

A New Approach to Homelessness for Queensland

This fact sheet outlines the new approach to homelessness reduction for Queensland, including an overview of the new national framework for homelessness, key stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and an overview of new investment and reform activity to reduce homelessness in Queensland, in partnership with the community services sector.

National Context

The Australian Government's White Paper on homelessness, *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness* (the White Paper), released on 21 December 2008 sets a new national strategic approach to homelessness. The White Paper can be found at http://www.facsia.gov.au/housing/homelessness_white_paper/the_road_home.pdf

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed to new investment in reducing homelessness through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the Homelessness, Remote Indigenous Housing and Social Housing National Partnership Agreements. Attachment 1 provides an overview of the White Paper and Attachment 2 provides an overview of the Homelessness National Partnership Agreement (NPA).

The Department of Communities is leading the newly established multi-agency Homelessness Reform Group (HRG). The group, made up of senior government staff, is responsible for considering improvements to the homelessness service system and has developed Queensland's implementation plan, which is required under the Homelessness NPA. The plan focuses on the steps Queensland will take to meet the outputs and performance benchmarks in the Homelessness NPA. An overview of the Implementation Plan can be found at <http://www.housing.qld.gov.au/>

What involvement will non-government organisations have in shaping the Queensland responses to homelessness?

The Queensland responses fit with the directions and priorities set out in the White Paper, which was strongly influenced by input from the non-government sector through the green paper process.

The Queensland Implementation Plan for the national partnership was developed by the Homelessness Reform Group. Comment was provided through targeted sector consultation through the Homelessness Reform Group Working Group RG Joint Working Group, which comprises equal membership of government and sector representatives.

More detailed consultation is planned to finetune service models and implementation processes, through focus groups, regional forums and standing consultation mechanisms.

What do the new arrangements mean for clients?

- As part of a broader response to the new national agenda, the Department of Communities is working towards more integrated services for people experiencing homelessness, and to improve client pathways from crisis to longer term sustainable housing.
- These changes will have positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

What improvements to the homelessness service system are planned?

The White Paper provides an ambitious agenda to halve homelessness by 2020. Service providers and clients may not notice immediate change in the number of homeless people in their local area. Such changes will be incremental and felt over time. The first step was the development of a five-year implementation plan under the Homelessness NPA.

The Department of Communities co-ordinated a Queensland Government response to the Homelessness NP.

The broad directions are the introduction of improved responses to rough sleeping and chronic homelessness based on the Street to Home model; improved support for tenants to maintain tenancy and improved transition planning for people exiting health or statutory settings; improved coordination..

Over time this will mean new or improved services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The location and type of services is based on need. Services will aim to provide integrated solutions that meet the complex and varying needs of clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The non-government sector will be involved in the development of the new or improved service responses.

How will these improvements be demonstrated?

The White Paper and Homelessness NPA include a range of outputs, performance benchmarks and baseline measures. The Queensland Government will report to the Australian Government on progress against these measures.

How will the non-government sector be kept informed of progress?

Queensland Government agencies will continue to work in partnership with the non-profit community services sector to develop programs or services prior to final implementation. This will include consultation through mechanisms such as focus groups, regional forums, periodic agency network meetings, Regional Managers Coordination Networks, and departmental regional offices.

The Queensland Government is committed to engaging the community services sector in planning and implementation of *the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*. This commitment reflects the principles expressed in the Queensland Compact — a partnership agreement that guides the relationship between the non-profit community services sector and the Queensland Government to achieve better outcomes for Queenslanders.

Who can I contact if I have questions about these arrangements?

Services requiring additional information should contact:

Ms Kerry Batchler

Director

Homelessness Programs

Phone: 07 32247987

E-mail: Kerry.Batchler@communities.qld.gov.au

