

# Reintegration Puzzle Conference 2019

## Where do women belong?: Housing women in Central Australia post-release

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**#RPCon2019**



**“Housing is the elephant in every room”**

**“We’ve just gotten used to saying to clients: We’ve got nothing for you.”**

**“Women in the NT corrections system don’t have housing to begin with!”**

**“I struggle with knowing what homelessness is. All our clients have an address...”**

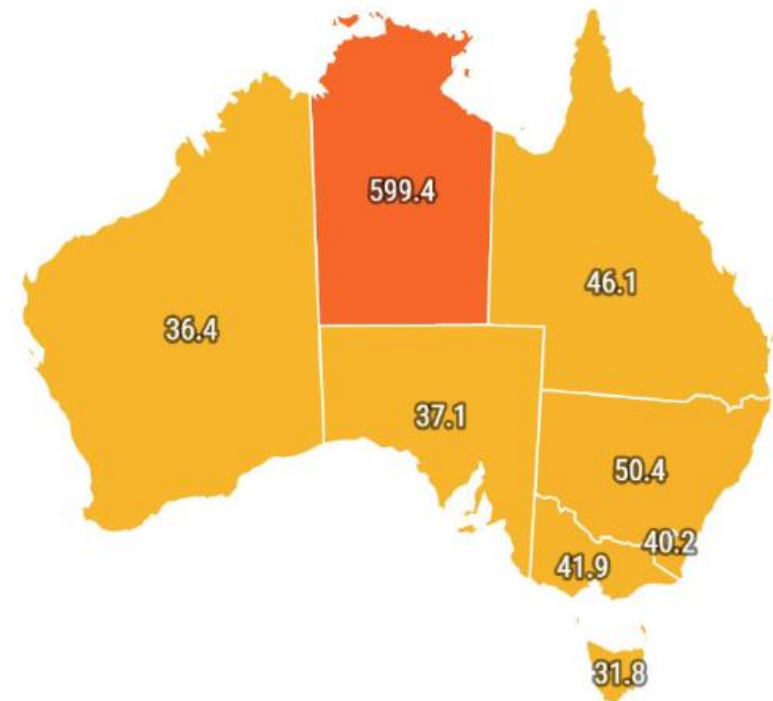
**“Our clients are stuck wherever they are.. its disheartening. Its horrible“**



# Housing & Homelessness in the NT

## Highest Homelessness Rates in the Nation

Rate per 10,000 population



**About 13727 people in the NT are homeless\***



Of these

Over half are female\*



47% Are seeking homeless services due to domestic & family violence\*\*



4942 Children are homeless in the NT\*



Everyday Homeless Services turn people away because they lack the resources, funding or capacity to help



[shelterme.org.au](http://shelterme.org.au)



shelterme

# Soaring demand for services

- 9,285 sought assistance in 2017-18
- 14% increase over past 2 years
- National average demand 117 clients per 10,000
- NT average 377 per 10,000 (x 3)
- Regional and outback NT – 537.7 per 10,000



# Homelessness is not just “rooflessness”

- **Primary homelessness** is experienced by people without conventional accommodation (e.g. sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings);
- **Secondary homelessness** is experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another (e.g. emergency accommodation, youth refuges, "couch surfing");
- **Tertiary homelessness** is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (e.g. boarding housing , caravan parks and severely **overcrowded dwellings**).



# Alice Springs and Central Australia



# What does homelessness look like in Central Australia?

Statistical Area Level 3	No.	%
Darwin City	825	6.0
Darwin Suburbs	542	3.9
Litchfield	244	1.8
Palmerston	146	1.1
<b>Alice Springs</b>	<b>2 109</b>	<b>15.4</b>
Barkly	624	4.5
Daly - Tiwi - West Arnhem	2 680	19.5
East Arnhem	4 032	29.4
Katherine	2 510	18.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 727</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5: Homeless persons enumerated by Statistical Area Level 3, Northern Territory, 2016<sup>5</sup>**

Source: ABS

<sup>5</sup>Figures may not add due to rounding

# For women exiting prison in Central Australia

No dedicated accommodation option

- TAP program is coming online (Corrections funding)
- Support programs:
  - Kunga Stopping Violence Program

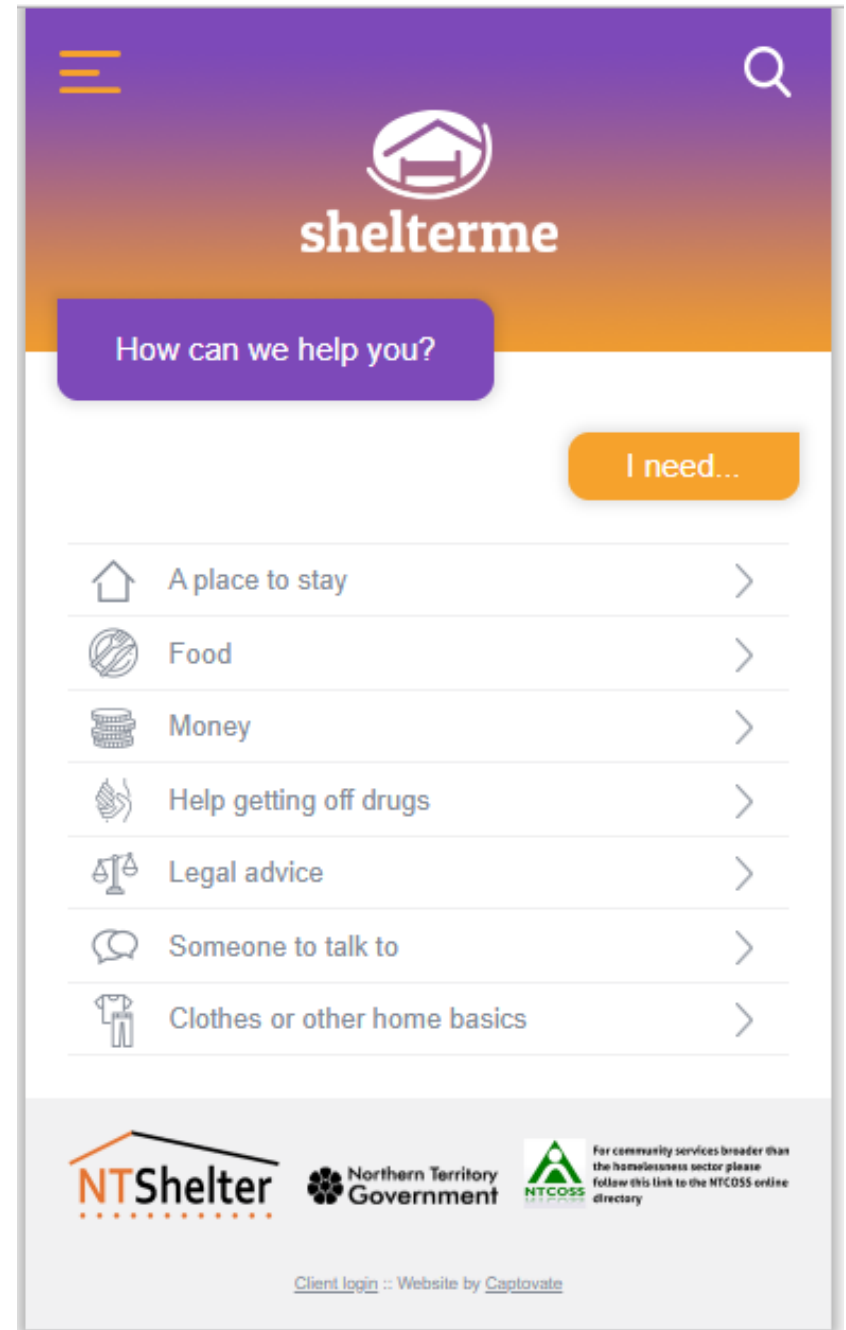
**Without a strong income, many women exit into overcrowding and are reliant on the mainstream housing sector**





# Supports available

- Crisis Accommodation
- Transitional or Medium Term Accommodation
- Public Housing
- Bond Assistance/private rental



# Longer term accommodation options in Alice Springs

## Wait times for public housing

There are over 1000 people currently on the public housing waiting list. The average wait time for public housing is 4-6 years.

## Priority public housing

Priority housing is considered a need for people who are experiencing urgent and extreme hardship. A hardship could be homelessness, serious medical conditions or disability, or social problems that affect peoples ability to find housing.

Priority housing is not considered crisis or emergency accommodation. However the department will offer referrals to other organizations that will not impact an application for priority housing.

## Other Accommodation Options

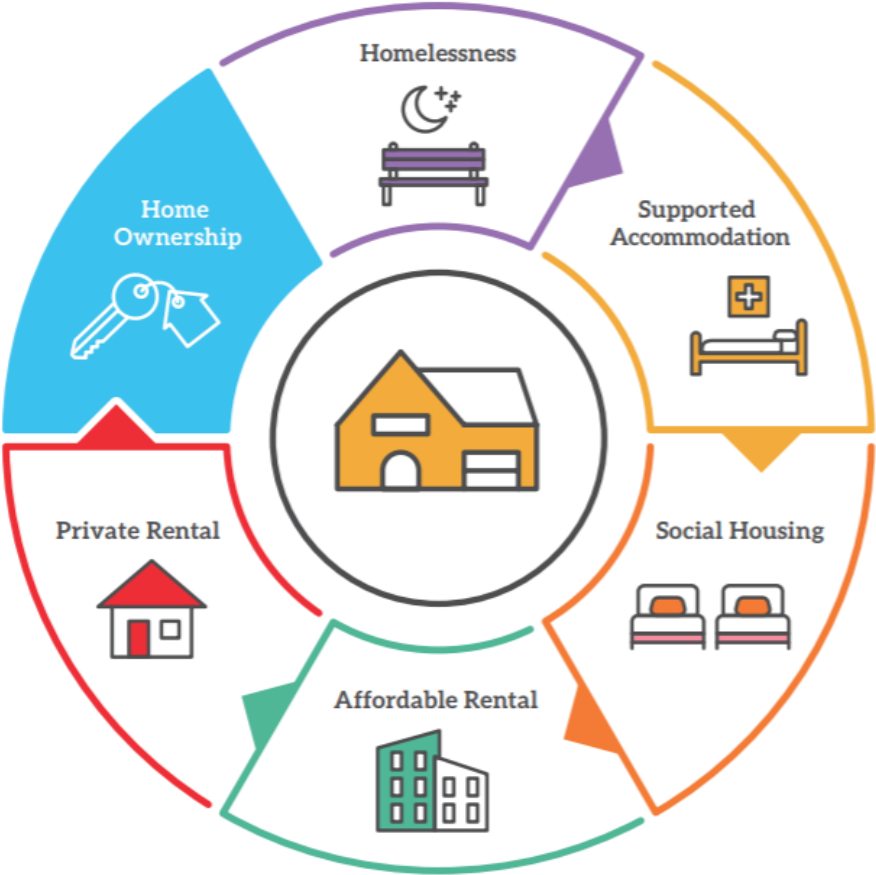
Town Camps Housing

Affordable and Community Housing – People working. with income

Private Rental and Home Ownership



# The housing “non-continuum”



# Compounding barriers

**Severe Infrastructure Shortages**

**Financial Barriers - Income**

**Financial Barriers – Fines/Debt**

**Family Pressures**

**Child Protection System**



# Reintegration response: What is needed?

- “Must be accessible, functional and safe.”
- “Should be built in Alice Springs, as the location is close to amenities and relevant services including public transport. Should be well lit and secure.”
- “Small town –consideration of standalone vs clustered cul-de-sac is not as relevant as everyone would know where they were. More important to have something fit for purpose.”



- “Small units in a large compound (2-3 bedrooms)”
- “Multiple in different locations so women have options and can avoid people they need to”
- “Semi communal living – offer privacy for families but also open spaces”
- “Accommodation must be culturally safe and appropriate”
- Space needs to be safe and comfortable –needs to maintain dignity. Pet friendly. Emphasis on physical security –high fences, onsite security, CCTV.”
- Disability access also could mean housing may need accommodate an additional support person people.
- Accessible, functional and safe.



- “What happens operationally –need further support for wrap around services.”
- “Remote areas may have space to put one but do not necessarily have good access to services.”
- “Significant issue of family violence, so many people are not safe with extended family. Family violence also can mean that men are escaping as well.”
- “Emergency accommodation is needed, but there is more of a need for transitional housing, and there is no place to exit to except into homelessness (8+ year wait-list for NT Housing).”
- “No suitable place to transition out of emergency accommodation.”
- “Needs to be safe from racism.”



# Creating a step change – what needs to happen?



- Leadership - housing must be a priority and people must be supported
- Supplementary payment for NT, recognising extent of need and inability to meet it
- National Housing Strategy
- Housing as key enabling infrastructure
- A bi-partisan, significant medium to long term investment program (breaking down the silos)
- Local decision making and control





*Ensuring women exiting prison have access to suitable safe, secure and affordable accommodation and appropriate supports is essential.  
Housing underpins a broad range of wellbeing indicators.*

**Thank you!**

And thanks to:



**Hannah Purdy : [ca@ntshelter.org.au](mailto:ca@ntshelter.org.au)**

