

Barriers in accommodating survivors of modern slavery:

Working towards safe, suitable, and
sustainable housing





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Disclaimer

This report presents findings from a project undertaken by Australian Red Cross (Red Cross). The report intends to inform future program development and policy discussion related to accommodation for survivors of modern slavery supported by the Support for Trafficked People Program (Support Program), survivors not accessing the Support Program and migrants on temporary visas in Australia. The report draws on information, opinions and advice sourced from a variety of individuals and stakeholders. While all care has been taken in its preparation, the report is not intended to be exhaustive and Red Cross does not assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for the accuracy or reliability of information contained in the report.

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04 Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this report and have been defined specifically for the purpose of this project.

- **Accommodation provider:** Agencies that were identified as having provided shelter to survivors of modern slavery and/or as a referral option for Support Program clients. They encompass both short and long-term accommodation providers and include housing agencies, direct providers, homelessness or family and domestic violence entry points that provide accommodation.
- **Case worker/ Support Program case worker:** A Red Cross case worker who works within the Support Program.
- **Crisis accommodation:** Short-term intervention, usually in a specific emergency accommodation facility or backpackers/motel, paid for by a homelessness entry point.
- **Community housing:** Housing managed by community housing providers but provided/funded by a state or territory government. In some states, can be accessed through the state/territory housing register.
- **Community housing providers:** Highly regulated, not for profit organisations that specialise in housing a diverse range of tenants through subsidised rental accommodation.
- **Exit pathways:** A pathway for an individual to leave their particular accommodation option for another accommodation option.
- **Forced marriage:** When a person gets married without freely and fully consenting because they have been coerced, threatened or deceived, or because they are incapable of understanding the nature and effect of a marriage ceremony for reasons including age or mental capacity.
- **Homelessness:** When a person does not have suitable or stable accommodation and their current living arrangement or dwelling is inadequate.
- **Homelessness entry point:** A homelessness organisation which acts as a first point of call for people in need and who can either supply crisis accommodation directly or make referrals to other accommodation providers or services.
- **Long-term accommodation:** Accommodation where the usual stay of an individual is longer than 3 months, including transitional, community, public housing and private rentals.
- **Modern slavery:** An umbrella term inclusive of range of serious exploitative practices, including trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices, and the worst forms of child labour.
- **Public housing:** Housing owned and/or managed by the government. State and territory governments usually provide public housing to low-income earners who pay a percentage of their income as rent.
- **Referring agency:** An agency that assists service users in finding accommodation through making referrals to accommodation providers.
- **Refuge accommodation:** Accommodation provided (commonly) to women and children escaping family and domestic violence. Refuges can cover a range of accommodation options from single units to group accommodation and are usually staffed by support workers.
- **Service user:** An individual who is accessing the services of an accommodation provider or an applicant to a housing program.
- **Short-term accommodation:** Accommodation where the usual stay of a service user is less than 3 months including emergency and crisis accommodation, refuges, youth and transitional housing.
- **Social housing:** An umbrella term that encompasses both community and public housing.
- **Support Program:** The Australian Government's Support for Trafficked People Program, funded by the Department of Social Services and delivered by Australian Red Cross.



- **Support Program client:** A person who is currently engaged with or has previously been engaged with and supported by Red Cross case workers through the Support Program.
- **Supported accommodation:** A type of housing that provides higher level care and support for people with particular or complex needs.
- **Specialist homelessness services:** A range of homelessness services funded by government that are delivered by various government and non-government organisations to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Survivor:** A person who has experienced modern slavery in some form, inclusive of both people who are formally assessed as victims as well as those who have not, but who have experienced a situation of exploitation.

*'In the past we have seen group activists and legislators fighting human trafficking, while others of us are working tirelessly to end homelessness. But the two are interlinked. What is important is identifying the problem, and in this case the problem is trafficked persons experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, and those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity being at risk for trafficking. Two intersecting issues, and the issues should not be examined separately. Rather the problem of human trafficking and its relationship to homelessness should be looked at as one' UNANIMA International 2021.*¹

06 Executive Summary

Modern slavery is a significant humanitarian issue and a serious human rights violation. Globally, an estimated 40.3 million people are currently subject to modern slavery.² Australia itself is not immune and we have seen a significant increase in the number of people formally identified as being affected by modern slavery within the past decade.³ Australian Red Cross (Red Cross), through delivery of the Support for Trafficked People Program (Support Program) funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS), has supported over 515 survivors of modern slavery since 2009, providing a holistic casework service to support individuals in meeting their safety, security, health and wellbeing needs, to reach their personal goals and develop self-efficacy.

From Red Cross's experience, finding safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation can be a particularly stressful and daunting prospect for survivors and a difficult process for case workers. Housing is a critical humanitarian need and a social determinant of health. A growing body of research indicates that housing has a significant effect on overall levels of wellbeing and specific mental and physical health outcomes for survivors of modern slavery.⁴ One of the main challenges support services experience when assisting survivors of modern slavery is finding suitable housing,⁵ which can have flow on implications for a person's recovery from their experience of exploitation. Although accommodation is not a catch-all solution for all the supports needed in aiding a survivor's recovery, safe, suitable and sustainable housing is a crucial foundation for their recovery journey.

Red Cross and our partners have consistently shared details of the challenges faced in accommodating survivors with Government and discussed these issues with sector stakeholders within human trafficking and forced marriage networks, including local governments in each state and territory across Australia. Red Cross acknowledges the commitment of DSS to better understand these barriers and consider potential solutions, through the Department's funding of this project.

The Australian Governments National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–2024 outlines a vision for a future where no one is subjected to modern slavery and the human rights of all people are valued equally. Acknowledging that a key principle in achieving this is to *"provide holistic, gender sensitive, culturally responsive, trauma informed, victim centred protection and support to all victims and survivors of modern slavery"*, the government has committed to *"Undertake a targeted review of support... available to modern slavery victims and survivors, particularly women and children, taking into account existing reviews and inquiries"*.⁶ This project aims to further inform government responses to supporting survivors of modern slavery by examining short-term and long-term accommodation options in each state and territory of Australia and identifying the main barriers to accommodating survivors.

This project analysed the **availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability** of different short-term and long-term accommodation options, considering the particular needs of survivors of modern slavery. This was done using a mixed methods approach including stakeholder mapping, online surveys from accommodation providers and Support Program case workers, semi structured interviews, a literature review and a review of Support Program client data. The findings of the project are as follows:

Availability

1. A lack of long-term accommodation options in the Australian housing sector has meant there are limited exit pathways out of short-term options, creating a bottleneck effect and limiting availability for new individuals that require accommodation. Although an issue for all service user groups, this is presenting additional challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery who also face barriers due to accessibility, eligibility and suitability considerations.
2. Availability of accommodation is particularly challenging in regional areas of Australia where seasonal trends can further limit short-term accommodation options.

Accessibility

1. Accommodation located in areas with limited access to essential services can present accessibility barriers for survivors of modern slavery who may experience challenges navigating or accessing different transport options.
2. Survivors of modern slavery with a mental or physical disability have access or support needs that are not always able to be catered for by accommodation providers.

Eligibility

1. Visa status represents a significant eligibility barrier, particularly to accessing long-term housing. To be eligible for social housing in most states and territories, applicants are required to have permanent residency or Australian citizenship. There is nothing (such as a specific access to priority listing) that allows survivors of modern slavery on temporary visas to be eligible nor prioritised.
2. A lack of ongoing income also represents a significant eligibility barrier for accommodation options that require an ongoing financial contribution for their services. Survivors of modern slavery and migrants on temporary visas with no or very low income and no access to government income support payments experience significant challenges in finding accommodation that is affordable and sustainable in the long term.

Suitability

1. Rules and responsibilities of accommodation providers are not always aligned with individual's needs: Criteria such as curfews, limitations on freedom of movement and requirements for engaging with education, training and/or work put in place by accommodation providers act as a suitability barrier as they may not be appropriate for individual's needs.
2. Specialised services such as supported accommodation is often more suitable for survivors of modern slavery who experience complex needs related to their experiences of trauma.

Additional findings

1. Individuals who are at risk of or who have experienced forced marriage face additional barriers to accommodation due to the importance of cultural and physical safety, as well as a lack of awareness and understanding of experiences of forced marriage.
2. A primary impact of a culmination of the barriers related to availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability of accommodation is that hotel accommodation is increasingly required to be utilised as a last resort and an alternative to homelessness despite its recognition as an option which may not be safe, suitable nor sustainable.

This report highlights the extensive barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery in a housing system that is in crisis and does not adequately meet the needs of survivors. It demonstrates the nature and extent of the challenges and highlights opportunities to collaborate with the accommodation sector to better support the needs of survivors, working towards achieving safe, sustainable and suitable housing as a foundation for recovery. Red Cross looks forward to working with government and civil society to achieve this vision.

08 Introduction

The full extent of modern slavery both globally and in Australia is hard to quantify but it is well established that only a small proportion of survivors are ever identified and referred to support services. The Australian Institute of Criminology estimates that for every victim identified in Australia, there are another four that are not identified.⁷

As a humanitarian organisation and part of the broader International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Red Cross is active in responding to the humanitarian impacts of modern slavery globally. Red Cross's work in preventing and responding to modern slavery in Australia largely sits within Migration Support Programs. Red Cross has worked in this area for over 25 years, providing assistance and protection to migrants according to their humanitarian needs.

Red Cross delivers the Australian Government's Support for Trafficked People Program (Support Program), which provides health and welfare assistance to people identified and referred by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) as suspected victims of human trafficking, slavery or slavery-like offences, which includes servitude, forced labour, deceptive recruiting and forced marriage. The Support Program operates Australia-wide and is responsive 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year. This work forms part of the Australian Government's National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery and is funded by the Department of Social Services. As of the 1st of July 2021, Red Cross has supported 515 survivors since beginning delivering the Support Program in 2009. Through the Support Program, Red Cross assists survivors in meeting their safety, security, health and wellbeing needs, to reach their personal goals and develop self-efficacy.

Case workers work with survivors holistically to support them to access services to meet their individual needs, including accommodation. From the 515 survivors Red Cross has supported, 56% presented with an **unstable accommodation situation at the time of referral** to the Support Program. This included being supported by crisis

accommodation or refuges for a short period of time; living or staying with family including when family were alleged perpetrators of trafficking offences, when relationships had broken down or when it was only a temporary arrangement; or not having accommodation at all and/or staying with friends.

The housing and accommodation situation in Australia

The Australian Federal Government provides resources and funding under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) and establishes objectives for housing and homelessness services. State and territory governments are responsible for developing strategies and distributing funding to services to support and address local housing needs.⁸ Despite these efforts, in any one night in Australia it is estimated that at least 116,000 people do not have a safe, suitable and sustainable place to live.⁹ It has been widely reported that Australia is in the midst of a housing and affordability crisis. The drivers of housing instability and homelessness are complicated but include market factors, structural factors and personal factors which all contribute to challenges many Australian's experience in owning or renting a home.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further affected housing affordability and rental availability across Australia and has rendered more visible many long-term systemic housing problems while also introducing a small suite of new issues.¹⁰ By October 2020 vacancy rates in Perth, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin and Canberra had fallen to 12-month lows of less than 1%, a pattern even more dramatic beyond capital city boundaries.¹¹ 'Rental stress', which is defined as spending more than 30 per cent of gross household income on rent, affects 50% of low-income households, a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the past 10 years.¹² Low-income earners are particularly susceptible to housing instability which can compound to increase difficulties in accessing accommodation. Traditional housing options that

have become out of reach mean that as renters get priced out of the market, they put pressure on social and public housing, which in turn flows on to short-term, and crisis accommodation. During the last census, more than 105,000 people were recorded as being homeless¹³ and in 2019–2020, specialist homelessness services (SHS) around the country were unable to assist 260 requests per day, totalling 95,300 in the year, mostly due to a lack of available accommodation.¹⁴ Given this landscape, it is particularly challenging to find safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation for survivors of modern slavery.

The importance of safe and suitable accommodation for survivors of modern slavery

At the outset of this project, Support Program case workers and accommodation providers agreed on the central role housing plays in supporting overall recovery and wellbeing by allowing individuals to organise other important aspects of their lives, such as their health, wellbeing, employment and education. Alternatively, not having a place to call home may have a significant impact on a person's sense of stability, security and belonging. Ultimately, an inability to find suitable housing can lead survivors back into situations of victimisation and exploitation.

Everything begins with a home. You cannot get on top of your mental health, your physical health, childcare, educational needs, employment, any aspect of your life without a safe and secure home. Two or three days of not having a safe and suitable home is so completely and utterly debilitating. You can't achieve anything. It does drive people back to incredibly unsafe situations. – WA Accommodation Provider

If we can't give people good enough options and we are leaving people with two bad choices then there's a huge risk for themselves and their dependents, that they may be at risk of further exploitation and abuse. – NSW Accommodation Provider

Opportunities to develop sector responses towards improving accommodation options for survivors of modern slavery

This report is designed to further inform the modern slavery and housing sectors of the barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery in Australia. This report presents opportunity for partnerships and collaboration between the housing, domestic and family violence sectors and actors involved in the support and assistance of survivors of modern slavery, as well as governments at the state and federal levels, to broaden accommodation options for survivors of modern slavery. In expanding options and opportunities for survivors to be accommodated in safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation, it will provide survivors the chance to recover from their experience and support steps towards building a new life.

10 Project Methodology

This project was led by Red Cross with the support of a steering group and used a mixed methods approach, combining online surveys, stakeholder mapping, semi structured interviews, a literature review and a review of Support Program client data. Red Cross case workers were interviewed to understand the specific experiences of Support Program clients. Accommodation providers as well as referring agencies were interviewed to capture the experience of survivors of modern slavery more broadly as well as migrants on temporary visas. The distinction of these two primary categories of stakeholders who were consulted in this project will be utilised throughout this report to reflect the needs and findings related to the different service user groups under analysis.

Although Support Program clients were the original focus of this project, many findings are also applicable to survivors of modern slavery not accessing the Support Program as well as migrants on temporary visas experiencing housing insecurity. Therefore, findings are presented in a way that reflects what is applicable specifically for each of these three service user groups.

The project has examined the **availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability** of accommodation in order to identify barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery. For the purposes of this project:

- **availability** refers to whether there is sufficient supply of accommodation;
- **accessibility** refers to how accessible the accommodation is, for example in terms of location and access for people with a disability;
- **eligibility** refers to any criteria that will allow someone to access an accommodation, for example a visa or citizenship requirement, co-payment, or specific gender;
- **suitability** refers to whether the accommodation is suitable to that person's individual needs, for example the length of stay, conditions of stay, facilities and support provided.

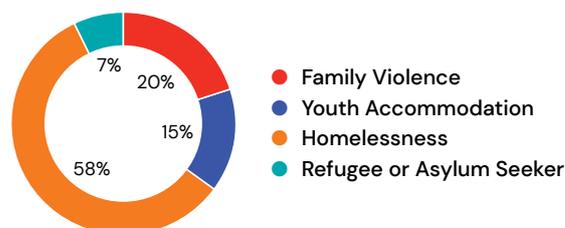


Figure 1: Accommodation providers survey respondents by sector

Stakeholder mapping: Stakeholder mapping was conducted to identify accommodation providers which were utilised as a referral option for Support Program clients and/or had previously accommodated survivors of modern slavery.

Surveys: An online survey was completed by 19 Red Cross Support Program case workers. A separate survey was completed by 107 accommodation providers and referral agencies, including 76% in urban areas and 19% in rural or remote areas.¹⁵ All accommodation providers identified through the stakeholder mapping exercise were approached to complete the survey. Survey respondents were from all around Australia and the surveys comprised both quantitative questions and open-ended questions. Figure 1 illustrates the sectors of the accommodation provider participants.

Interviews: To supplement information gathered from the surveys, 47 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 31 accommodation providers¹⁶, 14 Red Cross case workers, an academic with expertise in housing and a peak housing body. The interviews were transcribed, and the data was coded and thematically analysed using NVivo software.

Steering group: A steering group was formed for a period of 6 weeks while the project and methodology were being designed and tested. Members included representatives from the homelessness and domestic and family violence sectors in Victoria, a trafficking safe house provider in NSW, a forced marriage refuge in Victoria as well as two Support Program case workers and two Red Cross migration support programs staff.



Limitations

Project Scope: This project was not intended to be a holistic analysis of the housing sector or to map all government and non-government accommodation and housing options. Instead, it was designed to understand barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery. This project focus was therefore targeted at accommodation options for survivors of modern slavery, however due to the high intersection of people who experience modern slavery in Australia who are also migrants on temporary visas, many of the findings in relation to barriers in accessing accommodation for survivors of modern slavery may also be presented as risk factors for migrants on temporary visas.

This project reflects the views of case workers and accommodation providers in all states and territories when responding to questions within the framing of their specific local context.

Demographics of Support Program clients:

When referring to Support Program clients, Red Cross acknowledges that while anyone can experience modern slavery, including men and Australian citizens, the majority of clients Red Cross has supported to-date have been women and girls and from migrant backgrounds who are often on temporary visas.¹⁷ It is also important to note that Support Program clients are persons who have been identified as potential victims of human trafficking and slavery and referred to the Support Program by the AFP. Therefore, it is inclusive of only people who have been willing and able to engage with a policing agency for referral and have consented to accessing support. As such, this is not representative of all individuals affected by modern slavery in Australia, as many barriers exist as to why a survivor may be unwilling or unable to engage with a policing agency in order to access support.

12 Barriers in accommodating survivors of modern slavery

1.1 Barriers related to availability

The following were identified as the main barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery related to availability.

1.1.1 Limited exit pathways from short-term accommodation

Accommodation providers and Red Cross case workers both identified that a lack of transitional and affordable long-term accommodation options for Support Program clients and survivors of modern slavery has led to limited exit pathways from short-term accommodation. Fifty five per cent (55%) of short-term accommodation providers stated that the average length of stay in their accommodation is 12 months despite their service being intended for stays shorter than 3 months. This, in turn, has created a shortage on the services they are able to provide for new individuals requiring support. Reasons for longer periods of stay in short-term accommodation included long waiting lists for transitional and public housing, a lack of affordable accommodation options in the private rental market, as well as limited supported accommodation required in special circumstances based on individual needs.

From the accommodation providers who identified as having provided support to survivors of modern slavery, seventy-one per cent (71%) were intended to provide only short-term accommodation however the majority provided longer support as there was no safe, suitable or sustainable long-term accommodation options available for survivors of modern slavery, particularly if they were on temporary visas. As indicated by some accommodation providers, this may be particularly challenging for services who are emergency/crisis accommodation providers as they are usually funded to support a certain number of people per year, with the expectation that they may be able to transition to other type of long-term accommodation after the initial period of support (between 6 weeks to 3 months).

There's a real bottleneck for our transitional housing and that's because the normal pathways for people to move into public housing, community housing or private rental are blocked and that's because of long wait times and affordability. – NT Accommodation Provider

Figure 2. Gaps in the housing system and the bottleneck effect
Source: The Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (modified)¹⁸



All accommodation providers clearly identified that the provision of exit pathways from emergency accommodation to more stable and long-term options is beyond their capacity. Fifty nine per cent (59%) of accommodation providers identified that people they support usually exit into another short-term accommodation provider, and only eighteen per cent (18%) identified that users exit into sustainable long-term accommodation options. This demonstrates that despite this bottleneck effect not being exclusive to the situation of survivors of modern slavery, it does represent an additional challenge in the process of finding accommodation for survivors, especially when options are already limited because of suitability or eligibility as sections 1.3 and 1.4 detail further.

There is a real lack of options, in both short and long-term, so without people being able to kind of move through to private rental or social housing or some form of stability, they're likely to bounce back quite a bit between services. That reduces the amount of beds that are available for people. - VIC Accommodation Provider

Support Program case workers explained further how this inability to access long-term accommodation options can cause significant stress for survivors and may impact their recovery and wellbeing, having a deteriorating impact on their physical and mental health.

1.1.2 Limited availability of accommodation in regional areas

According to accommodation providers, regional areas have unique factors that may cause or exacerbate homelessness, particularly for vulnerable groups such as survivors of modern slavery and migrants on temporary visas, due to a limited availability of accommodation in these areas. In regional areas, common accommodation types include caravan parks, backpackers, dongas or motels. These options may be impacted by an areas peak or tourist seasons or seasonal events such as harvesting of crops for the agricultural sector, meaning availability of accommodation is even more limited during these times.

The biggest challenge that we have in Toowoomba is just the [lack of] options that are available. There's very limited emergency accommodation. We have some emergency accommodation for families, but it's pretty impossible to get into that. - QLD Accommodation provider

Accommodation providers from the NT, WA and QLD in particular highlighted that most accommodation services including social housing are centred around urban or regional hubs, and the limited options that do exist in regional areas are often at full capacity.

Exit and referral options were also sighted as a major challenge in regional areas, with one NSW accommodation provider observing that there were "little to no affordable housing options to refer people to", meaning service users stay longer than their maximum funded period contributing to bottlenecks. One TAS accommodation provider also commented on issues of availability stating that "Due to the housing crisis people stay in our accommodation much longer - we turn away many people in need due to not having enough accommodation."

From the 107 accommodation providers surveyed, 19% identified their service as being in a rural or remote area and of these, 10 said they supported survivors of modern slavery, 9 said they did not support survivors, and 2 said they were unsure. This indicates that even within the limited number of accommodation providers identified as being located in regional areas, they all may not be suitable for survivors of modern slavery due to a lack of exposure of working with this particular service user group and a related lack of understanding of their particular needs.

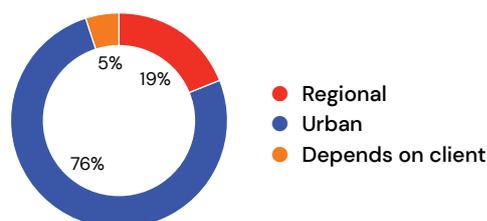


Figure 3: Location of accommodation providers

1.2 Barriers related to accessibility

Accessibility of accommodation in this report refers to an accommodation option that is accessible in terms of location, and accessible for people with special needs such as those who have a disability.

The following were identified as the main barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery related to accessibility.

1.2.1 Access to essential services

Responses from accommodation providers to questions related to the location of their service indicated that not all accommodation is accessible to particular groups due to limited access to essential services and challenges experiences in navigating or accessing transport options.

As figure 4 indicates, when asked if their service was within access to essential services such as banks, Centrelink, shops and medical services, 39% of accommodation providers indicated that public transport or other means of transportation was required. As indicated by Support Program case workers, this may present a barrier for survivors who do not have English as their first language, limited literacy, a fear of navigating the community on their own and/or are in the process of regaining self-confidence and independence.

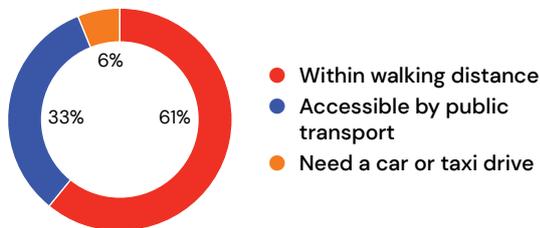


Figure 4: Accessibility of accommodation providers to essential services

In our service unfortunately we only have one unit that is disability friendly.[...] I think a lot of the transitional housing in the community often can be up staircases, so it can potentially mean that people will be waiting longer if they have special accommodation requirements. – VIC Accommodation Provider

1.2.2 Access for survivors with a disability

Support Program case workers and accommodation providers identified that survivors of modern slavery with a mental or physical disability have particular access needs that are not always able to be catered for by accommodation providers. Almost a quarter (24%) of all accommodation providers surveyed said they did not cater for people with a disability within their service and often commented that buildings and housing stock had not been designed for disability access.

From the accommodation providers that stated they have supported survivors of modern slavery, seventy-one per cent (71%) said they catered for people with disabilities which is a positive sign. However, Support Program case workers indicated that when finding accommodation for survivors of modern slavery with a disability, it is not only important that the service meets access needs, but also that the accommodation provider is aware of and inclusive of the particular needs that survivors of modern slavery may have such as trauma related mental health conditions, safety or cultural considerations, meaning that often supported accommodation was also required, which is in short supply.

Sometimes we get a referral for a client with a cognitive disability, and it takes time for them to be approved with NDIS and they can't live by themselves. There is not many supported accommodation that is culturally appropriate for clients. – VIC Case Worker

1.3 Barriers related to eligibility

Eligibility of accommodation in this report refers to aspects that determine whether an individual is eligible to be accommodated by a particular service.

Figure 5 and 6 illustrate the eligibility barriers that survivors of modern slavery may experience when finding short-term and long-term accommodation, identified both by Support Program case workers and accommodation providers. As they indicate, visa status and the lack of ongoing income are the main eligibility barriers both for short-term and long-term accommodation options.

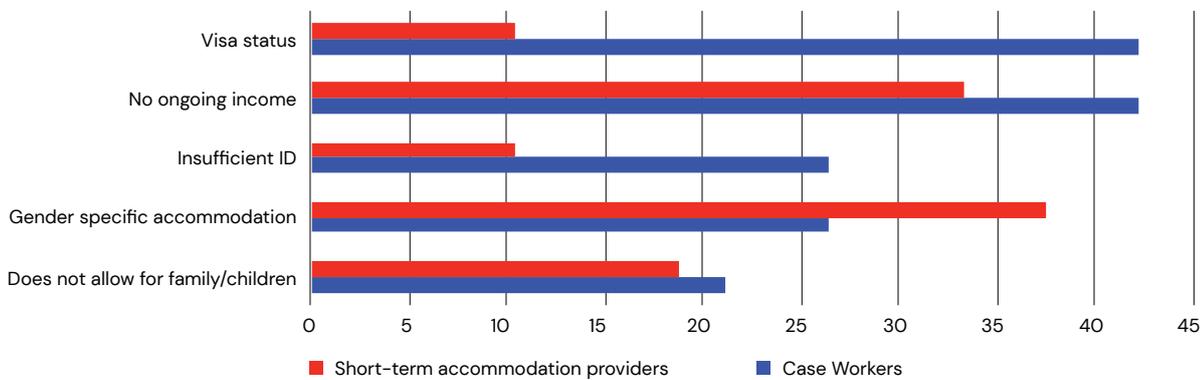


Figure 5: Eligibility Barriers to Short-term Accommodation

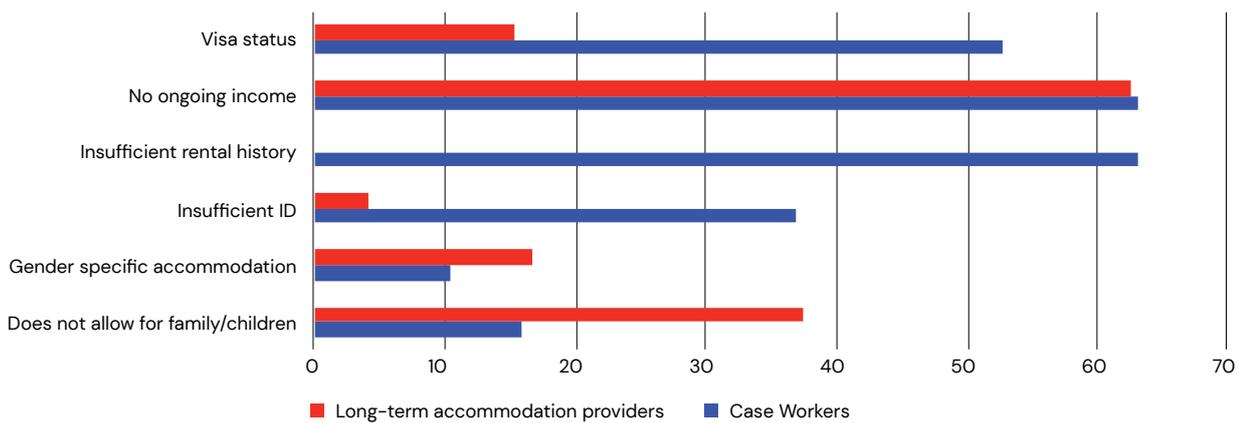


Figure 6: Eligibility Barriers to Long-term Accommodation

1.3.1 Visa Status

Although figures 5 and 6 indicate a difference in the degree of Support Program case workers and accommodation providers whom identified visa status as an eligibility barrier, analysing survey responses further identified that this is because the majority of accommodation providers did not consider visa status as an eligibility barrier **at the point of entry** to their service, however did consider it as a barrier to providing ongoing support. This was especially for individuals on temporary visas with no ongoing income and who are not eligible for government income supports (as it will be further explored in section 1.3.2). In contrast, case workers indicated this correlation between visa status and ongoing income as a barrier from the very start of the eligibility process.

With fifty-four per cent (54%) of Support Program clients on temporary visas, according to case workers, visa status presents a significant eligibility barrier, especially to accessing long-term housing. One reason is that in order to be eligible for social housing in the majority of states and territories, applicants are required to have permanent residency or Australian citizenship. While there are some exceptions in states that allow migrants on certain types of temporary visas to apply to social housing (for example WA and QLD allow people seeking asylum to be registered while waiting for the outcome of a protection visa), and some states that allow application to priority lists under certain circumstances (for example people fleeing family violence in VIC), there are no initiatives, such as a specific access to priority listing, that allow survivors of modern slavery on temporary visas to be eligible nor prioritised.

This situation possesses significant risks for Support Program clients and survivors of modern slavery more broadly who are on temporary visas or with an expired visa. As previous research undertaken by Red Cross identified, not having stable accommodation and having to rely on informal tenancy arrangements poses significant protection and health risks, now and into the future, and increases the chances of experiencing overcrowding accommodation and further exploitation.¹⁹

1.3.2 Lack of ongoing income

Overall, forty-two per cent (42%) of accommodation providers sighted a lack of income as an eligibility barrier for survivors of modern slavery and temporary migrants to accessing accommodation. As indicated in the table below, a substantial percentage of both short-term and long-term accommodation providers surveyed indicated that their service required some sort of financial contribution.

Requires co-payment?	Short-term AC	Long-term AC
Yes	44%	58%
No	56%	42%

Thirty-five per cent (35%) of clients that reported an unstable accommodation situation at the point of referral to the Support Program also reported not being employed and not accessing government income support payments.

Fifty-three per cent (53%) of clients that exited the Support Program with an unstable accommodation situation, exited with no employment and only 33% of these clients were accessing income support payment such as Centrelink.

Data related to Support Program clients who were supported by Red Cross between 2019 and 2021 also demonstrates a correlation between income (based on employment status) and accommodation situation. Support Program clients that did not have an ongoing source of income were more likely to have difficulties finding stable and appropriate accommodation. Visa type was a contributing factor to the lack of income for Support Program clients with a temporary visa, especially those whose visa did not have work rights. This demonstrates the need to consider the intersectionality between eligibility to work, accessibility of income and stable

accommodation, and the need for wrap around services that not only provide accommodation, but also support a holistic individualised response which enables individuals to work towards their independence whilst ensuring their basic needs are met until this independence is gained.

Case workers also noted that when Support Program clients are granted a Bridging Visa F²⁰ and start receiving Centrelink Special Benefit payments, the possibility of finding crisis accommodation increases as they are able to demonstrate ongoing income and pay the rate required to access the service. However, this visa is usually only granted if a person has no other substantive visa and therefore isn't a standard practice for all Support Program clients. This means that individuals who are referred to the Support Program on a different type of temporary visa (e.g. a partner visa or tourist visa) are less

likely to be eligible for social security payments and any other benefit that the Bridging Visa F may provide. From forty-three clients referred to the Support Program in the financial year 20/21, nineteen had a temporary visa at referral, and therefore may have been less able to access a regular stream of income through either income support payments or due to particular barriers they may face to gaining and maintaining employment.

There's the issue around being able to pay for your accommodation, so if you're not eligible for Centrelink [...] then it's looking for work and some of the people we're supporting aren't ready to enter the workforce or maybe don't have the skills as yet to enter the workforce. So that is a barrier to finding housing as well.
- NSW Accommodation Provider

1.4 Barriers related to suitability

Suitability of accommodation in this report refers to whether accommodation is suitable to a person’s individual needs, for example the length of stay, cultural considerations, conditions of stay, restrictions, facilities and support provided.

Even if accommodation is available and accessible for a survivor of modern slavery and they are also eligible to access it, unfortunately it may not suit their individual needs due to a range of reasons such as their experiences of significant trauma which require additional effort to ensure physical and emotional safety; cultural considerations, family composition and family background; and any physical or mental health concerns they may be experiencing as a result of their situation of exploitation, including drug and alcohol usage.

Figure 7 and 8 illustrate the suitability barriers that survivors of modern slavery may experience when finding short-term and long-term accommodation, identified both by Support Program case workers and accommodation providers. As they indicate, for short term accommodation providers the main suitability barriers were the existence of particular rules and responsibilities from some accommodation providers not aligned with individual needs, and the requirement for specialised services due to needs associated with an experience of trauma, deterioration of mental health, or drug and alcohol usage. Long term accommodation providers also identified the lack of accommodation options that accepted extended family/dependents as one of the main barriers.

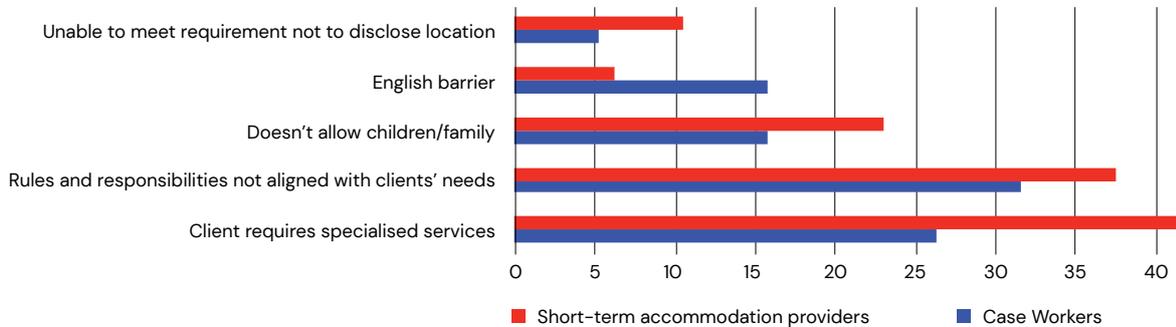


Figure 7: Suitability barriers to short-term accommodation

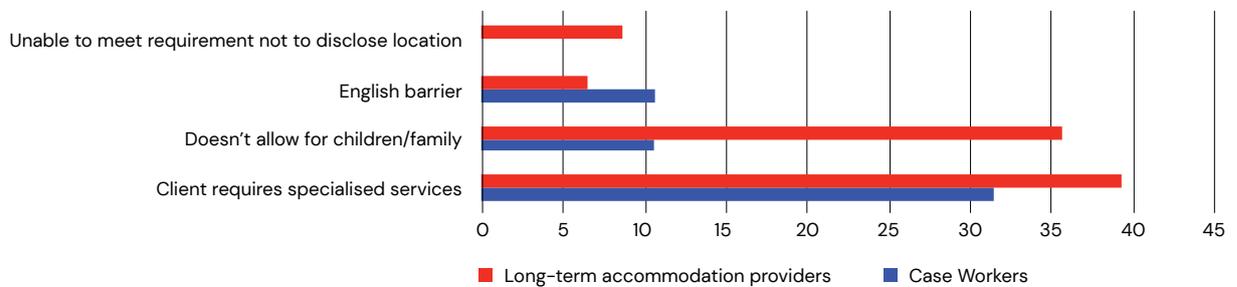


Figure 8: Suitability barriers to long-term accommodation

1.4.1 Rules and responsibilities not aligned with individuals needs

Short-term, transitional and supported accommodation usually have rules and responsibilities, such as curfews and other limitations of freedom of movement that may not be appropriate for survivors of modern slavery, especially in the context of their trafficking experience. When accommodation providers were surveyed about rules and responsibilities in their services, forty-two per cent (42%) of responders mentioned curfews and limitations to staying away from the accommodation for more than 1 or 2 nights per week as one of their main rules.

Another important rule and responsibility that short-term accommodation providers identified was the need to engage with education, training and work. Twenty-two per cent (22%) of accommodation providers highlighted engaging in education, training and work as one of their main rules as part of a strength-based approach. In some circumstances, survivors of modern slavery find this requirement overwhelming, especially at the beginning of their recovery process, coupled with other barriers that they may experience related to language, literacy, and social interactions.

1.4.2 Individuals requiring specialised services

Accommodation that provides appropriate support is crucial for survivors of modern slavery who frequently have complex needs associated with trauma as a consequence of their situation of exploitation, and as a result, these individuals often require specialised services.

[A major gap is] accommodation that can address all of those complex needs, so substance use, really significant trauma, mental health diagnosis as well, that has a real wrap around support. – NSW Caseworker

When asked about the challenges of finding those specialised services that Support Program clients may need due to their experience of trauma,

forty-one per cent (41%) of case workers identified finding accommodation that catered for particular needs associated with individuals in distress the main challenge, and thirty-seven percent (37%) identified finding accommodation suitable for clients experiencing substance addiction as very challenging. This is because needs associated with trauma and mental health issues can limit the suitability of accommodation options particularly if shared housing is not an appropriate accommodation solution.

Our clients have experienced a lot of trauma, some of them with significant mental health concerns, so shared accommodation usually doesn't suit them. We have been referring clients to refuge but that is not the best accommodation for clients with mental health issues. That has been the only option so far other than the hotels. – WA Case worker

Closely linked to trauma and mental health issues is the use of drugs and alcohol. Forced drug or alcohol use can sometimes be a part of an experience of trafficking or slavery²¹ or used by survivors as a coping mechanism.²² As noted by case workers and accommodation providers, accommodating survivors with substance addictions or who are regularly engaging with drugs or alcohol is particularly challenging as the vast majority of short-term accommodation providers do not allow the presence of drugs and alcohol in their premises. For those short-term accommodation options that do accept people experiencing a reliance on drug and alcohol usage, they usually have long waiting periods (in particular if they also provide therapeutic or rehabilitation support) or they do not have specialist support available for these needs.

Drug and alcohol issues [...] are a challenge for our service because we aren't able to provide accommodation to people who are still using drugs and alcohol or have a drug and alcohol dependency. So we have to kind of try and seek support through other services that are more specialised [...] just because we don't have 24-hour support. – NSW Accommodation Provider

Case workers identified that supported accommodation can assist clients in establishing a sense of physical, psychological and emotional safety and can support a client's recovery from their experiences of exploitation. Despite the importance of supported accommodation, case workers highlighted a significant shortage of these services.

1.4.3 Lack of services that accept dependents

One of the main barriers identified by accommodation providers and case workers was the lack of options that were suitable for dependent children of survivors of modern slavery. It was noted that having dependents reduces the options available, especially long-term accommodation options for individuals who are on temporary visa and not eligible for social housing. Additionally, there are very limited options of supported accommodation for long stay that accept clients with dependents. And even when they do so, the context of supported accommodation may not always be appropriate for children.

When you have dependents, it's less likely that you'll be able to house share. So, you're looking at trying to find a whole house or a whole unit to yourself on possibly very low income. - QLD Accommodation Provider

Despite fifty-six per cent (56%) of accommodation providers indicated they allow dependents, usually this is assessed on a case by case basis and not allowed for all situations. Dependents of survivors of modern slavery, independently, are not always considered at imminent risk and therefore it may be unlikely that they meet the threshold of risk needed to qualify for some type of accommodation. This sense of uncertainty may have an impact on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of both parents and dependents and may be, in some circumstances, a decisive factor for survivors of modern slavery for not to leave the situation of exploitation.



22 Additional findings

2.1 Barriers in accommodating individuals in or at risk of forced marriage

Throughout the course of this project, a number of additional findings emerged in relation to specific barriers related to suitability of accommodation for individuals in or at risk of forced marriage.

Forced marriage exists in complex familial and community contexts where individuals (mostly women and girls) have limited to no options to choose whom and when to marry due to pressures to adhere to cultural or traditional values and customs.²³ Due to ongoing pressures to marry or needing to leave forced marriages, which often include experiences of family and domestic violence, it is common for most forced marriage survivors to have family relationships that have broken down and to continually manage some degree of risk to their safety.

Case workers identified the main challenges in accommodating Support Program clients who have experienced or are at risk of forced marriage as cultural considerations (58%), maintaining safety (53%), and accommodation providers not being aware of the forced marriage experience (37%). Similarly, the main challenges identified by accommodation providers specifically related to individuals who are at risk of or experienced forced marriage were, complex trauma needs (39%), cultural considerations (34%), and maintaining safety (35%).

2.1.1 Cultural considerations

Creating a space that is culturally safe is important to ensuring survivors are comfortable and feel safe in their accommodation. Cultural considerations vary widely from group to group but may include providing food that meets religious requirements, providing a place to worship, or in some cases allowing for spaces for separate genders. Despite the need was particularly noted for survivors of forced marriage, it was also noted as a barrier by case workers for survivors of other types of exploitation.

Both accommodation providers and case workers stated the limited short-term accommodation options that are culturally sensitive and equipped to identify, assess risk to, and know how to respond to forced marriage.

Residential care or youth refuges are usually not suitable for survivors of forced marriage or at risk of being forced into marriage due to a presence of both female and male clients, exposure to different environments which some individuals found confronting and contributed to their feeling unsafe.

Definitely with forced marriage survivors we see that in terms of young people, if they aren't able to access one of the very few forced marriage specific services, which are culturally appropriate and for example, for young women, only females there, then they are left with mainstream youth homelessness services which can sometimes be inappropriate for them culturally. – NSW Accommodation Provider

Accommodation providers highlighted the importance of having specialised services for people in or at risk of forced marriage to ensure cultural appropriateness. Accommodation providers and case workers also identified that language may be a barrier for effective daily functioning for clients in supported accommodation where interpreters are only available for complex conversations.

2.1.2 Maintaining Safety

Forced marriage survivors who have left the family home may face less direct threats to forced marriage, however often require more support in managing risks. Accommodation providers and support program case workers both indicated that working with individuals in isolation from their family, as well as supporting safe family reunification where appropriate, can pose complex risks to safety and wellbeing and requires adequate support and often adequate management of the risks associated with survivors of forced marriage requires immediate staff availability and around the clock support.

Young women who have come out of an early forced marriage, do need a lot of support I would say, [within a] 24/7 model. – VIC Accommodation Provider

Ongoing fears related to the community locating and demanding the release of forced marriage survivors after placement were also identified, especially by providers in rural and remote areas, and was attributed to the smaller and more close-knit community relationships in these geographical locations.

Accommodation providers and support program case workers indicated the need to support survivors of forced marriage with ongoing risk mitigation.

With early and forced marriage prevention specifically...quite a few of the young women we are supporting [remain at] home, [or] are still in contact with family. I guess it's a complex position to be in supporting a young woman, there's a lot of safety planning with those young women. – VIC Accommodation Provider

2.1.3 Limited awareness and understanding of forced marriage experiences

Case workers indicated that despite instances of forced marriage often occurring in the context of family violence, accommodation providers, especially domestic and family violence accommodation providers, do not necessarily recognise and understand the intersection between family violence and forced marriage. This may impact on the ability of accommodation providers to meet the particular needs of individuals who are at risk of or who have experienced forced marriage, additional to the unique pressures and capacity these providers already have meeting the needs of their own client cohort.

From both accommodation providers and case workers experience, individuals who are at risk of or who have experienced forced marriage usually do not meet eligibility criteria for crisis accommodation as they do not meet the family and domestic violence threshold of risk which is needed to be at imminent risk and/or have

experienced physical assault/violence. Reluctance to disclose family violence experiences perpetrated by family members was reported by case workers as contributing to this ineligibility for crisis.

2.2 Hotel accommodation increasingly required as a last resort

Support Program case workers identified that one of the primary impacts of a culmination of the barriers related to availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability of accommodation options detailed in the main findings of this report is that hotel accommodation is increasingly required to be utilised as a last resort and an alternative to homelessness. However, case workers overwhelmingly agreed that hotel accommodation is not preferable as it is often not a safe, suitable nor sustainable option for Support Program clients.

Case workers noted that survivors of sexual exploitation have expressed that being present in a hotel can be a triggering experience for them as it can act as a reminder of their traumatic experiences in similar places. Case workers and accommodation providers both reported that for young people who are at risk of or have experienced any form of exploitation, living independently often requires intensive support to maintain their safety, emotional wellbeing, to navigate the challenges forming intimate relationships including maintaining healthy boundaries. Hotel accommodation does not offer these supports and may contribute to feelings of isolation and a subsequent deterioration in mental health that, in turn, may put them in situations where they adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms or return to situations of exploitation.

24 State specific findings

3.1 New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory findings

NSW AND ACT AT A GLANCE

Availability & Accessibility: A rental affordability crisis in the state is putting a strain on short-term and crisis accommodation options.

Eligibility: A lack of on-going income and visa status limits eligibility for short and long-term accommodation.

Suitability: There are limited options available that are able to respond to needs associated with trauma or accommodate family and children.

accommodation, plus a general undersupply of suitable accommodation options for Support Program clients. It was noted however that NSW is one of the only states to have a specific trafficking and slavery safehouse available as an accommodation option and case workers cited this as the most appropriate service provider to refer clients to. Case workers commented on the need to have more options tailored to the specific needs of survivors.

Availability and Accessibility

In NSW, the private rental market is one of the most expensive in the country and largely unaffordable for low to moderate income households, especially in urban and regional centres with only four per cent (4%) of all properties affordable for people on government income support payments.²⁴ This has contributed to over 51,000 applicants on the social housing waiting lists and wait times of up to 10 or more years impacting both availability and accessibility of housing in the state.²⁵ This in turn has put pressure on other short-term accommodation as service users do not have exit options and remain reliant on services for longer. In 2019–20 more than 21,000 people or forty-seven per cent (47%) of all the people who sought accommodation in NSW were not provided this service.²⁶ Similar situation was identified in the ACT where there has been an increase in the numbers of people who are in boarding houses or in severely crowded housing because of the lack of affordable accommodation options,²⁷ and with only less than 10% of the people requiring long-term accommodation accessing it. Short-term accommodation providers surveyed identified a lack of exit pathway as the main availability barrier

Challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery

In NSW, the main challenges identified by accommodation providers when supporting survivors of modern slavery was their inability to cater for complex needs relating to trauma, a lack of understanding of experiences of modern slavery and maintaining safety for individuals. These responses indicate that accommodation providers in NSW are not appropriately equipped to respond to the nuanced needs of survivors of modern slavery.

NSW and ACT case workers identified some of the main challenges as a lack of affordable long-term housing, availability and access to crisis

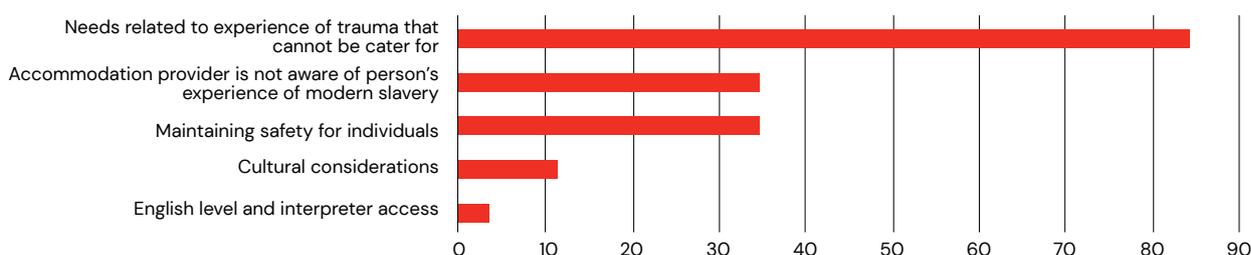


Figure 9: Accommodation Providers Challenges in Accommodating Modern Slavery Survivors

to accessing their accommodation. The delay and inability to transition out of the homelessness system to mainstream/ long-term housing has upstream effects on transitions from prisons, hospitals²⁸ and other supported accommodation.

Eligibility

Aligned with overall findings, in NSW, thirty-one per cent (31%) of **short-term accommodation** and fifty per cent (50%) of **long-term accommodation** providers reported the greatest barrier for accessing their accommodation was a lack of ongoing income, and forty per cent (40%) of long-term accommodation providers also highlighted visa status as an eligibility barrier. However twenty-five per cent (25%) of **short-term** and fifty per cent (50%) of **long-term accommodation providers** in NSW also reported accommodation not allowing children or extended family as eligibility barriers.

Suitability

Short-term accommodation providers identified individuals need for specialised services as the main suitability barrier, with rules and

responsibilities not aligned with survivors needs and not catering for extended family also as barriers.

Long-term accommodation providers cited the biggest suitability barrier as accommodation not catering for extended family, survivors requiring specialised services and no ongoing income as the main barriers.

For **Support Program case workers**, a lack of ongoing income, or insufficient income was the biggest suitability barrier to finding long-term accommodation for their clients both in NSW and ACT.

NSW SPECIFIC DATA

- 26 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 3 survey responses received from case workers
- 7 key informant interviews were conducted including with 2 case workers and 5 accommodation providers

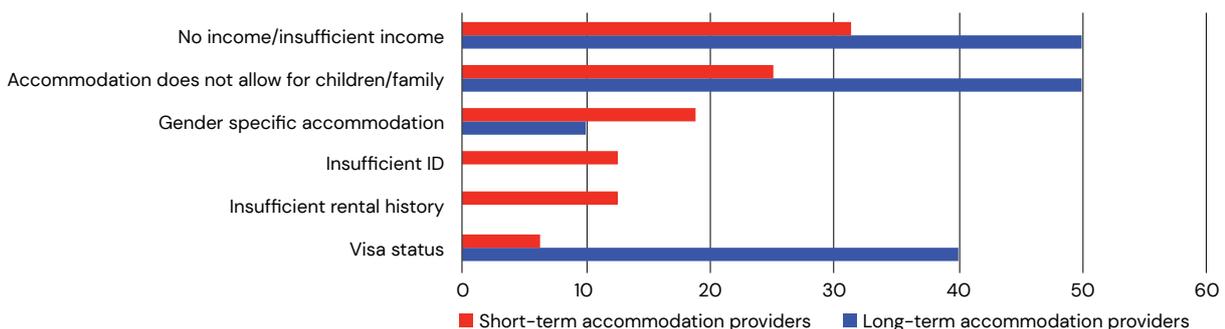


Figure 10: Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers

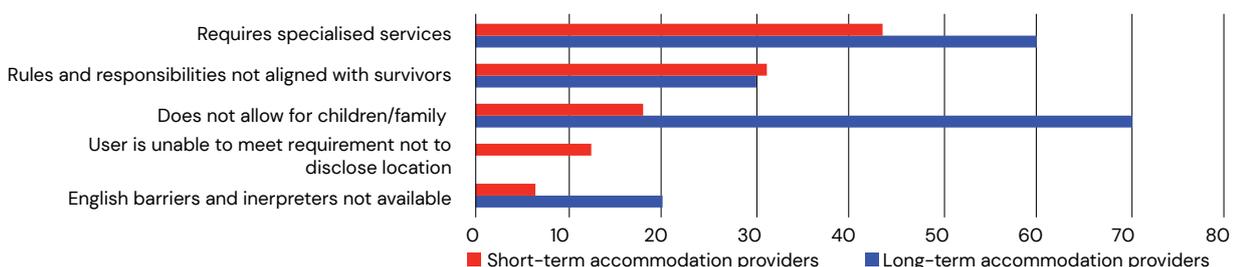


Figure 11: Accommodation Providers Suitability Barriers

3.2 Northern Territory findings

NT AT A GLANCE

Availability & accessibility: There are limited options outside regional hubs and a lack of crisis accommodation.

Eligibility: Insufficient income and lack of options for specific genders or family status limits eligibility for short and long-term accommodation

Suitability: Rules and responsibilities of accommodation options means they are often not suitable for individual's needs.

Challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery

Northern Territory (NT) accommodation providers reported that not being aware of a person's trafficking experience was the main challenge in accommodating survivors. Over half (55%) of NT survey respondents reported that they were unsure if they supported survivors of modern slavery, much higher than the national rate of thirty-four per cent (34%). This indicates that a lack of knowledge of modern slavery and related indicators may be a particular issue in the NT or survivors may be facing particular barriers to disclosing their trafficking experience when accessing accommodation services. Other main challenges for accommodation providers include needs relating to an individual's experience of trauma including complex behaviours associated with individuals in distress and ineligibility due to insufficient income.

Availability and Accessibility

Provision of safe, appropriate and affordable housing remains not possible for many people in the NT and this was reflected in this project as sixty-five per cent (65%) of NT accommodation providers cited a lack of housing stock and availability as the main service gaps.

With a shortfall of crisis, transitional, supported and long-term housing options to meet the current demand for accommodation, people with no or low income, find it challenging to access the housing market. In the seven years prior to 2020, the number of people accessing homelessness services in the NT has grown by almost fifty per cent (50%)²⁹ which has created strain on the crisis accommodation sector with accommodation providers commenting on "bottlenecks" in short-term accommodation with limited exit pathways for service users. Currently, most short-term/emergency accommodation and medium term/transitional housing in the NT is available in Alice Springs, Darwin and Katherine, with limited accommodation available outside these regional hubs.

The NT caseworker commented that Support Program clients face multiple barriers to accessing safe and secure housing given their likelihood of having low or no income, the lack of transitional and longer-term housing options and client's minimal possibility of meeting criteria to be prioritised for public housing and to avoid extreme long waiting lists.

Eligibility

In the NT, sixty-six per cent (66.7%) of **short-term accommodation providers** reported the gender specific nature of their accommodation as the greatest eligibility barrier to accommodating survivors of modern slavery, followed by their accommodation not catering for children or extended family (33.3%). The NT Support Program case worker also reported difficulty in supporting single males and single females, with most crisis accommodation options only being available for people with children.

Long-term accommodation providers reported no or insufficient income as a major eligibility barrier to accessing their accommodation, with sixty-four per cent (64.7%) of providers citing this as the primary barrier. Ineligibility due to visa status was also reported as an issue by seventeen per cent (17.6%) of long-term accommodation providers. This corresponds with the Support Program case worker's experience which also reported a lack of income as the major long-term eligibility barrier.

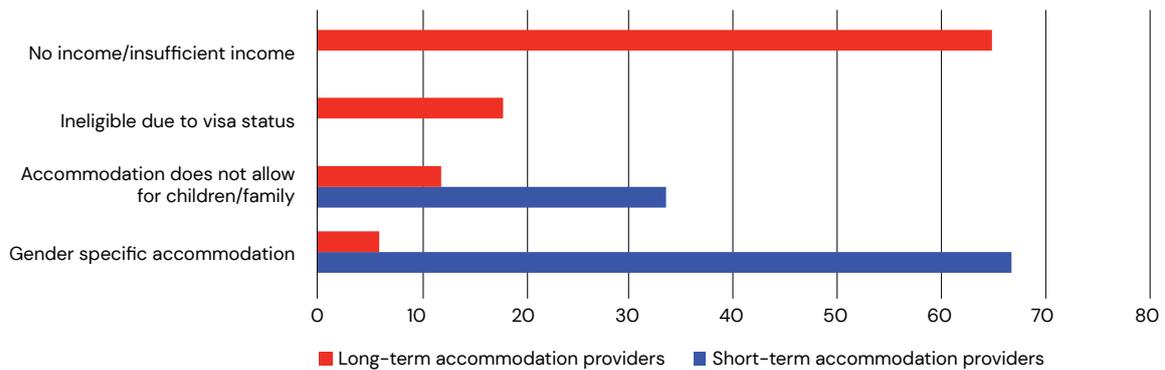


Figure 12: NT Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers

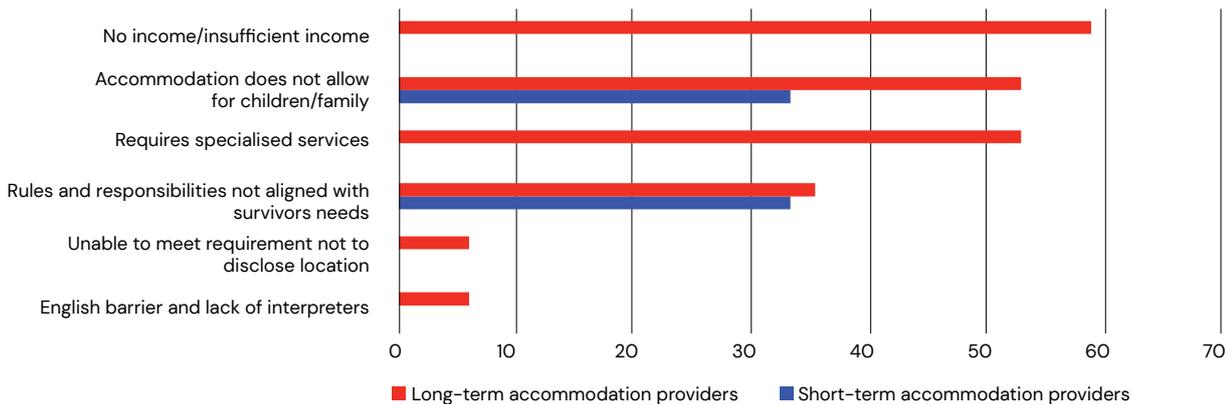


Figure 13: NT Accommodation Providers Suitability Barriers

Suitability

As with eligibility, no income or lack of income was identified as a primary suitability barrier by **long-term accommodation providers** as well as accommodation not allowing for family or extended children. However, in addition, users requiring specialised services and accommodation providers having rules and responsibilities that do not align with survivors’ needs were also identified as barriers.

The main barriers for **short-term accommodation providers** were accommodation not allowing for children and family and accommodation providers having rules and responsibilities that do not align with survivors’ needs.

This matches the **support program case worker’s** experience, who reported accommodation providers having rules and responsibilities that do not align with survivors’ needs as the main barrier.

NT SPECIFIC DATA

- 20 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 1 survey response received from NT’s single caseworker
- 6 key informant interviews were conducted, including with 1 case worker, 4 accommodation providers and 1 peak body.

3.3 Queensland findings

QLD AT A GLANCE

Accessibility: A competitive rental market is putting pressure on short-term options with gaps in regional accommodation.

Eligibility: A lack of ongoing income, rental history and sufficient ID are preventing eligibility for long-term accommodation.

Suitability: A requirement for income and a lack of accommodation that has specialised services or can cater to a persons needs are all suitability barriers.

Challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery

Both **short-term and long-term accommodation providers** in Queensland (QLD) cited the greatest challenge as service users being ineligible due to insufficient income, with nearly half (46%) of accommodation providers reporting this. Other challenges reported included accommodation not catering for family members, accommodation options being unaware of a person’s trafficking experience, behaviours associated with individuals in distress, and cultural considerations.

A lack of income was also sighted by **Support Program case workers** as the main challenge, followed by lack of supported accommodation and specialised services that could cater for behaviors associated with survivors in distress.

Availability and Accessibility

In the second half of 2020 due to Covid-19, QLD experienced a net gain of 17,000 people relocating from other states which is the states largest net gain since 2003.³⁰ As a result, the private rental market has become very competitive,³¹ and difficult to access particularly for low-income tenants. The current rental affordability crisis has contributed by way of overflow to increased wait times for social housing and in turn placed a strain on the crisis accommodation sector, with accommodation providers who identified as rural or remote sighting particular difficulties in accommodating survivors of modern slavery.

Eligibility

Short-term accommodation providers in QLD reported the biggest eligibility barrier for survivors of modern slavery was a lack of ongoing income and insufficient rental history. Low income was also reported as a barrier by sixty-six per cent (66.7%) of long-term **accommodation providers**. Forty-four per cent (44.4%) of respondents

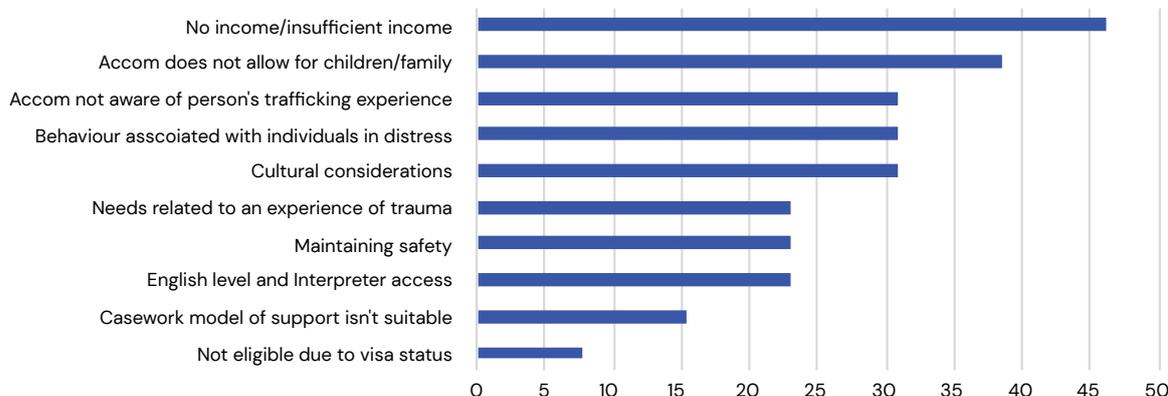


Figure 14: Accommodation Providers Challenges in Accommodating Modern Slavery Survivors

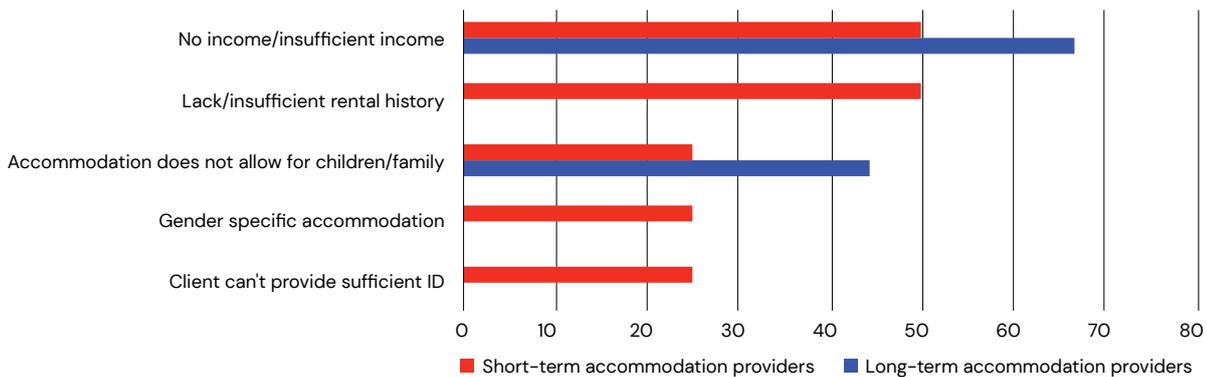


Figure 15: QLD Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers

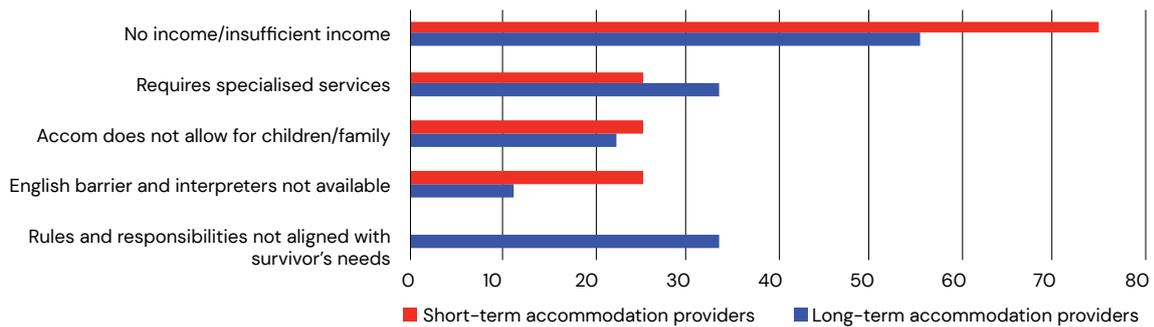


Figure 16: QLD Accommodation Providers Suitability Barriers to Accommodation

also highlighted accommodation not allowing for children or extended family. A QLD **Support Program case worker** reported having insufficient ID as one of the major barriers to accessing short-term accommodation, explaining that ‘many short-term accommodation providers will request client’s name and ID.’ They also mentioned two other longer term eligibility barriers for clients were a lack of rental history and a lack of income.

Suitability

For **short-term accommodation providers** the biggest suitability barrier reported was a lack of income, with seventy-five per cent (75%) of respondents citing this. This was also cited as the biggest suitability barrier by fifty-five per cent (55.5%) of **long-term accommodation providers**. Other suitability barriers to long-term accommodation include users requiring specialised services (33.3%) and accommodation providers having rules and responsibilities that do

not align with survivors’ needs (33.3%).

For the QLD **support program case worker**, **Support Program** clients having needs that required specialised services was the main barriers to accessing accommodation. The case worker reported that dual diagnosis of substance abuse and mental health was a key suitability concern, with many housing providers only supporting service users with one diagnosis.

QLD SPECIFIC DATA

- 13 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 2 survey responses received from case workers
- 6 key informant interviews were conducted including with 2 case workers, and 4 accommodation providers.

3.4 Tasmania findings

TAS AT A GLANCE

Availability and accessibility: An under supply of crisis and temporary accommodation options and a rental market out of reach for low income earners is contributing to homelessness.

Eligibility: Lack of income and gender requirements for accommodation are the biggest barriers

Suitability: Accommodation providers are unable to cater to complex needs associated with experiences of trauma.

Challenges in Accommodating survivors of modern slavery

The main challenge identified by both **short-term and long-term accommodation providers** in accommodating survivors of modern slavery in Tasmania (TAS) was the lack of awareness of person’s trafficking experience. A third of respondents saw this as the major issue, which is comparable to Australia-wide responses. Other challenges include supporting needs relating to an experience of trauma issues and cultural considerations.

Availability and Accessibility

In 2020 the Parliament of Tasmania published the findings from an Inquiry into Housing Affordability

in which it outlined significant challenges of housing affordability and other related housing issues in TAS.³² The inquiry described a stretched housing system that was struggling to keep up with the rapidly changing housing landscape and the increase on demand from vulnerable people in TAS due to in part, property market changes, the introduction of short-term stay listings such as Airbnb, diminishing housing stock and rental price increases.³³ The inquiry found that a factor contributing to homelessness and housing stress in the state was the under supply of fit for purpose public and community housing, a considerable wait for public and community housing, and that the waitlist was increasing,³⁴ all factors that were confirmed through information gathered in this project.

In TAS there are no services that specifically cater to survivors of modern slavery and there is a general lack of awareness of this diverse group of people. While the sector is more aware of refugees, migrants on temporary visas and women and children fleeing family violence, there are still gaps in accommodation which cater to these individuals and available options are not sufficient for the need, with one accommodation provider stating that historically there have not been large groups of temporary migrants settling in Tasmania. Tasmanian accommodation providers reported that, on average, about four per cent (4%) of the clients that they accommodate are temporary migrants which is significantly lower than the Australian average of twelve and a half per cent (12.5%). A Support Program case worker also explained that cultural considerations and maintaining client safety are a particular issue

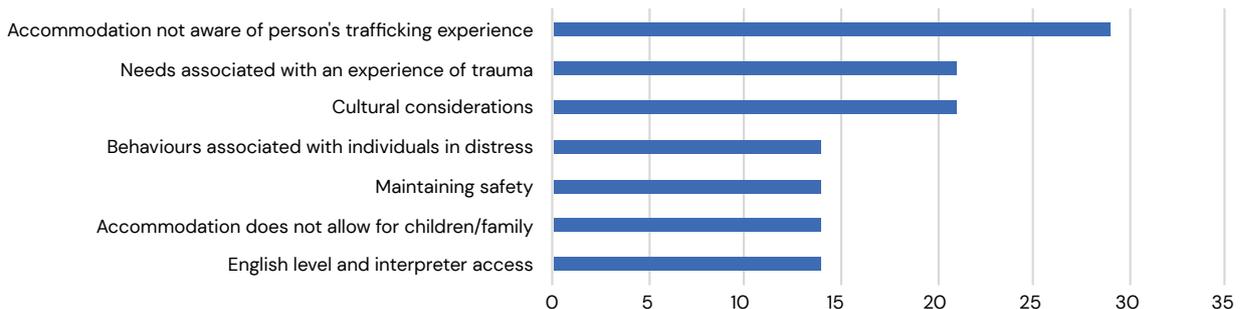


Figure 17: TAS Accommodation Providers Challenges in Accommodating Modern Slavery Survivors

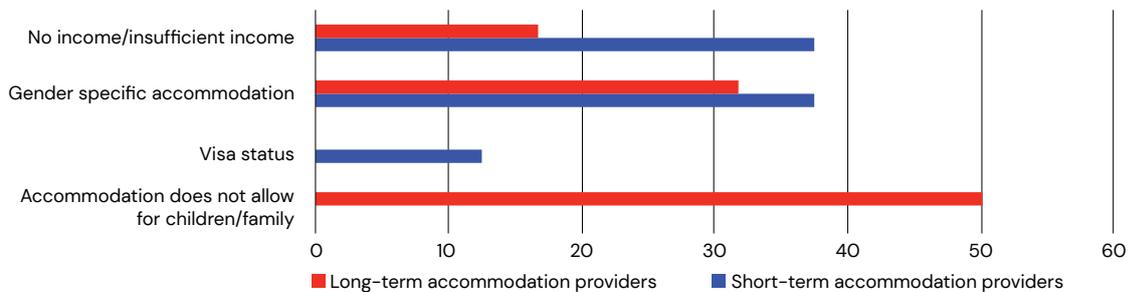


Figure 18: TAS Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers

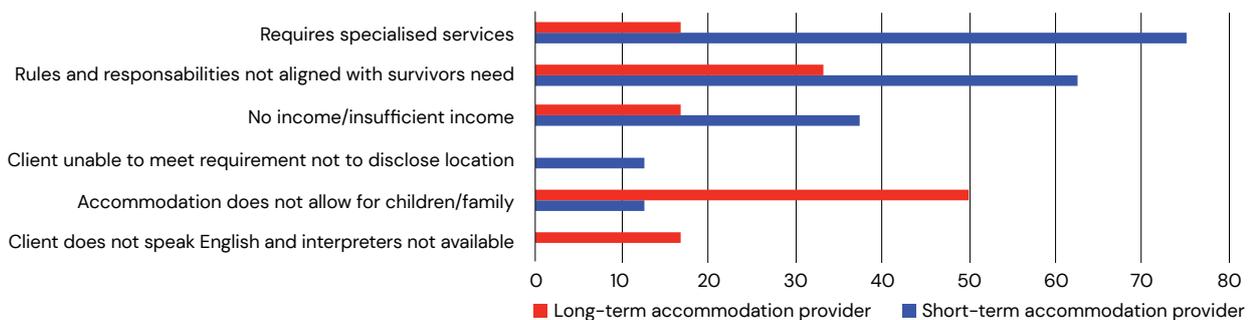


Figure 19: TAS Accommodation Providers Suitability Barriers

for forced marriage survivors in TAS which as a state, has a small population and therefore it can be hard to find safe and culturally appropriate accommodation away from family.

Eligibility

In TAS, **short-term accommodation providers** reported that the main barriers to survivors of modern slavery accessing accommodation options were a lack of ongoing income, the gender-specific nature of their accommodation, and ineligibility due to visa status. The biggest eligibility barrier reported by **long-term accommodation providers** were the accommodation not allowing for children/families, the gender specific nature of their accommodation and clients not having an ongoing income. A TAS **Support Program case worker** viewed the major short-term eligibility barriers as ineligibility due to visa status, the gender specific nature of the accommodation, and a lack of income. In terms of long-term eligibility barriers, accommodation providers viewed ineligibility due to visa status, the gender specific nature of the accommodation and a lack of ongoing income.

Suitability

Short-term accommodation providers reported the greatest barriers for survivors of modern slavery to be survivors requiring specialised services and rules and responsibilities that are not aligned with survivors' needs. This indicates that there is a gap in short-term supported services in Tasmania that are suitable to the needs of modern slavery victim/ survivors. **Long-term accommodation providers** reported accommodation not catering for extended family and rules and responsibilities not aligned with client need.

TAS SPECIFIC DATA

- 14 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 1 survey response received from TAS's 1 case worker
- 4 key informant interviews were conducted including with 1 case worker, and 3 accommodation providers.

3.5 Victoria findings

VIC AT A GLANCE

Availability and accessibility: A lack of suitable options for supported accommodation and long term options are out of reach to those without sufficient income.

Eligibility: Visa status and lack of income the main eligibility barriers.

Suitability: Accommodation options that provide specialised services or have rules and responsibilities that are aligned to needs are a gap.

Challenges in Accommodating survivors of modern slavery

A lack of suitable options for crisis and short-term accommodation (including refuge, supported and transitional accommodation) were all sighted as challenges in Victoria (VIC) by accommodation providers and Support Program case workers, in particularly a lack of self-contained options within crisis and emergency accommodation that would be appropriate for people who have experienced trauma and families with children. Ineligibility due to insufficient income as well as a lack of accommodation that caters to needs related to experiences of trauma or behaviours associated with individuals in distress was also referenced by all interviewees as being a gap. For long-term

accommodation options, one of the main gaps is access to affordable housing with fifty-four per cent (54%) of survey respondents citing lack of housing stock/ housing affordability as the main gap in the housing sector.

Availability and Accessibility

A competitive rental market, under-supply of social housing and demand for crisis accommodation outstripping supply have all contributed to difficulty in accessing accommodation options in VIC. Despite a high level of investment by the state government in recent years, housing policies have had a varied impact on vulnerable cohorts. Survivors of modern slavery have been largely excluded from state government housing programs, with little consideration of the specific needs of this group translating to a lack of short-term supported options to support this group.

Most initiatives have targeted Australian citizens and Permanent Residents, with those on temporary visas facing significant barriers to access mainstream housing and homelessness services. It was noted however that in Victoria there is a forced marriage refuge that provides wrap around support services for survivors. This was sighted by caseworkers as their preferred option to accommodate survivors of forced marriage. Temporary visa status and lack of income are ongoing key constraints to finding suitable long-term accommodation.³⁵

Eligibility

Being ineligible for short-term accommodation due to visa status is seen as the biggest eligibility

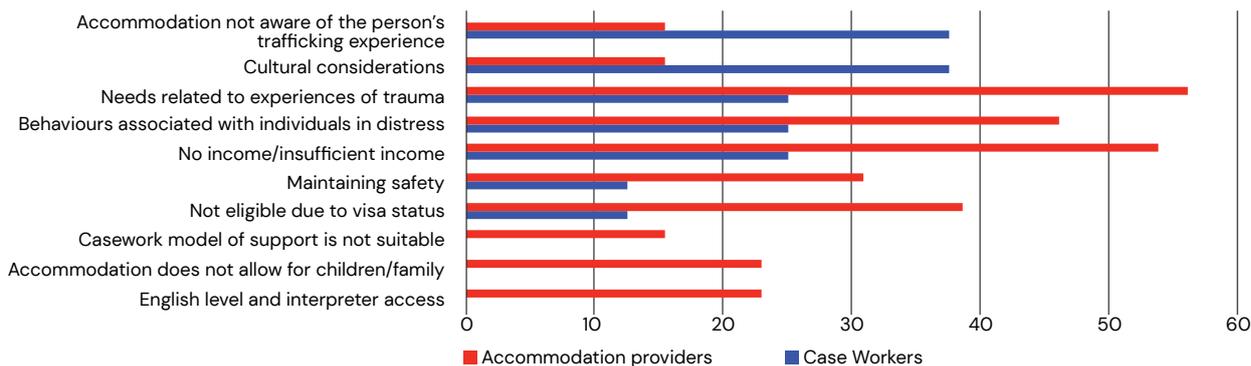


Figure 20: VIC Accommodation Providers Main Challenges in Accommodating Modern Slavery Survivors



Figure 21: VIC Short-term Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers



Figure 22: VIC Short-term Accommodation Suitability Barriers

barrier for both **Support Program case workers** and **short-term accommodation providers**. Similarly, income was seen as a major barrier for thirty-seven per cent (37.5%) of **Support Program case workers** and twenty per cent (20%) of **short-term accommodation providers**. Case workers highlighted considerably more short-term eligibility barriers than accommodation providers did, also identifying insufficient rental history as barrier. This reflects the differing roles of case workers and accommodation providers, with case workers looking more broadly to the private market to accommodate survivors of modern slavery.

Similar to the barriers identified for accessing short-term accommodation, **Support Program case workers** saw insufficient rental history and visa status as the main to accessing long-term accommodation, while **accommodation providers** viewed a lack of ongoing income and the gender-specific eligibility requirements of accommodation as the biggest long-term eligibility barriers to accessing accommodation.

Suitability Barriers

In terms of the suitability, accommodation providers raised more barriers than did case workers in accessing **short-term accommodation**. For **accommodation providers**, major suitability barriers include insufficient income and the client requiring specialised services. For **Support Program case workers**, Rules and responsibilities not aligned

with client need and client requiring specialised services were the main barriers identified.

For long-term accommodation, the main suitability barrier was lack of income with seventy-five per cent (75%) of **support service case workers** citing this barrier and thirty-seven per cent (37.5%) of accommodation providers. This reflects the lack of exit pathways for longer-term accommodation if an individual lacks income or support, which then effects whether accommodation providers consider a client as suitable for the accommodation.

For accommodation providers, another suitability barrier is clients having needs that can't be catered for (37.5%) reflecting the need for supported accommodation for survivors of modern slavery in Victoria.

VIC SPECIFIC DATA

- 13 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 8 survey responses received from case workers
- 8 key informant interviews were conducted including with 2 case worker, 5 accommodation providers and 1 referring agency.

3.6 Western Australia findings

WA AT A GLANCE

Availability and accessibility: A housing crisis in the state is impacting short and long term accommodation.

Eligibility: A lack of income and rental history are the biggest eligibility barriers identified by caseworkers.

Suitability: A lack of suitable accommodation where the rules and responsibilities align with needs, or where specialised services are required.

Challenges in Accommodating survivors of modern slavery

In WA, the main challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery as reported by **accommodation providers** was meeting complex needs associated with an experience of trauma, maintaining safety for the client and accommodation providers not being aware of a person's experience of trafficking. **Support Program case workers** reported numerous challenges in finding accommodation including needs associated with an experience of trauma and with individuals in distress, accommodation not being suitable for people with alcohol and drug issues and a lack of or insufficient income.

When accommodating survivors of forced marriage, **accommodation providers** cited needs associated with an experience of trauma, maintaining safety for service users, needs associated with individuals in distress, and cultural considerations as the main challenges. For **Support Program case workers**, the main challenges in finding accommodation for forced marriage survivors were needs associated with a trauma experience and cultural considerations, highlighting the lack of any specific accommodation in WA to cater to these individuals.

Availability and Accessibility

A snapshot into the WA housing and accommodation situation reveals the worst housing crisis WA has seen in forty years.³⁶ Rental stock is being lost rapidly as owners sell their properties at a rate which has a spike since the Covid-19 pandemic and two significant 'tent cities' have appeared in East Perth and Fremantle during 2021.³⁷ Many evicted people are turning to shelters and refuges that are already at full capacity or occupying what few beds are available and many others are left homeless. The impact on the health system can also be seen with a number of vulnerable people turning to hospitals for shelter.

In addition, a lack of transitional housing impacts the service and public housing priority waitlist is over two years. There is a 'lack of flexibility in the State system of being able to respond to urgent needs'
– WA Accommodation Provider

Further highlighting the crisis in WA, ninety-three per cent (93%) of accommodation providers surveyed cited a lack of suitable and affordable housing as the main gap in supporting modern slavery survivors in the State. This is the highest response rate to this question across Australia. WA accommodation providers highlighted compounding challenges with the flow-on effect in crisis accommodation in explaining that the current housing crisis means that individuals tend to stay longer than before as they do not have many other viable options, and often that providers were accommodating victims for longer than their (funding) criteria permits them. Accommodation providers reported that some of the State's refuges 'turn away up to 100 families a year due to capacity' and are full most of the time with 'ongoing concern around the lack of long-term accommodation options'.

Eligibility

In WA, **short-term accommodation providers** reported the greatest eligibility barrier to accessing their accommodation was the gender-specific nature of the accommodation. Other short-term eligibility barriers include a lack

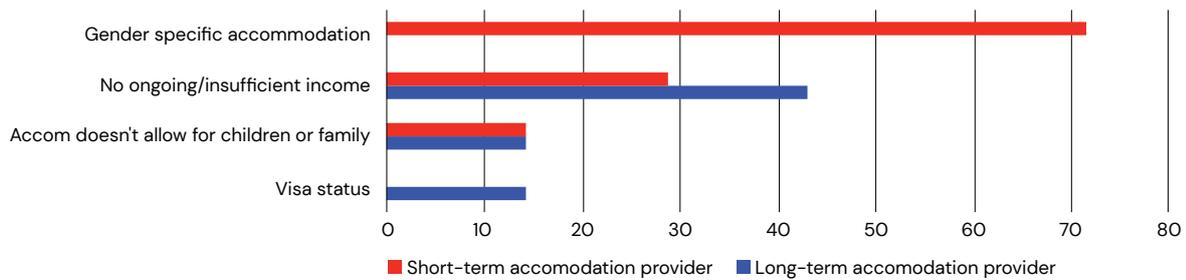


Figure 23: WA Accommodation Providers Eligibility Barriers

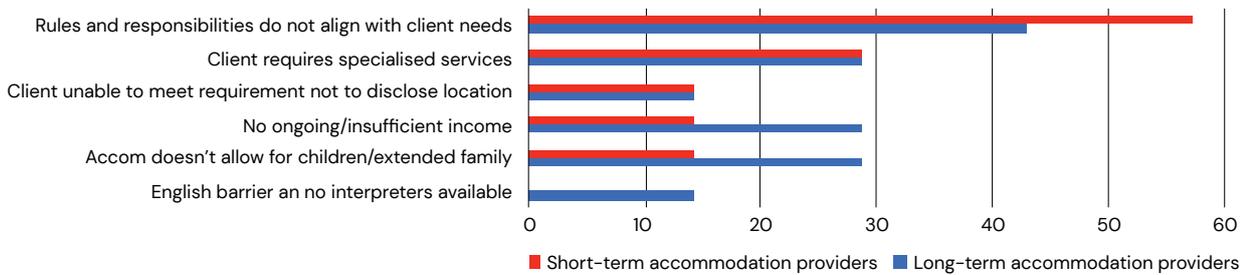


Figure 24: WA Accommodation Providers Suitability Barriers

of ongoing income or insufficient income and accommodation not allowing for children and extended family. For **Support Program case workers**, a lack of ongoing income and a lack of rental history were the greatest barriers to finding short-term accommodation. For **long-term accommodation providers**, the greatest eligibility barrier was a lack of ongoing income. This was followed by the accommodation not allowing for children or extended family and clients being ineligible due to their visa status.

Support Program case workers reported the major eligibility barriers in finding long-term accommodation for clients as lack of sufficient rental history, ineligibility due to visa status and a lack of ongoing income.

Suitability

In terms of suitability, **short-term accommodation providers** reported that rules and responsibilities not aligned with a client's need was the major barrier in accessing their accommodation and individuals requiring specialised services. This is reflected by **Support Program case workers**, with all three WA case

workers highlighting that a lack of income and a consequent lack of exit pathway were the main suitability barriers to short-term accommodation.

Long-term accommodation providers also reported no exit pathway as the main suitability barrier for their accommodation, followed by clients having needs that cannot be catered for. Similarly, **Support Program case workers** viewed no exit pathway as a main suitability barrier to long-term accommodation, along with accommodation not catering to children or extended families and insufficient income.

WA SPECIFIC DATA

- 14 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 3 survey responses received from case workers
- 8 key informant interviews conducted including with 3 case workers, 3 accommodation providers and 1 referring agency.

3.7 South Australia findings

SA AT A GLANCE

Availability and accessibility: A crisis accommodation sector in flux is causing limited access to housing.

Eligibility: Visa status and lack of options to support extended family are eligibility barriers.

Suitability: No or insufficient income and accommodation that doesn't allow for children and family were the main suitability barriers.

Challenges in Accommodating survivors of modern slavery

Both short-term **and long-term accommodation providers** in South Australia (SA) identified cultural considerations and needs associated with an experience of trauma as the greatest challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery. They viewed cultural considerations as a much bigger challenge at forty-three per cent (43%) of providers stating this, compared to twenty per cent (20%) of Australia-wide respondents. SA accommodation providers also viewed a lack of knowledge about a person's trafficking experience as a major barrier suggesting a lack of understanding about human trafficking indicators and presentation, and the unique needs experienced by this group. This indicates that providers may not feel they adequately understand and can address specific

considerations associated with accommodating survivors of modern slavery. Unlike NSW and VIC, there are no forced-marriage or trafficking specific accommodation services available to people in SA. Of South Australian accommodation providers respondents surveyed, forty-three per cent (43%) were unsure if their organisation support modern slavery survivors, further indicating a lack of knowledge of or confidence in understanding trafficking experiences.

Availability and Accessibility

One of the key challenges currently facing the SA housing sector is the transition by all providers to the new housing reform, *Our Housing Future 2020-2030*³⁸ as of June 2021. The SA Housing Authority, the government body responsible for housing and homelessness in SA, has increased the responsibilities given to non-government organisations as contracted housing accommodation providers. The new Alliance Model aims to ensure collaborative partnerships between successful consortiums in ensuring streamlined services are available to match the needs of clients. In the interim, services are transitioning under challenging circumstances with limited emergency accommodation options available in an already stretched system. *Our Housing Future 2020-2030* suggests that previous services have worked in isolation with limited transparency,³⁹ which is one of the measures that the new system hopes to address.

SA **accommodation providers** highlighted collaboration as very important when finding housing for clients, with seventy-one per cent (71%) of respondents stating that it is crucial

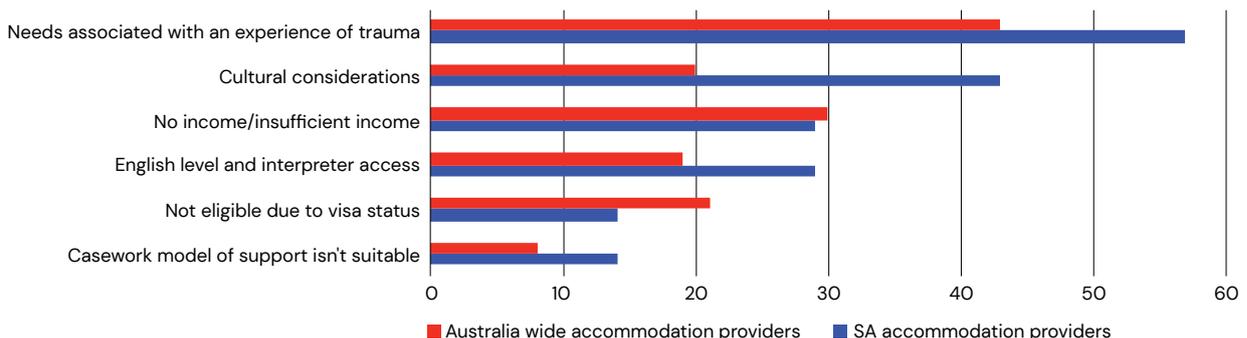


Figure 25: SA Accommodation Providers Main Challenges in Accommodating Modern Slavery Survivors

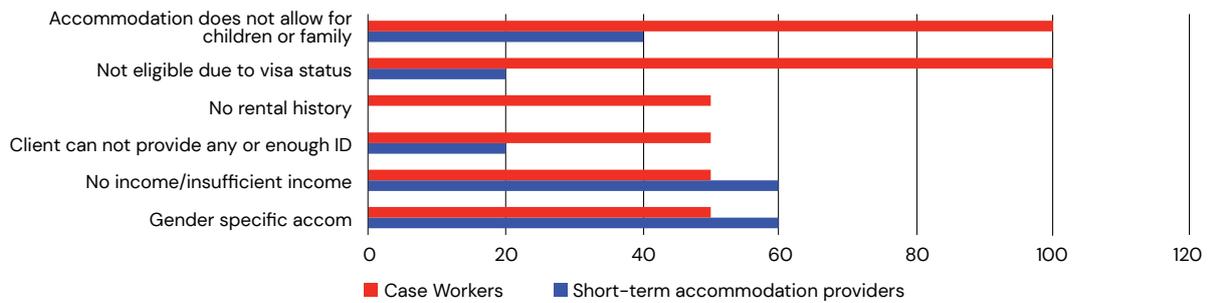


Figure 26: SA Short-term Accommodation Provider Eligibility Barriers

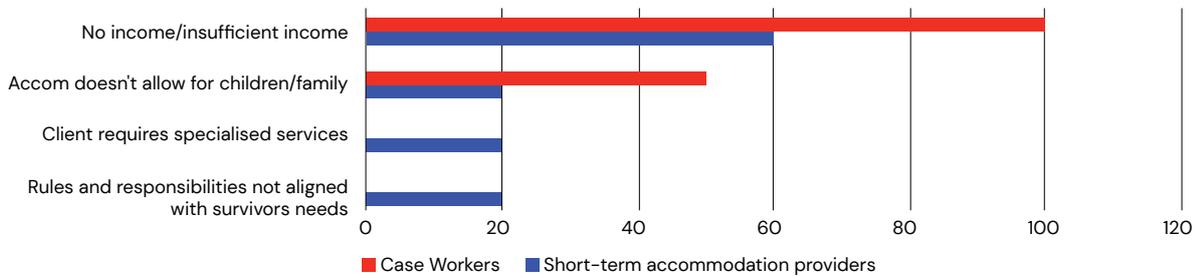


Figure 27: SA Short-term Accommodation Provider Suitability Barriers

and that they collaborate most of the time when exiting a client from their accommodation.

Eligibility

SA **Support Program case workers** reported a lack of visa status, and accommodation not allowing for family or children as the two main short-term eligibility barriers for survivors of modern slavery in accessing accommodation. For **short-term accommodation providers**, a lack of ongoing income and the gender specific nature of their accommodation were the biggest eligibility barriers to their accommodation.

Income is one of the biggest challenges. And also, what I found is some of the private rental agencies don't understand the situation of our clients. It's really challenging for our clients to get a reference or the rental history due to safety issues". SA Caseworker

SA **Support Program case workers** reported numerous long-term barriers including, lack of rental history, clients not being able to provide enough ID, and clients' lacking ongoing income as barriers, with both SA case workers identifying this barrier. Lack of eligibility due to visa was also reported as a barrier by fifty per cent (50%) of case workers.

A case worker commented on how these long-term barriers interact making difficult for survivors of modern slavery in South Australia to find long-term accommodation.

Suitability

In terms of suitability, SA **Support Program case workers** reported insufficient income and accommodation not catering for extended family as the main suitability barriers in finding short-term accommodation. For **short-term accommodation providers** insufficient income is the main suitability barrier, as was the main barrier identified for **long-term accommodation providers**.

SA SPECIFIC DATA

- 7 survey responses received from accommodation providers
- 2 survey responses received from case workers
- 6 key informant interviews were conducted including with 3 case worker, and 3 accommodation providers.

38 Future opportunities and alternative housing models

The findings of this project have highlighted the many barriers that currently exist across Australia in accommodating survivors of modern slavery. This section explores future opportunities and alternative housing models and approaches raised by interviewed participants. It is not meant to propose solutions to the housing system as a whole. Therefore, the models will not be analysed in detail and instead simply referenced for consideration in a further design of an accommodation model for survivors of modern slavery.

4.1 A right to housing and the 'Housing First' approach

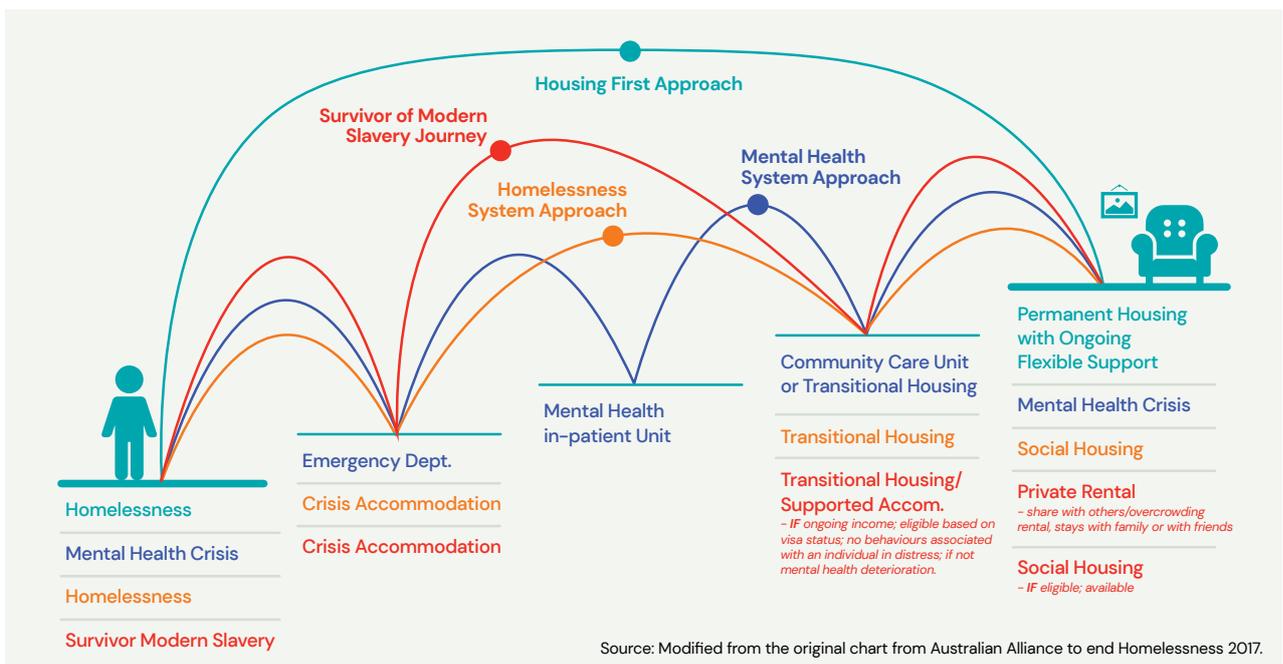
Housing is a human right enshrined in many international legal instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (Article 11).⁴⁰ Many interviewed participants highlighted the need to view access to suitable housing as a human rights issue.

A rights approach aligns with the Housing First model. The Housing First approach seeks to end homelessness by providing rapid housing

that is not conditional on requirements such as abstaining from substance abuse or family income.⁴¹ The approach is premised on the idea that an individual will be better able to work to address other issues they are experiencing once they have secure housing.⁴² It is a needs-based approach and focuses specifically on individual needs, goals and aspirations. Many interviewed participants suggested a Housing First model to be the most appropriate.⁴³

Housing is a human right. It shouldn't be based on income or status. It should be available to everyone. Safety is a human right. It's very difficult to be safe if you've got nowhere to go home to. – NT Accommodation Provider

I am a firm believer of the Housing First model. In looking at education, employment, mental health, substance abuse issues – you can't sort out any of those things, family relationship breakdowns, anything that is happening in someone's life, you can't solve unless they have a home and a stable place to live. – TAS Accommodation Provider



Source: Modified from the original chart from Australian Alliance to end Homelessness 2017.

The Housing First model is not new. It has already been implemented in several jurisdictions including New Zealand⁴⁴, the United States of America⁴⁵, and Finland⁴⁶. In Australia, the Housing First model is not yet a whole of government commitment but instead an approach that is predominantly used as a model for projects, strategies or programs.⁴⁷ For example, the Together Home in NSW⁴⁸ or the SA Future Direction Strategy.⁴⁹ Therefore, further consideration could be given to learn from and/or scale up some of these programs to ensure they cover the particular needs of survivors of modern slavery.

As illustrated in the figure on previous page, the advantages of considering a Housing First Model for survivors of modern slavery are that survivors could be eligible regardless of their visa situation, it would not necessarily have to be dependent on availability of further accommodation in the future and it would have a client centred approach based on individual needs and aspirations.

From crisis accommodation also another line that goes directly to private rental. In brackets share with others/overcrowding

4.2 Core and Cluster model

Another model that was raised by interviewed participants was the Core and Cluster model that is being implemented by some States such as NSW and VIC to support survivors of family and domestic violence. A core and cluster is a set of individual units on a piece of land, together with [...] communal activities areas for residents. The site allows for independent living while also providing comprehensive support services for women and children. The model offers families privacy while allowing them to connect and be supported as they wish as families effectively have their own home whilst living in a supported community environment.⁵⁰

We're seeing a lot of discussion about the model called the "Core and Cluster" model... it gives people that independence and their own privacy and space, more so than what they might experience in a refuge setting, but there are also services on site, case worker on site and opportunities for social engagement on site, within that built in cluster. - NSW Accommodation Provider

As it was stated by some accommodation providers, survivors of modern slavery, particularly survivors of forced marriage and/or exit trafficking with dependents could be benefited from a program based on this model of support.

4.3 Sub Lease Model

In interviews, the overwhelming majority of interviewed participants, accommodation providers and case workers were supportive of a sub-lease model of support whereby a client would sub-lease or co-sign a property from an organisation for a period of time and through this arrangement, become linked to the private rental market. This option was sighted as resolving a number of eligibility and suitability barriers to accommodation found in this report, including a lack of ID and rental history, affordability and visa status.

[The sub lease model] is a great model because of course the [organisation] has the capacity to hold those leases from the owners, which overcomes those barriers of migration, the visa, the bank account, the stable lease statements, [...]. I think that has real potential to be really useful. - Housing academic

Accommodation providers also noted that for this model to work the period of the arrangement needs to be longer than the time usually allowed for in crisis accommodation (three months) and be combined with wraparound services that really allow survivors to rest, recovery and focus on regaining a sense of trust and confidence in self and the community.

I think that [the sub lease] model does help people then understand their tenancy rights and responsibilities and have support around managing their tenancy independently. - NSW Accommodation Provider

For all client groups, it's not usually long enough across a 3-6 month period to stabilise emotionally, psychologically and financially, when there are very little alternative affordable housing options to facilitate exit pathways. -SA Accommodation Provider

40 Conclusion

Survivors of modern slavery often have specific needs as a result of their experience of exploitation and it is important for survivors to access safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation to act as a strong foundation for their recovery. Accommodation plays a central role in supporting overall recovery of survivors, allowing individuals to focus attention on other important aspects of their lives, such as their physical and mental wellbeing, social connections, employment and education.

This project examined barriers to accommodating survivors of modern slavery related to availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability and has highlighted both structural factors and personal risk factors that hinder individuals in finding and maintaining both short-term and long-term accommodation. These include:

Availability: A lack of long-term accommodation options in the Australian housing sector has meant there are limited exit pathways out of short-term options which are being accessed for longer period of times, creating a bottleneck effect and limiting availability for new service users. Although an issue for all service user groups, this is presenting additional challenges in accommodating survivors of modern slavery who also face barriers due to accessibility, eligibility and suitability considerations. Availability of accommodation is particularly challenging in rural and remote areas of Australia where seasonal trends can further limit accommodation options.

Accessibility: Accommodation located in areas with limited access to essential services can present accessibility barriers for survivors of modern slavery who may experience challenges navigating transport options. Survivors of modern slavery with a mental or physical disability have access or support needs that are not always able to be catered for by accommodation providers.

Eligibility: Visa status represents a significant eligibility barrier, particularly to accessing long-term housing. To be eligible for social housing in most states and territories, applicants are required to have permanent residency or Australian

citizenship. There is nothing (such as a specific access to priority listing) that allows survivors of modern slavery on temporary visas to be eligible nor prioritised. A lack of ongoing income also represents a significant eligibility barrier for accommodation options that require a financial contribution for their services. Survivors of modern slavery and migrants on temporary visas with no or very low income and no access to government income support payments experience significant challenges in finding accommodation that is affordable and sustainable in the long term.

Suitability: Rules and responsibilities including criteria such as curfews, limitations on freedom of movement and requirements for engaging with education, training and/or work put in place by accommodation providers may not be suitable for individual's needs. Specialised services such as supported accommodation is often more suitable for survivors of modern slavery who experience complex needs related to their experiences of trauma.

Additionally, individuals who are at risk of or who have experienced forced marriage face additional barriers to accommodation due to the importance of cultural and physical safety, as well as a lack of awareness and understanding of experiences of forced marriage.

A primary impact of a culmination of the barriers related to availability, accessibility, eligibility and suitability of accommodation is that hotel accommodation is increasingly required to be utilised as a last resort and an alternative to homelessness despite its recognition as an option which may not be safe, suitable nor sustainable.

Recognising that housing policies and priorities differ from state to state and the complexities of funding arrangement between state and federal governments, survivors of modern slavery have been largely left out of housing policies as a priority group and need to navigate the same systems and processes as all Australians, however at a disadvantage due to the many structural and personal risk factors they experience.

Red Cross also supports further research into housing models suitable for vulnerable groups including survivors of modern slavery and migrants on temporary visas. Red Cross see's that Partnerships between state, territory and federal governments and the housing, migrant and modern slavery civil society sectors will be vital in overcoming identified barriers in accommodating survivors of modern slavery and working towards safe, suitable and sustainable housing.

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