



Webinar update – December 2024

Key point covered in this webinar

1) Year in Review

- Thanks and acknowledgement to the homelessness services sector for their hard work, perseverance, and passion.
- New investments in the 2024-25 Budget including \$70.2 million to support the sustainability of services during the extension period for the relevant service agreements, \$15.7 million to boost Housing First Support Services (HFSS) in metropolitan and regional locations, and \$6.3 million to expand homelessness referral services. Further, the release of \$3 million in operational funding for the Regional Supportive Landlord Program in Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Albany.
- Australian Zero Homelessness Summit 2024
- Office of Homelessness' move to the combined Housing & Homelessness Division.
- Increasing regional focus: eg Central Great Southern – Community consultation for new homelessness service

2) Update on homelessness sector sustainability funding

- Budget 2024-25 announced \$70.2 million over the forward estimates to support the sustainability of relevant services during the extension period.
- This sustainability funding applies for the length of the extension of current contracts only to support commissioning of new services.
- ~120 services received a share of funding (\$16.7 million in 2024-25) from 1 July 2024 via service agreement variations.
- Factors informing allocation included the type or service, location of service, cohort or people being served, size of service.

3) Overall commissioning update

- Online and phone referral services: Extensions to 30 June 2027; new agreements planned to commence 1 July 2027
- Coordinated outreach services: Extensions to 30 Sept 2025; new agreements planned to commence 1 Oct 2025
 - On 18 March 2024, the Office of Homelessness held a face to face consultation session to seek input into the procurement of Coordinated Outreach services.
 - Total of 59 attendees, including 32 community services, 5 ACCOs, 3 local governments with a total 489 comments collected for analysis.

- Data, market analysis, and feedback from the face to face consultations helped inform the procurement approach.
 - Further information is expected to be available very soon.
- Engagement hubs: Extensions to 30 June 2027; new agreements planned to commence 1 July 2027
 - Communities will work with the sector to refine hub models (Housing First principles, No wrong Door approach) with close attention to their function and purpose in the homelessness system.
- Support services: Extensions to 30 June 2027; new agreements planned to commence 1 July 2027
 - Planning and design phase – Communities will work with the sector to redesign service models
 - Feedback to date has related to contracts not reflecting current workload or complexity, service models being stretched to support demand.
- Accommodation services: Extensions to 31 Dec 2026; new agreements planned to commence 1 Jan 2027
 - In 2024, service reviews and *preferred service provider* assessments were completed for 48 current service agreements (30 orgs)
 - New categories of accommodation services: 24/7 supported accommodation facilities, in-reach supported accommodation (varying models with staff on-site), respite night service.
 - Consultation to date has related to contracts being outdated and not aligning to the current service operations; increased complexity of the client cohort resulting in service model challenges; agreements often not reflecting the number of beds/rooms provided; agreements for accommodation services often being entwined with support external to accommodation.
 - Communities will continue to work with the sector to refine accommodation models into the future focusing on best practice and quality standards alongside community outcomes.

4) Regional commissioning

- Housing First Support Services – Albany: Registration of Interest and community consultation recently conducted in October/November. This will inform the final service design and procurement approach.
- Housing First Support Services – Kalgoorlie: Currently in planning and scoping phase – future procurement will be subject to securing ongoing funding through Budget
- Regional Supportive Landlord Model – Geraldton: Currently engaging with registered Community Housing providers who responded to the registration of interest process in early 2024.
- Regional Supportive Landlord Model – Albany and Kalgoorlie: Current plans are to engage a community housing organisation in the program in Albany by mid-late 2025, Kalgoorlie mid-late 2026.

5) Homelessness Commissioning Reference Group update

- The Homelessness Commissioning Reference Group was formed in February 2024 for an initial 12-month term, to provide a forum for constructive discussion

to inform the commissioning of homelessness services, a structured opportunity for the sector to share evidence-based best practice and expertise, promote integrated work to improve outcomes, and share information, advice, and guidance to inform the strategic direction of the homelessness service system.

- Six meetings have been held during 2024, and minutes are available from Shelter WA.
- Key areas covered include:
 - Community Services Outcome Measurement Framework
 - Building lived experience voices into commissioning and delivery
 - Connection points (outreach, engagement hubs, Entrypoint) working better together
 - Birdiya Maya Homelessness Research Project
 - Accommodation – foundations, revised service groupings, enabling conditions
 - Engagement Hubs – purpose, outcomes, cohort specificity
 - By Name List and Advance to Zero framework

6) Online Homelessness Services Portal

- The aim of the Portal is to empower people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to connect to supports.
- Users can create a profile, browse a wide range of support services and accommodation options based on their needs, and connect directly with existing services.
- The Portal project is a collaboration between Communities and a consortium made up of Infoxchange, Anglicare WA, the Innovation Unit and Anthologie.
- There will be a front-end for users and a back-end for services to add or modify information.
- The Portal will enable referrals through to the new homelessness service connectors (as part of Centrecare's Entrypoint) for those who are rough sleeping and who are not current users of services.
- The next phase is user training, delivered by Anglicare WA – more communications will be coming out very soon.
- The go-live date is planned for the first quarter of 2025.