

EVALUATION OF THE REINTEGRATION HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM (RHSP)

*Evaluation by CRC's Advocacy
Research and Policy Unit (ARPU)
for the period July 2023 to June
2025*

*Presentation prepared by Dr. Stella
Settumba Stolk*

CRC community
restorative
centre





CRC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we all work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community and pay respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We acknowledge the tireless advocacy and work undertaken by First Nations people in advocating for systemic change in the criminal justice system.

This always was, always will be Aboriginal Land.



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Background

2. About the RHSP Evaluation

- Evaluation questions
- Methodology

3. Key Findings

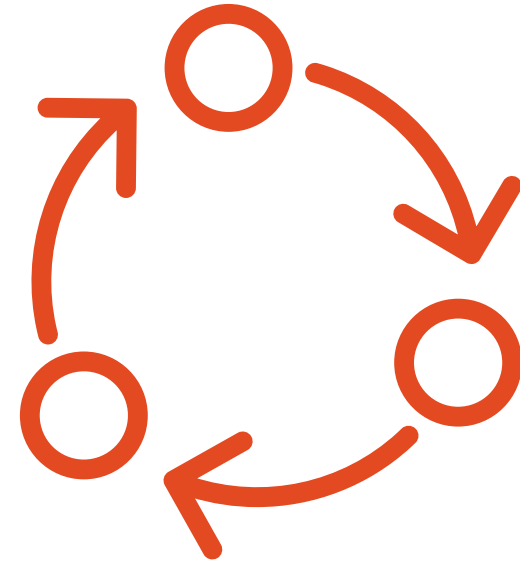
- Demand for the program
- Client demographics
- Housing Outcomes
- Impact on client wellbeing
- Impact on re-incarceration
- Focus on women
- Focus on First Nations people
- Cost implications

4. Evaluation Recommendations

BACKGROUND – RHSP

- Reintegration Housing Support Program (RHSP) commenced on 1 July 2021
- The RHSP takes a housing first, holistic approach to supporting people exiting prison who are homeless/at risk of homelessness to access housing and sustain their tenancy
- Provide wrap-around psychosocial support aimed to improve client wellbeing and reduce the risk of recidivism and homelessness
- The model sees two CRC workers co-located within six DCJ housing offices: Strawberry Hills, Mount Druitt, Liverpool, Dubbo, Coniston, Newcastle.

Evaluation Methods



About the RHSP Evaluation

Evaluation questions

Evaluation question:

***‘Did the RHSP
reduce
homelessness and
improve wellbeing
and recidivism
amongst people
exiting prison in
NSW?’***

What are the client experiences of receiving support through RHSP?

What are the RHSP staff experiences of providing support?

To what extent does RHSP respond to its intended client base?

To what extent has RHSP impacted long-term housing outcomes for clients?

To what extent has RHSP impacted client wellbeing outcomes?

To what extent has RHSP reduced client risk of re-incarceration?

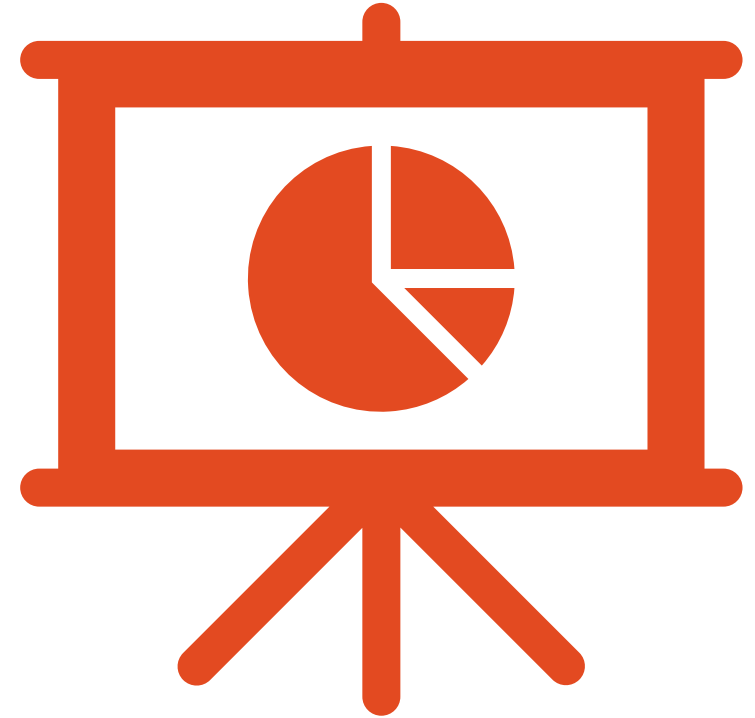
What are RHSP’s cost savings to the criminal legal system?

About the RHSP Evaluation

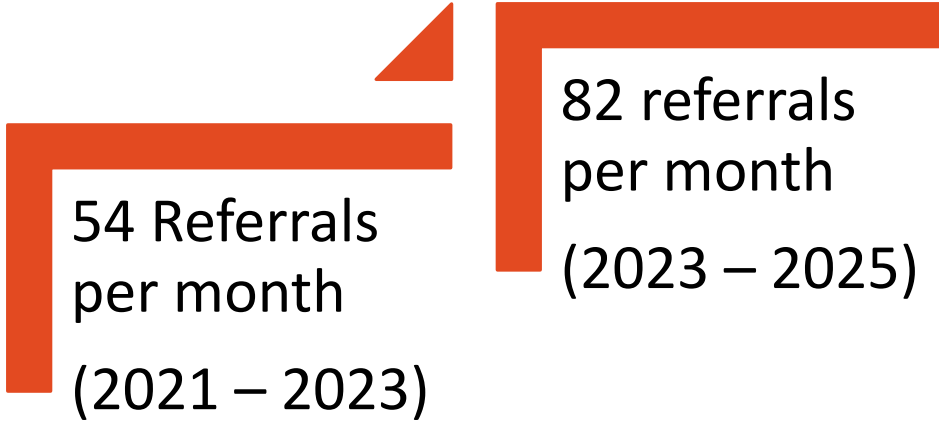
Evaluation methodology

Method	Details
Literature and document review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desktop review of key program documentation to understand the program and its operations.• Targeted rapid literature highlighting the unique intervention that NGOs like CRC can make for people exiting prison compared to government was conducted.
Qualitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 Client case studies• 1 Staff Speech
Quantitative methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of de-identified, individual-level administrative data from Client Information Management System (CIMS) for RHSP clients from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025• Cost implications of RHSP<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs and outcomes data from AHURI – (Martin et al., 2021)• Costs were estimated in 2025 AUD using the ATO CPI index• CRC costs - (McCausland et al., 2025)• Comparisons with SHS<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General SHS cohort• SHS cohort – people leaving custody• 2021-2023 RHSP evaluation comparison group

Key evaluation findings



DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM



54 Referrals
per month
(2021 – 2023)

82 referrals
per month
(2023 – 2025)

- 52% increase in average monthly referrals
- 71% unassisted referrals
- Primary reason for unassisted referrals was insufficient staff (49%) (2023 – 2025)
 - 61% in 2021 - 2023
- **RHSP is experiencing an overwhelming demand that far exceeds its current resources.**

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

529 RHSP clients,
574 support periods
between 1 July 2023
to 30 June 2025

Growing engagement
with **Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander** clients
44% up from 36%

Gender*
88% male
12% female
0.2% preferred not to say

Age
7% were aged 18-25
67% were aged 26-45
26% were over 45 years

Location
Coniston – 136 clients (24%)
Mount Druitt – 106 clients
(19%)
Other locations – 77-88
clients

Presenting tenure
Homeless – 87.5%
At risk of homelessness –
12.5%

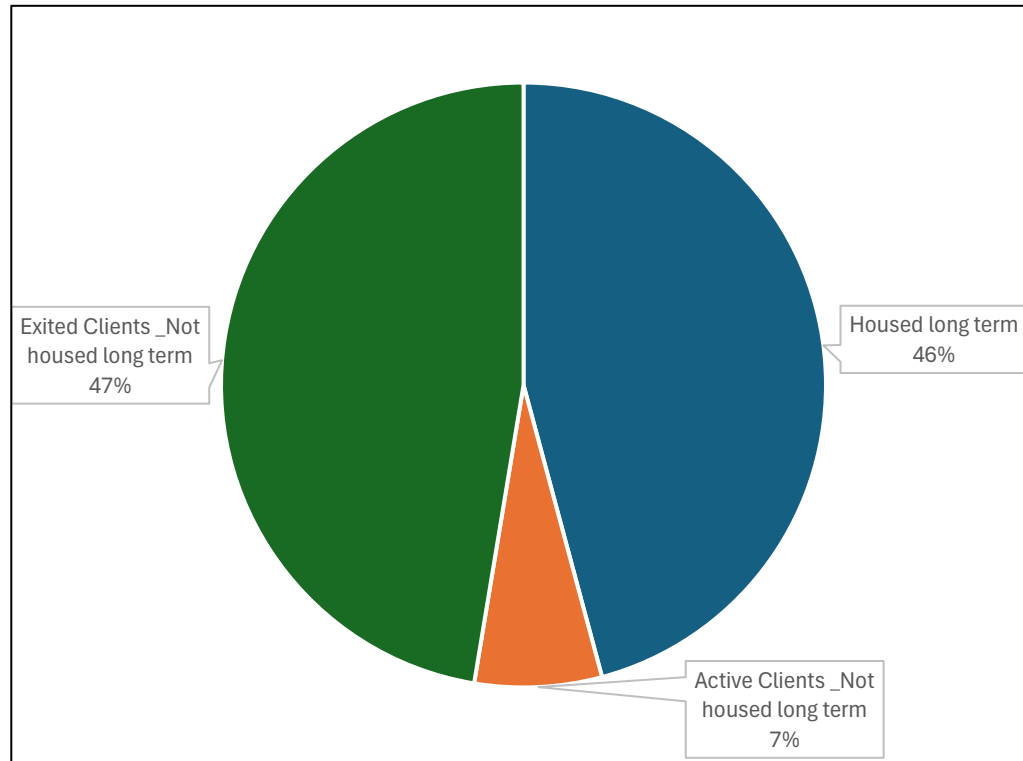
Clients commonly reported
having a **prior mental health
diagnosis** when starting
their period of support (**73%**
of support periods – up from
65%).

Referral Source
Pre-release – 58%
Post release – 42%

*0.2% of overall clients were recorded as 'prefer not to say' and none as being part of trans and gender diverse (TGD) communities, which is below the approximated average in Australia of 0.9% of adults 25+ and 2.7% of young people 16-24 ([Higgins et al 2024](#)). This underrepresentation is likely because questions like whether the client has a TGD history are not mandatory in CIMS, and as such this data was not recorded for most clients. More consistency in asking RHSP clients about TGD history will help acquire this needed data.

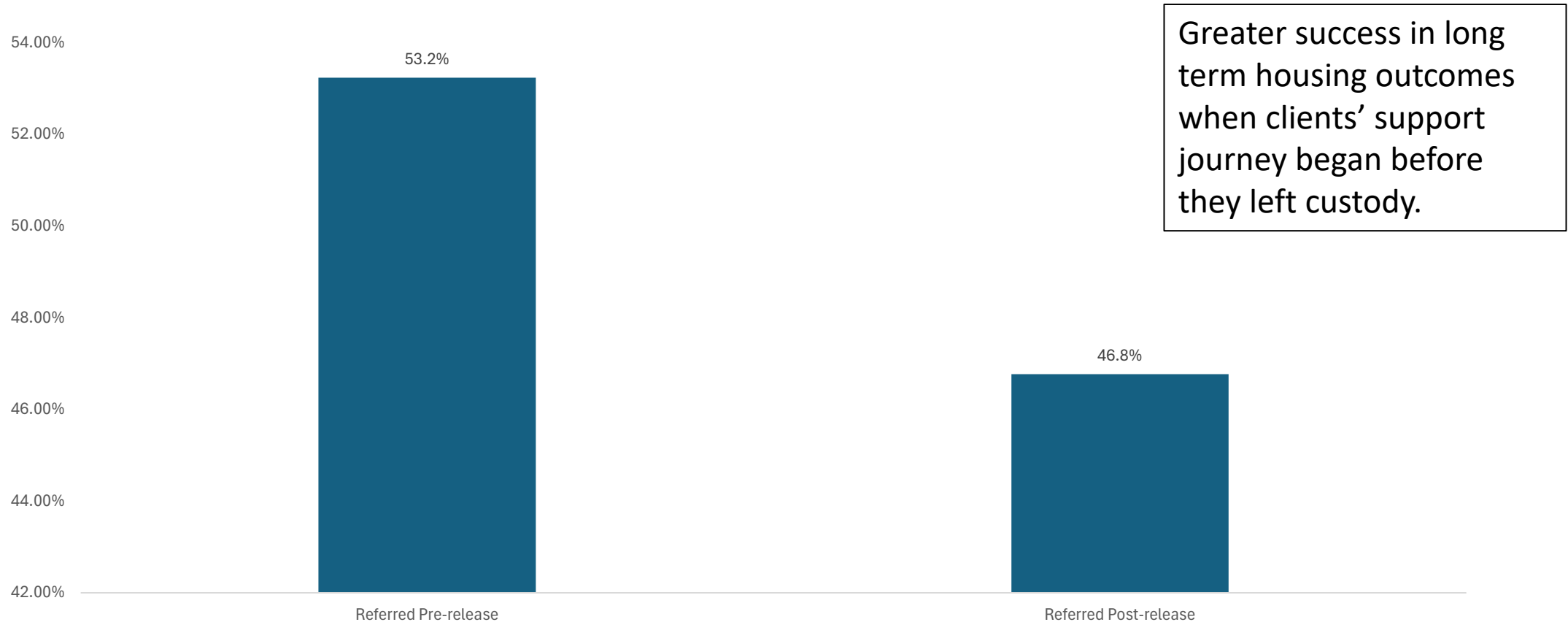
HOUSING OUTCOMES

PERCENTAGE OF ENROLLED CLIENTS HOUSED LONG TERM (N = 574)

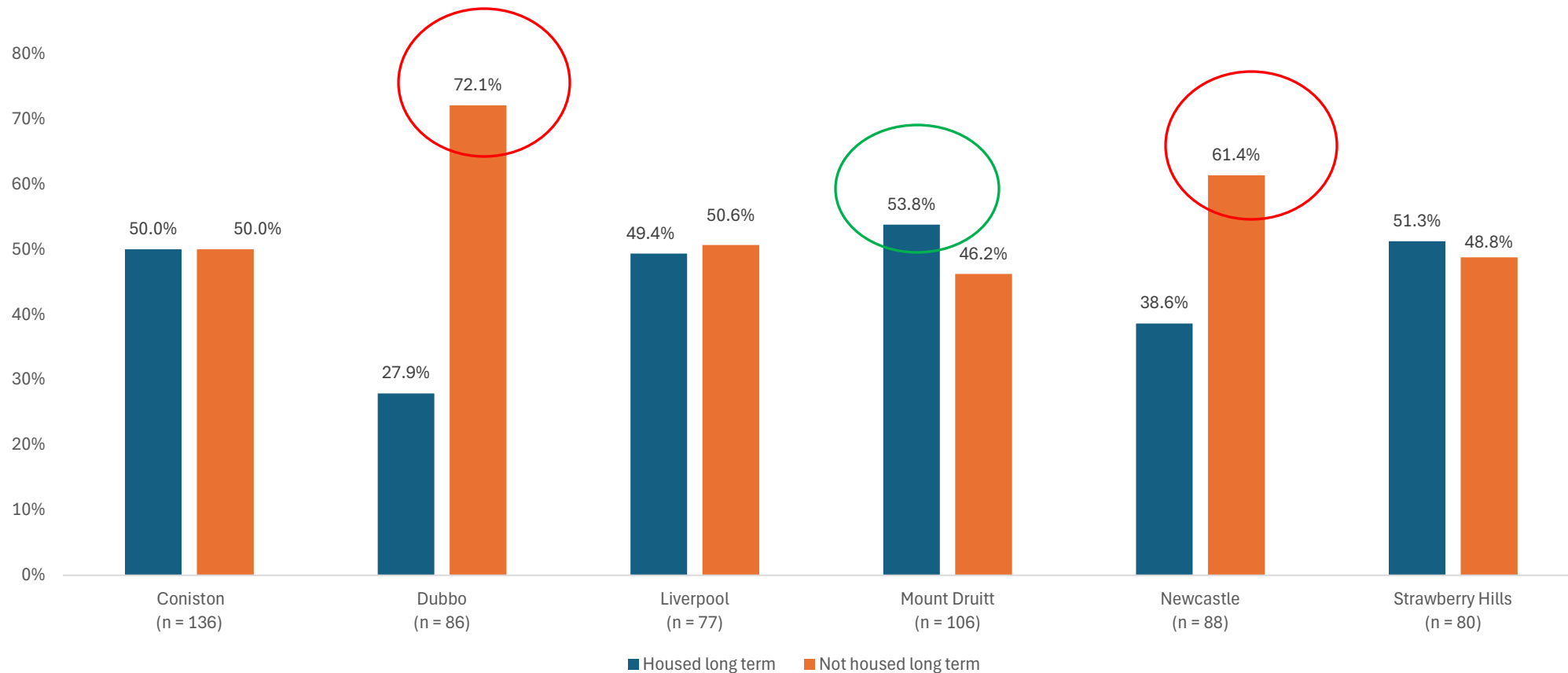


- 46% client support periods were assisted with long term housing, representing a significant success in providing stability for nearly half of program participants.
- Missed opportunity for 47% clients.

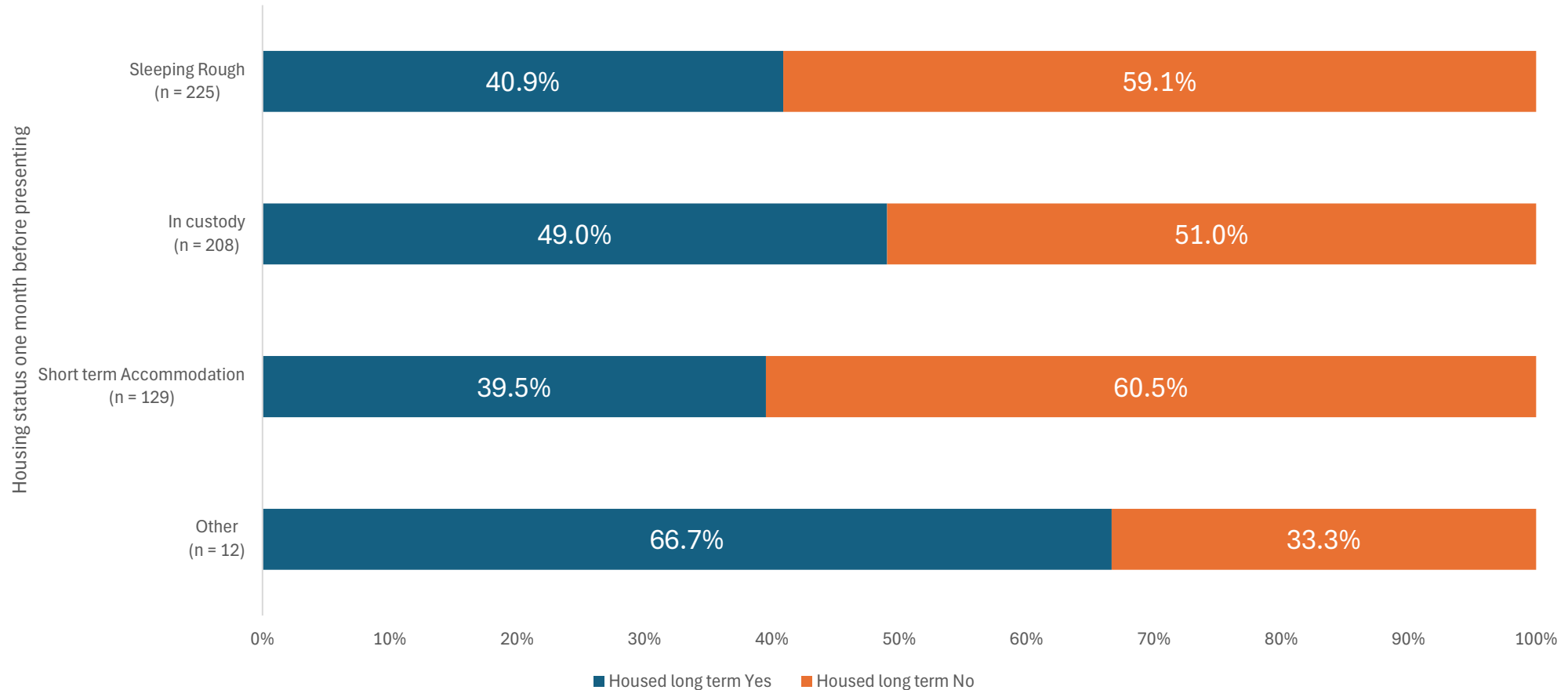
PERCENTAGE OF LONG TERM HOUSED CLIENTS WHO WERE REFERRED PRE/POST RELEASE (N = 263)



CLIENT LONG TERM HOUSING OUTCOMES BY LOCATION (N=573)

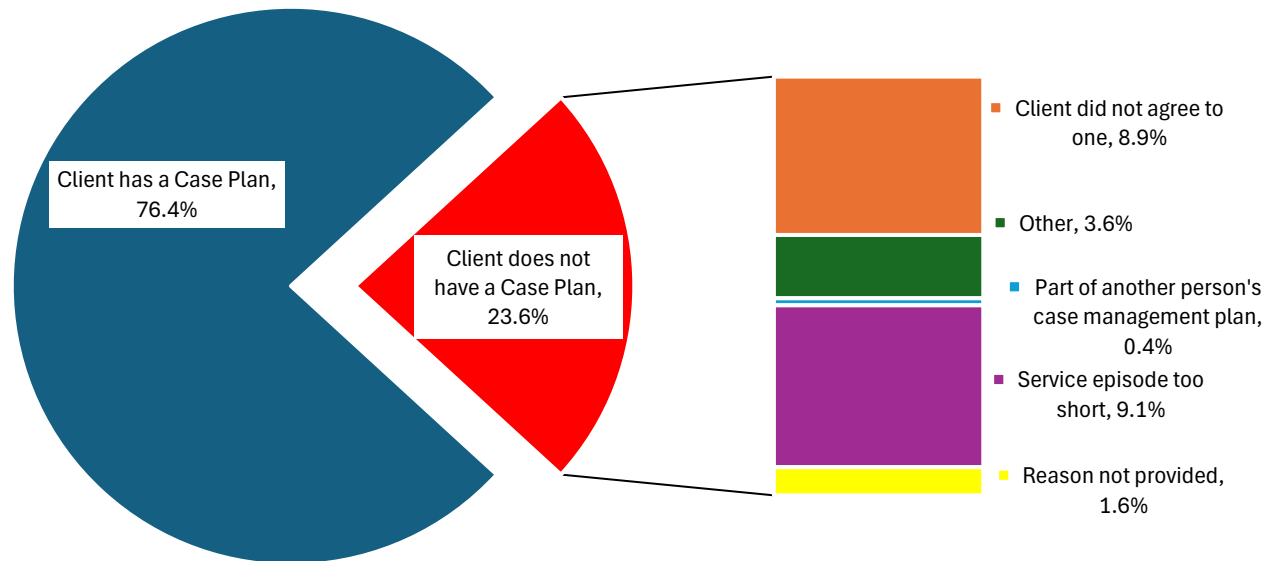


CHANGES IN HOUSING STATUS DURING SUPPORT PERIOD (N = 574)



CLIENT WELLBEING OUTCOMES

PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS WITH AND WITHOUT A COMPLETED CASE PLAN (N = 574)



In the absence of client wellbeing outcome measures, having a completed case plan was used as a proxy for wellbeing. When a client successfully works through their case plan, it shows that they are taking steps toward stability, addressing needs, and building a more structured life.

CLIENT WELLBEING – EVIDENCE FROM CASE STUDIES

- The holistic services provided by RHSP address multiple dimensions of wellbeing, from emotional stability to practical needs.
- Every case study showed that securing safe and stable housing was not only a pivotal first step in breaking the cycle of homelessness and reoffending, but enabled clients to focus on recovery, reconnect with family, and engage in community life.

With a secure home, Gerald has been able to focus on other critical areas of his life, including strengthening bonds with his children, continuing his substance use treatment, and meeting his obligations with Community Corrections – extract from Gerald's case study, Dubbo location.

Shawn has built the confidence to use public transport and engage in community activities like fishing, gardening, and going to cafes - extract from Shawn's case study, Newcastle location.

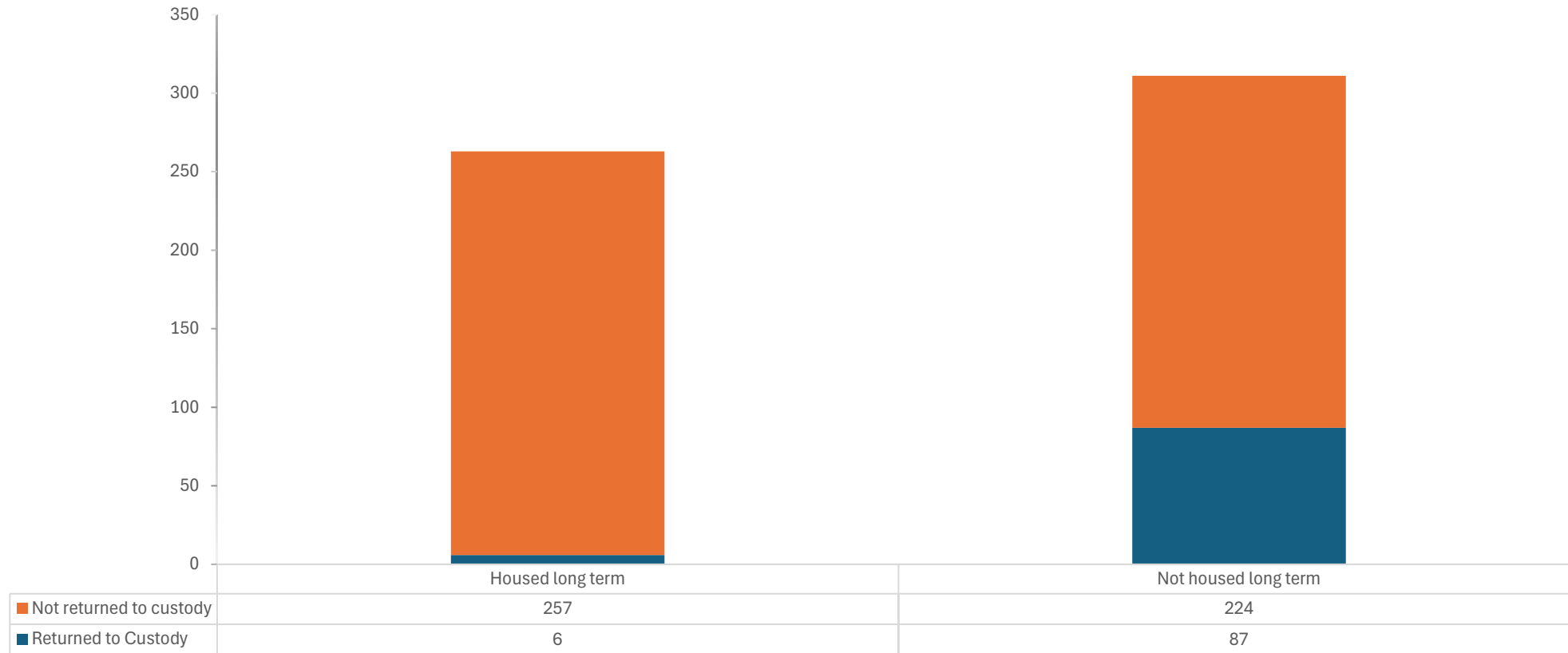
CLIENT WELLBEING – STAFF COMMITMENT

- Strong caseworker–client relationship demonstrated across all case studies
- Unwavering commitment to client wellbeing seen in the staff speech included in the report.

We've housed clients with acquired brain injuries, whose condition contributed to their repeated incarceration, to access NDIS and get the right care in place. Care that allows them not just to stay housed, but to live with dignity and support. - Kirsty Trethowan, RHSP Staff member.

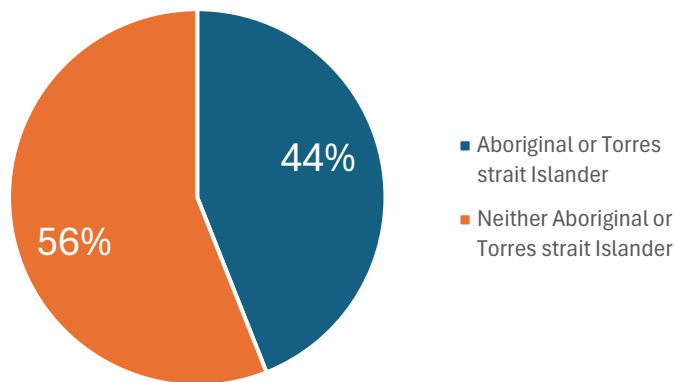
RE-INCARCERATION OUTCOMES

RE-INCARCERATION RATES AMONG CLIENTS HOUSED AND NOT HOUSED LONG TERM (N = 574)



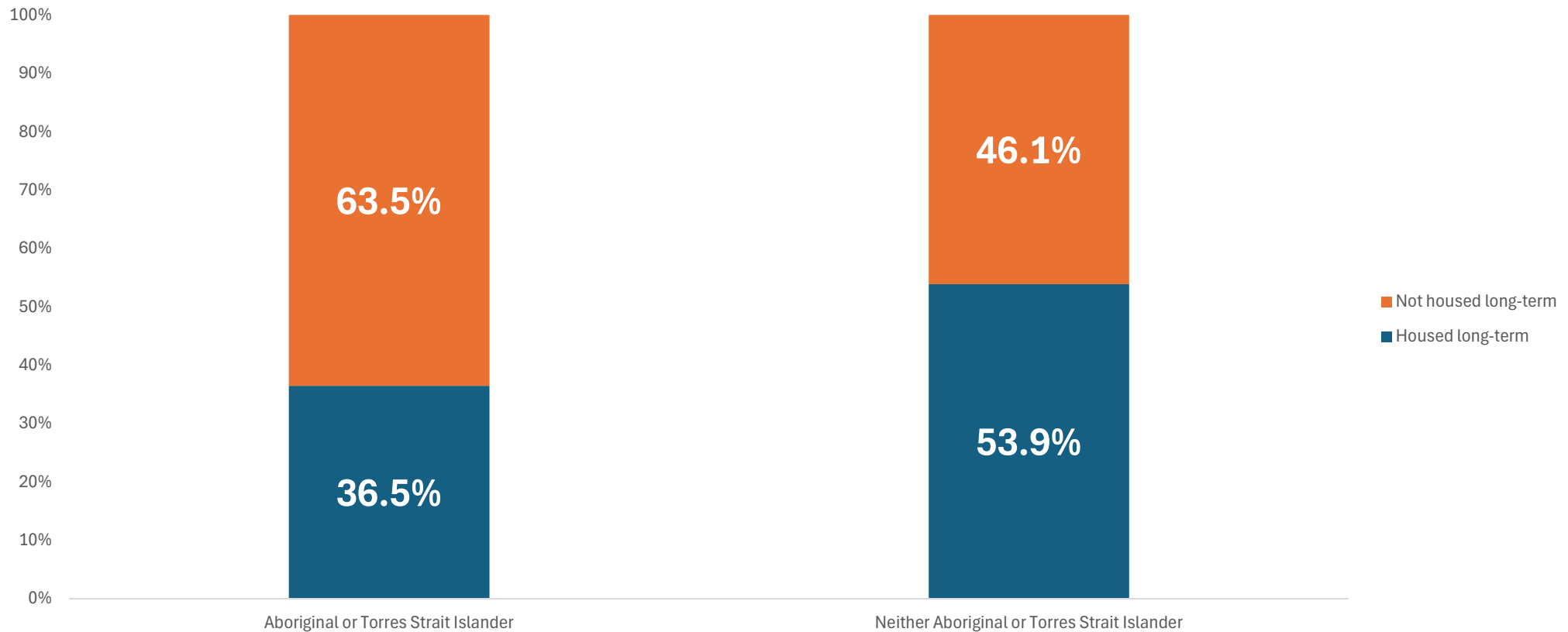
FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE - INSIGHTS

Indigenous status of RHSP clients
(N=529)

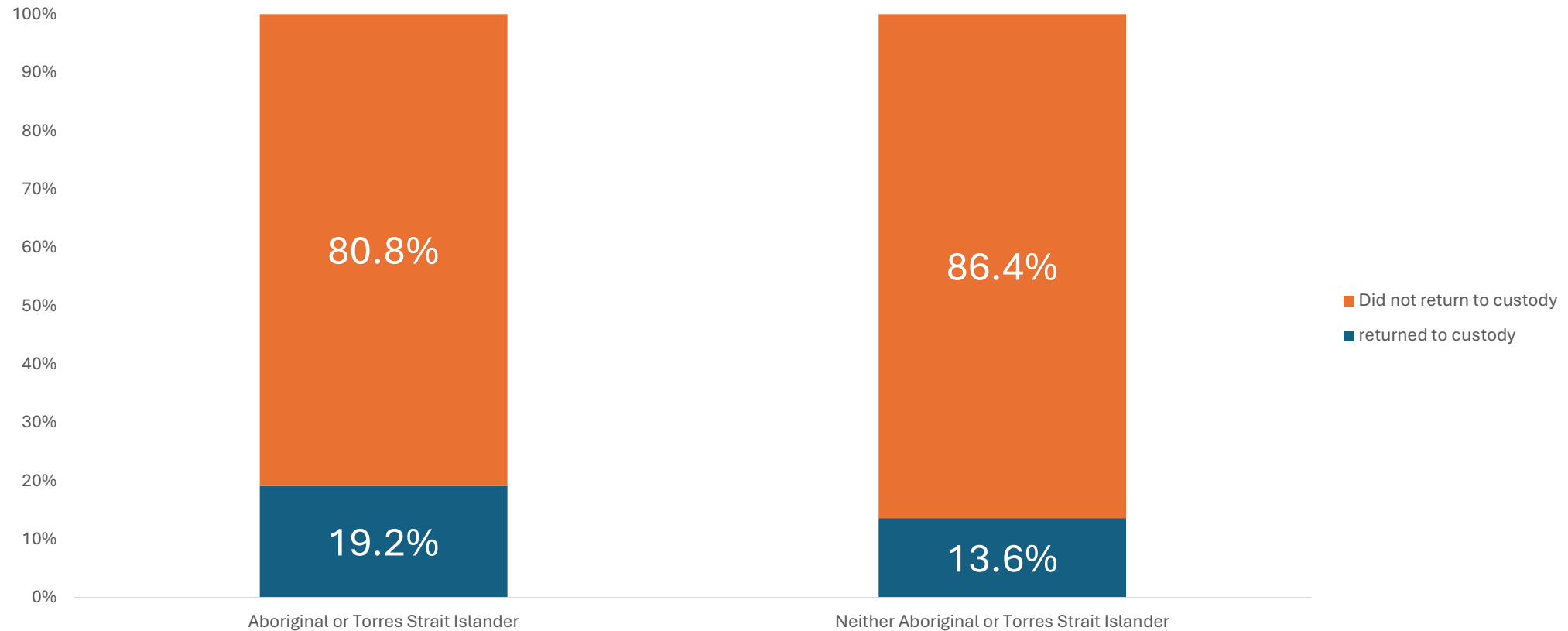


Demographic		%
Gender	Female	12.4%
	Male	87.6%
Referral Source	Pre-release	57.5%
	Post-release	42.5%
Location	Coniston	20.3%
	Dubbo	29.3%
	Liverpool	11.7%
	Mount Druitt	15.0%
	Newcastle	13.2%
	Strawberry Hills	10.5%

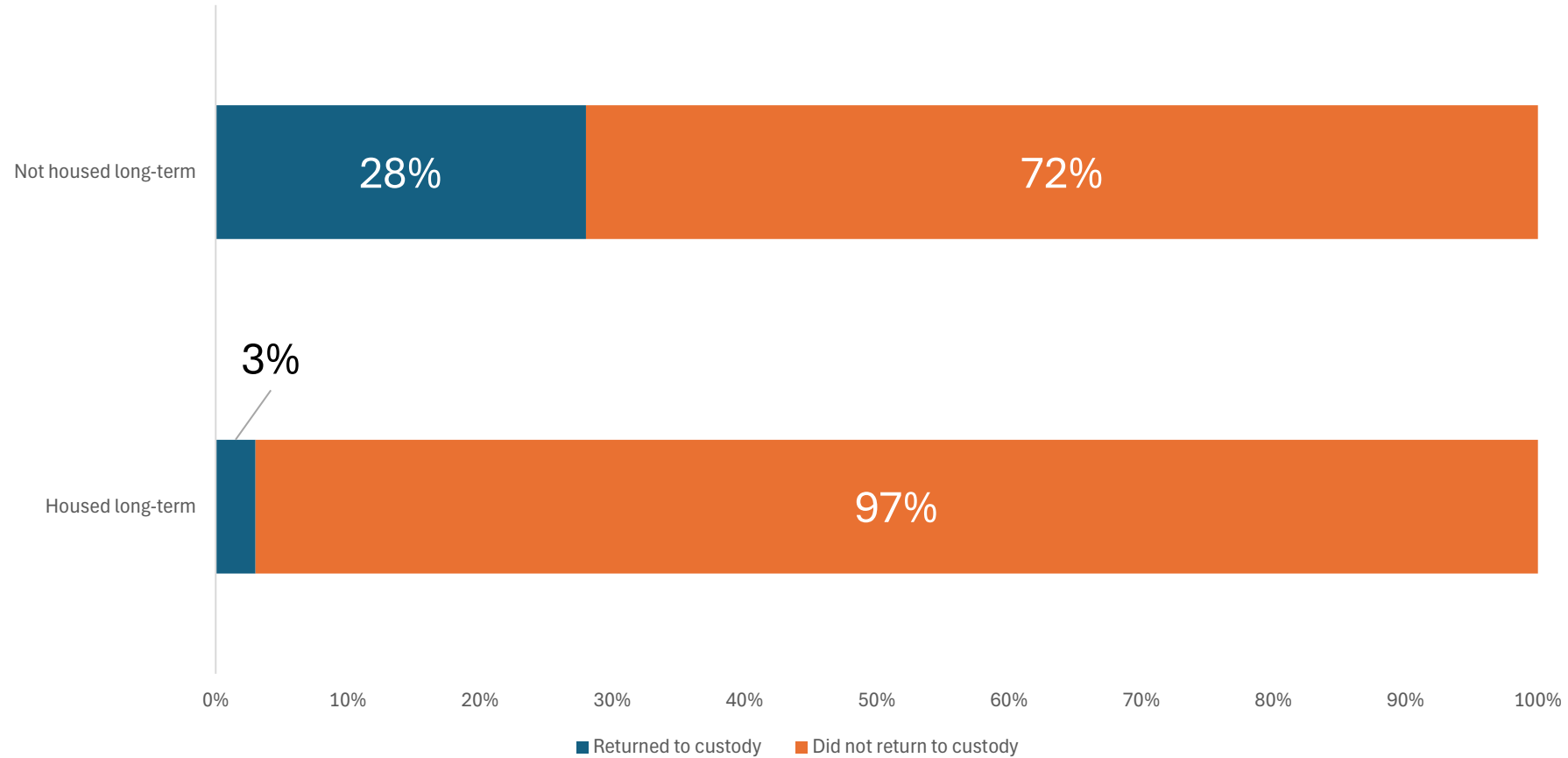
FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE – HOUSING OUTCOMES



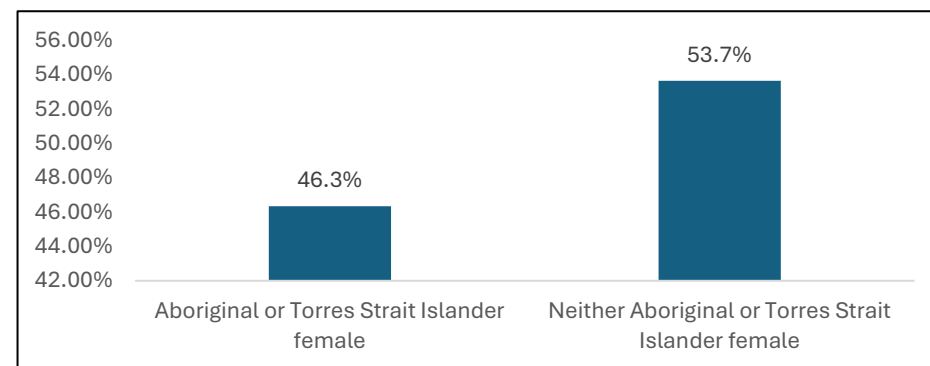
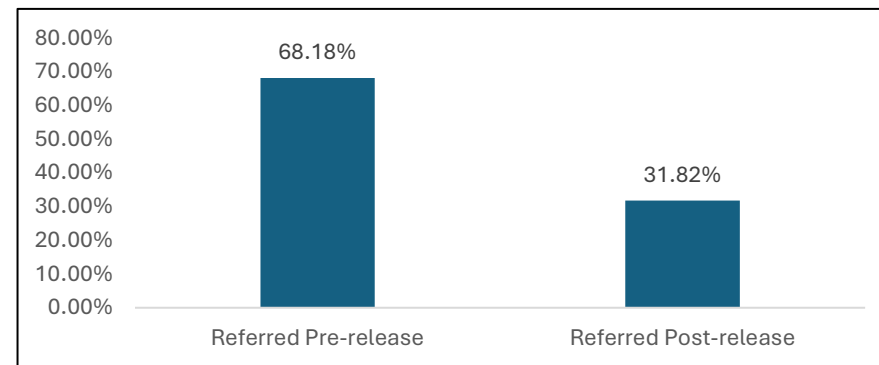
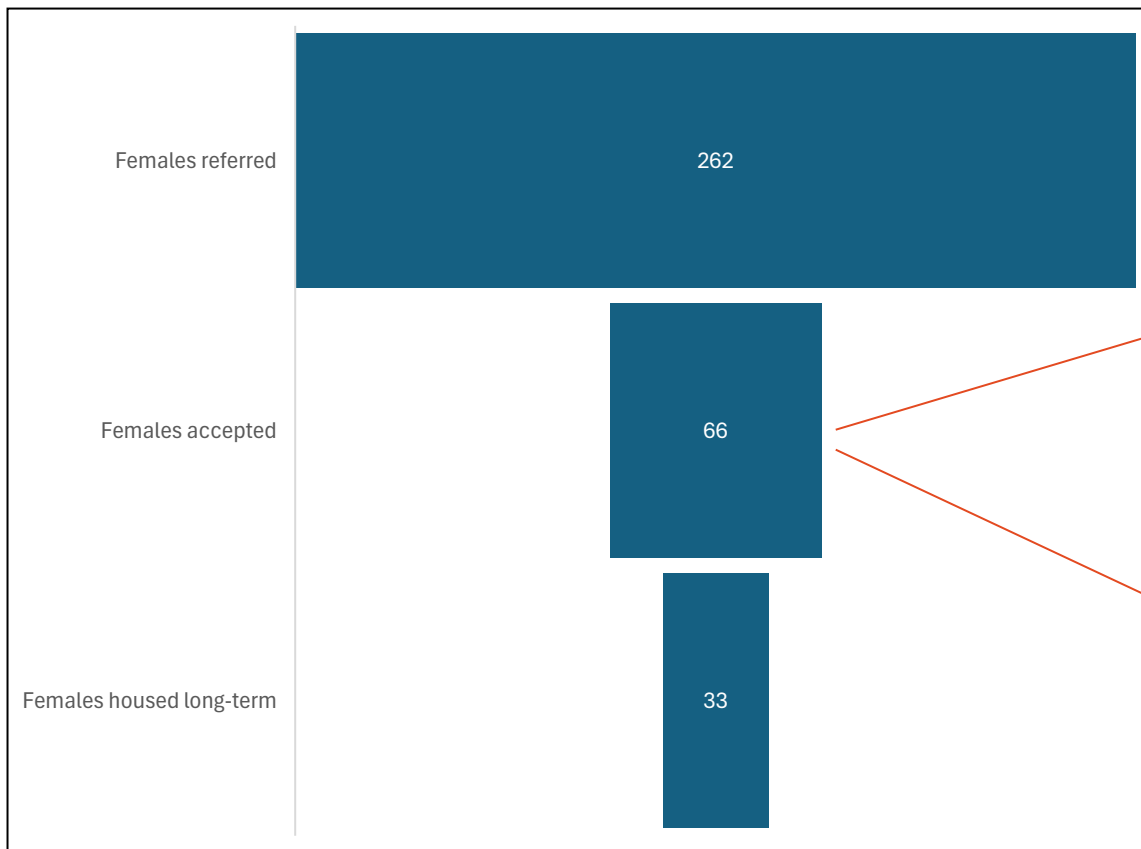
FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES - RE-INCARCERATION OUTCOMES



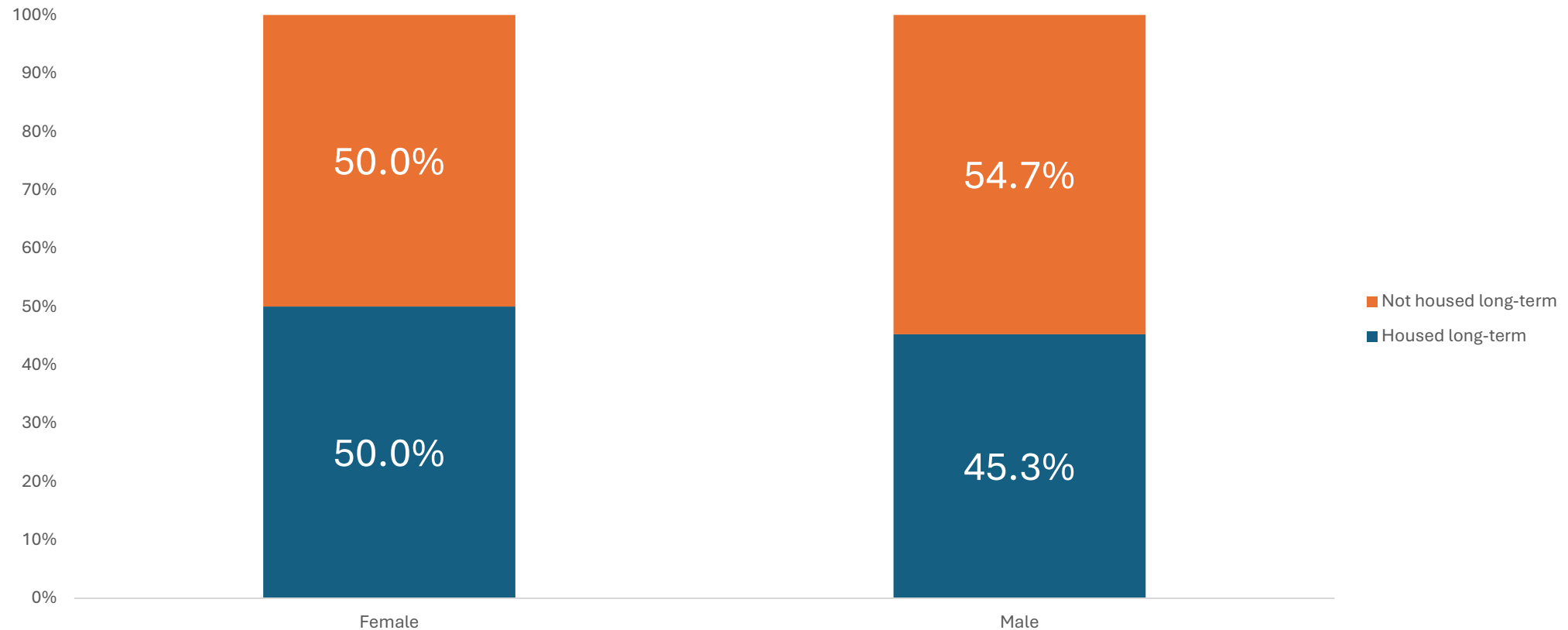
IMPACT OF LONG-TERM HOUSING ON REINCARCERATION AMONG FIRST NATIONS RHSP CLIENTS (N = 231)



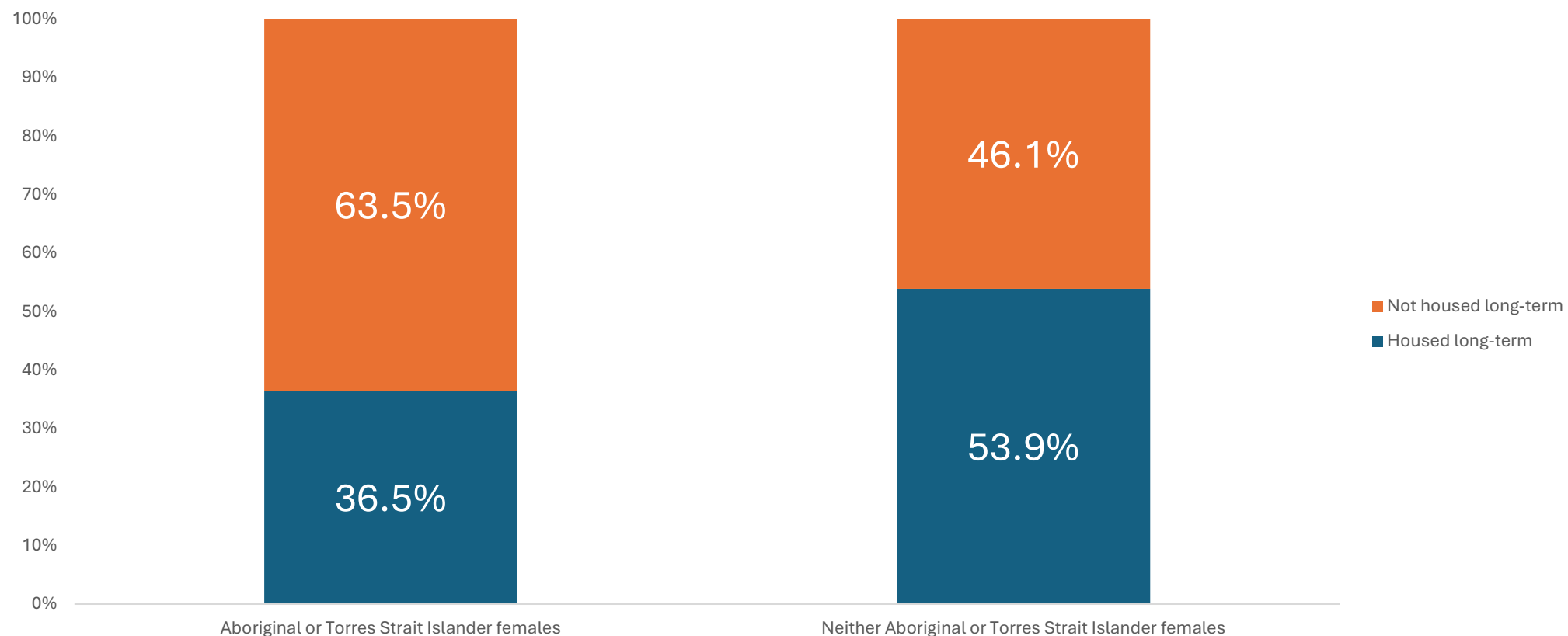
INSIGHTS - FEMALES



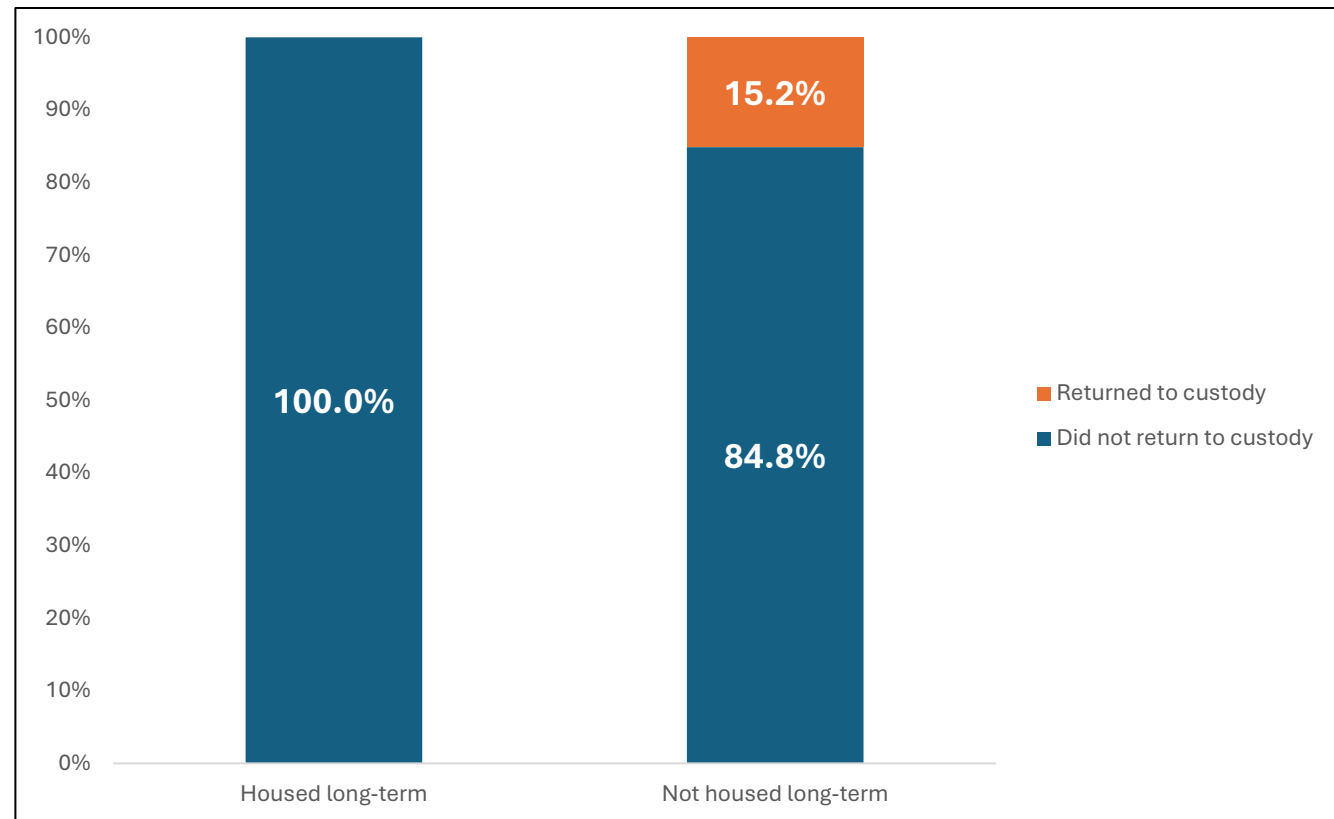
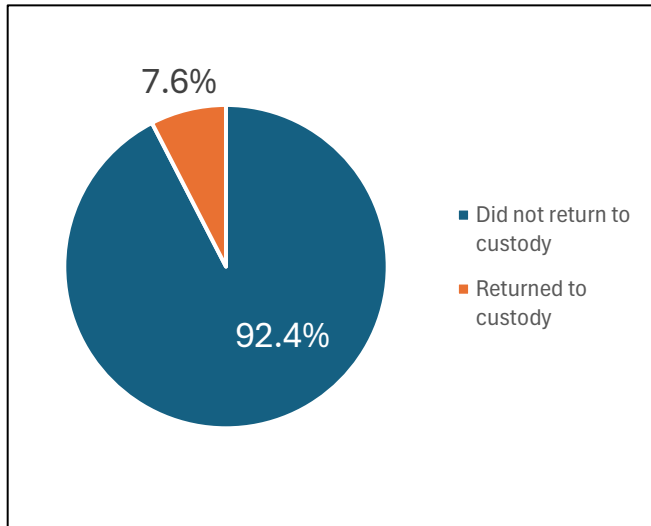
LONG-TERM HOUSING OUTCOMES OF FEMALES COMPARED TO MALES



HOUSING OUTCOMES – FEMALE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE



IMPACT OF HOUSING ON REINCARCERATION - FEMALES



COMPARISON – RHSP VS SHS

RHSP vs General SHS

Year	First Nations clients	Clients with a prior Mental Health Diagnosis	Female Clients	Male Clients	Clients housed long-term			
					Total	Female (Percentage of female clients housed)	Male (Percentage of Male clients housed)	First Nations (Percentage of First nations clients housed)
RHSP 2023 - 2025	44%	73%	14%	88%	46%	50%	45%	37%
SHS 2023 - 2024*	28%	32%	60%	40%	37%			5%
SHS 2024 – 2025*	29%	31%	60%	40%				

*Source: AIHW specialist homelessness services annual report 2023—2024 and 2024 - 2025.

COMPARISON – RHSP VS SHS

RHSP vs SHS Clients exiting prison

YearSHS	First Nations clients	Clients with a prior Mental Health Diagnosis	Female Clients	Male Clients	Clients housed long-term			
					Total	Female	Male	First Nations
RHSP 2023 - 2025	44%	73%	14%	88%	46%	50%	45%	37%
SHS 2023 - 2024*	28%	24%	21%	79%	3%			
SHS 2024 - 2025	30%	33%	21%	79%	1.2%			

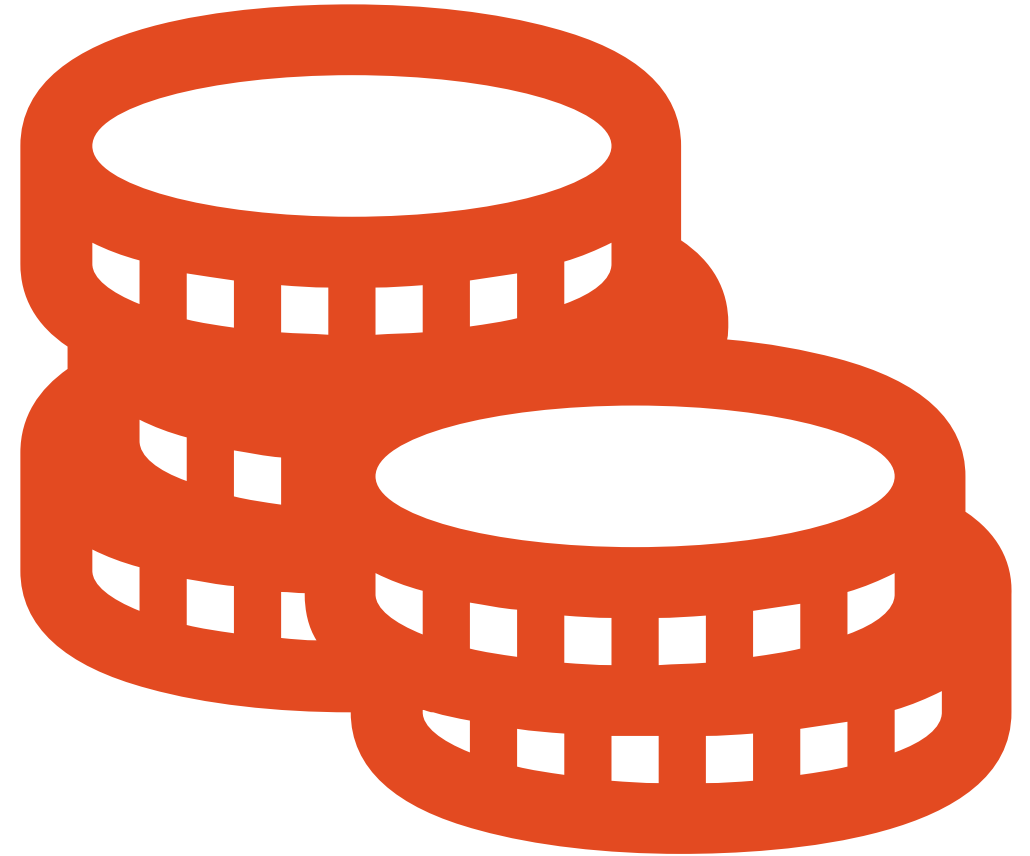
*Source: AIHW specialist homelessness services annual report 2023—2024 and 2024 - 2025.

RHSP vs SHS comparison group

Year	First Nations clients	Clients with a prior Mental Health Diagnosis	Female Clients	Male Clients	Clients housed long-term			
					Total	Female	Male	First Nations
RHSP 2021 - 2023	42%	65%	24%	75%	32%	19%	37%	23%
SHS*	37%		22%	78%	13%	12%	14%	16%

*Source: SHS Support Period data 2021 – 2023 (RHSP Evaluation Report 2021-2023)

Cost Implications



COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Measure	Long-term housing compared to rental assistance	Long-term housing compared to homelessness services
Net-benefit per individual (5 years)	\$6,424	\$43,162
RHSP total savings per annual cohort 5 years post housing	\$841,503	\$5,654,277
Missed 5-year savings per annual cohort due to unassisted eligible individuals	\$1,029,524	\$6,917,641
Adjusted total RHSP 5-year savings per cohort after accounting for RHSP program costs	\$70,401	\$3,968,647

Evaluation Recommendations



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Secure urgent, substantial, and sustained funding
- Increase staffing and resourcing
- Increased housing opportunities
- Regional strengthening
- Leverage data to demonstrate program impact
- Continue to work towards closing the First Nations gap
- Continuous staff data training – quality and completeness
- Stronger future evaluation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- RHSP Clients July 2023 – June 2025
- Clients whose case studies were included in the evaluation report
- RHSP Staff
- Kirsty Trethowan
- RHSP Program Managers – Kelly Parker and Regina Brady
- Alison Churchill, CRC CEO
- ARPU Staff - Rory Gillard, Angus Jack Mason, Stella Settumba Stolk
- Paul Ramsay Foundation – ARPU Funding
- Department of Communities and Justice – RHSP Funding



THANK YOU!

stella.stolk@crcnsw.org.au

arpu.team@crcnsw.org.au

www.crcnsw.org.au

CRC community
restorative
centre

