Impact Report

July 2023 - June 2024

Rooming House Outreach & Support Program
South East Region

Peninsula Community Legal Centre

Rooming house visits including multiple visits

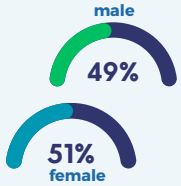
361

Rooming house residents contacted

411

Residents referred to housing services

47



Reports/enquiries made to regulators

6

Health packs delivered

189

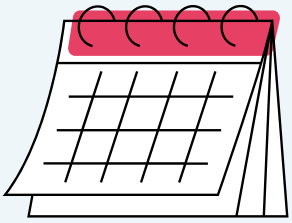
Vouchers supplied

309

Average length of stay

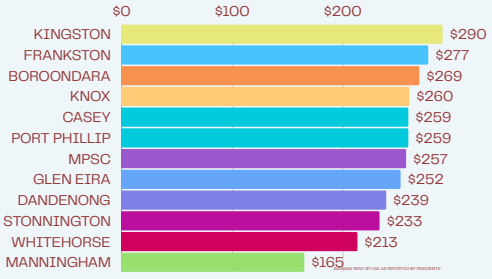
34

months



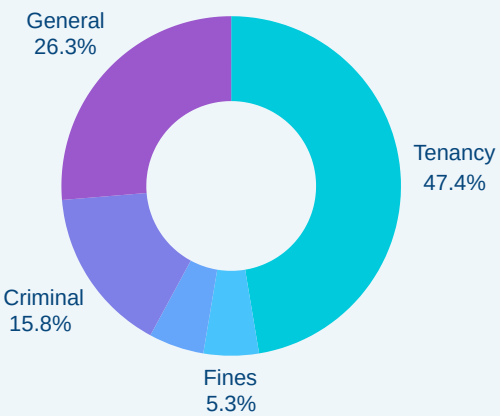
Average weekly rent over 17 LGA's

$251



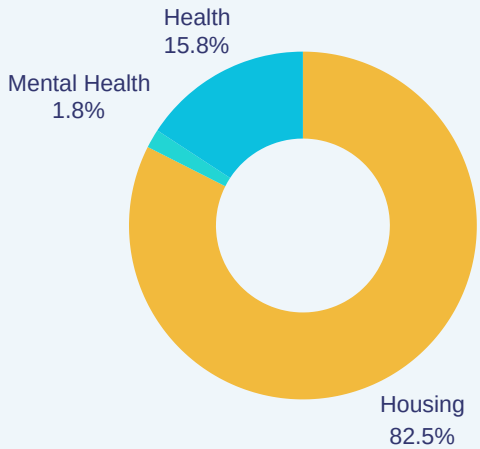
Rooming house referrals to PCLC

RHOP facilitated direct referrals within PCLC for TAAP services and other legal advice



Rooming house referrals + support / other

RHOP facilitated direct referrals within its network for residents seeking health, mental health, and other legal services



Yearly Impact Report Brief:

Fostering Collaborative Change in Rooming House Outreach

Within the past twelve months, our Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) has thrived through strategic partnerships with key organisations. These collaborations have been instrumental in broadening our reach and impact, demonstrating our collective commitment to support vulnerable rooming house residents.

Key Collaborations

- Better Health Network: Fortnightly outreach visits in Port Phillip, Stonnington, and Glen Eira
- Bolton Clarke: Weekly collaborative visits in the City of Casey and Glen Eira
- Access Health: Weekly outreach visits in Boroondara and Manningham
- Capire Consulting: Occasional collaboration in Dandenong.
- Wintringham: Fortnightly collaboration in Frankston and Mornington Peninsula
- Foothills Community Care: Fortnightly outreach visits in Fern Tree Gully
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Local: Fortnightly collaboration in Frankston

Impactful Outcomes

Our partnerships have enabled deeper engagement with residents, offering holistic support for legal and health needs. This approach has significantly expanded our reach, addressing the distinct challenges faced by rooming house residents. Formalizing these partnerships ensures sustained effectiveness, with each organization bringing unique strengths to create a powerful synergy.

Program Highlights:

Over the past twelve months, RHOP visited 361 properties across 17 local government areas, with 248 of them involving joint visits with key partner agencies—a collaborative effort representing 68.7% of our outreach.

Active Participation:

In addition to direct outreach, PCLC actively engages in rooming house working groups hosted by local councils. This participation strengthens our ability to provide effective assistance and contributes to safer living environments.

Local Council Collaborations:

- City of Casey: Rooming House Working Group & Homeless and Social Inclusion Network Meeting
- City of Frankston: Rooming House Working Group & Functional Zero
- City of Glen Eira
- Port Phillip Community Group
- Mornington Peninsula Shire: Multi-Agency Review, Housing Network Meeting
- City of Knox: Ferntree Gully Steering Committee Meeting, Foothills Community Dinner & Knox Infolink Community Breakfast

Highlight of RHOP's Community Engagement

RHOP has actively engaged with a diverse range of community and government members through 24 presentations across multiple municipalities. These presentations have fostered collaboration, raised awareness, and enhanced collective efforts to address pressing community issues. By engaging with a wide array of stakeholders, we have built strong partnerships, created a robust support network, and increased advocacy for our initiatives. Sharing best practices and innovative solutions has improved our collective effectiveness, while a deeper understanding of community needs has informed and tailored our service delivery.

Community Impact

The complexities and challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness, particularly for the first time, are immense. A single poor decision, bad experience, or relationship breakdown can quickly lead to unstable housing situations. For those who can self-report and advocate for themselves, the process is already daunting. However, for individuals dealing with ongoing trauma and unable to find alternative housing options, the situation becomes even more dire.

We acknowledge the severe strain the housing crisis is having on homelessness entry points, which is, in turn, leaving many to navigate the complex housing system without adequate support or time to understand and work through the necessary processes. This can exacerbates their trauma and hinders their ability to secure stable housing, further entrenching them in a cycle of homelessness and vulnerability.

The RHOP approach has successfully re-engaged individuals who had previously disengaged from the system, providing them with renewed hope and practical support. By addressing not only their immediate housing needs but also the underlying issues such as mental health, financial instability, and social isolation, we are helping to create more sustainable solutions.

We aim to continue expanding our reach and impact through additional community education sessions, strengthened partnerships, and innovative approaches to advocacy and support. Our goal is to ensure that no one falls through the cracks and that every individual has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Case Study

Resident JRH's case highlights the essential role of the Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) in tackling complex health and housing issues through collaborative efforts with multiple support services.

JRH lived in a three-bedroom house in the Mornington Peninsula, paying $260 per week without a lease or bond. The property housed six people, with two living in tents in the backyard and electrical leads running from the main house. The unregistered rooming house had unsafe and inadequate living conditions.

The house posed significant safety concerns. JRH experienced electrocution and an exploding appliance due to poor wiring, had only one working hot plate, and lived amidst substantial mould build up. Violence and threats were common, and rampant drug use exacerbated the unsafe environment, severely impacting JRH's mental health and leading to suicidal thoughts.

RHOP quickly devised a support plan, leveraging its extensive Mornington area network. RHOP connected JRH with an organization for a (IAP) assessment to identify suitable housing solutions and prepared a support letter to help him gain access to crisis and supported accommodation.

For health and wellbeing support, RHOP explored referrals to mental health crisis teams to address JRH's suicidal ideation and develop coping strategies. JHR did not want to exercise his renters rights for fear of eviction, however consented to RHOP to lodge complaints with local council and Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) regarding the unregistered rooming house and unsafe living conditions. JRH was encouraged to send photos of the unsafe backyard setup to bolster his case.

RHOP's collaborative efforts led to significant outcomes. The local council investigated the property's concerns, and JRH was accepted for crisis accommodation, providing him with a safer and more supportive living environment.

RHOP's collaborative outreach efforts significantly improved JRH's living conditions and overall well-being. This case underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach in addressing clients' complex needs, highlighting the transformative potential of community support services working together.