HOMELESSNESS in Western Australia

March 2016

A snapshot of the State Government's role in homelessness policy, services and future directions.
The Western Australian State Government, together with not-for-profit community service sector organisations, is committed to responding in new and sustainable ways to give people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, the opportunity to move beyond the immediate crisis and into long-term sustainable housing.

Homelessness is a complex issue. Factors contributing to individuals and families becoming homeless often include a combination of lack of affordable housing, family breakdown, lack of employment skills, substance abuse, mental illness, and family and domestic violence. Homelessness is not only about the people living rough on the streets; it is also about people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another, couch surfing, living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis and people living in their cars. To support homeless families and individuals, a range of specialist homelessness services are required to support the range of needs identified.

The State Plan 2010-2013 Opening Doors to Address Homelessness (the State Plan 2010-13) outlined the outcomes and key principles for implementing an integrated approach to homelessness, and action areas to deliver flexible and responsive services. This plan was developed following an injection of new funds, with the initial National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) resulting in 14 new programs in Western Australia - focusing on prevention, early intervention and breaking the cycle of homelessness.

This paper offers a snapshot of some of the achievements over the last few years, and the partnerships between government agencies and the not-for-profit community service sector. The development of new facilities and services has resulted in a significant increase in the number of beds available in Perth and regional areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of St Bartholomew’s new Lime Street premises and the Salvation Army ‘Beacon’ facility, Foyer Oxford, the Interim Night Shelter, the opening of Entrypoint Perth, Busselton Women’s Refuge, and the Kalgoorlie and Derby Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation Services. I recognise and appreciate the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in realising these initiatives.

The Commonwealth is currently considering future homelessness policy and funding arrangements. Additionally, a number of reform projects currently underway within the Western Australian State Government will have an impact on the contracting, design and delivery of services. Over the next 18 months there is opportunity to review and plan for the future, to identify whether our current service arrangements are targeting those in most need and enabling the best possible community outcomes. This review process will require collaboration and input from all stakeholders.

The Western Australian Council on Homelessness (WACH) was instrumental in the development of the State Plan 2010-13. WACH will continue to have a key role towards the development of another long-term strategic plan for homelessness. In the short-term, WACH will support the review process, facilitation of regional forums and work towards planning for implementation of an integrated homelessness system addressing local needs.

Hon Andrea Mitchell MLA
Minister for Child Protection
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Executive Summary

The Western Australian initiatives to respond to homelessness have had a significant impact on the lives of people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. This paper provides an overview of homelessness in Western Australia including key statistics, policy settings, major programs and initiatives and future directions for service delivery to meet the needs of individuals and families at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

Understanding homelessness – key statistics

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census and the Australian Institute on Health and Welfare Annual Report on Specialist Homelessness Services highlights trends and areas to consider when targeting investment to areas most at need.

Outlined below are some of the key statistics from the Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011, regarding homelessness in Australia and, more specifically, Western Australia.

On Census night in 2011:

- Nationally, 105,237 persons were classified as being homeless. This was a 17 per cent increase to the 89,728 persons classified as homeless on census night in 2006.
- In Western Australia there were 9,592 people experiencing homelessness. This is an increase of 16 per cent from the 8,277 on census night in 2006.
- Western Australians comprised nine per cent of the total homeless Australians in 2006 and 2011.
- There were one in 234 people identified as homeless in Western Australia (this includes rough sleepers as well as people living in crisis accommodation or severely overcrowded conditions).
- There were 4,154 persons living in severely crowded dwellings which accounted for 43 per cent of the Western Australian persons identified as homeless.
- 2,671, or 64 per cent, of those persons in severely crowded dwellings identified as Aboriginal.
- The number of people in Western Australia sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings decreased by nine per cent from 1,016 persons in 2006, to 925 in 2011.
- The proportion of homeless people in Western Australia who identified as Aboriginal decreased from 40 per cent in 2006 to 35 per cent in 2011.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Annual Report on Specialist Homelessness Services 2014-15, in Western Australia, family and domestic violence continues to be identified as the main reason for seeking assistance for nearly a third of clients who access specialist homelessness services.
Policy and funding for homelessness

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) is the lead agency for homelessness in Western Australia. There are two major policy agreements that support homelessness services provision in Western Australia; the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) and the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA).

The NAHA’s primary outcome is to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion through a focus on social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market, specialist services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and strategies to improve affordability of home ownership. NAHA is an ongoing agreement.

The NPAH’s primary areas of focus are to reduce homelessness through prevention and early intervention, breaking the cycle of homelessness and improving and expanding the service responses to homelessness. The NPAH contributes to achieving NAHA’s primary outcome. The first four year NPAH commenced in 2009-10 and, to date there have been three additional transitional short term NPAHs, including the current two year NPAH (2015-17).

In 2015-16, through state and Commonwealth Government funding arrangements, approximately $81 million will be allocated to the non-for-profit community services sector for the provision of homeless accommodation and support services for individuals and families, and those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless as a result of family and domestic violence.

The Western Australian State Government remains committed to partnering with the Commonwealth to address homelessness through long-term national agreements for the continued provision of specialist homelessness services for Western Australians.

Achievements

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness Evaluation of Western Australian Programs, Final Report, March 2013 was a two year evaluation on the implementation of 14 different NPAH programs. This evaluation has highlighted the success and effectiveness of programs delivered under NPAH including a restoration of dignity, self-respect, confidence and independence for many clients, and success in preventing and reducing homelessness through provision of affordable and adequate accommodation along with sustained and intensive support for a period of 12 months after the person had been housed.

A target of 11 percent was set for Aboriginal participation in all NPAH programs in Western Australia. According to the Specialist Homelessness Collection data, this target was greatly exceeded in 2014-15 with 36 per cent of all clients supported through NPAH being Aboriginal.

In 2015-16, under the NPAH and NAHA, funding is currently allocated to over 190 services across Western Australia. An overview of homelessness programs is outlined in this paper, including new services which have commenced over the last three years significantly increasing the service system capacity to support individuals and families across the state.

Current and future directions

The delivery of homelessness services has been supported and guided by a range of broader policies including the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy and the Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening doors to Affordable Housing. There are a number of other state government policies and plans that will contribute to inform the delivery of homelessness services into the future. These include the Western Australia Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025 and the State Regional Services Plan.
Reforms. The paper also refers to the five action areas of the State Plan 2010-13 (range of housing options, employment, education and training, health and wellbeing and connection with community family and friends) which provided a sound basis for the delivery of the current homelessness services.

The future direction for homelessness services delivery in Western Australia will involve: reviewing current programs, identifying what is currently working well, and investigating new and sustainable ways services can be delivered to better meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Going forward there will be increased focus on strengthening networks and service integration. There will be consideration to opportunities for improvement and innovation within the current funding and contractual arrangements, and opportunities which support the expansion and development of new services. Ongoing delivery, improvement and expansion of services for Aboriginal families and children, and women and children at risk of or homeless due to family and domestic violence will be a significant focus for homelessness service provision into the future. As will be growing knowledge and understanding for the delivery of services for other cohorts such as homeless single women, particularly older women.

This paper has been developed to provide a snapshot of the state government’s role in homelessness policy and services. It is not intended to provide a progress report on all programs. This paper is the first step toward the development of a new Strategic Homelessness State Plan which will build on and strengthen Western Australia’s existing service system with a renewed focus on integration, early intervention and flexibility in delivering targeted and efficient services according to need.

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**In Western Australia Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) data report in 2014-15**

- **62%** of clients who received support from SHS were female
- **18%** of clients were aged under 10 years
- **28%** of clients were aged under 18 years
- **40%** of clients identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin
Introduction

Over the last five years, the Western Australian initiatives to respond to homelessness have had a significant impact. In 2014-15, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported that more than 23,000 Western Australians accessed specialist homelessness services. An estimated 14,400 of the 23,000 clients needed accommodation. Of those who needed accommodation, 73 per cent were provided with accommodation and a further 10 per cent referred to other services for accommodation. These are significant successes. Assisting people to remain housed, or helping them to access housing, creates stability in their lives. It also minimises the social disadvantage and negative physical and mental health impacts of repeated or prolonged periods of homelessness.

The State Plan 2010-13 identified the outcomes and key principles for implementing an improved integrated approach to homelessness, bringing all relevant agencies and services to work together to open doors and improve circumstances for people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. The State Plan 2010-2013 also identified the action areas to support flexible and responsive services for people when they are homeless, and to prevent people from slipping back into homelessness.

There is a sustained commitment by government agencies and the not-for-profit community service sector to continue to strive and look for new and innovative strategies to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness. However, the recent short-term nature of the NPAH Agreements has limited opportunities to undertake re-contracting processes including service re-design.

In Western Australia, we have individuals and organisations with a strong sense of social responsibility and commitment to helping those in need. A comprehensive response to homelessness requires commitment and involvement by not-for-profit community sector organisations, all levels of government and industry. Momentum is growing for new approaches to delivering services and social funding options, such as social investment bonds.

It is hoped that this paper provides a platform for further discussion around funding and service delivery models, and an opportunity to explore the needs of individuals and families in local communities through regional planning and a consultation process with all key stakeholders.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight and provide information on:

- available data regarding homelessness in Western Australia;
- Commonwealth and state government homelessness funding and policy arrangements and implications;
- key components of the State Plan 2010-13;
- current homelessness programs (at a broad level) within the NAHA and NPAH, and how they have aligned to the vision, and contributed towards meeting the outcomes of the State Plan 2010-2013;
- highlights of new services and initiatives by the state government and the not-for-profit community service sector over the last three years;
- broader state government policy developments; and
- future directions.
Access to safe, secure, affordable housing underpins the economic and social well being of Western Australian households and their communities. In recent years, the favourable living conditions and resources sector boom have had an impact on the Western Australian economy. This has resulted in rapid growth in our state’s population. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Western Australia’s population increased by 3.3 per cent in 2013 and 2.2 per cent in 2014. This was the fastest growth of all the states and territories, and well above the national growth rate of 1.7 per cent.

The flow-on effect included a significant demand for housing, pushing up prices and placing pressure on low to moderate income households. This increasing demand for housing has also seen growing numbers of people seeking assistance from homelessness service providers. Western Australia is now facing a decline in the mining resources boom and, with this, an anticipated increase in financial stress for many individuals and families.

Defining homelessness

Homelessness can mean different things to different people. Indeed, many people who may be viewed as homeless using statistical or research definitions may not consider themselves as homeless. The ABS provides data on the estimated number of people who are homeless in Australia. On 4 September 2012, the ABS released the Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness which outlined that the ABS had changed from a ‘cultural definition’ to enumerate the homeless population on census night to an understanding of homelessness as homelessness, not rooflessness.

The new statistical definition of homelessness is:

“When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

• is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
• has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
• does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.”

The 2012 ABS statistical definition and methodology for counting the homeless included a new homelessness operational category ‘people living in severely crowded dwellings’. This new homelessness definition and methodology was applied to the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census data.
Comparison of 2011 and revised 2006 Census data estimates that:

Nationally, 105,237 persons were classified as being homeless on Census night in 2011. This was a 17 per cent increase to the 89,728 persons classified as being homeless on Census night in 2006. That is, for every 10,000 persons that were counted in Australia, there were 48.9 persons homeless on Census night in 2011, compared to 45.2 persons per 10,000 on Census night in 2006; an increase of eight per cent.

On Census night in 2011, there were 9,592 people experiencing homelessness in Western Australia. This number is an increase of 16 per cent from the 8,277 on census night in 2006.

For every 10,000 persons counted in Western Australia, there were 42.8 persons homeless on Census night in 2011; compared to 42.3 homeless people for every 10,000 in 2006 – an increase of one per cent.

In 2006 and 2011, Western Australians classified as being homeless comprised nine per cent of the total homeless Australians.

On Census night 2011, one in 234 people were identified as homeless in Western Australia. This includes rough sleepers as well as people living in crisis accommodation or in severely overcrowded conditions.

According to the 2011 Census, homeless people living in severely crowded dwellings formed the largest group both nationally and in Western Australia. In Western Australia there were 4,154 persons living in severely crowded dwellings which was 43 per cent of the Western Australian persons that identified as homeless. Of the estimated 4,154 persons identified as living in severely crowded dwellings, 64 per cent identified as Aboriginal (2,671).

Governance, policy and funding for homelessness

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Intergovernmental Agreement on new Federal Financial Arrangements saw a rationalisation of Specific Purpose Payments. The creation of the NAHA on 1 January 2009 incorporated the former Commonwealth State Housing Agreement and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

The initial four year NPAH (2009-13) also commenced in 2009-10 following the Commonwealth Government’s White Paper on Homelessness: The Road Home, which set a strategic agenda to reduce homelessness to 2020, and called on all levels of government, business, the not-for-profit sector and community to join together to reduce homelessness.

The NAHA set out a number of measures that sought to address housing affordability and combat the issue of homelessness, including: social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market, specialist services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and strategies to improve affordability of home ownership. The NAHA is an ongoing agreement.

The NPAH contributes to the NAHA outcome to “help people who are homelessness or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion”. The NPAH focusses on key strategies to reduce homelessness:

- prevention and early intervention;
- breaking the cycle of homelessness; and
- improving and expanding the service responses to homelessness.

The NPAH funded an innovation and reform agenda; pushing the system toward non-accommodation support, prevention and early intervention services, through the development and implementation of innovative service models.
In Western Australia, CPFS is the lead agency responsible for the coordination and implementation of funding for homelessness services through the NAHA and the NPAH. CPFS receives only a portion of the Commonwealth Government funds allocated to Western Australia for the NAHA, with the remaining funds administered by the Housing Authority (formerly the Department of Housing). The majority of NAHA funding for CPFS is allocated to crisis and transitional accommodation services including refuges (approximately 89 per cent). The remaining is allocated to support services including day centres, tenancy support programs, and outreach and support programs (approximately 11 per cent).

The initial 2009-13 NPAH and the transitional 2013-14 NPAH both contained funding for new capital projects. This funding enabled the development and implementation of new innovative service models. The 2014-15 NPAH had no capital component and was thought to be an interim measure to maintain service delivery levels, while a review of housing and homelessness was undertaken and long-term policy and funding arrangements were developed for post 30 June 2015.

On 28 June 2014, the Commonwealth Government announced a White Paper on the Reform of the Federation (Federation White Paper). In October 2014, it was confirmed that the review of housing and homelessness would not proceed, as housing and homelessness was identified as one of the key focus areas of the Federation White Paper. Other focus areas included education, health and federal financial relations. The Terms of Reference for the Federation White Paper focusses on the roles and responsibilities of the state and Commonwealth Government.

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**GOVERNANCE**

- **Homelessness**
  - Minister for Child Protection
  - Department for Child Protection and Family Support
    - Western Australian Council on Homelessness*
    - Senior Officers Group**
    - Regional Human Services Managers Groups
  - Community Sector Organisations / Forums

- **Housing**
  - Director General Meetings
  - Minister for Housing
  - Housing Authority

*Community Sector and State Government Representatives:
CPFS;
Housing Authority;
Mental Health Commission; and
Commonwealth Department of Social Services

**State Government Agency Representatives:
CPFS;
Mental Health Commission;
Corrective Services; and
Housing Authority
In March 2015, the Commonwealth Government announced funding for a further two year NPAH 2015-17. Given the NPAH and NAHA were to be considered as part of the Federation White Paper, this two year agreement was welcomed by the state government to enable continuation of services during the White Paper process. Allocations of Commonwealth Government NPAH funding to jurisdictions was maintained at the 2014-15 level. Under the 2015-17 NPAH, Western Australia will receive $14.97 million each year for the two years and this is matched by the state government.

Through the Federation White Paper process, the Commonwealth Government released *Roles and Responsibilities in Housing and Homelessness Issues Paper 2* in December 2014 and a draft Discussion Paper in July 2015. At the 11 December 2015 COAG meeting “COAG noted the importance of affordable housing for Australians on low incomes and agreed that reforms to housing and homelessness services would be taken forward by relevant Ministers in the context of existing work on housing affordability. COAG will receive a report on this work at the end of 2016.” (COAG Communiqué 11 December 2015).

**State Plan 2010-13**

The Western Australia Homelessness *State Plan 2010-13* identified strategies for the Western Australian homelessness service system to build on the strengths of existing services, and move towards a fully integrated homelessness service response in Western Australia. The State Plan 2010-13 built on the NAHA and NPAH and contributed to the following outcomes:

- Early intervention.
- Better integrated service system.
- Breaking the cycle.

The State Plan 2010-13 identified five action areas (range of housing options, employment, education and training, health and wellbeing and connection with community family and friends) and four guiding principles (people-centred, leadership, partnership and integration and flexibility and innovation) to develop and promote an integrated service system.

Using these action areas and principles, the *2009-13 NPAH Implementation Plan* identified the new programs for specific target groups. Engagement and integration with mainstream services were integral elements of all the programs.

Mainstream agencies, including: the Department of Human Services (Centrelink), Housing Authority, Mental Health Commission (including Drug and Alcohol Office) and Corrective Services were all closely involved in the development of the initiatives. There was also extensive consultation with the not-for-profit community service sector in the development and implementation of the programs.

This response by the state government and not-for-profit community services sector, in developing an integrated service system has had a significant impact on the lives of people experiencing homelessness, and those at risk of homelessness.

Through the NAHA and NPAH, critical safety net services have provided crisis and transitional accommodation, support and outreach services to help vulnerable Western Australian’s from falling through the gaps. Early intervention and prevention services have also provided a range of support and accommodation services to help break the cycle of homelessness.

In Western Australia SHSC data reports in 2014-15

42% of clients received assistance as a result of *domestic and family violence* (‘domestic and family violence’ was reported as a reason they sought assistance or they required domestic and family violence assistance)
The initiatives outlined in the State Plan 2010-13 were the foundations of the innovative community services and government partnerships. These partnerships resulted in new and sustainable ways to give people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness the opportunity to move beyond the immediate crisis and into long-term sustainable housing.

What the data tells us we have achieved

As outlined in the State Plan 2010-13, the joint Commonwealth and state NPAH funded services committed to achieving the following outcomes (identified in the original 2009-13 NPAH):

- fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough;
- fewer people will become homeless more than once;
- people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation; and
- people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing.

Furthermore, the State Plan 2010-13 referred to targets including:

- decrease of seven per cent in the number of people who are homeless;
- decrease of a third in the number of Aboriginal people sleeping rough; and
- decrease of 25 per cent in the number of people sleeping rough.

The ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2011 provides useful data on homelessness at the state and regional level. The upcoming 2016 Census will provide further data on progress towards the targets and planning.

Though it is important to consider progress towards the targets, it is equally important to highlight what has been achieved and how many individuals have been assisted by specialist homelessness services.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Annual Report on Specialist Homelessness Services 2014-15 (AIHW Annual Report on SHS 2014-15), provides information regarding people who are homeless and/or at risk of homelessness, and access specialist homelessness services. In Western Australia, this includes:

- number of clients accessing SHS in 2014-15 was 23,021;
- 62 per cent of clients who received support from SHS were female;
- 18 per cent of clients were aged under 10 years and 28 per cent of clients were under 18 years;
- 40 per cent of clients identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin;
- 42 per cent of clients received assistance as a result of domestic and family violence (‘domestic and family violence’ was reported as a reason they sought assistance or they required domestic and family violence assistance);
- 57 per cent of clients were at risk of homelessness when they first began receiving support;
- 43 per cent of clients (8,439 clients) were homeless when they presented. Of the 8,439 clients who were homeless when they presented:
  - 27 per cent had no shelter or were staying in an improvised dwelling;
  - 45 per cent were in short-term accommodation;
  - 27 per cent were living in a house, townhouse or flat as a ‘couch surfer’ with no tenure ; and
  - one per cent were living in other situations.
Homelessness programs and initiatives

Evaluation of NPAH Programs

Evaluations of the Western Australian NPAH programs to date have highlighted the success and effectiveness of the programs. The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness Evaluation of Western Australian Programs, Final Report, March 2013, was a two year evaluation on the implementation of 14 different NPAH programs. Both this evaluation and an audit undertaken by the Western Australian Auditor General indicated that the 14 programs were delivered in accordance with the NPAH Implementation Plan.

The evaluation found that for many clients, the NPAH programs meant a restoration of dignity, self-respect, confidence and independence. The evaluation noted that the combination of housing clients in affordable and adequate accommodation, whilst delivering sustained and intensive support for a period of up to 12 months after the person had been housed, was successful in preventing and reducing homelessness. Addressing the practical needs of clients through brokerage funds and supporting clients to access mainstream services was also highly valued and successful.

The majority of NPAH programs have a component of brokerage funding to enable services to be responsive to client needs and to facilitate an integrated approach between specialist homelessness services and mainstream agencies.

Programs – services developed for key target groups

Through NPAH funding, a number of new Western Australian programs have been implemented for specific target groups including:

- housing support workers for private and public tenancies;
- housing support workers for people leaving supported accommodation and institutional care;
- support for young people leaving child protection;
- support for children in homeless accommodation services; and
- new and expanded supports for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence.

Through matching the Commonwealth Government’s NPAH funding allocation, the state government has also developed, with the not-for-profit community service sector, additional new services to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing or being at risk of homelessness. The following information provides just a snapshot of some of the NPAH achievements and project work, particularly in relation to family and domestic violence and the

Specialist homelessness service collection (SHSC)

Specialist homelessness services funded by CPFS are required to participate in the national Specialist Homelessness Service Collection (SHSC).

The SHSC provides information which is vital to inform policy programs, reflect the work of specialist homelessness agencies and evaluate client outcomes.

The SHSC also provides information to governments, peak bodies in the homelessness sector, community groups and interested researchers to assist in public debate about homelessness.

Western Australian NPAH and NAHA services have achieved 100 per cent participation in the national SHSC for the 2014-15 financial year.

NPAH services required to participate in the SHSC have had 100 per cent participation in the SHSC since it commenced in July 2011.
key target groups of rough sleepers and Aboriginal people.

Entrypoint Perth

Entrypoint Perth commenced operation in February 2014, and is a free assessment and referral service assisting people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, in the Perth metropolitan area to access accommodation and support options. Entrypoint Perth can:

- assess individual (and family) circumstances on the phone or in person;
- provide individuals with information on accommodation and support options in the Perth metropolitan area;
- if eligible, provide formal referrals to crisis accommodation options and vacancies that exist; and
- set up a time for an assessment and then refer to the most appropriate services.

Family and Domestic Violence

The Western Australian Domestic Violence Service System Project

According to the AIHW Annual Report on SHS 2014-15, in Western Australia, family and domestic violence continues to be identified as the main reason for seeking assistance for nearly a third of clients who access specialist homelessness services.

Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 sets out a commitment by Western Australia to reduce the incidence of family and domestic violence through a focus on integration and reform over the longer term. Since July 2013, CPFS has been working in partnership with the Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Service (WA) Inc to progress reforms for a family and domestic violence service system. The service system aims to improve the safety of women and children impacted by family and domestic violence. An important component of this approach is that three specialist 24/7 emergency response services will take a lead coordination and facilitation role across the Perth metropolitan area. The services will be the key referral points for Crisis Care Unit (CPFS), Entrypoint Perth and the Western Australian Police (via the Crisis Care Unit). Operations commenced on 1 October 2015.

Between 2008-09 and 2014-15 the rate of family and domestic violence reported to Western Australia Police increased by 25 per cent, up to 41,315 notifications in 2014-15.

Between January 2014 and June 2015, there were 60,198 domestic violence incidents reports (DVIRs) across Western Australia.

John and Mary* were referred to Entrypoint Perth by Crisis Care, who had purchased crisis accommodation for them and their son over the weekend after they had been asked to leave the house where they were couch surfing. Entrypoint Perth staff met with the family and conducted an assessment with the support of an interpreter.

After liaising with several services, no immediate accommodation options were available, so Entrypoint Perth purchased a further night of crisis accommodation and provided food vouchers. Entrypoint Perth continued to meet with the family, with interpreter assistance, and liaise with a number of services over the next two days to negotiate support and referral pathways for the family.

A total of three nights’ accommodation was provided. Entrypoint Perth was successful in facilitating a referral to the Multicultural Services Centre of WA, who supported the family to secure a two-bedroom tenancy.

*Names changed to protect confidentiality.
Family and domestic violence crisis accommodation and support

State government and NAHA funding is provided to 38 crisis accommodation services across the state for women and children escaping family and domestic violence. Through the NPAH, additional funding was provided for Child Support Workers and the Keeping Kids Safe Project. This program has strengthened responses for children in domestic violence accommodation services to improve integration with mainstream services including schools, child care and health professionals.

Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach services

The Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach programs funded through the joint Commonwealth and state NPAH provide specialist workers to assess the safety and support needs of women and children who have experienced domestic violence, to enable them to stay in their own homes where it is safe to do so. The program also provides brokerage funds to stabilise housing and increase security.

Family and domestic violence counselling, advocacy and support services and coordinated response services

State government funding is provided for 22 family and domestic violence counselling services, advocacy and support services, and 17 family and domestic violence co-location response services throughout the state. The co-location response model consists of the Family and Domestic Violence Coordinated Response Service, Western Australian Police and CPFS. The partnership involves a cooperative triage of the DVIRs and provides risk assessment and appropriate responses for families and individuals in incidences of family and domestic violence. Responses may include facilitating multiagency responses on a needs basis.

The Western Australian Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework

The revised and relaunched Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework has been developed for use by all government agencies and community sector services to promote a consistent collaborative and seamless approach to identifying and responding to family and domestic violence.

It is now included alongside service specifications for community sector service contracts managed by CPFS, has been progressively included into the policy and practices of legal and statutory agencies and is increasingly being used by a range of mainstream service providers.

The purpose of the framework is to:

- support better identification of, and response to, victims of family and domestic violence regardless of what area of the service sector they come into contact with;
- ensure service responses are client and safety focused; and
- support interagency collaboration so responses are timely, holistic, streamlined and coordinated.

The framework sets common practice standards for family and domestic violence screening, risk assessment, risk management, information sharing and referral for all services – mainstream and specialist, government and community sector.
Busselton refuge

In February 2014, a new refuge was opened in Busselton currently known as Tuart House. Whilst the refuge was developed for women and children escaping domestic violence in the south-west, referrals are accepted from other regions and the metropolitan area.

The service model provides a response to the identified gaps in the Perth metropolitan specialist family and domestic violence accommodation and support service system, including accommodation for older boys and larger families. It also offers a response to the perpetrator of the violence, including monitoring and managing the risks posed to the victim and to intervene to bring about a positive change in behaviour. This unique new service model in the Busselton region enables increased safety to victims through holding perpetrators accountable.

Ellenbrook women’s refuge

A new metropolitan crisis accommodation service (currently under construction) will be provided for women and children escaping violence and will increase the capacity of the family and domestic violence service system. The new women’s refuge is being built in Ellenbrook and has capacity to accommodate six families. The refuge is based on a ‘cluster model’ design to allow larger families and women with older boys to be accommodated. The cluster model also fosters women’s independence, as the unit style accommodation provides a secure facility but without the constraints associated with communal style women’s refuges. This service will also adopt a Safe at Home component.

Youth – Foyer Oxford

The Foyer Oxford in Leederville opened in March 2014. It is the largest innovative single accommodation service for young people and the first purpose built Foyer development for young people in Australia. Young people are assisted to overcome obstacles in their lives, and gain the skills they require to achieve self-sufficiency and long-term outcomes such as education, employment and stable accommodation. These are conditions to the lease agreements for each young person at the Foyer – referred to as the Foyer Deal.

The service can accommodate a total of 98 young people aged 16 to 25 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This can include up to 24 young parents and their children. The service offers long-term transitional accommodation in self-contained apartments for up to two years, with 24 hour onsite support, case management and referral to mainstream and specialist services.

Young parents are provided with additional specialist parenting support. The client group is diverse, and priority access is given to Aboriginal young people, young people who have experienced the child protection system, and young people leaving statutory care.

The Foyer Oxford facility received the 2015 Sustainable Urban Development Award from the WA branch of the Urban Development Institute of Australia and also won the Town of Vincent 2015 Building Design and Conservation Award.

Foyer Oxford exemplifies what can be achieved through collaborative efforts of government (CPFS, Housing Authority and Department of Training and Workforce Development), non-government stakeholders (Anglicare and Foundation Housing) and industry, with BHP Billiton committing $5 million over five years towards the operational costs of the service.
Inner city rough sleepers

Nationally, the number of homeless people sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings decreased by six per cent from 7,247 in 2006 to 6,813 in 2011.

In Western Australia, the number of homeless people sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings decreased by nine per cent from 1,016 persons in 2006 to 925 persons in 2011.

Street to Home

Street to Home is a collaborative approach, with eight different service teams from seven not-for-profit community service sector organisations, plus the Mental Health Commission, successfully engaging with rough sleepers. The Street to Home program has three elements; Assertive Outreach Team (AOT), a Mobile Clinical Outreach Team (MCOT), and Housing Support Workers (HSW). The Street to Home program operates in the inner city areas of both Perth and Fremantle.

This program adopts a partnership approach that involves service managers, the MCOT, Housing Authority and the AOTs/HSWs meeting on a regular basis to monitor and improve client outcomes, streamline service delivery, and discuss and develop client management techniques. The partnerships required are critical to the success of the program. A shared database allows for the development of joint case management and support plans.

The MCOT model has been highly successful in introducing a more integrated approach to service delivery within the mainstream mental health system. MCOT works with other community mental health services and engages people who have not previously accessed mental health services.

The NPAH Evaluation found that the Street to Home program had been very successful in obtaining accommodation for clients, and/or assisting them to maintain accommodation. Between January 2010 and June 2012, 88 per cent are recorded as being accommodated in their most recent period of contact9. The evaluation found the program has a success rate of 74 per cent stably accommodated for at least 12 months10.

Sean entered the interim Foyer Oxford at 16 years of age before moving into the Foyer Oxford when it opened in March 2014. He was homeless due to:

- family and domestic violence;
- drug and alcohol misuse; and
- mental health issues in the family home.

Sean had a previous medical condition, which left him with permanent mobility impairment. He also reported experiencing difficulties with schoolwork and ongoing conflict with staff and students.

During Sean’s two year stay at Foyer Oxford, he was matched with a case manager who was able to assist him to think about his long-term aspirations and create a pathway plan to get there. Sean also:

- developed the skills needed to manage his tenancy;
- navigated and accessed training courses that aligned with his aspirations;
- found and maintained part-time work;
- accessed support services including counselling, career development and medical services; and
- improved his relationship with his family.

Sean successfully graduated from year 12 with qualifications in Aquaculture while maintaining part-time employment over the two years. Sean exited the Foyer into private rental accommodation and is now financially independent. He continues to build on his achievements 12 months from when he exited Foyer.

*Names changed to protect confidentiality.
Ruah Community Services is a Street to Home provider and coordinates Perth Registry Week in collaboration with the Perth City Council, City of Vincent, Housing Authority, CPFS and other community service organisations. The Registry Week initiative seeks to develop a registry of the needs of people sleeping rough in the Perth Central Business District and immediate surroundings. Teams of trained volunteers conduct surveys which help identify the most vulnerable homeless people in order to prioritise them for housing and support.

### Single adults – new accommodation services

Over the last few years there has been significant investment in increasing the number of beds in the Perth metropolitan area to meet the growing demand. These services offer more than just a roof, providing support and access to multi-faceted programs which respond to the challenging complexities of homelessness.

### St Bartholomew’s House

One of Australia’s leading social housing projects is St Bartholomew’s House (St Bart’s) in East Perth. St Bart’s provides a range of accommodation facilities including aged care, crisis, transitional and long-term accommodation programs for up to 148 people in need.

The facility provides new housing options for people who are homeless, including clients of Street to Home. The service commenced operation in the new building in September 2012 and is recognised as being unique in Australia, and a model of the new integrated response to support and accommodation for homeless adults.

The building’s design centres on providing an environment where clients will be inspired to take the steps required to move forward and reconnect with the community. With a community lounge, courtyards, parks, vegetable gardens and recreation areas, the building’s design is conducive to a homely community atmosphere, to promote reconnection and engagement for residents.

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**Results - Registry Week 2014 (13 – 15 May 2014)**

- 113 rough sleepers in the Perth region were surveyed using the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritisation Decision Tool (VI-SPDAT).
- The VI-SPDAT assesses the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and identifies which individuals are of highest priority for housing and support.
- Of the 113 rough sleepers surveyed:
  - Twenty one were aged under 25 years and 92 were aged 25 years or older. Their average age was 39.5 years old.
  - Twenty seven were women and 84 men. Two individuals identified as transgender.
  - Forty five (39.8 per cent) rough sleepers identified as Aboriginal.
  - Most rough sleepers had multiple health conditions.

More results are available on the Perth Registry Week 2014 Fact Sheet located at www.ruah.com.au
Beacon

The Salvation Army’s Beacon opened in February 2014 and is an inner city service providing accommodation and support to single men. Beacon replaced Lentara Hostel and increased the capacity by 25 beds to 102 beds.

As well as crisis and transition accommodation, Beacon provides a number of transitional support services which will enhance the Salvation Army’s ability to transition someone from point of dependence to independence. Onsite services include employment assistance, non-residential drug and alcohol services, communal kitchens and access to training courses.

Interim Night Shelter for Tom Fisher House

Opening in April 2014, the Interim Night Shelter for Tom Fisher House is a joint partnership between the state government and the St Vincent de Paul Society. It accommodates up to eight chronically homeless men over the age of 18 years. Tom Fisher has volunteered for the Society for over 50 years providing food, clothing, shelter, friendship and support to many people in the Western Australian community.

A purpose built facility (Tom Fisher House) is currently being constructed and is due to open in 2016. This will provide up to ten chronically homeless men with overnight accommodation and basic support. Two of the rooms will be available for couples. The facility will also have some provision to accommodate individuals with small dogs.

Services for Aboriginal people

In Western Australia, the proportion of homeless people who identified as being Aboriginal on Census night decreased from 40 per cent in 2006 to 35 per cent in 2011.

In 2014-15 Aboriginal people represented 40 per cent of those accessing SHSS in Western Australia. This represents a two per cent increase from 2013-14.

A target was set for a minimum of 11 per cent Aboriginal participation in all NPAH programs in Western Australia. Overall, this target was greatly exceeded in 2014-15, with 36 per cent of clients supported through the NPAH being Aboriginal.

According to the 2011 Census, homeless people living in severely crowded dwellings formed the largest group both nationally and in Western Australia. In Western Australia there were 4,154 persons living in severely crowded dwellings which was 43 per cent of the Western Australian persons that identified as homeless. Of the estimated 4,154 persons identified as living in severely crowded dwellings, 64 per cent identified as Aboriginal (2,671).

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) is a comprehensive COAG reform strategy that aims to address overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing condition and severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities within 10 years, to June 2018. It is a critical part of two major COAG agreements, the NAHA and the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA) which sets out the COAG framework for Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage over the long term. In Western Australia the NPARIH is administered by the Housing Authority.

The NPARIH Progress Review (2008-13), found that governments, including Western Australia, were on track to deliver the outcomes of NPARIH by 2018. Data from the 2011 ABS Census, indicated that inroads were being made into reducing severe overcrowding in locations where there has been NPARIH investment.
In 2015, negotiations commenced for a new National Partnership Agreement, for the period 2015-2018, to replace the existing NPARIH. The intention is to give states and territories more flexibility to deliver the housing Aboriginal residents need and increase focus on building sustainable systems.

CPFS currently allocates funding to 21 Aboriginal Managed Services and 44 Aboriginal targeted services\(^1\) – ‘targeted’ being a service that may not be classified as an Aboriginal specific service but the majority of clients accessing the service are Aboriginal. Many of these services are for homelessness and family and domestic violence, including:

- Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation services;
- Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Services;
- Family and Domestic Violence Coordinated Response Services;
- Family and Domestic Violence Services funded under NAHA;
- Homeless Accommodation and Support Services;
- Youth Accommodation and Support Services funded under NAHA; and
- Remote Rough Sleeper programs funded under NPAH.

CPFS is currently exploring how to further build capacity with Aboriginal organisations to deliver more services to Aboriginal people.

Kalgoorlie Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation service

The Kalgoorlie Aboriginal Visitors Accommodation facility was completed in late 2012. It provides short-stay accommodation for up to 41 Aboriginal people who are visiting Kalgoorlie from remote communities, who may otherwise sleep rough in public places or in overcrowded households. Visitors to the facility are provided with on-site support and linked to other appropriate support services. In recognition of the success of Stage One of this facility, the project was nominated as a finalist for a 2014 Western Australian Premier’s award in the ‘Improving Aboriginal Outcomes’ category.

The Red Cross-managed facility consists of five cabins and seven tents, facilities, laundry, a children’s playground and a large community building with kitchen, dining and sitting areas. It is an affordable, temporary and safe place to stay for up to three months, with access to individual and family support, community and health services and learning and personal development opportunities. Children staying at the facility attend a nearby primary school and local services visit residents to provide assistance as needed.

Derby Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation service

The Derby Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation service (DASSA) is a purpose-built facility operated by MercyCare as part of a new partnership with Centacare Kimberley. The joint state and local government venture was funded under the state Government’s Royalties for Regions program, to enable Aboriginal people from remote communities to access short-stay accommodation for up to four weeks at a time. This facility accommodates up to 54 people in both individual and family units.

The facility has been designed for Aboriginal people who are visiting Derby from remote communities, who may otherwise sleep rough in public places or in overcrowded households. Visitors to the facility are provided with on-site support and linked to other appropriate support services. The facility operates...
Service integration and broader policy and service developments

An integrated service system refers to service agencies working together to collaborate and coordinate their support, services and interventions to clients. This requires a person-centred approach and attention to client target groups, who have complex needs that require services from a number of agencies.

Some efforts may be one-off, but more typically, there is a system developed that enables agencies to meet or communicate and possibly streamline processes, to provide ongoing coordination.

Furthermore, an integrated service system provides greater flexibility for clients and service providers to match individual needs with the support provided — in order to develop solutions that will support client outcomes.
The outcomes, guiding principles and action areas outlined in the State Plan 2010-13 occurred alongside a number of other policy developments by partner agencies that have also progressed.

**Delivering community services in partnership**

The Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy replaced the Funding and Purchasing Community Services Policy (2002) and became effective from 1 July 2011. The DCSP Policy was jointly developed by the public and not-for-profit sectors to build and support a more mature funding and contracting relationship between the sectors by:

- rebalancing the nature of the relationship between the public and not-for-profit sectors;
- focusing on the achievement of outcomes and improving services and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged Western Australians;
- acknowledging the importance of partnering with the not-for-profit sector in the planning, design and delivery of human services;
- reducing the administrative burden imposed on not-for-profit organisations engaged to deliver services; and
- ensuring services are funded and procured in a sustainable manner.

**Open data policy**

The Western Australian Whole of Government Open Data Policy was launched in July 2015. The policy aims to facilitate greater release of government data which will enable opportunities for state government agencies, the not-for-profit community service sector and communities, to utilise data in more and diverse ways. Broader access and use of data enables strategic and targeted cross agency collaboration and the development of innovative solutions and services where there is an identified community need.

**Housing**

The Housing Authority’s Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing has delivered affordable housing options to Western Australians through a range of strategies including:

- a social housing system which supports people to transition out of the social housing system;
- affordable land and housing supply; affordable rental opportunities; affordable home ownership opportunities; and partnerships and reforms across government and industry.

On 10 May 2015, Housing Minister Colin Holt announced the Social Housing Investment Program. This is a $560 million investment in social housing that will halve the number of seniors and families currently on the priority waitlist. The investment aims to deliver up to 1,500 additional homes, including 1,000 social housing dwellings, which will be built, purchased or leased over the next two years to benefit the most vulnerable people on the priority waitlist for social housing.

The $560 million package is part of the 2015-16 State Budget. It will utilise $85 million of Housing Authority land, along with $452 million of land and housing development expenditure and $23 million in operational costs. The focus will be on constructing new homes, augmented by spot-purchasing or pre-purchasing competitively priced dwellings, leasing private rental stock and renewal of existing public housing sites. In 2015-16 and 2016-17, the Housing Authority will continue to work with industry to commence at least 2,200 new homes, inclusive of this initiative.

The Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-20 set a minimum target of 20,000 affordable homes by 2020. In June 2015, it was announced that the strategy had achieved this target. A new target of 30,000 homes by 2020 was subsequently set.

Under the NPAH initiatives, the Housing Authority has successfully provided a total of 1,233 houses, and has accommodated over 2,778 people through the ‘A Place to Call Home’ program from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2014.

The Housing Authority and Community Housing providers continue to work closely with the sector to consider opportunities to increase affordable housing options and arrangements.
Mental health

There is consistent evidence that people who are homeless have a much higher prevalence of mental illness than the general population\textsuperscript{14}, and that mental illness is a key risk factor for homelessness\textsuperscript{15}. Mental health issues are also more prevalent among homeless youth than among the overall population of young people in Australia.

On 1 July 2015, the Western Australian Drug and Alcohol Office amalgamated with the Mental Health Commission. A 10 year Western Australian Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015–2025 has been developed, and provides a ‘blueprint’ for the optimal mix of services needed for a better, more responsive and more equitable mental health, drug and alcohol system for all Western Australians over the next decade.

The plan sets an agenda to achieve a more positive, inclusive experience for consumers, carers and their families. This will be accomplished through the development of models of service (including service redesign), strengthening delivery partnerships across all sectors, better service coordination and integration, and a shared commitment to person-centred care.

Youth at risk

CPFS promotes the safety and wellbeing of young people by providing support to individuals and their parents, families and communities. Young people who are identified as being ‘at risk’ due to a variety of behaviour, situation and educational factors are the focus of the At Risk Youth Strategy 2015–18. The strategy has been developed to guide CPFS’ ongoing role in planning and delivering services that encourage young people to reach their potential and promote safety in the community.

Western Australian NPAH initiatives including Youth Services – Foyer model, Street to Home, Safe at Home, Young Women Leaving Child Protection Services, Homeless Accommodation Support Workers and Support for Children in Homeless Families have three specific outputs addressed through the 2015–17 NPAH, including:

- support services to young people aged 12 to 18 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to re-engage with their family where it is safe to do so, and maintain sustainable accommodation and engagement with education and or/employment;
- support services for homeless people, including families with children, to stabilise their situation and to achieve sustainable housing; and
- support services for children who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, including, but not limited to, maintaining contact with the education system.

State regional services reform

Findings from recent reviews, in particular the Aboriginal Youth Expenditure Review and a Location Based Expenditure Review (LBER) of the Roebourne and Martu communities, highlighted that despite significant investment, outcomes for many Aboriginal people across Western Australia remain poor. Common themes emerging from the reviews highlight acute program investment fragmentation, poor service coordination and lack of tailoring responses to local need as key contributors to the ineffectiveness of government services to Aboriginal people.
In response to the findings of the LBER, in December 2014 the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Sub Committee endorsed further development of a mechanism to progress the reform of human services delivery to regional communities. In May 2015, the state government announced a reform plan to enable improved outcomes for Aboriginal individuals with principles relating to targeted spending according to need, and development of sustainable services which are locally designed and delivered.

While the Regional Services Reform will be accelerated in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions, it is expected the reform will be rolled out across the state. The investment principles of the reform are likely to inform service design and contracting for homelessness services in the future, and are as follows:

1. Investment will only go to identified priority locations.
2. Expenditure in the identified priority locations will be reviewed and redirected in collaboration with the local community.
3. Minimum contract requirements will be set (scale and length) to drive service redesign.
4. Service redesign will be innovative, and include wrap around services tailored to the needs of individuals and families.
5. Contract performance will be monitored to enable continuous improvement while ensuring investment in programs that work.
6. Service delivery will be coordinated to minimise overlap and fragmentation.
7. Activity and funding will be aligned across all three tiers of government to reduce duplication.
8. Partnerships between agencies and the community will be strengthened to meet community need.
9. Action will target the needs of families and individuals.

The Regional Services Reform calls for a collective impact approach for multiple organisations and state agencies to abandon their own agenda in favour of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort. This approach and these investment principles will guide procurement practices and future work by government agencies and the not-for-profit community service sector.

Current and future directions

The real costs of homelessness are seen – in dollar terms – across the criminal justice system, welfare agencies, mental health services, schools and in health centres and hospitals. The social costs are also significant - rising crime rates and increased levels of violence. The human cost involved, especially to children and young people, is enormous - physical, mental and emotional stress which often shapes a child’s future. Everyone needs to take responsibility for homelessness.

While there have been great successes across specialist homelessness services to date, there needs to be consideration to how services can be delivered effectively and innovatively, considering funding constraints over the short, medium and longer term. Our future direction will involve reviewing our current programs and what is currently working well, and investigating new and sustainable ways services can be delivered to better meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
This work is already progressing through partnership work and forums such as the Regional Homelessness Forums, Regional Human Services Forums, Western Australian Council on Homelessness and inter-agency homelessness working groups. CPFS continues to work in partnership with existing service providers and government agencies to:

- strengthen networks and service integration;
- consider opportunities for improvement within the current funding limitations and contractual arrangements; and
- where possible, inclusion of additional funding to support the expansion and development of services.

Current work includes program development on services for Aboriginal people, rough sleepers, women and children escaping family and domestic violence and single women.

**Services for families and Aboriginal people**

In Western Australia, CPFS is the lead agency for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people. A key strategic priority for the Department is building capacity and strengthening partnerships and integration with community sector and government partner agency services. This includes a number of frameworks and programs relating to intensive family support services which both prevent children and young people from coming into care, and reunify children in out-of-home care to family.

Recent analysis by CPFS regarding the underlying issues faced by parents of a sample of children in care highlighted links of family and domestic violence, alcohol and drug use, mental health issues and homelessness. The complexity of homelessness and impact on families needs to be considered in planning for future homelessness programs and integrated service design models.

CPFS is trialling different ways to address Aboriginal children entering care, where homelessness is a factor, through the Intensive Family Support Housing Program. This is an across-government strategy working with an Aboriginal community housing provider in line with the state’s Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy and the DCSP Policy. While currently being delivered on a small scale, it is hoped that it will expand as a strategy to reduce the number of Aboriginal children coming into care and improve outcomes for severely disadvantaged families.

**Wooree Miya Women’s Refuge**

Wooree Miya Women’s Refuge is the only refuge in the metropolitan area primarily for Aboriginal women and children who are homeless, or at imminent risk of homelessness, due to family and domestic violence. The refuge is currently being re-developed and will have significantly greater capacity to accommodate more families, including larger families with older children. Wooree Miya will provide work readiness and vocational training, as well as greater access to specialist services, such as health and alcohol and drug counsellors, through onsite visits by partner agencies. Outreach services will be provided to families exiting the accommodation and families in the local area.

**Interagency collaboration**

Interagency collaboration continues, including the inner-city Parks Working Group to enable coordination of services for people staying in inner-city parks. This includes Aboriginal people, who may be visiting Perth from regional areas for medical treatment and may not have suitable accommodation. Work is progressing towards the provision of a dedicated service coordination agency to provide a single point of contact for the local government agencies, businesses and residents, thereby streamlining the delivery of services.

**50 lives 50 homes campaign**

‘Uniting for Homelessness’ (UFH) is an innovative project to support homeless people in their journey from homelessness to jobs and sustained permanent housing. It is the backbone to the 50 Lives 50 Homes Campaign.

UFH seeks new solutions to homelessness in service programs, and recognises the need for homeless support services to partner with business and social enterprises and explore alternative funding options for sustainable services.
In July 2014, a grant was provided to build on existing collaboration and work with vulnerable people identified through Registry Week. Ruah is the lead agency in the 50 Lives 50 Homes Campaign, which builds on the work achieved since the Perth Registry Week events in 2012 and 2014. While still in its infancy, the campaign will pull government and non-government stakeholders together to consider current issues in the key areas of housing, health/mental health and support for rough sleepers, and how positive outcomes for those who are most vulnerable in the inner city homelessness population can be delivered and sustained over time, through these greater collaborative efforts. This collective impact campaign focusses on:

- ongoing use of the VI-SPDAT to identify the needs of those who are homeless;
- a ‘Housing First’ approach for those identified with the highest needs;
- engaging local communities to participate in the campaign;
- improving service delivery and systems to achieve increased housing placement rates; and
- improved support systems, tracking and reporting on progress and outcomes.

Family and domestic violence services

CPFS continues to be the lead agency responsible for family and domestic violence strategic planning in Western Australia. This includes development, implementation and monitoring of Western Australia’s Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022 (Prevention Strategy) and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

To support the implementation of the Prevention Strategy, the Freedom from Fear: Working Towards the Elimination of Family and Domestic Violence in Western Australia Action Plan 2015 (Freedom from Fear Action Plan) was developed. This plan focusses on integrated service delivery and outlines the next key actions required to work towards improvements in prevention, early intervention and responses to perpetrators of violence.

Over recent years there has been significant progress on initiatives regarding perpetrator accountability and behaviour change, however it is recognised there is more work to be done. Key initiatives to date include the establishment of the ‘Breathing Space’ behaviour change service for men, the Men’s Domestic Violence Helpline, and the establishment of the Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams (FDVRT).

A further priority of the Freedom from Fear Action Plan is to target communities and populations at greatest risk. In response to data which demonstrated that the Kimberley region has significantly higher rates of reported family and domestic violence compared with other metropolitan and regional locations in Western Australia, the Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officer’s Group commissioned the development of the Safer Families, Safer Communities, Kimberley Family and Domestic Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020 (Kimberley Plan).

The Kimberley Plan outlines strategies to support a ‘whole-of-community approach’ to family and domestic violence. New funding and resources have been provided to support implementation of the Kimberley Plan, including funding for Tjallara Consulting to work alongside Aboriginal Elders, Law People and community leaders to strengthen existing culture and community based responses to family and domestic violence; and funding to expand the East and West Kimberley FDVRTs to include a more targeted and comprehensive response to perpetrators of family and domestic violence.

Single women

There is an increasing awareness and understanding regarding the situations of women experiencing homelessness, including both women who may find themselves homeless for the first time later in life, and women who have experienced homelessness on and off for many years. Many women may have experienced family and domestic violence at some stage, but this will not always be the presenting issue at the time of seeking assistance so many are not able to access family and domestic violence refuge services. We need to further develop our understanding of the complexity of homelessness for single women, their needs and long-term pathways out of homelessness.
NAHA funding towards services such as St Barts and Beacon, have traditionally targeted single adult males. The not-for-profit community service sector has recognised the growing need for services for older women and in late 2014, St Barts opened ‘Kensington Street Transitional Accommodation Services’, providing safe, secure and affordable accommodation for females aged 50 years and over who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.

CPFS is currently working with a number of organisations to broaden the target group of funding relating to inner-city homelessness crisis and transitional support services to include single women (including those over 50) and couples. Since July 2015, The Salvation Army has dedicated one floor at the Beacon facility to provide 18 rooms to accommodate single women and 16 rooms for couples. In early 2016 UnitingCare West will also be transitioning a six bed share house in Perth to provide accommodation for single women.

Next steps and vision for the future

The vision identified in the State Plan 2010-13 served as a guide for choosing current and future courses of action. An integrated service system will build stronger partnerships between different agencies and service systems. The vision remains consistent with standards and protocols focussing on service integration and collaborative practice to enable better outcomes for individuals and families. This vision will continue to strengthen partnerships and collaboration into the future. The Western Australia Council on Homelessness (WACH) will play an integral role in this process and the development of a new Strategic Homelessness State Plan.

In order to develop a long-term strategic homelessness plan, we need to review our current programs and consider principles for investment of government funding in conjunction with the considerable work being undertaken by the not-for-profit community service sector, which is not all reliant on government funding.

Planning for the long-term will consider re-contracting of services currently funded under NAHA and NPAH. At this stage, we need to plan according to the need for Western Australians and not specific NPAH or NAHA outcomes or funding limitations given the uncertain future of these agreements.

Planning requires input from all stakeholders – partner government agencies, not-for-profit service providers, peak bodies and most importantly those individuals and families in need of support.

A ‘reform project’ for homelessness services needs to take into consideration investment principles:

- funding is targeted;
- coordinated;
- not duplicated; and
- designed to meet the local need.
Next steps will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Review** of current programs, including Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data and qualitative information obtained during progress reports, service reviews and on-going contract management;

- A **consultation** process with peak bodies, Senior Officers Groups (comprised of representatives from relevant government agencies) and program specific groups. This should include examination of current “homelessness” services funded by other government agencies and possible duplication.

- **Regional mapping and short-term planning** which will include consideration to the investment principles:
  - examine current specialist homelessness and mainstream services available in the local region;
  - identify how the local regions currently achieve integrated services; and
  - identify new trends and ‘needs,’ and opportunities for improvement.

- **Examination of current activities undertaken by local government authorities** and collation of feedback on homelessness-related issues being experienced in their municipalities, and the type of activities or support that they are involved in to address these issues.

- **Negotiations with the Commonwealth Government** on policy and funding arrangements and consideration to Commonwealth-only funded homelessness services in Western Australia.

- **Consultation with the Housing Authority and community housing providers** in relation to housing affordability issues and options.

- Consideration to **contemporary research** relating to current trends and service delivery models.

- Development of a **strategic homelessness plan** for the future.
# Acknowledgements

The State Government acknowledges the following organisations which currently deliver Specialist Homelessness Services in Western Australia.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Service Provider</th>
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<td>55 Central Inc. Aboriginal Alcohol &amp; Drug Service (A.A.D.S) (Inc)</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Centacare Kimberley Association Inc</td>
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<td>Patricia Giles Centre Inc</td>
<td>Peel Youth Services Incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth Asian Community Centre Inc</td>
<td>Perth Inner City Youth Service Inc</td>
<td>Pilbara Community Legal Service Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise Network Inc</td>
<td>Ruah Community Services</td>
<td>Salvation Army (WA) Property Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share &amp; Care Community Services Group Inc</td>
<td>Short Term Accommodation for Youth Inc</td>
<td>South West Refuge Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Bartholomew’s House Inc</td>
<td>St Patrick’s Community Support Centre Ltd</td>
<td>St Vincent De Paul Society WA Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starick Services Inc</td>
<td>Swan Emergency Accommodation Inc</td>
<td>The Lucy Saw Centre Association Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UnitingCare West</td>
<td>Victoria Park Youth Accommodation (Inc)</td>
<td>Waratah Support Centre (South West Region) Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westaus Crisis and Welfare Service Inc</td>
<td>Women’s Health Care Association Inc</td>
<td>Youth Futures WA (Inc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Involvement Council Inc</td>
<td>Zonta House Refuge Association Inc</td>
<td>Youth Futures WA (Inc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

1 Social benefit bonds are a relatively new concept in funding social programs, and provide investors a return based on achieved social outcomes. SVA Consulting (2015). Pinning benefit bonds down. http://svaconsultingquarterly.com/2013/05/26/pinning-benefit-bonds-down/


13 Data current 2 November 2015.


