From Survival to self determination
A National Aboriginal – led pathway to ending Homelessness

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The reality of survival

24,930

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people estimated to be experiencing homelessness at the 2021 Census

20.4%

Of all people experiencing homelessness in Australia in the same Census

Secure housing creates room to make choices about the future



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Homelessness is shaped by connected systems

Housing, Health, Education, Justice, Employment.

ALL connect around people not departments



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Self – determination means authority and choice

For residents – People shape their own goals. Care choices and housing plans

For communities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities hold authority over local priorities and service design

For the system – Decision rights, funding and accountability support that authority.



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The Partnership Journey

Communication → Consultation →
Engagement→ Co design →
Shared decision making → Shared
Accountability



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A National pathway, shaped in each place

Prevention – Support tenancies and plan travel or institutional exits before accommodation becomes crisis

Immediate safety – Provide culturally safe accommodation with access to appropriate care

Secure Housing – Connect people with suitable homes and support to sustain them

Opportunity – Keep health care, learning, work and cultural connection within reach



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AHL's contribution to the national pathway

More than 50 years of accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people away from home.

Our contribution – A national hostel network that helps people access essential services

Our transformation – Stronger local decisions, consistent care and partnerships around each resident's goals

Our shared task – Work with community - controlled organisations and housing partners on lasting pathways.



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AHL's transformation makes the pathway practical

Honouring legacy and Transforming our Future

Change inside AHL	Difference for residents and Communities
Local decision - making	Hostel decisions reflect local needs and agreed community priorities
One AHL way of working	Consistent standards support care suited to each hostel's purpose
Workforce and Systems	Staff have the skills, information and time to support residents
Plans and accountability	Connect strategy to daily delivery



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One AHL way of working at each hostel

National Standards – Clear expectations for safety, service quality and accountability

Local authority – Agreed decision rights and resources for hostel teams, with community partnership arrangements

Purpose specific care – Care shaped by health, education, employment or other resident needs

Everyday practice – First Nations expertise and trauma informed care guide behaviour and decisions



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Closing the Gap as a test of transformation

Priority Reform	Proposed application through AHL and Partners
Shared decisions	Agree local priorities and decision rights with Aboriginal partners
Community control	Resource ACCO participation and strengthen their delivery capability
Government change	Change AHL policies and practice to address racism and cultural safety
Shared data	Agree community access to local information and its use



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A resident's choices shape the pathway

Illustrative example: a person leaving hospital who has no secure housing

Before discharge – The person, hospital and chosen support partner agree accommodation and care needs.

During an AHL stay – The resident shapes the plan, with health support and early housing assistance.

A secure next step – A Housing partner confirms a suitable home, with agreed follow up support.

The housing work begins before the hostel stay ends



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A National partnership with clear roles

Partner	Contribution to the proposed pathway
Communities and ACCO's	Set local priorities, shape care and hold partners accountable
AHL	Provide accommodation, develop staff capability and coordinate agreed hostel pathways.
Government, Housing providers	Fund and supply homes, support tenancies and align referral systems
Health, education, other services	Maintain access to care and opportunity across transitions



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The policy decisions needed

Shared authority – Fund local governance and agree who decides priorities, design and investment

Long term investment – Align accommodation, housing supply and support funding across portfolios

Planned transitions – Set joint responsibilities for hospital, custody and care exits

Public accountability – Report resident outcomes and changes in decision making with communities.



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Success includes housing stability and self determination

What should change	Proposed evidence
Resident choice	Residents report influence over their goals and care decisions
Community authority	Partners can show which decisions communities' control.
Housing stability	Suitable exit destinations and sustained housing
Access and wellbeing	Residents reach the services and opportunities they have chosen



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The first steps, then sustained reform

2026 27 Build foundations – Connect AHL plans and budgets. Agree local partners, decision rights and baseline measures

2027 -29 Test in practice – Trial care and transition arrangements in selected places. Review resident community experience.

Through 2036 Sustain and extend – Invest in approaches that communities support and evidence justifies, alongside housing supply.



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Leadership

Less Control → More Stewardship

Less Compliance → More Capability

Less Telling → More Listening



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From survival to self determination

A secure home

Real choices

Aboriginal authority over the response

