

# ***Safe at Home Responses***

**Affordable Housing Conference**  
**27<sup>th</sup> June 2018**



**Associate Professor Jan Breckenridge**  
School of Social Sciences, UNSW Sydney

# SHS and DFV: *What do the data tell us?*

Across Australia DFV **one of the most common reasons** clients seek assistance in **2016–17**:

- **4 in 10 or 115,000** clients assisted by SHS agencies for DFV

Of these clients:

- **77%** – female
- **48%** – living in single-parent households with a child(ren)
- **61%** – at risk of homelessness when first presenting for support

(AIHW 2018)

# SHS and DFV: *What do the data tell us?*

- Number of clients experiencing DFV assisted by SHS agencies has **increased by 10%** (average) each year, over past 5 years
- **9 in 10** of those assisted are women and children
- **1 in 3 SHS** clients with disability were experiencing DFV
- **41%** clients experiencing DFV were homeless when they sought assistance -this number fell to **28%** at service completion

# *What did the 115,000 clients ask for?*

- **42% requested short-term/emergency accommodation** - 72% received assistance for this service
- **30% requested long-term housing** – just 4% received assistance
- **73% (or 83,700 clients)** needed other help for DFV
- **87% (or 72,600)** of clients needing assistance for DFV, received it

# In addition to housing ...

Next most common services requested by this client group were:

- **Counselling** - therapeutic discussions or group sessions, specialised DFV support services
- **Material aid/brokerage** (38%) – 88% received assistance for this service
- **Family/relationship assistance** (30%) – 84% received assistance for this service

**Housing outcomes improve after support  
but homelessness is still high**

# Safe At Home (SAH) Responses—programs, interventions and strategies

- Prevents women from **entering/remaining longer in SHS** or supported accommodation & to **remain in housing of their choice** with increased financial security
- Provide **integrated criminal justice focus on safety**, including proactive policing, AVOs/exclusion provisions, court support, safety alarms & safety upgrades
- **Assessment of client risk** & strategies to reduce the risk of the perpetrator

# SAH Responses: *Philosophical Underpinnings*

- SAH is a **socially just** consequence for the perpetrator to leave
- The perpetrator is **solely accountable** for their violence & abuse
- Provides **a criminal justice response** through various criminal justice interventions and strategies:
  - civil and criminal remedies
  - proactive policing of breaches and education of police
  - ongoing monitoring of perpetrator risk

# SAH Responses – an alternative choice

- Homelessness among women and children caused by women **leaving family home when leaving DFV**
- When women leave the family home, they are **significantly more at risk of ongoing homelessness and poverty**, children and family networks of support are disrupted
- DFV victims **do have** a home, they **just cannot live** in it

**SHS are not able to provide a service to over half of the DFV victims who seek a service**

# Older Women and DFV

- An older women's experience of IPV may be assessed as **DFV** or 'elder abuse'
- It is likely to fall between these areas and **remain hidden**
- **Serious under-reporting** – who do they tell?
- Some older women **do not recognise their experience as DFV** – generational expectations and traditional gender roles
- Older women are frequently **not screened for IPV**

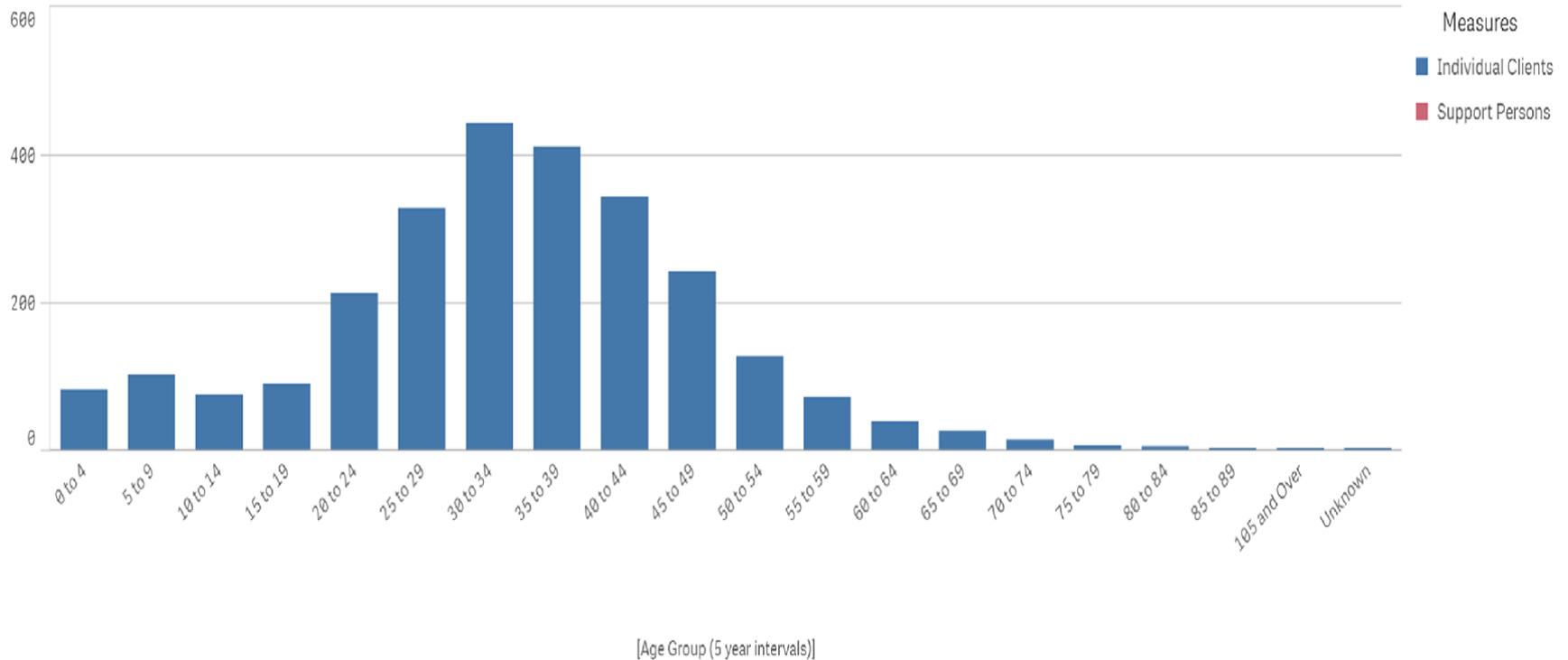
# Older Women and Access to SAH Responses

Older people are **not well represented** in the use of SAH responses. Example 1 – SHLV Evaluation:

Client age		
18–25 years	121	13.5%
26–40 years	508	56.8%
41–55 years	222	24.8%
Over 55 years	36	4.0%
Not known	-	0.0%
Not provided	7	0.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Example 2 - DSS Data Exchange Reporting

Individual Client by Age Group



# DFV vs Elder Abuse

- An older woman may be the **carer for the perpetrator**, **financially dependent** or **require care** from the perpetrator

If they are perceived as victims of elder abuse:

- the dynamics of **IPV can be obscured**
- perpetrator **excused of responsibility** often because they are deemed to be overwhelmed by their caring role
- May be forced to attend **services for elder abuse** rather than DFV services

# Older Women and SAH Responses

- **Stigma and shame** - older women may feel they have stayed in the relationship for too long a time
- Older women may fear leaving because of the prospect of **financial insecurity** and **leaving the home of a lifetime**
- Older women may have been homeless or precariously housed because of previous DFV but **unable to access SAH services** for their current circumstances