Opening Doors

Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness
2011–14

Queensland
Government

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Message from the Premier and Minister

Homelessness is a whole-of-community problem.

When doors are opened for homeless people and support and homes are provided, many will stay safe and keep their home. Through our Street to Home programs and our investment in new social housing, we are already achieving positive results to solve this problem.

The community's response to the devastating floods and Cyclone Yasi in the summer of 2010/11 showed that Queenslanders from all walks of life can come together for a common purpose and can support each other to get back on their feet.

We are calling for a similarly focused effort for Queensland to reach the national goals outlined in the Australian Government's white paper on homelessness: *The Road Home* and *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, such as reducing the number of people sleeping rough by 25%; reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness by 33%; and reducing overall homelessness by 7 percent — all by 2013.

Our government's previous strategy, the $235 million *Responding to Homelessness Strategy 2005–09*, set us in the right direction.

It extended our response, taking us from supporting people in crisis to also providing early intervention services, outreach programs and improving connections between government and non-government services.

But there is more to do.

This *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011–2014* contains three priority areas addressing prevention, housing and support, and services reform.

It will be assisted by recent investments in housing and homelessness programs through the Australian Government's National Partnership Agreements and by our adoption of a 'no wrong door' approach to service delivery.

The strategy will also contribute to *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*, by supporting people who are homeless to participate in employment and education and ensuring the health issues of people who are homeless are better addressed.

Homelessness is everyone's business. Specialist homelessness services cannot do the job on their own. People across governments and communities must work together if we are to help vulnerable people avoid becoming homeless, or end their homelessness.

It is our sincere aim that this strategy can focus all of our efforts to help address the problem of homelessness in Queensland and meet that goal.

Anna Bligh MP
Premier and Minister for
Reconstruction

Karen Struthers MP
Minister for Community Services and
Housing and Minister for Women

Introduction

Queensland has achieved significant progress in addressing homelessness (see table commencing on page 5) but to meet the ambitious targets to be achieved by 2013 and beyond, more will need to be done.

Most Queenslanders have stable employment, access to education, a network of social supports, and are able to enjoy most aspects of community and economic life[1]. However, there are a significant number of Queenslanders who are vulnerable and at risk of significant disadvantage or are already disadvantaged, and find it hard to get ahead.

It is difficult to quantify the number of people who are homeless. Best estimates provided by 2006 Census data[2] suggest that the number of people who are homeless in Queensland increased from 24,569 in 2001 to 26,782 in 2006. This was an increase of 9% from 2001 compared to an increase of 4.8% nationally over the same period. The estimated rate of homelessness per 10,000 people in Queensland decreased from 70 in 2001 to 69 in 2006.

Homelessness and disadvantage are linked

Our strategy

The strategy was developed in consultation with a wide range of community and government stakeholders from October 2010 to February 2011, and by analysing existing research, evaluation findings and previous submissions on homelessness.

It was developed in line with the principles of the Queensland Compact[3] — a partnership agreement that guides the relationship between the not-for-profit community services sector and the Queensland Government.

The Queensland Government will contribute to the national long-term goals of:

- halving homelessness by 2020
- offering supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020
- providing access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to social and economic participation.

The strategy will assist us to reach these goals by:

- setting clear long-term policy directions, and a vision and actions for reducing homelessness
- informing program and service model development and organisational arrangements
- clarifying roles and responsibilities in reducing homelessness
- guiding involvement in homelessness community action plans[4]
- guiding future funding and realignment decisions and/or priorities[5]
- guiding coordinated and/or integrated delivery of services
- providing a Queensland-specific response to the approach outlined in the white paper, *The Road Home*.

Our vision

To end homelessness by ensuring every Queenslander is empowered to find and keep a home.

This vision is related to the Queensland Government's Toward Q2 commitments of achieving a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland. Specifically, it will have a direct impact on Fair: Supporting Safe and Caring Communities and the target to reduce jobless households. It also complements the social inclusion aims of providing opportunities to participate fully in the life of society.

More broadly, the vision supports the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25.1 which states "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services…"

Achieving the vision will not be easy and may take time. Success will depend on local communities, organisations, government and non-government service providers getting behind it and working together to make it happen.

Our priorities

Three priority areas will focus Queensland's efforts to reduce homelessness over the next three years.

1. *Helping people avoid becoming homeless* — by improving housing outcomes for people exiting health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities.

2. *Helping people get ahead* — by ensuring people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have access to safe, affordable, well-located and appropriate housing together with support and increased opportunities to get ahead through participation in education, training and employment.

3. *Working together for stronger services* — better coordinating and integrating policies, programs and services, using and sharing data, and improving local case coordination.

These priorities and associated actions will build on the investments outlined on the following pages.

Our approach to assisting key groups

The Queensland Government understands that people in different circumstances or demographic groups have diverse needs that require different approaches to preventing or ending homelessness.

Recognising the issues faced by discrete client groups at greater risk of homelessness including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people escaping domestic and family violence, and young people, the strategy aims to ensure that there are services to respond to a range of needs and deliver appropriate support to help people access and sustain stable housing.

Our responses

Over the past six years the Queensland Government and Australian Government have invested significantly in housing and homelessness services and has worked to improve responses to homelessness, such as making people who are homeless a priority group for housing assistance. The Government has also reorganised its way of delivering services to make sure that people who are homeless are able to access the full range of assistance they require to become more independent and improve their quality of life. Many of the strategies, agreements and initiatives listed in the table below have led to a more coordinated approach across government to tackling homelessness.

2005	• Responding to Homelessness Strategy 2005–09 commenced.
	• Strengthening Non-Government Organisations Strategy.
	• Strengthening Indigenous Non-Government Organisations Strategy.
2006	• One social housing system[6] reforms commenced.

2007	• *Community Services Act 2007.*
	• Queensland Government Framework for Investment in Human Services.
	• Queensland Future Growth Fund.[7]
	• Queensland Standards for Community Services.
	• Community Services Skilling Plan.
	• Department of Communities' Needs Based Planning and Resource Allocation Framework.
2008	• National Affordable Housing Agreement.[8]
	• Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan — Social Housing Initiative ($1.2 billion over three years, around 4,000 new social housing properties in Queensland).
	• Queensland Compact.
	• Council of Australian Government housing reforms.[9]
	• National Rental Affordability Scheme.
	• Strengthening Social Housing Strategy.
2009	• New Department of Communities formed.
	• Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum created.
	• Queensland's response to Australian Government's Green Paper on Homelessness: *Which Way Home?*
	• National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness implementation commenced ($284.6 million over four years).
	• National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing commenced.
	• National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing commenced.
	• *For Our Sons and Daughters — A Queensland Government Strategy to Reduce Domestic and Family Violence 2009–14* commenced.
	• $414 million supplementary funding for community services over four years.
	• Queensland Affordable Housing Strategy.
	• Queensland Regulatory Simplification Plan 2009–13.
2010	• Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness consultation.
	• Department of Communities' Output-based funding and reporting.
	• Youth at Risk Initiative implementation commenced.
	• 'No wrong door' approach commenced.
	• Queensland Housing Assistance Forum established.
	• Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–20 *Positively Ageless* commenced.
	• Department of Communities' Commitment Statement: Fair, Cohesive and Equitable Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Queenslanders.

Priority areas and actions

1. Helping people avoid becoming homeless

Many people face barriers to finding, securing or sustaining tenancies, and as a result are at risk of homelessness, or may experience recurring periods of homelessness.

The root causes of homelessness can include:

- individual vulnerabilities or risk factors (such as disadvantage/poverty, lack of social support, substance abuse, debts and financial management, poor living skills or poor mental health)
- unexpected life events (such as job loss, relationship or family breakdown, health crisis, natural disaster or abuse)
- structural factors (such as poverty or lack of employment opportunities)
- barriers and gaps[10] in the health, housing, income support, employment, child safety or other service systems.

Key pathways[11] into homelessness include housing affordability stress, family breakdown, poor life transitions (particularly from statutory or institutional settings) and untreated mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Many vulnerable people are at an increased risk of homelessness after they exit from health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities. People exiting these facilities who have mental illness, who have a disability and have complex support needs, young people subject to child protection interventions, and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples[12] are at particular risk.

Exiting facilities can put people at increased risk

Photographer: Vicki Yen

What's working:

RentConnect

Many people have problems finding and securing a place to live in the private rental market.

Dedicated RentConnect officers in Housing Service Centres are providing one-on-one assistance to people including information on how to find a home, and practical assistance to help people secure a tenancy in the private rental market. This includes helping people to complete the rental application process, understand what rent they can afford and strategies for an effective property search. By March 2011, 2823 households had been assisted by RentConnect during 2010/11, exceeding the target of assisting 2650 households.

Following the summer floods and Cyclone Yasi, the RentConnect service provided a critical role assisting disaster affected households into rental accommodation.

Youth Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS) is helping young people who are exiting the care of the state (youth justice or child safety out-of-home care) on a path towards independence, including maintaining stable housing. Young people are being helped by case workers to transition towards independent living in accommodation appropriate to their needs. Accommodation options include supervised community accommodation, community managed youth studios and independent living units.

At 30 April, 2011 213 young people had been accommodated through YHARS and 373 had received support.

Approach

The Queensland Government will ensure that people at risk of homelessness are identified early, and ensure they have access to the right support before reaching crisis point.

Service improvements will be undertaken within existing resources to support better networks between housing providers and services that deliver the support people need to access housing and sustain their tenancies. Case management will be improved, and better and earlier use will be made of individualised transition plans, involving multiple support providers where this is needed.

The Queensland Government will also work with service providers to reduce risk factors for homelessness, providing better access to supports such as income support, counselling, education, training and stable employment.

The Queensland Government will build on current efforts, such as HomeStay Support services, that provide early intervention and post crisis support to enable people to address social and financial issues that put their tenancies at risk.

The Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland) program will be improved to better assist people experiencing difficulties with their tenancies, including developing a new service model.

Actions

HEADLINE REFORM: Reduce exits into homelessness

The Queensland Government will strengthen and increase current responses to people leaving health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities and introduce new processes, including:

- planning and implementing service models, policies and procedures that prevent exits into homelessness, including ensuring clients at risk of homelessness have individual transition/discharge plans for attaining sustainable housing before exiting health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities

- measuring the success of the implementation of exit plans for clients leaving health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities.

The reforms will include an improved case management approach together with better and earlier use of individualised transition plans involving multiple support providers. Better linkages between services will also be implemented to improve coordinated approaches.

Actions for strategic priority 1

By 2014, we will:	We will do this by….	Responsibility
1.1 Reduce exits into homelessness	**1.1.1** Planning and implementing service models, policies and procedures that prevent exits into homelessness, including ensuring clients at risk of homelessness have individual transition/ discharge plans for attaining sustainable housing before exiting health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities. **1.1.2** Measuring the effectiveness of the implementation of exit plans for clients leaving health facilities, child safety arrangements, prisons, and youth detention facilities.	Department of Communities, Queensland Health, Department of Community Safety, Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Queensland Police Service in collaboration with the community services sector
1.2 Increase clients' access to full income support entitlements	**1.2.1** Providing better information to housing and homelessness service providers on income support and ensuring clients are being provided maximum entitlements.	Centrelink in collaboration with relevant government agencies and community services sector.
1.3 Help people establish and maintain tenancies	**1.3.1** Implementing the findings of the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland) review, including introduction of service delivery outputs; a prioritisation framework to ensure clients with the greatest needs receive priority; and output based reporting.	Department of Communities in collaboration with the community services sector
Contribution to targets: Fewer people will become homeless.		

Photographer: Ian Williams

2. Helping people get ahead

Homeless people or those at risk require a range of services to address the factors that have led to their homelessness or that have put them at risk. These include access to appropriate accommodation and support. Once support and housing is established, people are better able to take up education, training and employment opportunities that can assist people to get ahead and experience a better quality of life and greater independence.

Some Queenslanders who are homeless will get back on their feet quickly with targeted support. Others will need long-term and intensive support. Some people move in and out of homelessness for many years and when they do find housing, they are not able to sustain it for long. To 'break the cycle' of homelessness, many homeless people need help to move quickly into stable housing with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur.

The Queensland and Australian Governments are increasing the supply of social housing options. In addition, the Queensland Government is ensuring that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are given priority access to social housing.

Investing in responses to homelessness improves the lives of people experiencing homelessness, but also makes sound financial sense for the community as a whole. Research has found that providing effective services for homeless people produces "positive outcomes for their clients at relatively low cost and can reduce health, justice and police expenditure." [13]

Photographer: Vicki Yen

What's working:

The 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign was an innovative effort led by Micah Projects to identify and house the most vulnerable homeless people in inner Brisbane.

Volunteers and community services workers fanned out across the inner city to survey people sleeping rough.

The Department of Communities worked with the campaign to ensure quick access to housing; as of May 2011, 56 people had been provided accommodation.

Increased social housing supply
More people in housing need are being provided accommodation.

The Queensland Government in partnership with the Australian Government is providing unprecedented levels of new social housing with 4833 new social housing dwellings bought or built since 30 June 2008. This is a result of investments in new social housing by the Queensland Future Growth Fund, and through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan — Social Housing Initiative.

Under the one social housing system, people who are homeless are prioritised for social housing. In the 12 months to March 2011, 2497 individuals or families that were homeless were placed into social housing.

This is more than half of the total 4851 new households that were placed into social housing over this period.

Approach

The Queensland Government will fund delivery of services that:

- improves access to existing and new accommodation and support options
- improves flexibility of available accommodation and services to meet diverse needs
- quickly settles people who are homeless into stable housing
- enables them to sustain their tenancies
- supports them to help them engage in community life.

The Queensland Government is committed to a 'housing first' approach, which transitions a person or household straight from homelessness into stable, long-term housing, and integrated housing and support. This approach involves close working among service providers to deliver coordinated services to clients. Unnecessary and unsettling movement through multiple short-term housing arrangements will be minimised.

Where this is not possible, people will be assisted through transitional accommodation and supported to stabilise their situation and build skills and independence.

Queensland is committed to the national aims to provide access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing that contributes to people's social and economic participation. The Queensland Government aims to help social housing tenants increase their abilities, independence and social connections, and increase their incomes through employment, so they gain greater financial independence and expand their housing options.

Queensland will improve connections and develop new partnerships and referral pathways between housing providers, homelessness services and agencies delivering training and employment services to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. In addition, more effort will be focused on identifying early intervention points to catch people as they begin to disengage from employment, education or the community.

Housing first moves people straight to stable, long-term housing with support

Actions

HEADLINE REFORM: Adopting a housing first approach

The Queensland Government will implement a housing first approach for people experiencing homelessness, which will provide quick access to stable housing and support. Stable housing is a necessary precursor to successful engagement with people with high needs. Housing first also entails the provision of support that addresses the factors that led to homelessness in the first place. A number of new initiatives are being implemented based on housing first principles:

Photographer: Ian Williams

- The Brisbane Common Ground initiative, which will house and support rough sleepers.
- A supportive housing service in Townsville for rough sleepers, primarily Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Street to Home services, which support rough sleepers and those experiencing chronic homelessness to transition to stable housing.

These initiatives will lead to broader reforms in the Housing and Homelessness Sector, ensuring they help achieve long term outcomes for clients.

Actions for strategic priority 2

By 2014, we will:	We will do this by….	Responsibility
2.1 **Provide access to appropriate accommodation support to people who are homeless**	**2.1.1** Providing priority access for homeless people to social housing connected to support services, to help them get ahead. **2.1.2** Delivering Brisbane Common Ground to house and support rough sleepers in Brisbane, and monitoring its effectiveness. **2.1.3** Implementing a supportive housing service in Townsville for rough sleepers.	Department of Communities in collaboration with relevant Indigenous community stakeholders, government departments and the community services sector.

By 2014, we will:	We will do this by….	Responsibility
	2.1.4 Implementing the Youth at Risk initiative for vulnerable young people aged 10–18. **2.1.5** Building more housing in remote Indigenous communities. **2.1.6** Improving the quality and amenity of housing in Indigenous communities.	
2.2 **Increase the economic participation and social engagement of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness**	**2.2.1** Providing improved access and service coordination of existing programs and new employment, training and education initiatives. **2.2.1** Delivering training, employment and other assistance to unemployed and under-employed people who are in housing need or exiting social housing to improve their economic circumstances.	Department of Communities in collaboration with relevant government departments and the community services sector.
2.3 **Improve responses to victims of domestic violence at risk of or experiencing homelessness**	**2.3.1** Completing and implementing the findings of the review of crisis accommodation and related support services for victims of domestic and family violence.	Department of Communities in collaboration with the community services sector.

Contribution to targets: Provide accommodation for people sleeping rough, increasing their social inclusion and financial security, and help them to exit homelessness permanently.

Photographer: Ian Williams

3. Working together for stronger services

Helping people who are homeless find or sustain housing often means that a range of interventions and services must come together to achieve outcomes for clients.

Common approaches to assessing client needs leads to the best outcomes

People generally have to navigate their own way through a service system which can at times be disjointed and complicated. People can achieve the best outcomes[14] when service providers have a common approach to assessing clients' needs, comprehensively plan, share information and coordinate how each provider delivers services to the client.

Specialist homelessness services need to be coordinated and integrated with mainstream services such as Centrelink, health and employment services and education and training services.

Community service organisations are facing a number of challenges to their sustainability. Issues include capacity to meet demand as need increases and changes, maximising the use of technology within limited resources, increased competition for workers from other industries, and ensuring the right people are there to deliver services[15]. The Queensland Compact will continue to guide work between the Queensland Government and the community services sector to address these issues.

Better data is needed on homelessness to support streamlined and effective services and to measure progress in reducing homelessness and client outcomes.

What's working:

Townsville Public Intoxication and Homelessness Action Plan

In October 2010, the Premier announced that a Queensland Government Action Plan for Townsville would provide medical and social support to some of Townsville's most disadvantaged residents. This initiative would also reduce the negative public perceptions of nuisance behaviour and public safety that are associated with homeless people in central business district parks and public spaces. Through the Action Plan, the Government Taskforce, working with relevant non-government organisations have:

- ensured that 34 people are no longer sleeping rough and 18 of these are now in medium or long-term housing

- supported 38 people through individual assertive outreach services

- delivered an additional 20 beds to provide safe overnight accommodation, so that fewer intoxicated people are sleeping rough

- provided homeless people with safe options such as environments without alcohol and with medical and social care

- assisted people who are at risk of creating a public nuisance to move away from the CBD to safe and appropriate accommodation.

Work on the Action Plan continues. For example, the Queensland Government is putting in place a new medium-term accommodation and support service at Dale Parker Place. The service will accommodate up to 20 people who have been sleeping rough to help them find longer term accommodation and the support they need to bridge the gap toward keeping a home.

Approach

The Queensland Government will support specialist homeless and mainstream services to work together better. Increased collaboration, coordination and integration will be implemented across a range of service areas, including drugs and alcohol, mental health, domestic and family violence, family support, child safety, corrections, police, health, welfare, education and training, and employment.

Enhanced responses will take account of the specific issues and needs of key groups that are at high risk of homelessness across the policy, program and service delivery levels. This will ensure people have better access to support that meets their immediate and underlying needs, when they need it and without having to repeat their story.

The Queensland Government will increasingly encourage community organisations to work together to deliver more efficient and effective services for clients, particularly for those with multiple and complex needs. This means that preference will be given to proposals for joined-up service delivery using shared tools and systems.

These improvements will be supported by improved information sharing between service organisations, establishment of common definitions of homelessness and 'at risk' across services, shared understanding of risk factors and indicators of early difficulties.

The Queensland Government will work with community service agencies to improve the housing and homelessness service system to align it better with client needs. This will mean more effective supportive housing for people with complex needs, more supportive tenancy management models, greater capacity to deliver intensive case managed support services, better coordinated housing and support and more flexible support options that match people's duration, level and type of need.

Queensland will work with other states and territories to implement and operate a new specialist homelessness services national data set, and other improvements to data collection and reporting processes to better measure outcomes and progress against targets. Queensland will ensure data is collected only if it is essential for reporting or where there are specific strategies in place to utilise the data.

To build the evidence base for improved responses to homelessness, research and evaluation will be undertaken and information systems will be developed. We will identify the most effective responses to homelessness, and information systems will provide better data about unmet need and the capacity of services to meet it. Processes to increase sharing of information among specialist, allied and mainstream services will also be undertaken.

Photographer: Ian Williams

What's working:

'No wrong door' approach

People who are homeless often have more than one issue they need assistance with. Building on the machinery-of-Government changes that created the new Department of Communities, the Queensland Government is adopting a 'No wrong door' approach to service delivery.

This approach will be extended further through the Homelessness Information Management Program that will implement a common assessment and referral tool and vacancy capacity management system to coordinate services within the specialist homelessness services sector.

These common homelessness assessment processes will be aligned with the assessment for social housing resulting in one assessment for both parts of the service continuum.

This will mean that when clients seek assistance, they only have to tell their story once and can have all their needs assessed, and be connected with the critical services they need to help them exit homelessness.

HEADLINE REFORM: Realignment of specialist homelessness services

It is essential that homelessness services are where people need them and they are able to provide the services that clients need. Through this three year reform, the Queensland Government will work with the specialist homelessness services sector to integrate and realign services, so they best meet the needs of clients. Key principles guiding the reform include:

- client needs, including duration of need to determine location of services and service delivery models

- collaboration with the non-government sector to identify the best set of services, and client assessment and management systems and tools
- services integrated with each other and with mainstream services
- use of contemporary service models
- sustainable services providing a consistent quality of service
- getting the balance right between crisis/short-term and long-term accommodation and support.

Actions for strategic priority 3

By 2014, we will:	We will do this by….	Responsibility
3.1 **Ensure people experiencing homelessness have clear and effective case planning and coordination to meet their diverse needs**	**3.1.1** Developing state-wide information systems, including client management and vacancy management systems. **3.1.2** Implementing across government the use of the Chamberlain and McKenzie definition of homelessness and at risk of homelessness to identify and assess people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. **3.1.3** Developing and implementing common assessment tools and processes across government and non-government services. **3.1.4** Developing and implementing an integrated policy framework and action plan for reducing homelessness among young people.	Department of Communities and supported by relevant government departments and community services sector.

3.2 **Link housing and homelessness service delivery to better meet the needs of clients**	**3.2.1** Realigning the specialist homelessness services sector, in line with: • contemporary service models • evidence of client need including duration of need • the appropriate balance between short term interventions and the provision of longer term accommodation and support responses.	Department of Communities in collaboration with the community services sector.
3.3 **Ensure all services for homeless people meet an acceptable level of quality and are consistent with best practice and new service models**	**3.3.1** Involving communities in planning and developing services and place-based solutions through Homelessness Community Action Planning. **3.3.2** Contributing to and implementing the Homelessness National Quality Framework.	Department of Communities in collaboration with the community services sector.
3.4 **Use data to better understand need and align services**	**3.4.1** Implementing the new specialist homelessness services data collection and client management system for homelessness services.	Department of Communities in collaboration with the community services sector.

Contribution to targets: Stronger and more coordinated services will increase the likelihood of people finding and keeping a home.

Photographer: Tony Phillips

Assisting key groups

People in different circumstances or from different demographic groups have diverse needs and may require different approaches to preventing or ending homelessness. The strategy aims to ensure that there are services to respond to the widest possible range of diverse needs and to deliver the appropriate support that is needed for individuals to access and sustain stable tenancies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

What we know. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly over-represented among people who are homeless[16]. In 2006, 3.6% of the Queensland population were identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander[17] but these peoples made up 8% of the homeless population[18] and 23% of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program clients[19] in 2008–09. The population of Indigenous people who are homeless can fluctuate as a result of seasonal, cultural or social factors[20] and has distinct types[21] including: spiritual homelessness; overcrowding; relocation and transient homelessness; escaping from an unsafe or unstable home; and lack of access to any stable shelter.

Issues. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households frequently experience overcrowding[22] as a result of family members visiting and staying, which can be a cultural norm[23]. However, it can result in increased living costs, can sometimes put tenancies at risk and may also mask the full extent of homelessness. Indigenous people may leave their home communities as a result of overcrowded housing conditions, or to access needed services which are not available in regional areas. Consultations have indicated that housing options and opportunities for employment are reduced by racism and discrimination and that some people leaving communities to live in urban areas need assistance and awareness-raising to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to establish and maintain housing and tenancies.

What we are already doing:

- A service integration project in Townsville has increased the effectiveness of the Case Coordination Group, so that rough sleepers who are primarily Indigenous with high needs are being housed and supported.

- Street to Home services are transitioning rough sleepers (a high proportion of whom are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) to long-term accommodation.

Young people

What we know. The 2006 census shows that 26% (or 7,093 people) of the homeless population in Queensland were aged between 12 and 24 years[24]. There was a 30% decrease in the number of homeless young people aged 12–18 between 2001[25] and 2006 (from 6,381 to 4,469); this has been attributed in part to the effectiveness of early intervention programs such as Reconnect and the Youth Support Coordinators Program.[26] The National Census of Homeless School Students 2006 identified that Indigenous young people, young people from alternative family types,[27] and young people who have been in care of the state or protection system are over-represented in the homeless student population. It is also known that a high proportion of young people transitioning from care are at risk of homelessness.[28]

Issues. The reasons for young people (12 to 25 years old) becoming homeless or being at risk of homelessness are diverse and complex.[29] Many homeless young people come from homes with high levels of physical, sexual and or emotional abuse and neglect; family disruption such as parents being homeless, in temporary accommodation or moving frequently; household friction; household poverty; and involvement with the child welfare or justice system. Young people who experience homelessness are at increased risk of experiencing ongoing homelessness as adults and of experiencing unemployment.[30]

What we are already doing:

- The Supported Accommodation for Young People initiative in Logan is assisting 22 young people at any one time who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, where their homelessness is compromising their engagement in education and training.

- The Supervised Community Accommodation initiative is supporting up to four young males at any one time, primarily those aged 16 to 18 years, in Townsville who are exiting detention and who are homeless.

- The Youth Enterprises Partnership is improving the economic and social outcomes for young people aged 15 to 18 years in Brisbane and Townsville who have recently entered the youth justice system and are at risk of further offending, and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Young people are receiving tailored support and access to social networks to assist them to obtain meaningful employment.

Photographer: Vicki Yen

Older people

What we know. Older people make up a significant proportion of the homeless population in Queensland. On census night 2006, it was estimated that there were 6,020 people aged 55 and older who were homeless, which made up 23% of the total number of people counted as homeless in Queensland. This was an increase of 1,790 people from 2001 when 17% of people who were homeless were 55 years or older. The proportion of older women who are homeless is also increasing in Queensland. In 2001, approximately 33% of people who were homeless and over 55 years were female, which increased to approximately 37% in 2006[31].

Issues. There are several factors which can impact on the financial status and housing security of older people, particularly for women[32], including divorce, health crisis, age discrimination, lack of family support, having a partner entering aged care, rent arrears, relationship breakdown and the death of a partner[33]. Increasingly, older women who experience homelessness are 'hidden' because they are forced into less visible alternatives and locations (such as couch surfing, shared accommodation, sleeping in cars and sleeping rough during the day)[34]. Older people on fixed incomes in insecure housing are at particular risk of homelessness or the need for institutional care[35].

What we are already doing:

- Implementing the Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–20 *Positively Ageless*, which is encouraging the development of age-friendly communities that suit varying needs, choices and levels of participation, and for the right services to reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged seniors at the right time.

- Implementing pilot projects using technology to assist seniors live independently under the Home and Community Care's Assistive Technology initiative.

- Delivering Home Assist Secure, which provides free information, referrals and subsidised assistance to older people and people with disabilities who wish to remain living in their home.

People sleeping rough and/or experiencing chronic homelessness

What we know. On census night 2006, there were 5,165 people sleeping out or living in improvised dwellings in Queensland[36], which represented 19% of all people who were homeless in Queensland, compared to 16% in 2001. Areas with high numbers of people living in improvised dwellings or sleeping out in 2006 included Inner Brisbane (288 people), Gold Coast East (133), Hervey Bay (112), Mackay (107), Rockhampton (83), Cairns (79), and Townsville (74).

Overall, most people sleeping out or living in improvised dwellings are located in rural and remote areas of Queensland (73%) compared to regional centres (15%) and Brisbane (12%).

Issues. Overall, people who experience chronic homelessness may be more likely to experience one or more of the following: a background of trauma and/ or abuse[37]; disabilities or physical health problems; brain damage or intellectual disability[38]; poor living skills[39]; learning difficulties; unemployment[40]; gambling addictions[41]; and family or domestic violence. Drug and alcohol misuse and dependence[42] is often associated with sleeping rough and chronic homelessness, which not only plays a significant role in contributing to some people's homelessness, but can also keep people on the streets, contribute to their poor health and make them more vulnerable to abuse and violence. The 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign[43] involved the use of a vulnerability index to identify the 50 most vulnerable people who were homeless in Brisbane. The survey found that of the 156 individuals surveyed who were sleeping rough, 83 (53%) were found to have health conditions associated with a high mortality risk. It remains difficult to assist many people out of homelessness, in the long term, if alcohol and drug dependence and mental and physical health problems are not addressed.

What we are already doing:

- Homeless Health Outreach Teams are minimising the health problems and contributing to the prevention and reduction of homelessness through the provision of specialist mental health, general health and drug and alcohol services to assist homeless people who are sleeping in public spaces, squats and improvised dwellings. Since July 2010, the teams have received 2,193 new referrals across Queensland.

- Roma House in Brisbane is providing accommodation and intensive support services for up to 39 long-term homeless people at any one time, many of whom may have been excluded from existing services and have complex needs.

- The one social housing system is prioritising assistance based on needs, including to people sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness.

Photographer: Vicki Yen

Families with children

What we know. The number of families who are experiencing homelessness in Queensland is difficult to quantify but there is anecdotal evidence that it is increasing. The SAAP National Data Collection Annual Report 2008–09, shows 13,000 children accompanied adults who received support from a specialist homelessness agency in Queensland 2008–09.[44] Between 2001 and 2006 there was a 25 per cent increase in the number of unaccompanied children under 12 years who were homeless in Queensland (from 2,328 in 2001 to 2,914 in 2006).

Issues. Families become homeless for both structural and individual reasons. Difficulty securing affordable housing is a key issue for families. Exclusion from housing may result from being 'blacklisted' on tenancy databases, discrimination from real estate agencies or rental debts. Families experiencing poverty and unemployment are particularly vulnerable to a housing crisis. Problems with drugs and alcohol may also put families at risk. Domestic and family violence is a major contributing factor for women and children experiencing homelessness. It is known that a significant number of families experiencing homelessness are not using specialist homelessness services (possibly less than one third).[45]

The impact of homelessness on families with children is significant and impacts negatively on behavioural, health and educational outcomes. Children in homeless families are more at risk of experiencing disadvantage and homelessness during their lifetime. Homelessness impacts on parenting skills with energy directed towards day-to-day living rather than the capacity to provide support to children.[46] In addition, a number of children are taken into the statutory care system because they were living in unsafe environments as a result of their homelessness.[47]

What we are already doing:

- The A Place to Call Home initiative in Queensland is prioritising access to families. The initiative is allocating households directly into long term social housing, with tenancy and other support to stabilise tenants' circumstances and ensure sustainable tenancies.

- Referral for Active Intervention services are helping families around the state by providing early support before they reach crisis point and end up involved with the child protection system.

Women and children escaping domestic or family violence

What we know. Domestic and family violence is a major cause of homelessness.[48] For example, of the main reasons for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services, domestic/family violence was the second largest category in 2008–09 at around 15%,[49] trailing only 'financial difficulty' at 17%.

Issues. Domestic and family violence continues to be the major driver of homelessness among women. Many victims of violence do not seek assistance from specialist homelessness services but stay with friends or family members in temporary arrangements. *The Road Home* supported initiatives that would assist victims of domestic violence to stay safely in their own home.

What we are already doing:

- Implementing the *For Our Sons and Daughters — A Queensland Government strategy to reduce domestic and family violence 2009–2014*.[50]

- Investing an estimated $147m in 2008–09 and $178m in 2009–10 on a diverse range of services from criminal justice services (policing and courts) to counselling and support and universal services which help to prevent domestic and family violence.

- The Breaking the Cycle of Domestic and Family Violence Program in Rockhampton is ensuring more timely and cohesive services are available for people affected by domestic and family violence.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)

What we know. People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, including asylum seekers, are at heightened risk of homelessness, due to a range of issues, including vulnerability due to multiple moves in the settlement process, difficulty finding and securing housing in the private market due to language and cultural issues and discrimination, and the declining supply of affordable housing. Some asylum seekers on temporary visas have limited or no access to income support as a result of visa conditions or residency waiting periods. Nearly 14% of all clients of SAAP services in 2008–09 were born overseas.[51]

Photographer: Vicki Yen

Issues. Homelessness among people from CALD backgrounds is often hidden as a result of community networks providing temporary accommodation, which can result in overcrowding and may in turn put those tenancies at risk.

What we are already doing:

- The Department of Communities' *Multicultural Action Plan 2009–2013* is promoting diversity in the department's business, including services, programs, policies and employment practices. This includes actions to progress initiatives such as translation and interpreter services for clients, delivering cultural awareness training to staff, and improving service delivery that responds to the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex

What we know. Enumerating the number of sex and gender diverse people experiencing or at risk of homelessness is not possible from current data or research. However, sexuality and sexual identity can play a role in the onset of homelessness due to intolerance and homophobia, particularly among young people.

Issues. There is a long-standing association between homelessness and the everyday lives of young men and women who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.[52] Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people are more likely to be homeless or at risk of homelessness compared to their heterosexual peers due to family estrangement or breakdown of support relationships as a result of a LGBTI identity. They are also more likely to find it difficult to meet housing costs and to sustain stable accommodation due to limitations in employment and education opportunities.[53]

- The Department of Communities' Commitment Statement: Fair, Cohesive and Equitable Services for Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Queenslanders[54] acknowledges individuals and communities that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, their diversity, their needs as a disadvantaged, marginalised and discriminated community and their valuable contribution to society. The department will consider sexuality and gender identity issues in the development of departmental policies, programs and services related to housing and homelessness.

People with a disability

What we know. People with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable groups experiencing, and at risk of experiencing, homelessness. People with disabilities are at risk of homelessness due to the shortage of affordable, secure and accessible housing, unemployment and low incomes. Discrimination may also impact on the ability of people with disabilities to access appropriate and affordable housing.

Issues. While people with a disability often have low incomes, they may be required to meet the costs of modifying a dwelling to provide internal and external access, as well as essential care and support services, aids and other equipment. These additional costs impact on their ability to meet ongoing living costs and may increase their risk of homelessness. Women with disabilities can be particularly disadvantaged. This client group is less likely to have paid work, get a secondary and/or tertiary education, and are more likely to be living in institutions than their male counterparts.

What we are already doing:

- The Post-care support — young adults with a disability exiting from the care of the state program is providing care to young people exiting to community-based living and independent adult life.

- The Department of Communities' Housing Needs Assessment process has resulted in streamlined access to social housing for a number of high need groups, including households that include people with a disability or mental health issues.

- The Department of Communities is building a better disability service system through Growing Stronger, a four-year program of reform (2007–2011) that is producing simpler, fairer and more transparent access to specialist disability services.

Photographer: Vicki Yen

People with an intellectual disability or impaired decision making

What we know. A report by the Queensland Office for the Public Advocate concluded that adults with impaired decision-making capacity make up a significant proportion of people who are chronically homeless. People with impaired decision-making may have a mental illness, intellectual disability, dementia, acquired brain injury, a history of drug and alcohol abuse which has impaired neurological functioning, emotional and/or physical trauma or a developmental disorder.[55]

Issues. People with impaired decision making often have complex support needs. They often have a limited ability to learn, comprehend, retain and apply information; a propensity for impulsive behaviour; poor problem solving skills; poor relationship skills; limited insight and poor memory.[56] Intellectual disability has been cited as one of the contributing factors to becoming chronically homeless. Crisis accommodation services are typically not equipped to provide specialised care required by people with an intellectual disability or impaired decision making.

What we are already doing:

- The Bridging the Gap — throughcare support services for offenders with impaired cognitive functioning initiative is providing specialised disability care during incarceration and post-release support for prisoners in South East Queensland who have impaired cognitive functioning and who may have extreme or challenging behaviour.

- The Special Circumstances Court Diversion Program in Brisbane ensures defendants with mental illness, intellectual disability or cognitive impairment, and homeless people or those at risk of homelessness have bail and sentencing outcomes linked to support services that will help them address the causes of their offending behaviour in a specialist therapeutic court setting.

People who have a mental illness

What we know. In 2005, Supported Accommodation Assistance Program data indicated that 12% of clients nationally in 2004–05 suffered some form of mental illness.[57] These clients were more likely to be living in a car, tent, park, street or squat both before and after support than clients with other problems.

Issues. Mental illness is closely linked with homelessness, although the direction of causality is often unclear: mental illness may be a consequence of and/or a cause of homelessness.[58] For example, the ongoing fear and victimisation of living on the streets may be a factor in people becoming emotionally distressed and the development of depression and anxiety.

What we are already doing:

- The Housing and Support Program is providing social housing and clinical and non-clinical support to assist people move from hospital into community living. Over 240 people are currently being assisted and in 2010–11 a total of $3.5m has been made available to provide assistance with transitioning from Queensland Health Mental Health facilities to community living.

- The Young Persons (Time Out House) Initiative — community residential program (in Cairns and Logan) is providing intensive and focused support and accommodation to young people aged 18 to 25 years who are showing early signs of mild to moderate mental health problems.

- The Resident Recovery Program is helping break the cycle between acute care, hostels and boarding houses and homelessness by providing individualised, flexible and responsive support for adults who are 18 years and over, who have moderate to severe mental illness and are about to be discharged from an inpatient mental health care facility to boarding house or hostel accommodation.

Photographer: Ian Williams

People in regional, rural and remote areas

What we know. At the time of the 2006 ABS Census, there were 5165 people sleeping rough and in improvised dwellings in Queensland, with 15% of these in regional centres and 73% in rural and remote areas.[59]

Issues. Homelessness in regional, rural and remote areas is often caused by lack of affordable housing, lack of community services and unemployment / underemployment.[60] A significant proportion of the homeless population are in regional, rural and remote areas where there are relatively few services to assist them. In remote areas, a significant proportion of Indigenous people are unable to access appropriate and affordable accommodation and there are high rates of overcrowding. Domestic and family violence is particularly prevalent in regional, rural and remote areas and this is the major cause of homelessness among women. In remote areas, domestic and family violence impacts significantly on Indigenous women. Despite the amount of domestic and family violence in these areas, women are less likely than those in cities to access crisis services or report violence to police.[61]

What we are already doing:

- Through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing the Queensland Government and Australian Government are addressing overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions and severe housing shortages in remote Indigenous communities.

Photographer:
Peter Waddington

Implementation

Government departments and the Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum (QHIF) will be responsible for implementing the strategy in collaboration with a range of Australian government agencies, local government, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations. Government members of the QHIF will review relevant policies and programs to align them with the strategy.

The strategy will also guide government agencies' future funding and policy decisions. Some actions and initiatives in the strategy may require new or different investment by government, while others will improve the use of existing resources.

The strategy will support the development of local efforts to reduce homelessness, including Homelessness Community Action Plans, by providing a framework for local coordination of government and community services. The action plans will result in better coordinated services that have a stronger focus on reducing homelessness, greater sharing of responsibility and accountability, and innovative local approaches to reducing homelessness.

The strategy supports local planning and actions

Guiding principles

People focus. All efforts to reduce homelessness will focus on improving opportunities for vulnerable people, whose needs are often multiple and complex, and empowering people to make positive changes in their lives. The rights, needs, culture and strengths of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be respected. A person-centred approach is consistent with a strengths-based approach, which assumes that people have strengths and resources for their own empowerment, and which focuses on connecting or reconnecting people to family, friends and community. Establishing these connections is essential to help people out of homelessness and to strengthen their capacity to live as independently as they can.

Flexible and appropriate support. People's diverse needs will be met through a range of flexible responses[62] including prevention, early intervention, crisis, post-crisis and ongoing/long-term housing and support. This range of support offers the best opportunities for people experiencing homelessness to achieve positive outcomes.[63]

Collaboration and engagement. Stakeholders will work together collaboratively to contribute to positive benefits and outcomes for people. Agencies, programs and services will fully integrate their efforts where necessary. People experiencing homelessness will be engaged and involved in planning and decision making related to their lives.

Location-specific. Investment and coordination efforts will be planned and tailored for particular locations using the energy and knowledge of local stakeholders to contribute to positive benefits and outcomes for people.

Continuous improvement based on evidence. Government and non-government service providers will continuously improve their policies, planning and services based on evidence from evaluations, research, data, and stakeholder feedback. Innovative and new approaches will be trialled and, if effective, implemented more widely, building on existing, successful approaches. Services for people who are homeless will be flexible and dynamic to match contemporary needs and trends.

Making the best use of resources. To assist the greatest number of people in need, the government will target its resources and realign if needed. Investment will build the capacity of the service system to contribute to positive benefits and outcomes for people in the long-term.

Roles and responsibilities

Reducing homelessness is everyone's responsibility. It will require coordinated action across a wide range of services and stakeholders. The strategy gives services and stakeholders a shared set of priorities and principles to promote coordinated efforts that will help people end their homelessness. Government departments play an important role in funding and directly providing a wide range of specialist and general services that contribute to outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Everyone has a role to play in reducing homelessness

The community services sector delivers services and support for people who are homeless, provides local leadership and participates in local partnerships and coordination efforts. However, stakeholders across the community have an important role to play, including:

- community members who may volunteer for organisations that help people who are homeless and can provide social connections and meaningful relationships
- private businesses that can provide employment opportunities and deliver services to people who are homeless

- academics who build the evidence base for what works in reducing homelessness and share ideas to improve policies and programs
- local governments which manage public space issues and drive local level planning and partnerships.

A list of roles and responsibilities of a range of stakeholders is at Appendix 2.

Accountability and review

The Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women is accountable for the delivery and outcomes of the strategy. The Minister will report to the Premier every six months on the progress of achieving the goals of the strategy's three priority areas.

Other Queensland Government ministers, including those with the portfolios of health, education, corrective services and employment, will have responsibility for important components of the strategy. The Department of Communities is the lead agency for the strategy and will work closely with other departments to progress it.

The Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum (QHIF) will regularly review the strategy to assess progress against goals and priorities and provide ongoing advice and guidance on improving implementation, in line with emerging national and state policy directions and economic and social changes.

The Council of Australian Governments oversees all jurisdictions' efforts to reduce homelessness and will lead national housing and homelessness reforms. The Australian Government, through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, has responsibility for leading national homelessness policy and funding.

The accountability for the strategy is distributed across Queensland Government departments

Endnotes

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3.	More information on the Queensland Compact is available at www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/department/about/corporate-plans/ queensland-compact/

4.	Homelessness Community Action Plans will bring together all relevant stakeholders in identified localities and focus their efforts on reducing homelessness based on local context, capacities and needs.

5.	The strategy does not involve new funding for 2011–12 and is focused on reforms that maximise the outcomes for people using existing resources. The strategy will provide a framework for future investment and/or realignment.

6.	Including: a common housing register for all forms of housing assistance to avoid duplication amongst housing providers and to streamline the application process for clients; the Client Intake and Assessment Process including a comprehensive housing needs assessment that supports the 'no wrong door' service delivery framework; and better targeting of social housing to households with the greatest housing needs, including clients who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

7.	As at 30 June 2010, a total of 67 607 social housing dwellings were owned or funded by the Department of Communities. Over the five years to 2011−12 the Queensland Government will have committed $500 million in additional funding from the Queensland Future Growth Fund to housing and homelessness expenditure.

8.	In 2010–11, approximately $76 million was allocated under the National Afforable Housing Agreement to 221 service providers for crisis and transitional supported accommodation, outreach support, information and referral services, service hubs, day support and early intervention services.

9.	The Council of Australian Governments has also introduced a number of national housing and homelessness reforms, will contribute to improving the homelessness service system and achieving long-term reductions in homelessness. The four homelessness-specific reforms are: Integration of homelessness services with mainstream services; Supporting quality homelessness services through a Homelessness National Quality Framework; Homelessness data collection and management; and Workforce development strategy.

10.	Barriers refer to, for example, problems finding, accessing, remaining continuously engaged with, or lack of follow-up services. Gaps refer to, for example, the absence of a service in a particular location, a type of service being unavailable when required, or a fragmented service system.

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63. Transition points in people's lives are acknowledged as critical opportunities for intervention to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Appendix 1: *Definition of Homelessness*

Defining homelessness is difficult partly because of the diverse range of individual circumstances and cultural components that homelessness can encompass. There are two general types of definitions of homelessness: the service delivery definition and the cultural definition.

It is the Queensland Government's intention to establish the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) cultural definition as the consistent and overarching definition in Queensland. This will be done through embedding the definition in policies, procedures, programs and information systems.

Service delivery definitions focus on establishing who needs access to homelessness services. These definitions vary across different government and community services agencies.

Cultural definitions of homelessness contend that homelessness and 'inadequate housing' are socially constructed, cultural concepts that only make sense in a particular community at a given historical period. The ABS cultural definition of homelessness is the most widely accepted definition of homelessness in Australia and is based on community standards for housing. It includes several types:

- marginally housed: people in housing situations close to the minimum standard*

- tertiary homelessness: people living on a medium to long term basis in boarding houses that do not meet the minimum community standard of separate bedroom and living room, own kitchen and bathroom facilities, self contained accommodation, and security of tenure provided by a lease

- secondary homelessness: people moving between various forms of temporary shelter including friends and relatives, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses and

- primary homelessness: people without conventional accommodation (living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc.).

The Queensland Government acknowledges that different agencies may require different service delivery definitions to target services and assess eligibility and need. It also acknowledges that the ABS definition does not incorporate cultural specific aspects, such as for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

*The minimum community standard is equivalent to a small rented flat with a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom.

Appendix 2: *Roles in Reducing Homelessness*

Department of Communities
- Lead Queensland's Whole-of-Government Strategy for Reducing Homelessness
- Fund and provide specialist homelessness and housing services, disability services, child safety services, community mental health, youth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

Queensland Health
- Improve the health outcomes, including mental health and substance abuse, of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Help ensure people at risk of homelessness who are exiting hospitals and other health facilities have access to appropriate accommodation and ongoing support.

Department of Community Safety
- Help ensure that people exiting prisons have access to programs and services that assist them to plan for their transition from custody to the community, including support to access appropriate accommodation and advice relating to tenancy issues
- Help ensure people who are homeless that access emergency services are referred to appropriate services.

Department of Education and Training
- Help improve the education and training outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- Identify and assist school-age students at risk of homelessness.

Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
- Improve the employment opportunities for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Department of Local Government and Planning
- Help increase the availability of affordable housing
- Ensure housing and homelessness issues are incorporated into regional planning processes where appropriate.

Department of Justice and Attorney General
- Ensure people experiencing homelessness who come in contact with the court system are linked with appropriate information and resources
- Ensure that obtaining identification documentation is not a barrier to ending homelessness.

Queensland Police Service
- Ensure people at risk of or experiencing homelessness who come in contact with police officers are provided with relevant information and are appropriately referred to services
- Ensure the safety of people who are homeless using public spaces.

Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Provide Whole-of-Government oversight of the strategy.

Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Ensure people experiencing homelessness do not experience additional barriers to obtaining driver's licences.

Queensland Treasury
- Ensure Government funding aimed at people experiencing homelessness is effective.

Community members
- volunteer for organisations that help people who are homeless
- identify people who are homeless in the community and advocate on their behalf
- provide social connections and meaningful relationships
- contribute to an atmosphere of understanding that homelessness can affect anyone in the community.

Private businesses
- provide employment opportunities to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- make philanthropic contributions to causes that help vulnerable people
- raise awareness of homelessness as a significant issue
- can improve access to housing and provide early warning systems for tenancies at risk (real estate industry)
- provide services including healthcare (such as general practitioners), affordable private housing, and financial (such as credit management and debt financing)

The community services sector, including community housing providers and specialist homelessness services
- provide high quality services and support to people who are homeless
- provide local leadership and valuable input into local partnerships and coordination efforts and
- advocate for and implement improvements to the service system that help people end their homelessness.

Peak and advocacy organisations
- Promote the rights and issues of community services and people who are homeless.

Academics and research and evaluation organisations
- Build the evidence base for what works in reducing homelessness
- Share ideas to improve policies and programs.

Local governments

- drive local level planning and partnerships

- manage public space issues

- in some cases provide services to people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Australian Government

- provide national homelessness leadership, directions, policies and coordination

- lead national data, research and evaluation efforts

- fund and provides assistance such as income support.