

# MC4 Commissioning and funding services to deliver the best outcomes

Shaya Nettle and Rhubee Neale, Toward Home Alliance

Jessie Robinson, Homelessness NSW

Clare Rowley, SA Housing Trust

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Shaya Nettle and Rhubee Neale, Toward Home Alliance

## **Rhubee Neale**

Anmatjere Arrernte woman

Artist and Advocate

*\*singer*

## **Kylie Wanganeen**

Kaurna woman

Aboriginal Homeless Support Practitioner

Wardli-Ana

Toward Home Alliance

Baptist Care SA

*\*song writer and guitar*

## **Ronald Rankine**

Ngarrindjeri man

Aboriginal Homeless Support Practitioner

Wardli-Ana

Toward Home Alliance

Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS)

*\*guitar*



# **Walk Towards Home**

Sometimes life doesn't  
Always turn out that way  
Obstacles we have to jump  
Then you find yourself  
With no support  
Sleeping where you can  
Lay your head

Found support  
Found my feet  
Found my way towards home

Got my home  
Found a purpose  
Found a place to call my own

Found support  
Found my feet  
Found my way towards home

The sunshine  
The darkness fades  
I see a future from now on

**Marni naa pudni**



# **Re-imagining the homelessness service system, through alliancing**

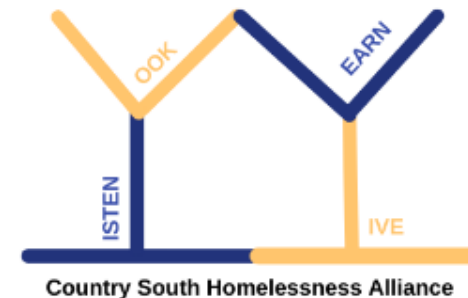
**Shaya Nettle**  
Alliance Senior Manager  
Toward Home Alliance

**Rhubee Neale**  
Artist and Advocate

# Alliancing in South Australia



- 2021 system reform
- A collective impact approach for tackling 'socially wicked' issues
- 75 individual services (70% of the sector), consolidated into five Alliance contracts
- 5 Alliances (\$55m of services): four geographical homelessness Alliances, and one statewide domestic and family violence Alliance



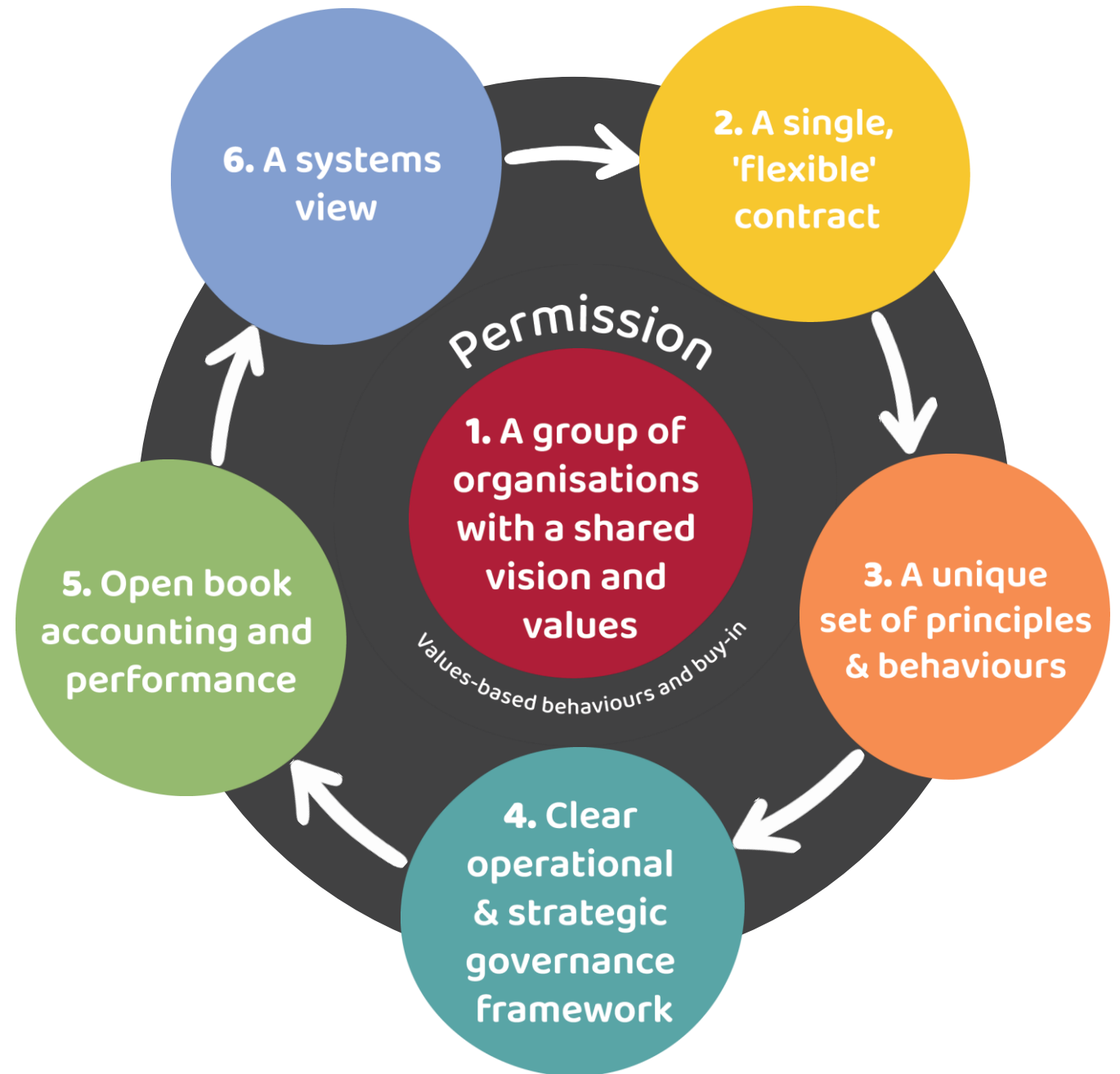


**Working together, to prevent  
and end homelessness.**

*THA MISSION*

**THA Values:** Collaboration, Integrity, Courage, Creativity, Trust, Respect

# What is alliancing?





# 1. A group of organisations with a shared vision and values



Aboriginal Family Support Services  
*Together with the community*



baptist  
care sa

Hutt St Centre

end homelessness



LUTHERAN  
CARE

MISSION  
AUSTRALIA



Sonder  
Celebrating 30 years

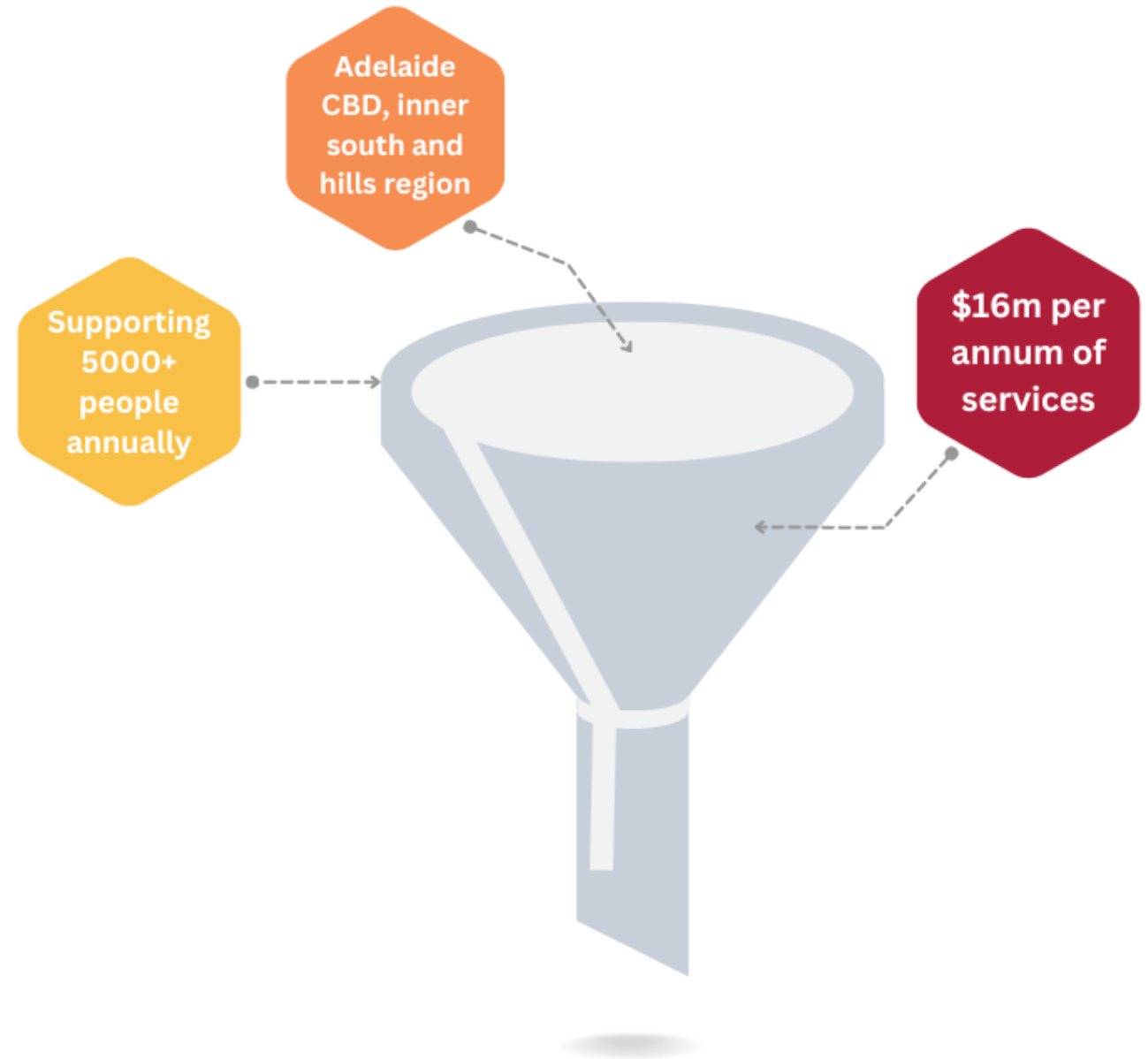


Supported by  
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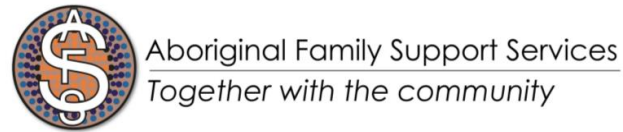
St Vincent de Paul Society  
*good works*

## 2. A single, 'flexible' contract...



Resource reallocation and service model adjustment  
for greatest impact

... With a service model focused on preventing, diverting and resolving homelessness



ACCESS

PREVENT

DIVERT

RESOLVE

WARDLI-ANA

WELLBEING

YOUTH ACCOMMODATION

ADULT ACCOMMODATION

TENANCY SUPPORT

# Wardli-ana, and THA's commitment to Aboriginal funding parity



Wardli-ana is THA's Aboriginal specific service, led by Aboriginal Family Support Services (AFSS) and Baptist Care SA.

- 24% of people receiving support from THA are Aboriginal; therefore, 24% or more of THA's case management funding is allocated to Wardli-ana.
- 3 out of 4 Aboriginal people accessing THA choose to be supported by Wardli-ana



# Wardli-ana, and THA's commitment to Aboriginal funding parity



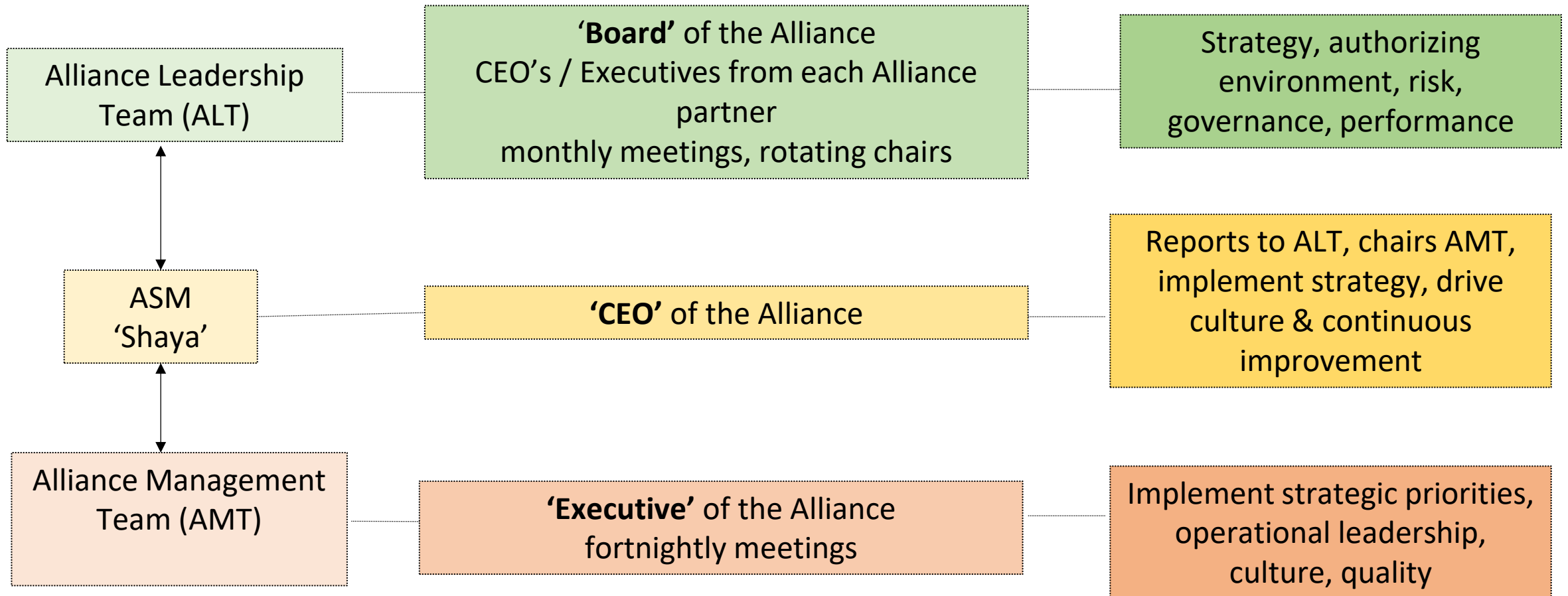
Payadlu.. 'lets listen and learn together'

### 3. A unique set of principles and behaviours



- No-blame culture
  - Best for client/community outcome decision making
- Shared risk, shared successes, shared problem solving
  - Open book accounting
- Active and intentional resource sharing (hard and soft resources)
  - Consensus decision making

# 4. Clear operational & strategic governance framework





# 5. Open book accounting and performance



*“Festooning is simply a sign that honeybees are working together on the comb”*

- 100% open financials and performance across all partners and parts of the alliance
- The Alliancing structure naturally drives increased service accountability
- Shared wins and losses; driving a transparent and collaborative response to under-performing areas
- **Lateral peer and collegial support and intra-organisational problem-solving; motivation to continually lean in and lift up service quality (and each other)**



## 6. A systems view



An opportunity for innovation:

- reallocating to respond to system trends and pressures
- trialing new service models and innovations
- collective advocacy

# Innovative, Alliance-focused responses



**Brief Intervention Pilot ('Homeless Support'):** service demand significantly exceeded capacity, leading to a growing waitlist.

## **Outcomes:**

- Brief intervention model trialed
- 40% of the people on the waitlist resolved their episode of homelessness;
- People on the 'waitlist' now receive support through the brief intervention project.

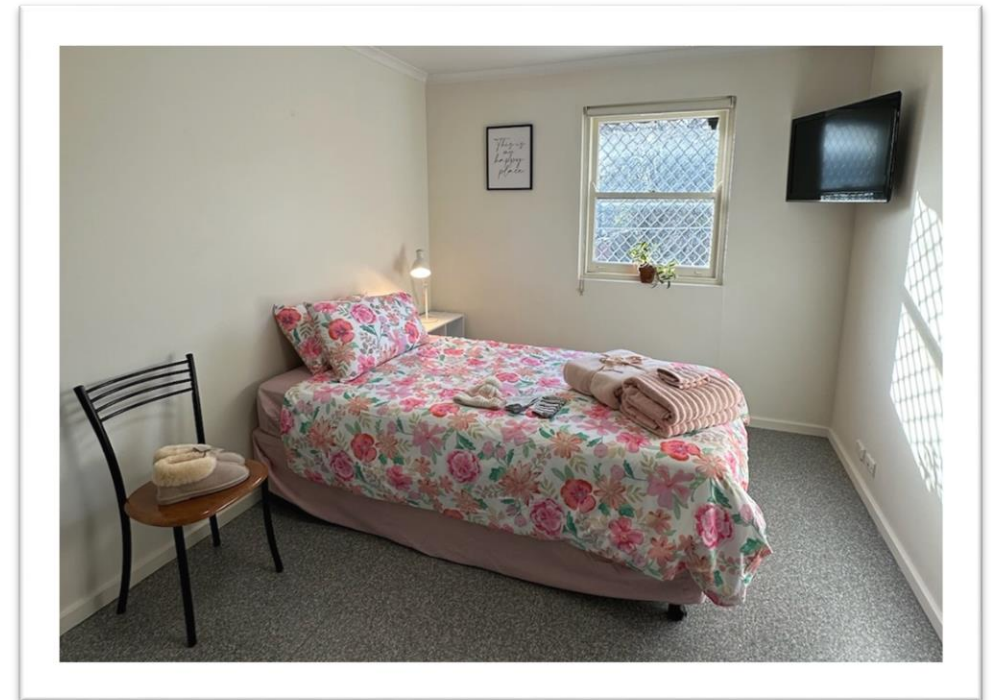
# Innovative, Alliance-focused responses



**Wright Place:** a rapid rehousing response for women.

## Findings:

- Successful diversion, rapid rehousing;
- Existing resources and relationships (Baptist Care SA contributed the building at no cost);
- Place-based, trauma informed and person-centred case management is vital;
- Safe and supported housing provides an opportunity for connection and recovery.



*A bedroom set up for an incoming Wright Place client*

# 'A lovely place to call home'



Personal Wellbeing (Satisfaction) Index (PWI) - % difference between entry and exit*						
standard of living	health	achievements in life	personal relationships	feeling safe	feeling part of community	future security
324%	263%	310%	612%	247%	612%	726%



*'Full of light and laughter'*

*'You forget what it's like to be treated like a human being'*

*'Staying here took so much stress away – I can now imagine a lifestyle not impacted by fear and panic. I can see a future; I couldn't before.'*

*A tattoo of a phoenix rising from the ashes – a metaphor of a tenant's experience at Wright Place.*

*\*(based on responses from 8 Wright Place tenants)*

# Is alliancing working..?

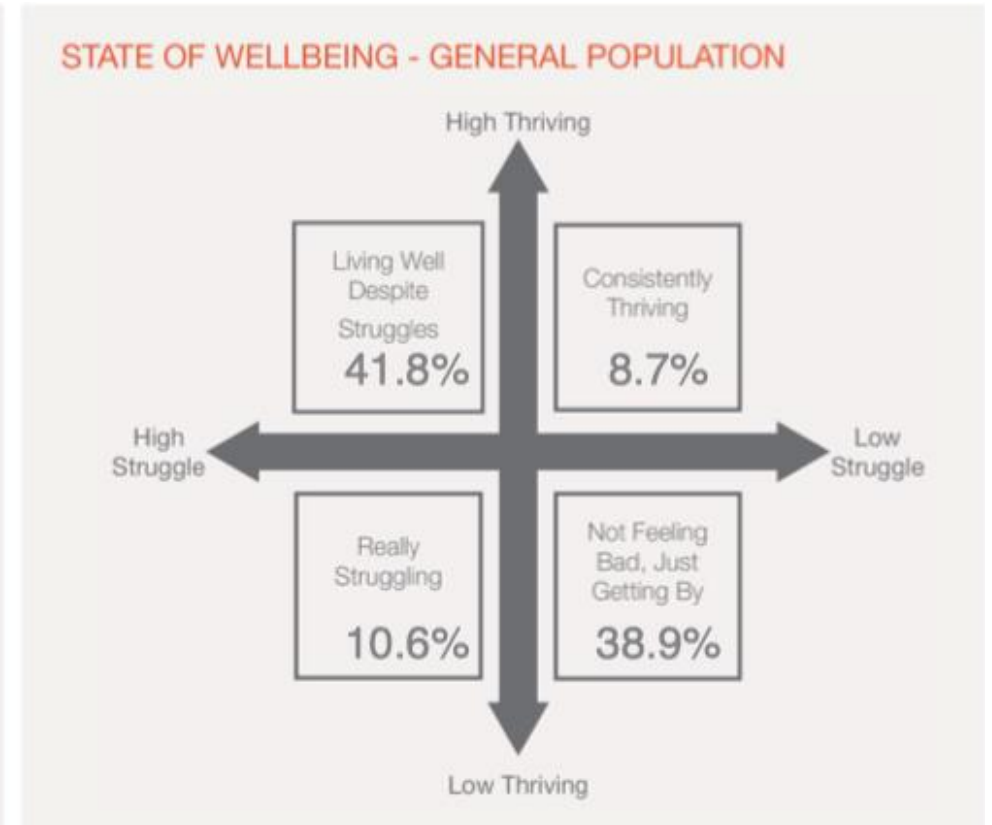
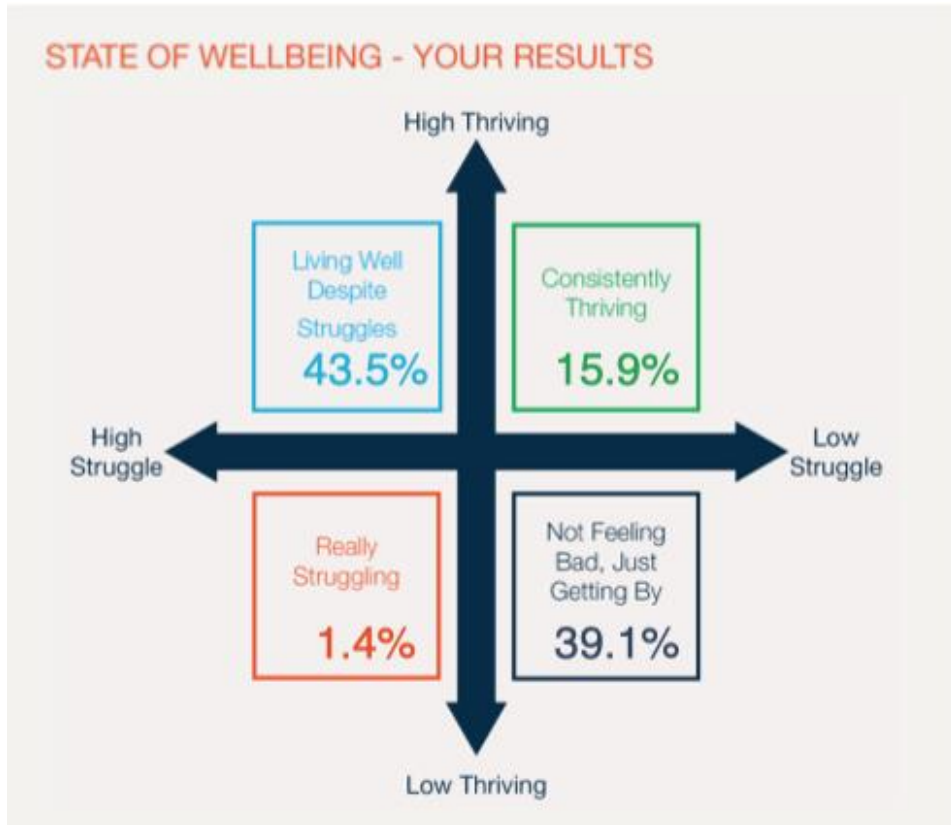


## PERMAH (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishment, and Health) Survey results

THA Workforce →

### Survey outcomes:

- 71% response rate
- 86% of staff identified as women
- 15% of staff identified as Aboriginal





# Is alliancing working..?



*THA staff at Closing the Gap Day, March 2024*



# Is alliancing working..?



*THA teams at the NAIDOC week march, July 2024*

# Generosity and united sector leadership



**Paya'adlu**  
(THA co-located city hub)

***'let's listen and learn  
together'***







# Rhubee Neale 'my story'...



## Women's experiences

- We give all our lives to community, family, friends
- We never really think about ourselves
- When it comes to us needing support, we find our glass is empty and look around and there is no support.

# Rhubee Neale

## ‘my story’...



### My journey

- As an empty nester, I decided to take a leap of faith and move from the Northern Territory to South Australia...
- I felt it was time to pursue my art and music.... But when I arrived I thought ‘what have I done??’ and began couch surfing, and not knowing what’s next...
- I started by phoning the Toward Home Alliance number to see if I can get help... they did an intake; I then got a support letter from Nunkuwarrin Yunti.

# Rhubee Neale 'my story'...



## My journey

- I then met Aimee (THA Wardli-ana case manager), who got me into emergency accommodation (motel)
- Aimee then introduced me to Carrington Cottages (transitional accommodation provider) and I went into their accommodation.
- Then Wright Place opened – (Toward Home Alliance's service for women over 45)

# Rhubee Neale 'my story'...



- Karen then asked me if I would be interested in being a mentor for the women, as caretaker!
- I was the first resident and Care Taker!
- As Care Taker, I supported the women by being a point of contact and support for the women, role model that there is hope after trauma. Plus art classes with the women.. !

## **The Wright Place to call home**

A women-only crisis accommodation centre has opened in Wright Street, so CityMag visited to learn more about how it makes tenants feel at home.



# Rhubee Neale

## ‘my story’...

- ‘we just need the right resources and support’
- ‘we just need to be seen and heard... because we are never seen!’
- ‘and to be recognised and valued for our contribution’

And out of this beautiful place, I finally got my own place..!





# Rhubee Neale 'my story'...

- And then I was asked to do a mural for the Alliance by Mel!
- It is my first Desert Rhubees Creation mural...
- A historical moment!!
- (If you want to know the story, contact THA)





# Thank you!

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**Rhubee Neale**

Artist and Advocate


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*Background artwork by Warlpiri artist Maureen Hudson Nampijinpa*



# MC4 Commissioning and funding services to deliver the best outcomes

Jessie Robinson, Homelessness NSW



# It takes relationships and resources

## *A system-wide approach to commissioning homelessness services*

**Jessie Robinson**  
Aboriginal Project Officer  
Homelessness NSW  
[jessie@homelessnessnsw.org.au](mailto:jessie@homelessnessnsw.org.au)

**Australian Homelessness Conference**

14 August 2024





# Acknowledgement of Country







We advocate for a whole-of-system change to end homelessness.

We contribute to homelessness policy through advocacy, media campaigns, and contributing to research.

We build skills, knowledge and networks to improve outcomes for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.



# Commissioning Report Background

**SPRC** UNSW  
Social Policy  
Research Centre



Commissioning Homelessness Services:  
A Review of Possible Approaches

A report prepared for:

**Homelessness NSW**

December 2023

Shona Bates and Natasha Cortis

- In 2023, the NSW Government announced a two-year extension of existing contracts for Specialist Homelessness Services and the Homeless Youth Assistance Program, extending them to 30 June 2026.
- DCJ announced that it will collaborate with stakeholders to shape the strategic direction for a new five-year contracting period starting 1 July 2026.
- Homelessness NSW commissioned a report with the Social Policy Research Centre in UNSW to identify and explores issues and challenges to consider in developing an effective approach to commissioning, contracting, and procuring homelessness services.

# Reflecting on Going Home Staying Home

## Background

In 2014, the NSW Government launched the '*Going Home Staying Home*' reforms aimed at improving homelessness services. The forms involved a major overhaul of the contracting arrangements for homelessness services. The total budget for these services was redistributed through a two-stage competitive tendering process. This process, however, was compressed into a very short time frame.

## Challenges

- *Readiness and Preparedness*: There was significant variation in the sector's readiness to respond to the new tendering process.
- *Partnerships*: The ability to form partnerships was crucial for responding to the tenders. Smaller services that failed to partner with larger providers found it challenging to compete.

## Outcomes:

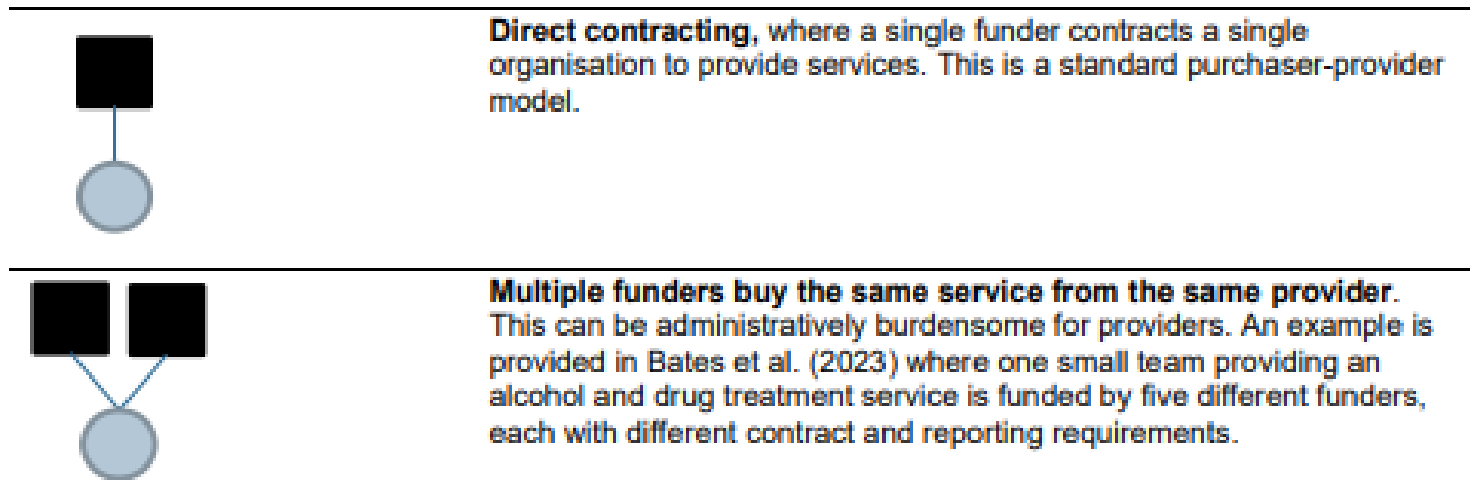
- *Reduction in Contracts*: The total number of contracts issued was more than halved.
- *Sector Relations*: Many services reported that the changes undermined cooperative relations within the sector.
- *Client Disruption*: The reforms were also disruptive for clients, impacting the continuity of care and support.
- *Trust in Government*: The process led to a decline in trust towards the government, with the sector remaining highly cautious about future commissioning.

# Models of commissioning

- Commission can be designed in multiple forms, depending on the goals of the project, the nature of the services needed, and the available providers
- Key considerations include efficiency, effectiveness, and the ability to offer a choice of services,



# Models 1 and 2- Direct contracting



- Direct contracting, where a government contracts services directly from a provider, creates a clear purchaser-provider relationship.
- This model is often seen as beneficial by governments because the model enhances opportunities to demonstrate accountability, increase efficiency through competition, and enable innovation and responsiveness to service users

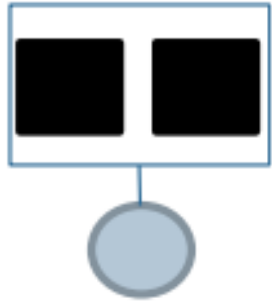


# Models 1 and 2- Direct contracting

**Table 1 Direct contracting: strengths and weaknesses**

Service providers		Clients
+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunity to have a direct relationship with government with the potential to shape the way services are delivered</li><li>• Chance to respond to new opportunities</li><li>• Opportunity to be involved in new pilot programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Direct contracting may be quicker for funders and providers to establish, so may provide quicker access to services than more collaborative models</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potentially high transaction costs for the provider in terms of responding to tenders, reporting to multiple funders, and renewing contracts</li><li>• Lack of power in negotiating as individual providers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Direct contracting may contribute to the fragmentation of services or overlaps, when not coordinated with other services and systems</li><li>• Direct contracts are typically time-bound and cessation of a contract can disrupt service continuity in terms of staff retention, client recruitment and retention, and relationships with funders and other partners in the service system</li></ul>

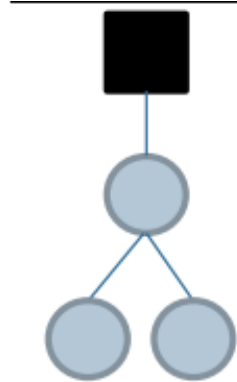
# Model 3- Co-Commissioning



**Co-commissioning** (also referred to as joint commissioning and collaborative commissioning). This involves multiple funders jointly commissioning services. In practice, the 'co-' occurs on a spectrum across the commissioning cycle and may involve strategic planning or the co-procurement of services. It aims to improve coordination among funders and streamline relationships for providers.

- When multiple funders jointly commission services, it's called collaborative or co-commissioning. This involves working together at various stages of the commissioning cycle, from strategic planning to co-procurement.
- The level of collaboration varies, with some funders aligning early on, while others join only during specific stages, like procurement.
- Strengths- Reduced administrative costs for services of reporting, improves service integration for clients.
- Disadvantages- May take time to establish the arrangement, impacting reporting requirements for services and service access for clients.

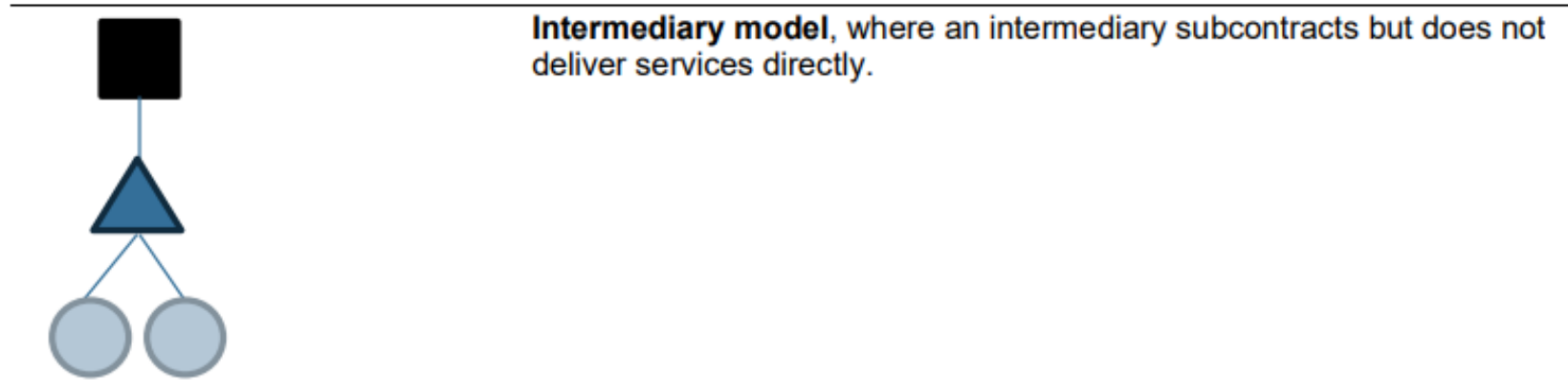
# Model 4- Prime Provider Model



**Prime provider model**, where the public sector contracts a lead (prime) provider who delivers some services itself and also subcontracts others to deliver services on its behalf. The prime provider has oversight of any subcontracted services leaving the funder having oversight of only one contract.

- In this model, the public sector contracts with a lead or prime provider, which is responsible for delivering some services directly and subcontracting other services to additional providers.
- Strengths-Subcontractors may be engaged more flexibly, allowing for tailored and responsive service delivery. The prime provider can strengthen its market position, potentially leading to more influence and stability., and Clients may have access to a broader range of providers, increasing their options.
- Disadvantages- Requires robust financial and governance systems to manage, the prime provider bears full responsibility for the outcomes of subcontracted services

# Model 5- Intermediary Model



- In this model an intermediary subcontracts but does not deliver services directly.
- Strengths- Service needs and priorities become developed through commissioning process, services contracted locally, potentially more relational form of contracting and allows service alignment. Less fragmentation of services.
- Disadvantages- One step removed from funder which can create lag between funding decisions and implementation. This can lead to potential service interruptions for clients.



# Principles of Commissioning and Conclusion

- Homelessness NSW will be advocating for future commissioning processes for SHSs to be underpinned by:
  1. **Putting Relationships First:** Focus on working well with others. Strong teamwork leads to better results.
  2. **Letting Communities Lead:** Involve the community in decision-making to ensure services meet their real needs.
  3. **Embedding Learning:** Keep learning and adapting to improve the commissioning process as needs change.
  4. **Investing in People:** Provide enough resources and support to ensure successful planning and collaboration

# MC4 Commissioning and funding services to deliver the best outcomes

Clare Rowley, South Australian Housing Trust

# Working in partnership to develop and implement the SA Homelessness Outcomes Framework



Government  
of South Australia

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SA Housing Trust

# SA Homelessness Outcomes Framework

**Aspiration statement:**  
*A future where homelessness  
 is prevented or resolved.*

**Version 1**  
 August 2023

## Aboriginal outcomes\*

**Aboriginal people have equitable outcomes.**

### Respect and understanding

*Aboriginal people are respected, understood and culturally safe within services, their home and their community.*

- Aboriginal people feel their family and culture is respected, understood and held at the centre of their support.

### Culturally safe supports

*Supports for Aboriginal people are culturally safe.*

- Aboriginal people receive support that is tailored to their individual and community needs.
- Aboriginal workers and their cultural obligations are respected and supported.
- Services actively grow their Aboriginal workforce.
- Aboriginal people are provided with culturally safe temporary accommodation when they need to travel from Country.

### Culturally appropriate outcomes

*Outcomes for Aboriginal people are culturally appropriate.*

- Aboriginal people have housing that meets their cultural needs.
- Aboriginal people return to Country or their community of belonging.
- Aboriginal people have equitable outcomes compared to non-Aboriginal people.

## Safety

**People are safe.**

### Personal safety

*People are safe from all forms of violence and abuse.*

- People feel safe.
- People are safe when accessing services.
- People are safe in their home.
- People are safe in their community.
- Children and their families are safe in their home and community.

### Domestic and family violence

*People have their specific domestic and family violence related safety needs met.*

- People have information, support and services to improve their safety in relation to their DFV experience.

### Inclusion and diversity

*People with disability, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, young people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are safe and supported.*

- People and families with unique needs receive the additional supports they require.

\*Co-design will continue to refine and iterate the outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

## Housing

**People have a place to call home.**

### Prevention

*People are prevented from experiencing homelessness.*

- People are not at-risk of homelessness.
- People are prevented from experiencing first-time, repeat or long-term homelessness.
- People are prevented from sleeping rough.
- People do not experience homeless after leaving government services.
- People are supported to move on from homelessness.

### Appropriate housing

*People have a home that is appropriate for their circumstances.*

- People live in properties that are safe and suitable.
- People live in properties appropriate to their household size and composition.
- People have affordable housing.
- People feel satisfied with the support to achieve a housing outcome.

### Sustainable housing

*People can make a home without needing to move.*

- People have security of tenure.
- People are sustaining their housing.

## Wellbeing and support

**People are well and living connected lives.**

### Community connection

*People are connected with people, culture and community.*

- People have networks and supports.
- People have belonging and shared understanding.
- People have strong relationships within and outside their community.

### Education, training and employment

*People are participating in their communities through study, work or volunteering appropriate to their circumstances.*

- Children are engaged in early childhood education.
- Children are engaged in school
- Adults and young people are engaged in learning.
- Adults and young people are employed.
- People are engaged in education, training or employment.

### Wellbeing

*People are healthy, well and thriving.*

- People have good physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- People are financially secure.
- People can find support if they need it.
- People are satisfied with their lives.

## Underpinning principles

- Person-centred and trauma-informed
- Committed to Aboriginal cultural safety
- Child and family-focused
- Respectful of diversity
- Empowering lived experience
- Delivering accessible, flexible and assertive support
- Evidence-informed
- Growing sector capacity and capability
- Defined by collaboration and partnership
- Efficiency, effectiveness and transparency



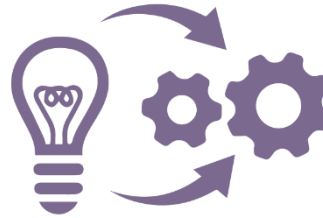
# Collaborative development



Discussions & workshops



Research



Bringing it together



Draft Framework



Final copy and roll-out

## Over 500 interactions and engagements with:

- Staff from specialist homelessness services
- People with lived experience of homelessness
- Government staff and teams
- Evaluation and outcomes specialists

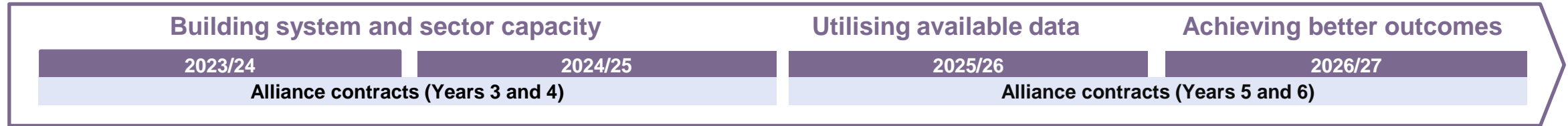
## Consideration of the works alongside:

- Future Directions for Homelessness
- Our Housing Future 2020-2030
- SA Aboriginal Housing Strategy 2021-2031
- National Plan to Ending Violence against Women and Children
- Existing national commitments

## Importance of:

- Regular, frequent communication, including sharing back summaries and actions
- Building partnerships with all stakeholders
- Intention to co-design and work alongside throughout
- Understanding the outcomes journey for all stakeholders

# Implementation overview



## Core focus for first Implementation plan:

- Understand how the Outcomes Framework impacts each of us – how we can share and work towards the aspiration.
- Get a detailed understanding of what we are measuring.
- Start reporting on the measures we have data for.
- Understand how the inputs, activities and outputs of each service fit into the long-term outcomes in the Framework.

## Activities:

- Continue co-design of Aboriginal outcomes, indicators and measures with Aboriginal leaders and sector staff.
- Finalise and start reporting on measures where data is available.
- Continued engagement and collaboration to support outcomes thinking.

## Outputs:

- Measure review and approval pathways
- Supporting materials (e.g. Handbook, user guides)
- Data manual and technical specifications
- Program logics for services

## Data collection and reporting

- Improve data quality of reported measures
- Cross-government data linkage
- Design tools to collect client experience and qualitative data
- Expand reporting capabilities (e.g. reporting by population group, geography)

## Continuous improvement

- Use data to inform small-scale continuous improvement across services
- Leverage outcomes data for pilot program design and evaluation
- Review current Key Performance Indicators to align to outcomes measurement

## Future strategies and recommissioning

- Use Outcomes Framework to inform future state homelessness strategy development
- Leverage outcomes data, intentions and gained systemic understanding to inform the homelessness system beyond the initial Alliance contracting term.

## Aims:

Better outcomes for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness

Greater understanding of the homelessness sector and our intersections

Increased outcomes data reporting capabilities

Increased capacity and capability of staff using the Outcomes Framework

More effective monitoring of outcomes to inform and improve our practices

Strengthened partnerships, a culture of innovation and outstanding performance

# Transition to Department for Human Services (1 July 2024)

**Alignment and connection between SA Homelessness Outcomes Framework and DHS Outcomes Framework.**

**Alignment and connection to DHS priorities, initiatives, strategic directions and approaches.**

**Continued partnership with Alliances and Directly Contracted Services.**

## **Aims for next steps:**

- Enable consistent approaches to outcomes across DHS
- Build a systems level view of the homelessness sector's collective impact
- Ensure SA Homelessness Outcomes Framework is intuitive, collaborative and fit for purpose

# Australian Homelessness Conference 2024

*Gathering Momentum*



Government of  
South Australia