



Homelessness Implementation Plan

AUSTRALIAN AND VICTORIAN GOVERNMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness in Victoria

According to the Counting the Homeless Report, **20,511** Victorians were homeless on census night 2006. Of these, it is estimated that up to **2,204** were sleeping rough. 63 per cent of the homeless population in Victoria were aged 34 or younger, 19 per cent were aged 12 to 18 years and 14 per cent were children under 12 years who were with either one or both parents. 3.8 per cent of the homeless population in Victoria were Indigenous.



The Australian and Victorian 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.

Work already underway

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:

- \$1.6 billion allocated to Victoria to construct new dwellings and refurbish existing social housing dwellings as part of the \$6.4 billion Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP). 667 and 929 new dwellings have been approved under Stages One and Two. Further approvals are due to be made under Stage Two of the construction element before the end of August 2009;
- \$99.2 million to Victoria under the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing to increase the supply of social housing through the construction of new dwellings;
- \$30.35 million over 10 years for Victoria 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.

These investments build on the very significant commitment the Victorian Government made in the 2006-07 Budget of \$510 million to deliver 2,350 social housing units across Victoria – the biggest ever one-off investment by a State Government in housing. Significant funding has also been allocated to many of the actions initiated by the *Victorian Homelessness Strategy* (2002) to strengthen Victoria's response to homelessness.

Victorian Strategic Framework

The Victorian Government has commenced work on the development of a new Victorian Homelessness Strategy. It will establish the strategic directions for achieving reform of the homelessness sector and mainstream service systems over the next ten years. The development of a new homelessness strategy builds on the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to bring Victoria's response to people where it needs to be by 2020.

With an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, collaborative efforts across government and service systems, the new strategy will provide the plan for Victoria to reduce the incidence and impact of homelessness. Consultation across government, the homelessness sector and mainstream providers will be central to the development process.

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 contribute to an overall reduction in homelessness.

The Australian and Victorian Governments will contribute **\$156.8 million** over four years to reduce homelessness under the Agreement. Victoria 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

The Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NP) has a focus on prevention, early intervention and building a foundation to reform and diversify the response to homelessness in Victoria. Initiatives are targeted to a range of demographics including those experiencing primary homelessness (sleeping rough). Measures include:

A Place to Call Home

- 118 long term accommodation units provided with support services to be located in Melbourne, outer metropolitan and rural/regional Victoria.

Foyer Model

- Youth facility to accommodate and support up to 45 young people in regional Victoria. Additional outreach support will also be provided to young people in the surrounding area.

Psychosocial support packages

- 50 intensive psychosocial support packages for people with enduring mental illness and psychiatric disability to provide holistic responses to achieve stability and improve social inclusion for the chronically homeless.

Assertive Outreach

- Outreach Services targeting single people and couples including those who are sleeping rough and who reside in rooming houses across Victoria will have pathways to long term sustainable housing providing tailored / intensive support over an extended period.

Support Exiting Prison

- New Housing Support Worker positions, located at the major prisons to provide case management support prior and post release.

Support for families at risk of homelessness

- Case management support, including financial counselling to families experiencing homelessness to maintain their accommodation. State-wide initiative.

Housing Support and Sustain Tenancies

- Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) that supports 'at risk' social housing tenants to prevent housing breakdown will be enhanced and expanded to take a more proactive approach.
- Two intensive support and response services will be established to help individuals and families access and sustain accommodation in the outer metropolitan growth areas.

Young People Leaving Care

- Proactive and intensive response for young people across Victoria to ensure a successful transition to sustainable accommodation and independence.

Support for women and children to remain safely in the family home

- Increase support across Victoria to enable more women and children to stay safely in the family home. The support will be in the form of case management to women who have been referred by police, courts and other services following family violence incident.

Support for Indigenous Women and Children

- New early intervention and response to Indigenous women with and without children in a culturally competent way.

Build mainstream services responsiveness

- Engagement of mainstream services and government agencies to build capacity to enable services to respond to people who are homeless and prevent those at risk of homelessness.

For more information on what the Australian Government is doing to reduce homelessness visit www.fahcsia.gov.au. For information on what the Victorian Government is doing to reduce homelessness or on specific initiatives visit www.housing.vic.gov.au