



Innovation born out of community resources

Fed up waiting for action from governments, the people living and working in the Southern Fleurieu have been inspired by Shelter SA to solve their local housing problems. Shelter SA held a workshop in July that brought together people from the Southern Fleurieu area to think laterally, discuss innovative ideas, and develop solutions to housing issues in the region.

Dr Alice Clark, Executive Director of Shelter SA said, “Regional communities are powerful networks of passionate people. There is no one with more knowledge who could better develop and implement a project than the people from the area. We look forward to seeing the projects come to life in Victor Harbor in the future.”

Younger and older people are at the most risk of living in precarious housing in regional areas according to workshop participants. Although houses in regional areas are slightly more affordable than those in metropolitan areas, for residents who live on lower incomes, renting and purchasing property remains out of reach. There is a need for increased quantity and variability of housing options including emergency, transitional and affordable housing types to suit people across the region.

Thinking of the demographics of those in need, one group developed a model for a housing cooperative for retirees. This is a housing solution that could operate independently from Governments, doesn't rely on donations and builds on the strength of community living.

Housing services in the region are finding that some young people at risk of housing stress are ill-equipped with the skills needed to live independently and cannot afford private rental. One team at the workshop developed a project to educate young people to improve their success of keeping a tenancy and matching them with house-mates. This project could prevent young people from re-entering the housing support system and would help them set up good habits for life.

There is no emergency accommodation in regional areas, but many unused community spaces such as Churches and sports halls that could shelter people in extreme weather events. Using existing space and the helpful spirit of the community is significantly more sustainable than building an emergency shelter from the ground up.

Lack of transport options in and around regional areas is a huge problem. While a train from the south into the CBD would be ideal, people need a transport solution now and not in 20 years. A solution developed by one team was a community style Uber, to connect drivers and passengers heading into the city.

The Blue Sky thinking approach opened the possibilities that could be implemented using the passion and knowledge of the people in the room and resources that are already available.