



Homelessness Implementation Plan

AUSTRALIAN, STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

Indigenous Homelessness in Australia

On the best available data, 105,000 Australians are homeless every night. Of these, 16,375 are sleeping rough.

Indigenous people are more likely to experience homelessness than other Australians. The 2006 census identified that 2.5% of the population were Indigenous but that 9% of the homeless population were Indigenous. Indigenous people were over-represented in all sections of the homeless population. For example of the people who were living with other households 3.8% (1,780) were Indigenous; of the people that were living in boarding houses 5.8% (1,252) were Indigenous; of people that were living in improvised dwellings 15.8% (2,587) were Indigenous, and of people who were living in specialist homelessness services 20% (3,910) were Indigenous.



What we are doing to make homelessness everyone's responsibility?

In December 2008, the Australian Government released a White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*, which 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 must be prevented wherever possible. People who experience homelessness must 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.

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. The improvement in housing conditions for urban, regional and remote Indigenous communities will provide the foundation for improvements in health, education and employment and contribute towards closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

Specific Australian Government initiatives include:

- \$1.2 billion per year over five years (2008-13) for the National Affordable Housing Agreement to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation;
- \$5.6 billion for the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan to construct new dwellings and refurbish existing social housing dwellings. It is expected that 7% of dwellings will be specifically targeted to Indigenous Australians;
- \$400 million over two years (2008-2010) for the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing to increase the supply of social housing. Based on current public housing allocations, up to 15% of tenants accommodated may be Indigenous;
- \$5.5 billion over 10 years (2008-18) for the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing to provide up to 9,000 new houses and upgrades to existing houses in remote Indigenous communities;
- \$1 billion nationally over the next four years to build 50,000 affordable rental properties under the National Rental Affordability Scheme;

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

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments established a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Under the Agreement the Australian Government has agreed to provide additional funding to the States and Territories to reduce homelessness. States and Territories have agreed to match the Australian Government funding to deliver services and capital projects that will reduce homelessness.

Under the National Partnership Agreement the Australian and State and Territory Governments are contributing a total of \$1.1 billion over four years to reduce homelessness. Approximately \$238 million of this funding will be spent on Indigenous specific programs.

Measures to reduce Indigenous homelessness

These measures that will benefit Indigenous people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:

A focus on Indigenous young people

NT: *Youth Crisis Accommodation Services* in Palmerston and Tennant Creek will assist young people attend school or training, remain engaged with family and receive the necessary support and counselling to build life skills.

WA: Support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence to stay in their present housing where it is safe to do so.

NSW: *Transition Program for Aboriginal People:* accommodation and support for Aboriginal young people aged 10-17 years in contact with the justice system to help them transition to independent living.

Qld: *Youth Housing and Reintegration Services:* 30 bungalows will be provided for young people at risk of homelessness in the backyards of family or care givers' homes in Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Inala, Mt Isa and Hervey Bay.

SA: *Indigenous Youth Early Intervention Program:* early intervention for Indigenous young people and their family, where there is an identified risk of abuse or neglect.

Assistance for Indigenous people exiting prisons, child protection and mental health in-patient care to find stable housing

NT: *Assistance for people leaving correctional services:* case management model to assist people to overcome barriers to re-integration and reduce re-offending behaviour.

SA: *Integrated Housing Exits Program:* across Government policy in health, corrections and child protection will be developed for mainstream agencies to provide long term, case managed exit planning, transition and management, as well as ongoing specialist support to stop people presenting as homeless post discharge. 20% of clients will be Indigenous people.

NSW: *Assisting Aboriginal Young People Leaving Care:* funding for two additional case workers to an existing Aboriginal specific leaving care service provider to assist in securing sustainable accommodation.

Assistance to Indigenous women and children experiencing family violence

NT: *The Family Violence Investment Strategy* will prevent families experiencing violence from becoming homeless by expanding accommodation facilities and better skilling workers.

Vic: The Aboriginal and Family Violence Prevention and Legal service located in metropolitan Melbourne provides assistance to Indigenous women across the state to access appropriate legal services. New positions will be established to provide a new holistic approach for Indigenous women and children experiencing family violence. Target area: Gippsland and Loddon Mallee Regions.

Qld: *Breaking the cycle of domestic and family violence:* new approach designed to ensure more timely and cohesive services are available for people adversely affected by domestic and family violence. Integrates human services and justice service systems through better information sharing and coordinated service delivery.

Assisting Indigenous people to sustain their tenancies

Qld: *RentConnect:* provides assistance for households to access the private rental market, will be expanded to Rockhampton, Caboolture, Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and the Gold Coast.

SA: *Intensive Tenancy Support Program:* early intervention program to support tenants to avoid tenancy disruption and eviction from public and private accommodation. 20% of clients will be Indigenous people.

NT: *Tenancy Sustainability Program:* intensive case management and life skills training to public housing tenants and applicants as well as residents of Community Living Areas (Town Camps) who require assistance to manage and sustain their tenancies.

WA: Advocacy and case management support for families to assist social housing tenants at risk of eviction. 11% of clients will be Indigenous people.

NSW: *Tenancy Support Project:* a focus on preventing Indigenous homelessness by assisting Indigenous people maintain their tenancies. Target area Richmond/Tweed and Mid-North Coast.

Assistance for Indigenous people sleeping rough to break the cycle of homelessness

SA: Aboriginal Transitional Accommodation: 180 people each year will get housing and help to access health and welfare services for transient Indigenous people. To be delivered through Port Augusta and Ceduna Town Camps.

WA: Long term stable accommodation for rough sleepers: redevelop two existing crisis accommodation services using Common Ground principles. 11% of clients will be Indigenous.

NSW: Coordination of assertive outreach and supportive housing will involve assertive outreach (including health and medical components) linked to long-term supportive housing for rough sleepers. The service will target inner Sydney.

Qld: Assertive outreach: new model to bring people off the streets into the housing using assertive outreach teams. Targeting Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns and Gold Coast.

NT: Intervention and Case Management Service: assistance to homeless and itinerant people to return to their home, communities or into other accommodation as needed. Target areas are Darwin, Palmerston to be followed by Katherine and Alice Springs.

Innovative long term accommodation and intensive support to keep Indigenous people housed and connected

A Place to Call Home: provision of 731 new permanent dwellings for people who are at immediate risk of homelessness who will also be provided with tenancy and support services for the first 12 months to assist them to sustain their tenancy.

Common Ground: 8 projects nationally to renovate existing or construct new affordable accommodation for a mix of people on low incomes, but particularly targeting homeless people. There will be a 40 unit Common Ground facility in Port Augusta for Indigenous people who are homeless.

Foyer model: 3 projects nationally providing a safe environment with personal support for young people residing in a Foyer Style accommodation.

For more information on what Australian Governments are doing to reduce homelessness visit www.fahcsia.gov.au.