



The
Constellation
Project

Driving smart solutions

Homelessness can't be solved with
blankets and temporary fixes.

We are working to end homelessness in
a generation.



Overview

About Constellation	3
Lived Experience Inclusion	4-13
Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning	14-16

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to this consultation regarding development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan).

The Constellation Project would like to focus its submission on two main areas of our work:

- The section on **Lived Experience Inclusion** relates to the way that the Plan is developed and implemented, encouraging deep involvement of people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness.
- The section on **Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning** related to the focus area of the issues paper on 'Planning, zoning and development'.

Contact:

Davina Dressler, CEO
davina.dressler@theconstellationproject.com.au
www.theconstellationproject.com.au

About Constellation

The Constellation Project has been rooted in multi-sector collaboration since conception.

In 2018, Australian Red Cross, the Centre for Social Impact, Mission Australia and PwC Australia joined forces around the idea that if they all worked together and pooled their diverse skills, experience and reach around housing affordability and homelessness, they would have the right recipe for creating smart solutions that could achieve lasting change.

This way of working led to a social lab process that began in 2018 bringing together over 100 people from across the not for profit (NFP) sector, business, government together with people who had lived experience of homelessness to explore the homelessness and housing landscape and identify practical solutions to progress.

Now as an independent entity, Constellation remains committed to our vision of driving multi-sector collaboration with those directly impacted, to end homelessness.

Lived Experience Inclusion

RECOMMENDATION:

We recommend that the Plan and any responses to homelessness are centred around the insights and expertise of people who have experienced or have been at risk of homelessness.

LIVED EXPERIENCE IN THE NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS PLAN

Background information provided on the development of the Plan indicates that it will involve broad public consultation, including with people with lived experience. We would urge that the government takes a step further than consultation and towards co-design. We firmly believe that for any effective strategy to address homelessness, the experiences and expertise of those who have faced or been at risk of homelessness must be central.

ABOUT LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived experience refers to the knowledge and understanding of something gained through direct, first-hand involvement. It may also be referred to as 'contextual' expertise. When we refer to lived experience at Constellation, we mean people who have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, or who have experienced being at risk of homelessness.

Lived Experience Inclusion

This may include people who have been exposed to family and domestic violence, financial stress, periods of unemployment, contact with the criminal legal system, or experienced mental-ill health and other intersecting issues as contributors.

Lived experience insights are critical for designing solutions that better meet the complexity that people experience in their everyday lives. People with lived experience are therefore critical partners in systems change processes. They can help to identify what change is needed and potential unintended consequences of approaches and initiatives. Through genuine partnerships and shared visions for change, we can better gauge the effectiveness of existing policies and how we should inform future policies, service system responses, and broader social and systems change.

LIVED EXPERIENCE IN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The concept and practice of lived experience is not new. Systematically marginalised communities have a long history of using their direct experiences of oppression to advocate for social and political change and have given rise to influential leaders of new movements. It is, however, a relatively recent phenomenon to have disciplined efforts to bring lived experience capabilities into service and policy improvement and delivery, particularly in the housing and homelessness sector.

Lived Experience Inclusion

There is now widespread recognition across the for-purpose sectors that the experiences, knowledge and skills of those accessing services are critical to the success of our social systems. In public services and social policy, design-led methodologies (such as human centred design, co-design and user experience) are increasingly used to gather insight and ideas from those who are, or will be, using services, and to test new propositions.

There is an increasing professionalisation of lived experience participation into roles that operate across the social sector, influencing thinking and change at many different levels. Peer workers in service provision, lived experience advocacy roles and peer researchers in academic settings are now frequently found in mental health, disability, aged care, family and sexual violence, justice, and youth settings.

Despite this activity, practices that support and enable lived experience contributions in housing and homelessness are emergent. Everybody is learning to do this work well, and many are developing knowledge about craft and conditions through ambitious, practical projects such as Constellation.

Lived Experience Inclusion

CONSTELLATION'S APPROACH

We recognise the significance of lived experience inclusion and leadership in guiding our work, and are currently in the process of developing a framework that outlines our approach. The document details the principles and practices that we draw from and use, the theories that have informed our ways of working and our lessons and learnings from our journey so far. While this framework is still under development and due for release in December 2023, we are eager to share some key insights that have emerged.

In our endeavour to create the right conditions for this work, it is important to note that the first step is for leaders to understand the value and impact of lived experience and the existing power imbalances. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and it is also important to acknowledge that we are in a continuous state of learning and improvement. Nonetheless, we provide a snapshot of how Constellation has sought to create the conditions for this work.

Lived Experience Inclusion

KEY PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin our ways of working:

1. We recognise and value the learnings and expertise of those with lived experience of homelessness, and that their voices and perspectives must be integrated into decision-making and solutions.
2. We work to create the right conditions where insights from people with lived experience are sought both formally and informally, and believe embedding these insights leads to more effective research and more informed responses to ending homelessness.
3. We consult, involve and partner with First Nations people and communities to co-create solutions to homelessness that are grounded in First Nations ways of knowing, being, and doing.
4. We recognise the diversity that exists within communities, including their unique capabilities, needs, and perspectives. We aim to engage a range of lived experiences across our work, tailoring them to the contexts in which identified improvements need to be made.

Lived Experience Inclusion

KEY PRINCIPLES (cont)

5. We are committed to connecting people to appropriate, informed, and tailored supports to enable meaningful engagement and partnerships.
6. We value the time and expertise of people with lived experience contributing to our work, and remunerate them accordingly.
7. We are committed to facilitating an organisational culture which is open to continuous feedback about our approach and seeks to continuously improve based on what we hear.

PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES

The following four pages describe our evolving practices, policies and structures for lived experience inclusion. We look forward to sharing the full Framework later this year, and welcome engagement with governments and other stakeholders about how to improve lived experience practice in housing and homelessness.

Focus areas	Practices, policies and structures	In practice this looks like...
Governance and decision-making	Identified positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identified position on the Board: Dedicated Board position(s) reserved for people with lived experience of homelessness. Currently, this is one identified position and we are exploring whether this is the best model. ● Identified position on the Executive Team: The Lived Experience & Project Coordinator is responsible for a) managing the engagement and inclusion of people with lived experience across Constellation’s work (implementation of the Paid Participation Policy, lived experience practice, additional supports etc.); and b) identifying other opportunities for inclusion and improvement across Constellation’s work.
Culture	Relational practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Valuing and prioritising meaningful connections and collaboration, with a commitment to understanding and learning from one another. ● Valuing feedback and reflection, and encouraging open dialogue, where diverse perspectives are welcomed and encouraged.
	Reflective learning approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Always asking questions and inviting dialogue about meaningful participation and people’s needs, in ways that evolve and strengthen practice. ● Being open to positive risk taking and embedding a commitment to learn from ‘mistakes’ and grow through feedback and reflection. ● Investing in research and other activities to support our learning.

Focus areas	Practices, policies and structures	In practice this looks like...
Staff support	Coaching and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing tailored support for those in identified lived experience roles, together with dedicated time and space for debriefing, reflection and discussion.
	Learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lived experience inclusion training for all Constellation staff across the board and executive team. ● Having conversations about career pathways and progression with staff in identified positions and as paid participants, investing in opportunities for them to develop their skills.
	Peer-to-peer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constellation's Lived Experience and Project Coordinator overseeing the engagement and inclusion of other participants with lived experience. By drawing from their own experiences, the Coordinator works to foster a sense of connection and shared understanding with other project participants. ● Investing in, and making space for, opportunities for peer-to-peer support for identified roles - both within and beyond Constellation.

Focus areas	Practices, policies and structures	In practice this looks like...
Participation	Paid Participation Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal policy for the remuneration of people with lived experience contributing to Constellation’s work (in cases where people are not being supported by other organisations to participate). The Paid Participation Policy sets out different levels of remuneration for different kinds of contributions. For each instance of participation, Constellation draws up a Paid Participation Offer, based on the Policy, which serves as a formal agreement with individuals about the scope of the work and related fees. Any preparation time, briefing and debriefing, travel time etc. is paid in addition to direct contact hours.
	Social labs/project teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of lived experience paid participants in teams progressing solutions, where the frontline decisions about the work Constellation will pursue are made. This varies based on the project, but could include meetings, workshops and co-design, contributing to written documents, reviewing documents and engaging stakeholders.
	Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event co-design: Paid participation by people with lived experience in the design team for every event run by Constellation. • Public speaking: Paid participation on panels or as speakers. • Attendance: Paid participation for attendance at events and meetings.

Focus areas	Practices, policies and structures	In practice this looks like...
Care and support	Briefing and debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running individual briefing and debriefing sessions with lived experience participants for any activity (event, workshop etc.) These include a conversation to determine individualised support needs that might enable participation, including assistance with transport, access to communications tools and amending the work to accommodate needs. ● Giving people as much information as possible about what to expect from any event or engagement, the benefits and risks of participation, and specifying their role, so that they can make informed decisions about participation. That way people with lived experience can decide whether and how to share their experiences. ● If participation is for an event, offering a walk-through of the space beforehand. ● Follow-up calls to check in on wellbeing and seek feedback on the engagement, in order to make improvements to our practice.
	Recognising lived experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At events, forums and workshops, offering recognition of the lived experience that exists in every room and space we're in, beyond dedicated lived experience roles.
	Providing information on supports available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing a list of internal and external supports so that people know who they can reach out to if anything is unsettling or potentially re-traumatising (usually sent prior to meetings as well as afterwards).
	Breakout space/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When conducting a workshop or event in-person, setting aside a breakout room for people to use if they need space. This room might also have a supportive team member present.

Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning

RECOMMENDATION:

That the interim National Housing Supply and Affordability Council considers progressing Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (MIZ) as a real, implementable strategy to increase the supply of social and affordable housing.

BACKGROUND

Social and affordable housing supply does not meet demand currently or into the future for people living in Australia. Rental affordability has crashed to record lows. One approach to increasing supply of affordable rental housing is the introduction of MIZ. The key benefit of MIZ is the creation of an ongoing pipeline of supply which does not require additional government funding.

MIZ occurs when a specified affordable housing contribution is required as a condition for development consent on a market housing (or other) project. In delivering on MIZ obligations, affordable housing units must be provided within their project or elsewhere. Otherwise, an equivalent contribution may be paid towards such housing, with the lands/funds being passed to an affordable housing provider. MIZ enables locational equity and the creation of diverse and inclusive communities by making affordable housing available to those (e.g. key workers) who would otherwise be unable to afford housing.

Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning

A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Constellation Project has developed a **National Framework** for the implementation of MIZ which would allow for the introduction of a consistent and clear policy, ensuring greater certainty of supply and transparency for key stakeholders across the Australian housing system.

The MIZ National Framework was developed over several years by a core team in collaboration with ~60 individuals from across the national housing ecosystem. This included contributions from developers, CHP's, Government (local, state, national), peak bodies (housing, planning and homelessness), academia and professional services.

Alongside Constellation, the MIZ National Framework is supported by the following organisations:



UNSW
SYDNEY



national
shelter



Planning
Institute
Australia

NB: The **National Framework** recommends a target of at least 10% once fully operational. The Planning Institute of Australia strongly supports the adoption of substantial target(s) for affordable housing provision for MIZ. PIA notes that the precise target(s) may need to vary based on need and circumstances across jurisdictions

Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning

The MIZ National Framework is an approach to the delivery of social and affordable housing that develops stronger collaboration between key players from across the housing landscape to unlock quality, affordable housing supply in the areas of greatest need over the **medium and long term**.

The Framework is designed for application across Australian metropolitan areas. There is greater need for access to social and affordable housing in metro areas as this is predominantly where most jobs are created, key workers need access to employment, and social service providers are located.

It is underpinned by a set of 7 guiding principles. These principles and the underlying details provide clarity a national framework, the benefits, and how MIZ can be applied in the Australian context. It is comprehensive and considers transition, roles and responsibilities, notice periods, jurisdictional specific legislation, transfer process, land/dwelling/cash contributions and capabilities required. It also considers an approach to grandfathering, with a current draft being refined with major developers.

The Framework addresses the requirements of and aligns to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) and National Housing Accord (NHA).

The full MIZ National Framework is included as an attachment to this submission.