



# Homelessness Implementation Plan

## AUSTRALIAN AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

### Homelessness in Australian Capital Territory

On the best available data, 1,364 people were homeless on census night 2006.

Of these, 78 were sleeping rough and 38 per cent were youth aged 12-24. 76 per cent of the homeless population in the ACT were aged 34 or younger; 21 per cent were aged 12 to 18 years and 22 per cent were children under 12 years who were with either one or both parents. 11 per cent of the homeless population in the ACT were Indigenous.



The Australian and Australian Capital Territory Governments are committed to reducing homelessness.

### What we are doing

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 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.

The ACT has primary responsibility for the delivery of essential public services such as health, education, community services, social housing, justice and policing. The ACT has as its goal the eradication of homelessness. In 2004, the ACT Social Plan set a target of no rough sleepers by 2013. 320 additional properties through the Nation Building and Jobs Plan, 20 properties through the A Place to Call Home Initiative and 20 properties through the Social Housing NP will house the ACT's current Priority Housing list and one third of people on the High Needs housing list for Public Housing. This will have enormous flow on effects to the crisis accommodation system. The creation of additional exit points will result in a seamless movement through the system and address the current turn away rates from crisis accommodation of 2.4 per cent (an average of 12 turnaways per day in 2009). Central to this is the establishment of the Common Point of Entry for homelessness services and the Common Waiting List for public and community housing.

### 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:

- \$102.765 million allocated to the ACT to construct new dwellings and refurbish existing social housing dwellings as part of the \$6.4 billion Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP). 56 new dwellings under Stage One have been approved. Further approvals are due to be made under Stage Two of the construction element before the end of August 2009;
- \$6.4 million to the ACT under the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing to increase the supply of social housing through the construction of new dwellings;
- \$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 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 contribute to an overall reduction in homelessness.

The Australian and ACT Governments will contribute **\$20.2 million** over four years to reduce homelessness under the Agreement. The ACT 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 Homelessness NP are directed to gaps in the service system which have been highlighted by the White Paper and the ACT Government's *Affordable Housing Action Plan – Phase II*.

### Community Outreach for Rough Sleepers

- Will provide active outreach and support to up to 20 rough sleepers, particularly young rough sleepers. This will involve supporting them into safe, secure and appropriate long term accommodation to enable them to engage with mainstream services and sustain their tenancy.

### Expansion of Transitional Housing Program

- Provision of temporary accommodation for 28 individuals and families exiting homelessness supported accommodation that no longer require the intensive support and assistance delivered through crisis accommodation. This initiative will provide an additional ten exit points from crisis accommodation providing a pathway into long-term appropriate and secure housing. This will ensure emergency accommodation is available to those most in need.

### Centralised Intake Service

- This provides for the centralising of the access for homelessness services and social housing within the Gateway Services of Housing ACT to ensure that clients do not have to negotiate with multiple agencies in order to access services.

### Housing Assistance for People Experiencing Domestic Violence

- Assistance for families experiencing domestic violence to remain in their homes through Housing ACT partnering with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and appropriate legal services to remove the perpetrator from the tenancy agreement.

### Managed supported accommodation for people exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre

- Up to fifteen men and five women will be accommodated at any one time as part of a planned transitional from correctional environments. Up to ten men and five women will also be provided with outreach support.

### Building Housing Partnerships

- Support to 700 individuals and families to break the cycle of homelessness and disadvantage. This will be done through coordinating and delivering a range of services to sustain their tenancy and assist them improve their living skills, undertake training and find employment.

### Extension of Building Housing Partnerships to Private Tenures

- The expansion of housing partnerships to those in private tenures. This will provide intensive support to individuals and families in private tenures to assist them in sustaining those tenures through the coordination of a range of services, including living skills, training and employment.

### A Place to Call Home

- Will provide 20 additional properties over the 4 years to house homeless families and provide those families with the necessary supports to sustain their tenancies. The client may initially be housed under a head tenancy arrangement with a homelessness service acting as both landlord and support provider; the tenancy will transfer to the client when they are able to sustain their own public housing tenancy.

### Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative

- 10 integrated packages of housing and mental health support to provide sustainable tenancies in public housing to people with moderate to severe mental health issues.

### Youth Foyer

- Provision of 20 places, with accommodation and support for young people aged 16–25 years old to maintain stable housing and engage with education and employment services.

More information on what the Australian Government is doing to reduce homelessness visit [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au). For information on what the ACT is doing to reduce homelessness or on specific initiatives [www.housing.act.gov.au/community/homelessness](http://www.housing.act.gov.au/community/homelessness) or [www.housing.act.gov.au](http://www.housing.act.gov.au)