

Expression of Interest to
Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund

PROJECT SERENITY

DRAFT ONLY

Version 0.1 Updated 4/01/2017

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Date of Submission (Closes 17/02/2017):

Contents

Mission Statement, Vision and Expected Benefits	3
Project Timeframe	4
Model Overview.....	4
Scope and Description	5
Host Application and Vetting Process.....	6
Host Training and Registration Process	7
Guest Referral and Intake Process.....	8
Monitoring and Evaluation	9
Items Yet to be Defined	10
Budget	11
Signatories.....	12

Mission Statement, Vision and Expected Benefits

Mission Statement:

To reduce homelessness and deaths resulting from domestic violence.

Vision:

A comprehensive system offering an alternative type of crisis accommodation to victims of domestic violence and abuse, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, relationship, cultural background, religion, language or form of violence/abuse, using principles similar to child fostering systems.

Expected Benefits:

Reduction in the number of deaths resulting from domestic violence.

Reduction in the burden on existing homeless refuges and crisis accommodation.

Reduction in the burden on child foster system by provision of alternative crisis accommodation suitable for a parent with children, allowing the children to remain with at least one parent/guardian throughout the crisis.

Reduction in the number of homeless, particularly parents with children.

Reduction in the number of victims returning to violence following crisis accommodation by allowing the victim sufficient time to find longer term, safe accommodation.

Reduction in the average duration a victim suffers abuse, and the escalation of abuse.

Victims feeling safer in crisis accommodation that is not concurrently housing former prisoners or individuals impacted by drug and alcohol abuse.

Provision of some crisis accommodation where the victim's pet(s) are welcome with them.

Project Timeframe

This is a long term project, expecting to continue to deliver on expected benefits for years. Funding is therefore sought for 4 years, delivered in stages.

Model Overview

The proposed model involves members of the public who have a spare room(s), applying and being vetted and trained to provide crisis accommodation, following principles similar to child fostering systems.

Scope and Description

Domestic violence has been referred to as a national epidemic, and requires nationwide solutions. A national system will reduce duplication of efforts and processes that may otherwise occur with multiple state-based systems, and allows for streamlined procurement arrangements. The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021 notes that the domestic and family violence service system is for the most part considered complex and fragmented. There is variation in the availability of services across the state, let alone the country.

Applications may be approved for Hosts who own the residence, or Hosts who rent the residence. Where the Host is a tenant, written approval will be required from the landlord. Holiday house. The residence is not required to be the owner's principle place of residence, such as a holiday home or investment.

Hosts are expected to provide clean, tidy, furnished accommodation and access to basic amenities such as toilet, bathroom, kitchen, laundry. They are not expected to provide transport, food, cook, clothe, clean up after or provide child minding. Hosts will offer privacy, respect and discretion. Hosts will undergo compulsory training prior to having their registration approved and receiving any Guests, however they are not expected to provide counselling services, or perform an official referral service.

The crisis accommodation service will be non-discriminatory regarding the age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, relationship, cultural background, religion, language or form of violence/abuse of the victim or children, and similarly of Host applicants. Emotional, psychological and financial abuse are noted as forms of domestic abuse, often as a precursor to physical abuse.

The persons escaping abuse will be allocated to a specific Host accommodation by the Safer Pathways Local Coordination Point in NSW, and equivalent in other states/territories.

It is intended that victims that can be identified as having drug or alcohol addiction are excluded from referral to the Project Serenity system. This is due to the risk that exposure may be detrimental to the Host and their family. Due to the more complex issues involved in such cases, better outcomes may be achieved in other crisis accommodation where daily contact is with specifically trained professionals more experienced than Project Serenity Hosts.

Victims who own pets can be referred to a Host who has identified in their registration that they can welcome the type of pets specified.

The length of stay permitted at Project Serenity crisis accommodation must be such that Guests have sufficient time to organise more long term accommodation, to reduce likelihood of returning to violence.

Monetary compensation will be paid to Hosts via Project Serenity to cover utilities and shared essentials (eg. Toilet paper, laundry detergent) used by the Guest throughout their stay in the crisis accommodation, to ensure the Host is not out of pocket for providing the basics.

There may be circumstances where crisis accommodation nearby where the victim was living would be preferable for them (eg. They work in the area.), and other situations where the victim would feel safer if housed further away.

Opportunity for feedback will be made available to both the Guest and Host following the Guest's departure.

Host Application and Vetting Process

Host Training and Registration Process

Guest Referral and Intake Process

Monitoring and Evaluation

Feedback Processes

Guest -

Host -

Review Process

Items Yet to be Defined

Quantifying the expected benefits.

Budget

Funding opportunities from the Commonwealth and other states/territories

Quantifying potential Hosts

Budget

Project Serenity offers an opportunity for NSW co-investment with the Commonwealth and other states/territories – a Blueprint Action included in the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016-2021.

Signatories