

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS



**Homelessness
Strategy | ACT**

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services



dhcs | ACT

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Acknowledgements | 1 |
| Minister's foreword | 2 |
| Executive summary | 3 |
| Our vision and mission | 3 |
| Groups for specific focus | 3 |
| Strategic directions | 4 |
| Implementation, monitoring and review - the ACT Homelessness Committee | 5 |
| 1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2 Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy | 8 |
| 2.1 Vision | 8 |
| 2.2 Principles | 9 |
| 2.3 Working together | 9 |
| 2.4 What will the strategy deliver? | 10 |
| 2.4.1 For the community | 10 |
| 2.4.2 For people at risk of homelessness | 10 |
| 2.4.3 For people who are homeless | 10 |
| 2.4.4 For service providers | 11 |
| 2.4.5 For the ACT Government | 11 |
| 3 Groups for specific focus | 12 |
| 3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders | 12 |
| 3.2 Single men | 13 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 3.3 | Single women | 13 |
| 3.4 | Families | 14 |
| 3.5 | Couples | 14 |
| 3.6 | Accompanying children | 14 |
| 3.7 | Young people | 15 |
| 3.8 | People leaving custody and who are involved in the criminal justice system | 15 |
| 4 | Homelessness in the ACT | 16 |
| 4.1 | Nature of homelessness | 16 |
| 4.2 | Homelessness in the ACT | 16 |
| 4.3 | The experience of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness | 18 |
| 4.3.1 | Key findings | 18 |
| 4.4 | Responses to homelessness | 19 |
| 4.5 | Access to housing | 19 |
| 4.5.1 | Social housing | 19 |
| 4.5.2 | Private rentals | 20 |
| 4.5.3 | Home ownership | 21 |
| 4.6 | Housing needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness | 21 |
| 4.6.1 | Recent Government initiatives | 21 |
| 4.7 | Other support services | 22 |
| 5 | The strategy | 23 |
| 5.1 | Strategic directions | 23 |
| 5.1.1 | Theme 1: Integrated and effective service responses | 25 |
| 5.1.2 | Theme 2: Client focus and client outcomes | 28 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 5.1.3 | Theme 3: Access to appropriate housing and housing assistance | 35 |
| 5.1.4 | Theme 4: Supporting and driving innovation and excellence | 40 |
| 6 | Implementing the strategy | 48 |
| 6.1 | Measuring success | 48 |
| 6.1.1 | Incidence measures | 48 |
| 6.1.2 | Infrastructure measures | 48 |
| 6.1.3 | Community based measures | 48 |
| 6.2 | Monitoring and review | 49 |
| 6.3 | The ACT Homelessness Committee | 49 |
| 6.4 | Monitoring | 49 |
| | Appendix 1 - Members of the HAG | 50 |
| | Secretariat to the HAG, committees and working groups | 52 |
| | Appendix 2 - Members of the Steering Committee | 53 |
| | Appendix 3 - Membership of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group | 55 |
| | Appendix 4 - Our partners | 57 |

Acknowledgements

The issue of homelessness is a community issue.it is of significant concern not only to those that specialise in supporting people who are at risk of homelessness or those who are homelessit also impacts on other areas in our community such as the education, health, welfare, legal and business sectors.

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy is the first Homelessness Strategy for the ACT Government and has been developed with extensive consultation and support from a wide array of key stakeholders within the ACT. With their invaluable contribution, we have been able to ensure that our strategy and action plan are not only practical but also forward looking and progressive for our community.

Special thanks must go to those people who have experienced homelessness who provided valuable insights into the reality of their situation in the ACT. Their experiences, ideas for change and views about what would make a difference have informed the development of the strategy

Recognition and thanks must also go to all of the community agencies and their representatives who gave tirelessly of their time to ensure that the strategy will have a positive and lasting impact and will assist in reducing homelessness in our community.

Similarly, thanks must go to all of the Government Departments and Agencies and their representatives who have contributed to the development of the strategy, ensuring that we will have a truly integrated government response to the issue of homelessness in our community.

Finally, but not least, thanks must go to all of the members of the various advisory and working groups that guided and helped refine the strategies now contained within *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy* – the Homelessness Advisory Group, the Steering Committee, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) Reference Group and the Homelessness Advisory Secretariat. Their input, ongoing assistance and dedication to ensuring that the strategy will benefit people at risk of homelessness, and those who are homeless, has been critical in finalising the strategy.

Sandra Lambert
Chair
Homelessness Advisory Group

Minister's foreword

Addressing homelessness presents a serious challenge to the ACT government and community. The complexity of its causes and its impact on individuals, families and communities highlights the pressing need for collective and collaborative responses.

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy is a key government priority. Its primary goal is to prevent and reduce homelessness so as to enable individuals and families within our community to lead safe, active, participative and rewarding lives.

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy has been developed recognising that the causes of homelessness are complex and that people are not usually homeless by choice. Providing a roof does not necessarily solve the problem of homelessness.

People who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, have individual needs requiring a range of coordinated service responses that work together to provide appropriate support when and where it is needed. Such responses must come from the government, as well as those working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and other agencies and community organisations that assist people in our community to live independently.

Collaborative partnerships between agencies that plan, fund, administer and deliver services are crucial to delivering the right mix of services to meet individual and family needs.

Critical to finding effective responses to address homelessness will not only involve the provision of more affordable housing but a significant change in our approach. We need to more actively engage our key stakeholders and ensure that the voices of people who are homeless are heard. We also need to continually review the size, scope and nature of homelessness in the ACT and proactively develop a research agenda to improve our knowledge about the types of responses that make a difference.

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy has strong government commitment, and it will remain a priority area until there is significant improvement in our collective ability to reduce the impact of homelessness, not only as it impacts on people but also as it impacts on our community as a whole.

Bill Wood
Minister for Disability, Housing & Community Services

Executive summary

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy addresses homelessness through a range of practical strategies to effectively support people at risk of homelessness while also providing the means for people who are homeless to access appropriate supports to decrease the impact and occurrence of homelessness.

The strategy has been developed to complement other key plans that are either under development or being implemented across government. In addition, the strategy is also aligned with the strategic priorities of a number of key programs and initiatives.

Our vision and mission

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy vision is that:

‘All Canberrans have the right to safe, secure, affordable and appropriate accommodation with the necessary supports to live as independently as possible within our community.’

To achieve this vision, *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy* goal is that:

‘The ACT community will work together to respond to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to minimise the occurrence of homelessness and its impacts.’

Groups for specific focus

A number of groups were identified as warranting specific attention in *The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT, 2002*:

- **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are more vulnerable to homelessness than the broader population. Their homelessness encompasses physical, spiritual and cultural aspects and is compounded by issues such as poor health and social and economic circumstances.
- **Single men** - Single men who are homeless often have a range of mental health, drug and alcohol issues and require specialist support. In the ACT three SAAP services provide supported accommodation for men and there is a high turnover (approximately 920 men were turned away in 2002-03 from one service because they could not be accommodated).
- **Single women** - The SAAP data indicates there are increasing numbers of single women who are homeless because of eviction, relationship breakdown and family and domestic violence. Contributing factors for their homelessness are poverty, decreasing access to affordable housing and lack of social supports.

- **Couples** - There is no crisis accommodation for homeless couples in the ACT. There is a significant demand for the provision of short-term, low cost accommodation for people and couples coming to the ACT who lack resources to secure accommodation on arrival.
- **Accompanying children** - The majority (90 percent) of children entering SAAP services are aged between 0-12 years of age. Many have experienced trauma (such as witnessing domestic violence), live in insecure accommodation, and are suffering from the effects of situational factors such as drug and alcohol issues, problem gambling and mental health issues.
- **Young people** - The ACT has the highest numbers of homeless people nationally for 12-13 and 14-15 year olds. Their needs are complex, and require a range of accommodation options and service support to prevent a cycle of homelessness and poverty.
- **Families** - There is a lack of supported crisis accommodation for families in the ACT (includes sole parents with accompanying children). The ACT SAAP data shows this is the fastest growing group of clients and some families are experiencing second and third generational poverty, joblessness, homelessness and/or domestic violence as a result of inadequate interventions.
- **People leaving custody or who are involved in the criminal justice system** - People leaving custodial care often have no home or job to return to. They are more likely than the general population to have no financial reserve and receive income support while facing discrimination in the labour market. Unstable accommodation post release is a major predictor, along with drug and alcohol abuse, of an offender's return to prison.

To ensure that the strategy remains relevant and targeted at those most in need, the circumstances of these target groups will be reviewed on an annual basis and the range of responses outlined in the strategy updated to reflect this need.

Strategic directions

Four key themes and objectives establish the framework for the *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*. These four themes and their associated objectives are:

Theme 1: Integrated and effective service responses

Theme 1 aims to ensure there is an agreed integrated approach to homelessness between government and the community sector in terms of policy, funding and operational requirements. The framework will ensure there is agreement and clarity around the goals and outcomes to be achieved from the service system, while providing a clear mandate for action. To support this framework, there will be a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention to better mitigate those factors that place people at risk of homelessness.

Theme 2: Client focus and client outcomes

Theme 2 aims to ensure the rights of people who are homeless are recognised and respected and that mechanisms are established to ensure these rights are realised. Theme 2 also aims to ensure that client centred approaches and comprehensive assessment processes identifiable to client need are integral to service provision. Specific responses to enhance the capacity of the current service system are identified for groups requiring specific attention.

Theme 3: Access to appropriate housing and housing assistance

Theme 3 aims to ensure there is an appropriate range of medium and longer-term support options for people who are homeless. Complementing this are specific strategies to respond to the needs of the groups requiring specific attention, as well as strategies to better support people to find and maintain appropriate accommodation.

Theme 4: Supporting and driving innovation and excellence

Theme 4 aims to ensure the service and support system is able to provide quality services, supported by evidence based decision making, and respond to the changing needs of people who are at risk of homelessness and those that are homeless. In addition, this Theme aims to ensure that the sector's workforce is able to respond to changing needs and requirements. Complementing this is an active awareness program targeted at increasing the community's understanding of the impact of homelessness on people and the wider community.

Implementation, monitoring and review - the ACT Homelessness Committee

The ACT Homelessness Committee will be established to govern the implementation of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*. This Committee will comprise government representatives from all portfolios and community representatives and be chaired by the Chief Executive of DHCS.

This Committee will be responsible for driving the implementation and evaluation of the strategy, the coordination of reporting and implementing a public communication strategy.

This Committee will meet regularly and report quarterly to the Minister for Disability Housing and Community Services; and every six months to the Management Advisory Group of Chief Executives on the implementation of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*.

1 Introduction

People who are homeless need access to basic infrastructure in appropriate public spaces...as well as access to crisis and medium to longer term accommodation options.

To determine the extent of homelessness in the ACT, the government commissioned the ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS) to undertake a needs analysis which was completed in 2002. *The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT, 2002* indicated that even using consistent definitions, calculating homeless is difficult.

- Using data from SAAP providers it is estimated up to 5,350 people in the ACT may experience homelessness each year.
- The Australian Population Census 2001 indicated at any point in time, homelessness in the ACT might be considered in the range of 40-50 people per 10,000 in the population which equates to 1,200 per night.
- The number of people sleeping rough each night (primary homelessness) may be between 120-315, or approximately 10 percent, of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- The number of people living in temporary accommodation (secondary homeless) in the ACT at any given time is approximately 50 percent of the homeless population.
- The number of people living in insecure tenure or marginal housing (tertiary homeless) is difficult to estimate. However the *Needs Analysis* indicates over 40 percent of households identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness are experiencing tertiary homelessness which provides a minimum estimate of 500 households at any given time.
- A substantial number of people experiencing homelessness in the ACT have complex or unmet needs.

These findings and others from key government reports and feedback from community consultations have provided the impetus for the ACT Government to develop a strategic government and community response to homelessness.

In June 2002, the ACT Government established the Homelessness Advisory Group (HAG), comprising cross government and community representatives, to develop an ACT Homelessness Strategy that:

- Provides a practical and realistic framework to set the direction for the next four years;
- Is informed by key stakeholders across government, community, and service users;
- Draws on evidence and research;
- Identifies the key objectives and priority actions to be undertaken within an accountability framework;
- Complements and links with relevant ACT and the Australian Government strategies; and

- Is monitored, reviewed and evaluated to identify what has been achieved and learned.

National and international research highlights the broad range of, and interdependence between, factors that contribute to homelessness. In the ACT currently, many of these factors are treated in isolation, through specific departmental funding directed to specific service type providers. A major objective of this strategy is to establish a coordinated approach to service delivery across the community service sector and between the tiers of government.

2 Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy targets homelessness through a range of practical strategies to effectively support people at risk of homelessness while providing the means for people who are homeless to access appropriate supports to decrease the impact of homelessness.

The strategy has been developed so that it complements other key plans that are either under development or being implemented across government.¹ In addition, the strategy is also aligned with the strategic priorities of a number of key programs and initiatives.²

2.1 Vision

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy vision is that:

‘All Canberrans have the right to safe, secure, affordable and appropriate accommodation with the necessary supports to live as independently as possible within our community.’

To achieve this vision, *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy* goal is that:

‘The ACT community will work together to respond to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to minimise the occurrence of homelessness and its impacts.’

¹ *Breaking the Cycle - The ACT Homelessness Strategy* has been developed so that it complements a range of other plans such as: The Canberra Social Plan; The ACT Mental Health Strategy and Action Plan; The ACT Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Strategy; The ACT Children’s Plan; The ACT Justice Plan; The ACT Strategic Plan for Women; The ACT Violence and Safety Framework; The National Homelessness Strategy; Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Homelessness and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program 1V.

² The Strategy also takes account of the systemic and service responses to homelessness in the ACT from a range of agencies, units programs and initiatives including Supported Accommodation Assistance Program – Homelinx, Canberra Emergency Accommodation Service, Turnaround Project; ACT Housing – Community Linkages Program, Preventing Eviction Program, Housing Manager Specialists, Housing Affordability Taskforce; ACT Corrective Services (JACS); MAP (JACS); Drug and Alcohol (DHCC) – Coordinated Case Management, Lead Tenant Model; Mental Health (DHCC); Youth Justice (JACS) – Intensive Youth Support Review; Education (DEYFS) – Health Promoting Schools, Resilience Program, Mindmatters; Family Services/ Support (DEYFS) – Coordinated Case Management, FAST, Family Support; Program Review, Resilience Program.; Disability (DHCS); Reconnect (Australian Government, FaCS) Australians Working Together (Australian Government FaCS); Stronger Families and Community Strategy (Australian Government FaCS); and Families Homelessness Prevention Pilot-Centrelink (Australian Government FaCS).

2.2 Principles

The seven underpinning principles of the strategy are:

- **client centred;**
- **responsive;**
- **prevention and early intervention;**
- **partnership;**
- **effectiveness;**
- **evidenced based; and**
- **innovation.**

The following principles underpin *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*:

- Supports will be built on the assessed needs of individuals, take into account the preferences of individuals and determined in conjunction with the person who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Service responses will be flexible, responsive and embrace diversity.
- Prevention and early intervention strategies have the potential to mitigate those factors that can lead to a person becoming homeless.
- Partnerships, collaboration and coordinated approaches at the service and person level will facilitate more effective service responses.
- Service effectiveness will be measured by agreed performance measurement, a focus on client outcomes and an emphasis on continuous improvement.
- Evaluation will be built into day-to-day service provision and will guide ongoing service improvement, evidenced based decision-making and future planning for the service system.
- Innovation will be rewarded as it leads to service improvement and better client outcomes.

2.3 Working together

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy has been developed and will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the overarching principles established by the Compact between the community sector and the ACT Government.

The Compact provides a positive basis for partnership and constructive working relationships between the community sector and government. Key principles that guide the Compact and underpin how government and the community sector will work to implement the strategy are:

- Trust, openness and transparency of communication and processes;
- Mutual respect for the capacity and capabilities of each sector, and recognition of their limitations;
- Valuing of the distinct and complementary role each sector plays;
- Respect for diversity and independence of community organisations and groups;
- Integrity, ethical practice, accountability and leadership in the way each sector operates;
- Taking responsibility in the relationship and being accountable for the process and outcomes;

- Consumer and community participation in planning, policy development and other decision making processes;
- Innovation and continuous improvement in community and government processes and in the planning and delivery of services; and
- Flexibility and cultural sensitivity in the processes used to consult with, and respond to, the different groups within the community.

To ensure an integrated approach, each lead agency will work within the governance framework established for the strategy so as to ensure that there is an opportunity and capacity to integrate the work being undertaken across the various actions.

2.4 What will the strategy deliver?

2.4.1 For the community

Community awareness and understanding of homelessness will increase, as will an understanding of those factors that impact on people placing them at risk of homelessness or resulting in them becoming homeless. This growing understanding will begin to impact on, and reduce, barriers and discriminatory practices often experienced by people who are homeless.

2.4.2 For people at risk of homelessness

For the people at risk of homelessness, they will be able to access a range of support services to assist in maintaining their tenure. Specific supports will be developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that are responsive to their cultural needs.

Support services will focus on individual needs and will have the capacity to bring together services such as mental health, alcohol and drug, emergency assistance, advocacy, tenancy management and financial advice and support to provide assistance as and when it is required.

2.4.3 For people who are homeless

For people who are homeless, a range of crisis support services will be available providing safe and secure accommodation, as well as accessible and well maintained basic facilities, services and infrastructure in appropriate public places for use by people during periods of homelessness.

With a focus on individual client planning, people who are homeless will be able to work with support providers to secure stable, medium to longer-term accommodation options, access to independent skills training and employment support services.

For A&TSI people, services will be more accessible, more culturally sensitive and able to better respond to their needs.

2.4.4 For service providers

For service providers, there will be a common approach and an agreed code of conduct to guide the provision of support to people who are at risk of homelessness and for those who are homeless.

Welfare, health and education services will be better able to identify earlier and support those people in housing stress and at risk of homelessness.

Government departments and agencies and the community sector will actively collaborate and coordinate their services by working in partnership so as to make it easier for people to access the services they need.

This strategy recommends the development of an informed cogent policy to facilitate information sharing while respecting and protecting the privacy of service users.

There will be new service options, and capacity within the service system will be expanded with the development of a range of accommodation options, including those specifically targeted to A&TSI needs.

2.4.5 For the ACT Government

For the ACT Government, there will be an integrated whole of government approach to address homelessness. All Government Departments and Agencies will work together to reduce homelessness in the ACT.

Government Departments will come together to collaborate in planning and policy development activities to ensure coordinated responses in funding, purchasing and the provision of services to people who are at risk of homelessness or for those who are homeless.

3 Groups for specific focus

The following groups were identified for specific attention in *The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT, 2002*:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;
- Single men;
- Single women;
- Couples;
- Accompanying children;
- Young people;
- Families; and
- People leaving custody or who are involved in the criminal justice system.

Breaking the Cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy focuses on the needs of all people experiencing homelessness and identifies responses over a four year period. However, to ensure that the strategy remains relevant and targeted at those most in need, the effectiveness of the strategy's actions will be reviewed from the perspective of the specified groups annually, and the strategy's future directions amended accordingly.

3.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more vulnerable to homelessness than the broader population. Their homelessness encompasses physical, spiritual and cultural aspects and is compounded by issues such as poor health and disadvantaged social and economic circumstances.

The ABS Census 2001 showed that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT experienced the highest percentage of housing affordability stress (58 percent). (ACT Report on Housing Affordability defines housing stress as spending 30 percent of the household income on housing.) Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in SAAP services, it is also recognised that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness do not access SAAP services. They may stay with relatives and friends, and live in overcrowded conditions. They may face higher levels of discrimination and require greater assistance with specialist needs like drug and alcohol use and support with their general health and well-being.

To respond better to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the ACT must establish more accommodation and support models especially for families. The needs of older people, as well as the transient population coming to the ACT must also be taken into account. In the first year of this strategy a service will be established to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in six individual

dwellings to re-establish community connections and build their skills and resources to maintain tenancies.

In partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, a range of initiatives will also be established to enhance the capacity of mainstream providers to respond to the needs of this population group.

3.2 Single men

The 2002-03 ACT Supported Accommodation Assistance Program³ (SAAP) data indicates there are a high proportion of single men who are homeless.

In the ACT three SAAP services now provide supported accommodation for men. There is still a high level of unmet need and no service model to support men over longer periods.

Single men who are homeless often have a range of mental health, drug and alcohol issues and require specialist support. Recent research undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) confirms that longer-term support for men, particularly those leaving custody, minimizes their potential re-entry to homelessness and reimprisonment.

In the first year of the strategy a SAAP supported accommodation service will be established to provide a longer-term intervention to assist men who have experienced recurring long-term homelessness.

3.3 Single women

The SAAP data indicates there are increasing numbers of single women who are homeless because of eviction, relationship breakdown and family and domestic violence.

Contributing factors for their homelessness are poverty, decreasing access to affordable housing and lack of social supports. In the ACT, two SAAP agencies provide specific support for single women and one agency for women escaping violence.

While there is no specific allocation for single women until 2005-06, it is envisaged that the substantial increase in families accommodation will have a flow on impact on existing services and will free up some accommodation in services currently providing accommodation for both women with children and those without.

The actual outcome will need to be carefully monitored, as identified earlier, on an annual basis.

³ SAAP is a jointly funded Territory, State and Commonwealth Program.

3.4 Families

There is a lack of supported crisis accommodation for families in the ACT (families includes sole parents with accompanying children). The ACT SAAP data shows this is the fastest growing group of clients.

Some of these families are experiencing second and third generational poverty, joblessness, homelessness and/or domestic violence as a result of inadequate interventions. *The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT* noted the significant, harmful effects homelessness has on children and the need for specific responses across agencies to the needs of children.

In the first year of the strategy, a number of service models will be established to support families headed by sole parent fathers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and families in regional locations of the ACT.

3.5 Couples

There is no crisis accommodation for homeless couples in the ACT. There is a significant demand for the provision of short-term, low cost accommodation for people and couples coming to the ACT who lack resources to secure accommodation on arrival.

The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT noted that 18 percent of SAAP service users are recent arrivals with no means of support. Alternative models to refuges need to be established to provide an immediate response and to enhance sustainable outcomes.

In the first year crisis accommodation will be provided to couples through a range of options. There will be capacity to house six couples until the end of 2007.

3.6 Accompanying children

The majority (90 percent) of children entering SAAP services are aged between 0-12 years of age. Many have experienced trauma, violence, live in insecure accommodation, or are suffering from the effects of situational factors such as drug and alcohol issues, problem gambling and mental health issues. Services report high, unmet needs, including access to basic supports such as meals and showers, counselling services and school liaison.

From the first year of the strategy, all SAAP providers will be allocated discrete funds to ensure they can respond flexibly to service user needs. For accompanying children, services will be able to provide professional interventions and programs and provide practical assistance.

3.7 Young people

There are increasing numbers of young people entering SAAP services, as stated in the report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Young*

Homelessness People 2001-02. The ACT has the highest numbers of 12-13 and 14-15 year olds in SAAP services in Australia.

In the ACT, the numbers of young people aged between 13-15 years of age are increasing. Their needs are complex, and they require a range of accommodation and support services to prevent a cycle of homelessness and poverty.

The Institute of Social Research at Swinburne University has undertaken a review and consultation process to inform future directions in relation to the locations, size and models needed to respond to young homeless people's needs.

3.8 People leaving custody and who are involved in the criminal justice system

People leaving custody and who are involved in the criminal justice system are at high risk of becoming homeless and of re-entering the criminal justice system. People leaving custodial care often have no home or job to return to. They are more likely than the general population to have no financial reserve and are reliant on income support. They also often face discrimination in the labour market.

Recent research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) examined how accommodation influences ex-prisoners' transition back into community life. The study found unstable accommodation post release was a major predictor, along with drug and alcohol abuse, of an offender's return to prison.

In the first year of the strategy a SAAP supported accommodation service will be established to provide a longer-term intervention to assist men leaving custody or involved in the criminal justice system, who are homeless to achieve sustainable housing outcomes.

4 Homelessness in the ACT

Homelessness can be a one off experience but, more often than not, it is episodic or it can be long term requiring ongoing support over time.....

Homelessness means different things to different people. Researchers Chamberlain and Mackenzie refer to three distinct kinds of homelessness:

- *Primary homelessness* - people who have no shelter, sleep rough, live on the streets, in cars, under bridges and in impoverished dwellings.
- *Secondary Homelessness* - people who frequently move from various forms of temporary accommodation, eg emergency accommodation, friends, relatives and boarding houses.
- *Tertiary Homelessness* – people living in accommodation that is without security of tenure, unsafe or inappropriate to their needs, without their own bathroom and or kitchen.

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy considers and addresses homelessness at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels to ensure the ACT is positioned to prevent, wherever possible, the occurrence of homelessness and to minimise its most damaging, sustained and residual impacts.

4.1 Nature of homelessness

The causes of homelessness are many and varied....many share the common experience of poverty; social isolation and abuse; loss of control over where they live; lack of acceptance by the broader community; and poor physical, emotional and/or mental health.

Homelessness affects people of all ages and all situations – from parents with accompanying children, young people, women escaping domestic violence, people in relationships, families, and people who are elderly. Homelessness can impact on all aspects of a person’s life – affecting their capacity to access adequate food and shelter, continue at school and in education, secure employment, secure income support, live independently and access medical, mental health, alcohol and drug and other services.

The reasons for homelessness are often multiple and complex. Structural factors can lead to homelessness, for example limited affordable housing, unemployment and poverty; there may be factors attributable to system failure, such as inadequate provision of early intervention and support services; and individual and personal circumstances.

Most often, it is not just one set of factors that lead to homelessness; rather, it is the interplay of an array of factors that leads some people to homelessness.

4.2 Homelessness in the ACT⁴

No longitudinal data exists on people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the ACT. The most comprehensive information available on homelessness comes from the SAAP National Data Collection.

⁴ All data is taken from the National Data Collection for SAAP 2002-2003

There is high utilization of all SAAP services. Most operate to capacity with a specific shortage of crisis-medium term accommodation places for single men, families and couples.

The Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT, 2002

The national SAAP data collection indicated that 1800 people were provided with support from the 36 SAAP agencies in the ACT in 2002-2003.⁵

Of these, 15 percent were from non-English speaking backgrounds, and 11 percent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are significantly over represented when compared to their level of representation in the ACT of one percent.

- More women than men were represented in the SAAP population, with women tending to dominate the younger age groups (under 25 years) while more men represented the age groups over 29 years.
- The average length of stay in SAAP services is between 50 – 110 days. Families tend to stay longer in SAAP services compared to single people.

The common reasons for seeking assistance from SAAP services are:

- Eviction/previous accommodation no longer available – 15 percent;
- Domestic and family violence – 15 percent;
- Relationship/family breakdown - 12 percent; and
- Usual accommodation was no longer available – 10 percent.

| SAAP user group | Main reason for seeking assistance |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Women with children | Domestic and family violence (46 percent) |
| Men with children | Relationship/family breakdown (22 percent) |
| Couples with children | Financial difficulty (22 percent) |
| Couples with no children | Usual accommodation not available (36 percent) |
| Women alone, 25 years plus | Domestic and family violence (26 percent) |
| Women alone, under 25 years | Relationship breakdown/ family violence (26 percent) |
| Men alone, 25 years plus | Eviction/accommodation ended (18 percent) |
| Men alone, under 25 years | Recent arrival, no means of support (12 percent) |

Table 1: Reasons for eviction by subgroup, SAAP 2002-2003 Data Collection

⁵ Note, this statistic does not account for the number of people who sought support and did not receive it, those that were homeless and did not seek support nor does it account for accompanying children.

4.3 The experience of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

A survey⁶ was undertaken of ACT residents who were homeless and people at risk of homelessness, as part of the development work of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*.

4.3.1 Key findings⁷

For people at risk of homelessness⁸, the factors impacting on the individual at risk related predominantly to domestic violence, relationship breakdown and unsafe environments and financial difficulties.

For people who have been or are homeless⁹, there were a range of factors that lead to homelessness. Consistent with national data for women, issues of domestic violence, unsafe environments and relationship breakdown were the major precipitating factors that lead to homelessness. For men, drug and alcohol issues were more significant.

Survey participants identified practical assistance (such as more access to crisis accommodation and more housing support) and better information on available support and assistance as supports that would have assisted them in a period of crisis leading to homelessness.

There are some people who choose not to be housed.... for these people the aim is to provide access to public spaces and support including facilities for showering, washing, cooking and storing possessions.

⁶ Details of the results of this survey can be found in *Breaking the Cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy: Survey Results, KPMG, 2003*.

⁷ These findings only relate to those individuals who participated in *Breaking the Cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy: Survey Results, KPMG, 2003*.

⁸ Surveys were completed for a total of 15 individuals, with the majority of individuals being female. The majority of individuals were aged between were 26 – 34 years (40 percent) while 33 percent were aged 35 – 49 years. No individuals identified as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin and only one respondent identified themselves as being from a non-English speaking background. The majority of individuals had been homeless at least once before (60 percent,) while 40 percent had never been homeless. .

⁹ Surveys were completed for a total of 129 individuals, with the majority of individuals being female (55 percent). Forty four percent of individuals either had children with them that were homeless or had had their children taken away because of their homelessness. Thirty two percent of individuals were aged 26 – 34 years, while 26 percent were 35 – 49 years. Twenty five percent of individuals identified as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin and eight percent as from non-English speaking backgrounds. Thirty percent of individuals identified as having a disability.

4.4 Responses to homelessness¹⁰

'Many clients are frustrated by a fragmentation of services; lack of appropriate accommodation; discrimination from agencies and landlords; a lack of knowledge and information regarding services; difficulty accessing services after hours; and difficulty in self-advocacy.'

*The Needs
Analysis of Homelessness
in the ACT, 2002*

Traditionally, the main service response to homelessness in the ACT is through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), a jointly funded Commonwealth and State and Territory Program.

ACT SAAP agencies provide a range of support and accommodation services to young people, single men, single women, families including sole parents with accompanying children, women and/or children escaping domestic.

SAAP funds transitional supported accommodation and related services to assist people to achieve self-reliance and live independently. SAAP services provide support and assistance through housing and accommodation; basic support (showering meals etc); general support and advocacy; financial and employment support; and specialist services. SAAP services also refer people to other services for specialist assistance, housing and accommodation and income support.

In 2002-03, over 90 percent of the assistance was provided for basic support and services, general support and advocacy, counselling, and housing and other accommodation. The highest levels of referral were for specialist services (26 percent), and this trend is increasing, particularly for single men. The highest unmet need was housing and accommodation for couples with children (56 percent) and by men with children (54 percent).

4.5 Access to housing¹¹

The ACT's growing housing need was confirmed through the *Report of the ACT Affordable Housing Taskforce*, released in December 2002. The report showed that approximately 8 percent (9,200) of all ACT households were experiencing housing stress due to spending over 30 percent of their income on housing.

Report of the ACT Affordable Housing Taskforce identified that significant numbers of people were unable to access the private rental market because of affordability, discrimination, financial circumstances, or accrued housing debt.

4.5.1 Social housing

The Commonwealth State Housing Agreement provides the primary vehicle for social housing assistance to low-income households unable to access appropriate or

¹⁰ All data is taken from the National Data Collection for SAAP 2002-2003

¹¹ This section has been adapted from the Final Report of the Housing Affordability Taskforce 2002.

affordable housing in the rental market. The major form of assistance provided under this Agreement is public housing, but it also includes community housing, A&TSI housing, crisis accommodation, home purchase and private rental assistance.

4.5.1.1 Public housing

There are approximately 11,444 publicly owned housing properties in the ACT, representing 10 percent of the housing stock and housing approximately 30,000 people.

Since 1996, there has been a decrease in the number of public housing stock by around 1,000 properties. This decrease is the result of sales, the transfer of approximately 200 properties to community housing, the reduction of inappropriate stock and the redirection of funding from sales to improve existing stock.

The public housing stock is ageing, in need of repair and maintenance and no longer meets the needs of many tenants and applicants. There is a lower turnover of tenancies, so the shedding of older properties is a slow process.

In terms of the suitability of housing to meet demand, there is a mismatch between the location of existing properties and the location preferences of new applicants. There is increasing demand for 1-2 bedroom dwellings (60 percent of applicants) and a decrease in demand for three bedroom and larger dwellings. There is also a changing trend in location preference.

These issues will be addressed through the Public Housing Asset Management Strategy 2003-08, involving the sale, redevelopment and refurbishment of properties.

4.5.1.2 Community housing

Community housing is delivered by non-profit organisations and offers a housing option that is not available through public or private markets. Community housing is complementary to public housing in that it offers a higher level of tenant participation in management and the diverse needs of individuals can be met.

As at June 2003 there were 25 organisations providing community housing services. The total number of dwellings was 477, including those provided outside of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. In 2002 and 2003, the ACT Government made available \$3 million per annum available to expand the community housing stock and \$1.4 million over four years for feasibility studies.

4.5.2 Private rentals

Private rental housing provides accommodation across all income groups and represents about 18 per cent of the total housing stock of the ACT. Between 1986 and 1996, the amount of private rental accommodation increased, but it has declined since then in both relative and absolute terms.

Housing options that are safe, secure appropriate and affordable are diminishing for all low and moderate income households in the public, community and private rental sectors.

The ACT private rental market accounts for 7 per cent of all low-cost housing. In comparison, private rental housing in other capital cities accounts for between 20-40 per cent of low-cost housing.

4.5.3 Home ownership

Home ownership is the primary form of housing tenure in the ACT (67 percent of all households). Between 1986 and 2002, the percentage of people owning their homes outright almost doubled from 18 percent to 33 percent, and the share of home purchasers fell from one-half to one-third.

House prices rose in Canberra by 17 per cent in the year to June 2002, only slightly lower than the national average increases of 19 percent.

4.6 Housing needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

The *Needs Analysis of Homelessness in the ACT* identified specific needs in relation to housing for people who are homeless and people who are at risk of homelessness, including the provision of:

- Affordable housing in locations with good access to transport, community and health facilities or services and employment opportunities.
- Safe housing for people who have experienced violence, abuse or trauma, particularly women with children escaping domestic violence.
- Substantial increases in the availability of single adult housing, in response to the growing number of single households with low income.
- Access to affordable housing for large family groups who choose to live together for cultural or practical reasons, who are at risk of overcrowding.
- Crisis to medium term accommodation for families, single men and couples.
- Assistance to overcome individual histories of debt, rent arrears, property damage or eviction through support and advocacy in the private housing market.
- Links to support services for people at risk, including those at risk of eviction and/or exploitation.

Strategies to address these needs have been considered as part of the work of the Affordable Housing Taskforce and as part of the actions of *Breaking the cycle – The ACT Homelessness Strategy*.

4.6.1 Recent Government initiatives

As part of the ACT Government's overall strategy to address the demand for housing in the ACT and as part of the 2003 – 2004 Budget, the government has allocated additional funding:

- \$3 million for community housing projects: innovative affordable housing projects; ventures with private and community sector finance and resources.
- \$1.4 million over four years for community based, A&TSI initiatives, to support the expansion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing sector.
- \$13.4 million over 4 years for a range of initiatives including short term supported accommodation for families, couples, single men and women to respond to homelessness in the ACT.
- Initiated the Land Release Program for 2003-04 to release land for approximately 2,400 residential dwellings and by increasing the range and price of available blocks, increase the number of affordable blocks for low income earners.
- A rental bonds assistance program for low-moderate income earners.
- Property value thresholds for stamp duty concessions for low-income households.

These initiatives are planned to increase the availability of social housing and enhance the supply of affordable housing for people at risk of housing stress.

4.7 Other support services

In addition to access to SAAP services and suitable housing, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness often have needs for other support services, similar to other people within our community. These services can include:

- Family support;
- Parenting support;
- Education and training support;
- Employment/income support;
- Personal support services;
- Health services;
- Drug and alcohol services;
- Mental health services;
- Disability support services; and
- Financial counselling.

There is a need to develop a more coordinated and integrated response with these service systems to respond to homelessness. It is only through the provision of individually tailored supports that people who are homeless will be better placed to maintain independent living in the community. Such approaches have been considered and integrated into this strategy.

5 The strategy

5.1 Strategic directions

Four key themes and objectives establish the framework for the *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*. These four themes and their associated objectives are:

Theme 1: Integrated and effective service responses

- Objective 1.1: Establish mechanisms to support integrated service responses and delivery.
- Objective 1.2: Increase focus on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

Theme 2: Client focus and client outcomes

- Objective 2.1: Develop mechanisms to ensure the rights of people who are homeless are recognised.
- Objective 2.2: Enhance client centred needs assessment, planning and decision-making to support quality outcomes.
- Objective 2.3: Design and deliver services to effectively respond to the specific needs of people to break the cycle of homelessness.
- Objective 2.4: Develop strategies to address the needs of individuals within the identified group for specific attention.

Theme 3: Access to appropriate housing and housing assistance

- Objective 3.1: Increase the available supply of appropriate, safe and adaptive housing for people at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless.
- Objective 3.2: Develop accommodation options to address the needs of individuals within identified groups.
- Objective 3.3: Assist people to achieve or maintain their tenure.

Theme 4: Supporting and driving innovation and excellence

- Objective 4.1: Undertake program evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure service quality and effectiveness.
- Objective 4.2: Undertake research to enhance evidence based decision-making and service development.
- Objective 4.3: Develop and implement a workforce planning strategy to develop and maintain a high level of skill and capability in the sector.
- Objective 4.4: Increase public awareness of homelessness in the ACT.

The following tables list the plan of action to be undertaken in response to each of the key themes and their supporting objectives.

Lead responsibility for each of the actions is identified along with the key partners to achieve the actions. Indicative timelines have been noted to provide an indication of the relative priority of each action.

5.1.1 Theme 1: Integrated and effective service responses

Theme 1 aims to ensure there is an agreed integrated approach to homelessness between government and the community sector in terms of policy, funding and operational requirements. The framework will ensure there is clarity around the goals and outcomes to be achieved from the service system, while providing a clear mandate for action. To support this framework, there will be a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention to better mitigate those factors that place people at risk of homelessness.

To support Theme 1, two objectives have been developed to guide future strategies and actions. These objectives are:

- Objective 1.1: Establish mechanisms to support integrated service responses and delivery.
- Objective 1.2: Increase focus on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

Objective 1.1: Establish mechanisms to support integrated service responses and delivery

| Action | Lead agency ¹² | Partners ¹³ | Completion date |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| <p>Action 1.1.1: Establish a joint operational framework between government agencies in response to homelessness and the community agencies that establishes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An annual, sector wide strategic planning framework; ■ An agreed operational policy framework; ■ A framework of options for funding; ■ Protocols for information sharing, consistent with privacy legislation requirements; | Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (DHCS) | Chief Minister’s Department (CMD), Treasury, ACT Health, Housing ACT, Disability ACT, Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (DEYFS); Department of Urban Services (DUS), Department of Justice and Community Safety (JACS), the SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |

¹² The lead agency is the agency responsible for coordinating the efforts of all of the partners and reporting to the ACT Homelessness Committee.

¹³ Partners are defined as those agencies that have an interest in the proposed action.

| Action | Lead agency ¹² | Partners ¹³ | Completion date |
|--|---------------------------|---|------------------|
| legislation requirements; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreed protocols for case management and service coordination and collaboration; ■ A joint approach to training and workforce development; ■ Common performance and outcome measures that are integrated into service and funding agreements for all relevant agencies; ■ Data collection and analysis requirements and protocols; and ■ Evaluation and continuous improvement requirements. | | | |
| Action 1.1.2: Establish a multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between government agencies and community agencies to give effect to the joint and integrated operational framework of homelessness services in the ACT. | DHCS | SAPP sector and other community service providers | By December 2004 |
| Action 1.1.3: Assess and develop current funding models to ensure they adequately support service viability and sustainability in providing outcomes for clients. | DHCS | Treasury, SAAP sector | By June 2005 |
| Action 1.1.4: Establish a funding framework for pilot programs. Trial innovative service models including training of staff, evaluation of pilot programs and mechanisms for recurrent funding where outcomes are achieved. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 1.1.5: Explore and implement collaborative funding proposals to enable flexible and innovative services to be developed. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, Treasury | Ongoing |

| Action | Lead agency ¹² | Partners ¹³ | Completion date |
|---|---------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Action 1.1.6: Develop a system wide information technology strategy to support service coordination and collaboration, information exchange and client feedback. | DHCS | SAAP sector and other relevant community service providers | By June 2005 |

Objective 1.2: Increase focus on prevention and early intervention in order to reduce the incidence of homelessness

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|-------------|--|------------------|
| Action 1.2.1: Map key pathways for people ¹⁴ who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless to determine opportunities for prevention and early intervention strategies, crisis, medium and longer-term responses. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations. | By December 2004 |
| Action 1.2.2: Map current resources for prevention and early intervention services for people in housing stress and at risk of homelessness in the ACT. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 1.2.3: Map current response for prevention and early intervention services for children at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness | DHSC | Children's Services ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |

¹⁴ People encompass accompanying children, youth, single persons, couples, families, and groups.

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|--|---|------------------|
| Action 1.2.4: Determine the need for further investment in prevention and early intervention services for people in housing stress and at risk of homelessness, available in the ACT. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, Treasury | By June 2005 |
| Action 1.2.5: Develop a risk assessment framework and associated training strategy for use by the broader service system to guide the development of intervention strategies and to mitigate the risk of homelessness. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 1.2.6: Coordinate outreach services in regional locations in the ACT to provide an early intervention and preventative response to people in housing stress, people at risk of homelessness and those who are homeless. | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, and DHCS ¹⁵ | JACS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

5.1.2 Theme 2: Client focus and client outcomes

Theme 2 aims to ensure the rights of people who are homeless are recognised and respected and that mechanisms are established to ensure these rights are realised. Theme 2 also aims to ensure that client centred approaches and comprehensive assessment processes identifiable to client need are integral to service provision. Specific responses to enhance the capacity of the current service system are identified for the groups requiring specific focus.

To support Theme 2, four objectives have been developed to guide future strategies and actions. These objectives are:

- Objective 2.1: Develop mechanisms to ensure the rights of people who are homeless are recognised.

¹⁵ Multiple lead agencies have been nominated for this strategy as each of these Government Agencies has their own regional networks that need to provide early intervention and prevention responses to people in housing stress, people at risk of homelessness and those who are homeless.

- Objective 2.2: Enhance client centred needs assessment, planning and decision-making to support quality outcomes.
- Objective 2.3: Design and deliver services to effectively respond to the specific needs of people to break the cycle of homelessness.
- Objective 2.4: Develop strategies to address the needs of individuals within the identified groups.

Objective 2.1: Develop mechanisms to ensure the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are recognised

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|-------------|---|------------------|
| Action 2.1.1: Establish a charter of rights and associated responsibilities for people who are at risk of homelessness and who are homeless in the ACT. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.1.2: Ensure that people who are at risk of homelessness or those who are homeless have access to individual advocacy services. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 2.1.3: As part of the review into Statutory Oversight and Advocacy Bodies, ensure that people who are homeless have access to an independent review mechanism to address issues of concern as they arise. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 2.1.4: Develop and disseminate a range of information to inform people about their rights, obligations and service responses for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|---|---|------------------|
| Action 2.1.5: Building on the client charter for people who are homeless and in consultation with service providers, develop a code of conduct for providers of services to people who are homeless. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.1.6: Integrate the requirements of the code of conduct for providers of services for people who are homeless into service funding agreements. | DHCS, ACT Health, Housing ACT, Disability ACT, DEYFS, | SAAP sector and community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 2.1.7: Implement an education and training strategy for service providers to ensure they are aware of the rights of people who are homeless, as prescribed in the client charter and the code of conduct for service providers. | DHCS, ACT Health, Housing ACT, Disability ACT, DEYFS, | SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 2.1.8: Establish data collection requirements and protocols to assess the capacity of service providers in meeting the obligations contained in the code of conduct. | DHCS, ACT Health, Housing ACT, Disability ACT, DEYFS, | SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |
| Action 2.1.9: Assess the feasibility of developing an 'official visitor' function for people who are homeless within supported accommodation services. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |

Objective 2.2: Enhance client centred needs assessment, planning and decision-making to support quality outcomes

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Action 2.2.1: Develop an integrated assessment strategy to guide the development of targeted service responses for people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 2.2.2: Develop and implement an integrated case management approach to facilitate client centred service provision and better service coordination and collaboration to deliver client outcomes. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.2.3: Develop and implement an informed consent policy for people to facilitate information sharing (consistent with privacy legislation) and enhance the coordination of service responses. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.2.4: Build on established standards to enhance methods for the participation of clients in planning and decision-making in support services. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.2.5: Develop and implement mechanisms to use client feedback, and reflect this in the agency's service agreement. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Action 2.2.6: Establish mechanisms, such as a forum for people who are homeless, people who have been homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness to inform policy and service development and provision. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 2.2.7: Build on service providers' networks that support people at risk of homelessness, or those who are homeless, to inform policy and service development. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |

Objective 2.3: Design and deliver services to effectively respond to the specific needs of people to break the cycle of homelessness

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| Action 2.3.1: Identify existing public spaces used by homeless people, and in consultation with people who are homeless, to determine what is required to make those spaces safe and appropriate. | DUS | DHCS, SAAP Sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.3.2: Ensure that town planning processes recognise the need for safe, secure shelter in public places for people who are homeless. | DUS | DHCS, SAAP Sector and other community organisations, ACTPLA | By December 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| Action 2.3.3: Evaluate SAAP funded drop in centres to determine their effectiveness and pilot alternative models for people who are homeless or socially isolated that provide safe environments where food, shelter, health, accommodation and vocational services can be accessed. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.3.4: Develop and implement early intervention initiatives, including advocacy support, case management, tenancy management and outreach (incorporating emergency relief) for people on low incomes to reduce the impact of financial crises that may lead to loss of accommodation and homelessness. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.3.5: Enhance partnerships with Home and Community Care providers to ensure that adequate supports are provided to reduce the likelihood of HACC clients becoming homeless. | ACT Health | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT and other community organisations | By December 2004 |

Objective 2.4: Develop strategies to address the needs of individuals within the identified groups focus

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Action 2.4.1: For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people develop options to provide supported accommodation for people who are transient, or leaving hospital or custody. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group, A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Action 2.4.2: Ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tri Lateral Housing Agreement responds to the needs of people who are at risk of homelessness and who are homeless. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group, A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee | Ongoing |
| Action 2.4.3: Pilot outreach support services for single women with mental health issues leaving supported accommodation. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group, A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 2.4.4: For women escaping domestic violence, undertake negotiations with the Magistrates' Court to identify options to better support women and children in securing access to safe and appropriate accommodation. | DHCS | JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 2.4.5: For accompanying children and young people, review protocols between agencies, such as SAAP providers and the DEYFS, to ensure responses are timely, well-coordinated and responsive to individual needs. | DEYFS and DHCS | SAAP sector and other community agencies | By June 2004 |
| Action 2.4.6: For young people leaving substitute care services, develop protocols to assist their transition into independent accommodation. | DEYFS | Housing ACT, DFACS, Substitute Care Sector and other community agencies including CREATE | By June 2004 |
| Action 2.4.7: For families, provide a range of flexible services that can respond to the needs of children and parents addressing causal and consequential factors related to homelessness. | DEYFS and DHCS | Housing ACT, SAAP sector and other community agencies | Ongoing |

5.1.3 Theme 3: Access to appropriate housing and housing assistance

Theme 3 aims to ensure there is an appropriate range of medium and longer-term support options for people who are homeless. Complementing this are specific strategies to respond to the needs of the vulnerable groups, as well as strategies to better support people to find and maintain appropriate accommodation.

To support Theme 3, three objectives have been developed to guide future strategies and actions. These objectives are:

- Objective 3.1: Increase the available supply of appropriate, safe and adaptive housing for people at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless.
- Objective 3.2 Develop accommodation options to address the needs of individuals within the identified target groups.
- Objective 3.3: Assist people to achieve or maintain their tenure.

Objective 3.1: Increase the available supply of appropriate, safe and adaptive housing for people at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|--|------------------|
| Action 3.1.1: Increase the supply of community housing stock in the ACT. | Housing ACT | Treasury, DFACS, DHCS, Community Housing sector | By December 2007 |
| Action 3.1.2: Develop an investment strategy for social housing in the ACT. | Housing ACT | Treasury, DFACS, DHCS, Disability ACT, DEYFS, ACT Health, Community Housing sector | By December 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| Action 3.1.3: Ensure that the future development/redevelopment of supported households consider the needs of people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless. | Housing ACT | DHCS, Community Housing sector, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 3.1.4: Ensure that, in implementing the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Taskforce, the needs of people at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless are considered. | Housing ACT | DHCS | Ongoing |

Objective 3.2 Develop accommodation options to address the needs of individuals within the identified groups

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Action 3.2.1: Explore options for accommodation support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men who may be leaving custody or involved with the criminal justice system, or who require support with drug and alcohol misuse. The support would include case management and connect people to community and essential services, such as housing, counselling, and employment. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group and the A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee, Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, JACS, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|--|-----------------|
| Action 3.2.2: Provide supported accommodation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in an individual dwelling rented from Housing ACT or through private rental market. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group and the A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee, Housing ACT, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 3.2.3: Explore options for a hostel to provide low cost, temporary accommodation for up to 30 A&TSI who have come to Canberra to receive medical attention or who may be seeking longer-term accommodation. The hostel would include accommodation for families and be managed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provider. | DHCS | A&TSI Reference Group and the A&TSI Trilateral Housing Committee, Housing ACT, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 3.2.4: For single men, establish a service to provide supported accommodation able to assist men who have complex needs related to homelessness to sustain longer-term accommodation. | DHCS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 3.2.5: Provide accommodation support for families in individual households, rented from Housing ACT or through the private rental market. Services will be targeted to a mix of population groups and regional locations to reflect demand and current service gaps. | DHCS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Action 3.2.6: For families, including sole parents, particularly young women aged 14-21 years of age with children; provide crisis and medium term accommodation options. | DHCS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 3.2.7: For couples, explore and test new approaches to the provision of accommodation and support. | DHCS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 3.2.8: Develop crisis to medium term accommodation and support responses for people leaving custody or who are involved in the criminal justice system, and who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. | DHCS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, JACS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |
| Action 3.2.9: Develop medium term accommodation with intensive support for people involved in the criminal justice system and who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless and would benefit from intensive support and intervention. | JACS | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, DHCS SAAP sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|-----------------|
| <p>Action 3.2.10: Enhance the supply of (single person units) two bedroom units for single people so that the future demand for such stock can be accommodated.</p> | Housing ACT | Housing ACT, Community Housing sector, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |

Objective 3.3: Assist people to achieve or maintain their tenure

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|-----------------|
| <p>Action 3.3.1: Develop and implement strategies to expand tenancy management and support arrangements at multi-unit, public housing to ensure that such sites are family friendly and safe.</p> | Housing ACT | DHCS, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| <p>Action 3.3.2: Refine tools, policies and procedures for the early identification of people experiencing crisis or risk of eviction to support them to maintain their tenure.</p> | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Action 3.3.3: In partnership with local communities, improve the infrastructure to support social housing to better sustain tenancies, and provide accessible accommodation for people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless. | Housing ACT and Community Housing | DUS, DHCS, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 3.3.4: Review Housing ACT operational policies, specifically those related to debt management, breeches in tenancy agreements and eviction, to ensure that they support people experiencing housing stress or are at risk of becoming homeless to maintain their tenure. | Housing ACT | DHCS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| Action 3.3.5: Undertake negotiations with the NSW Government to ensure that the eligibility criteria for accommodation and support between the ACT and NSW are consistent. | DHCS | Housing ACT, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |

5.1.4 Theme 4: Supporting and driving innovation and excellence

Theme 4 aims to ensure the service and support system is able to provide quality services supported by evidence based decision making and respond to the changing needs of people who are at risk of homelessness and those that are homeless. In addition, this Theme aims to ensure that the sector's workforce is able to respond to changing needs and requirements. Complementing this is an active awareness program targeted at increasing the community's understanding of the impact of homelessness on people and the wider community.

To support Theme 4, four objectives have been developed to guide future strategies and actions. These objectives are:

- Objective 4.1: Undertake program evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure service quality and effectiveness.

- Objective 4.2: Undertake research to enhance evidence based decision-making and service development.
- Objective 4.3: Develop and implement a workforce planning strategy to develop and maintain a high level of skill and capability in the sector.
- Objective 4.4: Increase public awareness of homelessness in the ACT.

Objective 4.1: Undertake program evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure service quality and effectiveness

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|-------------|---|------------------|
| Action 4.1.1: Building on local national and international experience, investigate and enhance current service standards for the homelessness service sector. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.1.2: Building on the performance management and outcome framework, develop and implement a strategy to promote continuous improvement and development across the homelessness service system. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| Action 4.1.3: Establish a resourcing strategy and timetable for implementing an agreed standards framework across the homelessness service sector. | DHCS | Treasury, Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFSSAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Action 4.1.4: Provide funding to expand the SAAP resourcing and development service, to resource SAAP services to, coordinate and facilitate training and networking opportunities; and enhance the sector's capacity to effectively respond to the needs of all people eligible for SAAP services. | DHCS | SAAP sector | By December 2004 |
| Action 4.1.5: Establish benchmarks to guide performance assessment and performance improvement across the service sector. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |
| Action 4.1.6: Provide governance support and training to service providers to ensure the sustainability of organisations to provide support to people who are at risk of homelessness or those who are homeless. | DHCS | SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |
| Action 4.1.7: Integrate learnings from innovative initiatives and effective practice into the service system. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.1.8: Identify criteria for, and establish ongoing awards for, the development of innovative and creative solutions to homelessness and related issues in the ACT. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 |

Objective 4.2: Undertake research to enhance evidence based decision making and service development

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| <p>Action 4.2.1: Establish a research program to inform, monitor and drive the implementation of integrated and coordinated service responses for people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless. As the first stage of that research program, scope the research requirements and determine the research agenda for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and children; ■ Refugees on protection visas; and ■ Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By June 2004 |
| <p>Action 4.2.2: Ensure findings from research programs for people who are at risk of homelessness and people who are homeless are embedded into policies and the service delivery framework.</p> | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| <p>Action 4.2.3: In conjunction with the Council on Ageing, convene a working party of key stakeholders to determine the needs of older people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.</p> | DHCS | COTA, Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|-------------|---|------------------|
| <p>Action 4.2.4: As part of the response to young people, undertake research to review the current supported accommodation models in the ACT for young people between the ages of 12-15 and 16 -19 years of age who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. This project will consider the needs of young people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ have experienced family breakdown; ■ may not be able to return home; ■ have a disability and/or a mental illness and/or exhibit self harming or violence behaviours; ■ who are A&TSI; ■ in contact with youth justice and/or family services; ■ who may identify as gay, lesbian or transgender; and ■ to determine suitable responses to their needs. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| <p>Action 4.2.5: Investigate the value of establishing meaningful ACT sample sizes in ongoing ABS research and data collection projects to inform planning activities at a service system level.</p> | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, | By December 2004 |
| <p>Action 4.2.6: Ensure that SAAP data collection strategies take into account accompanying children to aid future planning.</p> | DHCS | SAAP sector | By December 2004 |

Objective 4.3: Develop and implement a workforce planning strategy to develop and maintain a high level of skill and capability in the sector

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| <p>Action 4.3.1: Develop a 5-10 year workforce blueprint for the homelessness sector that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifies current and future skill requirements; ■ Assesses current workforce capacity; ■ Determines training and development requirements; ■ Identifies potential future workforce supply; ■ Develops recruitment strategies, staff retention and succession planning; and ■ Formulates strategies to address future requirements. <p>This plan will be reviewed bi-annually.</p> | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2004 |
| <p>Action 4.3.2: Develop an integrated training strategy for the homelessness sector including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The establishment of a common induction strategy for new staff to the sector; ■ Development and delivery of accredited training across all agencies including case management; and ■ Development and implementation of training programs that build the skills of workers in client focussed approaches and in the achievement of client outcomes. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By June 2005 |

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Action 4.3.3: Enhance skills amongst service providers for provision of culturally appropriate support to people from diverse backgrounds. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.3.4: Develop capacity amongst service providers to provide culturally sensitive and accessible service response to A&TSI people. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, to A&TSI Reference Group, DEYFS, JACS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.3.5: Develop strategies to ensure that contracted services assisting children have workers who are trained and resourced to provide child specific responses. | DHCS | DEYFS, SAAP sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.3.6: Develop strategies to ensure that support workers, working with people in housing stress and those at risk of homelessness, have a sound knowledge of the ACT Residential Tenancies Act. | DHCS | SAAP sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |
| Action 4.3.7: Identify and implement learning and development strategies to enhance the capability of service management to engage in innovative service development. | DHCS | SAAP sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |

Objective 4.4: Increase public awareness of homelessness in the ACT

| Action | Lead agency | Partners | Completion date |
|---|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Action 4.4.1: Implement a public awareness and communication strategy on homelessness to raise awareness and to promote a common understanding of homeless people as members of the community. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, JACS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | By December 2005 then ongoing |
| Action 4.4.2: Provide leadership to tackle prejudice, develop a common understanding and foster respect in all parts of the community for the experience of those who are homeless and in recognising the professional status of workers in the field. | DHCS | Housing ACT, ACT Health, Disability ACT, DEYFS, SAAP sector, Community Housing sector and other community organisations | Ongoing |

6 Implementing the strategy

6.1 Measuring success

To assess the success of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*, the following key indicators have been developed to measure the impact of the strategy.

6.1.1 Incidence measures

Incidence measures relate to the level of homelessness in the community and related demand for services. Measures of ‘success’ include:

- fewer individuals and families living rough on the streets who do not have access to appropriate housing;
- reduced number of children experiencing homelessness;
- no waiting lists for crisis accommodation and reduced waiting lists for social housing providers;
- reduction of people being excluded from social housing due to past evictions;
- reduction of the rate of return for individuals and families into crisis and transitional housing;
- increased numbers of people who are homeless able to access social housing;
- individuals and families in ‘housing stress’ able to access the necessary supports and services in a timely manner so as to secure and maintain their tenure and their ability to live independently in the community; and
- lower levels of evictions from social housing.

6.1.2 Infrastructure measures

Infrastructure measures relate to the ability of the social housing infrastructure to appropriately accommodate individual and families. Measures of ‘success’ include:

- people spending a reasonable time in transitional accommodation and able to exit to appropriate housing which meets their individual circumstance and needs;
- greater supply of social housing stock;
- increased stability in tenure for people in accommodation suitable to their circumstance and needs; and
- increased satisfaction of individuals and families with their accommodation.

6.1.3 Community based measures

Community based measures relate to the understanding and attitudes to homelessness and related issues amongst the general community. The key measure of ‘success’ focuses on a

greater awareness of homelessness and the factors that prevent and/or lead to homelessness in our community.

6.2 Monitoring and review

To oversight the implementation *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*, a governance framework will be established to monitor and review performance against the four themes and their associated objectives.

6.3 The ACT Homelessness Committee

The ACT Homelessness Committee will be established to govern the implementation of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*.

This Committee will comprise government representatives from all portfolios and community representatives and be chaired by the Chief Executive of DHCS.

This Committee will be responsible for driving the implementation and evaluation of the strategy, the coordination of reporting and implementing a public communication strategy.

This Committee will meet regularly and report quarterly to the Minister for Disability Housing and Community Services; and every six months to the Management Advisory Group of Chief Executives on the implementation of *Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy*.

6.4 Monitoring

Breaking the cycle – the ACT Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that the Strategy is effective in reducing homelessness and that it reflects the emerging and priority needs of people who are at risk of homelessness. It will be informed by all portfolios across government; service providers; key community stakeholders; and service users. This will be achieved by convening a number of forums, together with an Annual Homelessness Summit.

An evaluation framework will also be developed involving government, community organisations and service users. The evaluation framework will be both summative and formative for the life of the strategy.

Secretariat functions will be provided by DHCS. The progress of the strategy and its evaluation will be included in all ACT Government agencies' annual reports.

Appendix 1 - Members of the HAG

Ms Sandra Lambert (Chair)

Chief Executive

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Maureen Sheehan

Director Community Development

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Bronwen Overton-Clarke

Director Policy and Organisational Services

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Sarah King

Senior Manager Community Services

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Helen Fletcher

Director Housing Services Group

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Mr Alan Franklin

Senior Manager Housing Policy and Planning

Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Nicole Hoffman

Senior Project Officer, Policy Coordination

Department of Urban Services

Ms Bronwyn Webster

Manager Policy and Analysis Unit

Department of Education, Youth and Family Services

Ms Siobhan Carrigan

Senior Policy Officer

ACT Corrective Services

Ms Melanie Thompson

Policy Officer

Department of ACT Health

Ms Linda Trompf

Acting Manager Mental Health Policy Unit

Mental Health ACT

Ms Kathryn Maxwell
Director Community Engagement Unit
ACT Chief Minister's Department

Mr Joseph Murphy
Territory Manager
ACT Government
Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Ms Ara Creswell
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations

Mr Jim Carter
Independent Representative

Ms Meredith Hunter
Executive Officer
Youth Coalition of the ACT

Mr Warren Daley
Aboriginal Health Worker

Ms Annette Wade
Executive Officer
ACT Shelter

Ms Ginny Hewlett
Community Representative

Mr John Parke
Marketing Consultant
Chair, Youth Business Initiative

Ms Therese Quinn
Acting Program Manager
YWCA of Canberra

Ms Jacqui Pearce
Executive Director, Toora Inc
ACTCOSS Representative

Secretariat to the HAG, committees and working groups

Ms Margaret Russell

Manager of the Secretariat and Senior Policy Administrator
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Ms Karen Fominas

Key Coordinator and Administrative Support
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Ms Therese Daniell

Policy Officer and Administrative Establishment
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Ms Cate Coughlin-Brewer

Administrative Support
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Appendix 2 - Members of the Steering Committee

Ms Maureen Sheehan (Chair)

Director Community Development
Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Bronwen Overton-Clarke

Director Policy and Organisational Services
Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Sarah King

Senior Manager Community Services
Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Mr Alan Franklin

Senior Manager Housing Policy and Planning
Department of Disability, Housing & Community Services

Ms Ginny Hewlett

Community Representative

Ms Bronwyn Webster

Manager Policy and Analysis Unit
Department of Education, Youth and Family Services

Ms Annette Wade

Executive Officer ACT Shelter

Ms Nicole Hoffman

Senior Project Officer, Policy Coordination
Department of Urban Services

Ms Linda Trompf

Acting Manager Mental Health Policy Unit
Mental Health ACT

Ms Kathryn Maxwell

Director Community Engagement Unit
ACT Chief Minister's Department

Ms Jacqui Pearce

Executive Director, Toora Inc
ACTCOSS Representative

Ms Siobhan Carrigan
Senior Policy Officer
ACT Corrective Services

Ms Carmel Maher
Assistant Territory Manager
ACT Office
Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

Ms Anneka Ferguson and Ms Sharryn Howes
Senior Project Officers
Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

Ms Anne Kirwan
Manager, Youth and Mental Health Programs
Centacare

Appendix 3 - Membership of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group

In developing the ACT Homelessness Strategy, the ACT Government has been working directly with a range of key stakeholders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT to ensure the Strategy is owned by, and relevant to, all who make up the ACT community.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group comprises the following representatives:

Ms Sarah King (Chair)

Senior Manager

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Mrs Betty Callow

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Welfare Officer

The Canberra Hospital

Mr Dion Devow

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Welfare Officer

The Canberra Hospital

Ms Julie Tongs

Chief Executive Officer

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Centre

Mr Maurice Walker

Chair

Chief Minister's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Council

Mr Keith Clarke

Manager

Aboriginal Hostels Limited

Ms Destiny Devow

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Representative

Ms Roslyn Brown

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Representative

Ms Isabelle Collins

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Representative

Mr Keith Brandy

A&TSI Services and Cultural Diversity Unit
ACT Corrective Services

Ms Kim Davison

Coordinator
Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Leslie Purcell

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

Ms Rose Longford

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

Mr Jim Best

Billabong Aboriginal Corporation

Ms Rebecca Trindall

Access, Resources and Support for SAAP Communities

Mr Bob Huddleston

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Representative

Ms Lyn Ella

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit
ACT Chief Minister's Department

Ms Marsha Files

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit
ACT Chief Minister's Department

Appendix 4 - Our partners

Many government and community organisations have come together to develop the strategy-of-action to address homelessness in the ACT including:

- Aboriginal Hostels Ltd
- ACT Corrective Services
- ACT Health
- ACT Planning and Land Authority
- ACT Shelter
- ARSSC (Access, Resources and Support for SAAP Communities)
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations
- Australian Government Departments of FaCS/Health and Ageing
- Billabong Aboriginal Corporation
- Centrelink
- Chief Minister's Department, in particular:
 - ACT Office for Ageing
 - ACT Office of Women
 - Chief Minister's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Council
 - Chief Minister's Multicultural Council
- Coalition of Community Housing Organisations
- COTA Council on the Ageing
- Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services
- Department of Education, Youth and Family Services
- Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal Youth corporation
- Koori Women's Network
- SAAP Sector
- Southside Housing Aboriginal Corporation
- The Canberra Hospital
- Urban Services
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Centre
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Youth Justice Community Unit