



The Priority Project

**Private Rentals Property Register
for women and children impacted
by domestic and family violence**

Project Proposal for consultation

5 August 2021

**“Our hypothesis is that
many property owners
will prioritise rental for
women (and their children)
experiencing intimate
partner violence.”**

- The Queensland Constellation Team

The ABS 2016 Personal Safety Survey found that out of 756,800 women who left their homes due to DFV there were 509,700 instances of women staying with friends or family, 65,100 instances of staying at a shelter or refuge, 49,600 instances of staying at a motel or similar accommodation, 12,000 instances of staying at a boarding house/hostel and 24,400 instances of women sleeping rough. These numbers indicate that the majority of women who experience DFV experience primary or secondary homelessness when leaving their homes.

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Purpose of this document

This Project Proposal describes a new solution that prioritises housing for women who have experienced intimate partner violence conceptualised by the Queensland Constellation Project Team. [The Constellation Project](#) is an initiative launched in 2018 as a cross-sector collaboration whose vision is to end homelessness.

Our solution involves the prioritisation of private rentals to provide safe, affordable, accessible, appropriate and secure housing for women (and their children) experiencing intimate partner violence in Queensland.

The Constellation Team has documented the solution to support ongoing consultation and seek support for a possible pilot of the service. The pilot would be called **The Priority Project (TPP)**.



Executive Summary

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia, with many women choosing to remain in unsafe living situations due to a lack of suitable housing.¹ It is well documented that there is a gap in the provision of medium to long-term housing for women experiencing intimate partner violence.

This solution is not about more crisis accommodation or more social housing, although both are desperately needed. This solution is about housing vulnerable women in underutilised 'housing stock', private rentals. The team has engaged stakeholders who are willing to support women and their children who need stable, medium to long-term accommodation in rental properties. This solution will require a pilot in the current market where private rentals are in very short supply.

Key drivers:

- Women are being murdered by current or former intimate partners at an average of 1 per week across Australia.²
- Those experiencing DFV are often forced to return to unsafe environments or become homeless.
- Social housing waitlists are long and growing.
- The majority of the current funding in this area pertains to crisis accommodation.
- People, including First Nations Australians, older women, and culturally and linguistically diverse women, face significant challenges securing medium to long-term, affordable housing.
- There is an appetite to do more to support people who have experienced DFV, which has only increased during the pandemic.
- Current housing provisions are inadequate and sustainable solutions are needed from cross-sector stakeholders.

There is an indisputable need for change.

At this stage, there is no coordinated effort by any organisation to involve property owners in the provision of housing for women experiencing DFV. Consultation during this project (with property owners and real estate agents) has established that some property owners would prioritise rental to women experiencing intimate partner violence. This relates to investments properties being rented to this priority group at full market rent or at discounted market rent.

This document outlines the case for the creation and management of a Private Rentals Property Register that would help women and their children secure safe, affordable medium to long-term accommodation. A new service that would involve collaboration with referring support services and real estate agents, with property owners, would prioritise eligible women to secure suitable accommodation.

This Project Proposal outlines how a pilot, called The Priority Project, would work in a partnership approach to support women and children at risk of homelessness as a result of intimate partner violence. The Constellation Team is keen to discuss the new solution with potential stakeholders and funders.

¹ Flanagan, K., Blunden, H., valentine, k. and Henriette, J. (2019) Housing outcomes after domestic and family violence, AHURI Final Report 311, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/311>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-4116101.

² Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018.

Our case for change

DFV in Queensland - shocking statistics



On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner in Australia.³

In Queensland, nine intimate partner homicides occurred in Queensland in 2018/19.⁴ 28,185 Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) were made in Queensland in that year.⁵

Queensland police data has shown that they have responded to 113,779 occurrences of DFV between 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021, an increase of 107,000 cases on the 2020 calendar year.⁶

It is important to note that the statistics above are only those cases which have been reported to the authorities. It is expected that this number is likely far greater as the DFV sector understands that many incidents are not being reported for fear of retribution. In addition to this, between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2020 a total of 350 DFV-related homicides occurred in Queensland.⁷

Housing needs and the risk of homelessness for those experiencing DFV

DFV is the leading reason women and children leave their homes in Australia, placing this cohort at an increased risk of homelessness, and they have been named as a national priority group in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (Council on Federal Financial Relations 2018). The Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016-2026 has identified DFV as a leading cause of homelessness and housing instability within Australia. In 2017-2018, 42% of people assisted by specialist homelessness services had experienced DFV, with 78% of this cohort being women (AIHW, 2018).

The ABS 2016 Personal Safety Survey found that out of 756,800 women who left their homes due to DFV there were 509,700 instances of women staying with friends or family, 65,100 instances of staying at a shelter or refuge, 49,600 instances of staying at a motel or similar accommodation, 12,000 instances of staying at a boarding house/hostel and 24,400 instances of women sleeping rough. These numbers indicate that the majority of women who experience DFV experience primary or secondary homelessness when leaving their homes.⁸⁹

For women who do not experience periods of homelessness and for those transitioning out of homelessness there are three main, stable housing options: social housing, the private rental market and home ownership. However, although these housing options are theoretically available, women and children experiencing DFV face many access issues.¹⁰ Private home ownership is rarely accessible due to financial constraints and many women and their children experiencing violence also leave privately owned homes creating additional access barriers. Private rentals can provide women with flexibility and choice, but rising rents, competition to secure rentals and stigma faced by women and their children can make these options less accessible. Social housing remains a valuable housing option for women and children leaving DFV as it can offer both stability and affordability, but eligibility criteria and very limited supply makes social housing increasingly difficult to obtain.¹¹

Additional information regarding the evidence base for women and their children facing DFV is provided in Attachment A.

³ Bryant W & Bricknell S 2017. *Homicide in Australia 2012–13 to 2013–14: National Homicide Monitoring Program report*.

Statistical Report no. 2. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/sr/sr2>.

⁴ Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 18/19 Annual Report.

⁵ Queensland Courts, D & FV Statistics, FY 19/20.

⁶ M. Eaton, 'Queensland domestic violence cases still rising sharply, expert warns coercive control law will be no quick fix', *ABC News*, 17 May 2021, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-17/qld-domestic-violence-cases-rise-sharply-coercive-control-law/100133958>>.

⁷ Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2019–20 Annual Report, *Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board*, Brisbane, 2020 <https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/663632/domestic-and-family-violence-death-review-and-advisory-board-annual-report-2019-20.pdf>.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2016). Personal Safety, Australia.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>.

⁹ Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI). (2020). Housing, homelessness and domestic and family violence.

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/housing/policy-analysis/housing-homelessness-and-domestic-and-family-violence>

¹⁰ Flanagan, K., Blunden, H., Valentine, k. and Henriette, J. (2019) *Housing outcomes after domestic and family violence*, AHURI Final Report 311, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/311>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-4116101.

¹¹ Flanagan, K., Blunden, H., valentine, k. and Henriette, J. (2019) *Housing outcomes after domestic and family violence*, AHURI Final Report 311, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/311>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-4116101.

The lack of medium to long-term housing options for women

Crisis accommodation and refuges: short term, limited availability

Many women and their children move from an unsafe environment to crisis accommodation (typically in a motel or similar temporary situation) for a short period of time - a few days to a couple of weeks, and *then* to a range of transitional accommodations: crisis, longer-term refuges, and *then* into longer-term housing if suitable options are available. The frequent disruptions in locations and routines- in work, schooling and family and community connections are unsettling and problematic.

With the significant issues of supply and suitability in long-term sustainable housing for women and their children, the journey to stable housing can be long and complex, with many finding themselves homeless or moving between a range of temporary or unsuitable housing options before securing a long-term housing outcome.

A now chronic shortage of medium to long-term housing options for women and their children experiencing DFV has resulted in this cohort being confined to either crisis accommodation or refuges. This compounds the problems for other women and children with down the line impacts on crisis accommodation with many women and children unable to seek help at the point of crisis. Vulnerable women thus face hard choices of risking further violence, living for extended amounts of time in secondary homelessness or returning to the violent relationship.

Stable, medium to long-term housing dedicated for women surviving DFV would add to the entire support system responding to a substantial and pressing social problem. It is widely argued medium to long-term housing would be a cheaper solution to crisis accommodation.¹² There is a compelling need for change.

¹² Ben Smee, (2021), *Women fleeing domestic violence 'trapped' in refuges due to lack of housing, advocates say*, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jun/09/women-fleeing-domestic-violence-trapped-in-refuges-due-to-lack-of-housing-advocates-say>.

Social housing: limited availability and extremely long wait times

Social housing is a stable and affordable housing option for women and children, albeit with many barriers to access to be considered. A family's access to social housing is dependent on a range of eligibility criteria that encompasses social issues and complexities, income and assets, property ownership and citizenship and residency.¹³ Many women may not meet this eligibility criteria and although exemptions are in place for DFV, seeking these exemptions can be a lengthy process.

There is a critical lack of social housing supply Australia-wide. ABS figures show that social housing was 4.2 per cent of total housing available in Australia in 2016,¹⁴ which represents the lowest number of households living in social housing during the last 35 years.¹⁵ This lack of supply means that wait lists are generally years long and priority is given to the most complex cases.¹⁶

¹³ Queensland Government. (2020). Department of Housing - Eligibility for Housing. <https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/public-community-housing/eligibility-applying-for-housing/eligibility-for-housing/check-your-eligibility>.

¹⁴ Groenhart, L. and Burke, T. (2014) Thirty years of public housing supply and consumption: 1981–2011, AHURI Final Report No. 231, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/231>.

¹⁵ Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (2017) Census data shows falling proportion of households in social housing: ABS data shows lowest proportion of social housing in 35 years, AHURI Brief, 16 August, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/census-shows-falling-proportion-of-households-in-social-housing>.

¹⁶ Flanagan, K., Blunden, H., valentine, k. and Henriette, J. (2019) *Housing outcomes after domestic and family violence*, AHURI Final Report 311, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/311>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-4116101.



Private rentals: underutilised housing stock

The private rental market allows women and their children greater flexibility and control in comparison to refuge/transitional accommodation. However, the private rental market as an option in housing survivors of DFV has not been systemically supported or developed as an option that could meet the specific needs of this cohort. Security concerns and affordability remain concerns, and the competitive nature of leasing in the private rental sector often puts sole women and sole parent families at a disadvantage.

Private rental applications can be a stressful process for women and children in crisis, and multiple rejections can have negative impacts on self-confidence. Although community attitudes are changing, women can still experience discrimination and stigma when trying to access the private rental market. Women may also have issues with previous rental histories due to DFV, such as being listed on a database due to property damage or rental arrears.

The support services working with women who have experienced DFV also face difficulties supporting families into private rentals, in part due to a lack of connections and networks within the industry, as well as issues of affordability, leaving private rentals an underutilised housing option.

A proposed solution

The solution is the establishment of an organisation that would prioritise private rental housing for women who have experienced intimate partner violence and are in need of affordable housing. TPP is a new solution that involves referring organisations and other coordinating bodies and advocacy groups to identify and support women and their children in newly found rental accommodation.

The Priority Project's operations - how would it work?

TPP's service offering would involve:

- creating and maintaining a Private Rentals Property Register to be made available at affordable rates for a minimum of 2 years
- working collaboratively with referring support services during a woman's tenancy to ensure women are being provided with appropriate supports, especially in regard to rental security and security in the home
- brokering partnerships between real-estate agencies, community services, contractors and other stakeholders for the provision of housing, funding, goods and services managing the contribution of funds, services and products, including in-kind contributions

- implementing and advocating for strict procedures to protect the privacy of women and family members
- ensuring rental properties have suitable levels of security.

Consultation during this project has led to the Constellation Team being confident that some property owners would prioritise rental to women (and their children) experiencing intimate partner violence. This relates to investments properties being rented to this priority group:

- at full market rent
- at discounted market rent.

It is unlikely that real estate agents who generally work in isolation from other services and from their competitors could facilitate the above system-wide operations. Alterations to official processes might help: for example, should the office state government form allow it, property owners could tick yes as illustrated below:

Property occupations Form 6

Appointment and reappointment of a property agent, resident letting agent or property auctioneer

Part 4—Appointment of property agent

Section 1
Performance of service
Annexures detailing the performance of service may be attached if required.

The client appoints the agent to perform the following service/s:

<input type="checkbox"/> Sale	<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase	<input type="checkbox"/> Letting / collection of rent / management
<input type="checkbox"/> Leasing (Commercial agents)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I would rent my property to a woman (and children) experiencing intimate partner violence.	

The above could be risky, especially if real estate agents had limited understanding of the dynamics and impacts of DFV and they did not work with support services to support women impacted by DFV.

TPP is a new solution that involves referring organisations and other coordinating bodies and advocacy groups to identify and support women and their children in newly found rental accommodation. The partnership approach is shown in the diagram overpage.

A New Solution

DV and Housing service providers

Imagine if you could refer women in need to appropriate medium to long-term housing.

Donors

Individual, corporate, philanthropy:
Imagine if you could donate directly to support a woman impacted by DV.

Property Owners

Imagine if you could register your property so a woman feeling domestic violence had a secure home and appropriate supports.

Tradies

Imagine if you could donate some hours to fix a broken fence or secure a gate.

Rotary Club members

Imagine if you could fundraise to support a woman, donating funds to The Priority Project.

The Priority Project

Register of homes for rent



+

Goods & Services

PARTNERSHIP BROKERING
HOUSING NAVIGATION
APPROPRIATE SUPPORTS

Real-estate agents

Imagine if you could help women in your local community in tangible, meaningful ways, plus quickly secure rental agreements.

RentConnect officers

Imagine if you could refer someone who isn't eligible for other housing.

Government

Imagine if there were more homes available to reduce the long social housing waiting list.

Corporates

Imagine if you could support rental for a woman experiencing DV for a fixed time.

Advocacy Bodies

Imagine if you could refer people to The Priority Project who will provide options for them to support women.



Imagine you could more easily find a secure and affordable private rental.



Imagine you could settle into a community, feeling safe in a secure home with additional supports.



A Partnership Approach

Eligibility and Eligible Priority Tenant/s (EPT)

This solution focuses on women (and their children) experiencing intimate partner violence. While the eligibility criteria will be further refined in ongoing consultation with the pilot partners, our current criteria for these women is outlined below. These women would:

- be referred to TPP by a DV or referring housing service providers. This will ensure that:
 - a. an appropriate risk assessment is already in place for the woman/family's safety
 - b. the referring service has a commitment to support the woman during her first residential tenancy or until which time they deem support is no longer required - this support would involve collaboration with TPP.
- have experienced or are currently experiencing DFV. A service referral would confirm that a DV situation is currently or previously occurring.
- not currently suitable or eligible for crisis accommodation and/or leaving crisis accommodation. Throughout our research, we have established that the gap for housing supply for our target cohort is in medium to long-term housing, not crisis accommodation.
- be a primary caregiver of one or more children under 18. The service would be available to women without children also.
- either have enough or close to enough income (regular income or Centrelink income) to afford weekly rental payments. TPP would seek funding to support a percentage (possibly 20%) for a woman to afford accommodation if the weekly rent was more than 30% of their income.

If a woman met the above criteria, she would be classified as an Eligible Priority Tenant (EPT). This includes the scenario TPP is able to provide some amount of rental subsidy. The journey of an EPT is outlined in the journey map on page 11.



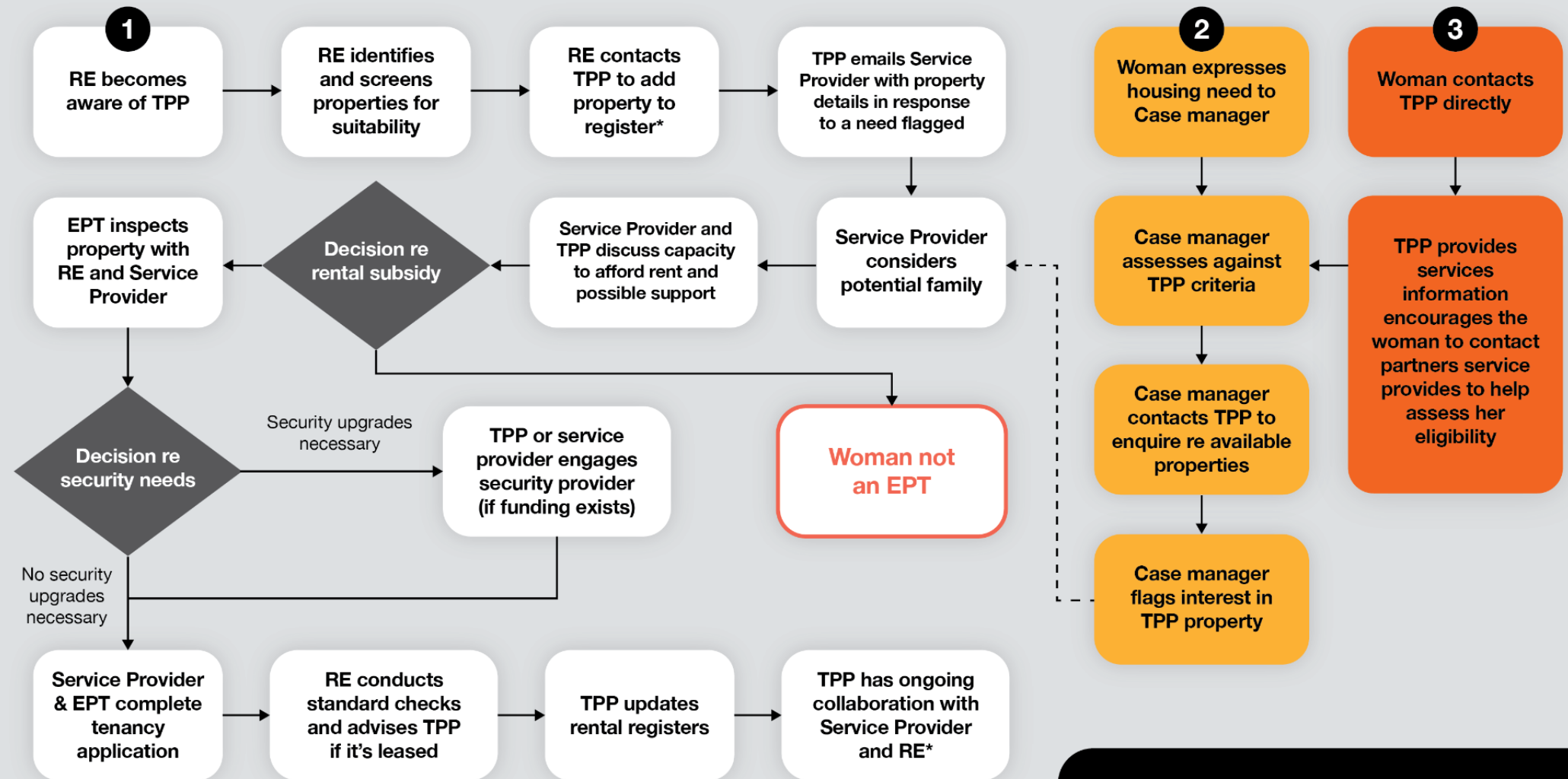
Outcomes for women and their children, plus society and stakeholders

For women and their children	For society and stakeholders broadly*:
<p>TPP will enable women and their children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reduce incidences where a woman returns to a violent home ● avoid homelessness ● find accommodation and services to support them more easily and have more control, choice and confidence in their community ● settle into a new community with increased support and security ● remain in a community with their familiar local supports ● possibly access rental properties at more affordable rates – thanks to owners and utilising subsidies from TPP donors ● have improved mental and physical health – feel and be safer. 	<p>TPP will enable stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● contribute to transitioning women out of DFV situations ● have opportunities to support something meaningful and tangible within their community ● channel funding towards housing solutions for those in need ● provide goods and services directly to a vulnerable cohort ● sustain support for a woman and family (long-term support). <p>* Property owners, donors (corporates, philanthropists), real estate agents, tradies, corporates and government. See the many stakeholders and how they may support on page 9.</p>

Journey mapping - securing a property

Additional detail about how an Eligible Priority Tenant would secure a property is provided in Appendix B.

Three ways an Eligible Priority Tenant (EPT) would secure a property on The Priority Project's (TPP) Private Rentals Property Register

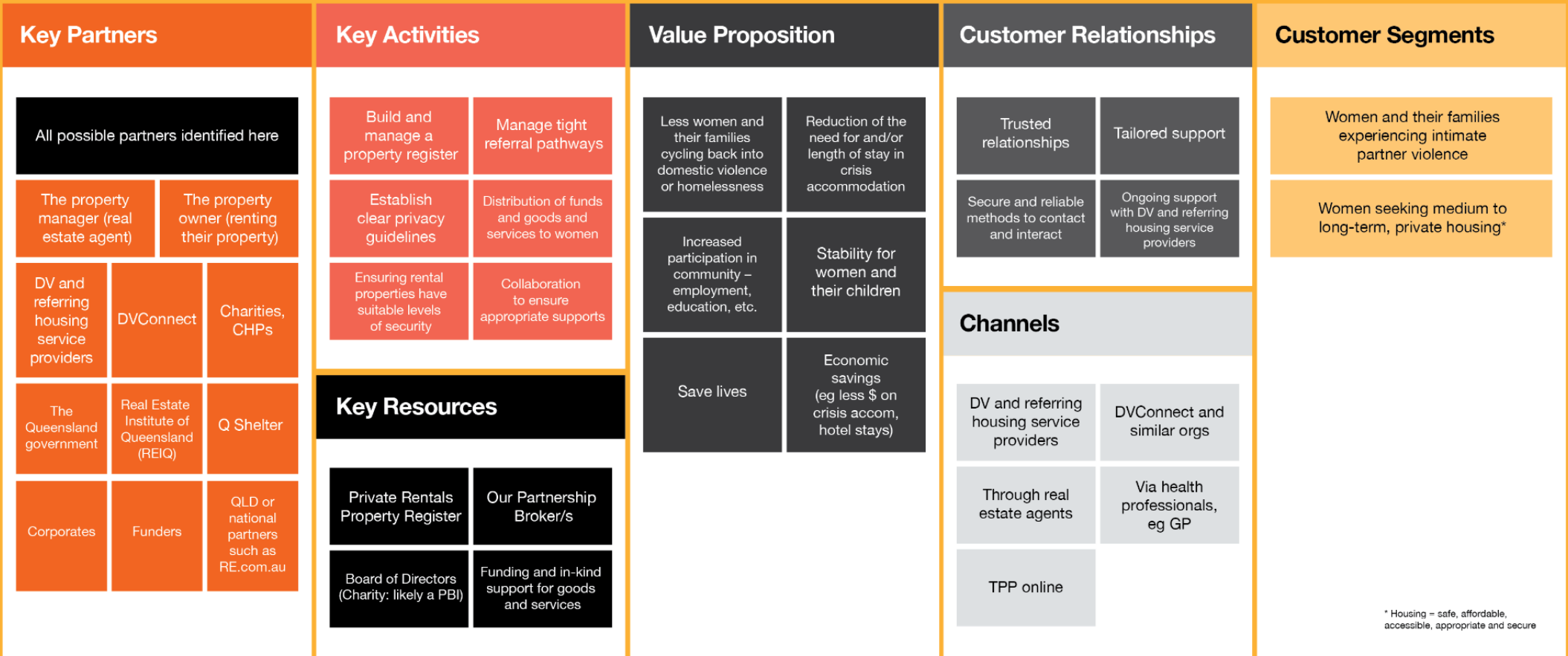


* RE agent would advise The Priority Project when a property on the register becomes available.

RE: Real Estate Agency
 EPT: Eligible Priority Tenant
 Service Provider = DV or Housing Service Provider

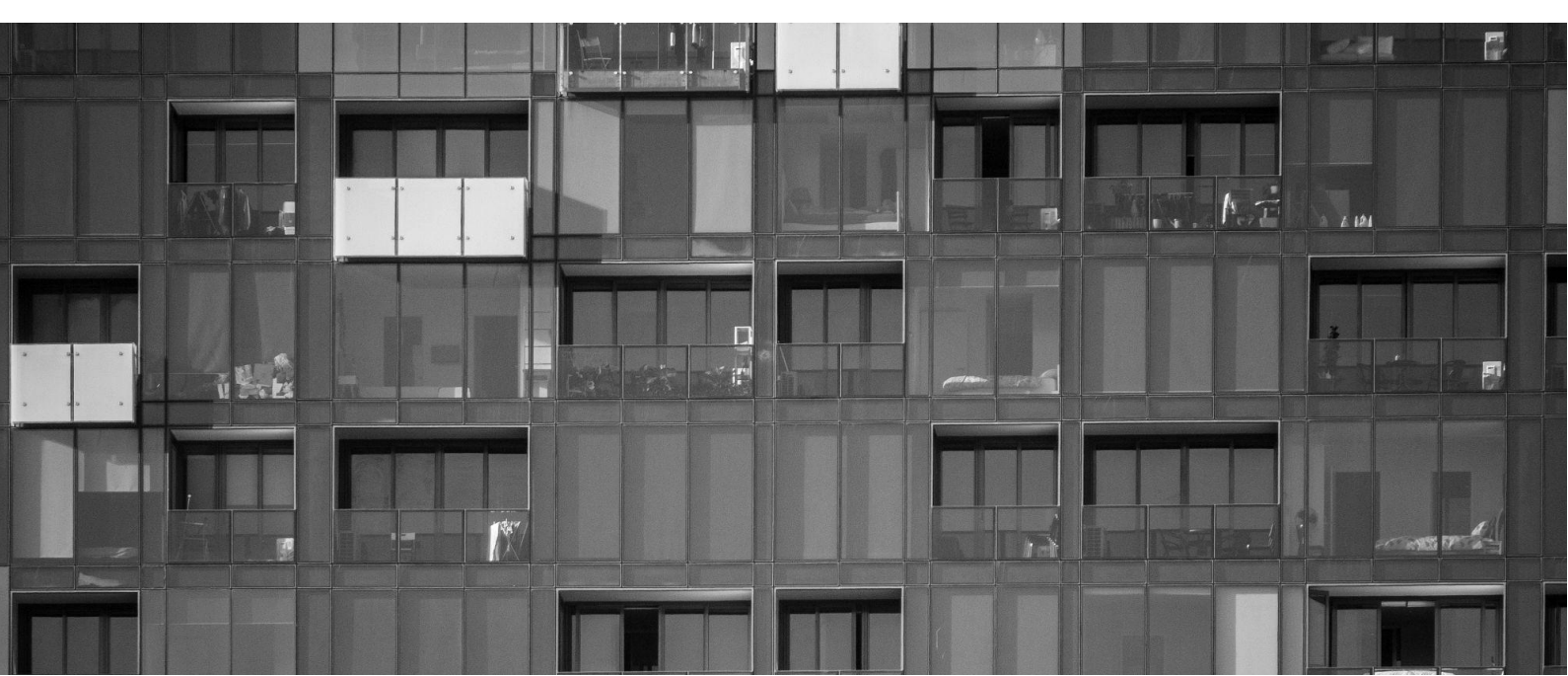
The Priority Project Business Model

The following Business Model Canvas describes key and interrelated elements for The Priority Project. The model broadly refers to elements which are described in more detail throughout this Project Proposal.



* Housing = safe, affordable, accessible, appropriate and secure





The property owner’s involvement

The Constellation Team considered the value proposition for all stakeholders, including property owners. This informed our early consultations. In the voice of property owners, this is what has been heard:

What	Pains	Gains
Property owners generally want:	Property owners want to avoid should they support TPP:	Property owners want these outcomes/benefits should they support TPP:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help people who need it most • Stable tenancies • Financial security • To help someone who has experienced what I have (DFV) • An investment portfolio with purpose • Ethical partners involved in my affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to my property • Spending too much on new security - noting that I would possibly contribute to some improvements • Short term tenancy agreements - greater than 2 years is desirable • Insurance becoming more expensive • [Some] reducing my rent • My property being damaged, possibly by the perpetrators - this may be a real or just a worry/risk that might not eventuate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to long-term tenancy and providing a secure tenancy- win win • Minimal vacancy times (saving considerable money) • A more secure property after any modifications • General knowledge of the woman and her family - not personal information, but the knowledge they are being supported • Possibly being able to support by the provision of some goods through my networks.

The Constellation Team is presently investigating the possibility that property owners who discount their rent would receive a tax deduction for the amount of discounted rent. The Australian Taxation Office has made some class rulings that allow this.¹⁷

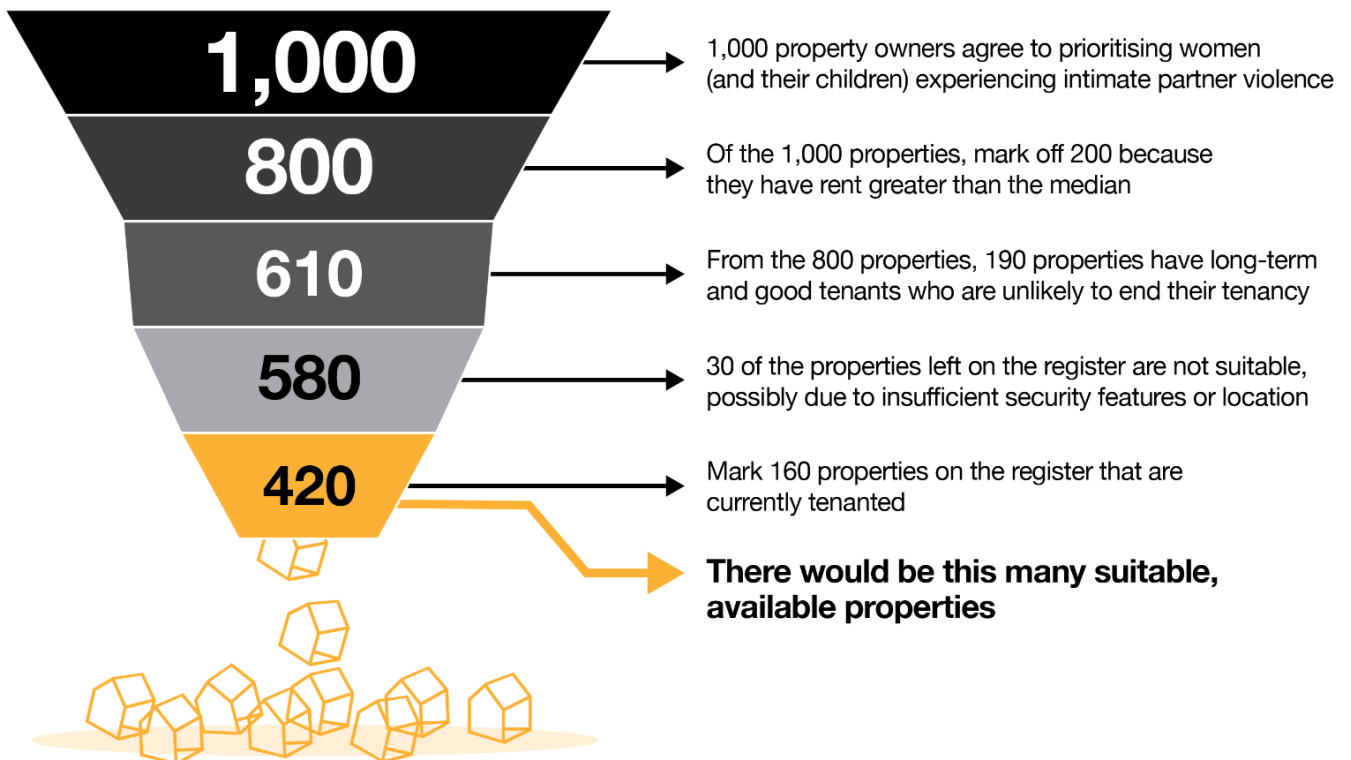
Regardless of this provision, a significant learning for the Constellation Team has been that the majority of property owners consulted would prioritise their rental to women (and their children) experiencing intimate partner violence - whether they discount the rent or not *and* irrespective of whether they receive tax deductible donation or not. Over the short term, additional property owners will be consulted - see Phase 1 actions in the Timeline on page 22.

¹⁷ <https://www.homegroundrealestate.com.au/news/ato-ruling-information/>. Also, this would require that TPP would be a registered charity with DGR status.

Although this solution has been designed with the woman experiencing intimate partner violence at the centre, like many double-sided marketplaces, the solution relies on available 'stock'. Housing stock is paramount to this solution and so are strategies to persuade property owners to support this solution.



In regard to the supply of rental homes, currently there are very low vacancy rates (exacerbated since Covid). The challenge to persuade property owners will be a major focus for TPP. In addition to generally persuading property owners to prioritise rental to the cohort, other factors will influence the supply of homes. These are outlined below in the diagram that chooses 1,000 property owners/1,000 rental properties for illustrative purposes only.



The Private Rentals Property Register would be a constantly changing data file/resource, partly visible by some partners.

Partnering real estate agencies

Real estate agents supporting TPP would play an integral role in securing rental properties for the Private Rentals Property Register. During the Constellation Team's consultations, agents shared that they would be interested in supporting projects that contribute positively to the community, including supporting women who have experienced family violence.

As is the case for property owners, real estate agents shared positive and some cautious feedback regarding participating in this solution. In relation to their concerns or undesirable outcomes, agents shared that they felt there may be increased concern about damages to the property (possibly from perpetrators); that they would want to avoid working with multiple social service agencies; that they wouldn't likely cut their fees (some might); and that currently vacancy rates are so low. On the positive side, agents explained that their involvement would provide ways for them and their customers to positively support a vulnerable group in the community; and that it may save them money.

In regard to the impact on agents' income should they support TPP, should an agent secure a Tenancy Agreement with an EPT, the agent could save *significant* time and money (for themselves and the property owner) by not:

- advertising the house
- conducting open homes
- replying to a high volume of enquiries.

Agents raised that property owners would like to secure a medium to long-term tenancy and also be confident knowing that TPP and another service provider would be supporting their tenant. The role of the agent in the solution is summarised in the full-page journey map on page 11.

Entity type




The Constellation Project team has considered different business models and different possible entity types and configurations for how TPP might operate (post a pilot). Different entity types include a company limited by guarantee, an incorporated association, and a for-profit entity should TPP be a stand-alone organisation. Other options included alliances or partnerships between multiple, existing services providers, or being auspiced by an existing service provider.

In relation to the pilot outlined in this document, it is proposed that an existing service provider sponsor the pilot and be guided by a Governance Group. More information about this is on page 18.



How is The Priority Project different?

The Constellation Team was tasked with designing a solution that did not replicate an existing service. The following table identifies the differences between what TPP would do and what other services in the DFV and homelessness sectors currently do.

	Things TPP will do:	Things TPP will not do that existing services do:
 <p>Housing supply</p>	<p>Create and maintain a Private Rentals Property Register to be made available for a minimum of 2 years. <i>There is currently no Private Rentals Property Register.</i></p>	<p>Facilitate head leases (undertaken by real estate agents, Community Housing Providers or the housing department).</p>
	<p>Work collaboratively with referring support services to ensure women are being provided with appropriate supports, especially in regards to rental security and security in the home.</p>	<p>Perform the duties of a real estate agent.</p>
	<p>Implement and advocate for strict procedures to protect the privacy of women and family members.</p>	
 <p>Partnership Brokering</p>	<p>Liaise with real estate agents on the provision and allocation of properties based on an established set of eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>Facilitate leasing with property owners (undertaken by real estate agents)</p>
	<p>Work collaboratively with community services who refer women - to secure a rental and then during the tenancy.</p>	<p>Deliver case management, manage intakes, or have direct interaction with EPTs in the absence of a Service provider).</p> <p>Provide crisis accommodation (provided by Special Housing Services).</p>
	<p>Establish and develop relationships with stakeholders for the provision of funding and goods and services (corporate, Government, private enterprise and tradies, philanthropy).</p>	
	<p>Establish and develop relationships with contractors for the provision of goods and services, including security improvements.</p>	<p>Manage day-to-day maintenance of the properties (undertaken by real estate agents).</p>
 <p>Advocacy</p>	<p>Lead and participate in advocacy for DFV and homelessness</p>	

Overall social and economic impacts

Finally, the significant social and economic impacts we anticipate TPP's service to have include:



Less women and their children cycling back into DFV or homelessness



Increased participation in community – employment, education, etc.



Stability for women and their children, plus potential economic savings



Reduction of the need for and/or length of stay in crisis accommodation and reduction in this expense



Increased access to local support services



Lives saved



Proposed Pilot of The Priority Project (TPP)

The Constellation Team proposes that TPP's service is piloted for 12 months. A 12 month pilot would enable core functions to be evaluated and refined before, potentially, a new organisation is established to scale operations. We are naming this pilot, The Priority Project.

How would it work?

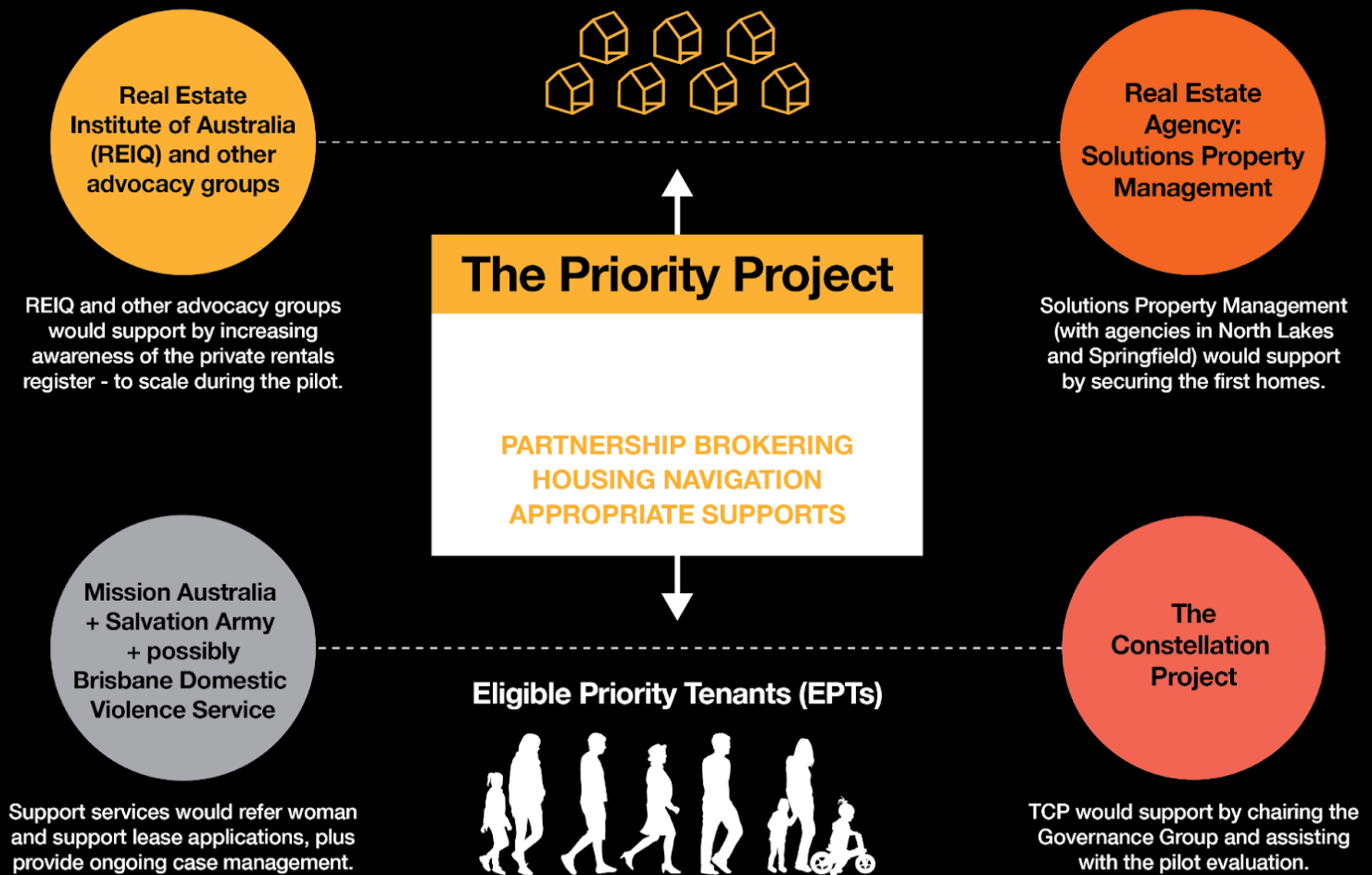
It is proposed that:

- a Partnership Broker is employed (1 FTE) for 16 months to prepare for and manage the pilot
- Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) exists to outline the role that pilot partners would play
- The Partnership Broker works between the pilot real estate agency offices and the sponsoring not for profit (both named below)
- the project is governed by a Governance Group, chaired by an executive from the Constellation Project
- the sponsoring not for profit (NFP) administers pilot funding
- leases are arranged for 1 year (not 2 which would be the aim post pilot).

Pilot partners would be finally confirmed through MoUs. The diagram below names partners who have expressed interest and who the Constellation Team is liaising with currently. A high level summary of their role is outlined below.

ion

Proposed Partners:



During the 12 month pilot, the Constellation Team believes it is important to test and evaluate as many elements of the proposed service as possible. This includes having funding to cover a limited number of bond payments, limited emergency funding for women who may break a lease and for some security expenses. The team has separated funding for limited rental subsidies which would, ideally, be funded for the pilot also.

To outline in detail the unique journey of some women using the service, we have profiled four women in Appendix B.

Four women who have experienced intimate partner violence



Belinda



Fatima



Carolina



Maria

Woman working with 1 child who can afford rental



Is housed and supported

Woman not working with 2 children who can afford rental



Is housed and supported

Woman with no children who cannot afford the rental



Is housed and supported

Woman working with no children

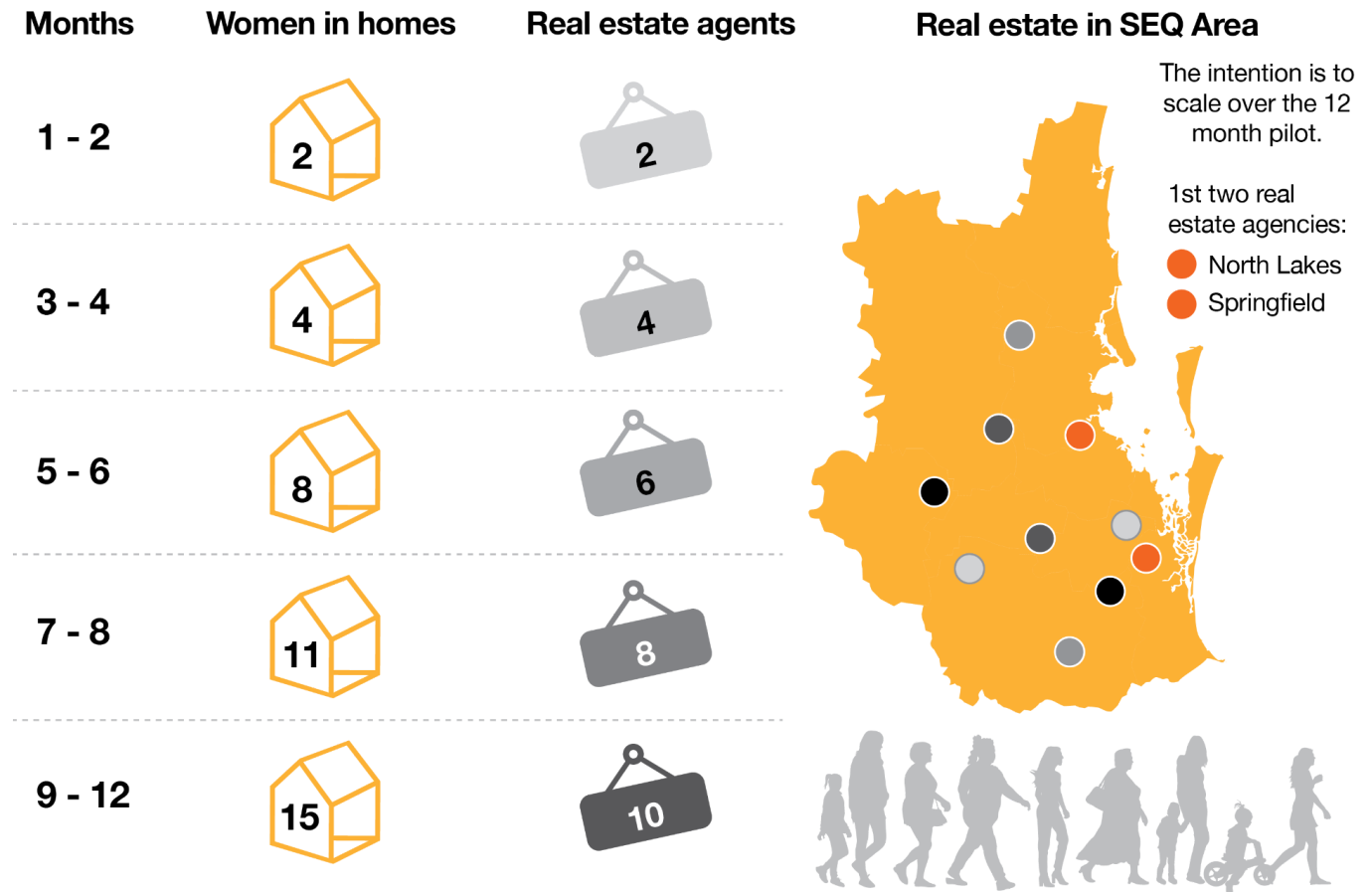


Is housed and supported

See Appendix B for more detail regarding each woman's financial situation and how they connected with TPP.

Growth during the pilot

It is envisaged that there will be steady growth during the pilot. The team has conservatively set the following targets, starting with housing 2 women through real estate agencies in North Lakes and Springfield within the first 2 months. As shown below, it is envisioned that there will be up to 10 agents supporting the pilot across South East Queensland by the 12 month mark.



Pilot funding

The funding required to support a 12 month pilot is outlined below.

Minimum pilot funding (Part A)

Pilot funding (Part A)			
	Year 1	Year 2	
	2021/2022	2022/2023	
Expense items	\$	\$	Notes
Partnership Broker	\$40,000	\$120,000	Year 1, 3 months. Year 2, 12 months. Includes 20% oncosts for 1 FTE.
Laptop	\$3,000		
Printing	\$500	\$5,000	Printing of marketing materials for pilot partners.
General expenses	\$3,000	\$9,000	Includes travel costs, mobile phone expenses, internet access costs, electricity etc.
Website (about the pilot)	\$2,000	\$1,000	
Security expenses x 4	\$0	\$6,000	Funding for adjustments to reduce DV risk, eg improved lighting, security screens, trees removal.
Bonds x 2 EPTs	\$0	\$4,000	Funding to support 2 women.
Emergency break lease funding	\$0	\$3,200	Funding to cover 8 weeks of rent at \$400 per week if a woman/women had to break the lease.
Emergency relocation funding	\$0	\$5,000	Funding to cover relocation funding should a woman need to move quickly (security breach).
Contingency		\$2,600	
Total pilot funding being sought	\$48,500	\$155,800	

The above funding would support the pilot as described on page 8, but excludes minimal rental subsidies for three women in the pilot.

Rental subsidy funding has been separated from the funding above. The Constellation Project Team would hope funding is obtained for minimal rental subsidies so that this could be evaluated, including stakeholders' responses to the outcomes achieved for women receiving this support. The team feels that rental subsidies will be an integral part of the pilot and anticipates that the funding sources might be different. Going forward, it is envisaged that the general public may be compelled to donate to support this element of project funding.

Additional minimal Rental Subsidy funding (Part B)

Additional Rental Subsidy funding (Part B)			
	Year 1	Year 2	
	2021/2022	2022/2023	
Expense items	\$	\$	Notes
Rental subsidy support x 3 EPTs	\$0	\$10,000	Funding to support 3 women access affordable housing: 20% of the projected EPTs.
Total Rental Subsidy funding	\$0	\$10,000	

Timeline

The following timeline includes milestone tasks between now (Phase 1) and the possible establishment of a new entity, TPP (Phase 6). The 12 month pilot is referred to in Phase 3.

		2021		2022				2023				2024			
		Q3, 2021: Jul-Sep	Q4, 2021: Oct-Dec	Q1, 2022: Jan-Mar	Q2, 2022: Apr-Jun	Q3, 2022: Jul-Sep	Q4, 2022: Oct-Dec	Q1, 2023: Jan-Mar	Q2, 2023: Apr-Jun	Q3, 2023: Jul-Sep	Q4, 2023: Oct-Dec	Q1, 2024: Jan-Mar	Q2, 2024: Apr-Jun	Q3, 2024: Jul-Sep	Q4, 2024: Oct-Dec
Phase 1	The final cycle of work (3 of 3) for the Queensland Constellation Team concludes and Project proposal about the housing solution is finalised.														
1.1	Ongoing consultation, focused on property owners and pilot partners														
1.2	Go, no go decision by the Constellation Project Executive and Pilot partners (Governance Group).		November												
Phase 2	Consult widely and seek partners and funding for pilot														
2.1	Seek pilot funding.														
2.2	Employ Partnership Broker (1 FTE).			March	The milestone actions that follow and dependant on funding and the time the Partnership Broker is employed.										
2.3	Workshop Risk Register V2 with pilot partners, including mitigations.														
2.4	Prepare MOUs with pilot partners.														
2.5	Develop communication materials and operational procedures														
2.6	Develop Rental Register and analytics.														
2.7	Confirm arrangement with sponsor organisation for pilot.														
Phase 3	Implement 12 month pilot				June				End May						
3.1	Design and build dashboard - tracking, reporting benefits, etc.														
3.2	Manage operations														
Phase 4	Pause operations and finalise evaluation.								End May						
4.1	Contract / funding for Partnership Broker (for pilot) ends								End June						
4.2	Stakeholders review pilot evaluation														
Phase 5	Secure funding and partners for establishment of a charity										October				
5.1	Secure funding promise.														
5.2	Establish organisation and apply to ACNC for charity status														
5.3	Receive funding														
5.4	Employ 2 FTE Partnership Brokers													July	
5.5	Refresh communication materials including online presence.														
Phase 6	Resume operation as a stand-alone charity														October

Our next steps

The Constellation Team is continuing to consult with stakeholders about the profiled solution. After their third cycle of work concludes in July 2021, the Constellation Project Executive and the Constellation Team will consider ongoing work, including a focus on further consultation with property owners.

The team intends to invite the following organisations (also mapped on page 18) to form a Governance Group:

- **The Constellation Project**
- **Mission Australia**
- **Solutions Property Management**
- **REIQ**
- **Salvation Army**
- **PwC.**

Other organisations will be consulted with and may join the above group, including the Combined Women's Refuge Group, the Brisbane Domestic Violence Service and DVConnect.

This Governance Group would be involved in the go, no go decision to seek pilot funding and provide guidance regarding pilot operations. This activity is included in the following high level next steps:





Appendix A: Evidence basis for women and their children facing DFV

Although DFV occurs across all sociodemographic and age groups, the *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018* by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report identified that women were most frequently those who experienced DFV, with their current or previous partners posing the greatest threat.¹⁸ There is currently limited data available on the extent, nature and impacts of DFV on children, however, many women who experience DFV report having children in their care:

- In their 2017 Personal Safety survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 49% of persons who experienced violence by a current partner reported they had children in their care. In addition to this, 61% of those who experienced violence by a previous partner also had children in their care at some point during the course of the relationship.¹⁹
- A study by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that 23% of young people aged 12 to 20 years had witnessed some form of violence against their mother or step-mother, with this number increasing to 42% for those young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI).²⁰

¹⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018*. Cat. no. DFV 2. Canberra: AIHW.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Personal safety, Australia*: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>.

²⁰ Indermaur D 2001. Young Australians and domestic violence. *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* no. 195. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi195>.

Homelessness risk

Women and children who have experienced DFV are at a higher risk of homelessness and are considered a national homelessness priority group in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (Council on Federal Financial Relations 2018).²¹ Note also:

- DFV is currently the main reason women and accompanying children seek specialist homelessness services support in Australia and approximately half of these women are unable to obtain immediate accommodation due to lack of available housing (AHURI, 2019).
- In 2017-18, 22% of those seeking support for specialist homelessness services as a result of DFV were children aged between 0-9.²²
- Many women reported they experienced long periods of unstable, unaffordable and unsafe housing options, in addition to housing quality options deteriorating significantly for women and children who have fled DFV (UWS, 2009).
- Many women also reported returning to live with perpetrators due to lack of housing options available (AHURI, 2019).

²¹ National Housing and Homelessness Agreement. (2018). https://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/other/other/NHHA_Final.pdf

²² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*. Cat. no. DFV 3. Canberra: AIHW.

Although DFV is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia, many women are also choosing to remain in unsafe living situations due to a lack of suitable housing.²³ A study completed by the NSW Women Refuge Movement and the UWS Urban Research Centre identified that these factors were important for women and children experiencing DFV in relation to housing:

- Quality and location of the housing and of the neighbourhood to create a sense of security and safety
- Being able to maintain routines and establish new routines around schooling, work and other activities
- Being connected to community, friends and family
- Security of tenancy - not having to move across a range of housing options
- Flexibility to work around requirements of family orders and child safety

Many of the system gaps listed above prevent women and their children from meeting these identified housing needs.²⁴

Intersection between child safety and DFV

DFV has been identified as a common contributing factor amongst children facing abuse and neglect:

- Approximately 2.5 million adults in Australia have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 15, with parents being the most frequent perpetrator of physical abuse.²⁵
- The witnessing or exposure to DFV by children has been increasingly recognised as a form of child abuse. In 2017–18, the proportion of family order cases in which a ‘Notice of Child Abuse, Family Violence or Risk of Family Violence’ was filed increased to 30% (AIHW, 2018).
- Children from families with housing instability are also more likely to be investigated by child protection services, or placed in out-of-home care which has had long-term impacts on children.

As a result of the above, qualitative research has identified that children exposed to DFV experience a range of long-term effects, including increased risk of mental health issues, effects on development and learning and behavioural difficulties, which could result in lasting effects on education and employment outcomes.²⁶

Children who have been exposed to/or have experienced abuse during childhood are also more likely to experience violence as adults:

- International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS)²⁷ found that women who experienced abuse during childhood were one and a half times more likely to experience violence in adulthood than those who had not experienced abuse during childhood.
- Those who experienced physical abuse as children were more than twice as likely to experience violence by a partner as those who had not experienced physical abuse as a child.

²³ Flanagan, K., Blunden, H., valentine, k. and Henriette, J. (2019) *Housing outcomes after domestic and family violence*, AHURI Final Report 311, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/311>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-4116101.

²⁴ NSW Women Refuge Movement & UWS Urban Research Centre. (2009). The impact of housing on the lives of women and children - post domestic violence crisis accommodation. http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/69590/Microsoft_Word_-_Finalreport.pdf.

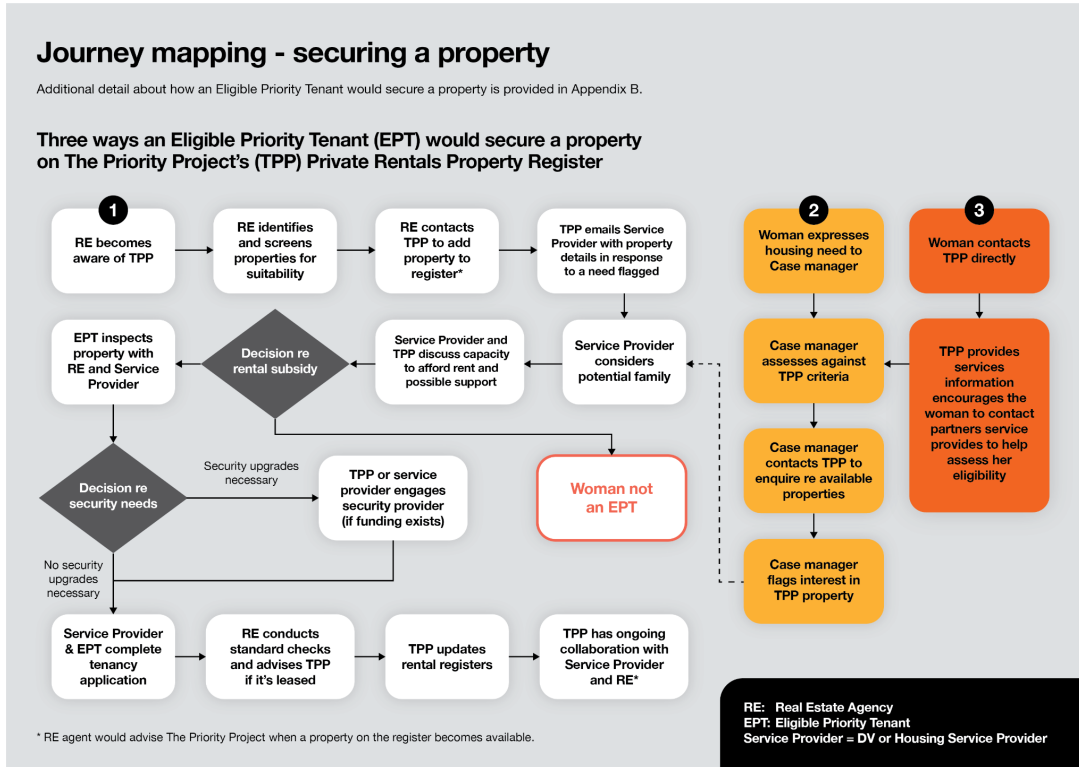
²⁵ ABS 2017c. Recorded crime—offenders, 2015–16. ABS cat. no. 4519.0. Canberra: ABS.

²⁶ Campo, M. (2015). Children's exposure to domestic and family violence: Key issues and responses (CFCA Paper No. 36). Melbourne: Child Family Community Australia information exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

²⁷ Mouzos J & Makkai T 2004. *Women's experiences of male violence: findings from the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS)*. Research and public policy series no. 56. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology. <https://www.aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/pp56>.





Appendix B: Example stories of woman utilising The Priority Project's (TPP) service

Four scenarios for four women who are Eligible Priority Tenants are provided below. How she can afford the rental payments is briefly described, as well as her journey to be connected to The Priority Project.



The following would be consistent with the journey map in the Project Proposal above.



4 women with different circumstances	Review of eligibility to be an Eligible Priority Tenant*	How this woman would connect with The Priority Project (TPP) <u>initially</u>
 <p>Woman working with 1 child who can afford rental Belinda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belinda’s weekly income is \$1,417. • Belinda does not receive Centrelink payments. • We understand, given Belinda’s weekly income, she can afford to pay \$425 rental per week. • The Priority Project has a property on the register renting for \$400 per week. 	<p>Belinda contacted Brisbane Domestic Violence Service (BDVS), possibly with help from DVConnect, and the Service provider contacted TPP. A house was available. The Service provider and TPP liaise in regard to Belinda’s income and what she can afford. Belinda inspects the home with the real estate agent, she submits an application which is approved by the owner. A lease is signed.</p>
 <p>Woman not working with 2 children who cannot afford rental Fatima</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatima’s weekly income is \$649. • This income is made up from: • Parenting payment (Centrelink) = \$425 a week • Rental assistance (Centrelink) = \$83 a week • Family tax benefit A and B = \$142 a week • 30% of Fatima’s weekly income is \$195²⁸. • The Priority Project has a property on the register renting for \$425 per week. • If The Priority Project secured funding for rental subsidies during the pilot (see the Pilot funding section), it would provide a rental subsidy of \$230 a week for 12 months. • If there was no rental subsidy funding, Fatima would not be an EPT. 	<p>Fatima heard about TPP on the grapevine. She then called her Case worker at Mission Australia (or she sought out support/a Case worker). Her case worker contacted TPP about a need and to discuss available rentals. They discuss Fatima’s capacity to afford rent and what possibly support TPP may be able to provide. The decision was made to provide some rental subsidy. Then, the real estate agent, Case worker and Fatima liaise to formalise the tenancy agreement. TPP or the Service provider provides either bond loan or bond funding directly to the real estate agency.</p>
 <p>Woman with no children who cannot afford the rental Carolina</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina’s weekly income is \$416. • This income is made up from: • Jobseeker (Centrelink) = \$334 a week. • Rental assistance (Centrelink) = \$83 a week. • 30% of Carolina’s weekly income is \$125. • TPP has a property on the register renting for \$235 per week. • If The Priority Project secured funding for rental subsidies during the pilot (see the Pilot funding section), it would provide a rental subsidy of \$110 a week for 12 months. • If there was no rental subsidy funding, Carolina would not be an EPT. 	<p>Carolina is advised by her current Real estate agent that she may be able to find a new rental with help from TPP. They contacted TPP and advised of the eligibility process. Shortly after, Carolina and a Case manager from Mission Australia reviewed and submitted Carolina’s <i>Income Statement</i> from Centrelink. Carolina was housed 4 weeks later - after the TPP confirmed some rental subsidy.</p>
 <p>Woman working with no children Maria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria’s weekly income is \$1,788. • Maria does not receive Centrelink payments. • We understand, given Maria’s weekly income, she may afford to pay \$537 rental per week. • The Priority Project has a property on the register renting for \$340 per week. 	<p>Maria’s Salvation Army case worker talked with her about TPP’s service. The Salvos contacted TPP but there was no house on the register available now. TPP’s Partnership Broker contacted one of the supporting real estate agencies²⁹ about a house that was for rent but not yet on the register. The owner of the rental property was persuaded to lease her unit to Maria.</p>

²⁸ 30% of someone’s household income is often used to calculate affordability. We have included Rent assistance in the calculation of total income.

²⁹ The Partnership Broker could also introduce herself/himself to a new real estate service and endeavour to secure a property. The business development is part of the role of a Partnership Broker.

Who has been involved?

During three cycles of work, the following people supported the project:

Lab Team Members	Network Champions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrew Hamilton, Social Scaffolding• Angela Ballard, Researcher/Consultant• Bran Peres, PwC and voluntary• Ilesha Taraboulsi, PwC• Janet Maher, Mission Australia• Julie Saunders, Urbis• Joanne Bowen, PwC Queensland co-lead• Nicola Lambie, Independent Consultant• Nicole Peterman, PwC Team Member and Queensland co-lead• Sarah Grealy, Shadforth Financial Group• Sarah Wright, Micah Projects• Sharleena Bramley, Salvation Army• Sherena Oxley, Griffith University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Antonia Mercorella, Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ)• Hannah Clifford, Q Shelter• Ian Sampson, Independent Consultant• Jacqui Jones, PwC• Jeremy Mansfield, Lend Lease• Julie Saunders, Urbis• Karyn Walsh, Micah Projects• Kris Isles, PwC• Laura Valenti, Solutions Property Management• Rebecca Shearman, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women• Robert Reed and team, MinterEllison³⁰• Shaan Ross-Smith, Chair DV Connect



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³⁰ A special mention to MinterEllison to thank Stephen Knight, Nicole Gordon and Anastasia Maynes for their work to prepare a discussion paper - *TPP: Potential Structures* - which will inform next steps.