

Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

National Homelessness Conference 2018
Ending Rough Sleeping: What works?

7 August 2018

The Policy Context



Affordability, access and choice

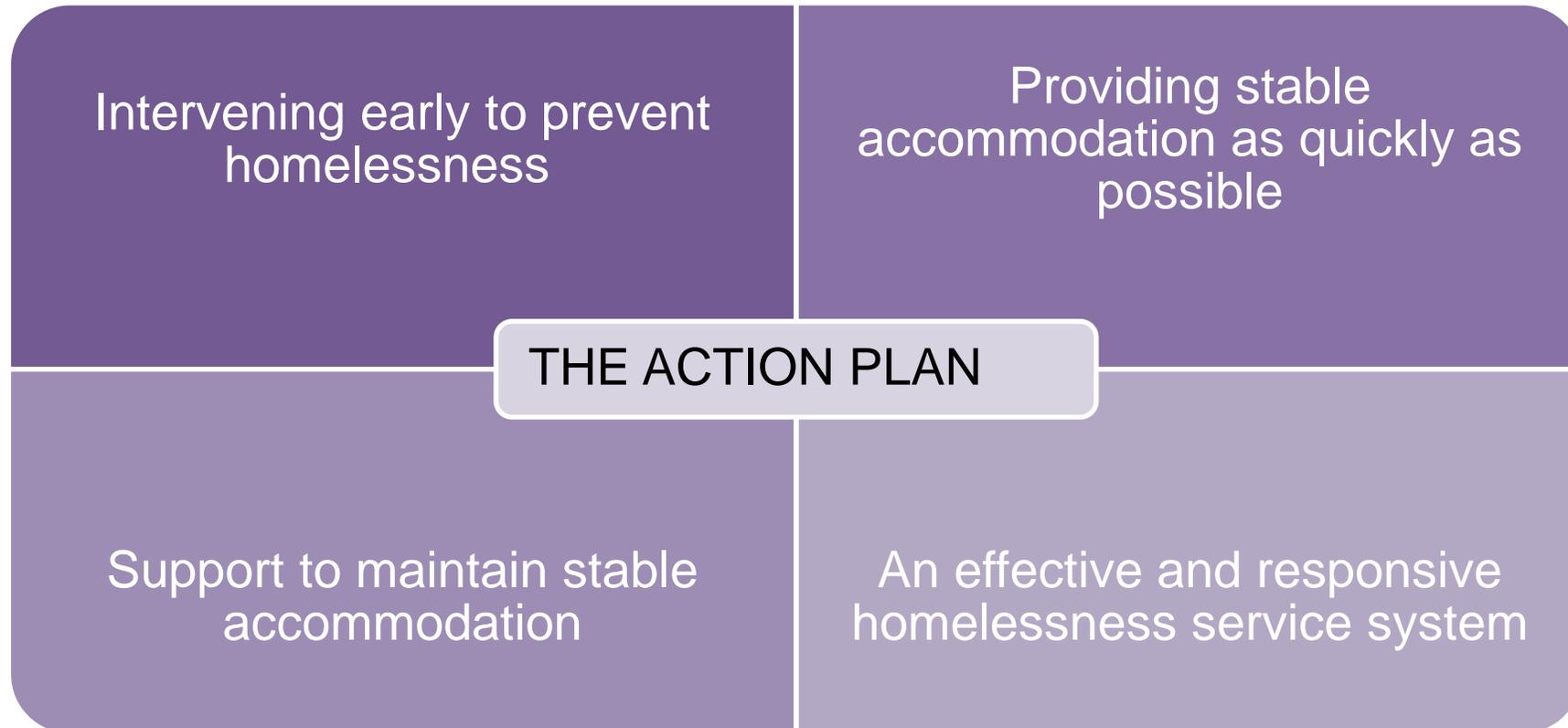


**Victoria's homelessness and
rough sleeping action plan**



The Action Plan

Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan provides a framework for reducing the incidence and impacts of rough sleeping within the context of four key themes guiding broader homelessness reforms in Victoria.



Current responses to address rough sleeping across Victoria

Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

1 August 2018



Call for funding submissions: Funded organisations are invited to submit proposals to deliver the services under the Action plan.

Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan – funding opportunities

In January 2018, the Andrews Government announced over \$45 million of initiatives as part of the Action Plan. The Action Plan provides a framework for reducing the incidence and impact of rough sleeping in Victoria within the context of four key themes:

- intervening early to prevent homelessness
- providing stable accommodation as quickly as possible
- support to maintain stable accommodation
- an effective and responsive homelessness and support service system.

New services for rough sleepers

As part of the Action Plan, the government is investing \$17 million to establish new services in the areas of highest incidence of rough sleeping throughout the state – three outer suburban and five regional/rural locations. These are Dandenong, Frankston, Maroondah, Geelong, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Bacchus Marsh and Bendigo.

Two years of funding is available to suitably qualified Community Service Organisations (CSOs) to establish the following new suite of services:

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Future directions

Intervening Early to Prevent Homelessness

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will intervene earlier and more rapidly to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, or minimise the duration or impact of homelessness when it occurs. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

What will we do in the future?

Explore ways to provide people who are sleeping rough with more immediate access to help

People who are recently homeless and sleeping rough are often unaware of how to access help.

We will explore ways to harness different technologies as a means of providing people who are sleeping rough with more immediate access to services, including after-hours. As part of this work, we will also examine ways in which to acknowledge and engage public concern for people who are vulnerable and sleeping rough.

Work with allied services regarding client referrals to specialist homelessness services

Allied services such as jobactive employment assistance providers may be 'first to know' that a client is recently homeless and sleeping rough. As such, through timely proactive referral to specialist homelessness services, these providers have a key role to play in facilitating early intervention.

We will canvass opportunities to improve referral processes to ensure that people are referred to specialist homelessness services at the earliest opportunity.

Expand early intervention initiatives targeting people exiting settings that are known pathways to rough sleeping

Through routine screening coupled with dedicated pathways to housing and support, we can prevent people being released or discharged from settings such as prisons, youth justice centres, inpatient health facilities and out-of-home care into homelessness and rough sleeping.

We will continue to build on current reforms such as the expansion of assessment and planning in prisons to lead to sustainable housing outcomes and the development of dedicated housing options for young people leaving out-of-home care or the youth justice system to bolster early intervention for those at risk of chronic homelessness and rough sleeping.

Future directions

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will intervene earlier and more rapidly to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, or minimise the duration or impact of homelessness when it occurs. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

- providing support and assistance to tenants in private rental to avoid housing breakdowns and evictions
- prioritising those most vulnerable to homelessness including people exiting institutions
- assist people to avoid homelessness by providing more flexibility in the way funding is used to meet their needs
- improving our partnerships with agencies who are often 'first to know' when people are at risk of homelessness.



Providing support and assistance to tenants in private rental to avoid housing breakdowns and evictions

Prioritising those most vulnerable to homelessness including people existing in institutions

Assist people to avoid homelessness by providing more flexibility in the way funding is used to meet their needs

Improving our partnerships with agencies who are often 'first to know' when people are at risk of homelessness

Future directions

Providing Stable Accommodation as Quickly as Possible

In the context of the broader redevelopment of the specialist homelessness service system, we will seek to provide appropriate accommodation and support options to resolve crisis and avoid ongoing homelessness. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

What will we do in the future?

Continue to grow the supply of long-term housing for people experiencing homelessness

We will explore ways to build on commitments made in Homes for Victorians to expand the supply of long-term housing options for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping, including the \$1 billion Social Housing Growth Fund and the \$341 million investment to renew and expand public housing stock. For people sleeping rough, we will particularly focus on the creation of one-bedroom properties. This could be achieved through a range of models such as dispersed or cluster-style crisis accommodation that provides an environment conducive to minimising the duration, impact and recurrence of homelessness, supportive housing models targeted at people experiencing chronic homelessness and innovative accommodation models for those with complex needs.

To contribute to housing supply further the Commonwealth Government needs to urgently resolve the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and make funds available to the sector to grow social housing.

Future directions

In the context of the broader redevelopment of the specialist homelessness service system, we will seek to provide appropriate accommodation and support options to resolve crisis and avoid ongoing homelessness. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

- using the evidence of 'rapid rehousing' approaches to ensure people receive appropriate accommodation and support to resolve crisis and avoid risk of further homelessness
- providing support packages that are flexible in the intensity and duration required to assist each individual
- utilising the private rental market through the use of incentives and support
- making pathways to economic participation more accessible to ensure people are financially able to maintain their housing choices.

'You're worried about where you're going to be in the next couple of weeks, because I'll get kicked out of here by then. Am I going to be on the streets or what's happening? I try and calm down but it's kind of out of my control.' (client).



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Making pathways to economic participation more accessible to ensure people are financially able to maintain their housing choices

Future directions

Support to Maintain Stable Accommodation

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will ensure a Housing First approach is delivered to ensure people experiencing chronic homelessness or who are at risk of doing so become resilient to future housing loss. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

What will we do in the future?

Consider ways to bolster tenancy support for people with histories of chronic homelessness

The withdrawal or scaling back of tenancy support can present a risk for people with histories of chronic homelessness and rough sleeping who may delay seeking help until it is too late to prevent housing breakdown and who are also at high risk of tenancy abandonment at times of personal crises.

Complementing Tenancy Plus, we will explore options to deliver a flexible longer term support response for tenants with histories of chronic homelessness and rough sleeping across all tenure types – including private rental – as a further measure to prevent recurring homelessness and rough sleeping. This type of tenancy support could be delivered via telephone, assertive outreach and/or brief interventions to enable swift re-engagement of vulnerable clients.

Provide tailored support to groups who are vulnerable to chronic homelessness

Rough sleeping is experienced by a diverse range of individuals and groups within the Victorian community, all of whom may require modified forms and levels of support to successfully negotiate and sustain a pathway out of homelessness. We will explore opportunities to build on current best practice approaches to ensure support programs are tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of different client groups and where possible, take these to greater scale.

Future directions

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will ensure a Housing First approach is delivered to ensure people experiencing chronic homelessness or who are at risk of doing so become resilient to future housing loss. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

- improving the accessibility of our entry points, and offering outreach services where and when people are most receptive to receive assistance
- assisting people to end their homelessness experience through support services that are integrated, flexible and multi-disciplinary
- offering permanent housing with support that is flexible to respond to people's changing needs over time
- connecting people into their community once housed to prevent social isolation.

'We must provide those sleeping rough with the support they require not only to resolve their immediate crisis, but also to prevent their return to homelessness and rough sleeping in the future.'



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Connecting people into their community once housed to prevent social isolation

Future directions

An effective and Responsive Homelessness Service System

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will ensure a coordinated, sustainable and informed sector is enabled to work flexibly with each individual to resolve and prevent future homelessness. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

Continue to support improved service coordination at the local level
Building on the success of service coordination efforts in Melbourne's central business district over the past 18 months, we will explore opportunities to apply this approach in other geographic locations across the state to facilitate coordination of housing, health and other support services to better meet the needs of people who are sleeping rough.

Explore opportunities to facilitate more timely information sharing
Coordinated service delivery is underpinned by integrated information management. Essential client information must be shared between service providers in a way that is consistent, timely, up-to-date and respects the privacy of the client.

Learning from work to establish a family violence information sharing scheme, we will investigate a similar co-ordinated approach for people sleeping rough. This will enable opportunities for a common data set to ensure that key data is consistently collected, reviewed and maintained. This will be supported by clear privacy protocols to strike an appropriate balance between protecting the confidentiality of the client and ensuring service providers have access to the information required to operate efficiently and effectively to best support their clients.

Future directions

In the context of the broader reform of the specialist homelessness service system, we will ensure a coordinated, sustainable and informed sector is enabled to work flexibly with each individual to resolve and prevent future homelessness. We will look at ways to achieve this by:

- sharing data with service providers to better understand trends and work towards outcomes
- streamlining the entry and assessment process to better enable people to receive tailored responses that meet their needs
- ensuring the homelessness sector continues to build on integration and collaboration opportunities with the wider social services sector, voluntary groups and the community
- supporting the development of a workforce transition strategy to ensure staff and agencies are empowered with knowledge and support
- building upon our evidence base of best practice and welcoming consumers to add to our knowledge

Sharing data with service providers to better understand trends and work towards outcomes

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Next Steps

We have established a Homelessness Advisory Committee and four working groups.

The Homelessness Advisory Committee and working groups have begun examining practical and tangible options that progress the Action Plan's key directions

Work will culminate in a Future Directions Position paper to strengthen homelessness responses in Victoria

Questions

- For further information on the *Victorian Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan*, please visit:
<https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/towards-home>