

Submission to the Economic Reform Roundtable: Homelessness Solutions Model Framework

About us

This is a joint submission by Mission Australia and the Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia (CSI UWA).

[Mission Australia](#) is a national non-denominational Christian charity that has been providing support for over 160 years. We have 477 services across Australia which address homelessness, provide housing, assist struggling families and children, address mental health issues, fight substance dependencies, support people with disability and much more.

The [Centre for Social Impact](#) (CSI) is a national research and education centre dedicated to catalysing social change for a better world. CSI is built on the foundation of four of Australia's leading universities: UNSW Sydney, The University of Western Australia, Flinders University and Swinburne University of Technology.

Government decision-making based on solid evidence will lead to more productive investment

High quality, effective delivery, stewardship and operation of Non-Government Organisations funded to deliver essential human services can unleash tremendous productivity gains if accompanied by reformed governmental commissioning and investment practices.

CSI UWA and Mission Australia's Homelessness Solutions Model Framework is a project that aims to bring a robust approach to government decision-making when making investments in housing and support to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

Homelessness Solutions Model Framework

The Framework is a structured, evidence-based way of identifying and assessing the measures needed to end homelessness.

It aims to answer the question: *How can the allocation of housing and homelessness resources be made most effective and efficient?*

The end goal is to establish:

1. a typology - listing all possible types of housing and homelessness solution;
2. evidence on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of each of those solution types;
3. estimations of the extent of need for each type of solution;
4. conclusions about the direction of long-term investment reform.

Prototype phase conclusions

CSI UWA and Mission Australia, guided by an expert external advisory group, has developed a prototype of the Framework as part of the project's first phase, and can confidently state that:

- Effective and cost-effective measures are available to prevent homelessness, both housing responses and support responses. Currently in Australia, these measures do not operate at scale.
- Other effective and cost-effective measures are available to shorten people’s time in homelessness crisis and to prevent recurrence. Most resources in the homelessness service system are currently allocated to crisis responses.
- Deeper investment in homelessness prevention would constitute an effective and cost-effective systemic approach to resolving the current homelessness situation.

Policy domain	Response focus	Direction of recommended expenditure over the long term (↑ ↓)	Description	Models / forms	Programs / policy changes	Program jurisdiction	Reference to evidence source	Effectiveness of intervention	Quality of evidence on outcomes	Quality of evidence about costs	# of people currently served	# of people expected to be served	% current expenditure	% recommended expenditure
Reducing known risk factors	Upstream based		Targeted support for cohorts with elevated risk of homelessness	Early-stage prevention programs focussed on high-risk-of-homelessness groups	Responses for young people at risk of h'ness and Better Futures (Vic)	COSS in-school screening (Vic, NSW)	VIC	MacIntyre (2017)	Six months later, 88% were still living at home with their families, only 8 (out of 185)	Sample size: Small Reliability: Self-report Data age: >5 years				
			Responses to prevent young people leaving out-of-home care from exiting into h'ness	Policy change to extend the age of young people in care	National	Evidence base needs to be investigated								
			Responses to Housing Support											
			Responses that prevent exiting	the age of young people in care until 21 (Extended)		investigated								
			Responses to prevent people leaving justice facilities into homelessness	Housing Support Workers Corrective Services, under NPAH (WA)	WA	Wood et al. (2016)				Sample size: Small Reliability: Linked data Data age: >10 years				
			Youth Justice Casework Support Program - funded by Youth Justice	NSW	Evidence base needs to be investigated									
Responses that prevent exiting			Responses to prevent people leaving health facilities from exiting	The Cottage (Vic)	VIC	Evidence base needs to be investigated			Sample size: Small Reliability: Linked data Data age: >10 years					
			Responses to prevent people leaving mental health facilities from exiting into homelessness	Health program for those with severe mental health illnesses who were	WA	Wood et al. (2016)	Reduction in health service use	Sample size: Small Reliability: Linked data Data age: >10 years						
			CHOPS - Clarendon Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service (Vic)	VIC	Wood et al. (2017)	Reduction in health service use	Sample size: Small Reliability: Linked data Data age: >10 years							
			ALERT - Assessment,	VIC	Wood et al. (2017)	Reduction in health service use	Sample size: Small							

Figure 1. Snapshots of the prototype

Next steps

Phase	Action	Timeframe
Phase 1	Develop a prototype Homelessness Solutions Model Framework.	October 2023 – complete
Phase 2	<p>The Commonwealth leads a co-design process with States and Territories to refine the Framework and populate it with existing research evidence and data sources.</p> <p>This will require significant further investment of time and resources for a full comprehensive examination of the evidence and a summary and analysis of that within the Framework structure. Further input from researchers, policy makers, practitioners and people with lived experience</p>	2025 – 2029

	will be needed to undertake that work. Leadership from government will be key to ensure that it can be properly resourced.	
Phase 3	<p>The Commonwealth leads a co-design process with States and Territories to develop and finalise a Resource Allocation Model based on the Framework to inform the next iteration of the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness.</p> <p>This will need to be complemented by a homelessness research and evaluation program that addresses identified gaps in the evidence base. To return to the central aim of this project, we hope that this work will make a significant contribution to answering the question of <i>how governments should allocate resources to end homelessness.</i></p>	By 30 June 2029

Alignment to the Productivity Commission’s recommendations

The majority of recommendations in the PC’s report *In need of repair: The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement Study*, intended to inform the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (2024-2029) were regrettably not adopted, but could be catalysed through the Framework for the next iteration, in relation to:

- **Recommendation 5.5 Base funding should be untied and distributed according to need and the cost of delivering services**
- **Recommendation 5.8 A more comprehensive Data Improvement Plan (DIP)**
“...The DIP should also... address gaps in the housing evidence base and identify opportunities to link data sets. The Australian and State and Territory Governments should ensure that the DIP is sufficiently funded to carry out this work.”
- **Recommendation 5.10 A ‘what works’ centre to draw together insights and disseminate evidence**
- **Recommendation 6.1 Prevention and early intervention should be a higher priority**
- **Recommendation 6.3 Determining the funding required to meet need**
“...the Australian, State and Territory Governments should commit to a study into the unmet need for homelessness support and a stocktake of current services, to determine the level of funding required to adequately meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.”

Contact details

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the Homelessness Solutions Model Framework in more detail.

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