



Homelessness Implementation Plan

AUSTRALIAN AND WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness in Western Australia



On the best available data, 13,391 Western Australians are homeless every night.

Of these, 2,392 are sleeping rough. 62 per cent of homeless people in Western Australia were aged 34 or younger with a significant number (32 per cent) aged 12 to 18 years and 9 per cent were children under 12 years who were with either one or both parents. 11 per cent of people experiencing homelessness are Indigenous.

The Australian and Western Australian Governments are committed to reducing homelessness.

What we are doing

In December 2008, the Australian Government released *The Road Home*, the Government's White Paper on Homelessness. *The Road Home* called on all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector and the community to join together to reduce homelessness.

The Road Home outlined the need for new investment in homelessness and reform of existing services. Homelessness should be prevented wherever possible. People who experience homelessness should be supported to move quickly through the crisis system into long term housing and at the same time get help to reconnect with education, employment and the community. Mainstream services and homelessness services have to work together more effectively to reduce homelessness.

In *The Road Home*, the Australian Government adopted two headline goals to:

- halve overall homelessness by 2020;
- offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who seek it by 2020.

The White Paper also included interim targets to 2013 to contribute to these long term goals. These goals will only be achieved if all governments, business, the not-for-profit sector and the community work together to reduce homelessness.

Western Australia has primary responsibility for the delivery of essential public services such as health, education, community services, social housing, justice and policing. The Western Australian Government's commitment to tackling homelessness is shown through its State Homelessness Strategy (SHS) 2002 – 2006, a comprehensive whole of government response to better meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. \$52 million was provided for a range of additional services for people who are homeless, including services funded by the Department of Health's Mental Health Division and Drug and Alcohol Office. Initiatives under the State Homelessness Strategy have now been recurrently funded and constitute part of the State's ongoing response to homelessness.

Work already under way

In *The Road Home* the Australian Government committed to boost its efforts across all areas of government to achieve the 2020 headline goals and interim targets for reducing homelessness. This is especially important in areas such as social housing, employment, income support and aged care.

Specific Australian Government initiatives include:

- \$648.6 million allocated to Western Australia to construct new dwellings and refurbish existing social housing dwellings as part of the \$6.4 billion Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP). 286 new dwellings have been approved under Stage One. Further approvals are due to be made under Stage Two of the construction element before the end of August 2009.
- \$40 million to Western Australia under the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing to increase the supply of social housing;
- \$1.18 billion over 10 years for Western Australia to provide new houses and upgrades to existing houses in remote Indigenous communities under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing;
- \$1 billion nationally over the next four years to build 50,000 affordable rental properties under the National Rental Affordability Scheme;
- Improvements to Centrelink's capacity to respond to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and
- Additional emergency relief funding, more personal helpers and mentors for people living with severe mental illness, innovative employment services and increased capital and recurrent funding for elderly people who are homeless.

New work through the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Homelessness

As part of *The Road Home*, in December 2008, the Council of Australian Governments established a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Under the Agreement the Australian Government will provide additional funding to the States and Territories to reduce homelessness. States and Territories have agreed to match Commonwealth funding and deliver services and capital projects that will contribute to an overall reduction in homelessness.

The Australian and Western Australian Governments will contribute \$135.1 million over four years to reduce homelessness under the Agreement. Western Australia has developed an Implementation Plan setting out new initiatives and additional services which will make a substantial contribution toward the achievement of the 2013 interim targets to reduce homelessness.

The Implementation Plan

Initiatives under the Plan links directly with the National Building Economic Stimulus Plan, and Social Housing National Partnership Agreements to provide the essential support for people who are housed in new properties to ensure homelessness does not reoccur.

A joined up approach between homelessness services and mainstream services, including the Western Australian Department of Health; Mental Health Division and Drug and Alcohol Office; Corrective Services; Housing; and Child Protection is integral to the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan tackles homelessness across the state including metropolitan, rural and remote locations. Measures, targeting non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, include:

A Place to Call Home

- 33 new social housing dwellings with targeted support services for the first year of tenancy for people on social housing waiting list including single adults and couples. Location: metropolitan area.
- A Foyer development providing secure housing and on-site support services for around 100 young people, including 35 young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Location: metropolitan area

Assistance for Rough Sleepers

- Provision of long term, stable accommodation with services in inner city Perth based on Common Ground principles. Location: metropolitan inner city-Perth and Fremantle.

Private and Public Rental Support Services

- Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies, including tenancy support, advocacy, case management, financial counselling and referral services. Location: state-wide, including metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

Alcohol and Drug Housing Support Workers

- Provision of 10 Alcohol and Drug Housing Support Workers to integrate homeless services with mainstream services to provide intensive support for homeless people with substance issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation. Location: metropolitan, rural, remote areas.

Support for children who are homeless

- Support for children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including assistance to maintain contact with the education system. Location: state-wide including new services in metropolitan and rural areas.

Assertive Outreach

- Three outreach teams, supported by specialist mobile clinical teams for mental health, drug and alcohol assessment, treatment and referral, will provide intensive support, including access to stable accommodation for rough sleepers, in inner city-Perth and Fremantle.
- Assertive outreach programs in remote areas (Kimberley and Goldfields) to connect rough sleepers to long term housing and health services.

Specialist homelessness accommodation workers

- Provision of 17 specialist homelessness accommodation workers to assist homeless people, including families with children, to stabilise their situation and to achieve sustainable housing. Location: state-wide including metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

Support – People Leaving Child Protection, Corrective Services and Mental Health Facilities

- Provide independent living options and support for young women leaving child protection services. Eight specialist workers to assist people leaving mental health services and five specialist housing workers to assist people leaving correctional facilities to secure and maintain stable accommodation. Location: metropolitan and rural areas.

Support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence

- Support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence to stay in their present housing where it is safe to do so. Location: metropolitan, rural and remote areas.

A better connected service system

- Test new funding models for specialist homelessness services that reflect the costs of delivering services to people with exceptionally complex needs.

For more information on what the Australian Government is doing to reduce homelessness visit www.fahcsia.gov.au. For information on what the Western Australian Government is doing to reduce homelessness or on specific initiatives call (08) 9222 2555 or visit www.dcp.wa.gov.au