



# Understanding Stuff

Report on hoarding and squalor in  
Greater Metro South Brisbane

**partnersinrecovery**  
supporting mental health and wellbeing

**phn**  
BRISBANE SOUTH  
An Australian Government Initiative

Brisbane South PHN is the lead agency for the Partners in Recovery program supported by the Australian Government

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Brisbane South PHN is the lead agency for the Partners in Recovery program. This project was funded by Partners in Recovery.

## About Neami National

Neami National is a community mental health service supporting people to improve their health, live independently and pursue a life based on their own strengths, values and goals.

### Our vision

Full citizenship for all people living with a mental illness in Australian society

### Our mission

Improving mental health and wellbeing in local communities

[www.neaminational.org.au](http://www.neaminational.org.au)

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land we work on and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

We welcome and appreciate diversity in all its forms, including staff and consumers, and believe diversity makes our teams, services and organisation stronger.



# Contents

<b>Background</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction	4
Greater Metro South Brisbane region	4
Project objectives and intended outcome	6
Method and approach	6
<b>Defining hoarding and squalor</b>	<b>7</b>
Hoarding disorder	7
Prevalence and demographics	7
Domestic squalor	7
Prevalence and demographic	7
Treatment	7
<b>Project outcomes</b>	<b>8</b>
Service mapping and building networks	8
Identification of knowledge gaps	8
Recommendations – knowledge gaps	8
Understanding Stuff: Forum	8
<b>Further issues identified</b>	<b>10</b>
Misconceptions by community	10
Misconceptions by professionals	10
The inappropriate use of language	10
Recommendations – misconceptions and language	10
Early intervention	10
Recommendations - early intervention	10
Services and funding	10
Recommendations - service improvement	11
Recommendations - the future of funding	11
Multi-agency / multidisciplinary approach	11
Best practice guidelines	12
Evidence based practice and models	12
Strategic approaches	12
Collaboration and collaborative approaches	12
Recommendations - collaboration	12
Personal Insight	12
Recommendations – personal Insight	12
Consumer led or peer responder programs	13
Recommendations - consumer led or peer responder programs	13
Research	13
Recommendations - research	13
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>15</b>

# Background

## Introduction

Neami National is a community mental health service supporting people living with mental illness to improve their health, live independently and pursue a life based on their own strengths, values and goals. Its vision is to ensure full citizenship for all people living with a mental illness in Australian society.

In 2014 Neami National recognised the need to identify the services, and gaps in services, that exist for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor issues in the Greater Metro South Brisbane (GMSB) region. Hoarding and/or squalor has a significant impact on the person experiencing it, and on their family and neighbours.

Neami National front-line service staff were concerned that there were limited resources and service options available, and that referral pathways were often difficult to navigate. These problems were compounded by service information gaps. It was observed that there were organisations and individuals concerned for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor that were unaware of the services or of the collaborative options that currently exist.

To combat these concerns, Neami National secured Partners In Recovery System Reform Funding, in order to undertake the Understanding Stuff project. This project comprised two main project aims, including progressing the understanding of existing hoarding and/or squalor services and responses in the GMSB area, and to undertake capacity building activities with front-line workers.

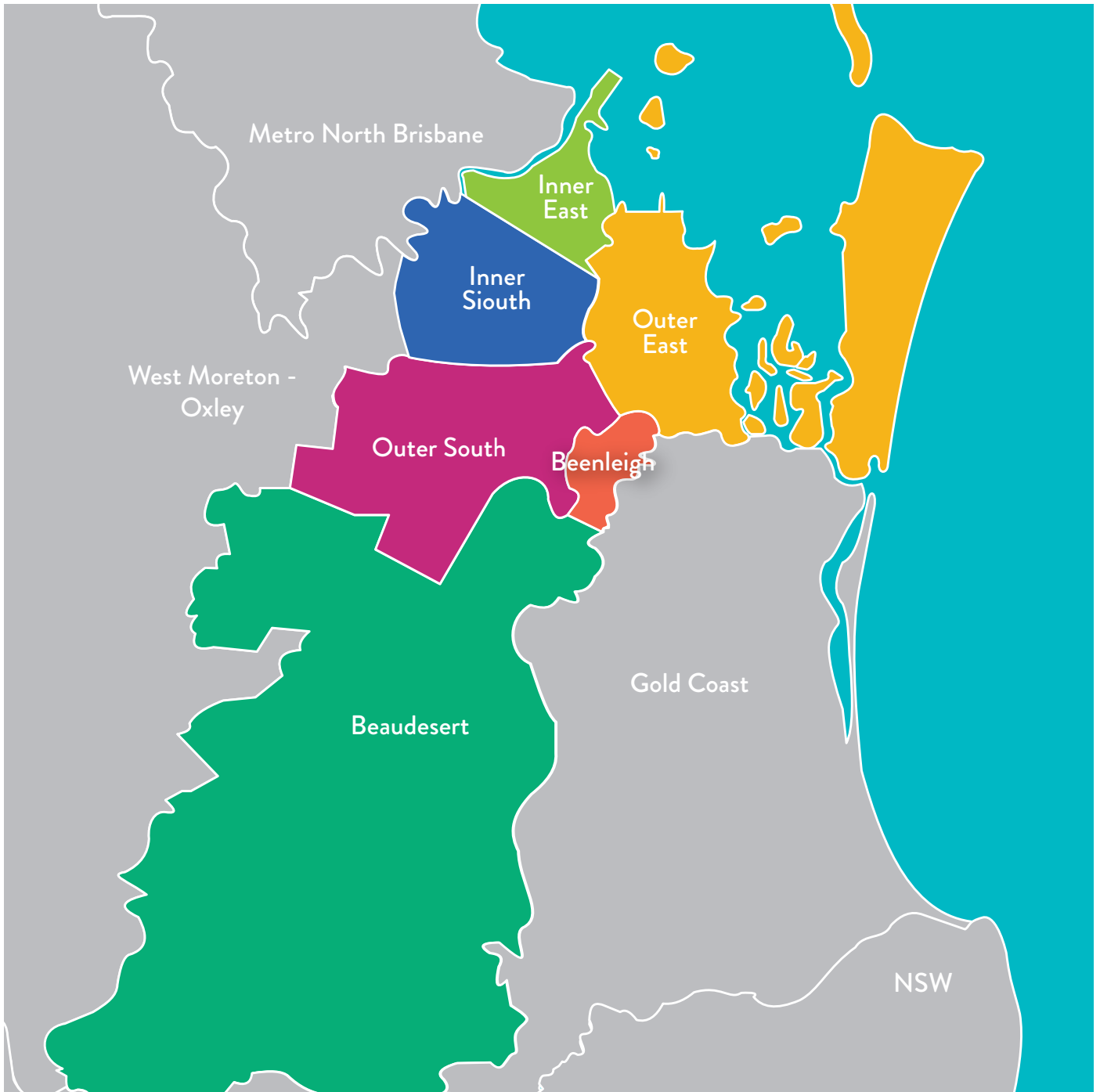
Partners in Recovery is a three year federally funded program which aims to support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs, and their carers and families, through improved integration and coordination of support services and associated agencies. It is particularly focused on achieving community-based recovery.

## Greater Metro South Brisbane region

The Greater Metro South Brisbane (GMSB) region covers an area of 3,775km<sup>2</sup>. It incorporates four Local Government Authorities (LGAs): Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council, Redlands City Council and Scenic Rim Regional Council. The population size recorded in the 2011 Census is 915,859 people, and this is projected to grow by 35% by 2031. 50.2% of the current population are female and 49.8% are male. The predominant age bracket is between 20 and 55 years.

The GMSB region has a large culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population with over 170 different cultural groups represented (MLGMSB 2014). 17,025 people identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, which is the third highest representation of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. GMSB area is home to 43 per cent of the CALD population in Queensland. This is significantly higher than the greater Brisbane average and is more than double the average for Queensland. There are over 18,480 persons in the GMSB area that do not speak English well or at all.

Certain areas within the GMSB area have high incidences of homelessness and people in supported accommodation, including over 4,500 persons in the eastern and southern suburbs, over 3,000 in the inner suburbs, and nearly 3,000 in the Logan and Beaudesert regions. The Brisbane Vulnerability Index Register (Micah Projects Inc. 2013) reports that of the homeless population surveyed, 38% had tri-morbid conditions and 49% had a dual diagnosis. It is thought that hoarding and squalor can precipitate cases of homelessness and the interventions of agencies such as the Office of the Adult Guardian, highlighting the need for an evidenced based approach which relies on collaboration, partnerships and early intervention.



## Project objectives and intended outcome

The objective of this project was to increase the understanding of existing services and support for people experiencing Hoarding and/or Squalor in the GMSB; identify gaps in knowledge and understanding of Hoarding and/or Squalor issues in GMSB; and to create a service list of hoarding and squalor services in GMSB and the wider area.

An important aspect of the Understanding Stuff project was to build capacity through access to evidence-based practices and develop relationships across the sector, creating connections and raising awareness about the work of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group, the work of GMSB Partners in Recovery (PIR) and more broadly the work of Neami National and other related services within the GMSB region.

It was intended that Understanding Stuff and the concurrent project De-cluttering the Hoarding and Squalor System within Metro North Brisbane: No More Sweeping it Under the Rug, facilitated by Partners in Recovery in Greater Metro North Brisbane, would provide a platform for a collaboration of ideas and information sharing, and build momentum amongst people working toward better outcomes for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.

Linkages were to be established between agencies, improving working relationships with key parties, and capacity building was to be a key feature of this project, building relationships amongst organisations supporting individuals experiencing hoarding and/or squalor. The relationship with the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group was paramount to the success of this project. The Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group, an initiative of the Brisbane Homelessness Community Action Plan, had been formed in response to the growing issue of hoarding and/or squalor in the region.

## Method and approach

The Project Officer undertook consultation and discussion with a range of known stakeholders and agencies to collect as much information as possible regarding service provision and resource availability in the GMSB region. The following areas were canvassed:

- The services they use or are aware of for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor
- What collaborative relationships they have formed or are aware of, pertaining to hoarding and/or squalor
- Knowledge of and engagement in the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Case Coordination Group(s)
- Perceived service, education, funding and approach gaps for hoarding and/or squalor concerns
- Perceived education gaps, and what would be beneficial to be presented at the Understanding Stuff Forum

Through this consultation the Project Officer was able to identify previously unknown service providers and clarify the services of other agencies. The services and resources identified are presented in Part 2 of this report (Hoarding and Squalor Resources).

A forum was held during March 2015 to educate, create open discussion, build capacity, and build collaborative responses to hoarding and/or squalor. The forum was collaboration between Neami National, GMSB Medicare Local, and the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group.

# Defining hoarding and squalor

Hoarding and squalor refer to two different, but often interrelated, issues which pose significant concerns and risks for individuals and the community. Hoarding is recognised as a diagnosable and treatable psychiatric illness (Steketee & Frost 2007), whereas squalor refers to the condition of the living environment (Snowden et al. 2012). Prolonged extreme hoarding may lead to squalor, and while this is not always the case, they often exist simultaneously. Consequently this report refers to hoarding and/or squalor.

## Hoarding disorder

Hoarding behaviour is characterised by the pathological collection, acquisition and accumulation of seemingly useless objects, and an unwillingness or inability to discard or relinquish them. The American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) included 'Hoarding Disorder' in a new chapter called Obsessive Compulsive and Related Disorders (APA 2013).

In the earlier editions of the DSM, Compulsive Hoarding was considered one of the eight diagnostic criteria for Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD). The frequency of Compulsive Hoarding as independent from other neurological and psychiatric disorders, including OCD and OCPD led to the recommendation for the inclusion of compulsive hoarding as a separate disorder and not merely a criterion of OCPD (Mataix-Cols et al. 2010).

It is thought that the inclusion of compulsive hoarding in the DSM-V will improve clinical utility, identification, increase public awareness and initiate research into the cause and treatment for people experiencing hoarding (Mataix-Cols et al. 2010).

## Prevalence and demographics

Brisbane City Council figures show that there are between 30 and 60 cases of hoarding recorded within the City Council area each year (Hoarding in Brisbane 2015). There are no published studies to date of hoarding and squalor prevalence within Queensland or nationally. However, research in the USA, UK and OECD countries indicate that between 2-5% of the population experience this condition (Grisham & Norberg 2010).

An epidemiological study found that individuals experiencing hoarding disorder were more likely to be unemployed, more often unmarried, separated, divorced or widowed, and often older (Nordsletten et al. 2013). This study also found that individuals experiencing hoarding were more likely to face financial difficulties and demonstrate poorer health.

## Domestic squalor

The term "severe domestic squalor" refers to living conditions; it does not describe a person. It occurs "when a person's

home is so unclean, messy, and unhygienic that people of similar culture and background would consider extensive clearing and cleaning to be essential" (Snowden et al. 2012).

Severe domestic squalor can occur when an individual or individuals fail to remove household waste or in fact accumulate the waste of others. Squalor can occur as part of self-neglect, or as part of hoarding; typically squalor resulting from hoarding is when the person hoarding, collects items such as animals or household waste.

Some individuals experiencing squalor may be living independently and causing little harm or concern to anyone, however often individuals come to the attention of service providers because their living conditions become such that they are having a negative effect on themselves and the community. The type of services that may become involved may include Department of Health, local councils, neighbours, family or friends (CCS 2013).

Squalor is attributed to impaired executive function, lack of impulsive control as a contributory factor, and there is evidence that the frontal lobe dysfunction may be a major factor, which can result in a reduction in personal hygiene, lack of empathy and concern for others, disinhibition and social skills (Snowden et al. 2012).

A cross-sectional study found that 70% of clients who were referred to a specialist cleaning service identified as having a mental disorder. Of those, 16% identified with dementia, 21% with a psychotic disorder, and 22% with alcohol induced disorder as either a separate disorder or comorbidity (Halliday et al. 2000).

Snowdon et al. (2012) note that of those experiencing severe domestic squalor, there are two groups that emerge, "a group where the living in squalor appears to be attributed (at least in part) to a health problem (usually a mental disorder although sometimes physical issues); and a group where there is no identifiable underlying disorder, other than of personality".

## Prevalence and demographics

It is thought that 0.1% of individuals over 65 are living in severe domestic squalor (Norberg & Snowden 2014). The rates appear to be lower in younger age groups, although it is acknowledged it is difficult to get a true indication due to research and published reports being "hampered to a significant extent by selection bias".

## Treatment

The Buried in Treasures (Tolin, Frost and Steketee 2007) scientifically-based program has been found to be effective in helping compulsive hoarders address their issues, and it is considered that workshops based on this program would be of significant value in the GMSB.

# Project outcomes

## Service mapping and building networks

Through this process it was identified that not all individuals working with people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor in the GMSB area were aware of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group or the existing services in the region. Consequently this process provided an opportunity to improve coordination and collaboration by introducing individual workers and organisations to the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group, building a database of interested individuals and organisations, engaging organisations and individuals in training opportunities, and building the momentum required for a concerted and collaborative approach to the issues surrounding hoarding and squalor. Partnerships were formed between interested stakeholders and the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Case Collaboration Groups.

A service list was created of the existing services that provide support for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor in the GMSB area. This is published as Part 2 of this report (The Hoarding and Squalor Resource Booklet 2015). A comprehensive distribution list was generated, providing an avenue for targeted invitations for a scheduled capacity building forum (Understanding Stuff: Forum; section below) and an extensive list of interested parties to provide this resource to.

## Identification of knowledge gaps

The stakeholders identified that there are a range of knowledge gaps that could be impeding the work undertaken with people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor. The knowledge gaps that were identified during this process pertained not only to the phenomenology of hoarding and squalor, but also how to identify and work with people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.

The main gaps that were identified are:

- Defining and understanding hoarding and/or squalor
- What are the causes of hoarding and/or squalor?
- What contributes to hoarding and/or squalor?

### Identification

- How to identify that someone is experiencing hoarding and/or squalor
- What assessment tools exist and how to use them

### Engagement

- How to sensitively raise hoarding and/or squalor concerns with consumers
- What is helpful and what is not helpful when working with people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor

- How to work respectfully with individuals without exacerbating trauma
- How to develop action plans that are both collaborative and include the consumer
- What are the referral pathways in the GMSB area
- What services exist for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor, and how to find these services

### Coordinated Response

- What networks and case collaboration exist in the GMSB area
- How can organisations work together to ensure successful outcomes for people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor

The Understanding Stuff: Forum and engagement of stakeholders with the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group was designed to address a number of these knowledge gaps.

## Recommendations – knowledge gaps

- Ongoing education of stakeholders and discourse regarding allocation of responsibility
- Provide education to the community sector on best practice approaches

## Understanding Stuff: Metro South Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Forum

The Understanding Stuff Metro South Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Forum was a collaboration between Neami National, Greater Metro South Brisbane Medicare Local (now known as Brisbane South PHN) and the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group. Held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, the purpose of the forum was to educate, build capacity, create open discussion and build collaborative responses amongst organisations and individuals working with, or concerned for, people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor, in the GMSB area.

Over 70 stakeholders attended the Forum, including staff from local Councils and State Government departments, and with half of the participants from the community sector.

There were seven presentations, including one by Professor John Snowdon, University of Sydney. Professor Snowdon is an internationally renowned researcher and expert on hoarding and/or squalor. Six of the presentations were recorded and will be edited and presented as a podcast on the Neami National website ([www.neaminational.org.au](http://www.neaminational.org.au)).



Topics covered at the forum included:

- The work of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Case Collaboration Group
- Creating in-roads with government departments and building networks
- Psychological interventions
- RSPCA responses
- Queensland Fire and Rescue reporting and responses.

Feedback from attendees found that:

- The forum was highly rated (52% Excellent, 45% Very Good)
- The majority of the information was new (all of it 5%, most of it 55%, about half of it 23%)

# Further issues identified

## Misconceptions by community

Community misconceptions can be influenced by the media portrayal of hoarding and/or squalor. The Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group have identified this as a significant barrier, because:

*“Media representation of the issues of hoarding and squalor is generally very negative. This in turn fuels divisive community attitudes, which can be distressing and damaging for someone struggling to manage their clutter”*

The Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group recommend;

*“Encouraging the community to move from being ‘fascinated’ and ‘curious’ to being empathetic and supportive...”*

## Misconceptions by professionals

It is expected that the changes to the DSM V will increase awareness within the health professional community and as such should improve identification and treatment as well as stimulating research and development of new treatments specifically for compulsive hoarding. However it is considered likely that there will be a lag in reducing current misconceptions held by professionals. These misconceptions will continue to be challenged by the new diagnosis, resulting in intensified dialogue regarding not only what hoarding disorder is, but also whose responsibility it is to provide assistance.

## The inappropriate use of language

During interactions with professionals working within this area it was identified that some professionals possessed a pejorative attitude toward, or used denigrating language when referring to, people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor. This is concerning as it is these attitudes which can prevent further understanding and impede the likelihood of people experiencing hoarding and squalor seeking or accepting help.

Language can express cultural norms and belief systems which are often so ingrained that their use can appear normal, acceptable, and accurate. However the endorsement through implicit consent and acceptance of the use of such language or attitudes fails to educate and to foster compassion essential for working with the challenges surrounding people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.

## Recommendations – misconceptions and language

- Continue to engage key stakeholders from the community and government sectors in the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group.
- Reduce assumptions and misconceptions and break down stigma/shame through awareness raising campaigns
- Education to improve willingness to recognise assumptions and values and examine the habits of speech.

## Early intervention

Although hoarding can begin very early in life, research suggests that it is not often until middle age that a person may be identified as having a disorder and requiring assistance. Because it is a chronic disorder, which is long lasting and has persistent effects, it is important that hoarding behaviour be identified and the individual given assistance as soon as possible.

There are several ‘gatekeepers’ who could be the first point of contact for an individual experiencing hoarding and/or squalor. The outcome for an individual is often dependent on the level of understanding and expertise of the ‘gatekeeper’. This raises the importance of building awareness amongst implicitly involved groups that are often not thought of as involved in hoarding and squalor concerns, such as Real Estate Agents, Occupational Therapists at hospitals and other service providers.

## Recommendations - early intervention

- Development of an overarching response framework and practice guidelines, which highlights whose responsibility it is to respond and how to do this.

## Services and funding

Service gaps and funding gaps are inherently linked and these two areas were identified as one of the most significant gaps in GMSB.

The Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group report that:

*“Limited resources and funded services in the community means that finding support is difficult, time consuming and often an additional obstacle for someone who may already experience multiple mental, physical and emotional barriers”*

Service gaps that were identified include:

- Long term therapeutic and psychological assistance
- Intensive support
- Flexible services, which work with the individual rather than provide blanket responses
- Affordable cleaning services
- Coordinated case management
- Crisis referral pathways

Funding gaps identified include:

- Appropriate brokerage
- Funding for people under 65
- HACC program limitations
- Barriers for funding in boarding houses
- Lack of sustainable ongoing funding for appropriate psychological services and cleaning services
- It is also worth noting that it has become apparent that Partners In Recovery (PIR) flexible funds have been used on numerous occasions to assist an individual with hoarding and/or squalor concerns. As PIR is due to discontinue in line with the roll-out of NDIS, PIR flexible funding is not a sustainable solution, and it must be considered where additional funds will be sourced once the PIR initiative has concluded.

### Recommendations - service improvement

- Recruit champions to the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group who can continue to incite passion, encourage momentum and reduce burn out of key members of the Working Group
- Invest in long term therapeutic and psychological assistance
- Provide access to intensive support
- Develop flexible services that work with the individual, rather than provide a blanket response
- Access to affordable cleaning services
- Improve accessibility to on-going funding for specialist trained therapists, mental health workers, peer responders, professional organisers, professional cleaning services and other in-home services to provide coaching and other supportive approaches to reduce clutter, address risks to health and safety, and support longer term, ongoing change
- Improve accessibility to long-term case management
- Coordinated case management
- Crisis referral pathways
- Improve access to resources and services for those with hoarding disorder, their families and service providers, for example, a support group and

developing a services road map, which could be accessible on the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group website, Hoarding in Brisbane.

### Recommendations - the future of funding

- Cost analysis to successfully implement a multi-agency approach
- Access to sustainable and appropriate brokerage
- Additional funding for people under 65
- Increase sustainable ongoing funding for appropriate and responsive psychological and domiciliary services
- It is also worth noting that it has become apparent that PIR flexible funds have been used on numerous occasions to assist an individual with hoarding and/or squalor concerns. As PIR is due to discontinue in line with the roll-out of NDIS, PIR flexible funding is not a sustainable solution, and it must be considered where additional funds will be sourced once the PIR initiative has concluded.
- Source funds to pilot the Uniform Inspection List within the GMSB area
- Utilise Current momentum to source additional funding for research advancement
- Source funds from MH Commission to establish continued research and projects regarding hoarding and / or squalor in GMSB
- Services to pool funds for a specified hoarding and squalor worker
- To build a strong case for improved resourcing of programmes, services and systems source funds to undertake data collection to:
- Research the prevalence of hoarding and squalor in Brisbane
- Gauge the current responses, costs, gaps in service and barriers to effective responses within GMSB
- Dedicated outreach and engagement workers to work intensively to build relationships and trust with people experiencing hoarding and squalor
- Source funds to establish peer-lead group work programs in the region

### Multi-agency / multidisciplinary approach

The existence of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group is not known to all people working within the area of hoarding and/or squalor. Although this project attempted to partially mitigate this through capacity building activities, there remains a gap in knowledge within the professional community regarding

the existence and work of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Case Collaboration groups.

Although the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group has achieved considerable achievements since their inception in 2013, the engagement from some key stakeholders would further enhance the performance and capabilities of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group.

### Best practice guidelines

Best practice guidelines could be developed specifically for the GMSB based on national and international best practice guidelines

### Evidence based practice and models

There are significant gaps in the utilisation of best practice approaches within the GMSB area. These approaches have been identified and are detailed in various reports, published both within Australia and internationally.

### Strategic approaches

Brisbane does not currently have a task force that has been specifically formed to survey the services, research and education that exists for compulsive hoarding. The lack of a task force has been identified as is required to establish the development of a clinical and practical service framework, and ensure the approaches to hoarding and squalor are consistent.

### Collaboration and collaborative approaches

Since the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group formed in 2012, it has become recognised as an expert body, which has developed collaborative, holistic and sustainable responses to hoarding and squalor, within Brisbane. The gap is not that collaborative groups don't exist, more that they are not known as broadly as desired within the field.

It is worth noting that concerns have been raised in regard to there being "too many" interagency meetings, which service providers were expected to attend, and that the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Case Collaboration Groups may be superfluous.

### Recommendations - collaboration

- Introduce standardised tools, to ensure consistency of approach
- Develop best practice guidelines for the Australian context
- Target agencies for engagement on the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group
- Develop a political portfolio dedicated to hoarding and squalor, as a platform for legislative change
- Government leadership in creating an overarching framework
- Create task force to lead and educate, define best practices, and create collaborative approaches. Others roles of a task force would be to define best practice interventions, promote funding for research, provide access to education and resourcing, and facilitate information exchange among service providers to improve service
- Focus on strategic approaches, and collaboration and collaborative approaches
- Create collaborations with housing providers to prevent homelessness
- Utilise a team orientated multiple layer approach, with a lead agency appointed
- Concerted effort to bring more local council representatives to the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group to ensure uniform best practice approach across the councils.

### Personal insight

It has been identified that lack of personal insight and self-awareness is a significant barrier for individuals experiencing hoarding and/or squalor, which consequently causes obstacles for the services that are supporting them.

### Recommendations – personal insight

- In response to the lack of expertise in this area in Queensland, the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group to progress partnerships with universities, relevant professional mental health bodies and practitioners to build local expertise and effective therapeutic responses.

## Consumer led or peer responder programs

Until 2016 there have been no consumer led programs, or peer led programs such as the Buried in Treasures workshops in the GMSB region. Buried in Treasures is a facilitated support group that is highly structured and time-limited. The workshop consists of 15 sessions spread over 20 weeks. Each session focuses on a chapter in the book, Buried in Treasures: Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding (Tolin, Frost and Steketee 2007). In 2016 Neami National and Richmond Fellowship Queensland have piloted the BIT workshops in the Inner-Brisbane and Logan regions.

### Recommendations - consumer led or peer responder programs

- Support ongoing Buried in Treasures workshops within GMSB
- Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group to progress partnerships with recovery focused mental health services, and to develop locally-based, peer support groups based on successful models developed in the United States.

## Research

There is limited research into hoarding and squalor within Queensland which has resulted in insufficient people professionally and appropriately trained to work with people experiencing hoarding and squalor. A lack of academic research, particularly within an Australian context, has resulted in minimal lobbying to secure additional funding for service provision.

### Recommendations - research

- Collect prevalence data to support further research
- Develop links and partnerships with academics and universities to undertake research relevant to Queensland
- Support research into best practice, evidence based treatments
- Trial and evaluate approaches that may have been successful in other countries
- Create linkages with housing providers to undertake research and lobby for funding

# Conclusion

- Although there is no specific prevalence data regarding the hoarding and squalor concerns within Greater Metro South Brisbane, it is evident by the myriad of professionals that are collaborating through the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and other networks and training opportunities, that there is a perceived need for services and education regarding hoarding and/or squalor.
- The area is under resourced, under serviced and there are gaps in knowledge which may prevent professionals from accessing the services that do exist. Some of these concerns can be and are mitigated by the work of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group. The role of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group is paramount to the success of this mitigation, however the responsibility does not lie entirely with them. To create successful and sustainable responses to hoarding and/or squalor, it is the responsibility of the community, government, and private sectors.
- A commitment is required across all levels of government and the community sector to progress multi-agency responses to the issues associated with hoarding and/or squalor. This includes a commitment to co-ordination, collaboration, the sharing of resources, and the implementation of consistent standards of best practice approaches across services. The recommendations included in this report provide potential opportunities and avenues through which this commitment could be achieved in Brisbane and across Queensland.
- For agencies to be able to deliver an effective multi-disciplinary approach to hoarding and squalor, ongoing training and education is essential. As is the development of an overarching framework and evidence based best practice guidelines to support those professionals working with people experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.
- Continued lobbying and local research would give leverage to increased funding and resource development. Research in this area within the Queensland context would further assist the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group in their work to progress systemic change to benefit those working with and experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.
- Within the Greater Metro South Brisbane area there are four LGA's, which all have different approaches to hoarding and/or squalor. The forum of the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group provides a platform to improve dialogue and generate opportunities to create a uniform approaches across the councils.
- The complexity of both systemic and individual hoarding and/or squalor concerns are best approached when collaboratives have clear practice guidelines to follow, explicitly identifying the roles and responsibilities of each involved agency. In order to create successful collaboratives within Greater Metro South Brisbane, it may be pertinent to form local working groups within the distinctly different areas across the region, including Redlands, Logan, and Inner South.
- Neami National, the Brisbane Hoarding and Squalor Working Group and Brisbane South PHN aim to work with each other in a continued effort to engage professionals, to create meaningful and systemic change that can assist those experiencing hoarding and/or squalor.

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