approximately 12 months, resulting in market rent being charged. This was compounded by the fact that the client was unable to obtain a separation certificate, due to difficulties with the previous employer, leading to a period where the only family income was Family Tax Benefit.

In speaking with the client, it was identified that there were possible contributing mental health factors compounded by the breakdown of a long term relationship just prior to the difficulties arising with tenancy management. It was also highlighted that the person lacked financial awareness and needed further support through both general and financial counselling.

STS has supported this family to access Care Financial Services, has advocated on its behalf to recalculate the rebates of the affected periods and has provided intensive support through the ACAT process. A referral has also been made to WRLC, which is assisting with the appeal that is currently underway.

By utilising a case coordination approach, it has been possible to involve support from a number of stakeholders, including STS, Housing ACT, WRLC, Care Financial Service, Centrelink, Canberra Fathers and Children Service, and First Point.

At this time, the STS remains engaged with the family through the appeals process and case coordination on future planning. Current tasks include investigating all possible alternative accommodation options, general support and planning discussions with family members in the case of a loss at the appeals stage. This family is genuinely engaged with the program and has made significant achievements since its first contact.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$0.1595m	$0.256m	$0.263m	$0.269m	$0.9475m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$0.196097m	$0.426606m	$0.446121m	$1.0688m
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
percentage reduction in proportion of people entering homelessness services from public housing	10	
number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants assisted to sustain a tenancy	12	32
number of at risk tenancies able to be sustained after referral	50	383

Helping our Senior Tenants (HOST)

This initiative is auspiced by Housing ACT and aims to assist elderly tenants to sustain their tenancy and connect with other supports when required. The HOST program is delivered with face to face visits from Housing ACT staff. These visits utilise a social connectedness tool, to assess both the ability of aged tenants to live independently and the adequacy of existing supports. Depending on individual needs, active referrals are made to relevant services, including Home and Community Care (HACC) services, and the Red Cross Telecross program (which provides a daily phone call to check on the well-being of at risk people who live alone). The focus of the program is tenants who are over 90 years old.

Key Achievements and Challenges

An important feature of the HOST program is the assessment of service users' current needs, which can then inform subsequent discussions regarding downsizing or other options, if they are not coping in their present housing. Housing ACT assists older tenants who wish to remain in their local community to access suitable older person's accommodation in that area. This is now more achievable, with a number of units for elderly persons' accommodation being built across the ACT under the Nation Building Jobs Plan. In this way, the program has been able to provide options for elderly tenants who may wish to move into more suitable accommodation, while maintaining their established linkages and supports.

Case Study

R, a 93 year old woman, had resided in the same 2-bedroom Housing ACT (HACT) property since it was allocated to her 30 years ago, when she migrated to Australia from Eastern Europe. Following the death of her husband, R had been living alone for the past 10 months. She spoke very little English and also had mobility issues. During a Client

Service Visit with R, the Housing Manager (HM) noted that the property was poorly maintained and that there was an accumulation of rubbish and waste.

When asked about supports, R stated that she had a carer who looked after her, and consent to share information with the carer was completed. When the HM returned to the office, she contacted the HOST Client Support Coordinator (CSC), who contacted the carer and ascertained that he was someone who lived in a neighbouring complex. The carer reported that he attended the property daily to support R. When questioned about the state of the property, the carer refused to comment, terminating the call.

The HOST CSC then brought the matter to the Senior Manager, noting the potential for elder abuse, and the appropriate authorities were contacted. R was removed from the property via an ambulance, as she was suffering severe malnutrition. She was kept in hospital for over a month. During that time, the HOST CSC engaged a number of support agencies to adequately support R, including the Public Trustee to manage her finances. R was also transferred to an Older Person's Property with HACT, in one of the newer complexes which would better suit her needs as an older person.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ 0.10	$ 0.10	$ -	$ 0.21
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of elderly tenants assessed	50	24
number of elderly tenants assisted to sustain tenancy	25	24
number of elderly tenants supported to move to appropriate housing based on assessment	25	230

In 2010-11, 24 elderly tenants were supported through needs assessments and assisted to sustain their tenancies. A further 230 elderly tenants have been supported to move to appropriate housing under the right sizing program.

Managed Accommodation Program (MAP)

The Canberra Men's Centre (CMC) *Men's Accommodation Support Service* (MASS) program commenced in June 2004, providing accommodation and support for single men with high and complex needs, who were unaccompanied by children.

CMC has established the *Men's Managed Accommodation Program (MAP)* as an extension of the MASS program, to support men exiting detention at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. The *MAP* targets single men who are likely to face homelessness on release from corrections.

The MAP can accommodate up to 15 men at any one time, with a further 10 provided with outreach support at any one time. Accommodation is initially provided under a head

tenancy arrangement with clients housed in place. Clients are then signed to their own tenancies when support is no longer required. Properties have been sourced from Housing ACT stock. A Women's Managed Accommodation Program provides support and accommodation for women exiting detention at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. The Women's Managed Accommodation Program is able to assist up to five women at any one time, with a further five women provided with outreach support at any one time.

Key outcomes of the program include securing and maintaining long-term accommodation, improving basic living skills, addressing complex health and substance abuse issues, and re-engaging with their families and community. The Men's Managed Accommodation Program operates from the Civic area of Canberra, but uses Housing ACT properties across the ACT to accommodate participants.

Key Achievements and Challenges

A challenge encountered early in the life of the program was the leveraging of funding and the actual allocation of funding from another ACT Government department for the program. However, the program went ahead and was able to commence before this funding was received.

The MAP has highlighted the benefits for homeless persons if government agencies and community agencies can work together to achieve successful programs and outcomes for clients.

Canberra Men's Centre (CMC) has noted that clients often present with entrenched or intractable behaviours, related to 'survival on the street'. This program challenge has been addressed through persistent and consistent support, role modelling, and assertive outreach, underpinned by respect for the client. Another challenge has been maintaining progress with the client when there are not immediate or short-term outcomes (client de-motivation). CMC has overcome this through persistent engagement and a positive approach to personal challenges experienced by the client, which feeds into an innovative approach to finding solutions.

Key achievements of the program include:

- achieving a recidivism rate of less than 20% over an 18-month period

- no observed instances of violent assault by clients during the period

- positive alternatives to anti-social behaviour as a result of respectful mentoring

- reduced drug and alcohol usage (several clients also engaged with a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program)

- accommodation, employment, and social engagement outcomes as a consequence of effective case work in collaboration with the client

- sustainable housing outcomes for over 30% of participants; the balance continue to be assisted with transitional / long-term housing and support

Case Study

Following discussions with the Canberra Men's Centre (CMC) referral committee, the client was released into CMC Transitional Accommodation with outreach support, rather than the Managed Accommodation Program (MAP). Both programs utilise an intensive case management approach, with the transitional accommodation focus being on short term assistance rather than extended case management. As the client had particularly high and complex needs and had a long history of offending, it was decided that he should be placed in transitional accommodation as his prognosis for recidivism was high. The client did engage, however, and responded to intensive case management to the extent that it was decided that he may well benefit from the MAP.

The client's engagement in the MAP was at times spasmodic, but the application of an assertive case management approach ensured that he had consistent support in dealing with his complex needs. The establishment of a collaborative support network was imperative for the client to address his drug and alcohol issues, mental health needs, meet his Probation and Parole requirements and address many other intricate issues.

With this consistent support, the client was able to finish his parole period without being re-incarcerated, for the first time in 14 years. Furthermore, he has been able to maintain his tenancy, actively engage with his job network agency to develop his capacity for education and employment, and establish a stable personal relationship. Subsequently, the client is being transitioned from the MAP to independent living as a tenant of Housing ACT.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
State funding (million)	$1.740m	$0.715m	$0.724m	$0.74	$0.754m	$ 4.673 m
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of tenancies successfully transitioned to independent tenancy	12	22
number of tenancies established for 1 year or more (not applicable for 2010-11)	n/a	n/a
number of people provided with outreach	15	60

The women's component of the Managed Accommodation Program was established in February 2011. The program involves supporting women prior to their release from prison. Because of this, the program did not accommodate women until May 2011 and subsequently has not been reported against in the 2010-11 Annual Report.

Mental Health Housing and Support Initiative (HASI)

The Mental Health Housing and Support Initiative (HASI) was established in the ACT in June 2010, to increase tenancy and clinical support for tenants with a mental illness, and

is similar to the HASI program in NSW. The aim of HASI is to provide integrated packages of housing and mental health support, to support sustainable tenancies in public housing for people with moderate to severe mental health issues and enhance community participation. Subject to a successful independent review of the initiative, and available resourcing, the program may be extended to include tenants with drug and alcohol dependencies.

HASI operates as a three-way service delivery partnership in the ACT:

- Accommodation support and rehabilitation associated with disability is provided by four non-government organisations (funded by ACT Health)

- Clinical care and rehabilitation will be provided by ACT Mental Health Services; and

- Long-term secure and affordable housing and property and tenancy management services are being provided by Housing ACT.

The governance structure for the program includes a HASI Executive Committee comprising Senior Executives from the Community Services Directorate (including Housing ACT), ACT Health and a representative of the Mental Health Community Coalition. Reporting to the Executive Committee, a HASI Advisory Committee is responsible for the intake and assessment process and for the establishment of joined-up responses at a programmatic and individual case level.

Key Achievements and Challenges

A significant challenge for implementing the HASI was ensuring that the core features of the successful NSW program were retained, while still developing a program that was both relevant and appropriate for the ACT context. This has been addressed in the course of establishing the program in a manner that reflects the needs of clients in the ACT program.

Another issue for HASI was the challenge of engaging the support of clinicians who were to be involved with the program. By conducting joint presentations to groups of clinicians, the HASI program was able to ensure that this challenge did not adversely affect the program.

A highlight of the program has been its capacity to establish sound partnerships between agencies. This has led to clients with mental health and other issues being provided with the necessary support and treatment to sustain accommodation in the community.

It is anticipated that the HASI program will expand to support additional clients from July 2011, increasing the program capacity from 10 clients to 15.

Case Study

Richmond Fellowship is a non-government agency that provided support to 3 clients in the HASI program during 2010-11. All were women with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and most had a history of abuse, social isolation and recurrent hospitalisations. One had been homeless.

Each client was allocated a key worker who worked with them to develop a personal recovery program. These workers attended monthly meetings with the client's clinical

supervisor from ACT Mental Health and a representative from the Housing Department. Over the 6-month Jan-Jun 11 reporting period, Richmond Fellowship provided a wide range of services to the women involved in the HASI program. In addition to providing assistance with shopping, cooking, attending pathology tests and doctors' and clinic appointments, each key worker undertook a range of specific activities that were designed to help meet the goals determined by individual clients.

One client, JS, stated that her chief goal was to increase the number of social activities she undertook each week. In response, her key worker networked with a number of different agencies and in addition to attending Richmond Fellowship's own social activities, this individual now attends weekly well-being sessions through Inanna women's group, as well as craft and social activities in a group run by the National Brain Injury Foundation.

Another client, JC, determined that her long-term goal was to run her own graphics and web design business. Her key worker assisted her not only in enrolling in appropriate CIT courses, but provides on-going support, mentoring and opportunities for much needed breaks and relaxation. The third client, NS, wished to pursue an exercise regime. To this end, her key worker investigated various gym programs on offer, supported her with a weekly walking regime and assisted her in choosing and purchasing a treadmill for use at home. This client is already supported by a peer support worker, who together with the client's key worker, seeks to reduce her social isolation by involving her in a range of social activities.

Since their involvement in the HASI program, all HASI clients have retained their tenancy, and none have required hospitalisation. The number and type of social activities undertaken by each client has also increased. Considering the vulnerability and previous history of these women, this is a significant achievement.

Two of the three clients - JC and NS - are living more or less independently, are able to maintain budgets and do their own shopping, cooking and the necessary cleaning and upkeep of their accommodation. One client, JC, has enrolled in a CIT course while another, NS, is actively seeking employment. This same individual is now having increased contact with her daughter as a direct consequence of having her own accommodation.

All three clients are also engaged in physical activity to varying extents. While JC regularly attends a gym class on her own, NS has weekly walks with her key worker, and is using the treadmill she purchased. JS has remained relatively resistant to attempts to encourage her physical activity, but more recent efforts (which involve walking a dog as part of a trial for a pet therapy program) seem to be having a positive effect.

These HASI clients were provided with a level of support that reflected their individual level of need, which was modified as progress was made. All three clients were provided with after-hours on-call phone support on weekdays and weekends. The total number of hours dedicated to each client varied according to their level of need, with JS regularly requiring in excess of 60 hours per month, and NS and JC needing between 20 and 35 hours of support per month.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$0.0157m	$0.5133m	$0.339m	$0.348m	$ 1.216 m

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of people provided with support	8	9
number of tenancies sustained for 1 year or more	8	6

Youth Foyer Model - 'Our Place'

The ACT's Youth Integrated Education and Accommodation Program is an exciting new initiative aimed at supporting young people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness. By providing high quality and affordable housing within a supportive environment, the program is able to link young people with education, training and employment opportunities. The program was recently launched and the new service name announced: *Our Place - Live, Learn and Achieve*.

Young people engaged in the program also have the opportunity to participate in mentoring and life skills activities, helping to build supportive relationships and prepare for independent living.

The program further provides for a range of community and business partnerships dedicated to helping young people to achieve. It is anticipated that such partnerships will develop further over the coming years and will contribute to the benefits of the program, both for the young people and for partner organisations.

The Youth Integrated Education and Accommodation Program brings together two Commonwealth Initiatives, the Nation Building and Jobs Plan as well as the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The program provides an innovative approach to addressing youth homelessness, recognising that young people require more than a roof over their heads.

The program has already experienced positive outcomes for young people involved, with all participants engaged in full-time employment, education or training as at 30 August 2011.

Key Achievements and Challenges

A number of challenges have already been addressed in implementing this model in the ACT. These include the identification of a suitable property for the accommodation, and the establishment of strong working partnerships. As the program develops into the future, it will be important to consider how best to support social inclusion and community engagement for participants, and how to maintain a robust range of service linkages.

A key strength of the program is its holistic response to the problems faced by many young people who are at risk of homelessness. This will be essential in developing a long-

term approach to supporting effective outcomes for young homeless people, maintaining links to employment or training as they transition into long term accommodation.

The program experienced some challenges in terms of ensuring that initial places were allocated within a tight timeframe. The Allocations Panel worked hard to liaise with First Point to manage this, and the service was established with a full complement of Service Users accommodated.

Case Study

A is an 18 year old mother of a fifteen-month-old daughter, S. A was referred to *Our Place* by the local Migrant Resource Centre. A came to Australia as a refugee with her family from the Sudan, when she was eight years old. Her parents separated when she was 12 and A lived with her mother and five siblings until she became pregnant when she was 16. As an unmarried mother brings 'shame' to her family in A's culture, A had to leave home and moved into a women's refuge. Her mother was able to provide some support to her, but A was unable to return home and remained in the refuge for 12 months until she was referred to *Our Place*. A had maintained her attendance at school throughout her pregnancy and after the birth of S. When she was referred to *Our Place*, she was attending CC Cares, an education program specifically targeting young parents.

When A was referred to *Our Place* she was 6 months pregnant with her second child, who was born in September. A was accepted to *Our Place* and has settled in well. Staff have worked closely with her to make sure she had the necessary supports in place for the birth of J. A attended school until she went into labour and returned to school three weeks later, after spending some time with her mother after J was born.

Staff have worked with A to establish her short, medium and long term goals. Short term goals include continuing at school, managing her parenting responsibilities and improving her relationship with her family. Medium term goals include completing her Year 12 and gaining entry into University to study Nursing. Long term goals include finding permanent affordable accommodation for her family, finishing her Nursing degree and finding employment.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$0.107m	$0.5308m	$0.5478m	$ 1.186 m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of young people who are accommodated in the program	15	24
number of young people who are re-engaged with family (not applicable 2010-11)	n/a	n/a
number of young people who engage in education, training and/or work	12	23

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of young people who exit the program into independent tenancy arrangements (not applicable 2010-11)	n/a	n/a

The program commenced operations in June 2011. This did not allow for sufficient time to report progress against the number of young people re-engaged with family or the number of young people who exited the program into an independent tenancy.

First Point (Central Intake Service) and Social Housing Register (Common Waiting List)

The ACT's Central Intake Service for Homelessness, *First Point*, commenced initial operation in October 2010 and became fully operational from 1 November 2010. The service is auspiced by Connections ACT, under contract with the Community Services Directorate. It is co-located with Housing ACT's Central Access Point (CAP).

First Point provides placement into homelessness and housing support services for people in the ACT, and facilitates access to other relevant services as required. In this way, *First Point* provides a primary, but not sole, access point into the ACT homelessness system. It operated on the basis of a 'no turn away' principle. This means that every homeless person who makes contact with the Central Intake Service will receive a service response. In the event that assistance cannot be offered, the service will provide follow-up contact within 48 hours, and then regularly after that time until the person has received an appropriate service response.

First Point streamlines service entry points into the homelessness service system, ensuring that clients do not have to negotiate multiple agencies to access services. This is achieved through the provision of phone and face-to-face contact, to assist in matching those in need of support to social housing and homelessness services.

Further improvements in service coordination have been achieved through the implementation of the *Social Housing Register,* to establish an integrated waiting list comprising both public and community housing applicants. The register has been established through a phased approach; this commenced with the inclusion of the current community housing providers operating under a formal contractual and leasing arrangement with Housing ACT. Subsequently, all additional community housing providers that receive properties constructed under the Nation Building and Jobs Plan will be required to allocate these dwellings from the *Social Housing Register*.

The final phase of the implementation of the *Social Housing Register* will be to investigate the possibility of linking affordable housing organisations to create a holistic social housing system that includes all forms of public, community and affordable housing.

Key Achievements and Challenges

A significant challenge in establishing *First Point* was ensuring a smooth transition to a central system. There were a number of obstacles to be considered in establishing a new service that was to be so critical in the management of homelessness services for the ACT. Perhaps the most important of these was the possibility that individual services would be resistant to the change. Housing ACT worked hard to provide ongoing consultation and to share information with all agencies involved, so that the transition

could be as smooth as possible. As a result of this, agencies were overwhelmingly supportive of the new service and have continued to note the benefits of a centralised point for the coordination of homelessness services.

The co-location of *First Point* in the Central Access Point has also been a positive factor in establishing a strong working relationship with Housing ACT's Gateway Services. The physical location of *First Point* ensures that a continuum of responses to homelessness and housing needs may be provided in a coordinated manner.

In addition to managing homelessness service provision, *First Point* is also functioning as an important data source, providing an immediate and coordinated snapshot of the homelessness context in the ACT. This is used to inform planned responses to the needs of people accessing homelessness services.

Case Study

A homeless teen contacted *First Point* when he needed temporary accommodation after his relationship broke down with his parents. As no crisis accommodation was available, *First Point* worked with the teen to stay with friends until he was remanded and placed in Bimberi Detention Centre. The teen and *First Point* liaised as he moved between Bimberi and Marlow Cottage, until *First Point* was able to place him in a youth Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS). *First Point* also referred the teen and his parent to Reconnect Outreach Program, with a view to the teen returning home after he worked on some agreed issues.

After a couple of months, the teen was exited from the youth SHS for drug use and he returned to Marlow. Almost 18, the teen requested that *First Point* seek other accommodation services. *First Point* referred him to another SHS but the referral was unable to be accepted due to the house dynamics. Unfortunately, at this time the relationship with the teen's parents completely broke down and the parents withdrew from the outreach agency. *First Point* provided emotional support as required. First Point supported the young person into an adult SHS, which was supplemented with additional outreach to explore longer term housing options.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$0	$0.22875m	$0.132613m	$0.136413m	$0.4978 m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$0.45m	$0.467m	$0.483m	$1.4m
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of people contacting First Point provided with a service response	300	2,626
number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, who are referred to accommodation	75	701

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of people provided with support services	300	1,590

Staying at Home after Domestic Violence Program

The Staying at Home after Domestic Violence Program (STAY) was developed in conjunction with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) and commenced in October 2009. This initiative assists victims of domestic violence to remain housed in their long-term accommodation. The STAY program supports the family to remain in the home, and have the perpetrator removed from the tenancy agreement and rehoused. This takes place, where appropriate, after final domestic orders have been granted.

As part of the STAY program, an approved business process is now in place, which includes the development of a Domestic Violence Policy Manual, a Memorandum of Understanding between Housing ACT and DVCS and a workflow chart to ensure a smooth and efficient process is in place for identifying Housing ACT tenants who are eligible for the program.

The Domestic Violence Policy Manual sets out the policies and procedures for working with women and children escaping domestic violence. The Manual also states the directorate's commitment to working in partnership with specialist agencies, to ensure effective responses to domestic violence. The domestic violence flowchart clearly outlines the referral definitions and the processes for contacting DVCS for tenancy support, and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) to register an application under Section 85, substitution of tenancy.

While the STAY program is not currently funded, these processes remain in place and are used to identify current or prospective clients of Housing ACT who may be eligible for the program.

Key Achievements and Challenges

A challenge to the program's operation has been the difficulty in accessing final domestic violence orders from the court, as well as a significant time lag. This has meant that while Housing ACT tenancy staff are aware of STAY as a response to domestic violence issues, there have been very few clients who fall within the eligibility parameters of the program.

The project partners addressed this difficulty in part, by identifying other solutions to allow people to remain housed in place. By utilising the 'breakdown of tenancy' provisions of the ACT's *Residential Tenancies Act,* the program could achieve the same outcome without the need for final domestic violence orders. However, this alternative approach is only applicable to households where both parties are joint tenants of Housing ACT (rather than one being a tenant and one a resident).

In addition to the core program, Housing ACT provided funding to DVCS for two extra court workers to assist people accessing the legal system.

The initiative involved a close working relationship between Housing ACT and DVCS. This included a part-time project officer based in each organisation. The project officers

worked across sites in both organisations and have facilitated a range of related service delivery improvements for each agency.

Case Study

R and her now ex-partner G were allocated a 2-bedroom Housing ACT property just before the birth of their first child, D. Prior to the allocation, there were concerns that there may be a history of domestic violence incidents between R and G, but both parties denied this.

Within the first month of moving into the property, it became apparent that there was significant domestic violence being perpetrated against R, with ongoing complaints of domestic disputes, and repeated police attendance at the property. R was linked with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and supported to take out a Domestic Violence Order and press charges against G following the assaults. G was subsequently incarcerated.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
C'wealth Funding (million)	$ -	$0.1m	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 0.1 m
State funding (million)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Overall Service Target	0	0	0	0	0	0

2010-11 Targets (please specify units)	2010-11 Target	2010-11 Actual
number of clients assessed under the STAY program	5	1
number of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence	5	1

Under this program, the ACT Government has provided funding to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service for a dedicated court advocacy worker to support individuals and families experiencing family violence. This program supported 298 clients between January and June 2011, including 399 instances of support.