

Maureen's experience



Maureen* experienced homelessness over a 15 month period, mainly living in parks in Logan. Her experience illustrates the challenges experienced by people impacted by trauma who are trying to manage their mental and physical health while experiencing rough sleeping.

* name changed for privacy



Becoming homeless

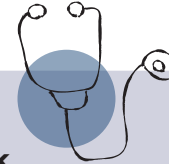
Maureen left a regional town after experiencing DFV and losing care of her children. She moved to Hugh Muntz Park in Beenleigh with her dog to be close to her children.

"I felt very unsafe in a tent alone so I was using drugs to cope".

"Life in the park was chaotic. My mental health was suffering and I was using drugs more but I didn't want to leave Beenleigh".

Connecting with support

The Logan Homelessness Outreach Service met Maureen and helped her out with dog food. The team did a comprehensive assessment and raised her situation with the Logan Zero Service Coordination group, leading to collaborative responses.



Getting sick

Maureen was taken by ambulance and admitted to a Brisbane hospital with a serious infection that required surgery.

"I told the hospital I wanted to get off the street but they just treated me like just another homeless drug user".

"You can only shower properly once a week in the park. Baby wipes became my best friend".

Leaving hospital

Maureen discharged herself and returned to the park. Outreach Team workers bought supplies and filled her script for antibiotics.



Finding a home

After review by the Logan Zero Service Coordination meeting Maureen was offered a property, which she initially declined as it didn't have room for her children.

"If I stayed in the park I wouldn't last much longer. It shouldn't come to people being unsafe to get help".

Maureen moved into a unit at Slacks Creek Community Housing. She engaged in counselling for her mental health, and appreciates the on-site support available at the unit complex.

"For the first time I feel like I have a home. I have boundaries. It's my safe space".

Seeking safety

After safety incidents in the park, Maureen gave up her dog and YFS helped her move to a different park, then a motel then a boarding house in Brisbane.

"The boarding house was honestly worse than the street. I wasn't leaving my room because it was so unsafe".

"I was doing better. I was clean of ice".

Moving on

Maureen left the boarding house to stay with a friend, stopped using drugs, got work and a car.



Moving back to the park

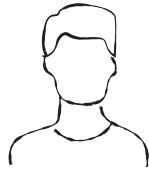
Maureen moved to Tully Park in Jimboomba for a job that fell through, and reconnected with the Outreach Team.

Rebuilding a life

Maureen has enrolled in a course to work in community services and help others.

"My story is textbook trauma. Rules are made to be broken and so are textbooks".

Fred's experience



Sixty four year old Fred* had experienced homelessness for eight years following a divorce before he arrived in Logan's Tully Park. Within six months Fred had secured housing through coordinated efforts. His story demonstrates the importance of long-term outreach to monitor people's wellbeing and coordinated efforts to respond when things change for them.

* name changed for privacy



Becoming homeless

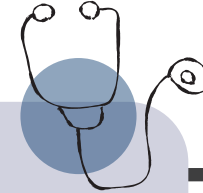
Fred came to Tully Park from New South Wales to be closer to family. He lived off and on between the park and a family member's place, sleeping in his truck, while recovering from a skin cancer removal.

"I was living and working out of my truck for years. My son kicked me out at Christmas".

"They showed me a place that was too small so I knocked it back".

Connecting with support

The Logan Homelessness Outreach Service connected with Fred, completed an AHVTT assessment and updated his social housing application. He decided against a potential housing option at that point for suitability and affordability reasons.



Health declining

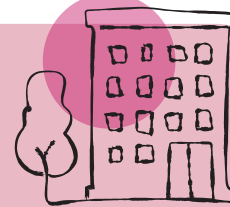
The Outreach Team continued to connect regularly with Fred, noticing his health was going downhill following a tick bite. They referred him to outreach nurses who took him to the GP.

"I got a tick and my hand went bung then I got another tick".

Receiving a diagnosis

Fred was struggling to breathe, and outreach care services were really worried. The GP found a lesion on his lung and referred him to a specialist who diagnosed him with lung cancer.

"They gave me puffers to help me breathe".



"Oh well. I'm not going to live forever".

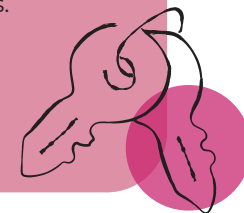
Finding a home

Fred accepted that he could no longer live in the park. Logan Zero Service Coordination stakeholders worked together to prioritise Fred for a property close to hospital and to explore tenancy sustainment. His medical specialist wrote a letter of support confirming the urgency of his housing needs.

Moving in

Fred moved into a studio flat with help from the Outreach Team and Logan Zero to buy furniture and whitegoods.

"My chest is better in the house than in the truck".



Talia's experience



Talia* is a young mum who lives with her partner and their one year old child. Their child has a chronic health condition which requires regular hospital visits and will eventually require surgery. They have been homeless for around 12 months.

* name changed for privacy



Becoming homeless

Talia and her partner and child became homeless as part of a larger extended family group when they lost the housing they were sharing in another community.

Homelessness with family

Most of their homelessness experience has been as part of a larger family group, including staying with extended family in overcrowded housing, camping at various commercial camp-sites around South East Queensland, and eventually moving to Tully Park to camp for free. In winter during one of their camping stops their daughter became seriously ill and was admitted to hospital, and was discharged back into homelessness. They also lost all their ID in a storm in Tully Park and it has taken time and money to restore this.

"Tully Park was OK as long as you stuck to yourself - it could be worse. If you had a caravan or camper van it would be OK, but it's not really safe in a tent with the people who stay there".

Outreach in the park

Talia and the rest of the family were visited by the Logan Homelessness Outreach Service soon after moving to the park – this was the only service they interacted with in the park. The Outreach Team worked hard to get them out of the park as quickly as they could.

"YFS Outreach treated us as a priority because of the baby".

First crisis housing attempt

Talia and her family left the park along with other family members to motel accommodation managed by a community housing organisation. After a few weeks they were asked to leave as a result of something another family member was accused of doing and moved back to the park.



"The motel wasn't very good - it was worse than staying in the park".

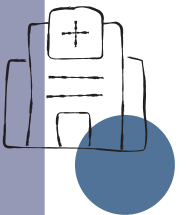
Second move to crisis

After they returned to the park they re-established contact with the Outreach Team. The team supported Talia and her partner and child to move on their own into a head-leased crisis housing unit. Now they are attempting to source longer term housing in the private market or in social housing. Talia views private rental as unlikely for them due to their very low income, but has been told she needs to try this before she will be prioritised for social housing.

"Lack of money is our biggest problem. The most helpful thing for us has been getting help to pay for our housing".

Ongoing health needs

Talia's child's health requires regular specialist appointments at the Queensland Children's Hospital. From their current location this involves a long train journey with walks at either end but at least this journey is affordable with 50c fares. At some point in the future the condition will require surgery which will mean hospital access will be crucial.

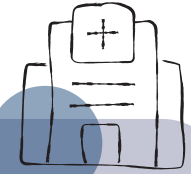


Jane's experience



Jane* is an older woman who experienced homelessness over a two-year period. She has family in Logan and two small dogs. Her experience illustrates the risks of rough sleeping for an older woman and the importance of being responsive when the person is ready to receive help.

* name changed for privacy



Becoming homeless

Jane became homeless after leaving a social housing property in regional Queensland. She left her tenancy after a dispute with a neighbour and being refused a transfer to get away from this conflict. She eventually moved to Tully Park in Logan.



"Don't promise things and then not deliver – it just gives people false hope".

Connecting with support

Initially she lived in her car until a local volunteer-run charity arranged for a caravan she needed to pay off. Later she connected with the Logan Homelessness Outreach Service and outreach nurses, who helped her with scripts and medical appointments. She also met with housing representatives in the park but was unhappy with the response. She was seen by the mental health outreach team but was not considered to be in crisis.

Things getting worse

For some time Jane was OK with living in the caravan – the inconvenience of not having reliable electricity and a place to shower was offset by not having to pay rent. However, over time her depression got worse, leading her to seek treatment. A dispute about payments for her caravan led to it being repossessed and she had to return to her tent.

"I would have left there sooner if I could. The Department of Housing needs to prioritise older women better, with or without pets."

Crisis point

After returning to the tent she was assaulted by another camper and left the park, sleeping in her car near her family member's home. The final crisis arrived when she became seriously ill and spent a week in ICU.

Leaving hospital

On her discharge from hospital Jane stayed with her family member to recover but returned to her car when her family member stole money from her. She initially planned to stay with another family member some distance away, but was not well enough for such a drive and got back in touch with the Outreach Team.

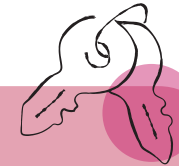
Crisis Housing

The Outreach Team urgently organised short-term accommodation funding for Jane to move into a motel, where she stayed for five weeks.



Housing

During her time in the motel, services strongly advocated for Jane to receive social housing. After she was initially refused for one housing option because of her dogs, the Outreach Team paid for them to be desexed, immunised, chipped and registered to reduce the barrier. She was then allocated a unit managed by a community housing provider.



Tenancy sustainment

Jane continues to face challenges. She is without a car and public transport is limited, so things like shopping and social activity are difficult. She feels lonely after the social life of the park. She is in the process of applying for a transfer to a two-bedroom unit to be able to share with her adult son in the future.

"It's nice to have a fridge and running water and to be able to lock the door, but I miss having my money."