

SANCTUARY CRISIS ACCOMMODATION PILOT

Key insights from the evaluation and lessons for the model
prepared by Urbis for Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

Crisis accommodation plays a critical role in the service system for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, providing immediate safety, access to specialist services, and a pathway to escape abusive situations. However, an acute shortage of appropriate crisis accommodation options in Victoria means many victim-survivors are sent to motels, where there is limited security and support for women and children.

“...I arrived here feeling lost and hopeless, but the team has provided unwavering support in every aspect. From emotional and social support to practical assistance like providing shelter and essential items, they went above and beyond.

– Sanctuary resident

URBIS

Safe Steps

THE SANCTUARY MODEL

Sanctuary provides short-term supported crisis accommodation to victim-survivors (adults and children) until they can be referred to appropriate longer-term accommodation. The Sanctuary building includes seven fully-furnished, self-contained apartments and several large shared spaces, accessible for a range of ages and cultures. The service delivery model provides wraparound support for residents, including through intensive, face-to-face case management support and a range of in/outreach services.

KEY FEATURES OF SANCTUARY



RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

RESIDENT OUTCOMES

- The intensive, face-to-face support provided by Sanctuary staff enables residents' immediate needs to be addressed and their protective factors to be built much quicker than in a motel. Adults receive an average of two hours of direct support per day, and children an average of one-hour.
- Adults and children overwhelmingly report positive experiences staying at Sanctuary. Surveyed adults routinely highlight the emotional and practical support provided by staff contributes to improved feelings of safety and empowerment. They also appreciate the support provided to meet their children's specific needs.
- Adults and children transition to safe accommodation settings after leaving Sanctuary. Of the 128 adults who have exited Sanctuary, almost all women (97%) made safe transitions including to refuges and the homes of friends/family.
- Residents report positive outcomes after transitioning from Sanctuary into other accommodation, including feeling safe and secure in their current housing, increased financial stability, and continued access to support to address their health, disability and cultural needs.

123* adults and 174 children have made safe transitions, including to:

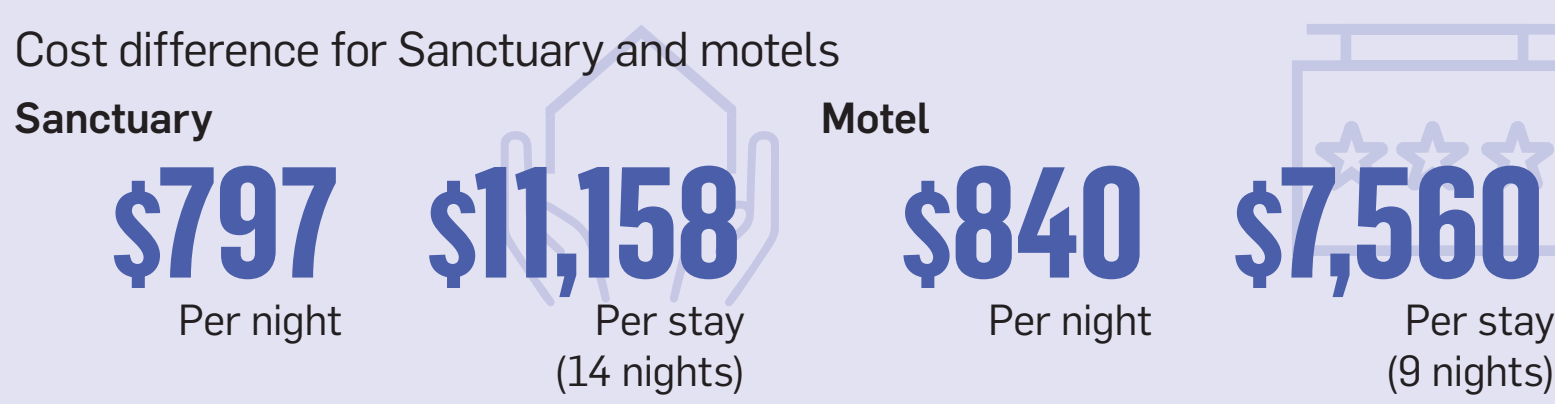
Refuges (68 adults) Safe @ Home (9 adults)

Friends and family (25 adults) Other safe accommodation (21 adults)

*3% of Adults returned to PUV, no data provided for one adult.

ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

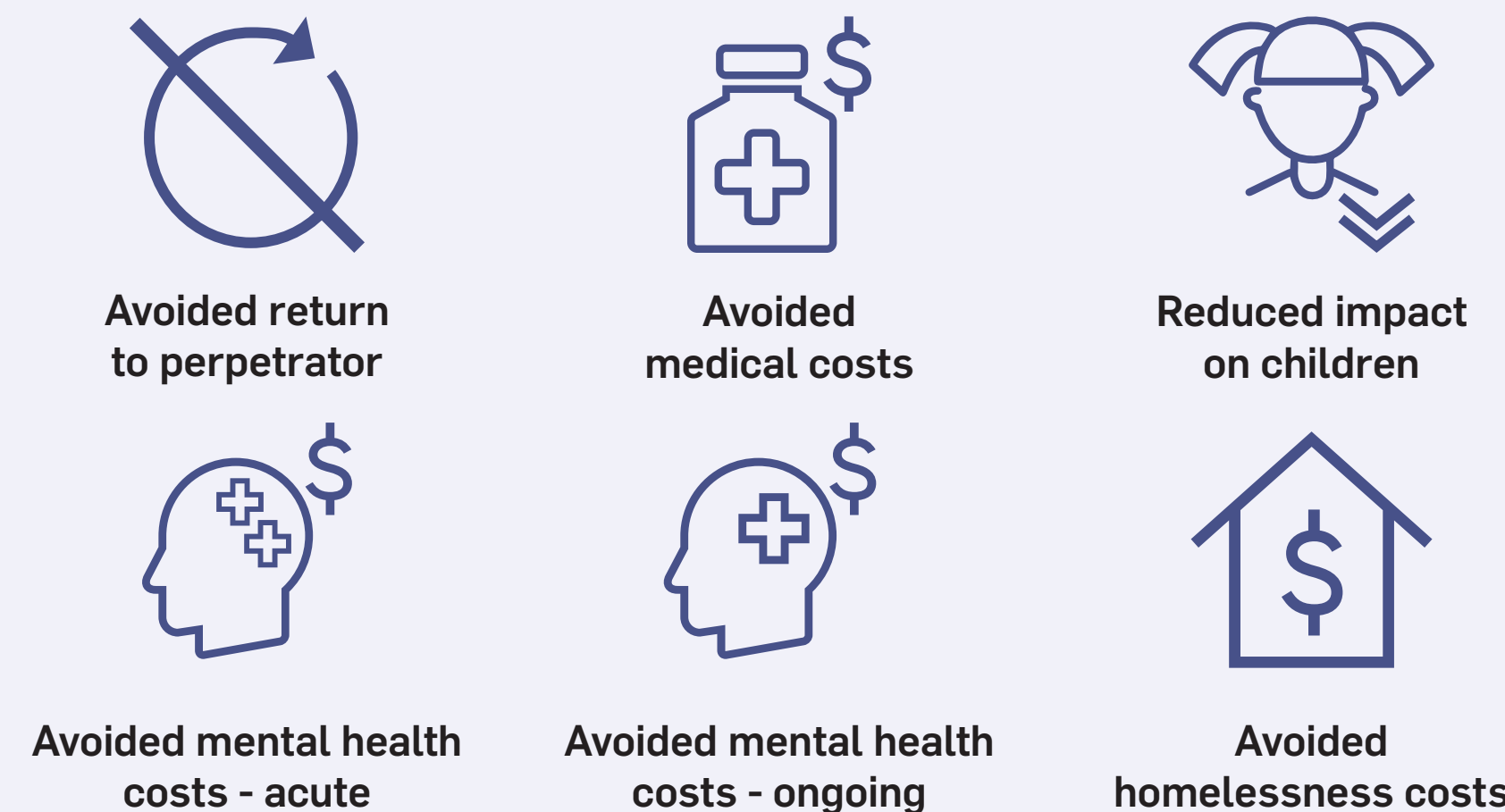
- The assessment shows that the delivery of wrap-around services at Sanctuary is providing an improved impact at a lower cost as compared to alternative crisis accommodation options such as motels.



- Annual cost-savings to the government have been estimated to provide insight into the ongoing budgetary impact of the Sanctuary model and the outcomes it is expected to deliver. Urbis has identified a range of potential outcomes that residents may experience arising from their stay at Sanctuary.



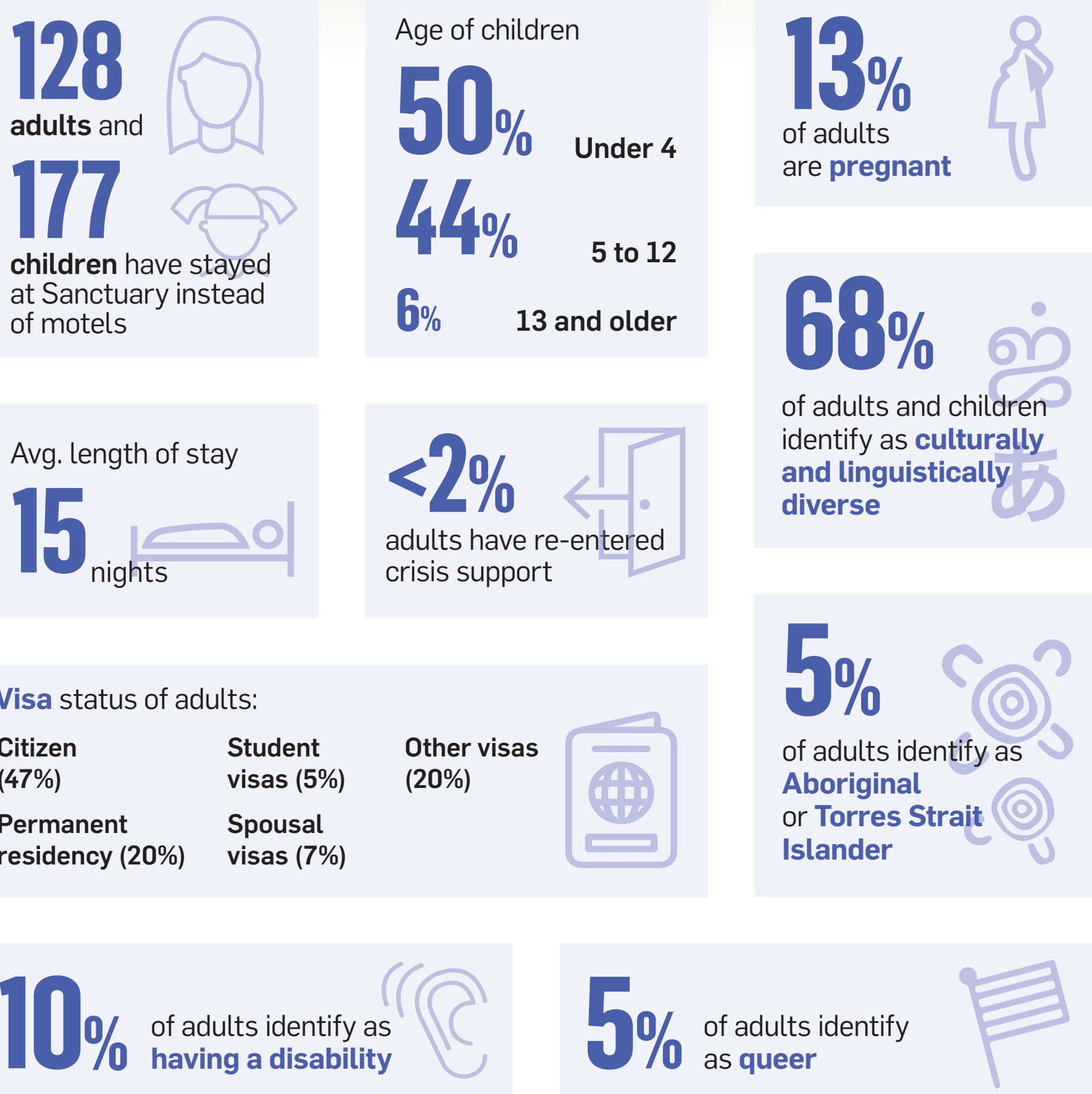
KEY LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES QUANTIFIED WERE:



“Sanctuary gave me a voice again. The workers are wonderful and without their help I would not have been able to make this much progress. I miss them all.

– Sanctuary resident

DEMOGRAPHICS



“I had a very peaceful time here. Having conversations with the staff always gives reassurance about things. Thanks for everything. Really feel safe and good here.

– Sanctuary resident

METHOD

Safe Steps engaged Urbis to conduct an evaluation of the 12-month pilot of Sanctuary. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact and viability of the Sanctuary service delivery model, including an economic assessment and an assessment of the outcomes achieved for residents including women and children.

The evaluation was conducted from September 2023 to November 2024 and was informed by the following data sources:

- Interviews with staff from Safe Steps, partner organisations and refuge staff
- survey results, including exit surveys of adults (107 respondents) and children (12 respondents) and a follow-up survey of adults from 1-6 months after they transition out of Sanctuary (37 respondents)
- client management system data to determine hours of staff support per adult and child during their stay at Sanctuary.
- de-identified resident data from the full 12 months of operations
- program documentation and cost data.

CONCLUSION

- Sanctuary is the only supported crisis accommodation model of its kind in Victoria, providing independent living as well as shared spaces which offer opportunities for social connection among residents, including children.
- Sanctuary addresses a critical gap in the service system for people escaping domestic and family violence and it is anticipated the model will be scaled up and replicated in future.
- Sanctuary provides a superior alternative to motels most notably a better experience and enhanced outcomes for women and children and lower operational costs.

For further information on Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre, [please scan here.](#)

