

**Submission  
No 247**

**INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING**

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# Homelessness and social housing

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Submission to the committee.

**For the local Shoalhaven area.**

**4/30/2014**

## 1.

I have been given this opportunity to express some of my personal views/concerns about homelessness in the local Shoalhaven area as a temporary accommodation provider since 2006. Although I have experienced a lot of different aspects with regards to this topic.. I will give you one example of what actually happens to motels operators if temporary accommodation is not handled correctly by accommodation providers.

As the managing Director of the Riverhaven Motel up until last December 2013, My wife and I choose to only accommodate *homeless women/men and their families, as well as homeless/displaced Domestic violence victims (often accompanied by their children also)*.

We took this cause of action because we soon learned through bitter experience, that we could not safely assist and provide healthy temporary accommodation to families, whilst also accommodating drug and alcohol addicted people and those with often non-diagnosed mental health disorders, or clients choosing not to medicate themselves for others safety. Often causing violent unpredictable behaviours, and outbursts towards the families and other guests staying with us (not to mention my personal safety each time I had to intervene...).

I spent the most of my time watching over our property for un wanted visitors that searched through the place or knew others staying with other clients. The biggest concern was to protect the families housed with us, from uninvited guests who often recognised the families staying with us, these individuals would always mention the whereabouts of our clients to known local friend/relatives, who then in turn told their ex partners. This was always a problem for me as I would have to deal with them face to face.

there were also cases where the people staying with us would get in contact with partners and disclose their location for fear of retribution, in those cases I had to move these families on as I could no longer keep them safe.

I worked hand in hand with the department of housing NSW, Department of social welfare, child protective services, local women's refuges and other local welfare organisations to support our clients.

During our time we helped a lot of families to find their footing in life and make a new beginning, we often needed to provide extra support depending on each case, as well as basic counselling, emotional support and observing the family dynamics and reporting any concerns regarding the children's safety and well-being to child services (mostly due to parents instability from the abuse they had come out of.)

In My experience I found there were two types of homeless peoples,

- 1) Those with a victim mentality. These people often went around town from motel to motel. All though they had the funds to make a new start, they lacked the solution skills to make this happen, often due to lack of knowledge or emotional unstableness. These clients often blamed their circumstances on everyone else, rather than themselves. These people would often be chased up by multiple departments looking to provide support, but never took it seriously.

I found it hard that these people would often have multiple agencies supporting them, even though they made no effort to help themselves to the frustration of the agency representatives. Whilst the people earnestly desiring just one agency to help them, often walked the journey un-assisted

- 2) The Victors. These people were the fighters always chasing up the support they could, doing everything to provide a safe start for them -selves and their families. After lengthy battles and pushing red tape uphill they would achieve their goals. Often the major problem was to get just one agency to help them.

I soon began to question whether it would be better for government welfare to spend their resources giving people life solution skills to make key decisions, as well as to deal with the emotional issues that affected them to live a stable life in the community, (rather than give fortnightly money that was often spent on daily spree of consumables)

I know that this doesn't even scrape the surface, but I hope it's a small thought that helps inform the government.