

## Attachment 1

### **The Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness – *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness***

**January 2009**

- 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 new approach to homelessness is significant, with tighter controls placed on the achievement of improved outcomes for homeless Australians. Looser controls will also be placed on inputs, allowing state and territory governments and community organisations who are closer to clients to specify the design of services that work.
- The White Paper establishes two headline goals which will guide the long term response to homelessness in Australia, these are to:
  - halve overall homelessness by 2020
  - offer accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020.
- There are also interim targets of a seven per cent reduction in overall homelessness by 2013, a 25 per cent reduction in rough sleepers and a 33 per cent reduction in Indigenous homelessness.
- The White Paper states that homelessness will be implemented through three strategies:
  - *Turning off the tap* – services will intervene early to prevent homelessness.
  - *Improving and expanding services* – services will be more connected and responsive to achieve sustainable housing, improve economic and social participation and end homelessness.
  - *Breaking the cycle* – people who become homeless will move more quickly through the crisis system to stable housing with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur.

- Key initiatives proposed in the White Paper include:
  - Tenancy support for private and public housing.
  - Strategies to support young people aged 12–18 years to stay connected with their family.
  - No exits into homelessness from health, corrective services, child care and mental health facilities.
  - Strategies to assist people experiencing domestic violence to stay in their home.
  - Community based mental health services.
  - Improved access to Centrelink services.
  - Quality standards, new funding models, improved information technology and workforce development strategies for homelessness services.
  - Social housing.
  - Assertive outreach for rough sleepers.
  - Strategies targeting older people including a specialist facility for older people who are homeless and improved services.
- In addition, the Commonwealth Government proposes to establish a national homelessness research strategy to support the White Paper priorities including population-based research, cost benefit analysis of the effectiveness of interventions and longitudinal studies.