



All Paths Lead to a Home



Western Australia's
10-Year Strategy on Homelessness
2020–2030



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Western Australian Government proudly acknowledges the First Nations people and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, families and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

The first step in living alongside and working with the Aboriginal community is built upon establishing respectful relationships. Crucial to these respectful relationships is acknowledging the history of Aboriginal people and recognising the importance of connection to family, culture and country.





“Ending homelessness requires us to find new approaches that focus on the needs of the individual.”

Minister's foreword

Since the launch in December 2019 of All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030, Western Australia has faced unprecedented and unforeseen challenges. These challenges, brought about by the COVID-19 global pandemic, have emphasised the importance of ensuring that every person in our community has a safe place to call home.

Homelessness is a complex problem which can be triggered by a variety of causes and its effects can be devastating on individuals and families. It could hit any one of us at any time.

We know that a shortage of affordable housing, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown, domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse are all recognised factors contributing to people experiencing homelessness in Western Australia. However, as we emerge from the COVID-19 health emergency, we realise that many people will find themselves homeless for the first time due to the lasting economic and social impacts of this pandemic. Young people, Aboriginal people and women are likely to be particularly affected.

Together with Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness, the Action Plan 2020-2025 provides a clear framework for government to work with the community services sector and the wider community to prevent and respond to homelessness over the next five years. I am pleased that, already, significant progress has been made on many of these actions. Where possible, as part of the McGowan Government's COVID-19 Recovery Plan, we are bringing forward existing commitments to respond to

the additional need resulting from the pandemic. This includes the Government's investment in new social housing.

However, while the Government progresses our plan to get Western Australia back on its feet, we must not lose sight of the need for longer-term solutions. Ending homelessness requires us to find new approaches that focus on the needs of the individual and are less about fitting people into a system where one size clearly does not fit all. This means working across organisations and sectors to support individuals, families and people at risk of experiencing homelessness at critical points in their lives, such as when leaving care or leaving prison.

I thank all those from across the sector, our State and the community, who gave us your time and knowledge to inform this Action Plan. Your contributions will help to provide safety and support for the most vulnerable in our community through the COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

Achieving this change in our response to homelessness is not easy, however, I am confident that through our ongoing and collective effort, Western Australia will be in a strong position to meet the challenge of ending homelessness that we have set ourselves.

Hon Simone McGurk MLA

Minister for Community Services



“Change cannot be achieved unless we work together, and the Department of Communities is committed to working collaboratively to provide sustainable solutions to homelessness.”

Director General's foreword

We have seen significant change since the release of All Path's Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030 (the Strategy) in December 2019. Since that time, the State Government has championed increased investment into social and affordable housing and provided new funding to support homelessness services. Our community service partners, people with lived experience and local governments came together to co-design a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery. Then the COVID-19 pandemic reached the shores of Western Australia, causing us to change the way we went about our daily lives. The pandemic prompted us, as State Government, to start re-thinking how life should be in a 'new normal'.

As the State Welfare Coordinator for Western Australia, I have the primary responsibility to identify, respond to and coordinate the provision of welfare services across the community. This responsibility extends to supporting the most vulnerable Western Australians; individuals and families experiencing homelessness. I am proud of the work that the Department of Communities has done, and continues to do, in partnership with the community services sector in providing innovative solutions to get more people into safe and stable accommodation. Throughout our responses, we continue to remain true to our bold vision that 'Everyone has a safe place to call home and is supported to achieve stable and independent lives.' As we move into the recovery phase of the pandemic, we must acknowledge that economies and communities are forever changed. There will be significant social and economic impacts on Western Australia that will likely place more pressures on homelessness services in months to come. In order to stand up to this challenge, we need to work together in partnership to ensure that our homelessness system is strengthened.

The Action Plan 2020-2025 is a critical next step in responding to this challenge. We are being challenged by the ways in which we need to

work in this new environment we find ourselves in; change cannot be achieved unless we work together.

The Action Plan lays out a pathway towards a community that supports everyone having safe, secure and stable place to call home. It offers a foundation for how we will partner with state and local government agencies, the community services sector, business, philanthropy and people with lived experience.

Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that we are providing culturally appropriate support and this plan recognises the specific vulnerabilities of rough sleepers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and young people. The Action Plan is the first of two five-year action plans that will drive the implementation of the Strategy and help achieve its outcomes. It outlines the Department of Communities' commitment to working collaboratively to provide sustainable solutions to homelessness, supporting a Housing First approach to help people leave homelessness and forge a new pathway towards recovery and independence.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the state and local government agencies, community service organisations and individuals that stepped up in not only designing this plan, but also providing support to the vulnerable during the pandemic. The significant contribution of the COVID-19 Taskforces is a testament to genuine partnership between the community and government sectors.

Ending homelessness is a significant challenge, but one that we are absolutely committed to. Given the strength of our response to the pandemic, I have every confidence in our success at delivering this. With every step we take together, we can make life a little better for the most vulnerable in our community and ensure that they have a safe place to call home.

Michelle Andrews

Director General, Department of Communities

“We are on the path towards delivering many of these actions.”

Introduction

[All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030](#)

(the Strategy) will be supported by two five-year Action Plans.

The first Action Plan for the Strategy will cover the period 2020-2025. It focuses on ending rough sleeping, building a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery, increasing low-barrier crisis responses and supporting innovation.

Already, we are on the path towards delivering many of these actions. Since the release of the Strategy in December 2019, significant progress has been made. For example:

- Work is underway on the delivery of 300 new public housing units targeting homeless and vulnerable people on the priority waitlist as part of the Housing Investment Package.
- In July 2020, the Department of Communities released a blueprint for a No Wrong Door system following a six month co-design process involving representatives from the community sector, state and local government agencies, and people with lived experience.
- Planning and engagement with the sector for the delivery of the Common Ground facilities and the procurement of services under the Housing First Homelessness Initiative has begun.

The Action Plan provides a framework for the activities that will be undertaken over the next five years. The Department of Communities also recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic's effects are far from over; there will be sizeable social and economic impacts that are anticipated to place further pressure on our homelessness service system. This plan allows us the flexibility to respond to those changes by adapting our responses to better suit new and emerging cohorts.

It also brings together many of the initiatives that are already underway within different parts of government and the community services sector which have a critical role in helping to achieve the outcomes of the Strategy.

The Action Plan builds on the consultation that was undertaken over that past two years to develop the Strategy, including regional and metropolitan face to face workshops, the online survey and feedback on the Directions Paper, as well as the work that was undertaken by the Supporting Communities Forum Working Group on Homelessness.

The Supporting Communities Forum will provide guidance and oversight of the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, including advice on ways to improve joint implementation processes and strengthen engagement and partnerships.

Action Plan 1 | 2020–2025

Priorities



Building a No Wrong Door system



Co-design and implement a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery.



Develop and implement an online information platform that will support a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery by improving the visibility of services and resources available across the sector and enabling secure data sharing with consent.



Ending rough sleeping



Education and training to build a shared understanding of housing first principles in the Western Australian context.



Expand assertive outreach services.



Develop a 'By Name List' of people who are rough sleeping.



Increase the supply of permanent, supported housing.



Reduce exits into homelessness.



Low-barrier responses



Improve access to accommodation by implementing low-barrier approaches.



Develop protocols for eligibility for services and accommodation that remove restrictive rules and barriers to entry.



Focus on removing barriers and creating a culturally safe environment for vulnerable cohorts including rough sleepers and young people.



Innovation



Work to develop flexible contracting options.



Co-design service level outcomes in partnership with the community to deliver responsive and relevant homelessness services.



Explore Social Impact Investment.



1. Improving Aboriginal wellbeing

Aboriginal people continue to be overrepresented in homelessness and often have complex chronic health conditions.

Unacceptably high numbers of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness is symptomatic of intergenerational trauma and disadvantage and this is recognised in these actions. These actions aim to reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal people within the overall homelessness population.

Actions focus on reducing barriers faced by Aboriginal people in accessing housing (including reviewing policies and practices that may indirectly discriminate against Aboriginal people) and empowering Aboriginal people and organisations to design and deliver services and accommodation that meet the needs of Aboriginal people and families.

Actions under this focus area will be implemented in partnership with Aboriginal people and organisations.



Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
1.1 Strengthen the role of Aboriginal organisations and communities in designing and delivering culturally appropriate responses for Aboriginal people.			
Update and implement the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Strategy to increase opportunities for ACCOs to design and deliver infrastructure and services for Aboriginal people.	Department of Communities	ACCOs	Underway
1.2 Ensure government policies and practices impacting homelessness reflect an understanding of Aboriginal culture and values.			
Engage an Aboriginal consultant to undertake an independent review of operational practices regarding evictions from public housing. The aim of the review is to ensure practices and decision making around evictions are culturally appropriate and do not have unintended negative or discriminatory consequences for Aboriginal people.	Department of Communities		2021
1.3 Ensure homelessness response services are culturally responsive and flexible to better meet the needs of Aboriginal people.			
Co-design best practice frameworks for cultural competency and trauma-informed care with Aboriginal people.	Department of Communities	ACCOs	2020-2021
1.4 Increase the availability of appropriate accommodation and service options for Aboriginal people and families.			
Co-design alternative housing options that are diverse and meet cultural and family needs.	Department of Communities	ACCOs	Underway
Develop an initiative to incentivise landlords to prioritise Aboriginal tenants who are homeless, or at risk.	Department of Communities	Peak organisations	2022
Provide pathways and opportunities to support Aboriginal social housing tenants to enter into employment or training.	Department of Communities		Underway
Improve support and accommodation for Aboriginal people and their families who travel to the metropolitan area to access health care.	Department of Health		Underway
Establish additional Aboriginal Short Stay Facilities in locations where there is evidence of need.	Department of Communities		2020-2025
Provide holistic, person-centred support for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness through the Aboriginal Community Connectors Program.	Department of Communities		Underway

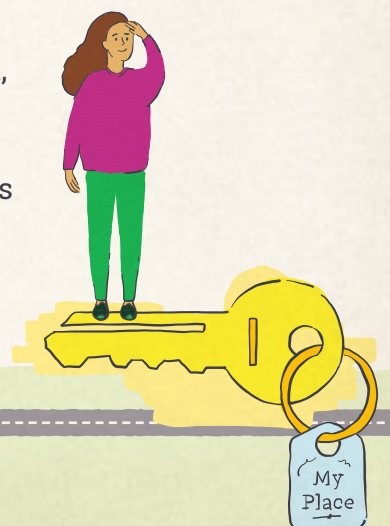


2. Providing safe, secure and stable homes

It is imperative that we do all we can in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that people are protected and connected to safe, stable and secure homes that will improve their wellbeing. Actions under this focus area aim to remove service barriers and increase low-threshold accommodation options that are connected to flexible and tailored support.

These actions reflect the Department of Communities' role in responding to the pandemic, building on lessons learned and prioritising immediate access to safe and secure accommodation for people sleeping rough. There is an emphasis on introducing a Housing First approach to homelessness that prioritises getting people into permanent housing with appropriate support and increasing the supply of diverse housing options for individuals and communities.

In addition to the actions included under this focus area, the provision of safe, secure and stable homes will be supported by additional investment in the construction and refurbishment of social housing dwellings as well as initiatives to increase housing supply outlined in the [WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030](#)



Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
2.1 Embed a Housing First approach in the homelessness response system.			
Provide education and training to build a shared understanding of Housing First principles and their application in Western Australia across government and the community services sector.	Community Services Sector	Department of Communities	2020
Develop approaches that are flexible so that individuals and families are not required to relocate from their housing when they change or finish a support program.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	2021-2022
Support the development of a Housing First for Youth model.	Community Services Sector	Department of Communities	2020
2.2 Ensure people sleeping rough have immediate access to shelter free from harm and are connected to appropriate supports.			
Deliver at least 300 new public housing units targeting homeless and vulnerable people on the priority waitlist as part of the Housing Investment Package.	Department of Communities		Underway
Deliver the Social Housing Economic Recovery Package to increase the supply of social housing for people on the priority waitlist, those living in group homes, supported disability accommodation and women's refuges. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refurbishment of 1,500 public and community houses. • The introduction of a rolling maintenance program targeting 3,800 regional dwellings. • The delivery of around 250 new homes. 	Department of Communities		Underway
Review and expand assertive outreach services to ensure rough sleepers are better connected to appropriate support and accommodation services. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding support to street present young people under the age of 18. • Co-locating Assertive Outreach Workers and Housing Support Workers from different organisations in a single location to coordinate outreach efforts and support pathways into housing. 	Department of Communities	City of Perth Local Government Community Services Sector	2020
Develop protocols for eligibility for services and accommodation that remove restrictive rules and barriers to entry.	Community Services Sector	Department of Communities	2020-2021

Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
Improve access to accommodation by implementing low-barrier approaches and removing unnecessary restrictions to access.	Community Services Sector	Department of Communities	2020-2021
2.3 Identify and develop innovative housing options suitable to the Western Australian context.			
Deliver the Housing First Homelessness Initiative that will expand successful housing first and collective impact models for housing and supporting people experiencing homelessness to new locations.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	Underway
Plan, design and construct two Common Ground facilities to house people who are sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness with wrap around supports.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector City of Perth	Underway
Expand the Assisted Rental Pathways Pilot Program.	Department of Communities		2021-2022
2.4 Identify and introduce innovative funding opportunities to drive and deliver responses to homelessness.			
Explore and develop a Social Impact Investment model to prevent and reduce homelessness.	Department of Communities		2022-2025
Work with philanthropic partners to develop investment projects that address homelessness. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital projects that increase the supply of diverse and innovative housing options. Non-capital projects that help people to access housing and support. Projects that facilitate access to underutilised housing and land. 	Community Services Sector		2020-2025



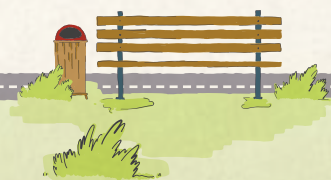
3. Preventing homelessness

This focus area is aimed at keeping people housed; the COVID-19 pandemic's full economic and social impact has not yet been fully realised. However, we know that individuals and families are struggling to maintain their employment and more people are relying on charities for necessities. This focus area looks at strengthening support to ensure that individuals and families are diverted away from the homelessness system by implementing effective early intervention measures that prevent people from experiencing homelessness.

These actions target key engagement opportunities including working with schools on education and prevention for young people, working across government to prevent exits into homelessness from prison, youth detention and out-of-home care, and increasing the supports available to help people maintain housing.

There is an emphasis on assisting individuals and cohorts who are at a higher risk of homelessness and where targeted interventions can have the greatest impact, such as young people.

There is also recognition of the need to focus on cohorts who are likely to be disproportionately affected by the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, such as women and young people, as well as the need to strengthen prevention of people who may be at risk of falling into homelessness for the first time due to rising unemployment.



Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
3.1 Develop tailored responses for vulnerable cohorts at risk of homelessness.			
Develop and support low-barrier / low-threshold accommodation options for young people which are inclusive of the needs of vulnerable groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) and LGBTQI+ young people.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	2020
Expand targeted support programs for young people aged 18-25 who are transitioning from out-of-home care into independent living.	Department of Communities		Underway
Develop flexible and tailored responses to support people at risk of experiencing homelessness for the first time due to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	2020
Strengthen the planning and coordination of existing strategies and services that are context specific for students who are identified as at risk of homelessness.	Department of Education		2022
Review and update Department of Communities policies and practices for social housing applications to remove service barriers which can act as unintended drivers of homelessness, including policies and practices relating to identification requirements and communication with clients on the waitlist.	Department of Communities		Underway
Increase accommodation options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have mental health, alcohol and other drug issues as aligned to the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Accommodation and Support Strategy.	Mental Health Commission	Department of Communities	2020-2025
Ensure safe, welcoming and culturally responsive services are available for vulnerable cohorts, including young people, CaLD people, LGBTQI+ people and people living with disability.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector People with lived experience	2020-2025
Establish "One Stop Hubs" in Mirrabooka and Kalgoorlie that will provide an integrated specialist service for people experiencing family and domestic violence.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	Underway

Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
Establish two additional women's refuges to increase the capacity of the service system and strengthen responses to family and domestic violence. One of the facilities will be tailored to provide a person-centred integrated response for those who have experienced family and domestic violence with co-occurring mental health, substance misuse concerns and intergenerational trauma.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector	Underway
3.2 Ensure people exiting government services are better connected to housing and appropriate support services.			
Facilitate pre-release throughcare planning to improve access to housing and other support services for adult offenders upon release from prison, including those with complex needs.	Department of Justice	Department of Communities Mental Health Commission	2020
Facilitate pre-release throughcare planning to improve access to housing and support services for young people who would otherwise be homeless upon release from detention.	Department of Justice	Department of Communities	2020
Ensure that future procurement processes consider the need for wrap around services, including accommodation for adults remanded in custody who are unable to take up bail due to having no stable housing if released.	Department of Justice		2021
Implement targeted services to support a case management and throughcare approach to enable appropriate support, referral and engagement with accommodation services for adults and young people exiting prison or detention.	Department of Justice		2020
Ensure that future procurement processes consider the need for wrap around services, including extended youth bail services in both regional and metropolitan areas.	Department of Justice		2022
Review the appropriate model of service delivery and staffing resources to coordinate bail services for young people in regional and remote areas.	Department of Justice		2021

Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
Develop integrated intervention models for the Magistrates Court to divert accused persons to appropriate programs and services (including accommodation) that are based on their level of risk of offending and service needs.	Department of Justice	Legal and Community Services Sector	2020-2023
Provide tailored supports where needed to minimise exits into homelessness from public, community and Aboriginal housing.	Department of Communities		Underway
3.3 Develop social reinvestment initiatives that recognise the value of diverting someone from a life of homelessness.			
Collaboratively develop social reinvestment initiatives that recognise the value of diverting someone from a life of homelessness.	Community Services Sector	ACCOs	2020-2025
3.4 Strengthen community education about homelessness and available supports to enable early intervention for those at risk and to positively influence community attitudes and behaviours.			
Provide online information to teachers, support staff and all students about homelessness, which will include material on causes, indicators and available services.	Department of Education		2021
Develop an online information package about homelessness for schools, which will include material on causes and indicators for early identification and available services.	Peak organisations		2020-2021
Establish education programs on housing and homelessness issues including tenancy rights, financial literacy and basic life skills that target individuals and families at risk of homelessness.	Peak organisations		2020-2025
Raise awareness with the community about homelessness to challenge stigma and myths.	Peak organisations	People with lived experience Local Government	Underway
Ensure the priorities and strategic intents of the Western Australia Police Force reflect and prioritise the causal factors of homelessness in the areas of Aboriginal wellbeing, youth, mental health and family and domestic violence.	Western Australia Police Force		Underway



4. Strengthening and coordinating our responses and impact

Throughout the development of the Strategy and the creation of immediate responses to support vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been clear that our impact is significantly larger if we work together. Actions in this focus area, aim to improve the coordination of homelessness services across all levels of government and the community services sector with the goal of enabling person-centred responses that better meet people's needs.

These actions aim to improve the coordination of homelessness services across all levels of government and the community services sector with the goal of enabling person-centred responses that better meet people's needs.

These concentrate on improving the reporting and collection of data, ensuring that all homelessness services are culturally-competent and trauma-informed, putting in place the tools that are needed to support a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery (including strengthening assessment and referral pathways), supporting the use of new technology and facilitating new approaches to the design and funding of services.

Improving the coordination of services for people who are sleeping rough is a priority under this focus area.



Priority Action	Lead agency	Other partners	Start date
4.1 Enable connected, coordinated and collaborative responses to homelessness that put people at the centre.			
Develop a 'By Name List' of people who are rough sleeping, beginning in locations where the Housing First Homelessness Initiative will be implemented, to better understand the individual needs and circumstances of people experiencing homelessness and link people with appropriate supports.	Community Services Sector	Department of Communities City of Perth	Underway
Work collaboratively with service providers to optimise opportunities for diversion and referral to support services.	Western Australia Police Force	Community Services Sector	Underway
Ensure our officers act with care and empathy, understanding that homelessness is not a crime.	Western Australia Police Force		Underway
Provide frontline officers with the resources and information to make referrals to support services when it is appropriate to do so.	Western Australia Police Force		Underway
4.2 Strengthen the integration of responses to prevent and end homelessness for key systems, including health, mental health, corrective services, education, housing and child protection.			
Expand Alcohol and Other Drug Education and Support Workers in youth accommodation and support services.	Mental Health Commission		2020-2025
Ensure effective trauma-informed and cultural competency training is available for Mental Health Commission services to strengthen responses for Aboriginal people and people from CaLD backgrounds.	Mental Health Commission		2020-2025
Consider evaluation findings and recommendations of pilots or existing programs that provide cross-agency services in school settings. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated school models. • Full-service schools. • Child Parent Centres. 	Department of Education		2021

Priority Action**Lead agency****Other partners****Start date****4.3 Develop innovative tools and systems to support and enable a No Wrong Door approach to the service system.**

Co-design and implement a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A common assessment framework that considers cohort specific needs (or adopt universal methods of assessment and triage of people at risk of homelessness or who are experiencing homelessness) so that people don't have to repeat their story multiple times. • Improving the live bed count to reflect more services in real time and increase visibility. • Improving the telephone-based referral service. 	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector ACCOs Service users	Underway
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4.4 Improve collection, sharing and use of data, information and intelligence.

Develop and implement an online information platform that will support a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery by improving the visibility of services and resources available across the sector and enabling secure data sharing with consent.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector ACCOs Service users	Underway
Develop an outcomes measurement framework and evaluation plan for the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness.	Department of Communities	Department of Treasury	2020

4.5 Strengthen commissioning and contracting to make sure responses align with the Strategy and drive positive outcomes.

Co-design service level outcomes in partnership with the community to deliver responsive and relevant homelessness services.	Department of Communities	Community Services Sector ACCOs Service users	Underway
Audit existing specialist homelessness service contracts for compliance with Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy and use those findings to improve future contracting practices.	Department of Communities		2021
Develop approaches that are flexible in contracting community service organisations and work with agencies to implement them.	Department of Finance		2020-2025

Department of Communities

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