

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

Submission

Response to the NSW
Homelessness Strategy
Consultation

February 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Mission Australia is an organisation dedicated to ending homelessness and ensuring that people and communities in need can thrive. We deliver over 460 programs and services across Australia, in many areas including homelessness, housing, strengthening communities, children and families, youth, employment and disability. Mission Australia Housing is a Registered Tier 1 Community Housing Provider and owns or manages more than 4,500 social and affordable homes. In NSW we have 58 housing and homelessness programs and services and almost 3,000 social and affordable homes in our portfolio.

Mission Australia welcomes the NSW Government's comprehensive consultation process on the development of the NSW Homelessness Strategy 2025-2035 and rolling action plans. Our response is guided by a combination of insights from people who have used Mission Australia's housing and homelessness services and from the expert staff who work there, alongside our research and policy development work.

We appreciate the Government's frank account of the situation confronting NSW and the promising ambition shown to address it. However, we stress that it will take considerable investment and resources, genuine whole-of-government coordination with stakeholders and robust accountability to truly deliver on the Strategy vision:

Homelessness in NSW is rare, brief and not repeated because people have a safe home and the support to keep it.

We support this vision and the broad direction of the draft Strategy, including its three headline outcomes:

1. Wherever possible, homelessness is prevented from happening in the first place, making it rare;
2. When homelessness does occur, people are quickly connected to housing and the supports they need;
3. When homelessness does occur, people do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness.

In our view, the Strategy and its associated documentation accurately identify the key issues, present the evidence of what works, and set out a compelling direction and outcomes to be achieved. Given this, our response to the draft Strategy focuses on how implementation processes and the first action plan can support the achievement of the Strategy vision and its three outcomes

We are hopeful this new Strategy will end the business-as-usual approach of past strategies and plans that deliver piecemeal funding, ad hoc fixes and patches, a host of pilots and initiatives that do not progress to widespread adoption, and no enforceable accountability on government agencies other than the Department of Communities and Justice to solve homelessness. We also urge the Government to seek bipartisan support on reforms to minimise the potential politicisation of a serious issue.

CREATING A SYSTEM DESIGNED TO END HOMELESSNESS

The homelessness service system must substantially transform if we are to end homelessness. Currently, Mission Australia and others are working within a system designed primarily to respond to people when they are homeless, or when it is *almost* unavoidable – this is too late. If we build capacity and capability to respond to people sooner with the right assistance, we will avoid unnecessary human misery and make the goal of maintaining or finding housing (with or without complementary supports) far more successful.

Additionally, any substantial progress to end homelessness cannot overcome a broader service system lacking accountability and resourcing to respond to people’s homelessness risks, and without a significant increase to social and affordable homes which has long been called for by the homelessness sector and now by a large majority of the public.¹

Where to start

The NSW Government must be prepared to do what it takes. The majority of the Guiding Principles and Government commitments under the three outcome areas are destined to achieve very little without the backing of the following:

- ◆ Binding legislation
- ◆ Resourced service systems
- ▣ New targeted investment
- ✕ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility
- + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock

We have labelled these “success enablers” and indicated against which actions they are required to lead to real and lasting structural reform.

Due to the nature and scale of the problem being faced, there are many immediate implementation priorities for the Government, however, we understand not everything important can be pursued at once. We therefore recommend that the Government prioritise, in the first homelessness action plan, the Guiding Principles and Government commitments along with corresponding actions as set out in the table below. The rationale behind these actions is provided in the main body of the submission.

Guiding Principle / Government commitment to prioritise	Immediate actions for the first homelessness action plan
Housing is a human right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSW Government to consult on, draft and pass a Bill on a right to housing with a duty to assist provision by the end of 2025. • Homes NSW to lead cross agency work to develop a roadmap to modify systems, guides, training and tools to assist mainstream services to identify homelessness risk factors and provide advice and referral as a minimum.
Prevention is prioritised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW Government to redesign government budget operating rules to incentivise prevention-oriented policy. • Homes NSW to lead cross-agency development on a prevention system and investment roadmap that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ clearly defines a typology of homelessness prevention; ○ sets out roles and responsibilities of government agencies in prevention; ○ includes actions to shift NSW to a homelessness prevention and wellbeing focus. • Homes NSW to consult on the design and eligibility for a \$500m 5 year Homelessness Prevention Transformation Fund. • Homes NSW to lead development of a business case for additional investment across the service system to support prevention and early intervention work.
Increase the supply of a range of quality accessible and appropriate housing types in NSW, including social, affordable and key worker housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSW Government to provide sufficient investment to increase affordable and appropriate housing stock (e.g. permanent supportive housing models for people with high and complex needs). • Homes NSW and Department of Planning & Environment to draft planning legislation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ designate social and affordable housing as essential infrastructure to fast-track developments; ○ continue measures to facilitate increased density, especially in middle ring suburbs of Sydney; ○ introduce Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning; ○ facilitate modular home construction; ○ reduce barriers for development of emerging housing models. • Homes NSW to undertake a needs analysis for youth-specific housing to inform investment of appropriate models across areas of identified need in NSW.
Person-centred principles are embedded in policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes NSW to follow a strategic commissioning approach as outlined in this submission in the planned commissioning of homelessness services. • Homes NSW to consider the application of the alliance contracting approach in its recommissioning plans for SHS.

STRATEGY TARGETS

Q. What types of target(s) would be most useful to measure our impact and why?

We welcome the NSW Government’s intention to have targets for the Strategy as they are an important accountability mechanism and drive action and solutions. Sitting under targets should be corresponding outcome and output measures and regular performance reporting at the system level, service level, client and community level (similar to the Closing the Gap framework). The targets that are adopted should be ambitious yet achievable and have firm and unambiguous language so there is common understanding among accountable parties.

A separate consultation process is required

Targets and a corresponding outcomes-based performance and reporting framework should be the product of a separate consultation with representation from accountable government agencies, service providers, housing, homelessness and wellbeing experts, and people with lived and living experience. We have provided some examples of what the Strategy should be aiming for below.

OUTCOME 1: Wherever possible, homelessness is prevented from happening in the first place, making it rare.

<i>Example targets</i>	<i>Example measures</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
<i>XX annual social dwelling units approved for development</i>	- # social housing DA approvals -	- NSW planning/LGAs	- Homes NSW
<i>XX annual affordable dwelling units approved for development</i>	- # affordable housing DA approvals -	- NSW planning/LGAs	- Homes NSW
<i>XX% of dwellings built by eligible private developments are set aside for social and affordable housing</i>	- # eligible housing DA approvals	- NSW planning/LGAs	- Homes NSW
<i>XX% of NSW households in the bottom two quintiles of the income scale are housing/rental stress</i>	- % of NSW households in housing/rental stress	- ABS	- NSW Government
<i>XX% of clients entering and exiting homelessness services at risk of homelessness</i>	- % of clients entering and exiting homelessness services at risk of homelessness	- SHSC/Service Providers	- Service providers, government agencies
<i>Zero people leave government institutions into homelessness</i>	- # people exiting without receiving exit planning - # people exiting with housing need unmet - # people exiting with non-housing related services and support needs unmet	- Administrative data	- Health, Justice, Police, DCJ, Homes NSW

OUTCOME 2: When homelessness does occur, people are quickly connected to housing and the supports they need.

<i>Example targets</i>	<i>Example measures</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
All people who need homelessness support have it	- # days of support provided per episode	- Services	- SHS
	- # days of support provided in total across all episodes	- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	
XX decrease in unmet housing need	- % of SHS clients with unmet need for housing at end of support period.	-	- Homes NSW - SHS
Number of referrals to other services and supports	- # successful referrals to non-housing-related services and supports (e.g. for AOD recovery)	- Services	- Service provider
	- # successful non-housing support sessions provided (e.g. for education and training)		

OUTCOME 3: When homelessness does occur, people do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness.

<i>Target</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
XX decrease in number of episodes of homelessness	- # of service users self-reporting multiple episodes of homelessness (e.g. over the last 2 years, over their lifetime)	- Services	- SHS - Other service providers
	- # of interactions with the same service user (e.g. through assertive outreach or crisis accommodation services)		
XX decrease in returning service users	- # people returning to housing and homelessness services for support	- Services - AIHW	- SHS - Other service providers
XX% stably housed for more than 12 months	- # months a service user stays at one address or reports being housed in suitable, safe and secure accommodation	- Services	- Social housing providers
		- AIHW?	- Other services

Ongoing resourcing and governance

Investment in research and evaluation throughout the life of the Strategy is critical to assess the implementation and achievement of targets and outcomes in an objective and systematic way. Evaluation is also critical to build an evidence base of what works, continuously improve strategies and programs to improve outcomes and bring effective and innovative initiatives to scale.

Governance arrangements for ongoing data monitoring and reporting should also be established, with key activities of:

- Regular reporting on the performance framework
- Data development work
- Research and evaluation functions
- Implementation of continuous improvement (e.g. best practice resources and support to accountable entities, refinement of processes to reduce administrative burden, etc.)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Q1. What do we need to consider as we implement services and system reform guided by these principles over the next 10 years?

Q2. Which principles should be prioritised and why?

Mission Australia believes that most of the Guiding Principles have some form of work that needs to be implemented as immediate priorities. We have also indicated the success enablers which underpin the majority of actions that the Government must meaningfully commit to, for the system and service reforms to have the intended impact.

Guiding Principles	Implementation considerations	Success enablers:	Implementation priority
Housing is a human right	<p>⇒ Legislate the right to housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For this principle to have any meaning, the Government should move to codify it in law, setting out the obligations of the NSW Government (the 'duty bearer') and the entitlements of the residents of NSW (the 'rights holder'). <p>⇒ Legislate a Duty to Assist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This would create a requirement for government and government-funded services to make enquiries about people's housing situation, make appropriate referrals, and provide timely support to prevent homelessness. - For example, in Wales a legally mandated 'Duty to Assist' has been in place since 2014, and importantly it activates not just when someone is homeless but when someone is at risk of homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Binding legislation + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock ◆ Resourced service systems 	<p>The NSW Government to consult on, draft and pass a Bill on a right to housing with a duty to assist provision by the end of 2025.</p>
Aboriginal expertise and leadership are respected	<p>⇒ Facilitate genuine self-determination through the Action Plan for First Nations peoples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy and program settings affecting the housing and homelessness outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be led by First Nations peoples. - We note the findings from Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia's (CIRCA) consultation on how to meaningfully engage Aboriginal communities in the development of the homelessness strategy: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility 	<p>Homes NSW to honour the findings from the CIRCA's consultation on how to meaningfully engage Aboriginal</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ putting Aboriginal voice and experiences first ○ supporting local leadership and expertise within Aboriginal communities ○ empowering Aboriginal communities to co-design solutions ○ developing a prior understanding of the community ○ building an ongoing relationship between DCJ and community ○ engaging the community early and regularly ○ respecting Aboriginal ways of knowing and being ○ respecting cultural protocols ○ having a clear and transparent scope ○ recognising and acknowledging prior harm ○ providing a safe space for expressing views ○ telling participants how their data will be stored, shared and distributed ○ closing the loop by telling Aboriginal communities how their views informed the strategy development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>communities in the development of the homelessness strategy, and align it to the ways of working with communities in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.</p>
<p>People with lived experience inform service design</p>	<p>⇒ Establish or enhance a range of engagement mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meaningful and systemic engagement mechanisms need to be part of policy, program and practice processes – not only service design. Homes NSW should consider the below mechanisms to engage people with lived experience and expertise, especially with the upcoming commissioning of homelessness services. This should also catalyse work across the government in human services more broadly and health, disability, justice to ensure all portfolios of government have similar lived experience mechanism, and that innovation and learnings can be shared. <p>Establish a consistent tenant participation network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homes NSW should create a network of local tenant participation structures consistently across all public housing communities in NSW, feeding into a state-level group. Homes NSW should also explicitly support Community Housing Providers’ tenant engagement structures. - For example, Mission Australia Housing’s Tenant Action Groups have a strategic focus, setting medium to long-term goals. This is beneficial for both our services and tenants because they can improve tenant/staff relationships, improve tenants’ skills and self-confidence and increase willing involvement into the design and delivery of services and broader advocacy issues. <p>Build a Lived Expertise workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lived Expertise practitioners can contribute enormously to the development of person-led and recovery-focused support because they inspire hope and are able to bring the unique skills and knowledge gained through lived experience and engagement to bear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility 	<p>Homes NSW to review current engagement mechanism for involving people with lived experience and establish/enhance as needed, and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create a network of local tenant participation structures across public housing; - create specific roles and employment pathways for

	<p>Implement quality assurance and service improvement initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Australia builds participation opportunities into our quality assurance processes that evaluate the effectiveness of programs. This perspective adds to the evidence base for how people feel about a service, telling us what is working well and building our understanding of where quality and safety could be improved. - Such practices should be adopted across statewide program evaluations. <p>Create opportunities to contribute to service design and co-design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Client/tenant input into the design of Mission Australia’s services includes: feedback from existing services; desk-based research into the needs of our clients/tenants and their communities; and consultation and co-design of service models with current and existing clients/tenants through contextual interviews and ideation workshops. - Similar practices should be adopted across statewide service design processes. <p>⇒ Shift toward genuine collaboration and empowerment in the entire commissioning process, not just service design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choosing the right engagement method depends on the situation, resources, and target group. The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is useful for this purpose. We use this at Mission Australia to identify suitable levels of engagement. For significant issues affecting clients and communities such as solutions intended to benefit them, government and funders should aim for approaches closer to the right side of the spectrum. <table border="1" data-bbox="438 862 1373 958"> <tr> <td>Inform</td> <td>Consult</td> <td>Involve</td> <td>Collaborate</td> <td>Empower</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">----- increasing impact on decisions -----></td> </tr> </table> <p>⇒ Acknowledge power and vulnerability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is often a power imbalance between professionals and individuals with lived experience, especially from marginalised groups (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally diverse, LGBTIQ+). - It is crucial to acknowledge these imbalances. Those in positions of power – including government agencies and service providers - must actively create safety by using sensitive language and behaviours and take responsibility for sharing power including decision-making responsibility on priorities and activities. 	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower	----- increasing impact on decisions ----->						<p>people with lived expertise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify opportunities in business and service processes for lived experience to meaningfully contribute to continuous improvement.
Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower									
----- increasing impact on decisions ----->													
<p>Person-centred principles are</p>	<p>⇒ Embed a strategic commissioning approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic reform of commissioning processes will be a key element of reforming partnership arrangements with government, providers and beneficiaries of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power, decision- 	<p>Homes NSW to follow a strategic commissioning approach as outline</p>										

<p>embedded in policy and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At a minimum the intended re-commissioning of homelessness services should include the following elements to enhance partnership arrangements and work towards better outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Involving people and communities with living/lived experience, to improve program design and delivery o Outcomes-based contracts to incentivise performance on the basis of change achieved for people, compared with other forms of contracting which measure administrative tasks and inputs. o Aligning contract periods with the time taken to achieve the goal, to increase certainty about program achievements and stabilise the human services workforce. o A clear view on the evidence of what works, to drive better outcomes. o Consolidating contracts on a place and/or cohort and/or outcome area basis to reduce the current fragmentation of service provision, increase accountability and enable new ways of working. o Designing program guidelines and contracts to be highly flexible and devolve as much decision-making as possible to local frontline staff, who best understand the needs of the communities in which their service users and they themselves live and are experts in how service systems operate there. o Procurement processes to encourage collaboration between service providers. o Robust monitoring and evaluation to track progress and feed into continuous improvement. - There have been recent advances in Australia and overseas of commissioning models that are designed to better bring together a diverse range of actors and break down existing policy and service delivery silos to support community-led responses to community-identified issues. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o system convening ('bring people together across sector, organisational and community boundaries ... to create positive change in how systems like public services operate').² o alliance commissioning ('brings together providers and commissioners to create an integrated team to lead, coordinate and deliver services designed to meet mutually agreed outcomes').³ o community or place-based commissioning ('handing power and resource over to communities that is held by public sector institutions').⁴ - In particular, the alliance contracting approach implemented for the homelessness service system in South Australia, developed in Scotland, has improved the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery, fostered sector collaboration, enabled innovation and resulted in improved outcomes for people at risk of and experiencing homelessness. The alliance approach involves multiple non-government partners coming together to develop integrated service networks with supporting behaviours and practices, working together in a formal and structured way, both at a system and 	<p>making and responsibility</p>	<p>in this submission in the planned commissioning of homelessness services.</p> <p>Homes NSW to consider the application of the alliance contracting approach in its recommissioning plans for SHS.</p>
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	<p>geographical level. We strongly encourage the NSW Government to consider adopting at least an alliance commissioning approach for the recommissioning of the SHS services.</p>		
<p>Prevention is prioritised</p>	<p>⇒ Establish a clear typology and definition of homelessness prevention and how actors in the service system fit in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is ambiguity in the sector about what homelessness prevention is and the associated roles and responsibilities of services and staff. - Mission Australia uses a typology of homelessness prevention in our prototype Homelessness Solutions Model Framework (see <i>Service planning and delivery is flexible, localised and joined-up</i>) based on Fitzpatrick et al.'s prevention typology⁵ which attempts to bring together both temporal- and population-focused approaches to homelessness prevention (that is, both the timing of prevention initiatives and the population to whom they are targeted). We suggest this be adopted in NSW. <p>Universal prevention measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This includes measures preventing or minimising structural risks of homelessness across the population at large. This includes permanent housing (for as long as people need or want it) with support as required as well as a range of non-housing measures including poverty reduction. <p>Targeted prevention measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are early-stage prevention programs focussed on high-risk-of-homelessness groups. <p>Crisis prevention measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are responses that prevent foreseeable homelessness, usually included tenancy support programs. <p>Emergency prevention measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are responses that prevent imminent homelessness or work to rapidly re-house people. These often overlap in practice with crisis prevention measures and are also often delivered by tenancy support programs. <p>⇒ Target significant new investment at scaling prevention activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current spending levels for crisis responses must continue, given the current housing emergency. But the Government must progressively shift to a preventive system and this requires new, additional frontloaded investment. Over the long-term, crisis investment will reduce as prevention of homelessness increases, reducing overall housing and homelessness spending. <p>⇒ Establish a \$500m 5 year Homelessness Prevention Transformation Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Fund would have the main objective of catalysing the transition to prevention by funding policy, program and practice changes, investing in evidence-based housing and support models, with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Binding legislation + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Homes NSW to lead cross-agency development on a prevention system and investment roadmap that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clearly defines a typology of homelessness prevention; - sets out roles and responsibilities of government agencies in prevention; - includes actions to shift NSW to a homelessness prevention and wellbeing focus. <p>Homes NSW to consult on the design and eligibility for a \$500m 5 year Homelessness Prevention Transformation Fund.</p> <p>NSW Government to redesign government budget operating rules to incentivise</p>

	<p>secondary objective of freeing up investment in housing and homelessness over the longer term as the need for cost-intensive crisis interventions diminishes. (See Appendix A for more details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Fund would support investment in the prevention activities identified in our Homelessness Solutions Model Framework (see <i>Service planning and delivery is flexible, localised and joined-up</i>). The Framework provides compelling evidence for why this additional ringfenced investment is critical to making homelessness rare, brief and not recurring. <p>⇒ Adjust government budget operating rules to acknowledge cost savings for prevention and early intervention investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conventional government budget operating rules are incapable of capturing the true value and long-term impact of investments in prevention and early intervention. - Redesigning budgeting rules to capture the increased or decreased demand for government services would lead to better well-being outcomes for people and communities, and fiscal savings to government. This would account for the true avoided costs of investment in homelessness prevention, for example the reduced demand/expenditure on specialist and mainstream services, like policing, Emergency Departments and temporary accommodation. - This would incentivise government agencies to pursue meaningful wellbeing and preventive policy-making and put forward business cases to NSW Treasury where a high degree of confidence in cost savings can be demonstrated. - The Centre for Policy Development is leading work on aligning government budget processes in this manner and further detail is in <i>Banking the benefits, Better aligning budget process rules with Measuring What Matters</i>.⁶ A live example is demonstrated in the Victorian Government’s <i>Early Intervention Investment Framework</i> which we recommend be used to inform the Homelessness Prevention Transformation Fund.⁷ 		prevention-oriented policy.
<p>Housing First principles are embedded in policy and practice</p>	<p>⇒ Housing First only works when there is housing available which matches individual need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Australia strongly endorses a Housing First approach that is founded on a commitment to people having a right to housing without treatment or behavioural eligibility pre-conditions. They should be provided with the right housing and support if needed as soon as possible after becoming homeless. Social and affordable housing, as well as the private rental market, can all be used as housing stock to meet these needs. - However, general social housing and private rentals are not suitable for the minority of individuals with highly complex needs and behaviours, who need supportive or permanent supportive housing models which are not widely available. Investing in an adequate supply of specialist housing plus support will be needed for this group. 	<p>+ Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock</p>	<p>The NSW Government to start work on all available avenues to increase long-term housing stock. This principle succeeds only on the ability to meet the need for social and affordable housing,</p>

			including models for specific cohort needs.
<p>Service planning and delivery is flexible, localised and joined-up</p>	<p>⇒ Adopt a systems approach with supporting governance structures to drive whole-of-government action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service integration is important across the many sectors that influence housing and homelessness outcomes. To drive this whole-of-government effort, the NSW Government should establish a Steering Committee comprised of senior representatives from across relevant agencies as well as from service providers and people with lived experience. <p>⇒ Form place-based homelessness action groups/plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our staff across NSW stress the importance of flexibility and agency for their communities to make decisions and be supported to do so. - A systems approach should make clear where there are necessary statewide approaches (and the degree, if any, of localisation) and acknowledge when communities are best placed and empowered to lead by devolving budget autonomy, service commissioning, policy-making, etc. to meet accountable outcomes. - Ideally, the regional homelessness action plans would be developed by regional communities, including service providers operating there, service users or consumer representatives, and other stakeholders including local government. The Government should fund the regional groups to do this work, including, for example, funding for providers to backfill their staff so they can participate. The groups should then continue, acting as a service system coordination/community interface mechanism for the implementation phase of plans. <p>⇒ Establish a framework of housing and homelessness interventions to inform service commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Australia and the Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia have developed a prototype Homelessness Solutions Model Framework (the Framework). - The Framework categorises all end-homelessness interventions across three domains - permanent housing plus support, prevention measures, and crisis responses - and assesses what we know about the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of each. (See Appendix B for further detail). - This Framework should be adopted in NSW and used to help the Steering Committee and associated regional bodies to inform service planning, identify gaps and assess progress in shifting towards prevention-oriented solutions to homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment ✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility 	<p>NSW Government commit to a governance structure for implementation of the homelessness reforms that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes representatives from all relevant stakeholders; - operates in genuine partnership; - shares decision-making; - supports place-based homelessness action plans and community agency. <p>Homes NSW to commission work to develop a framework of housing and homelessness interventions to inform service commissioning.</p>

<p>The workforce is strong and supported</p>	<p>⇒ Invest in creating a strong, capable and sustainable care workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness services are under increasing pressure, with a combination of rising demand, staff shortages and inadequate funding creating an unsustainable system. This is reflected in trends across the entire care sector, which is growing rapidly and requires a pipeline of skilled workers. To enable the development of this pipeline, the value of the social sector must be recognised as an essential and attractive place for people to work and build a career. - The Government must take a more active role in the stewardship of this vital sector for employment, including by developing a <i>Care Sector Workforce Plan</i> which aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ attract, recruit, and retain skilled workers; ○ direct funding to activities to develop a workforce that is capable, effective, evidence-based, client-centred, trauma-informed, safe, and reflective of the diversity of the communities in which we work ○ support redeployment and transferability within the sector to minimise costs spent on redundancy only to move across to another organisation undertaking the same role.. <p>⇒ Proper service commissioning and contract lengths will benefit workforce growth and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often programs and initiatives are funded on a short-term basis and/or are repeatedly extended for short periods. While many still produce positive outcomes, discontinued or short-duration funding significantly decreases the prospects of positive client outcomes. - This funding environment results in the loss of qualified staff from the sector and thus disrupts trust relationships, continuity of care and client outcomes. Our analysis of three years of our housing and homelessness data across 63 services found that along with key service features such as duration of engagement, frequency of engagement and brokerage, that highly skilled staff, specialist roles and multi- disciplinary teams that could create genuine and effective relationships based on trust were critical to successful client outcomes.⁸ - This dysfunctional funding environment is also highly inefficient, with avoidable waste of taxpayer funds in high frequency contract “churn” incurred by both government agencies and providers. 	<p>▣ New targeted investment</p>	
<p>Systems, tools and measurement are consistent and fit for purpose</p>	<p>⇒ Establish a strong governance framework for the implementation of the NSW Homelessness Strategy, and the development, monitoring and reporting of rolling action plans.</p> <p>As discussed under <i>Service planning and delivery is flexible, localised and joined-up.</i></p>	<p>✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility</p>	

OUTCOME 1:

Wherever possible, homelessness is prevented from happening in the first place, making it rare.

Q1. To make homelessness rare, what should NSW prioritise for action and why?

Q2. What opportunities and risks are there for implementing actions under this outcome?

1.1. People can get and keep a safe and affordable home

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Increase the supply of a range of quality accessible and appropriate housing types in NSW, including social, affordable and key worker housing</p>	<p>⇒ Holistic approach to housing supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The housing system is complex: high property prices put pressure on rental markets, which in turn puts pressure on the limited non-market housing stock (social and affordable housing) and the homelessness system. - The Strategy must consider these interactions in the system in its policy directions and the housing spectrum holistically, from urgently needed non-market solutions (social and affordable housing, crisis and transitional accommodation) to easing affordability, security and access of market housing (private rentals and homeownership). - However, Government support to repair the housing system needs to prioritise new housing and maintaining current housing for people most in need. - The current bipartisan support for planning reform in NSW should be used as a strong opportunity to introduce sorely needed change. <p>⇒ Prioritise social and affordable housing as essential infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The challenge of gaining approval for social and affordable housing development applications needs to be recognised and addressed. Given the urgency of delivering the social and affordable housing supply agenda, these development applications should be designated as critically important social infrastructure and, where possible, improvements be made to their assessment processes and timeframes, coordination between stakeholders, and transparency and certainty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Binding legislation ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW and Department of Planning & Environment to draft planning legislation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - designate social and affordable housing as essential infrastructure to fast-track developments; - continue measures to facilitate increased density, especially in middle ring suburbs of Sydney; - introduce MIZ; - facilitate modular home construction; - reduce barriers for development of

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning powers that were introduced by State and Territory governments to support the delivery of the former National Rental Affordability Scheme provide a guide for ensuring these development applications are treated with priority. ⇒ Continue measures to facilitate increased density, especially in middle ring suburbs of Sydney; - Mission Australia supports increased densification in established suburbs in major cities – the middle ring – as part of efforts to boost housing supply. This can include measures such as mixed tenure developments in brown- and grey-field sites, subdivisions and secondary dwellings (“granny flats”). - However, lessons from rapid and unplanned densification must be heeded to minimise community opposition and to avoid solving one problem only to create several more. Key considerations need to be the updating of overstretched and neglected essential infrastructure in middle ring suburbs, and ensuring the community dividend is sufficient and not outweighed by wealth accumulation and transfer to land holders and developers through unlocking additional value to already lucrative land assets. - Under properly managed plans, which include a community change management component, densification of the middle ring can play a significant role in increasing supply of social and affordable housing. ⇒ Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (MIZ) to boost affordable housing supply - Mission Australia supports inclusionary zoning strategies that foster communities where all forms of housing are embraced. We recommend a robust mandatory inclusionary zoning policy be adopted and that the Government be informed by the work of The Constellation Project on a National Framework for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning (MIZ).⁹ - MIZ has generated substantial numbers of social and affordable homes internationally, including the UK, USA and many other countries with similar housing markets as Australia. For example, in a 12-month period from 2021, MIZ delivered 26,000 new affordable homes across England. - The public benefits generated by MIZ are retained over the long term. Homes delivered through MIZ, when owned and managed by not-for-profit community housing providers, support the growth of this sector and boost its capacity to leverage additional investment into more new affordable homes. ⇒ Decrease construction times with modular home construction where appropriate 		<p>emerging housing models.</p> <p>Treasury to review the effectiveness of homebuyer schemes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure they target only low-income households; - redirect any savings to social and affordable housing.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This type of housing construction has been used overseas in countries like the USA, UK and Canada to rapidly deploy temporary housing to address homelessness. It has also been used for permanent social homes in Australia (like under the WA Government’s Modular Build Program, Victorian Government’s Regional Housing Fund to deliver 250 modular social homes). - The overseas builds for new homelessness facilities often utilised prefabrication methods to speed up deployment and construction time. For example, it took 90 days to construct 39 units (each 23m²) as part of a temporary modular housing project in Vancouver, Canada. - In circumstances of severe overcrowding and lack of alternative, culturally appropriate housing in Aboriginal communities, modular construction techniques should be more widely used, including for the rapid construction of emergency housing. <p>⇒ Support emerging housing models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning systems need to support emerging housing typologies to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities. This includes co-housing models, medium-sized new generation boarding houses with support, and co-designed models for particular at-risk of homelessness groups such as Aboriginal people and young people. <p>⇒ Target homeownership support to lower income households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driven by factors such as the price of housing, changing household demographics and population increases, the rate of homeownership is declining. It is appropriate that governments address this issue but, as recommended by the Productivity Commission, support into home ownership should be tightly targeted to lower income households and use criteria such as income testing. 		
<p>Improve support so people can keep their housing, regardless of the type of housing they have.</p>	<p>⇒ Expand tenancy sustainment programs for all at-risk renters regardless of tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homes NSW needs to take a more active coordination and funding role in this area to ensure equitable coverage for all people in need across housing tenures, including in the private rental market. - Features of robust tenancy support for people at risk are: integrated service delivery; facilitation of access to appropriate housing and to support programs that address the underlying and often complex issues that can cause tenancy loss and/or homelessness risk; and provision of a collaborative, integrated, holistic service delivery approach that is tenant-driven, strengths-based and goal-focused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to commission tenancy sustainment programs to cover all at-risk renters in NSW.</p> <p>Homes NSW to draw up guidelines for dispersing funding to rollout statewide</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are many good examples of small-scale programs operated and funded by community services and Community Housing Providers which can provide best-practice insights. ⇒ Scale up funding to localised initiatives with private real-estate agents to build early intervention and/or housing pathways - Pilots have shown this type of collaborative model to provide effective responses to tenancy sustainment for at-risk households or to facilitate access to rental homes following homelessness. - For example, the Macarthur Real Estate Engagement Project is a successful example of collaboration between homelessness services and the private sector to identify and respond to homelessness risk. It started with initial funding from the NSW Government over a decade ago. Mutual benefits flow from this work, with the business cost savings for real estates/landlords an important outcome that keeps this project running.¹⁰ - More recently, Mission Australia received funding to deliver The Priority Project– a program that involves the prioritisation of private rentals to provide housing for women (and their dependants) who have experienced domestic and family violence – in Southeast Queensland, in partnership with The Salvation Army and with the support of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. Evaluation outcomes of the 12-month pilot were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 23 women and 49 dependents were housed; ○ 89% of women opted to receive on-going case management; ○ 21 out of 23 tenancies were maintained at the end of the pilot period; ○ economic value was conservatively estimated at \$536,435 in annual savings across housing services, healthcare, and outcomes for children. - Mission Australia would be happy to provide the evaluation, as well as the evaluation on the Western Sydney pilot site and a report on the scalability of the two models to help inform Homes NSW’s required action in this area. 		<p>coverage of collaborative localised initiatives between homelessness services and private real estate.</p>
<p>Support people to remain in or enter the private rental market through tapered subsidies and other rental products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Review private rental assistance products - These products have historically seen low uptake due to factors like restricted eligibility, slow processing times and insufficient awareness-raising. The role of these products should be articulated the Strategy’s accompanying action plans, especially given the undersupply of non-market housing. 	<p>▣ New targeted investment</p>	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to review the effectiveness of private rental assistance products to guide where further</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additionally, the soaring cost of housing means that subsidies are often not set at practical levels to support entry and sustainment in private rentals for many on low incomes, even if they do access them. - For example, the Rent Choice Youth product has an income test that is too low to benefit many young people struggling with housing costs, and some real estate agents are put off by the administrative burden and perceived challenges of providing housing to young people. An alternative use for the funding would be to roll out a model of youth shared accommodation using headleases funded up-front from Rent Choice Youth. Mission Australia is successfully implementing a similar model in Victoria, the Dandenong Youth Housing Project for young people leaving care. - From our experience, people need deeper subsidies, for longer periods, until the flow of new social and affordable homes increases substantially to rebalance the housing market. <p>➔ Programs to transfer social housing tenants into the private market should be weighed against their impact and cost</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While private market tenancies are appropriate for some people, we advise against transitioning tenants from social housing to an unaffordable private market without ensuring sufficient support and accountability for their long-term housing outcomes. 		<p>investment and changes are needed.</p>
<p>Support people leaving government services into appropriate housing</p>	<p>➔ This commitment needs housing stock and a resourced service system to be successful</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We support the intent of the <i>No Exits from Government Services into Homelessness: A framework for multi-agency action</i>, but note that it has not had a discernible impact on exits into homelessness because of a lack of accountability and inbuilt penalties and dis-incentives pursuing this work. - Without the further action to strengthen the enforceability, resourcing and funding of this work this government commitment under the NSW Homelessness Strategy will fail to deliver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to lead cross-agency work to develop an action plan and secure funding arrangements to effectively implement the <i>No Exits from Government Services into Homelessness: A framework for multi-agency action</i>.</p>

1.2. People at risk of homelessness are identified early and linked with the right supports

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Build capacity of mainstream government and community services to identify people at risk and connect them to appropriate services.</p>	<p>⇒ Legislate a Duty to Assist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As discussed above, Wales and Scotland have introduced a legal duty to assist for public officials, which creates an active responsibility to identify people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and assist them to access available support. A similar duty should be legislated in NSW. <p>⇒ Systematic screening for homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic screening for homelessness risk by non-housing and non-homelessness services would enable the early identification of people who could be assisted to keep their housing or quickly find new housing. This could range from advice and/or referral to more comprehensive interventions such as exit planning. This is particularly effective for groups at elevated risk of homelessness in contact with mainstream services, such as: students who are disengaging with education within schools, which is often an indicator of family conflict; people staying in hospitals, corrections facilities and other residential settings; and young people preparing to leave out-of-home care. - At a minimum, mainstream services should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ screen all clients to assess for risk of homelessness; ○ seek to prevent homelessness by use of assistance and brokerage funding; ○ refer to an SHS when necessary for assistance into permanent housing or, if necessary, crisis accommodation. ○ Improve data collection and proper monitoring, to generate information on rates of homelessness among out-of-home care leavers and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Binding legislation ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>The NSW Government to legislate a Duty to Assist by 2025.</p> <p>Homes NSW to lead cross agency work to develop a roadmap to modify systems, guides, training and tools to assist mainstream services to identify homelessness risk factors and provide advice and referral as a minimum.</p>
<p>Build on effective prevention approaches that identify and support people and families at risk of homelessness.</p>	<p>⇒ Increase funding and resourcing to the targeted early intervention, health, justice, child protection and out-of-home care systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend current early intervention programs to support family cohesion and long-term homelessness prevention. - The NSW Government should advocate for continued funding of Reconnect or similar family reconciliation service by the Commonwealth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to lead development on a business case for additional investment across the service system to support</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand access to youth specialist community mental health and substance abuse services to meet demand. - Extend current alcohol and other drug treatment and rehabilitation programs to meet need. - Expand justice reinvestment and diversionary approaches to keep people from entering the criminal justice system. 		<p>prevention and early intervention work.</p>
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1.3. People know where to get information and support to prevent homelessness

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Work to change the negative attitudes and stigma about homelessness that can prevent people from seeking support.</p>	<p>⇒ Develop an awareness campaign to better inform attitudes towards housing and homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homelessness and a lack of affordable housing are not solely political problems: they are societal problems. What we accept as a society will help to set the parameters for government action. - Presenting a narrative that the community succeeds when we all succeed; that we do better in all aspects of life – our work, relationships and public participation – when housed and can afford the basics of life. - An awareness campaign should both educate the community and mainstream service providers about homelessness and to build support for the bold actions that need to be implemented. - It could build on previous work undertaken by the Susan McKinnon Foundation, Per Capita’s Centre for Equitable Housing and the FrameWorks Institute, alongside recent research from Ipsos and the Committee for Sydney which shows increasing support for higher-density housing. <p>⇒ Building community acceptance for ‘yes, in my backyard’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social and affordable housing developments often face strong local community opposition based on stigma and fear, alongside general anti-development sentiment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Medium-term:</p> <p>NSW Government to devise an awareness campaign which should be linked to the major reforms of the Strategy to help promote the changes as well as general community attitudes (e.g. introduction of a Duty to Assist, a build program of social and affordable housing and support for private renters, by MIZ, a target to end homelessness).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mission Australia and other public and NGO providers have experienced this difficulty, with local opposition to planning proposals for new homelessness services and social housing developments.- If the actions proposed in this submission to significantly boost housing supply, especially social and affordable housing, are to reach the scale and speed of delivery that is required, community attitudes need to turn from opposition to welcoming of diverse housing types and residents within neighbourhoods. <p>⇒ Change management approach</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A change management approach can be adopted, targeting formal community leaders (such as council staff and elected councillors), informal community influencers, as well as the general public.- An aspect of the campaign would focus on urban change – a growing city, need for more affordable housing and the benefits this gives to individuals and whole of community – and would follow an initial phase of awareness raising, then followed by knowledge/ownership building of the implementation of solutions.		
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OUTCOME 2:

When homelessness does occur, people are quickly connected to housing and the supports they need.

- Q1. To make homelessness brief, what should NSW prioritise for action and why?
 Q2. What opportunities and risks are there for implementing actions under this outcome?

2.1. People’s needs are quickly identified and they are referred to the right support

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Support local coordination groups to improve screening, triage and referral</p>	<p>⇒ Joined-up service responses need increased resourcing and funding to be done well and systematically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Mission Australia, we know there are many examples of the health, education and justice systems linking up with community services such as the youth homelessness program Reconnect and SHS. - An effective example of this is the co-location of mental health and AOD services at the Common Ground Camperdown residence. - However, these linkages are typically confined to a local area or service and driven by personal relationships and goodwill. This is not an equitable way to do prevention work and is no substitute for a coordinated service system response backed by a strong policy imprimatur, resourcing and funding. - Often, even when a person at risk is identified early, there are long waitlists for specialist services or no services to refer on to, which underscores the importance of adequately funding service systems. - Writing into service contracts the need to engage in collaboration is not sufficient. <p>⇒ Support Advance to Zero initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advance to Zero (AtoZ) is a groundbreaking national initiative of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) that supports local collaborative efforts to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping, community by community. Using a range of evidence-based approaches, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to lead development of a business case to resource and fund services to do this work, which some already do despite limited capacity or a strong mandate to do it.</p> <p>Homes NSW to provide support to the Advance to Zero initiatives to deepen and widen the impact of their work.</p>

	<p>communities are supported not just to address individual instances of homelessness, or even reduce overall homelessness, but to end it altogether.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AtoZ is a collaboration between a broad range of communities, organisations and individuals that are all committed to ending homelessness. - Communities, generally defined as a local government area or collection of local government areas, seek to measure their progress towards this goal by calculating 'functional zero', a dynamic way of determining if a community has been able to make homelessness rare, brief and once-off. Tools such as By Name Lists and Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT), a screening tool that helps homelessness services to prioritise support for the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness, support the work of the AtoZ community. - AtoZ is characterised by three core components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Everyone working together with a shared strategy to end homelessness. o Local community wide by-name data o A Housing First systems change approach to coordination, improvement and advocacy. 		
<p>Revise policies, practice and tools for homelessness screening, assessment and intake</p>	<p>⇒ Introduce homelessness risk indicators into mainstream administrative data systems, starting with the corrections system as the first priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As discussed above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	
<p>Revise housing policies and practices so they are responsive to need, flexible, culturally appropriate and support pathways out of homelessness</p>	<p>⇒ Alignment of standards across public and community housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The <i>Homes for NSW Plan</i> should commit to the delivery of consistent high-quality standards across social housing, irrespective of the provider. Homes NSW should commit to complying with the relevant NRSCH operational standards and should report on these as Community Housing Providers are required to. <p>⇒ Assess and appropriately address unreasonable disparities in policies that apply to Community Housing Providers and Homes NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have observed some areas of disparity in expectations of homes managed by Community Housing Providers compared with public housing stock. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Binding legislation 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to draft any necessary legislative or regulatory amendments to reflect consistent operational standards be met regardless of housing provider.</p> <p>Homes NSW to include in the revision of</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For example, we have observed that the requirement to turnaround a property for a new tenancy in 14 to 28 days is strictly enforced for Community Housing Providers but not Homes NSW managed properties. - A further area is distribution of housing maintenance funding based on ownership or management of the home, such as with the \$1 billion Repair and Restore Maintenance program announced in the 2024 NSW Budget. Homes NSW could consider expanding access to this Program and further initiatives to ensure equity of maintenance spend on stock that is Government-owned and managed as well as Government-owned but community housing managed. The stock that has been transferred from the Government to the community housing sector are significantly aged and in disrepair and tenants would benefit greatly from access to this funding. <p>⇒ Preserve the community housing sector’s ability to be flexible and innovate</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The inherent difference in organisational structures and scale, available resources and budget flexibility between Homes NSW and Community Housing Providers needs to be acknowledged when assessing what is practicable and reasonable, and whether additional government support is required to meet higher customer excellence or guarantees. The value of a multi-provider system is the space and flexibility to innovate, and must not be inadvertently stifled by overly prescriptive Homes NSW policies while aiming for a threshold of quality consistency and service equity. <p>⇒ Further issues and actions are contained in our Homes for NSW Plan submission</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We understand submissions to that separate consultation process are also being considered in this consultation. 		<p>housing policies and practices areas that have unreasonable disparities in application based on housing provider type.</p>
<p>Introduce a homelessness registry so services work better together to meet people’s needs</p>	<p>⇒ Any new system should not duplicate and be co-designed with services</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing IT systems or applications can be money, time and resource intensive endeavours. Given the higher priority needs and actions identified in this submission, the Government should proceed judiciously and look to opportunities to enhance existing initiatives. - For example, the By-Name List developed by the End Street Sleeping Collaboration has been valuable for reducing the need for people to re-tell their stories to multiple agencies and help services to link and coordinate support. There are opportunities to create data linkage with government 		

	services such as the NSW Housing Register, NDIS, etc with an injection of government funding and resourcing.		
Improve responses to people sleeping rough in public spaces and during extreme weather	<p>⇒ Permanent supportive housing options are critical to a successful response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services involved in assertive outreach operate in a constrained service system and paucity of appropriate housing for people sleeping rough. Most people sleeping rough have high and complex needs and general social housing options won't work. - Increase the availability of purpose-built supportive housing (permanent or otherwise) options. The Together Home Program conceived during COVID demonstrated that we can respond rapidly to house people rough sleeping, but it also highlighted that people with high and complex needs struggle to have their needs met and housing sustained in general housing stock or headleased properties. We observed that a two-year tenure was not long enough for many participants and recommend that the Government consider models designed to be permanent (for as long as wanted and needed by the tenant). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>NSW Government to provide sufficient investment to increase permanent supportive housing stock.</p>

2.2. People get safe crisis accommodation with appropriate support when they need it

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
Shift from commercial hotels and motels to temporary accommodation models delivered by the homelessness and housing sectors	<p>⇒ Modular homes for temporary accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Already mentioned in Outcome 1.1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment 	
Deliver high quality crisis accommodation with no barriers to access	<p>⇒ The role of crisis and transitional accommodation needs to be wound back and permanent housing scaled up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finland's success in reducing homelessness was in large part to its strong Housing First policy that included a program of converting crisis shelters into 		

	<p>longer term homes – reducing their system’s reliance on short-term accommodation and expanding permanent housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the prolonged homelessness and housing emergency, short-term accommodation has become a necessary default for most people who become homeless, including those who need minimal support/assistance and could be rapidly housed if the stock were available. In an ideal system, which the Homelessness Strategy should chart a credible path towards, there would be minimal use for crisis and transitional accommodation. There use would eventually be confined to small subset that would include people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o escaping DFV and needing an accommodation-based crisis response; that is, in immediate danger and urgently needing a safe place until their existing home is made safe or a new long-term home is organised. It is important to note that this is only a subset of people experiencing DFV, as many do not need an accommodation-based crisis response and can resolve their housing situation themselves; o needing assistance to apply for private or social housing, for example to obtain identification or other documents, and with nowhere else to live in the meantime; and o requiring support to learn to live independently, for example people who must learn about rental payment arrangements, property care and self-sufficient living skills. This applies particularly to young people, most of whom cannot be expected to live independently without support. <p>⇒ Where crisis accommodation is necessary and appropriate, it should meet certain quality criteria</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We acknowledge that there will likely always be at least a residual need for crisis accommodation. Where crisis accommodation is in place, it should provide the following good practice elements identified in the research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Flexible length of stay. o Well trained and supportive staff. o Staff with lived experience and Aboriginal workers to support cultural safety. o Trauma-informed care. o Support for a broad range of needs. o A built form that is trauma-informed. 		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accommodation should be self-contained with kitchen facilities and private bathrooms, and there should be options that allow people to keep pets with them. ○ Ongoing support should be provided to people after exiting crisis accommodation to long-term housing to ensure tenancy sustainment.¹¹ 		
Increase access to person and family-centred supports, particularly for people with complex needs, who are staying in temporary accommodation	<p>⇒ This requires the Government to commit to investment in existing services to increase their capacity to do this work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment ◆ Resourced service system 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Homes NSW to lead development of a business case to resource and fund services to do this work.</p>

2.3. People are supported out of homelessness into longer-term housing with tailored support

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
Support people into good quality, stable, accessible and appropriate social and affordable housing that meets their needs.	<p>⇒ This requires the Government to commit to investment in increasing supply of social and affordable housing stock, including a range of targeted models for people with specific support needs (e.g. young people, people with long-term or permanent complex needs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>NSW Government to provide sufficient investment to increase affordable and appropriate housing stock.</p>
Support Aboriginal people and families into culturally appropriate longer-term	<p>⇒ This should be explored and developed through the dedicated Aboriginal Action Plan and related governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power and decision-making 	

<p>housing including private rental and homeownership.</p>			
<p>Assist children and young people into housing and support models that meet their developmental needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Children and young people need a care and safety response not an adult homelessness response - An adult homelessness system is not designed for unaccompanied children and young people and their unique life stage and needs. The failure of the targeted early intervention services system and the more acute child protection and out-of-home care systems points to the need for those systems to be better funded and resourced so their skilled practitioners can do what they are trained to, intervene early and provide family support/reunification where safe and feasible to do so, or support the young person’s care needs and transition to independence. ⇒ The unique life stage circumstance of unaccompanied young people requires funding of tailored housing models with support and flexible length of stays - In circumstances when children and young people need to be housed away from family, kin or outside the out-of-home care system, there needs to be a wide range of housing models to meet their diverse support needs, including: Youth Foyers for young people ready for education or employment; specialist models for young people with higher-intensity support needs such as high-level mental health or trauma-induced behavioural issues; models designed for First Nations youth; and models specifically catering for young people with physical disability. - See Appendix C for youth housing model options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment ◆ Resourced service system + Sufficient affordable & appropriate housing stock 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>Department of Communities and Justice to lead the develop of a business case to sufficiently resource and fund targeted early intervention and acute child and family services to reduce the incidence of youth homelessness and the default relegation of unaccompanied children and young people to the adult homelessness system.</p> <p>Homes NSW to undertake a needs analysis for youth-specific housing to inform investment of appropriate models across areas of identified need in NSW.</p>

OUTCOME 3:

When homelessness does occur, people do not experience multiple episodes of homelessness.

- Q1. To ensure homelessness is *not repeated*, what should NSW prioritise for action and why?
 Q2. What opportunities and risks are there for implementing actions under this outcome?

3.1. People with complex needs can access comprehensive, longer-term support so they do not experience repeat homelessness

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Deliver case management that links housing and support for people experiencing chronic homelessness and those with complex needs due to trauma, poor health, mental illness and alcohol and other drugs.</p>	<p>⇒ Develop an adequate supply of permanent supportive housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is strong international and Australian evidence that permanent supportive housing has beneficial outcomes for some of the most vulnerable members of our society, and that this type of homelessness solution needs greater policy attention and funding investment in Australia. - Permanent supportive housing is needed by only a very small proportion of the population: generally, people with histories of long-term and recurrent homelessness, likely including rough sleeping, who have high and complex support needs and who are likely to have been failed by multiple service systems, or for those who have a similar profile but who have not yet become homeless. This includes people with high and complex support needs who are in, and likely to be cycling through, various forms of institutional settings including correctional facilities, mental health residential facilities and hospitals. - There has been an increasing interest in and development of permanent supportive housing initiatives over the past 20 years. However, the approach remains disjointed and uncoordinated at both Federal and State/Territory levels. By and large, the landscape of permanent supportive housing in Australia has been populated by pilot or time-limited initiatives for which sustainable infrastructure and support has been unavailable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Resourced service system ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate:</p> <p>NSW Government to provide sufficient investment to increase permanent supportive housing stock.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples of true permanent supportive housing – with enduring housing and enduring support – are limited in Australia, with Common Ground a leading example. Several long-term supportive housing programs have demonstrated excellent outcomes, which in NSW include Together Home and Mission Australia’s MISHA (Michael’s Intensive Supported Housing Accord) program, but these have provided enduring access to support services beyond a limited duration. - Further modelling of the need for permanent supportive housing needs to be undertaken, and Mission Australia is working with a range of sector colleagues on advancing this work. In the meantime, it is clear that demand for these services well exceeds the limited supply currently available. 		
Provide tailored models for children and young people with complex needs so they can maintain stable housing and achieve their goals	<p>⇒ The unique life stage circumstance of unaccompanied young people requires funding of tailored housing models with support and flexible length of stays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As discussed above, there needs to be a wide range of housing models to meet diverse support needs of children and young people. - See Appendix C for youth housing model options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ New targeted investment 	<p>Immediate</p> <p>Homes NSW to undertake a needs analysis for youth-specific housing to inform investment of appropriate models across areas of identified need in NSW.</p>

3.2. People have strong connections to their community that protect against repeat homelessness

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
Support people to build resilience and connections to family and community through community development approaches	<p>⇒ Support place-based and community-led approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Mission Australia, working with communities is central to our work across homelessness and other service domains. We support people, groups and organisations to come together to identify common goals and to create solutions that positively impact their community. We enable communities to build upon their strengths, become more resilient and to develop their capacity to better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility ▣ New targeted investment 	

<p>such as community gardening initiatives, playgroups and children’s activities, local libraries and community centres.</p>	<p>overcome the issues they face, working with communities with a vision for long-term sustainable change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All communities are unique, with different assets and aspirations, challenges and needs. However, evidence shows there are common factors across stronger communities. These factors have informed Mission Australia’s Stronger Community Domains and Outcomes, which outline our vision for communities that are connected, inclusive, healthy, resilient and thriving. - We have developed a suite of resources focused on community strengthening activities, tools and measurement frameworks. We would be very happy to share these with Homes NSW if that would be of interest. 		
<p>Strengthen relationships with local councils, which play a key role in developing connected and resilient communities, and links with their Homelessness Action Planning processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of our commitment to partnership and convening of people groups and organisations towards positive solutions in local communities, Mission Australia actively collaborates with local government in a range of ways. We recognise local government’s pivotal role in sustaining strong connected and resilient communities for all citizens, aligning in our shared focus in any given geography to support people experiencing vulnerability. Their role includes a diverse range of activities, which could be targeted for further investment and strengthening, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local government representatives are commonplace in community-led place-based governance committees - collaboration on a broad range of community-facing engagement and development initiatives, from day celebrations (such as NAIDOC week), diversity and inclusion initiatives, community action plan implementation, consultations, and neighbourhood connection projects. - Advocacy on behalf of tenants and people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness for informed community and homelessness action plans - Discrete project collaboration through community development functions - Local government grants also assist in funding community initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Distributed power, decision-making and responsibility ▣ New targeted investment 	

3.3. People have access to housing that meets their changing needs across their lifespan

Govt. commitment	Implementation opportunities/risks	Success enablers	Priority
<p>Work with Commonwealth Government services to integrate housing, aged care and disability supports so people have greater choice and control.</p>	<p>⇒ Pursue this agenda through the Housing and Homelessness Ministerial Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several policy review processes have articulated the need for a stronger connection between housing, aged care and disability service provision. - We refer Homes NSW to an upcoming publication from Homelessness Australia which will contain a number of recommendations regarding the intersections between these fields and needed reform. 		
<p>Work to make mainstream services more culturally safe for Aboriginal people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>⇒ Require homelessness and housing organisations to undertake service design and delivery in a way that is demonstrably culturally appropriate, effective and determined by the local communities' choices, and to have a demonstrated cultural safety framework and evidence of culturally safe practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieving genuine choice and self-determination requires an understanding of the dynamic preferences of communities in service delivery and social housing, and for alternatives to be available which reflect those preferences, and how these shift over time. - Action should prioritise engaging with community to understand their service delivery needs and preferences, and should explicitly require homelessness and housing organisations - whether or not they are Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) - to undertake service design and delivery in a way that is demonstrably culturally appropriate, effective and determined by the local communities' choices. - We note that non- ACCOs deliver housing and homelessness services to more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than are delivered by ACCOs. Such “mainstream” housing and homelessness providers must have the capability to deliver culturally safe, culturally appropriate services, and work within cultural safety frameworks, and should be included in the service mix where communities want them to be. Non-ACCO organisations, if genuine, are already employing First Nations peoples from their own communities to serve those communities, and the contribution of such staff should be acknowledged. 		<p>Immediate</p> <p>This work should fall under the remit of the dedicated action plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>

<p>Design and modify social housing to meet people’s ageing, disability, cultural or other needs, such as accessibility, safety or community integration.</p>	<p>⇒ Location, design and adaptability of homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The urgent need to increase social and affordable housing stock must not overlook the needs of customers and lessons learnt from previous large-scale build initiatives, such as to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ well-located homes (close to jobs, public transport, educational, health and other services); ○ appropriate homes for family size, disability, ageing, cultural and other needs; ○ meet universal design standards which include space and liveability criteria; ○ tenure blind with market housing in the neighbourhood; ○ allows ageing in place; ○ flexibility to change designation from social to affordable housing as tenant circumstances change; ○ supportive housing models (permanent or otherwise) that a significant minority of tenants will require to live independently and thrive. - These aspects should be tested with intended beneficiaries through mechanisms such as those suggested for the <i>People with Lived Experience Inform Service Design</i> Principle to ensure all considerations are covered in delivering quality homes people will thrive in. 		
<p>Provide well-maintained, quality social homes to ensure people’s safety and well-being.</p>			

APPENDIX A – Homelessness Transformation Prevention Fund

Rationale

The homelessness service system must substantially transform if we are to end homelessness. Currently, Mission Australia and others are working within a system designed primarily to respond to people when they are homeless, or when it is almost unavoidable – this is too late. If we build capacity and capability to provide the right assistance to people before they reach crisis point, we will avoid unnecessary human misery, and more effectively help them maintain or find housing (with or without complementary supports) and save taxpayer funds.

To shift the system to this more efficient footing (see diagram below), Mission Australia recommends that the centrepiece of reform be a \$500 million 5 year Homelessness Prevention Transformation Fund. The Fund would have the main objective of catalysing the transition to prevention by funding policy, program and practice changes, investing in evidence-based housing and support models, with the secondary objective of freeing up investment in housing and homelessness over the longer term as the need for cost-intensive crisis interventions diminishes.



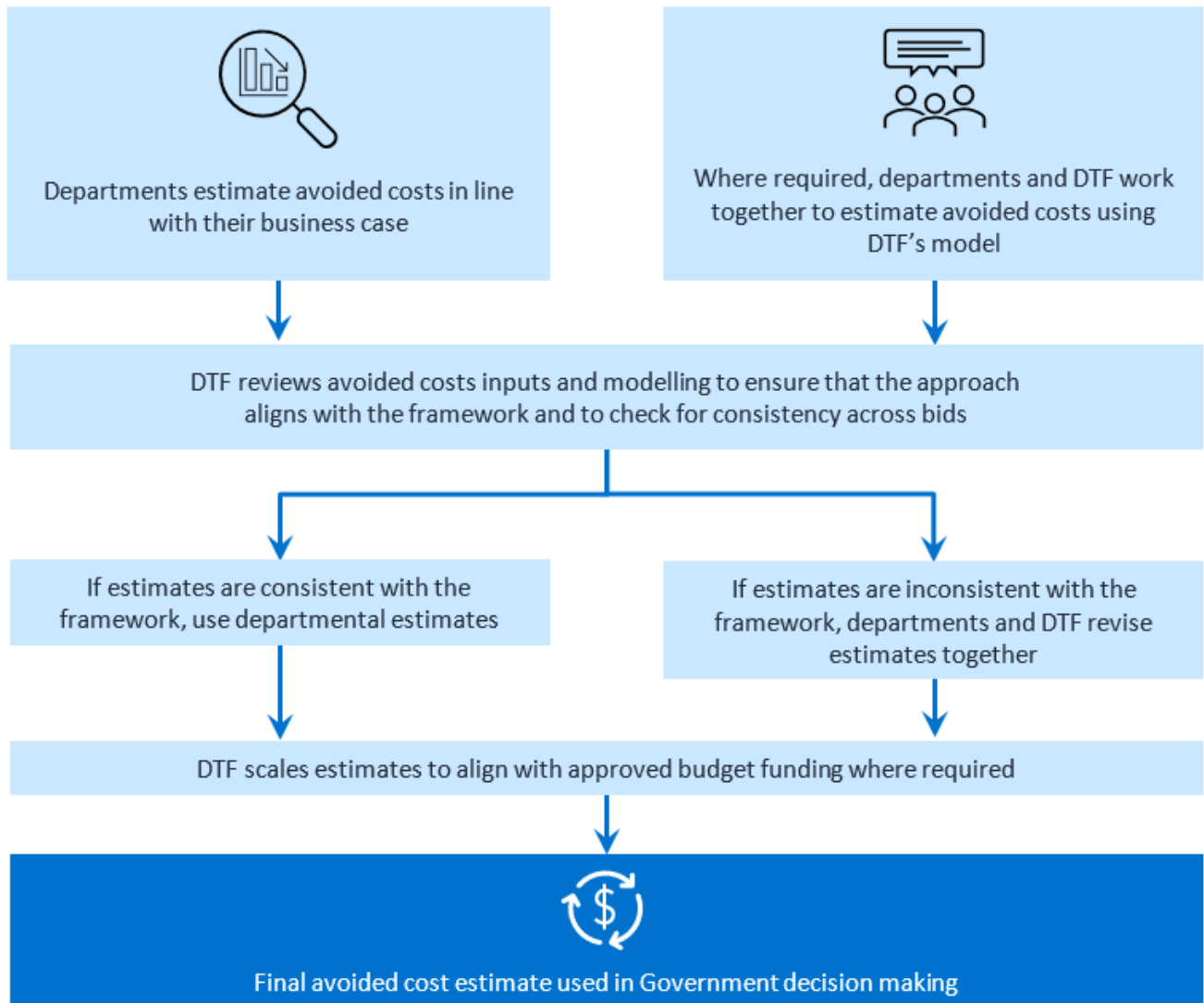
Suggested operation

We propose the Fund be designed with reference to the Victorian Government’s Early Intervention Investment Framework (EIIF), under which government agency initiatives are required to:

- Include outcome measures with expected outcomes and to report against them annually if funded.
 - Outcome measures may include measures that inform the calculation of avoided costs – for example the reduction in emergency department admissions – but also improvements for the individual and community such as better health and wellbeing
- Estimate the resulting avoided costs for government services for 10 years following an initiative receiving funding.
 - Effective avoided cost estimation requires high quality data and analysis. To support this, the Victorian Government has provided funding through the EIIF to improve quantitative capability to better quantify the impacts arising from early intervention initiatives.

Once submissions for funding have been made, Treasury (or DTF in Victoria) reviews inputs for quality assurance of outcome measures and avoided costs and works collaboratively with departments to resolve any issues.

Figure 7: Developing quality assured avoided cost estimates for EIIF initiatives



Extensive material on the purpose, operation and impact of the EIIF can be found here:

<https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/early-intervention-investment-framework>.

APPENDIX B – Typology of interventions to end homelessness

Mission Australia and the Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia have developed a prototype Homelessness Solutions Model Framework (the Framework). The Framework categorises all end-homelessness interventions across three domains - permanent housing plus support, prevention measures, and crisis responses - and assesses what we know about the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of each.

It proposes an answer to the question of *how Australian governments should allocate resources to end homelessness*.

The Framework includes:

- A typology - listing all possible types of housing and homelessness solutions;
- Evidence on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of each of those solution types;
- Estimations of the extent of need for each type of solution;
- Conclusions about the direction of long-term investment reform.

We recommend that the end-homelessness typology, summarised in Table 1, be used to inform commissioning of homelessness and housing services. We believe that this will help to identify gaps in service delivery and policy settings, stratify solutions and clarify the role of homelessness and other sectors in ending homelessness.

Table 1. Typology of interventions needed to end homelessness

Description	Example models / forms
Domain 1: PERMANENT HOUSING (FOR AS LONG AS PEOPLE WANT OR NEED IT) WITH SUPPORT AS REQUIRED	
HOME OWNERSHIP with/without support	Mortgage assistance products and subsidies
PRIVATE MARKET rental housing with/without support	Private rental housing products with no support
	Private rental housing with low/medium/high support
Long-term below-market rented housing, i.e. AFFORDABLE AND SOCIAL HOUSING , with/without support	Affordable housing products with no support
	Affordable housing with low/medium/high support
	Social housing with no support
	Social housing with low/medium/high support
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING enduring housing with enduring high-level support	Single-site (congregate, high density) e.g. Common Ground
	Scattered-site in housing throughout the community
Domain 2: PREVENTION MEASURES FOR PEOPLE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS	
UNIVERSAL PREVENTION MEASURES: Preventing or minimising structural risks of homelessness across the population at large	Poverty alleviation
	High rates of secure employment
	Violence (especially domestic and family violence) prevention
	Closing The Gap, elimination of systemic racism

	Adequate and affordable childcare
	Adequate and affordable health, mental health and AOD programs
TARGETED PREVENTION: Early-stage prevention programs focussed on high-risk-of-homelessness groups	Responses for young people at risk of homelessness and educational disengagement
	Responses to prevent young people leaving out-of-home care from exiting into homelessness
	Responses to prevent people leaving justice facilities into homelessness
	Responses to prevent people leaving health, mental health or AOD facilities from exiting into homelessness
	Culturally appropriate short stay accommodation for First Nations people travelling to regional centres
CRISIS PREVENTION: Responses that prevent foreseeable homelessness	DFV support
	Family restoration
	Tenancy support/evictions prevention
EMERGENCY PREVENTION: Responses that prevent imminent homelessness or work to rapidly re-house people	Short-term support for those newly homeless to re-enter housing
Domain 3: CRISIS RESPONSES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	
OUTREACH or on-site support services	Assertive outreach, outreach, drop-in centres, community hubs
CRISIS/TRANSITIONAL accommodation	General adult crisis and transitional accommodation
	DFV shelters
	Youth rapid rehousing
	Youth refuges

The variables used to describe and assess each intervention type, summarised in Table 2 below, could also be incorporated into the Strategy, to show the evidence for the interventions under consideration as well as the population need and likely costs and cost offsets.

Table 2. Variables assessing each intervention type

Solution types	Effectiveness of the solution type	Costs of the solution type	Need for the solution type	Expenditure
For each intervention ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rating of effectiveness • Quality of evidence about effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost to deliver - capital • Cost to deliver - operational • Avoided costs • Quality of evidence about costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of people currently served • # of people expected to be served • Quality of evidence about need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % recommended expenditure • % current expenditure • Recommended direction of future expenditure, over the long term

APPENDIX C – Youth housing options

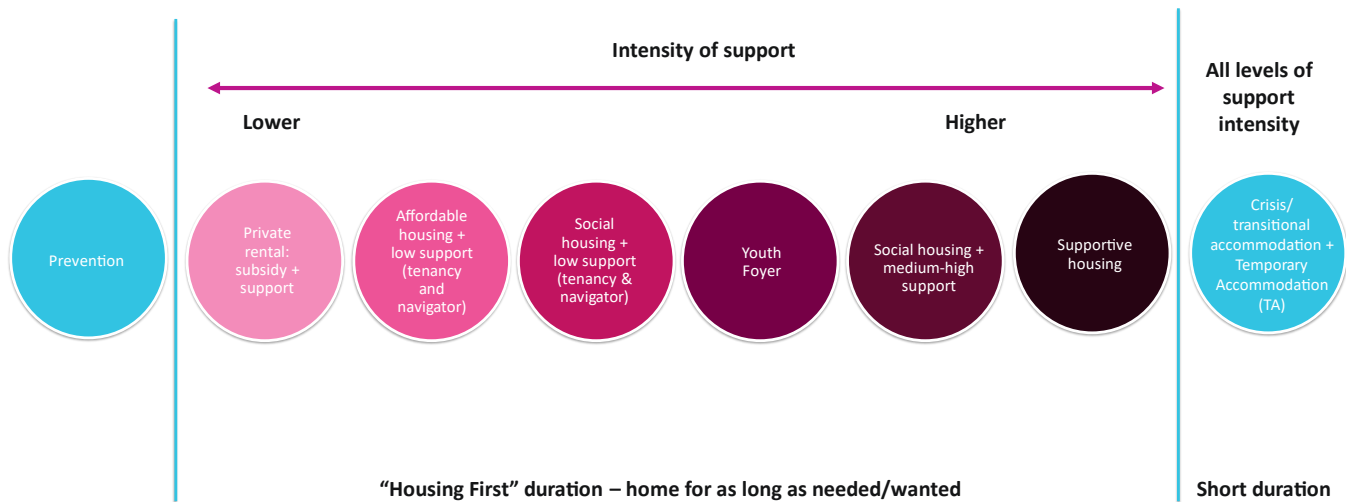
Diagram 1. Youth housing options

Youth housing options

Young people (16-24) need housing with support for different reasons and at different levels of intensity depending on need and circumstances.




 Based on the Homelessness Solutions Model Framework, developed by the Centre for Social Impact (UWA) and Mission Australia



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REFERENCE LIST

- ¹ A poll of more than 1,500 people across 24 of the most contestable electorates in late January shows 73% of voters say housing affordability will be important in influencing their vote. The research shows 84% believe ensuring Australians have safe and stable housing is a fundamental government responsibility, and 76% agree more social housing is needed. See: <https://newshub.medianet.com.au/2025/02/new-research-reveals-affordable-housing-is-a-vote-changing-election-issue/86982/>.
- ² New System Alliance, undated report. System convening: What you told us. At <https://newsystemalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/New-System-Alliance-Systems-Convener-Report-2023.pdf>.
- ³ Cardiff & Vale Regional Partnership Board, undated fact sheet. Alliance contracts. At <https://cavrp.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Alliance-Contracts-A-different-approach-to-commissioning-focused-on-collaborative-working-to-achieve-agreed-outcomes-1.pdf>.
- ⁴ Lent, A, Studdert, J & Walker, T. (2019). Community commissioning: Shaping public services through people power. At <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/community-commissioning-shaping-public-services-through-people-power/>
- ⁵ Fitzpatrick, S., Mackie, P., & Wood, J. (2021). Advancing a five-stage typology of homelessness prevention. International Journal on Homelessness, 1(1), 79-97.
- ⁶ See further: <https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Banking-the-Benefits.pdf>.
- ⁷ See further: <https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/Early-Intervention-Investment-Framework-A-considered-and-collaborative-approach-FINAL-PDF.PDF>.
- ⁸ Pereth, C., Jagatap, S., Baird, V., Kos, A., Di Nicola, K., & Sadler, P. (2023). A Safe Place to Call Home: Mission Australia's Homelessness and Stable Housing Impact Report 2023, <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/submissions-and-reports/housing-and-homelessness/2624-a-safe-place-to-call-home-homelessness-impact-report-2023/file>.
- ⁹ See further: <https://theconstellationproject.com.au/projects/mandatory-inclusionary-zoning/>.
- ¹⁰ See further: <https://sharedvalue.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Phil-Preston-MREEP.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Batterham, D., Tually, S., Coram, V., Mckinley, K., Kolar, V., Housing, L., Mcnelis, S., & Goodwin-smith, I. (2023). Crisis accommodation in Australia : now and for the future (Issue 407). <https://doi.org/10.18408/ahuri5126801>.