

HELPING HOMES VICTORIA MEET UNIQUE NEEDS



Co-designing with people with a lived experience of mental ill health to inform the development of 2000 homes for people living with mental illness.

Introducing Homes Victoria

Homes Victoria and the Department of Health are implementing a suite of reforms that respond to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health system. One of the priorities is an increase in the allocation of social housing to Victorian's living with mental illness.

The commission recommended that Homes Victoria dedicate budget from the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build to build at least 2000 homes for adult Victorians living with an acute mental illness who are in unstable housing and require intensive, ongoing treatment, care and support. The commission also recommended that the homes be codesigned with people with a lived experience of mental illness and unstable housing to ensure that the composition, design and supports meet the unique needs of the people who will live in them. This approach was selected to ensure the composition and design of the housing and support responded to differing levels of need.

Tight timeframes

Homes Victoria needed the codesign work to be carried out in a very tight timeframe in order to input into the Department of Treasury and Finance Big Build market procurement processes. The codesign needed to rapidly get to the heart of what matters most to people living with

an acute mental illness about their home, how would they use their home, where should it be located, the preferred composition of the home and what supports they need to help them live successfully. Importantly, Homes Victoria and the Department of Health also needed to be able to engage registered housing providers and mental health service providers in the process so they could not only contribute to the design of the homes and supports but to also provide guidance on the feasibility and viability as well as advice on how to best coordinate services for future residents.

However, codesign to be meaningful needs to be respectful of peoples ability to participate safely particularly when engaging with people who maybe hard to reach or vulnerable. KPMG's experience in similar work meant we were best placed to assist Homes Victoria to meet demanding timelines whilst ensuring the design was reflective of peoples needs as well as practical enough to inform future procurement. Our ability to bring together the right mix of people and specialised partners, codesign methods and trust was critical to delivering a successful outcome.

Listening, learning and designing

Over five months, our team led an iterative three-phase co-design program. We partnered with a range of specialists in the design and facilitation

of the codesign process including facilitators from Mental Health Victoria as well as a panel of 'critical friends' with lived experience who helped shape the approach, analysis and recommendations throughout. Our participants included Aboriginal Victorians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ community members, people from regional areas of Victoria, and people from different age groups – ensuring the design was informed by the needs of a diverse range of people.

Our team set out to understand what their unique needs were and how those needs could be supported through tailored, thoughtful housing and support. For example, what features were needed inside and outside of the home? What support services needed to be accessible and when, to help people live successfully in their home? We welcomed the thoughts and insights of our participants, and the guidance of our lived experience partners, across every aspect of the project including the design, planning, facilitation, analysis, and final development of specifications.

In addition to people with lived experience of mental ill health, we engaged with carers and service providers in the mental health sector, and housing agencies. We explored their insights and recommendations, and considered how they may be better able to collaborate to provide better support to people living in the homes.

Homes fit for purpose

Our team drew on their experience in design, working with government and working with vulnerable people to deliver tangible outputs that would directly feed into Homes Victoria's planning and procurement processes. Importantly, we helped to define the likely range of homes and their design features that would better meet the needs of people living with mental illness, to support the procurement of the homes. We also provided guidance on the sorts of support and services that should accompany those homes, and how housing and support service providers can collaborate to improve outcomes for people living in the homes.

Project insights

Our ability to work rapidly in response to the project's urgency and bring the right experts together from across KPMG and externally were key advantages for Homes Victoria. We demonstrated our specialised capability to assist clients with the complex and often intensive task of large, lived-experience co-design with people who can be hard to reach, and whose voices are often unheard.

Beneficial to our success was our ability to rapidly bring together a team with the right experience in lived experience codesign and a codesign approach that embedded lived experience at every stage and level of the project from planning, facilitation, design, analysis through to

recommendation. We also leveraged our broader experience of supporting work in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System as well as experience supporting Homes Victoria with large scale market procurement activities.

A blueprint for the future

Homes Victoria has used this work to inspire others to widen their use of co-design approaches. Our work has revealed the opportunities and advantages of co-design, which Homes Victoria and other agencies will be able to draw on or replicate in future to gain similar benefits.

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September 2022. 942092785MC