

**Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub Case Study**



Submitted by **City of Perth**  
Case Study **Safe Night Space for Women**

## Background

As part of the needs assessment through the development of the Rough Sleeper Plan, there was a gap in inner-city emergency accommodation for women identified. The City of Perth, in partnership with Ruah Community Services was able to initiate the Safe Night Space for Women to meet this need.

The project was funded by the City of Perth, as part of its Rough Sleeper Plan as committed to in the Perth City Deal. Whilst it is an ongoing program, it is intended as a temporary measure to address the gap whilst awaiting the development of other more permanent solutions to homelessness accommodation.

## Goals/objectives

The City recognises that homelessness and rough sleeping has become critical in inner city spaces with limited accommodation options available. Whilst awaiting the development of the Boorloo Bidee Mia and the East Perth Common Ground facility, the City provided inner-city emergency and crisis accommodation for women.

The space created shelter for up to 20 women aged 18 years or older with seven nights a week availability and a point of engagement and referral to other services.



## Lessons learned

The City of Perth expected many lessons would be learnt.

- Awareness and Engagement

Through the early operational period, the shelter experienced low numbers. Several contributory factors were identified: including lack of awareness from other service providers and clients, individual perceptions around what the space may be like, unsure of who may already be at the shelter and personal dynamics.

- Operational Times

The Safe Night Space opens at 7:00pm, however other homelessness services shut in the early afternoon. The result is that women tend to make their way to the shelter in the afternoon and 'hang around' outside for significant periods of time.

- Complex Needs

There has been an underestimation of the complexity of needs demonstrated by patrons and the period of time required by staff to address these needs.

- Location – Proximity to City

The Safe Night Space is slightly outside of the central CBD meaning that some patrons need to catch public transport or CAT buses to access.

- Management of Men

It was recognised there were instances of potentially threatening people ‘hanging around’ outside and nearby who needed to be managed. This poses a threat to both clients, some of whom are leaving Domestic Violence situations, and staff assisting them.

- Management of Issues and Complaints

Throughout operation there had been instances of complaints from neighbouring residents regarding various social issues and noise which needed management.

- Management of Luggage

Clients accessing the service, have at times extra luggage, requiring storage out of hours. This has posed logistical problems for the shelter to both store and dispose luggage of when necessary.

- More Self-Referrals than Third Party Referral

The Shelter has a multi-referral pathway, being either via a third-party referral that allows for a 10-night period of stay or a self-referral pathway that then allows for a 5-night period of stay. There was significantly more self-referrals than initially expected.

## Outcomes

The Safe Night Space for Ruah continues to operate, however some of the initial outcomes achieved for the period of 31 May, 2021 – 31 March, 2022 are:

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Total number of new referrals:            | 822   |
| Estimated number of individuals assisted: | 767   |
| Number of Instances of Support:           | 3,700 |

### March 2022 outcomes:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Number of new cases of support:  | 46    |
| Number of referrals received:  | 96    |
| Number of referrals accepted (self-referrals incl.):                             | 234   |
| Number of referrals made: to Day centers:  | 71    |
| To other Specialist services:  | 47    |
| Number of instances of support:  | 1,080 |
| Provision of Trial Safe Night Space COVID-19 Vaccination Service: 1 month period |       |
| Number of women accessing the post vaccination space:                            | 10    |