

## New grant to help end complex homelessness

Around 20 of Sydney's most vulnerable residents, who have experienced prolonged and repeated episodes of homelessness, will be offered an opportunity to end that cycle.

The City of Sydney has awarded a grant of around \$50,000 to the Haymarket Foundation to conduct neuropsychological assessments for people experiencing homelessness who have suspected cognitive impairments. The assessments make recommendations relating to appropriate housing and supports.

This can mean the difference between a person settled happily supported independent living with access to the NDIS for instance, or yet another failed tenancy.

"Many rough sleepers housed during the pandemic have since returned to homelessness, due to the complexity of their issues, including cognitive impairments," says the CEO of the Haymarket Foundation, Peter Valpiani.

These failed tenancies can be due in part to undiagnosed cognitive impairments and therefore inappropriate housing and supports being put in place.

The Haymarket Foundation will work with the End Street Sleeping Collaboration's escalation group and the Collaborative Support initiative to focus on the City's most vulnerable.

"One of our initiatives is the establishment of a collaborative approach to breaking down systems barriers to help find equitable and sustainable solutions for the most vulnerable rough sleepers – those identified as having the most complex needs and for whom housing solutions have been the most difficult to find," says Christine McBride, CEO of the End Street Sleeping Collaboration.

While assessments can be done through the public health system, the barriers are often insurmountable. There is long waiting times for assessment and many individuals in the target cohort have a history of negative experiences with the health system.

The assessments will be carried out by Advanced Neuropsychological Treatment Services (ANTS), which has worked with the Haymarket Foundation for over 10 years.

"Our consultants travel so that all assessments can be carried out at the safe and familiar environment of the Haymarket Centre. The support provided by the staff at the Haymarket Foundation has been invaluable in our achievement of 100% attendance rates for referrals received," says Dr Jamie Berry, the Director of ANTS.

So far there has been no research carried out in the area: the team plans to publish the results, which could lead to changes in policy and practice.

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