

Hotel rooms pilot to protect rough sleepers from COVID-19

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About 20 people experiencing homelessness are being moved in to Perth's Pan Pacific hotel in response to COVID-19

Rough sleepers are unable to self-isolate and many have chronic health issues

'Hotels with Heart' pilot aims to keep homeless people safe and out of hospital

New service model could be scaled up to support vulnerable people if the pilot is successful

The McGowan Government is moving to protect some of the most vulnerable members of the Western Australian community from the impacts of COVID-19.

Due to their circumstances, people experiencing homelessness are often unable to take social distancing measures and self-isolate.

About 20 people experiencing homelessness are being moved in to Perth's Pan Pacific hotel as part of a "Hotels with Heart" pilot, to reduce the health risks for people experiencing homelessness during this difficult period.

The initiative aims to deliver both health outcomes for the community and economic stimulus to the hotel sector.

It will focus on rapidly housing rough sleepers who are most at risk, to keep them safe and out of hospital.

If the trial is successful, the new service model could be scaled up to support and ensure the safety of people experiencing homelessness, family and domestic violence and mental health issues.

The pilot was developed by a taskforce made up of government and non-government representatives, who have been looking at the immediate risks faced by people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

It is being delivered in partnership with community service organisations that have significant experience with delivering services to the homeless.

These organisations have partnered with health professionals who specialise in treating people who are homeless, and have sought advice on how best to prevent, protect and care for the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comments attributed to Community Services Minister Simone McGurk:

"The State Government recognises that there are a number of cohorts in our community that are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

"The Hotels with Heart pilot learns from similar initiatives happening interstate and around the world, including in the United Kingdom, America and Canada.

"It demonstrates what can be achieved when there is collaboration across the private, community service and government sectors.

"I would like to thank the Pan Pacific Perth for stepping forward to help us deliver a solution for some of the most vulnerable members of the community during what is a difficult time - particularly for rough sleepers.

"With the help of community service organisations, this initiative will take the pressure off the health system in Western Australia and potentially help to flatten the curve as the State fights to stop the spread of COVID-19.

"The Hotels with Heart pilot also aims to sustain our hotel sector for when the COVID-19 threat is eliminated. The State Government is committed to providing targeted economic stimulus that also has other benefits, such as the health outcomes of this initiative."

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