



#EndHomelessnessWA

The Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness: Ending Homelessness in Western Australia Report

— August 2019

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The Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH)

The WA Alliance to End Homelessness is comprised of a group of individuals and organisations that have come together to end homelessness in Western Australia. The WAAEH includes a Steering Committee, Project Team, Backbone Organisation and Project Funder.

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Backbone Organisation: Shelter WA (Michelle Mackenzie, CEO).



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Disclaimer

The opinions in this report reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness or any of its organisations.



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Preface

In July 2018, the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH) released the Strategy to End Homelessness (the Strategy). The Strategy articulates a ten-year plan to end homelessness in Western Australia through invoking a whole-of-society response. An important part of the Strategy is a commitment to targets, including the vision that in ten years' time the Western Australian rate of homelessness will be halved from its 2016 level, and that all forms of chronic homelessness including chronic rough sleeping will have ended. The Strategy also commits to the establishment of measurement, accountability and governance mechanisms 'that are robust, transparent and open to external review ... providing an on-going means for assessing progress in meeting the goals of Ending Homelessness in Western Australia in 10 years' (p. 5).

The WAAEH, via Shelter WA, received funding from Lotterywest to develop the Outcomes Framework (the Framework) to measure and monitor progress towards ending homelessness. The Centre for Social Impact at the University of Western Australia (CSI UWA) (a founding member of the WAAEH) undertook the task of developing the Framework (see #EndHomelessnessWA, Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation Framework).

While the Framework seeks to operationalise the key targets of the 10-year Strategy and monitor our progress in ending homelessness in Western Australia, this report aims to synthesise existing data and connect that to what we know in terms of the thinking, responses and initiatives in Western Australia that are currently emerging.

Importantly, this report captures the voices of people who have a lived experience of homelessness as well as practitioners working in the sector. It is at this touchpoint—between frontline workers and clients who are seeking support—where the most valuable insights into what is working or not working can be found. This report presents the lived experience and practitioner perspectives side by side. When one mirrors and affirms the other, a powerful narrative about the way forward unfolds.

It is our hope that from here on we will get better at synthesising information sources and facilitating feedback loops within the homelessness sector and the community more generally, so that we can collectively enhance our understanding about what is effective for ending homelessness in this State. By continually learning together and integrating new perspectives, we will improve coordination and enhance local responses. There is also some cause to celebrate as we document the development and evolution of our responses to homelessness in WA.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2018, the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH) released a 10-year plan to end homelessness through a 'whole-of-society' and community-based response. The Western Australian 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness (the Strategy, available at www.endhomelessnesswa.com) was developed by a group of organisations that came together with the goal of ending homelessness in Western Australia.

This report is the first in a series of annual reports that will be produced by the WAAEH to examine progress in ending homelessness in Western Australia (WA). Its aims are threefold. First, to profile the state of homelessness in this State and thus provide a reference point for the task ahead in achieving the goal of ending homelessness in WA. Second, to give an account of various initiatives underway to address and end homelessness in WA, including the work of the WAAEH itself. Third, to bring to the fore the voice of lived experience to guide our goals of ending homelessness. This report presents the views of a group of those currently experiencing homelessness or who have recently experienced homelessness as well as those of service practitioners, who reflect with great insight on the effectiveness of our current response to ending homelessness.

While most people working in the homelessness sector can quote the latest Census data on the number of homeless people in Western Australia (about 9,000 homeless, with just over 1,000 of these people without shelter or sleeping rough), this is a point-in-time figure from one night in 2016. While this data is essential for tracking long term trends, as well as for comparative analysis of cohorts and geographical areas, we need a richer understanding of the nuances of our local context at more regular points in time. This report aims to bring a diversity of information sources together – the lived experience voice and quantitative and qualitative data sources – to reflect on the state of homelessness in WA in 2019. With this information we can offer observations on our progress to ending homelessness in WA.

1.2 Purpose

This report will examine:

- What the statistics tell us about the current state of homelessness in WA in 2019;
- What the lived experience voice and practitioners tell us about what is working well and not well;
- Some of the key initiatives and innovative approaches to ending homelessness and the ongoing work of the WAAEH; and
- What is changing in the policy landscape and where to from here.

This report sits alongside the WAAEH Strategy, the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation Framework and related Dashboard, as well as the various Action Plans of the Alliance as they develop over time.

1.3 Overview of the Western Australian service system, 2019

The service system for people facing homelessness in WA is well-developed and includes a range of supports and responses. These include:

- Crisis Accommodation and Transitional Accommodation support services that provide supported accommodation to those who would otherwise be without shelter (e.g., Chrysalis House Women's Refuge, Horizon House, Ngarangga Ngurra Safe House, St Bartholomew's House Kensington Street Transitional Accommodation, Perth Inner City Youth Service's Household Network and the Uniting Care West Accommodation and Support Program);
- Tenancy Support to those in housing but who, without support, are at risk of homelessness including those exiting homelessness (e.g., Anglicare WA Family Housing Program, Tenancy WA, Red Cross Private Tenancy Support Service, and Centrecare Private Rental Advocacy and Support Service, St Bart's Reconnecting Lives);
- Specialised support to meet a broad range of needs (e.g., Wungening Aboriginal Corporation (formerly Aboriginal Alcohol and Drug Service), Communicare Financial Counselling Service, Fresh Start Recovery Program, and Homeless Healthcare);
- Transitions to Permanent Housing with Support (e.g., 50 Lives 50 Homes and Foyer Oxford).

The homelessness service system in Western Australia has been evolving over the last 15 years and is benefiting from innovative programs introduced a decade ago (such as the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Innovation and Investment Fund) when the sector began a more significant move away from a focus on crisis responses, to more sophisticated approaches that address the causes of homelessness and aim to end rather than just manage homelessness.

It is now well accepted that providing only crisis support, or providing housing without any additional support, leads to a revolving door of people never quite exiting homelessness (that is, when an exit is shortly followed by re-entry into homelessness). The literature confirms that a system heavily weighted toward traditional 'emergency' service delivery approaches is both ineffective and costly (Culhane and Metraux, 2008).



As our understanding of homelessness develops and awareness of the scale of homelessness grows (supported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' introduction of more robust Census Counts for the homeless population), more sophisticated solutions are emerging or are being scaled up from their prototype beginnings. The political will to solve homelessness in WA has also grown in the last decade, facilitated by the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness commencing in 2009, and the formal recognition that housing is a basic right for all citizens (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2008).

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness as well as the Stimulus Package and smaller scale initiatives developed by philanthropists and services provided the funding and impetus for states and territories to implement more effective responses to homelessness. This was kick-started in 2009 but faltered after an initial strong start due to lack of new commitments and sustained funding. However, developments from that period and earlier, such as Safe At Home, Foyer Oxford and other homelessness to permanent housing initiatives, remain strong in WA, with independent evaluations indicating that they are making a difference.

It has been one year since the Strategy was published, and there are signs that the Strategy has directly and indirectly activated a wide range of responses to homelessness that did not exist before. The WA Alliance to End Homelessness has helped galvanise support across sections of the community to end homelessness in Western Australia, especially in the metropolitan area where the WAAEH has created regular opportunities, such as the Pulse Meetings, for services and other representatives from the sector, as well as people with lived experience, to come together. This allows people to make connections that have the potential to enhance responses to homelessness, improve service coordination and support collective learning as well as maintain the motivation and will to continue towards the target of ending homelessness in WA.

We have also seen the development of the Western Australian Government's Homelessness Strategy which promises to be the most significant Strategy document in the area of homelessness produced at the government level in Western Australia. Importantly, within those responses as well as more generally, there are signs of enhanced coordination and collaboration in the homelessness service system. While measuring the effectiveness of initiatives is not the purpose of this report, presenting a snapshot of the kind of activities emerging and partnerships being generated in the sector as well as lived experience and practitioner reflections, will assist with understanding how we are tracking towards the targets set and ultimately the goal of ending homelessness in WA.



2. Profiling the homeless population in Western Australia

2.1 Enumerating the homeless in Western Australia

Despite the development of a strong homelessness service system, homelessness in Western Australia continues at unacceptable levels. In this section we provide evidence from the main data sources on the current state of homelessness in Western Australia. These sources are the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) 2016 Census of Population and Housing (the Census), WA Registry Week data 2010-2017, as presented in the *State of Homelessness in Australia's Cities Report* (Flatau, Tyson, Callis, Seivwright, Box, Rouhani, Ng, Lester & Firth, 2018) and the WA Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) which updates annually.

In a broad sense, these three data sources tell us that the profile of the population of people experiencing homelessness in WA roughly resembles that of other states and territories, with relatively similar patterns in who are the most vulnerable cohorts, and that these patterns persist over time.

The population of people experiencing homelessness in WA, as in Australia overall, is characterised by an overrepresentation of Aboriginal people, people who have experienced family or domestic violence, people with mental health issues, young people, and people with substance use issues. This reflects what we know about the individual antecedents of homelessness. In addition, for WA in particular there is evidence that those who find themselves homeless are more likely than those in other states and territories to be Aboriginal, to have had interactions with the justice system (e.g., to have been in prison), to be living in remote areas, and to be sleeping rough (Kaleveld et al., 2018).

Trends in the overall homelessness count

The Census provides the only complete assessment of overall homelessness across Australia and, due to consistently applied methodologies, the most reliable way to make comparisons across states and territories. The Census measures homelessness across six categories— those living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out (rough sleeping); in supported accommodation; staying temporarily with other households; in boarding houses; in other temporary lodgings; and in severely overcrowded dwellings. This also makes it the most comprehensive picture of housing insecurity.

Using this framework, the ABS indicates that more than 116,000 people were experiencing homelessness in Australia on Census night in 2016; about 9,000 were in WA. While these 2016 rates will not be updated until the 2020 Census, two trends can be observed which indicate the direction we are moving in towards ending homelessness. Firstly, homelessness rates (per 10,000 of the population) have decreased since 2001, both nationally and in WA. However, since 2006 homelessness rates in WA continue to fall, while nationally they are increasing (by 4.6% from 2011 to 2016; see Figure 1).

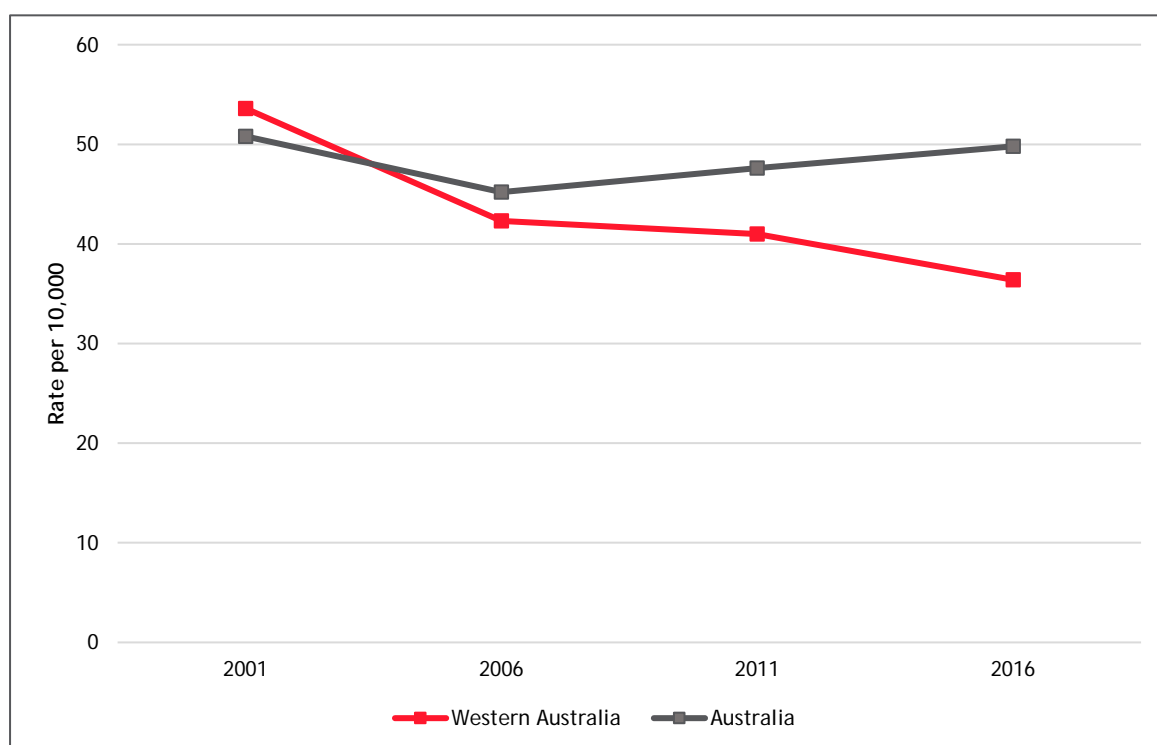
Western Australia is one of only three states and territories where the homelessness rate seems to be decreasing. Compared with other states and territories, WA had a below average overall homelessness rate and a downward trend since 2001 (see Figure 1). For example, to illustrate the discrepancy across states and territories, the homelessness rate rose by 27% in New South Wales, while it fell by 11% in WA (2001 to 2016).

Analysis by types of homelessness

Some important nuances are not immediately obvious within the overall count of homelessness. Most of the national increase in homelessness between 2011 and 2016 is reflected in persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings. While WA did not experience this same increase in people living in 'severely' crowded dwellings, data indicates that the most acute form of homelessness, 'sleeping rough' (living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out), impacts on WA to a greater extent, and increasingly, compared to other states and territories (the 1,083 people sleeping rough in WA on Census night 2016 represents 13% of all people sleeping rough nationally (the WA population represents 10.8% of the total Australian population (ABS, 2016)). In 2016, WA had the second highest rate of persons (per 10,000 of the population) sleeping rough after the NT (Table 1Error! Reference source not found.). The count of people sleeping rough in WA has also increased from 2% to 3% between 2011 and 2016 (Table 2Error! Reference source not found.).



Figure 1: Rate of homeless persons per 10,000 of the population for WA and Australia, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016



Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

Table 1: Rate of homeless persons per 10,000 of the population by state and territory over time, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016

States and territories	2001	2006	2011	2016	Direction of change 2001-2016
New South Wales	36.4	33.9	39.7	50.4	↑
Victoria	38.9	35.3	41.7	41.9	↔
Queensland	54.8	48.3	43.9	46.1	↓
South Australia	39.8	37.0	36.4	37.1	↔
Western Australia	53.6	42.3	41.0	36.4	↓
Tasmania	27.5	24.0	31.0	31.8	↑
Northern Territory	904.4	791.7	723.3	599.4	↓
ACT	30.4	29.3	48.7	40.2	↑
Australia	50.8	45.2	47.6	49.8	↔

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

Table 2: Rate per 10,000 of the population, in WA and Australia (2016)

ABS category	WA rate per 10,000 of the population	Australian rate per 10,000 of the population
Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out	4.4	3.5
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	4.3	9.1
Persons staying temporarily with other households	7.9	7.6
Persons living in boarding houses	4.0	7.5
Persons in other temporary lodgings	0.2	0.3
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	15.6	21.8

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)



Table 3: Count of people experiencing homelessness in WA by category (2011–2016)

ABS category	2011	2016	Direction of change
Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out	925 (9%)	1,083 (12%)	↑
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	931 (10%)	1,054 (12%)	↑
Persons staying temporarily with other households	2,169 (23%)	1,950 (22%)	↔
Persons living in boarding houses and other temporary lodgings	1,413 (15%)	1042 (12%)	↓
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	4,154 (43%)	3,871 (43%)	↔
Total Western Australia	9,592 (100%)	9,005 (100%)	↓

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

Significantly, WA also had the lowest rate (per 10,000 of the population) of persons in supported accommodation for the homeless, a rate that was significantly lower than the Australia-wide figure.

What the Census data tells us is that to end homelessness in WA, there will need to be a strong focus on people living in severely crowded dwellings. As evident in other states and territories, this represents the largest proportion of the homeless population. Other questions for WA to consider are:

- Why are people more vulnerable to sleeping rough in WA than other states and territories?
- Is there anything about our service system that contributes to this pattern (which is increasingly evident) compared with other states and territories?
- Could this be related to lower rates of people in supported accommodation in WA, compared with other states and territories?

The report will further explore statistical evidence about various types of homelessness and vulnerable cohorts in order to better define possible priorities for action to effectively end homelessness.

2.2 A snapshot of rough sleeping in metropolitan Western Australia

Rough sleeping in Perth and Fremantle: Registry Week data 2010-2017

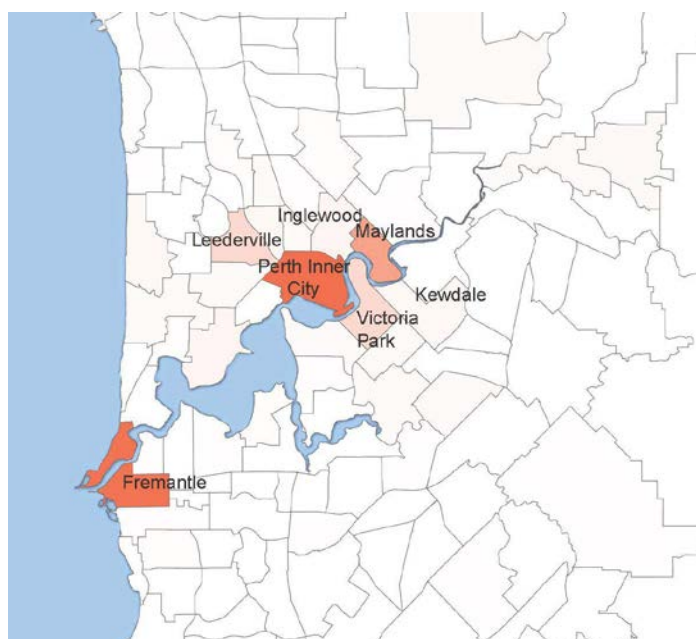
Since 2012 Western Australia has participated in Registry Week collections (being conducted in 2012, and 2014 to 2017), in which homelessness services collected data from people rough sleeping in cities¹. The instrument utilised is the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), which collects information about individuals' needs.

A collation of Registry Week data between 2010 and 2017 (as presented in *The State of Homelessness in Australia's Cities: A Health and Social Cost Too High* report, the first analysis of the Registry Week data across Australia between 2010 and 2017), indicates that WA Registry Week collections were highly concentrated in inner Perth (City, Northbridge, East Perth, Highgate, Leederville, Subiaco, West Perth, North Perth). Fremantle collections began in 2016 and represent the second largest collection (see Figure 2). Smaller collections are evident in Rockingham and the North East, North West and South East corridors (not displayed in Figure 2) (Flatau, Tyson, Callis, Seivwright, Box, Rouhani, Ng, Lester & Firth, 2018). The nature of the Registry data collection means that the number of responses and the geographical location of the responses will be indicative of where people are more likely to be rough sleeping.

¹ The 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign originally ran over three consecutive years; resulting in a sharp increase of surveys conducted during 2014 (n=175), 2015 (n=205) and 2016 (n=391).



Figure 2: Western Australia Registry Week Collection



Source: State of Homelessness in our Cities Report (2018); Registry Week Data Collections 2010-2017

Largest Collections: Perth City (City, Northbridge, East Perth, Highgate, Leederville, Subiaco, West Perth, North Perth) and Fremantle

What else do we know about the population of people rough sleeping in Perth and Fremantle?

Using the Registry Week respondents as an indicator of the profile of rough sleepers in Perth and Fremantle, the following patterns were evident in the data.

- **Men are more likely than women to be rough sleeping**

Males accounted for 66.3% of Registry Week respondents nationally, and in WA the proportion of males was even higher at 73.1% (75.5% for Fremantle and 72.9% for the rest of Perth). This is a substantially higher proportion than both the Census data, in which 58% of the homeless population were male, and the Specialist Homelessness Service Collection (SHSC) which recorded 40% of clients as male, indicating that men are more likely to be rough sleeping and less likely to utilise homelessness services (Flatau et al., 2018).

- **Younger women were more likely than older women to be rough sleeping**

While males represented a higher proportion of the homeless population in each age bracket, the distribution of homeless females was skewed towards the younger age brackets; 46.6% of female Western Australian Registry Week respondents were aged 34 years or under, compared with 31.9% of males (Flatau et al., 2018).

- **Many of the women who were rough sleeping were Aboriginal**

Notably, 46.8% of female Western Australian respondents identified as Indigenous. This proportion was higher in Fremantle, where 54.2% of female respondents identified as Indigenous (Flatau et al., 2018).

- **Those identifying as lesbian or gay do not seem to be over-represented in the population of people rough sleeping**

Most of the Registry Week respondents, 90.6%, identified as straight. In WA, 93.9% of Fremantle Registry Week respondents and 91.2% of Registry Week respondents in the rest of Perth identified as Straight. 2.9% identified as Lesbian/Gay (2.0% and 3.2% in Fremantle and the rest of Perth, respectively), 3.2% as Bisexual (2.0% and 3.0% in Fremantle and the rest of Perth, respectively) (Table 4). Transgender and Other Gender respondents comprised 0.7% of the national sample (0.6% WA) (Flatau et al., 2018).



Table 4: Sexuality by geographic region

	Fremantle	Rest of Perth	Australian Registry Week sample
Straight	93.9%	91.2%	90.6%
Lesbian/Gay	2.0%	3.2%	2.9%
Bisexual	2.0%	3.0%	3.2%

Note: excludes missing, declined, do not know, and other responses.

Source: Registry Week Data Collections 2010-2017

This is roughly in line with what other statistical collections indicate about sexuality in the general population (for example in 2014, the ABS's General Social Survey found that 3.0% of the adult population identified as gay, lesbian or 'other') (ABS, 2015).

- Educational attainment was very low amongst those rough sleeping

Only 6.6% reported their highest level of education as an apprenticeship or tertiary studies. These rates were higher in WA overall (7.7%) and in Fremantle (13.3%). (Although this statistic does not provide a direction comparison, as an indication the ABS's Survey of Education and Work found that 62.3% of the Australian population in 2018 had a Certificate III or above (proportion of total population aged 20 to 64 years) (ABS, 2018)). The proportions of respondents reporting their highest level of education as Year 9 or below were also high across WA: 28.0% overall, 36.7% in Fremantle, and 27.4% in the rest of Perth (Flatau et al., 2018).

Impacts of rough sleeping

The total time spent homeless varied significantly among respondents. However, chronic homelessness (long-term persistent homelessness) is the norm for rough sleepers in WA. Those currently sleeping rough reported the longest cumulative time spent homeless compared to other forms of homelessness (the mean was 5.4 years and median 3 years for WA which is similar to the Australian mean of 6 years and median of 3 years).

Those experiencing chronic homelessness exhibit elevated lifetime prevalence rates of serious medical conditions. 74.8% of WA respondents sleeping rough report problematic alcohol and/or other drug use and are frequent users of acute health services. They were also more likely to have historical and current interactions with the police and justice system, be a victim of attack, engage in risky behaviours, be less likely to have a healthcare or pension card, and be more likely to have a Centrelink breach (Flatau et al., 2018).

In WA, women were more likely than men to report being a victim of attack since becoming homeless (60.9% of women versus 48.4% of men), and were also more likely to report that they had threatened or tried to harm themselves or someone else in the year prior (52.1% of women versus 42.3% of men). Women in WA were also substantially more likely than men to report that they are forced or coerced to do things that they did not want to do (42.3% of women versus 25.2% of men), but only slightly more likely to report engaging in risky behaviours like exchange sex for money, run drugs, have unprotected sex with strangers or share a needle (32.2% of women versus 30.3% of men) (Flatau et al., 2018).

Table 5: Proportion of Registry Week respondents reporting experience of risky behaviour, WA and Australia

	WA	Australia
Been a victim of attack since becoming homeless	51.9%	44.0%
Threatened or tried to harm themselves or someone else in the past year	45.1%	35.0%
Have anybody that forces or stands over them to do things that they do not want to do	29.6%	24.4%
Engage in risky behaviour like exchange sex for money, run drugs, have unprotected sex with strangers or share a needle	31.2%	20.4%

Source: Registry Week Data Collections 2010-2017

Note: Estimates excludes missing values

Beyond the Registry Week collection, it is well documented that people sleeping rough fare worse than the general population. A detailed analysis of this is beyond the scope of this report, but this is nonetheless another reminder of the urgency of ending rough sleeping (which is associated with poor outcomes and chronic homelessness) as a priority for ending homelessness in WA.

2.3 Homelessness in regional and remote Western Australia

While the WA Registry Week data provides detail about homelessness populations within (largely) the Perth metropolitan area, a look at the homelessness rates across the whole of Western Australia (provided by the Census and SHSC) show that homelessness in regional and remote WA should demand as much, if not more, of our focus.



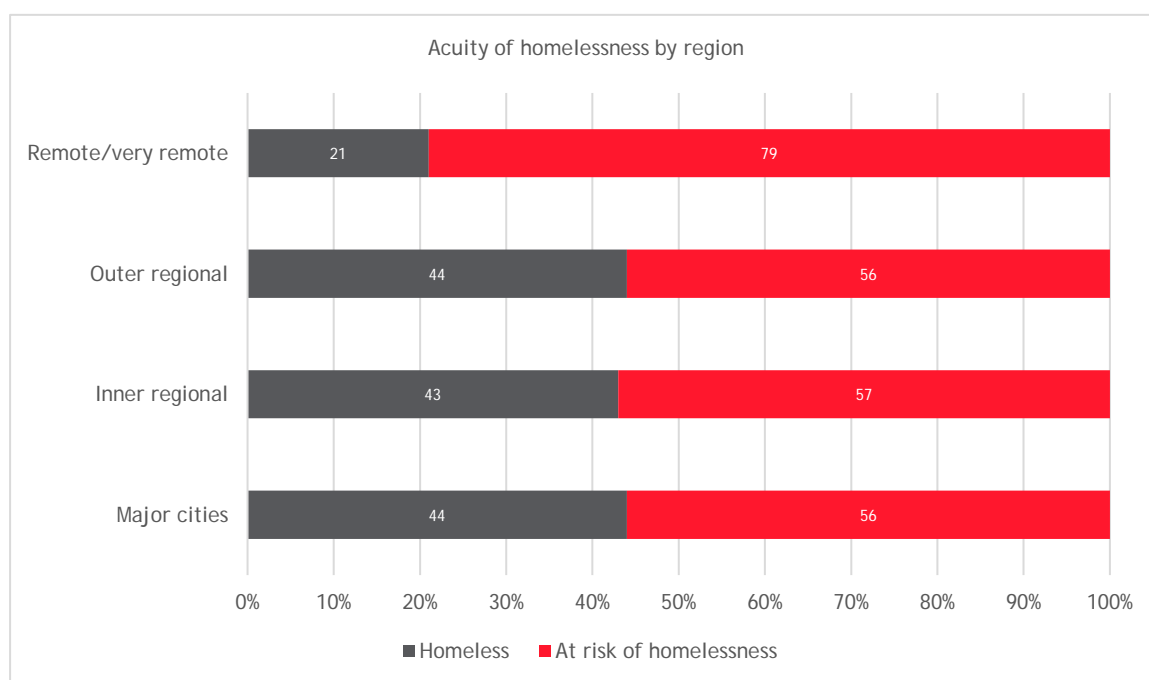
Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

For instance, the SHSC (2017-18) indicates that the WA Outback had the second highest rate of SHS clients out of all regions in Australia. This rate was 343.2 per 10,000 population (significant compared to the national rate of 117.4 per 10,000) (AIHW, 2018). This equals 3,347 clients.

Clients in remote/very remote areas have different profile to those in metropolitan areas. They are more likely to be:

- At-risk of homelessness (79.1%) rather than homeless (20.9%) when seeking assistance (WA statistics) (see Figure 3 for comparison with metropolitan areas)
- Indigenous (91%) rather than non-Indigenous (9%) (national statistics)
- Seeking help from domestic violence (and increasingly so, 38% up from 33% in 2016-17) rather than housing crisis (11%) (WA) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

Figure 3: Acuity of homelessness by region



Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection 2017-18

The SHS collection identifies trends in remote/very remote area over the past 4 years, as outlined below:

- **High and increasing rates of service use (see Figure 4)**

Agencies in remote/very remote areas consistently reported the highest rate of homelessness service use, which was 2.7 times higher than in major cities in 2017-18, up from 2.3 times in 2014-15. Though services in inner regional areas had the largest average annual growth in client numbers (4.7%), services in remote/very remote areas had the largest growth in the rate of service use, increasing on average by 5.3% each year since 2014-15.

- **Slight increase in proportion of Indigenous clients**

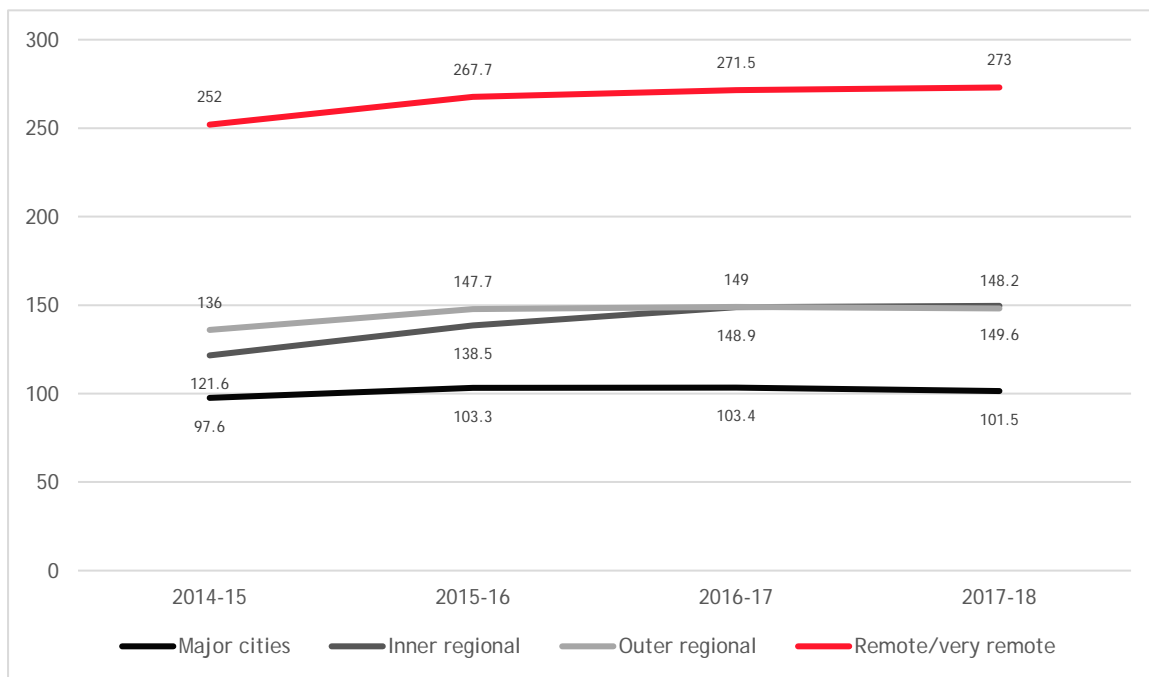
In remote/very remote areas the proportion of Indigenous clients increased from 89% in 2014-15 to 91% in 2017-18. Inner regional areas have also seen an increase in the share of clients who are Indigenous with 25% of clients identifying as Indigenous in these areas in 2017-18, a rise of 4 percentage points over the 4-year period.

- **Domestic and family violence remains the most significant driver**

Domestic and family violence has remained the main reason clients sought assistance in all regional areas in 2017-18 (AIHW, 2018).



Figure 4: Rates of client service use (per 10,000 population) by SHS agency geographic area 2014-15 to 2017-18

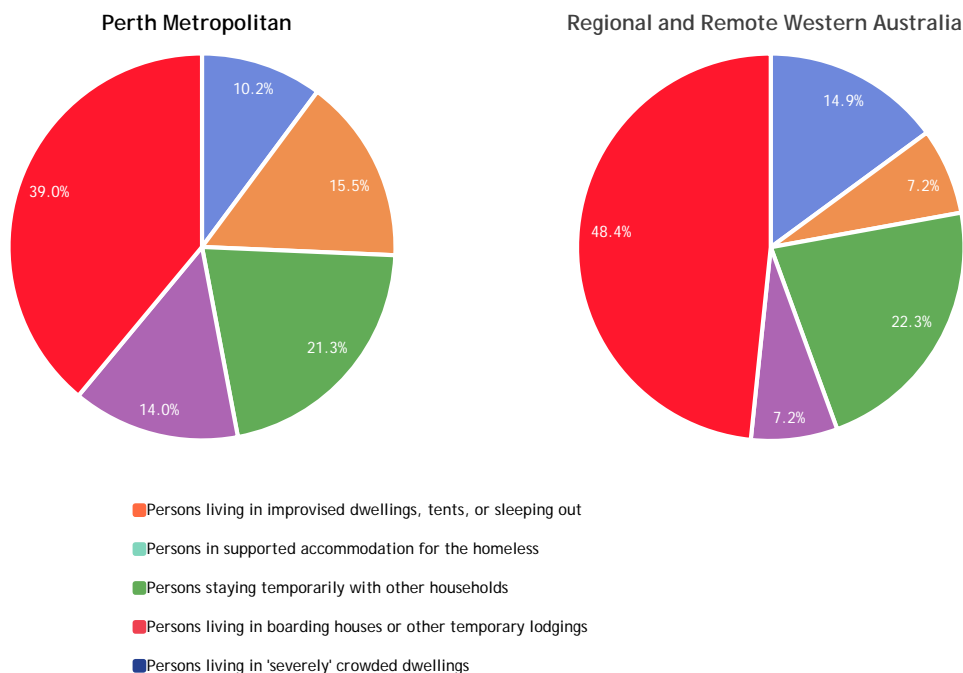


Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

Census of Population and Housing data

The Census data provides a slightly different picture of regional and remote homelessness. Most significantly, the Census indicates that rough sleeping (persons living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out) is experienced by a higher proportion of the overall homeless population in regional Western Australia (14.9%) compared with the Perth metropolitan homelessness population (10.2%), as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Structure of homelessness across WA regions (2016)

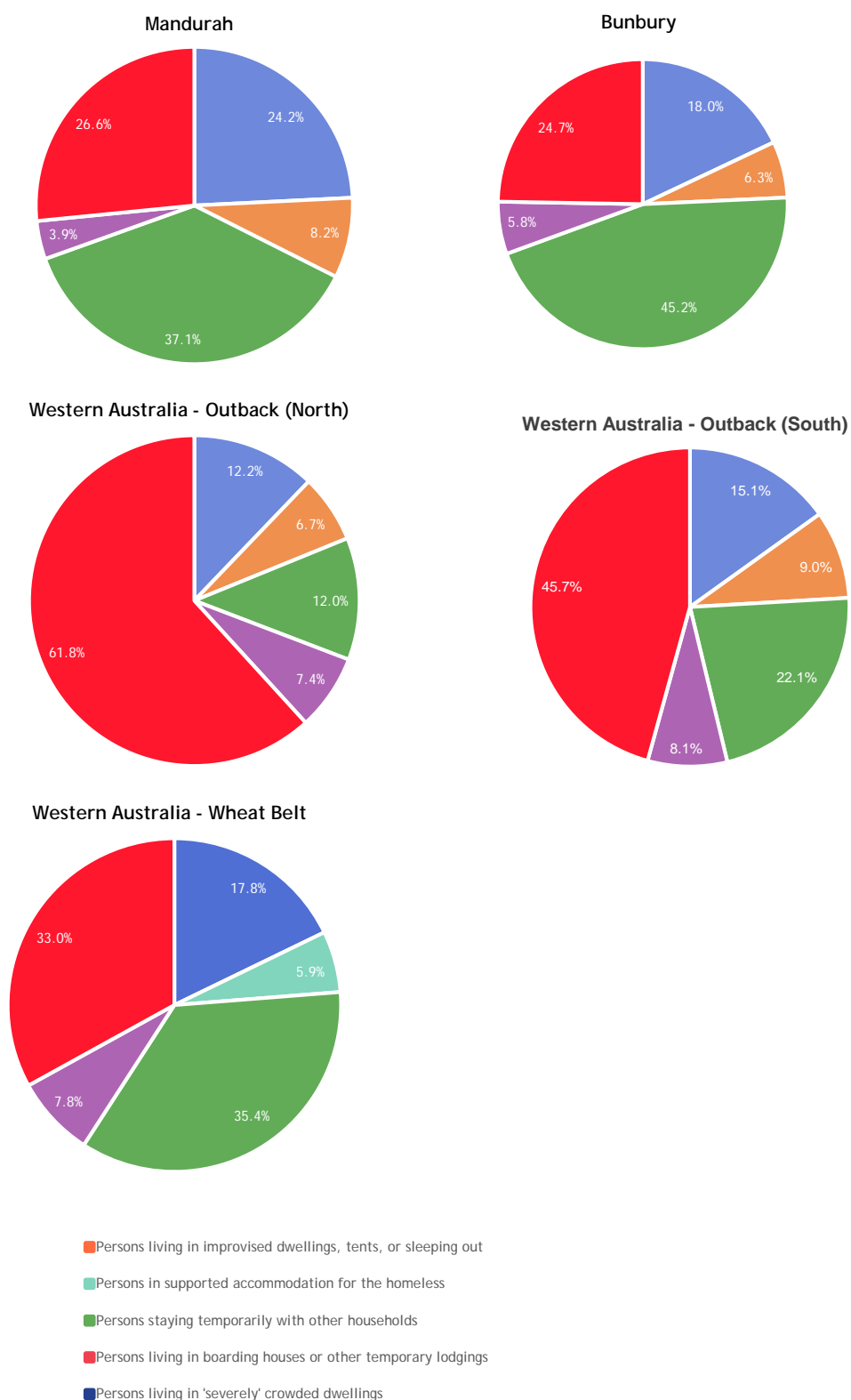


Source: ABS Census of Population and housing, 2016



The proportion of the total homeless population sleeping rough is even higher in the Outback (South) and the Wheatbelt (both over 15%). And the highest proportion of the homeless population sleeping rough is in Mandurah, where almost one quarter of the homeless population sleep rough.

Figure 6: Structure of homelessness across Statistical Area Level 4 regions in regional and remote WA (2016)



Source: ABS Census of Population and housing, 2016



In the Perth region a relatively higher proportion of those that are homeless are in supported accommodation and in boarding houses and temporary lodgings relative to the regions. This may reflect the availability of supported accommodation and boarding house options in Perth relative to the regions. A higher proportion of those in the regions are living in severely overcrowded dwellings, especially in the Outback where 61.8% of the homeless population in the Pilbara and Kimberley are in severely overcrowded dwellings. Aboriginal people experience much higher rates of severe overcrowding across WA than non-Aboriginal people and comprise 45.9% of all those experiencing severe overcrowding forms of homelessness (Kaleveld et al., 2018).

2.4 Identifying populations most vulnerable to homelessness

Overview

This section presents summary statistics that enhance our understanding of which population cohorts or experiences make people more likely to be homeless.

Groups with the highest client rates for Specialist Homelessness Services

The Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) offers the most recent data (2017-18) that identifies groups with the highest client rates per 10,000 of the population (clients represent people accessing services who are at risk of homelessness, or homeless). In WA in 2016-17 as well as 2017-18 the cohorts with the highest client rates were:

1. Aboriginal people (913.5 per 10,000)
2. Clients who have experienced domestic and family violence (41.5 per 10,000)
3. Clients with a current mental health issue (21.5 per 10,000)
4. Young people presenting alone (15-24) (11.8 per 10,000)
5. People with drug and/or alcohol use problems (10.2 per 10,000).

For most client groups, WA rates are comparable or lower than national rates. The only exception is the Indigenous client rate which is significantly higher than the national Indigenous homelessness rate which in turn is considerably higher than the national non-Indigenous rate (see Table 6).

Table 6: Client rate per 10,000 in Western Australia and Australia

		WA			Australia		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
1.	Indigenous	935.3	922.8	913.5	787.0	813.9	802.7
2.	Domestic and family violence	42.0	42.5	41.5	44.4	47.4	49.2
3.	Mental health	19.5	21.2	21.5	30.4	32.0	32.9
4.	Young people presenting alone (15-24)	10.9	11.1	11.8	18.1	17.4	17.6
5.	Drug and alcohol use	10.1	10.9	10.2	11.1	11.3	11.0

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

Groups experiencing increasing need or service usage rates

The SHSC in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 indicate a continual increase in service rates (per 10,000 of population) for the following three client groups in WA (see Table 7):

1. Young people presenting alone (15-24)
2. Older people (55 and over)
3. People presenting with mental health needs.



Table 7: Client rate per 10,000 by priority group

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Direction of change between 2015-16 and 2017-18
All clients	93.4	96.2	92	↓
Indigenous	935.3	922.8	913.5	↓
Young people presenting alone (15-24)	10.9	11.1	11.8	↑
Older people (55 and over)	7.0	7.6	7.9	↑
Domestic and family violence	42.0	42.5	41.5	↓
Disability	4.6	4.8	2.7	↓
Mental health	19.5	21.2	21.5	↑
Exiting custodial arrangements	1.4	1.5	1.5	-
Leaving care	2.3	2.3	2.3	-
Children on protection orders	2.4	2.6	2.6	-
Drug and alcohol use	10.1	10.9	10.2	↓

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, 2019).

The report will now outline a more detailed profile of groups most at risk of homelessness and/or experiencing increasing need in WA as identified in the SHSC:

1. Aboriginal people (913.5 per 10,000, top five)
2. Clients who have experienced domestic and family violence (41.5 per 10,000, top five)
3. Clients with a current mental health issue (21.5 per 10,000, top five and increasing)
4. Young people presenting alone (15-24) (11.8 per 10,000, top five and increasing)
5. People with drug and/or alcohol use problems (10.2 per 10,000, top five)
6. Older people (55 and over) (7.9 per 10,000) (increasing).

The more detailed analysis is presented below (in the order of highest rate to lowest).

Aboriginal people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders made up 3% of the Australian population in 2016, and yet the Census found that people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders represented 20% of the national homeless population. (This figure is also likely to be an underestimate.) Aboriginal people are overrepresented to an even greater extent in WA where they made up 3.1% of the total population in 2016 and 29.1% of the homeless population. This is also reflected in comparing rates of homelessness per 10,000 of the population in the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (Table 8 Error! Reference source not found.) (Kaleveld et al., 2018; ABS, 2016).

Table 8: Rate of homelessness (per 10,000 of the population) by Indigenous background, in all states and territories (2016)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	Act	Australia
Indigenous	105.4	163.8	238.6	273.8	344.6	55.2	2082.6	146	361
Non-Indigenous	45.9	36.7	35.3	29.8	25.9	29.9	84.1	32.3	37.8
Not stated	93.7	107.5	78	75.5	36.4	40.3	148.8	149.9	86.6

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

The SHSC found that WA had the lowest rate (per 10,000 of the population) in Australia of non-Indigenous homelessness, but a dramatic overrepresentation of Indigenous clients with 42% of SHS clients identifying as Indigenous in 2017-18 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

Nationally, approximately one in five people interviewed for Registry Week identified as Indigenous. Again, these rates were higher in WA (31%).

In addition, a higher proportion of Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people interviewed reported sleeping rough. In WA overall, 68.7% of Indigenous Australians, compared with 56.1% of non-Indigenous Australians reported that they slept rough most of the time. In Fremantle, 64.3% of Indigenous respondents were sleeping rough and in the rest of Perth, 69% of Indigenous respondents were sleeping rough.



People who have experienced domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is identified across the research literature as one of the key pathways into homelessness in Australia (Kaleveld et al., 2018). The Specialist Homelessness Services Collection provides evidence of this link, with domestic and family violence recorded as the main reason women and children seek SHS assistance. In 2018, Mission Australia published an important report, *Out of the Shadows*, that identifies domestic and family violence as a significant driver of homelessness, especially for women and children. The report reviews evidence from the SHSC with some pertinent points summarised here:

- In 2017-18, 42% of all clients of SHS in Australia (121,000) were experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Of the people who sought SHS due to domestic and family violence related issues, more than three out of four or 78% were female. Many of these clients were children - 22% (around 26,500) were children aged zero to nine, and 34% (nearly 42,000) were aged under 18.
- Within the group of clients experiencing domestic and family violence, around half (52%) had sought assistance from an SHS within the previous 12 months, indicating a large proportion of returning clients.
- About 23% of rough sleepers receiving support (2011-12 and 2014-15) reported experiencing domestic and family violence at least once. They were much more likely to be younger than older (56% of those reporting domestic and family violence incidents were aged under 35, compared with 9% aged 50 and over). Female rough sleepers were four times as likely as males to report having experienced domestic and family violence (46% compared with 11%). Female rough sleepers who were persistent service users (those who presented to SHS in each year of the reporting period) were very likely to report having experienced domestic and family violence (74%) compared with 16% of male rough sleeping persistent service users (AIHW, 2018; Mission Australia, 2018).

Mental health and homelessness

In 2014, for the first time, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' General Social Survey collected information about mental health conditions, discovering that 3.4 million Australians (18%) reported having a mental health condition (such as depression, behavioural or emotional disorders, dependence on drugs or alcohol, feeling anxious or nervous, or problems learning or understanding things).

People who reported having a mental health condition were more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness in their lifetime compared with people who did not (25% compared with 10%). People who reported a mental health condition were also more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness in the last 10 years compared with people who did not (15% compared with 6.1%) (ABS, 2016b).

While the VI-SPDAT used during Registry Week does not directly ask about diagnosis or presence of mental health conditions, 29.8% of respondents overall and 29.4% of WA respondents have been taken to a hospital against their will for mental health reasons, suggesting their mental health condition may have been acute. In both Australia and WA, 48.4% of respondents had spoken with a mental health professional in the six months prior to survey, and 36.9% of Australian respondents and 44.3% of Western Australian respondents have attended Accidents and Emergency (A&E) due to not feeling emotionally well or because of their nerves. In WA, women were slightly more likely than men to have gone to A&E due to not feeling emotionally well or because of their nerves (55.2% versus 40.2%) (Flatau et al., 2018).

Youth homelessness

Youth homelessness is fairly consistent across the states and territories, according to Census figures. The proportion of persons classified as homeless who are aged between 12-24 years ranges from 26% in both Victoria and Northern Territory to 21% in Queensland and Western Australia. WA had the lowest rate of homelessness (per 10,000 of population) of young people 12-24 compared with the rest of Australia (ABS, 2016).

In terms of age, young people are significantly overrepresented, and this is an increasing cohort in WA. The impacts of the experience of homelessness will also be felt over the life course, therefore a focus on youth homelessness is critical.

Drug and alcohol use and homelessness

There is a wealth of research that shows a strong link between alcohol and other drug misuse, and homelessness. Johnson & Chamberlain's (2011) study found that an estimated 17% of the homeless population (out of a sample of 4,191) became homeless because of substance abuse. Teesson, Hodder and Buhrich (2003) found in their study sample that homeless people were six times more likely to have a drug-use disorder and 33 times more likely to have an opiate use disorder than the Australian general population. Johnson, Gronda & Coutts (2008) found that 55% of the people in their sample (homeless population) reported having had problems with drug use (Kaleveld et al., 2018).

This suggests that drug and alcohol services must be a part of both prevention strategies and an integral component of support offered to exit homelessness.



Homelessness in older Australians

In terms of overall numbers and rates, homelessness in older Australians (aged 55 years and over) may not be as significant as youth homelessness, but they still made up 16% of total homeless population in Australia in 2016 (18,625 persons), and in WA are a cohort accessing SHS at an increasing rate over recent years. For older persons, most are living in boarding houses (27%), followed by staying temporarily in other households (24%). Males accounted for 63% of older persons who were homeless on Census night in 2016, increasing by 26% to 11,757 in 2016. The number of older homeless females increased by 31% to 6,866.

WA's rate of homelessness (per 10,000 of population) for people 55 and over was lower than NSW, Victoria, ACT and the NT (ABS, 2016).

Table 9: Rate of homelessness (per 10,000 of population) by age, in all states and territories (2016)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	Act	Australia
12-24	75.3	65.6	56.4	59.8	48.1	51.4	895	51	72.9
55 and over	30.4	34.9	34.9	19.2	23.9	16.7	359	26.5	29

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

The number of homeless persons aged 55 years and above has steadily increased over the past three Censuses, from 12,461 in 2006, to 14,581 in 2011 and 18,625 in 2016 (a 28% increase between 2011 and 2016). The rate of older persons experiencing homelessness has also increased, from 26 persons per 10,000 of the population in 2011 up to 29 in 2016.

2.5 Summary

Identifying risk groups for homelessness is difficult to scope as there are numerous pathways into homelessness, and homelessness affects all diverse groups within the population. There are many 'hidden' homeless who are not captured in the three main datasets due to data collection methods or the types of homelessness they experience. We must accept this space is dynamic, and keep working to understand where our efforts are best placed.

Some other cohorts that deserve our effort to better understand their homelessness risks and needs to address are:

- **Veterans**

In 2017-18, an Australian Defence Force (ADF) indicator was introduced into the SHSC. This measure found 107 veterans in WA seeking SHSs, with 40 of these people homeless and 66 at risk of homelessness (AIHW, 2018). The WA Registry Week data revealed a total of 72 veterans in WA, 5 were interviewed in Fremantle and 67 in the rest of Perth. A larger proportion of veterans versus non-veterans in WA reported that they were sleeping rough at the time of their interviews (69.4% of veterans; 59.5% of non-veterans). A substantially higher proportion of veteran than non-veteran Registry Week respondents in WA reported that they had a permanent physical disability that limited their mobility, and 47.2% who identified as veterans reported that they had suffered a serious brain injury or head trauma in their lives, considerably higher than for the non-veteran homeless population (Flatau et al., 2018).

- **Interactions with the justice system**

Registry Week data indicates that a greater proportion of WA respondents had experiences of imprisonment in their lifetime, and that rough sleepers in WA were substantially more likely than non-rough sleepers to have been in prison at some point in their lives. Of Registry Week respondents, WA females were much more likely to have been in prison than females in the rest of Australia (47.6% of WA female respondents versus 26.7% of female respondents overall).

73.8% of Indigenous Western Australian Registry Week respondents reported that they had been in prison at some point in their lives, compared with 52.4% of non-Indigenous WA respondents. This rate was 75% for Indigenous Fremantle respondents, and 73.8% for the rest of Perth. Youth detention rates were also higher amongst Indigenous respondents: 45.8% of Indigenous respondents in WA overall had been in youth detention (versus 30.0% of all WA respondents). Rates of youth detention amongst Indigenous Fremantle respondents were lower (25%), and higher in the rest of Perth (47.3%) (Flatau et al., 2018).

- **People with a disability**

The Census defines people with a profound or severe disability were those people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long-term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age. As in 2011 and 2006, 5% of homeless persons in 2016 indicated they needed help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas. The proportion of persons requiring help or assistance in core activities who were classified as living in 'improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out' is very low (3%) (ABS, 2016). The Census found that the proportion of respondents, both rough sleepers and non-rough sleepers, in WA reporting a permanent physical disability that limits their mobility, is substantially lower than in Australia overall.

However, Registry Week data found that 17.9% of Western Australians who were rough sleeping reported permanent physical disability that limits mobility. This is lower than the national percentage of 27.8% (Flatau et al., 2018).



- **Culturally and linguistically diverse people**

People who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in the five years prior to the Census accounted for 15% (17,749 persons) of all persons who were estimated to be homeless on Census night in 2016. Of the homeless people who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in the five years prior to Census, 12% were born in India, 10% in China, 6% in Afghanistan, 5% in Pakistan and 4% in Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan and Malaysia. In 2016, 74% or 13,088 persons who were born overseas and arrived in Australia in the last five years were living in 'severely' crowded dwellings and 13% (2,350 persons) were living in boarding houses (ABS, 2016; Kaleveld et al., 2018).

There is a pattern that people from culturally and linguistically diverse background experience more secondary homelessness such as overcrowding and are less likely to access services. This means some data collections are inadequate at capturing the full extent of homelessness in the CaLD population. While the Census remains the best data source, it is only available every five years, which greatly limits our understanding of the nature and extent of CaLD homelessness.

- **Children under 12 presenting alone**

It is extremely difficult to find information, statistics, studies or other sources, about young people who fall around the typical age bracket for data collections (e.g., 15 and over). The under 12 age group is even more under researched. We know anecdotally that young children do present independently at SHSs in WA.

These groups may not be consistently visible as highly vulnerable populations across all three of the big homelessness measures (due to data limitations, data sources handling different demographic information plus various sampling, definitional, or data collection methodologies that may obscure the homelessness of certain groups). There seems to be enough evidence to indicate that these groups should be on the radar at least as populations of potential vulnerability, or in need of further locally based research and consultation. It is hoped that with new commitments to measuring homelessness in WA (such as the Perth Zero Project), our reliance on the Census, SHSC and Registry Week will diminish and with that our understandings of more diverse cohorts and risk factors will expand.



3. Reflections on the current service system

3.1 Service use statistics for Western Australia

Service rates and support received

Western Australians are accessing SHSs at a lower rate than nationally. In WA in 2016-17, one in 104 people received homelessness assistance; this was lower than the national rate (1 in 84). In 2017-18, service rates were even lower with one in 109 Western Australians accessing homelessness assistance; this was also lower than the national 2017-18 rate (1 in 85). Fewer clients overall were assisted in WA in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17.

Table 10: SHS Client Information, in WA and Australia at large

	2016-17	2017-18	Direction of change
Service rates	One in 104	One in 109	↓
Total clients assisted	24,626	23,739	↓
WA % of the national SHS client population	9%	8%	↓
% homeless on first presentation	41%	40%	↓

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, 2019)

SHSC data indicates a significant disparity between WA and national rates for length of support received and length of accommodation provided. In 2017-18, the median length of support received was 19 days in WA and 39 days in Australia. The median length of accommodation provided was 12 days in WA and 32 days in Australia (AIHW, 2019).

Table 11: Specialist Homelessness Services Data support received by clients as overall percentages, 2016-17 and 2017-18 in WA and 2017-18 in Australia

		WA 2016-17	WA 2017-18	Australia 2017-18
Support received	Median length of support (days)	18	19	39
	Median length of accommodation (nights)	12	12	32

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

Unmet demand

In the SHSC, unmet demand data is presented from two perspectives:

1. **Unassisted requests for services** capture those who are not able to be offered assistance by the SHS agency.
2. **Unmet need** captures those who had some but not all their identified needs met by the agency (SHSC, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

In 2017-18, on average, 59 requests for assistance went unmet each day in WA. The average nationally is 236. The WA population, only representing 10.8% of the total Australian population (ABS, 2016), accounts for over 24% of all unmet requests for assistance nationally. This could indicate either the need for assistance is not as high (which is not likely given the homelessness statistics) or that WA is not meet the needs of those facing homelessness at a disproportionately high level when compared to the national standard. However between 2016-17 and 2017-18 there was improvement.

Table 12: Number of unassisted requests for services

		WA 2016-17	WA 2017-18	Direction of change
Unmet requests for assistance WA	# requests for assistance unmet per day	67	59	↓
	# requests for assistance unmet per day	261	236	↓
	% of all unmet requests in WA	25%	24%	↓

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The SHSC also provides information about the reasons a service was not provided, which are outlined below.



Table 13: Daily average unassisted requests, by reason service was not provided, 2017-18 WA

Reason	Short term or emergency accommodation	Other housing assistance	Specialist service (without accom.)	General assistance only	Total
Person did not accept service	5.2	1.3	0.6	0.6	7.7
Person wanted different services	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.6	1.7
Agency was in the wrong area	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.8
Agency had no accommodation available	20.6	3.4	0.0	0.1	24.2
Agency had no other services available	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.0
Agency had insufficient staff	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.9
Agency was inappropriate, wrong target group	2.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	2.6
Agency's facilities were not appropriate for a person with special needs	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Person was refused service/ person did not meet criteria	3.6	0.7	0.2	1.5	6.1
No fee-free services, available at the time of request	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Other	7.7	2.3	2.1	2.7	14.8
Total	42.3	8.6	3.2	6.2	60.4

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

The extent to which SHS agencies met specialist service demands in 2017-18 was in line with the previous year. For example, one in three mental health service requests were neither provided nor referred in both 2017-18 (32%) and 2016-17 (33%). Over this time, clients requiring mental health services increased by 2% (more than 600 clients) (AIHW, 2018).

The Annual Report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) points out the clients seeking support from SHS agencies often need various services. With some needs arising more than once in a support period, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the need has been met from the available data.

Provision of accommodation

Accommodation was the most commonly identified need. Nationally, in 2017-18, assistance was provided to 59% of the 107,600 clients requiring short term or emergency accommodation but only 5% of the 104,600 clients requiring long-term housing. While similar numbers of clients need short-term/emergency accommodation and long-term housing, the need for long-term housing is greatly and disproportionately unmet (AIHW, 2018).

Census data indicates that WA has one of the highest rates of people sleeping rough (living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out), yet the lowest rate of people in supported accommodation. While the WA population was 10.6% of the national population in 2016 on Census night, 13% of those sleeping rough in Australia were in WA. This was the second highest rate of all states and territories, after the NT. The rate of people sleeping rough in WA had increased from 2% to 3% in the previous five years (ABS, 2016). WA had the lowest rate of persons in supported accommodation for the homeless, which perhaps reflects that the provision of such services in WA is less effective at meeting needs than in other states and territories.

Table 14: Rate per 10,000 of the population in WA and Australia

	WA rate per 10,000 of the population	Australia rate per 10,000 of the population
Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out	4.4	3.5
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	4.3	9.1
Persons staying temporarily with other households	7.9	7.6

Source: ABS 2016 (Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016)

In WA, a minority of clients are supported to enter housing. Of WA's over 6,400 SHS clients who were homeless when they started receiving support from homeless services, about 35% (nearly 2,300 clients) were assisted into housing (51% (around 1,100 clients) were housed in public/community housing, while nearly 46% (around 1,000 clients) were housed in private/other housing). This is comparable with national figures where 38% of clients were assisted into housing (AIHW, 2018).



Indications of a highly effective service system in regional and remote areas

The proportion of clients needing short-term or emergency accommodation increased as remoteness of the service provider increased:

- Major cities - 34%
- Inner regional areas - 38%
- Outer regional areas - 44%
- Remote/very remote areas - 62% (national statistics, AIHW, 2018).

Nearly 9 in 10 requests for accommodation were met by services in remote/very remote areas (88%). Clients of services in major cities and inner regional areas were the least likely to receive accommodation (52% and 41% of need met, respectively). Clients in remote/very remote areas were more likely to receive short-term or emergency accommodation (92%) than those in major cities (52%) and inner regional areas (50%) (AIHW, 2018).

This is despite, as mentioned previously, agencies in remote/very remote areas consistently reporting the highest rate of homelessness service use, 2.7 times higher than in major cities in 2017-18. Though services in inner regional areas had the largest average annual growth in client numbers (4.7%), services in remote/very remote areas had the largest growth in the rate of service use, increasing on average by 5.3% each year since 2014-15.

3.2 The lived experience of homelessness, and practitioner consultation

We recognise those experiencing homelessness as the paramount voice to guide the social movement to end homelessness in Western Australia. We also recognise that the lived experience voice is increasingly being valued by policy makers as it has been by practitioners in the social purpose sector. Where social problems are complex and diverse such as in the homelessness space, it is important to stay close to the lived experience perspective and to understand how their interactions with the system play out, in both positive and negative ways.

The lived experience voice also provides insights and ideas about what is needed and potential ways forward.

As part of our ongoing engagement with those with lived experience, we consulted a group of people with lived experience of homelessness. A group of practitioners working in the homelessness sector were also consulted so that we could understand how both perspectives aligned and validated each other.

Lived experience and practitioner experience consultation process

In June-July 2019, the Centre for Social Impact, University of Western Australia (CSI UWA) engaged two groups in a consultation process: one group designed to understand the perspectives of people who were experiencing or had experienced homelessness (nine participants: seven metro and two regional), and another to understand from a practitioner view how the system is working and what is needed to improve it (five participants: five metro).

The practitioners and the lived experience group represented a diversity of views and experiences. Among them were experiences of family and domestic violence, refugee backgrounds, experience with mental health and legal issues and regional or remote backgrounds.

These voices highlighted some of the pain points in the homelessness system and foregrounded the hardship faced by those who come into contact with a system they find ineffective, at a time in their lives when they are extremely vulnerable. The reflection of homeless people's experiences and practitioners' frustrations creates a powerful narrative and a strong call for systems change.

Meeting with the lived experience group in a safe space, in a peer-to-peer discussion format, was highly informative. The consultation was a rich source of data and understanding, and the participants expressed appreciation and a desire to continue the conversation. This highlighted the potential value of this process as an ongoing part of an overall approach to ending homelessness (and this mechanism has been built into the WAAEH operations generally as well as the *WAAEH Homelessness Outcomes Framework*). Below is a summary of the key points raised by the group. At times, composite quotes are used to convey a richer picture of one event, or to protect individual identities.

The lived experience voice

People with lived experience of homelessness spoke about what they needed from the service system. What people with lived experience emphasised, above all, was the uninterrupted flow between various elements of support as they exit homelessness. They asked for a system that could seamlessly and without delay:

- respond to red flags, without hesitation;
- help clients be safe and stable straight away;



- provide clean and secure accommodation;
- help clients transform their life in various ways in terms of safety, employment and health; and
- meet clients' ultimate need for community, social and personal belonging.

Figure 7: Summary of what is needed address individuals' homelessness, as articulated by lived experience voices

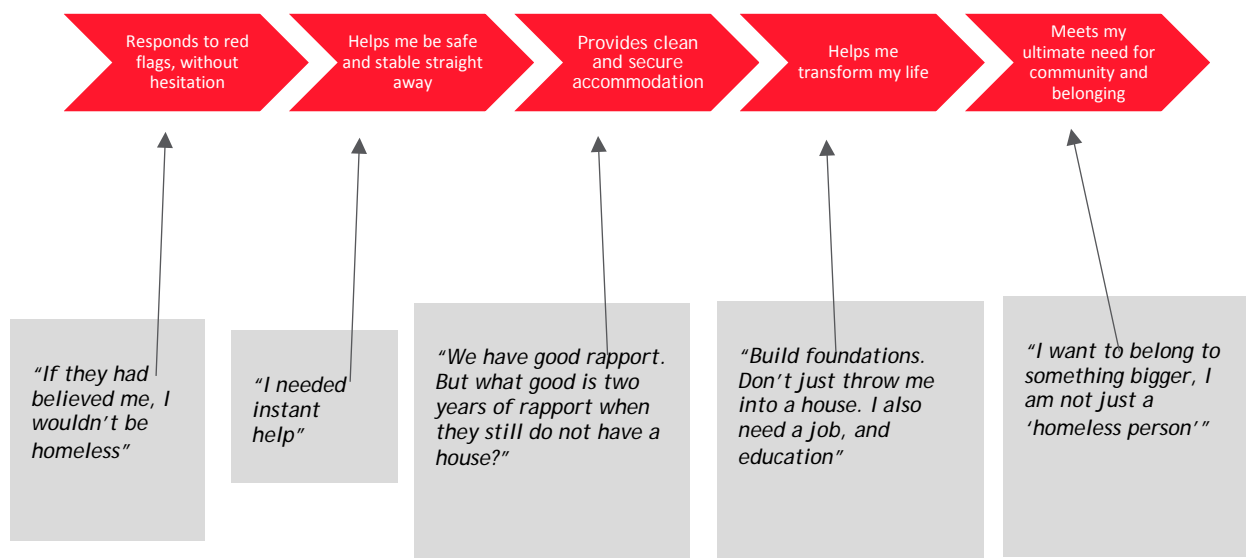


Figure 7 presents a conceptual model of the important elements that emerged from discussion with the nine lived experience participants. Where any of the parts of this flow break down, people who need help describe feeling even more powerless, even forsaken. Interestingly, feelings of powerlessness were mirrored in the practitioner group, where people working in the homelessness sector also expressed frustration at not being able to, or sufficiently resourced to, effectively help someone exit homelessness. Some key themes that emerged from both the discussions are outlined below.

Key themes from the lived experience and practitioner consultation

Speaking with both people with lived experience of homelessness and practitioners working in the homeless sector, a strong sense comes through about what is missing or broke, what is needed, and in which direction the sector needs to go in order to effectively support people. Interestingly, the key points emerging from the lived experience group resemble closely the issues and barriers that practitioners face. Thematic analysis from both groups is therefore presented together in this section.

Needs to be addressed

Holding a person and genuine care

The importance of feeling cared about is critical for those with lived experience of homelessness, especially given that homelessness may heighten vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma and re-traumatisation.

- *"The need is to be held by the system, when I am falling apart"*

A surprising number of people expressed that the system/people working in the system did not genuinely care for them. The quotes give an indication of the damage done when people are homeless and waiting for what they see is an unresponsive system.

- *"Workers do not care"*
- *"Are you helping me or getting money from me?"*
- *"Organisations are not set up to care...it's us and them"*
- *"I asked for one thing, but no-one got back to me"*
- *"For the amount of money they are getting they are not delivering"*
- *"Services are monetising misery/ Programs are non-existent. They get your signature and get the money for that, but you never hear from them again"*



Staff are also aware of this: *"People need to be loved"*

Staff believe there is a problem at times with feeling burnt out and believe that staff need to be given enough support, resources and supervision to offer genuine care.

- *"They know if you've got your own agenda, or if you've checked out"*
- *"Staff are burnt out. The Code of Practice says there should be supervision for staff, but the reality is there may be a small organisation, one staff working alone at night, this limits the support they can give. And leads to vicarious trauma for staff"*

Meeting ultimate needs

The practitioner group noted that an exit from homelessness involves not only finding a house, but also strong supported pathways that lead to community; networks of informal support; emotional, spiritual, financial supports; and, importantly, employment, income and a sense of purpose.

- *"A lot of services are on the way to providing those supports but we do not have a way to refer on to meet ultimate needs"*
- *"We need to address the loneliness, and help them see their own potential and future"*
- *"I'd like to see what an end to homelessness actually looks like? Where can I refer someone so that they experience purpose, learn life skills, have a home, belonging, their needs addressed, there is love"*
- *"I want involvement in community. Want activities, things to do. I'm not just a homeless person"*
- *"We can refer to transitional housing, but they are still not integrated into the community"*
- *"Put people in community where they want to be"*

Staff need access to power, agency and resources to end homelessness and offer people the individualised support they need

When people have positive experiences with their case workers, they are disappointed by the case worker's inability to actually end their homelessness. People who work in homeless services have sophisticated understandings of homelessness and their clients' needs, are highly skilled at establishing trust and rapport, and strongly committed to supporting their clients. However, staff often cannot transform lives because of systems-level factors, including insufficient resourcing and sustainable exit pathways (such as lack of houses, jobs, opportunities, safe places or programs to refer onto). Sometimes this is seen by clients of the system as lack of will or understanding.

- *"My case worker is nice but she is powerless"*
- *"Workers have no idea of the real world, there is no understanding so they do not know how to act"*
- *"I need the system to trust in my ability to recover. I knew what I needed but I wasn't believed"*

Staff are committed to ending homelessness for individuals, but also upset by their inability to do so.

- *"I need the actual options available to actually end homelessness. When I'm trying to help someone I come up against a wall"*
- *"Need a smooth, clear transition to housing, as quickly as possible. The current system creates a long traumatising journey to permanent housing"*
- *"People go sideways or backwards"*

Staff in community services feel confident about *preventing* homelessness if they could act at both the preventative and crisis ends of the system. However, staff need to be somehow permitted to follow this through engaging with those in other support systems that are working in the preventative space largely outside the homelessness support system. Prevention means intervening across diverse needs and in creative ways. Workers need flexibility and the freedom to respond to problems with a level of individual discretion.

- *"Workers need permission to actually respond when red flags come up"*
- *"At the local level, we need discretion and brokerage funds... Flexible solutions and having leeway. Sometimes families need as little as \$2000 to prevent them becoming homeless"*
- *"Like the NDIS, we want mechanisms to be able to respond to individuals. Cannot compartmentalise people... need to individualise people's support based on their circumstances"*

At the local level, staff need access to discretionary funding/brokerage funds, so they can find solutions for individuals in a timely manner. The suggestion is to devolve power and permission to frontline workers, so they can ask people, 'what do you need?' and then deliver.



Persistent problems

Inadequate housing

Staff and people with lived experience of homelessness reported the lack of affordable, safe, clean housing options that were available immediately, and that this was the most significant barrier to ending homelessness. People with experience of homelessness reported feeling unsafe in their house, and described the health risks that came from sub-standard accommodation.

- *"They put me into an unsafe environment ... and did not believe me when I told them I needed to leave for my personal safety"*
- *"In my house I was isolated, with no access to resources. I've been through all the programs, the appointments, but I'm still isolated"*

Staff are also concerned about the lack of appropriate housing, and do not feel confident that alternative safe accommodation will become available.

- *"Everything is full"*
- *"My client was unsafe...She felt more in control of her life on the streets"*
- *"The accommodation was not hygienic"*

Rigid rules leading to longer term problems

Agencies and individuals working to end homelessness are often constrained by broader sector policies, such as Centrelink requirements and visa restrictions that leave some people without any support. Both the support workers and the people with lived experiences traced their entry into homelessness directly back to being denied resources at a specific time of need that was beyond their control. The fact that the initial needs were often short term highlights the need for flexibility in responses.

- *"Withholding assistance due to rules - visa restrictions, Centreline policies, lack of 'evidence'"*
- *"I have five years of evidence from a GP and a psychologist but I cannot access help from HomesWest because of my visa. Immigration accept me as a refugee but I am stuck in crisis accommodation"*

Practitioners also call for a wider pool of agencies to work more flexibly and actively to prevent homelessness.

- *"Social services system needs to be integrated"*

Difficulties, complaints and fairness

When people present with difficulties, fears or complex needs, they are not always treated with the sophistication, dignity or respect they deserve.

People feel hurt by processes perceived as unfair and not transparent. For example, for some people the housing waiting list feels like a lottery, and the lack of information can feed a sense of hopelessness. People have experienced dismissal of their complaints about unsafe housing. The lived experience group demonstrates that there is strong anger in parts of the community of people who have experienced homelessness.

- *"No justice"*
- *"They didn't believe me"*
- *"No dignity, they do not care"*
- *"System is antagonising"*
- *"I missed my appointment at the hospital because I was not at the address ... I went on a wait list. Now my health is worse than before"*
- *"There is real anger, collective anger. And protest. People want to sanitise my story"*

Staff also recognise that the system does not respond well when people face difficulties. Complexities within the system mean even reasonable requests - being heard, having a small matter settled, or asking for a change in order to be safe - involve complicated processes and can lead to stressful legal avenues.

Processes, especially complaints processes, need to be designed with sensitivity to the circumstances of people who have experienced homelessness (which may also involve trauma). People need to trust and believe the people working in the system want to help them.

Difficulties navigating complexity

People experiencing homelessness need a simple interface that can support them immediately.

- *"I did not have an advocate. I am a refugee and needed more help understanding everything"*



Practitioners put forward the idea of lived experience people being navigators and mentors, who can help others and simplify the system for them.

Ideas for the way forward

Focus on transformation

For both the lived experience group and the practitioner group, the hope that the money spent on homelessness services and housing would actually change lives seemed out of reach. They describe a system where people can access support, but that does not necessarily help them end homelessness. Homeless services staff may be highly skilled at establishing trust and rapport but are unable to transform lives because they cannot access resources (houses, jobs, opportunities or programs that are available that they can refer into). Employment and training were especially highlighted as a central (unmet) need to help people make a sustained exit from homelessness.

- *"We need options to give someone that are not bandaids, but are restorative, life changing options, that can actually end homelessness"*
- *"I had 15 years of going to a soup kitchen"*
- *"What about after the refuge? I need a job"*
- *"There are a lot of services out there that are wondering what the next steps are"*

Place-based initiatives and community-led responses

Practitioners felt strongly that each local area needs to have an action plan. This will allow for linking groups that might work together naturally (businesses and NGOs etc.) to respond to homelessness while a person stays in their community. It was felt the place-based initiatives and community-led responses can better meet whole-of-person needs, especially the need for belonging and inclusion.

- *"In any vision of ending homelessness community connectedness is an important practical stepping stone"*
- *"Housing will not solve homelessness, community will. We need to provide a community where people can interact with each other and value each other as human beings"*

Normalise homelessness so we take the risks seriously

The practitioner group spoke about the need to normalise homelessness, so that outside the homelessness system it is not seen as 'other'. If we embed a cultural understanding that anyone can become homeless given an interplay of circumstances, we can hope that the system will become more agile at responding to risks. The lived experience group spoke about not being believed, or being refused help, while they were at the stage where they were at risk of homelessness but not yet homeless. They felt especially let down by government services that were outside the homelessness sector, such as Centrelink.

Share meaningful information to know we are on the right track

Practitioners and the lived experience group highlighted the need for feedback from the ground to be collected regularly.

- *"I go to lots of meetings and there is no representation from the people they are trying to assist"*
- *"Best thing is to listen to lived experience voice"*

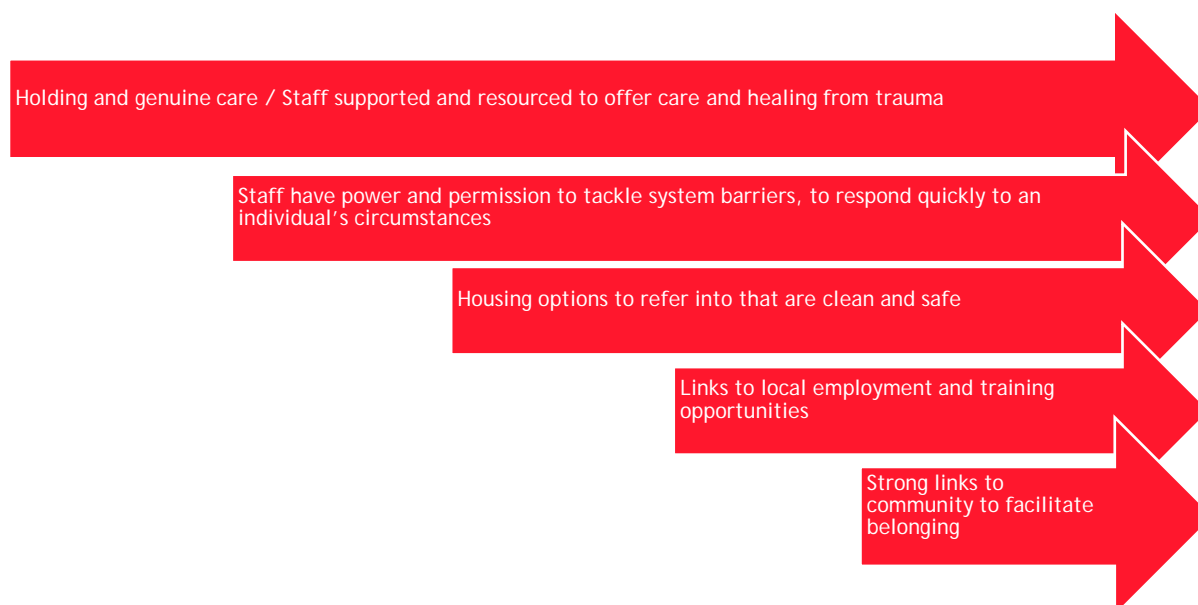
There was also a cynicism about the information currently collected, as it is seen as not getting to the heart of the issue, or not being translated into action.

- *"What's the value [in research]...is it just to get money. There is still no action"*
- *"VI-SPDAT helps us understand acuity, but we cannot translate that into action"*
- *"You invite us here to tell our stories but where do our stories go?"*

A more transparent mechanism to seek lived experience voice and feed it back to a wide audience was expressed and supported by all lived experience participants in the group.



Figure 8: Summary of key components of an effective system, as described by lived experience and practitioner groups



What do those experiencing homelessness want to be safe and well

The consultation with lived experience people for this report involved a small sample of nine participants. The Registry Week data also asked people what they needed in an open-ended question "what do you need to be safe and well". The 4,500 respondents across Australia confirmed and validated what we heard from the nine Western Australians.

For Registry Week participants - many of whom were rough sleeping when they responded - basic needs for housing and shelter ranked the most highly, with 84% of respondents referencing a house, home, accommodation, shelter, or roof. Food was mentioned by a substantial proportion of respondents, often in conjunction with shelter, and physical safety for themselves and their belongings was also a concern.

Accessible, affordable, and regular healthcare services for both general physical and mental health were mentioned by many participants. Financial resources, referred to as money, income, stable income, financial security and stability were a prominent concern. Over 500 participants mentioned that they want a job or employment.

Love and belongingness were identified as key factors for many respondents. These needs varied and included reuniting with family, developing a strong social support network, and maintaining supports with agencies.

The following are some illustrative quotes from Western Australian respondents of what they feel they need to be safe and well (Flatau et al., 2018):

- *"Permanent accommodation, good job, steady income, driving licence, relationship"*
- *"My own place, the ability to deal with problems and move towards employment"*
- *"My own space, stick to my drug program continue to see my psych"*
- *"New kidneys and a house to get out of the cold weather. I get sick all of the time"*
- *"Getting a house, mental health support, medication, family support/communication"*
- *"Get off the streets. Have somewhere where I can be with my pets and live a responsible life"*

3.3 Sustaining achievements in Western Australia to end homelessness

Although there may be new initiatives emerging in WA (for example those supported by the WA Alliance to End Homelessness), it is important to continue to recognise and support the interventions put in place in recent years, and to build on their success.



In 2019, WA continues to host several best-practice, intensive support service delivery models such as Foyer Oxford, 50 Lives 50 Homes, Street to Home, and Safe at Home.

The following is a summary of some excellent examples in WA of programs with sound theoretical underpinnings that have been independently evaluated, and that are achieving successful long term outcomes for clients. Their continuation is essential for a robust mix of responses to homelessness and options in WA.

Foyer Oxford

Based on the international Foyer Model, the WA implementation by Anglicare WA provides accommodation, wrap around support and links to education and training for young people. The target of 80% resident engagement in employment, education or training was met by single residents (Jan-June 2018) and 72% across all residents (evaluation by KPGM, with results published at www.foyeroxford.org.au).

50 Lives 50 Homes

50 Lives 50 Homes focuses on rapid transition to housing providing long-term, supported housing for people rough sleeping. Support includes collaborative case management with backbone support by Ruah Community Services and wraparound support focused primarily on health supports. Collaborative partnerships involve 27 agencies. Between 2016 and 2017, 107 people have been housed in 78 homes which has been shown to reduce emergency department presentations by 31% (evaluation by the Centre for Social Impact UWA).

Safe at Home

Safe at Home provides support for women and children experiencing domestic violence to stay in their homes where it is safe to do so. Case management support is provided for women and children to stay in their homes. In addition links to police (e.g. to assist in obtaining Violence Restraining Orders), specialist risk assessments of staying in the home for the women and children, and safety upgrades to the home, the Safe at Home also aims to provide brokerage funds to stabilise housing and increase security. Data for 440 clients indicates (though not conclusively) that 77% of clients may have stayed in the family home during a specified study period (evaluation by Cant, Meddin & Penter, 2013).

Street to Home

Street to Home is a collaborative model focused on ending rough sleepers' homelessness. Street to Home comprises three assertive outreach teams, five housing support worker services and a mobile clinical outreach team. The assertive outreach teams locate and engage rough sleepers and address their most pressing needs. Housing support worker services provide support to maintain accommodation and facilitate engagement with general health, mental health and drug and alcohol services. The mobile clinical outreach teams provide assertive clinical assessment and treatment for rough sleepers with serious mental illness and substance abuse issues.

An evaluation found that out of the 197 clients that had engaged with the program 12 or more months prior to the evaluation period, at least 67% maintained their accommodation for 12 months or greater. Of those accommodated in public housing, 90% retained their tenancy for 12 months or more (evaluation by Cant, Meddin & Penter, 2013).

Royal Perth Homeless Team

The Royal Perth Homeless Team commenced in July 2016 as a collaboration between Royal Perth Hospital and the Homeless Healthcare General Practice. The core aim of the Royal Perth Homelessness Team is to improve outcomes for homeless patients by supporting them through their time in hospital, improving discharge planning and continuity of care and linking them with community-based services to address their underlying health and psychosocial needs (Gazey, Vallesi, Cumming & Wood, 2018).

Ongoing work of specialist homelessness services, crisis supports and outreach teams

While it may be tempting to shine a light on the new, eye-catching programs and initiatives, it is important to also recognise the ongoing work of charities and not for profit organisations who are no less relevant and valuable even when new approaches emerge. Many organisations in Western Australia provide crisis and emergency support and outreach, which is an essential part of any homelessness service system. In recent years many not-for-profit organisations have developed structures and processes within their agencies to assist people move from sleeping rough to transitional accommodation and finally long term accommodation. There is a trend across organisations to develop a suite of programs and/or referral pathways, meaning that all services are beginning to recognise and apply principles of Housing First, even while operating with very limited resources.



4. Emerging homelessness responses and initiatives in Western Australia

This section provides a brief outline of emerging responses in the Western Australian homelessness system. This section will outline the state government's strategy, before profiling new initiatives that are currently being initiated or supported by the WAAEH. This will include important initiatives from the past that are being scaled up—both directly by the WAAEH as well as others in the homelessness support system.

4.1 New policy settings to support ending homelessness

In WA there has recently been a drive to develop a more integrated response to ending, rather than just managing, homelessness.

In July 2018, the WAAEH launched the Western Australian Strategy to End Homelessness, a 10-year action plan to end homelessness. This community-led plan signalled a commitment to homelessness being addressed as a whole-of-community issue, one that must involve both collective will as well as collaborative efficacy to end homelessness.

At the same time the Department of Communities is developing a 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness. This looks at how all players across WA (government, local government and community organisations) and across all sectors can work together to address homelessness. The development of these two strategies provide an opportunity to build a momentum in WA around ending homelessness that involves all sectors and players.

The Western Australian State Government has released a Directions Paper for the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness as a progress update and a request for community feedback (Government of Western Australia, 2019). The paper proposes three directions for each of the Strategy's focus areas. Proposed directions have been directly informed by community consultation, including people with lived experience, Aboriginal people and young people, and partnership with the community services sector and peak bodies. Furthermore, the paper identifies that responses need to address all periods of the homelessness continuum to balance current clustering around the crisis period, that a 'No Wrong Door' approach is needed to address current widespread difficulty to navigate the homelessness service system, and that investment in ending homelessness will result in significant long-term cost savings to government and community. The Strategy aims to create a whole-of-community response, by allocating targets and accountability across government agencies and community sector partners.

One strength of the State Government's strategy is the engagement of the Supporting Communities Forum's Homelessness Working Group in assisting in the development of the Strategy. This process of engaging various stakeholders from across the sector will help ensure a whole-of-government integrated service system.

The following policies and initiatives are also relatively new and are seen to be greatly enhancing the service system.

- The Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-20: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing;
- Self-directed brokerage funding for specialist homelessness services - allows clients to address their individual needs and optimise case management;
- Direct housing pathways and funding for housing support workers in correctional services, drug and alcohol facilities and mental health services, and constructed new accommodation units for young people leaving child protection settings;
- The Aboriginal Legal Service of WA Limited (ALSWA) welcomed an announcement by the State Government (May 2018) that Western Australia will receive Federal funding to establish a state-wide 24 hour hotline, requiring police to call the ALSWA whenever an Aboriginal person is brought into a lock-up; and
- The Wungening Aboriginal Corporation in partnership with Centrecare Incorporated, delivering the Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (the EIFS Strategy).



Table 15: Directions for each Focus Area of the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness, as proposed in the Western Australian State Government's Direction Paper for the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness

Focus Area	Direction
1. Sustainable pathways out of homelessness	1.1. Create and trial different types of housing and accommodation that addresses the diverse needs of people across the homelessness continuum
	1.2. Make more beds available in low-barrier crisis and short-term transitional accommodation
	1.3. Improve service delivery through innovation and collaboration
2. Prevention and early intervention	2.1. Focus on families and young people to break cycles of homelessness
	2.2. Better support for people who have recently exited homelessness or whose tenancies are at risk
	2.3. No exits into homelessness from government institutions including prisons, hospitals and out-of-home care
3. System transformation to create an integrated, person-centred system	3.1. Implement a No Wrong Door approach to service delivery
	3.2. Implement integrated, whole-of-government responses to homelessness
	3.3. Roll out consistent, trauma informed practice across programs and services

Source: Western Australian State Government's Direction Paper for the 10-year Strategy on Homelessness (Government of Western Australia, 2019)

4.2 Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness activity

WAAEH is comprised of a group of organisations that have come together to end homelessness in Western Australia. The WAAEH is led by project steering committee which includes representatives from Uniting Care West, Ruah Community Services, St Bartholomew's House, Foundation Housing Ltd., Anglicare WA, St Vincent de Paul WA, the Centre for Social Impact UWA and Wungening Aboriginal Corporation. The Alliance has many member organisations and supporters across the community.

The WAAEH is currently supported by Lotterywest through funding administered by backbone organisation Shelter WA as well as by organisations in the project steering committee.

The WAAEH acts as a facilitator and point of connection for stakeholders working across sectors on various issues relevant to addressing homelessness. In addition to developing *The Western Australian Strategy to End Homelessness*, the WAAEH has developed a governance model, cohort and place-specific action plans, and toolkits to enable those in the community to develop their own responses to homelessness. The WAAEH has also facilitated the establishment of several working groups examining key issues in the homelessness space.

Key achievements of the Alliance include:

- Completion of the WAAEH governance framework.
- Continued engagement of over 500 cross-sector stakeholders through events, meetings, and other activities on a regular basis (at least fortnightly).
- Continued engagement with the Government of Western Australia in the development of its Homelessness Strategy.
- Growth of engagement with communication channels (increases across social media metrics, increased e-news subscribers).
- Development of the Youth Cohort Action Plan, including a series of three co-design workshops.
- Development of the Rough Sleepers Action Plan.
- Publication of the Co-design Toolkit, Outcomes Measurement Framework, State of Homelessness Report, and Housing First principles.
- Significant progress on implementing the Advance to Zero approach and by-name lists in Perth (Perth Zero Project).

The WAAEH will continue its facilitating role throughout the homelessness space. Specific future actions include, but are not limited to:

- Launching the Youth Cohort Action Plan and Rough Sleepers Action Plan.
- Ongoing measurement and evaluation through the WAAEH Outcomes Measurement Framework.
- Developing the report on Housing First, compiling evidence from around the world and outlining the core principles of the model.



- Supporting the expansion of the Advance to Zero community team into Midland.
- Issuing a response to the Western Australian Government Homelessness Directions Paper and continued engagement in the Western Australian Government Homelessness Strategy; and,
- Establishing key messages and develop advocacy plan.

For more information about the WAAEH and any of the initiatives featured in this report, go to www.endhomelessnesswa.com or email hello@endhomelessnesswa.com.

Much of the collaborative work of the WAAEH has occurred via working groups.

Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness Working Groups

WAAEH Working group on housing supply

The working group on housing supply is a group of local and State government, not-for-profit organisations, and private sector stakeholders working in ways relevant to the housing supply aspect of ending homelessness.

The notion of a housing supply working group arose through private sector stakeholders attending walkthroughs of *The Western Australian Strategy to End Homelessness* during its development and wanting to contribute to the ending of homelessness. Seeking to harness that energy, an informal working group was formed. This spawned two housing supply projects: Common Ground and the My Home Project (tiny homes). The working group on housing supply has recently relaunched, with two meetings taking place thus far, and Terms of Reference for the group being established.

The working group on housing supply is chaired by Kathleen Gregory, CEO of Foundation Housing. As the group has only recently relaunched, broader membership is still being established.

The working group on housing supply seeks to act as a central source of knowledge and best practice with regard to housing supply. It seeks to leverage existing resources, new housing stock, and innovative housing solutions to address the role of housing in homelessness, through the provision of education and advice, brokerage, mobilisation of resources, and promotion of good practice.

A key challenge in bringing stakeholders that are involved in housing supply but not in the homelessness sector is matching up what people *want* to do to address homelessness with what is feasible, effective, and sustainable. The housing supply working group aims to facilitate the implementation of big ideas to address the housing supply aspect of homelessness by connecting the ideas to other initiatives, knowledge, and opportunities.

As the working group on housing supply has only recently relaunched, its key achievements include:

- Establishing Terms of Reference.
- Identifying key stakeholders to invite to the working group.

Next steps:

- Invite identified stakeholders to the working group.
- Undertake an environmental scan of non-government solutions to housing supply issues nationally and globally.
- Develop a presentation on the 'face' of homelessness in Perth, solutions that have worked in different communities, and actions people can take to help bring these solutions to Perth.

WAAEH Working group on exiting prison

The need for a working group on exiting prison was recognised through the efforts of the WAAEH while developing the Western Australian Strategy to End Homelessness to identify cohorts that needed specific action plans. The working group comprises representatives from the not-for-profit service sector, State Government, and researchers seeking to ensure that Western Australians do not exit prison into homelessness.

The WAAEH Working group on exiting prison involves representatives from Access Housing, Acacia Prison, the Department of Justice data team and transitional team, and the Wungening ReSet program.

The working group on exiting prison seeks to undertake an environmental scan of who is doing what in relation to ex-prisoner transition and accommodation, a stocktake of housing supply for this cohort, and a survey of prisoners to find out more information concerning the accommodation prisoners expect to exit into.

A survey by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that one in three people entering prison had experienced homelessness in the four weeks prior to their incarceration, and that over half (54%) of prisoners due to be released within four weeks of being surveyed were expecting to be homeless (AIHW, 2019). More detailed information about the nature of the accommodation that prisoners are released into - for example, whether they are reliant on spare beds and couches of family



members, or whether they are able to access and afford rentals - is critical to understanding and addressing this pathway into homelessness.

The working group on exiting prison launched recently, with two meetings held to date. The definition of an initial scope and identification of potential members are the key achievements thus far.

Next steps:

- Invite representatives from the Prisoner Review Board and Department of Housing to join the working group.
- Present results from the environmental scan and housing supply stocktake
- Establish a project to study current prisoners in relation to their accommodation and transition post-exit.
- Use results from the environmental scan and housing supply stocktake to identify directions and actions the working group on exiting prison should take.

WAAEH Working group on Domestic Violence

The Working Group on Domestic Violence was formed as the WAAEH and its stakeholders sought to identify the cohorts that required specific action plans to be developed to address their needs in relation to homelessness.

The Working Group comprises a core group, including people with lived experience, Communicare, Anglicare WA, The Salvation Army, Ruah Community Services, Centrecare, Starick and Rise.

The role of the Working Group on Domestic Violence is to conceptualise the actions required by practitioners, policy-makers, and the public to ensure that the pathway from experiences of domestic violence to homelessness is closed.

The Working Group on Domestic Violence is quite newly formed, having had two meetings thus far. The Group is currently reviewing whether its scope should be homelessness-specific or family and domestic violence more broadly and, if its focus is broader, whether it still fits under the umbrella of the WAAEH. A concern about a broader focus is ensuring there is no duplication of government domestic violence initiatives.

Several stakeholders are making cash contributions in order to fund a facilitator to run a half-day workshop to determine the potential role of the group.

Next steps:

- A half-day workshop, led by CSI UWA's Strategic Design Manager Katie Stublely, to work through where the Working Group can best add value in terms of addressing family and domestic violence issues, including homelessness.

Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness Cohort and Place-specific Action Plans

Youth Cohort Action Plan

The WAAEH identified the need for a youth specific action plan to address homelessness. The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) established a design team and commenced the development of this action plan. The team consists of: youth members of the Homelessness Youth Advisory Council (HYAC) who have lived experiences of homelessness, a group of diverse professionals from a range of organisations and a small design squad who have worked together to facilitate the process.

The group used various design tools like 'system maps,' 'journey maps,' and 'future narratives' to empathise, discover, analyse and gain new insights together. One key highlight of the design process was the 'Service Safari', where members of the HYAC group rode the Street Connect bus and visited a range of organisations that provide services to youth experiencing homelessness. HYAC reported their findings back to the larger design team who included their insights in the formation of the action plan.

Youth Affairs Council of WA and youth members of the Homelessness Youth Advisory Council led the project, with the design team consisting of representatives from Indigo Junction, with assistance from Design Coaches (Katie Stublely from Centre for Social Impact and Jethro Sercombe) and a Social Consultant, Karen Wellington.

Key achievements to date:

- The Homelessness Youth Advisory Council presented findings of the service safari to the Department of Communities and the Social Impact Festival Summit.
- Young people who have been part of the process report feeling confident and connected through the process and social networks they have formed.
- The HYAC, in collaboration with the youth homelessness sector and YACWA, have co-written a draft 10-year plan to end youth homelessness in Western Australia. The plan will be publicly released in late 2019.



Next steps:

- YACWA will seek options for continuing the HYAC.

Rough Sleepers Action Plan

The WAAEH identified the need for a specific action plan to address rough sleeping. This has been led by the Centre for Social Impact UWA. The process has involved interviews with stakeholders, including people with lived experience. The design team also utilised the Pulse Meetings to collect input from a wide range of stakeholders. The process involved a focus on the goal: “By 2028 Everyone will have a place to call home and no one will experience homelessness for more than five nights.”

Key achievements to date:

- People provided their insights and understanding of what it would take to end rough sleeping through a Future Narrative process.
- These have been developed into statements that provide an understanding of what barriers need to be addressed and actions need to be taken to end rough sleeping.
- The statements are presented with photographs in a user-friendly and engaging format.

Next steps:

- The Action Plan will be available on the WAAEH website.

4.3 Initiatives supported by the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness

Capacity building, toolkits and coordination activities to end homelessness

Perth Zero Project

In February 2019, the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness helped bring together people from Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth to work with Community Solutions (USA) to mentor communities in the By-Name List methodology for ending homelessness.

Since February the WA Alliance to End Homelessness has been facilitating the collaboration of Perth-based organisations in developing a database for Perth, with an initial focus on the Perth CBD and Fremantle, with hope to soon expand to Midland, and beyond.

The approach records people experiencing homelessness (predominantly rough sleepers) by their name in a database to track their touchpoints with homelessness services. With this information it is possible to show month-by-month data about how many people are actively homeless in a community, whether or not this number is reducing month by month and how many people are moving in and out of homelessness each month.

The By-Name List builds on the achievements of 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign, however, this list adds in an extra level of understanding about how people move in and out of homelessness. This enables people working in the homelessness sector to prototype and test system change, and have access to real-time data. A strong By-Name List can be used to plan estimations of future rates of homelessness, including inflow into homelessness and refining performance targets.

The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, through the support of Micah, has been developing a national database that will collect this data along with VI-SPDAT surveys in each community and map the outcomes. The 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign has been involved in testing and providing feedback on the database’s functionality.

The Perth Zero Project involves WA Alliance to End Homelessness, Ruah Community Services, UnitingCare West, Royal Perth Hospital, St Patrick’s Community Centre, St Vincent de Paul Society, AnglicareWA, City of Perth, St Bart’s, Centrecare, The Salvation Army, Indigo Junction, UnitingCare West, 50 Lives 50 Homes, St Bartholomew’s House, CSI UWA and School of Population Health (University of Western Australia).

The role of WAAEH in the Perth Zero Project involves:

- Promoting, advocating and mentoring local communities to take up the approach.
- Assisting local communities in building capacity to take on the approach (there has already been interest from Mandurah, for example).
- Championing and/or undertaking state-wide research and analysis of data.
- Providing support in establishing protocols and agreements around privacy and consent (to safeguard client privacy in an information sharing environment and to ensure meaningful, informed, ongoing consent for clients who agree to their information being added to a shared and dynamic database).



Key achievements to date:

- Draft database has been designed by Micah Projects in Brisbane on behalf of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, with input from state representatives.
- Quality data collection systems have been established.
- Outreach workers across organisations have developed better ways of coordinating their efforts.
- Consent and privacy framework has been developed, including protocols for people who are not able to be located, and information sheets have been drafted.

Next steps:

- Reporting 50 Lives 50 Homes.
- Join other states and territories in Adelaide for a second 2-day action lab to advance the learning on how to use the list to progress system change.
- Establish quality data.
- Expand the number of organisations inputting data.
- Expand into other regions such as Midland in the immediate future, and eventually into other outer metropolitan and regional areas of WA.

Housing First in Perth capacity building project

Fundamental to *The Western Australian Strategy to End Homelessness* is a commitment to Housing First principles. In order to enact this commitment, the WAAEH needed to gather existing knowledge on what Housing First is in practice and map out what the implementation of Housing First in Perth would look like.

The role of the Housing First in Perth capacity building project is to scope the current evidence on Housing First from around the world, identify the core principles of Housing First, and begin to identify how these principles would apply to a Housing First implementation in Perth. Niall Rhatigan and Elsie Blay have been enlisted by the WAAEH to lead this work.

The Housing First in Perth capacity building project is largely an awareness-building exercise and has made significant progress towards this goal. The project has:

- Identified success rates of 70-90% in terms of long-term sustaining of housing (5 years+) among implementations of the Housing First Pathways Model with scattered-site accommodation.
- Named the following as core principles for Housing First:
 - Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions
 - Residents leases and tenant protections are protected by law
 - Individualised and person-driven wraparound supports
 - Housing is not contingent on engagement with wraparound support and is provided through assertive engagement rather than coercion
 - Recovery-oriented support, with recovery defined by the individual
 - Consumer choice with regard to the extent and manner of engagement with support
- Put forward the following additional principles for implementation of Housing First in the Perth context:
 - Culturally aware and responsive: Housing First Perth acknowledges the strength and knowledge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and its Elders. Housing First Perth works to shared reconciliation principles and is developed and delivered in partnership with the community.
 - Social and community development: Housing First Perth is a community development activity, working with the community to build a supportive and validating environment for participants of Housing First Perth.
 - Minority aware and responsive: Housing First Perth acknowledges the acute challenges faced by specific cohorts such as people living with disability, LGBTIQ+, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. As such, Housing First Perth is developed and delivered in partnership with minority groups within the context of their experience and community, and has diverse teams so that participants can access peer support from the community of their choice.
 - Partnering in the system: everyone engaged with Housing First Perth is a responsible and important member of the system. Participant representation is a core part of review and development of Housing First Perth, and representation is not limited to proportional representation, rather it is delegated as equal to professional input.

Next steps:

- Bob Jordan, National Director of Housing First Ireland, is speaking about Housing First during Homelessness Week.
- Further scoping of Housing First, engaging with stakeholders to inform them of the practicalities of the approach, and gauging their interest. A core challenge of implementing Housing First in Perth is that it is a complete system change that requires a total paradigm shift when it comes to service delivery, and the role of service delivery organisations. This 'flip' is essential to ensuring fidelity to Housing First principles and achieving the outcomes associated with it, but will require organisations to transform the way they operate.
- Develop materials to inform people that do not know about Housing First, identify and provide resources to those within the sector for effective implementation of Housing First, and identify the policy settings required to make Housing First work.



Co-design review and Action Plan Co-design Toolkit

The Strategy to End Homelessness, launched in April 2018, acknowledged that actions to end homelessness needed to be localised and tailored for specific cohorts. In recognition that all Action Plans are best developed in and by the place and the people they are created for, CSI UWA was engaged to deliver a co-design literature review and toolkit that can be used to inform future action plans to end homelessness.

The literature review was prepared to aid the development of co-design capacity. It contextualised 'co-design' theory within settings of complex social issues, presenting examples of contemporary practice, and reviewing relevant pre-existing toolkits, and insights on capacity building for meaningful co-design.

This review has been written to inform a general stakeholder audience comprised of WAAEH alliance members and other interested parties.

In addition to the literature review, CSI worked alongside a project team and Alliance partner organisations (Jethro Sercombe, Katie Stublely, Karen Wellington, Kelly Clark) to develop a toolkit to make it as easy as possible for any group, anywhere, to pick up this toolkit and get started in designing their own Action Plan to end homelessness, in partnership with people they would be engaging with.

This toolkit provides the step-by-step methods to create an action plan.

Key achievements to date:

- Feedback and testing has been sought and completed with various partners.
- A co-design Action Plan toolkit has been developed.

Next steps to date:

- The toolkit will be uploaded onto the WAAEH website for use.

Danjoo Koornly: Walking together towards everyone having a place to sleep and call home.

Purposeful discussions between Aboriginal people and Elders and the Centre for Social Impact, as well as views arising from the 2019 Social Impact Festival Summit (July 2019, CSI UWA), have revealed insights and a framework for how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can work together towards a more culturally appropriate and effective housing system for Aboriginal people. These insights have been captured in an accessible presentation. It represents a starting point for a broader conversation and transformation.

4.4 Examples of other new initiatives that align with the goals of the WAAEH Strategy

Other innovative responses to ending homelessness have emerged in WA, and although not from the direct actions of the WAAEH, their existence can be attributed to the flow on effects of other WAAEH initiatives, or the role of WAAEH in bringing people together has created the opportunity for these projects to be established.

The HOME Project

The aim of the *HOME Project* is to empower people in metropolitan Perth who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness or housing precariousness to participate in consultation and co-design processes. The *HOME Project* brings these people together with housing sector stakeholders in planning and designing housing policy, interventions and services.

This will result in a pool of individuals skilled in co-design, that government, non-government and private sector housing providers can call on for valuable lived-experience input. The project aims to provide this via engagement and training sessions. A result of these sessions will be a HOME Co-design Tool Kit, which will be a resource to inform housing organisations, government and other key stakeholders on ways to engage people with lived experience of housing insecurity in co-design. Another potential output is a HOME Speaker's Bureau, which would involve a group of skilled participants in the *HOME Project*, contactable through Shelter WA, who can be called on by policy officers, government ministerial staff, media outlets, and community organisations for input, insight, and co-design. This idea will be developed in partnership with the participants of the *HOME Project*.

Shelter WA and Tenancy WA are facilitating the HOME Project. An Advisory Group with representatives from Community Housing, WA Association for Mental Health, WA Alliance to End Homelessness, YACWA, a lived experience representative and researchers from Curtin University and Centre for Social Impact, University of Western Australia.



Key achievements:

- Project planning and intake processes have been established.
- An evaluation framework has been developed.
- Advisory Group has been established and has met once.
- Recruitment for lived experience participants has commenced.

Next steps:

- To commence engagement and training with lived experience participants.
- To commence the evaluation, designing tools and consulting with lived experience participants about suitable information capture.

Home Stretch

Home Stretch is a national campaign and initiative exploring better outcomes for young people transitioning from the Out of Home Care system when they turn 18 years of age. It was launched nationally in August 2016 and in February 2017 Anglicare WA led a Committee to launch the Home Stretch campaign in Western Australia. This campaign also seeks to achieve Legislative change on the leaving care age by increasing it from 18 to 21.

In March 2019, the Minister for Child Protection announced that the Department of Communities would work in partnership with Anglicare WA to implement a small-scale trial. This trial currently allows for 15 participants in the Fremantle District.

Anglicare WA, is working in partnership with the Department of Communities and Child Protection. The small team will work with the young people and key stakeholders over 12 months to develop a new approach to leaving care.

Key achievements to date:

- Prototyping work has been undertaken to design the service.

Next steps:

Anglicare WA are submitting a proposal for funding to Lotterywest to enable the trial to deliver on the intended goal of creating systems change. This funding application seeks support for following initiatives which will strengthen the integrity of the trial and delivery of the intended outcomes:

- Extension of sample size of participants in the WA trial from 15 to 25.
- Establishment of an independent Youth Advisory Group.
- Partnership with an ACCO to develop and design culturally appropriate responses to leaving care
- Evaluation of the trial in WA.
- Gather evidence that could potentially inform legislative change to increase leaving care age from 18 to 21.

City of Perth's Homelessness Services Accreditation Process

The City of Perth are developing a 12-month trail of an accreditation for homelessness services. This will focus on goodwill groups, and will provide them with an opportunity to be better coordinated and integrated with Perth's Homelessness Sector. The HSAP will also support the established not-for-profit organisations who are often not aware of the full extent of homelessness support groups and services that are in the Perth city.

The HSAP aims to increase the opportunity for both goodwill and funded homelessness support services to link people from crisis to longer-term support services that can address the types and cause of their homelessness. The HSAP also aims to capture all the work that goodwill or church groups may be doing through this application for accreditation. This will enable services to be better coordinated and distributed, to better meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. The accreditation process looks to have criteria that will help ensure food safety standards are met, needs are identified and service gaps are understood. To best support the sector and people accessing these support options, both goodwill groups and not-for-profit services who provide outreach based service delivery within the inner city will need to comply with the HSAP in order to operate wither from mobile or nominated sites.

The City of Perth will allocate where services can be located to optimise effectiveness, for example, to be close to day centres or services with case management support so people who are homeless might be easily referred into other support that can assist them to end their homelessness. The City of Perth are facilitating and managing this process, are working with neighbouring local government authorities, and have sought consultation from the whole of Perth's Homelessness Sector.

Key achievements to date:

- Three workshops have been completed.



- The accreditation process is currently in development.

Next steps:

- A 12-month trial is scheduled to commence within the next couple of months, designed to be replicated in other local governments.
- Once the trial has launched, all groups and services providing service delivery to support people experiencing homelessness within the inner city will be required to apply to become accredited.

20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle

Although not a WAAEH initiative, this program builds on the 50 Lives 50 Homes style campaign. The 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle program aims to support chronic rough sleepers to rapidly secure stable and sustainable housing. The approach will include client-centred case management with a focus on trauma informed care. Workers will work with the individuals to put in place the wrap around services required, broker housing, and provision of support to sustain housing in the long term. This will take place exclusively in the Fremantle region.

The idea for this program evolved out of a community dialogue on homelessness led by St Patrick's Community Support Centre, the City of Fremantle, and WA police, as a response to concerns as to increasing levels of chronic homelessness in Fremantle. It is an iteration of the 50 Lives 50 Homes program, but an adapted, place-based initiative to respond to community issues in Fremantle. St Patrick's will lead 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle on the ground, with Ruah Community Services providing backbone support for the project, as well as afterhours support for individuals engaged with the program. A range of collaborating agencies will be involved to provide diverse supports for individuals.

Key achievements to date:

- The St Patrick's 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle Outreach Caseworkers are on the ground.
- A preliminary list of 20 potential participants has been drawn up, and engagement commenced with some early work already underway on housing.
- Ruah Community Services has their arrangements for backbone and afterhours support in place.

Next steps:

- The Centre for Social Impact UWA will be engaged to undertake an evaluation of the program.
- A proposal has been submitted to the Department of Communities to fund a rental brokerage scheme, to increase the diversity of housing options and suitable housing that will feed into this program. This proposal as well as the involvement of Foundation Housing is subject to funding.

Homelessness Week lived experience group

The Homelessness Week lived experience group have been meeting on a regular basis in preparation for designing messaging about the experience of homelessness to contribute to the discussions during homelessness week 2019. The content as well as consideration of the most appropriate forums for these messages was worked through in a small group, with facilitation support provided by Shelter WA.

One-off funding through Lotterywest has enabled up to 12 people with lived experience of homelessness to be consulted in this way. Shelter WA is managing this project which is funded through Lotterywest.

Key achievements to date:

- Decisions have been made about the most appropriate forums for messaging during homelessness week - with a Facebook group being the preferred platform.
- The group designed and coordinated their own lived experience event with support from Shelter WA.
- The group reviewed external/grant events regarding its appropriateness and value in being part of Homelessness Week.
- The lived experience group chair had a significant say at broader HW reference group meetings, providing the lived experience group's perspective/input.

Next steps:

- Feedback will be sought from participants and audiences about the value of this group, and their contribution to homelessness week discussions and understandings.
- Funding and other ways to sustain this group or a similar group will be explored, with the vision that every homelessness week will have an advisory group of people with lived experience of homelessness to help shape the messages.



Joondalup Wanneroo End Homelessness Group

The Joondalup Wanneroo End Homelessness Group (JWEHG) was formed in 2011 in response to the State Government's mandate for Regional Plans to be developed (articulated in the State Plan *Opening Doors to Address Homelessness 2010-2013*).

The JWEHG comprises stakeholders from local government, state government, local community service agencies, educational institutions, local businesses, local churches, and philanthropic organisations. Regular attendees include the Department of Communities - Housing, Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo, Anglicare WA, Community Vision, the Pat Giles Centre, Uniting Care West, Foundation Housing, the Spiers Centre, HAND, Centrecare, Riverview Church, Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, Cornerstone Churches, The Pantry, Joondalup Rotary, Foodbank, the Underground Collaborative, No Limits, Share the Dignity, Orange Sky Laundry, Sacred Heart College, ECO Pay it Forward, a person with lived experience of homelessness, Hygge, and Street Chaplains.

For most of its history, the JWEHG has been focused on information sharing in order to better understand the nature of homelessness in the Northern Corridor. It has also prioritised scoping the services available to address needs and advocating for improvements to the homelessness service system in the region. The JWEHG is now engaging in a collaborative effort to attract funding and specialist homelessness services to the Northern Corridor.

Key achievements to date:

- To our knowledge, the JWEHG is the only regional action group formed as a result of the State Plan *Opening Doors to Address Homelessness 2010-2013* that is still operational. The JWEHG, then known as the Joondalup Wanneroo Regional Homelessness Action Group, finalised a Regional Homelessness Plan in 2011.
- The JWEHG renamed itself in 2018 to articulate its commitment to ending, rather than managing homelessness, in line with the goals of the WAAEH.
- The JWEHG has, since 2014, reported homelessness statistics to the North West Regional Managers Forum to raise awareness of homelessness in the region.
- The membership of both the City of Joondalup and City of Wanneroo to the JWEHG facilitated what is believed to be the first collaboration of two local councils on a plan to end homelessness in their regions.
- The JWEHG was integral to the development of the City of Joondalup/City of Wanneroo Regional Homelessness Plan 2018/19-2021/22, and the JWEHG was named in the Plan as a lead agency for implementation.

Next steps:

- The JWEHG will fulfil its role as a formalised interagency network of stakeholders in the northern suburbs to ensure the homelessness sector works effectively, efficiently and collaboratively.
- The JWEHG aims to improve understanding of the interrelationships between service providers in order to encourage increased communication and collaboration.
- The JWEHG will advocate for better responses to homelessness.
- The JWEHG is seeking to increase funding and services to address homelessness in the Northern Suburbs.



5. How are we tracking in terms of ending homelessness?

5.1 Our efforts, against the targets

The WAAEH Strategy articulates nine outcomes and related targets to be achieved by 2028:

1. Western Australia will have ended all forms of chronic homelessness including chronic rough sleeping.
2. No individual or family in Western Australia will sleep rough or stay in supported accommodation for longer than five nights before moving into an affordable, safe, decent, permanent home with the support required to sustain it.
3. The Western Australian rate of homelessness (including couch surfing and insecure tenure) will have been halved from its 2016 level.
4. The underlying causes that result in people becoming homeless have been met head-on, resulting in a reduction by more than half in the inflow of people and families into homelessness in any one year.
5. The current very large gap between the rate of Aboriginal homelessness and non-Aboriginal homelessness in Western Australia will be eliminated so that the rate of Aboriginal homelessness is no higher than the rate of non-Aboriginal homelessness.
6. Those experiencing homelessness and those exiting homelessness with physical health, mental health, and alcohol and other drug use dependence needs will have their needs addressed. This will result in a halving of mortality rates among those who have experienced homelessness and a halving in public hospital costs one year on for those exiting homelessness.
7. Those experiencing homelessness and those exiting homelessness will be supported to strengthen their economic, social, family and community connections leading to stronger well-being and quality of life outcomes. Employment among those experiencing homelessness will be significantly increased. Over half of those exiting homelessness will be employed within three years of moving into housing. Well-being and quality of life will equal those of the general population in the same timeframe.
8. A strong, collaborative and adaptive network of services and responses across the community services, health, mental health, justice and education sectors will exist working collectively to address the underlying causes of homelessness and meeting the needs of those who become homeless.
9. Measurement, accountability and governance mechanisms that are robust, transparent and open to external review will be operating, providing an on-going means for assessing progress in meeting the goals of Ending Homelessness in Western Australia in 10 years.

In the Table below, the nine targets have been summarised into priority areas, and some of the initiatives that are either the direct result of WAAEH action, or inspired by the WAAEH, are mapped next to each priority area to demonstrate the new actions that have been taken to address the target. (It should be noted that this was not an extensive process, and based on a sample of known projects only. We recognise that there are currently many other developments and initiatives, small and large, outside this scope. Also, some of the initiatives may not be strictly new, but rather may have been influenced and reshaped by the WAAEH Strategy).

Further information on how outcomes are tracking against the targets is available in the first *Homelessness Outcomes Measurement and Evaluation Framework: Dashboard* report available at www.endhomelessnesswa.com



Table 16: WAAEH Priority Areas

Priority area	WAAEH targets	Relevant emerging responses to support this
Rough sleeping/chronic homelessness	#1	Perth Zero Project Rough Sleeping Action Plan City of Perth's Homelessness Services Accreditation Process 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle Joondalup Wanneroo End Homelessness Group
Rapid, permanent housing	#2	20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle Working Group of Housing Supply Housing First in Perth Capacity Building Project City of Perth's Homelessness Services Accreditation Process
Support to sustain housing	#2	20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle
Addressing causes of homelessness to reduce inflow into homelessness	#4	HOME Stretch Working Group on Exiting Prison Working Group on Domestic Violence Youth Cohort Action Plan
Aboriginal homelessness	#5	Danjoo Koorliny: Walking together towards everyone having a place to sleep and call home
Health needs addressed	#6	
Financial/employment needs addressed	#7	Home Stretch
Community and social needs addressed	#7	Home Stretch
Cross-sector, whole of community response and coordination	#8	Perth Zero Project Joondalup Wanneroo End Homelessness Group Youth Cohort Action Plan Rough Sleeping Action Plan Housing First in Perth Capacity Building Project City of Perth's Homelessness Services Accreditation Process The HOME Project 20 Lives 20 Homes Fremantle
Measurement, feedback loops and accountability to track progress	#9	Perth Zero Project Homelessness Week Lived Experience Group The HOME Project Co-design toolkit

Of course other innovative responses to ending homelessness have emerged in WA. Some may have developed outside the influence of the WAAEH. For others their existence may be partly attributed to the Strategy, or the flow on effects of other WAAEH initiatives, or have benefitted from the WAAEH bringing people together, creating opportunities for new projects to be established or to develop in a way that is more integrated with the ecosystem. It should also be noted that our focus here on 'new' or emerging initiatives is not intended to undermine the value of those well-established homelessness responses. Many Western Australian homelessness services and programs, the contributions of goodwill groups and informal networks that provide outreach and support to people experiencing homelessness, do provide the most fundamental supports for the homeless in WA, and are also evolving all the time in their own ways. Our focus on the 'new' is offered rather as an indication of the direction in which we are moving, collectively.

Since the WAAEH targets were set one year ago in mid-2018, a great many activities have emerged that will make a difference to many of the priority areas identified by the WAAEH (as well as priority areas identified by statistics - such as addressing domestic and family violence and homelessness in the youth cohort).



What is apparent from a cursory glance at Table 17 is that while there continues to be a focus on rough sleeping and ending chronic homelessness, at the same time efforts have been put into broadening out housing options and preventing inflows into homelessness. It is promising also to note that the WAAEH has put energy into improving cross-sector collaborations and expanding the coordination tools and collaboration opportunities available, which may prove highly effective, given what we know about homelessness and the importance of working together to create seamless responses. At the moment many of these initiatives are focused in the metropolitan area of WA, however the value of developing tools (actions plans, co-design toolkits, by-name lists etc.) is that unlike programs and services, they can be transferred (with capacity building) to regional and remote areas of the state relatively easily.

With a few of the targets - such as addressing Aboriginal homelessness, health needs, employment needs and community and social needs - there does not seem to be significant new investment, focus or development. While the need to address Aboriginal homelessness may be well understood and accepted, we now face the work of mapping out what effective engagement looks like and how Aboriginal people can lead their own homelessness responses. Other needs are not as obvious. For example there may be more of a need to expand our understanding of how to support a person once they have been housed. We think of 'wrap around support' as including, of course, mental health, health, drug and alcohol interventions, financial counselling. However, the lived experience consultation emphasised that need for social inclusion and belonging, through finding work, a purpose, hobbies, safe neighbourhoods and community participation - these sometimes simple and inexpensive interventions are essential for mapping a way forward for people who have experienced homelessness.

Taking a wider view, beyond the influence of WAAEH and its targets, Census statistics tell us that homelessness in WA will not end unless we address regional and remote homelessness; applying efforts and resources as willingly and comprehensively as we do in metropolitan areas. As we move forward this should guide how we build on and extend the current work being done.

The lived experience and practitioner voice reminds us that no matter how well our intentions and services are, we will not see an end to homelessness unless we can work flexibly to quickly solve the housing problem for every individual, and then stay with them until they are secure in their tenure, their community and their economic lives.

As explored in section two, the groups of people more likely to experience homelessness reflect the characteristics associated with known drivers of homelessness. For example, research links homelessness to mental health and substance use issues, trauma and experiences of domestic violence and interactions with the justice system ('individual antecedents') (Kaleveld, et al., 2018).

Unaffordable housing has perhaps been responsible for the broadening out of the homeless population in recent times, to include new categories such as homelessness in older Australians and family homelessness brought on by rental shortage or financial stress (Eardley, 2008). Western Australians experiencing relatively common life transitions, such as older people going through a relationship or marriage breakdown, now face more difficulty finding affordable housing options. For this risk group, their needs are relatively straightforward and housing affordability strategies most likely can stand alone as an adequate solution. Continuing to source new, flexible ways to access housing options quickly is an important part of ending homelessness in WA.

For many people experiencing homelessness, the journeys into homelessness are characterised by exposure to violence and trauma (at times stemming back to childhood), a lack of any safe relationships or attachments in their lives, and often multiple physical and mental health issues, including dependence on drugs or alcohol (Robinson, 2014; Mackelprang et al., 2014; O'Donnell et al., 2014; Buhrich et al., 2000). People also find themselves at risk of homelessness as a result of exclusion from the labour market, due to lack of education and skills, discrimination, or the circumstances of poverty that reinforce social exclusion (Flatau et al., 2015).

Some of the antecedents to homelessness, such as trauma and poverty, can be deeply entrenched and passed through generations. People who face homelessness have often been excluded from more than one of the domains of social life - for example the labour market, their families and friendship networks, and community life - which all need to be addressed. Any system-wide response to homelessness must consider the diversity of pathways into homelessness and the fact that multiple risk factors intersect and compound (Kaleveld et al., 2018). As mentioned above, feedback from the lived experience groups highlights people's need for belonging and community, and the essential pieces of the puzzle include training and employment. This is not just a wish list, but is absolutely integral to ending homelessness. It is important that in WA the whole social service sector can be brought into the drive to end homelessness. The work of the WAAEH over the past 12 months indicates that their role as coordinators, facilitators, bringing people together to discuss and share ideas and networks provides an ideal infrastructure to make this happen. The State Government's Homelessness Strategy, and the processes behind it such as the Supporting Communities Forum which engages a wide range of stakeholders is also an example of best practice that can help connect all the pieces together.

Solving homelessness will always be in parts both simple and complex. People experiencing homelessness need secure accommodation that leads to permanent housing. To ensure a permanent exit from homelessness however, the underlying causes that have led a person to experience homelessness also need to be addressed. In WA our service system is becoming more focused on this, with increasingly sophisticated solutions. We believe the presence of well-considered strategic planning and direction, and regular activities to bring parts of the sector together - as the WA State Government and WAAEH are doing - is key. Already we are seeing agencies working together to provide a more coordinated response. We have seen this occurring for example at Pulse meetings, and when people gather to establish the Perth Zero Project, and local government beginning to develop local responses.



5.2 Future leadership

Based on a summary of what is emerging in the service system it is clear there is a growing momentum in WA in terms of:

- enhancing the sophistication of our responses to end homelessness;
- developing technological solutions that can enhance coordination between services;
- nurturing links between personnel working in diverse services - such as through regular Pulse meetings - that are leading to better understanding of the service system and better coordination;
- enhancing our measurement tools and strategies so that more real time data will be available, including linked data and data on inflows and outflows, alongside other ways to track the dynamic and complex drivers of homelessness;
- galvanising political will, both within government and outside of government, to organise resources and strategies towards ending homelessness, via the WA Alliance to End Homelessness, as well as the State government's 10 Year-Strategy to End Homelessness.

This points to more inputs, potentially more resources, and a sector committed to collaborate and innovate.

In terms of innovation there are some who express caution about a forever evolving service system. We cannot invest in innovation at the expense of current programs and initiatives. Sustaining and recognising good work makes sense not only because of the significant initial investment, but because of the relationships formed and relative efficiency of mature programs.

Collaboration is also a nuanced concept. The lived experience voice and practitioner consultation indicated that systemic barriers persist. Even agencies that are in theory working together to end homelessness, contain rigidities that prevent individuals from solving their own housing issues. Speaking with individuals who have journeyed through the system provides insight about the rigid and sometimes non-sensical ways that systems operate, which may not be obvious to those in policy or service design. This calls for a regular, ongoing lived experience voice that can inform service design, how policy is operationalised, and partnerships between agencies.

While this report cannot be a comprehensive review of the whole sector, is it only one information source. As we move towards our goal of ending homelessness it is important to reflect together regularly and in many ways. We are getting better at seeking a diversity of voices (e.g., the Aboriginal voice, the voice of young people and the voice of lived experience), bringing co-design processes into our systems and facilitating cross-sector forums. Opportunities for regular informal conversations with people outside our immediate networks is as important as data sharing and statistics, for understanding where we are at. The important idea is that complex systems require multiple feedback loops. Then people need to be enabled and empowered to respond to that information, not only in shaping policy directions, but at the touch point of service delivery where individual clients seek an end to their homelessness.



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