



8 March, 2023

Housing and Homelessness Program Delivery Branch
GPO Box 9820
Department of Social Services
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Safe Places Inclusion Round: Discussion Paper Submission

Great Lakes Womens Shelter was the grateful recipient of \$1.39m in the last Safe Places round. We created a beautiful, designed-for-purpose shelter which is currently housing 9 families in 10 bedrooms (one mother has 8 children). Our Activity ID was 4-FWMSOZ5 and the grant has been fully acquitted.

From our experience as a successful grant recipient, we provide the following feedback to the Discussion paper:

Development Periods

The inclusion of *Development Periods* is an essential stage in the application process to provide additional time for organisations to obtain planning and development approvals and mitigate implementation risks for delivery timeframes and budgets.

As a small community organisation, we were burdened with significant upfront investment in terms of our own time and expertise to get application ready. There are many pre-DA requirements such as architect designs; consultants in engineering and building codes; soil analysis and other environmental hurdles; then council application and approval processes and fees, which are all prerequisites for a successful DA. Given the amount of legislation (BASIX, NATHERS etc) to be negotiated, DA lodgement is supported by a team of experts, and is expensive. These are activities to be completed and costs that are incurred in preparation for a successful grant application. Without having them in place, there is a time/process and compliance deficit that significantly extends the period before the project is "shovel ready". Depending on the project LGA, this preparation stage can be a minimum of 1.5 years, and sometimes two years or more.

An investment from the Department in seed funding upfront (or Development periods) would facilitate a smoother application process by supporting applicants to meet minimum application criteria prior to making a submission and avoid significant delays in project deliverable timeframes.

Potential Eligibility Criteria

As mentioned above, the inclusion of a staged approach where organisations are supported to design and develop their proposals up front, would facilitate the process of meeting all eligible criteria proposed in the Discussion Paper.





In response to the question: *What are the best measures to determine an applicant's suitability to meet the needs of women and children with disability?* Community connectedness and previous history of service delivery in community would be important to ensure women and children can be adequately connected to support networks for their individual needs.

In response to the question: *What standard of the Livable Housing Australia design guidelines should emergency accommodation for First Nations women and children, women and children from a CALD background and women and children with disability meet?* Platinum - to provide access for all age / and disability ranges without the need for retrofitting in the future.

The proposed eligibility criteria: *"Proposal provides new (additional) safe places for FDV emergency accommodation, with a "safe place" as defined in section 4.3.2"* could be expanded to include transitional accommodation options where a community has identified a gap between emergency accommodation and longer-term housing options. Longer term emergency accommodation would ensure safety and wellness outcomes for families are met adequately. A woman and child's safety net ends when she leaves the shelter, without adequate support she remains vulnerable. Having purpose-built housing options with supports available, will ensure all women and children can remain safe for the long term, not just while in shelter.

Proposed Definitions

For the purposes of the Inclusion Round, 'emergency accommodation' is defined as short-term accommodation for less than 12 months however only includes refuges or crisis shelters. Supported transitional accommodation is greatly needed to support a vulnerable family to transition into short term independent accommodation as part of their journey to full independence from specialised service support. Transitional accommodation is understood to be between three to twelve months therefore would satisfy criteria of 'short term' accommodation.

The proposed definition of a 'safe place' is well understood however as the Safe Places Inclusion Round is for capital only, this measure puts significant burden on under-funded specialised DFV services to meet the ongoing operational and service delivery costs to maintain the 'safe place'. There needs to be further consideration of the true cost to provide a 'safe place' and commitment from the Department to support this aspect.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback towards the upcoming Safe Places Inclusion Round. We look forward to participating in the upcoming consultations in March.

If you require any further information, I can be contacted at corinne@glws.org.au.

Kind regards,
Corinne Stephenson

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land on which we work and play,
The Worimi people, and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present and emerging.*

GREAT LAKES Womens Shelter



GLWS is committed to reconciliation between all Australians.



GREAT LAKES Womens Shelter

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