

# SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLD

"THERE'S ALWAYS THIS SENSE OF UNDERLYING SHAKINESS - WHAT IF..."



Single parent with 2 kids - one with a disability



Three casual jobs - income less than \$30,000



Private rental with lease directly with owners

## A STABLE FOUNDATION

*"I have a dream that one day I'll own something but that's out of reach. I'd love something simple, access to a garden – herbs, some nature, natural light and space to have people over for dinner. It doesn't need to be big or fancy, just stable and secure."*



### STABILITY & SECURITY

- A long lease would enable us to make long term plans
- Everyday I worry if I'll get 'the call' to say I have to move
- It massively impacts my decisions



### LUCKY ONES

- We're one of the lucky ones, at least we have something!
- As long as we have housing, I can manage the rest
- It's hard but the kids are settled and have good connections - that's what matters



### MAKE IT WORK

- Active & Creative kids vouchers
- FoodBank - thank god for FoodBank!!
- Avoid Coffs - especially the plaza!
- Camping holidays
- Hand-me down everything!



### BACK UP PLAN

- Kept our big tent as our back up plan



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Lease due to expire - trying to renegotiate

## IMPACTS ON PARENTING

*"I think there needs to be a focus on mums with kids – the impact on little children and the stress on primary care giver is huge – and that impacts on their ability to build connections, be social, be playful with their kids. Moving often, financial worry and not knowing how long you can be somewhere makes it so hard."*

### WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

We discussed the many ways that housing instability and high housing costs impacts on her life and her family.

These included:

- Regularly going without essentials - good food, going out, presents, healthcare
- Deciding not to pursue her career goals and 'risk' studying at university
- Not seeing extended family - the travel costs are too much, and the house is too small to have people stay with her
- The stress on her own mental wellbeing and how it makes her 'distracted' in her parenting
- The pressure she puts on herself to shield her kids from their situation and trying to be positive when she's so worried
- When it's really tough, it makes her question the decision to separate - it was an unsafe relationship but at least they had two incomes
- Worry about what it will be like for her kids - if the housing market is this tough now, what will it be like in the next few years when her teen wants to move out of home

### WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The most important things this single parent identified were **stability and security and a stable foundation**.

- A **long lease** and predictable rent would mean that she's able to make plans and work towards goals. Ideally, a 3-5 year lease would mean that she had the confidence to make long term plans like study. It would also put the underlying shakiness at ease. "Currently I have that pang of worry every time the phone rings or I check the mail, it could be a notice that I have 90 days to vacate. Having security would make such a difference."
- A focus on **secure housing for single parents and families**. The impact on parents and children is so sad.
- This was supported by comments from a local teacher who said **"As a teacher I have seen many students suffering through homelessness, unsuitable housing and having to leave the area, heartbreaking..."**

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