



Jesuit Social Services' submission to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan

October 2023



Jesuit Social Services: Who we are and what we do

Jesuit Social Services is a social change organisation working to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential. For 45 years we have been working with some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised members of our communities, who often experience multiple and complex challenges. We work where the need is greatest and where we have the capacity, experience and skills to make the most difference. We deliver services across Victoria as well as in Western Sydney and the Northern Territory (NT).

Research, advocacy and policy are coordinated across all program and major interest areas of Jesuit Social Services. Our advocacy is grounded in the knowledge, expertise and experiences of program staff and participants, as well as academic research and evidence. We seek to influence policies, practices, legislation and budget investment to positively influence people's lives and improve approaches to address long-term social challenges. We do this by working collaboratively with governments, business and the community sector to build coalitions and alliances around key issues and by building strong relationships with key decision-makers and the community.

How our work intersects with the housing and homelessness sectors

At Jesuit Social Services, we offer a range of programs in the housing and homelessness space. Most of our programs focus on working with people with complex needs. Our program participants often are at risk of experiencing homelessness, and experience a range of co-occurring and interrelated issues, including mental ill-health, substance misuse, involvement with child protection and justice systems, and experiences of trauma, including family violence. We also respond to the needs of specific population groups, including young people experiencing vulnerability, young people exiting out of home care and people in the youth and adult justice systems and newly arrived refugees and people seeking asylum. Jesuit Social Services does this by offering a range of housing and homelessness programs

with a focus on preventing homelessness through targeted early intervention initiatives such as tenancy support, transitional support, wraparound supported accommodation services and community integration support.

Our housing and homelessness-related programs include:

- **Perry House:** specialist forensic disability accommodation program providing 24-hour support and residential living skills for young people with a cognitive impairment who are involved with the criminal justice system or are at risk of homelessness.
- **Dillon House:** 24-hour supported accommodation for young people involved with the justice system who are at risk of homelessness.
- **Next Steps:** intensive early intervention assertive outreach support for young people at risk of homelessness after involvement with the justice system.
- **ReConnect:** transitional assistance for men and gender diverse people exiting prison.
- **Link Youth Justice Housing Program:** head lease housing model providing intensive after hours support for young people involved with the justice system who are at risk of homelessness.
- **Maribyrnong Community Residential Facility:** temporary accommodation and wraparound support for men leaving prison who would otherwise face homelessness.

Executive Summary

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan).

Having adequate housing is a fundamental human right, and it is widely acknowledged that access to secure, long-term housing is a crucial foundation for personal health, wellbeing and agency.¹ Every person living in Australia should have access to safe, secure and affordable housing, however for an increasing number of people this is not the case due to the current housing crisis.² Consultation on the Plan comes at a pivotal time, and the Plan must make ambitious, evidence-based targets in order to bring about the changes needed to reform Australia's housing system and end homelessness.

The recommendations in this submission are grounded in the knowledge, expertise and experiences of Jesuit Social Services' program staff and participants, as well as research and evidence. This submission's recommendations provide a framework for reform, and are also informed by consistent advocacy and campaigns led by organisations in the housing and homelessness sector.

In this submission, we emphasise the critical need for the Plan to include a dedicated commitment to increasing the nation's supply of safe, sustainable and supported public housing, along with a commitment to end homelessness by ensuring people can access an adequate social and financial safety net. This submission also outlines the case for including targets in the Plan to expand investment in effective approaches for homelessness prevention such as tenancy and housing support programs, particularly for people with multiple and complex needs. Jesuit Social

Services also advocates for equitable access to energy efficient and climate safe housing, including access to heating and cooling in rental properties as a matter of urgency. Finally, this submission also highlights the need for separate National Housing and Homelessness Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and children and young people, to ensure the unique experiences of these cohorts are properly addressed, not lost in a larger national plan.

Jesuit Social Services would welcome the opportunity to expand further upon any of the matters raised in this submission.

Introduction

We commend the Federal Government for undertaking consultation on the development of a strategic and long-term national vision for housing and homelessness policy.

State and territory governments, non-government organisations and housing and homelessness services have been advocating for a coordinated national plan to improve housing and homelessness outcomes for years.³ Australia has not had a long-term national strategy for housing since 1992, and as a result, the Plan represents an opportunity for important reform.⁴

This opportunity comes at a critical time. Australia is currently experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis that continues to intensify. The gap between the demand for and supply of public and community housing continues to widen, with tenants in the private rental market facing very low vacancy rates and skyrocketing rents, and home ownership becoming increasingly inaccessible for many people.⁵ As a result, more people are slipping through the cracks and facing unstable housing and homelessness. The pressure of these issues is felt disproportionately by households on low

1 Office of the High Commissioner United Nations (1966). International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11). [Weblink](#); Infrastructure Australia (2019). An assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs: The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019. [Weblink](#).

2 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (2022). Why does Australia have a rental crisis, and what can be done about it? [Weblink](#).

3 Many organisations have called for a national plan. [Everybody's Home](#) (2018); [Parliament of Victoria](#) (2021); [Salvation Army](#) (2022); [Mental Health Australia](#) (2022).

4 Department of Social Services (2023). The National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper. [Weblink](#).

5 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (2022). Why does Australia have a rental crisis, and what can be done about it? [Weblink](#).



incomes or income support payments, people experiencing vulnerability, and people with complex needs, such as disability, mental ill-health, substance misuse and experiences with the justice system.⁶ Systems and services are also being affected by the housing crisis, with service demand and costs booming for services in areas including justice, mental health, settlement services and homelessness.⁷

Given the severity of the current housing crisis, and the longstanding need for more strategic direction, the Plan needs to deliver short-, medium- and long-term objectives that incorporate increased supply of housing with the required support services necessary to support vulnerable population groups. The Plan needs to be backed up by new funding commitments and measurable targets in order to ensure accountability for sustainable change. The Plan represents an opportunity to address the issues that have contributed to the current housing crisis such as inadequate housing supply and poor income security, as well as an opportunity to indicate options for early intervention in other systems such as justice, child protection/ out of home care, mental health and disability and settlement services for new arrivals.

Jesuit Social Services has witnessed first-hand some of the problems currently affecting Australia's housing system. We have a decades-long history working alongside people with multiple, complex and intersecting needs. These are the people who experience some of the greatest difficulties in obtaining access to safe, secure and affordable housing. While we make comments and some recommendations that apply to housing and homelessness issues as a whole, this submission specifically focuses on the experiences of people with multiple and complex needs and people who are at risk of homelessness.

This submission discusses the following five focus areas highlighted in the Issues Paper:

1. Social housing
2. Homelessness
3. The impact of climate change and disasters on housing security, sustainability and health
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing
5. Children and young people

6 Swinburne University of Technology (2021). We identified who's most at risk of homelessness and where they are. [Weblink](#).

7 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). Social housing shortage fuels Victoria's prison cost blowout. [Weblink](#); Homelessness Australia (2023). Housing crisis is driving surging demand for homelessness services. [Weblink](#).

Our recommendations

We call on the Federal Government to implement the following recommendations as part of the Plan.

1. Increase investment in safe, sustainable and supported social housing, by committing to build at least 25,000 public and community homes per year over the next ten years, with a particular focus on increasing the supply of public housing as a percentage of social housing overall, as per calls by the Everybody's Home Campaign.
2. Jesuit Social Services endorses the Northern Territory Council of Social Service's submission to the Plan, and supports them in recommending that 20% of all new housing in the NT is social and affordable housing, including setting a target for increased supply of public housing.
3. In accordance with National Shelter and the National Association of Renters' Organisations, Jesuit Social Services proposes that each jurisdiction sets a minimum target of 10% of all housing being public or community housing by 2036, including setting targets for an increase in public housing.
4. Raise the base rate for JobSeeker and related payments from \$54 to at least \$78 a day, as per calls by the Raise the Rate Campaign, in order to lift people on income support above the poverty line and increase their ability to afford access to appropriate housing and prevent homelessness.
5. Benchmark Commonwealth Rent Assistance for private tenants with low incomes to actual rents/ rents paid, requiring a 100% increase in the maximum rates for this payment in 2023-24.
6. Increase investment in targeted, specialised and holistic programs of housing and support for people whose multiple and complex needs are not met through the private rental markets or community housing systems. These programs should include targeted initiatives offering outreach and wrap around supports for people with a range of needs including:
 - young people exiting out-of-home care and custodial settings;
 - young people at risk of homelessness;
 - victim-survivors of family violence;
 - people with mental ill-health, experiences of substance misuse and trauma;
 - people with disabilities; and
 - people seeking asylum and refugees.
7. In accordance with NT Shelter's Supplementary Submission to the Plan, adopt a needs-based funding allocation method for homelessness services in the NT.
8. Ensure effective implementation of climate safe and energy efficient design in planning and construction of new public and community housing, as well as retrofitting of pre-2003 social housing.
9. Provide equitable access to energy-efficient housing, and invest in energy efficiency improvements for low-income homes to cut emissions and energy bills.
10. Strengthen minimum rental standards to enable equitable access to energy efficient housing to reduce negative health and mortality impacts of both hot and cold temperatures. This includes legislating cooling requirements in rental properties and implementing incentives for landowners to retrofit pre-2003 built homes.
11. Invest in place-based responses to addressing extreme weather, housing and entrenched disadvantage including in the NT and Western Sydney, and ensure these responses are developed in partnership with local communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

12. Implement future and emergency planning for preventing homelessness and displacement as a result of extreme weather and natural disasters, as well as response planning to provide solutions to cope with weather conditions for those who are already experiencing homelessness or newly experiencing homelessness.
13. Develop a 10-year National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Homelessness Plan in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, supported by allocation of additional funding.
14. Develop a 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan for Children and Young People, supported by allocation of additional funding.
15. Invest in transitional, ongoing wraparound support programs for children and young people exiting out-of-home care.



Jesuit Social Services' Perry House



New social housing build, Ascot Vale



1. Social Housing

The role of social housing

The Plan represents an opportunity to re-prioritise the social housing sector. Social housing is an umbrella term for public housing, community housing and State Owned and Managed Indigenous Housing (SOMIH). Social housing is essential government-subsidised infrastructure, allocated by need, and it is meant to be significantly more affordable than private rental housing. Public housing charges tenants 25% of their income, while than community housing charges tenants 25-30% of their income plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance.⁸ Along with affordability, social housing provides security of tenure to people who are unlikely to be able to access the private rental market due to a need for medical, age-related or other forms of support, or due to affordability issues.⁹

Social housing tenants are typically people who are on very low incomes, have complex needs or have experienced homelessness or domestic and family violence.¹⁰ Social housing tenants are more likely to be women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, have a disability, be over 65 or be from single-person households.¹¹

An increasing number of people are becoming unable to access the private rental market, and it is the least affordable in the country, when compared with other housing options such as home ownership or social housing. This is as a result of increasing rents, high levels of competitiveness and low supply of vacant rental properties.¹² People with low incomes are being priced out of the private market and in order to increase access to housing, an increase in the supply of social housing, and public housing specifically, needs to be prioritised in the Plan.

Social housing plays an essential role in providing shelter for people who are at risk of homelessness or living in precarious situations.¹³ It can help people to rebuild their lives and pursue education or employment, and also results in better outcomes for people who would otherwise be at risk of becoming homeless. Public housing in particular is an essential support for people experiencing vulnerability; a 2021 study by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) found that better outcomes were achieved by placing people exiting prison into public housing rather than private rental properties. This study also found that housing people from the justice system in public housing represented a

8 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink.](#)

9 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink.](#)

10 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink.](#)

11 Department of Social Services (2023). The National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper. [Weblink.](#)

12 Martin, C., Lawson, J., Milligan, V., Hartley, C., Pawson, H. and Dodson, J. (2023). Towards an Australian Housing and Homelessness Strategy: understanding national approaches in contemporary policy. AHURI Final Report No. 401, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne. [Weblink.](#)

13 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink.](#)

government funding saving of roughly \$5,000 per person.¹⁴ Social housing, and specifically public housing, is an essential support and a wise investment, but currently Australia's social housing supply is not keeping up with demand.¹⁵

Social housing in 2023: supply is shrinking and demand is growing

Despite being essential infrastructure, Australia's social housing supply is inadequate, and requires significant development, repair, redevelopment, upgrading and investment to meet the needs of a growing population. Social housing represents only 4% of all dwellings in Australia, down from 7% in the mid-1990s.¹⁶ This proportion is even lower in Victoria, with social housing making up only 2.9% of the state's residential dwellings.¹⁷ While there has been some growth in social housing stock nationally, it has not kept up with population growth, which grew by 15% during 2011-2021, while social housing stock only grew by 4.5%.

The community housing sector has grown significantly and now makes up 25% of all social housing, compared with 7.9% in 2006.¹⁸ This growth is welcome, but for the purposes of this submission which focuses on people with multiple and complex needs, public housing is still the most affordable and accessible type of social housing, and therefore must be prioritised in the Plan. Current supply of social housing is inadequate and without a significant increase, more people will be forced onto long waitlists for social housing, particularly for public housing, or into crisis accommodation, rough sleeping or couch surfing.¹⁹

Waitlists and households with unmet housing needs

It is difficult to gain an accurate picture of the number of people in Australia who need social housing. At the end of June 2022, there were 174,000 applicants on waitlists for public housing and 13,700 for Indigenous housing.²⁰ Additionally, as of June 2021, there were 40,000 applicants waiting for community housing.²¹

These figures already demonstrate a substantial need for more social housing, particularly public housing. However, some organisations and commentators, including AHURI and the Community Housing Industry Association also argue that social housing waitlists are not an accurate representation of need.²² This is because waitlists do not consider other kinds of households with an unmet housing need, such as people living in overcrowded dwellings, private tenants in rental stress (paying over 30% of their income on rent) or people experiencing homelessness who are not on waiting lists. A recent Community Housing Industry Association report prepared in partnership with UNSW Sydney and the University of Sydney found that if you consider these other households, there are 640,000 additional low-income households in Australia who need social housing.²³ This research along with reported demand and waiting lists demonstrates an urgent need for significant and meaningful investment into growing Australia's social housing stock.

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- 14 Martin, C., Reeve, R., McCausland, R., Baldry, E., Burton, P., White, R. and Thomas, S. (2021). Exiting prison with complex supports needs: the role of housing assistance. AHURI Final Report No. 361, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne. [Weblink](#).
- 15 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink](#).
- 16 Martin, C., Lawson, J., Milligan, V., Hartley, C., Pawson, H. and Dodson, J. (2023). Towards an Australian Housing and Homelessness Strategy: understanding national approaches in contemporary policy. AHURI Final Report No. 401, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne. [Weblink](#).
- 17 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). New figures reveal Victoria's social housing crisis. [Weblink](#).
- 18 Department of Social Services (2023). The National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper. [Weblink](#).
- 19 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2023). Housing assistance in Australia. [Weblink](#).
- 20 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2023). Housing assistance in Australia. [Weblink](#).
- 21 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink](#).
- 22 Department of Social Services (2023). The National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper. [Weblink](#).
- 23 Community Housing Industry Association (2022). Quantifying Australia's unmet housing need: a national snapshot. [Weblink](#).

The importance of public housing

Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows that Australia's supply of public housing has been steadily declining. In 2011, there were 337,177 public housing dwellings (81% of all social housing).²⁴ In 2023, this has declined further, with a total of 297,600 public housing dwellings (67% of all social housing).²⁵ This change has mostly been due to governments selling and transferring public housing stock to community housing providers.²⁶ While community housing stock has increased, in reality this change does not 'offset' the loss of public housing stock.

Recently there have been several major announcements by governments regarding housing policy, including the passage of the Housing Australia Future Fund Bill 2023, the outcomes of the National Cabinet meeting in August and Victoria's Housing Statement.²⁷ In each of these, governments used the terminology 'social and affordable housing' to describe future housing policy and funding commitments. While public housing does fit under the umbrella term of social housing, without making a specific mention of public housing in these recent announcements, there is no guarantee that any of these changes will result in an increase in public housing stock.

For example, Victoria's Housing Statement contains commitments regarding the construction of new social homes and the rebuilding of current public housing towers as sites with a mix of social and private housing. The Housing Statement does not specify if any of this new housing will be public, and the current government approach to public housing redevelopment transfers these public resources to Community Housing Organisations, either through direct sale or a Ground Lease Model.²⁸

Community housing is necessary and more affordable than private rental properties, but it is our observation that community housing does not meet the needs of most Jesuit Social Services participants, or people with complex needs, people on income support payments or very low incomes or people at risk of homelessness. Community housing is more expensive than public housing, and from our perspective it does not provide the same security of tenure.

Public housing is essential infrastructure and the issue of continued decline in public housing stock needs to be addressed in the Plan. Setting targets for increased supply of public housing in all states and territories should feature as a priority in the Plan. The public housing waitlist of 174,000 applicants nationally demonstrates the need and demand specifically for increasing public housing supply.

What we're asking for

On August 16th 2023, the National Cabinet agreed to a national target to build 1.2 million new 'well-located' homes in the next five years, starting from July 2024.²⁹ Additionally, on September 12th, the Federal Government agreed to spend an extra \$1 billion towards public and community housing this year as part of negotiations for the Housing Australia Future Fund.³⁰ These commitments are a good starting point given the amount of new housing stock needed. However, it is vital that the National Cabinet housing target includes a significant percentage of social – and specifically public – housing. Public housing is the cornerstone of a just housing system, and waitlist data shows that the greatest need exists for public housing.

24 AIHW (2011). Housing assistance in Australia. [Weblink](#).

25 AIHW (2023). Housing assistance in Australia. [Weblink](#).

26 AHURI (2023). What is the difference between social housing and affordable housing – and why do they matter? [Weblink](#).

27 Parliament of Australia (2023). Housing Australia Future Fund Bill 2023. [Weblink](#); Prime Minister of Australia (2023). Meeting of National Cabinet – Working Together to Deliver Better Housing Outcomes. [Weblink](#); Victorian Government (2023). Victoria's Housing Statement. [Weblink](#).

28 Porter, L., Kelly, D., Kunjan, P., Levin, I., Shaw, K. & Davies, L. (2023). Victoria's Housing Statement: A critical explainer. RMIT University Centre for Urban Research. [Weblink](#).

29 Prime Minister of Australia (2023). Media Release: Meeting of National Cabinet – Working together to deliver better housing outcomes. [Weblink](#).

30 Karp, P. (2023). Greens agree to support Labor's \$10bn housing fund, breaking months-long impasse. [Weblink](#).

It is unrealistic and unviable to rely too heavily on the private and community markets to rapidly expand and meet the needs of the diverse range of people who need social and affordable housing – particularly those who require additional wrap-around supports. Public housing is more affordable, offers secure long-term tenure, and has been proven to act as a strong protective factor against homelessness.³¹ Urgent investment in increasing public housing supply is needed to lessen the impact of the housing crisis on people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

Recommendations

1. Increase investment in safe, sustainable and supported social housing, by committing to build at least 25,000 public and community homes per year over the next ten years, with a particular focus on increasing the supply of public housing as a percentage of social housing overall, as per calls by the Everybody’s Home Campaign.
2. Jesuit Social Services endorses the Northern Territory Council of Social Service’s submission to the Plan, and supports them in recommending that 20% of all new housing in the NT is social and affordable housing, including setting a target for increased supply of public housing.
3. In accordance with National Shelter and the National Association of Renters’ Organisations, Jesuit Social Services proposes that each jurisdiction sets a minimum target of 10% of all housing being public or community housing by 2036, including setting targets for an increase in public housing.

2. Homelessness

To be effective, the Plan must cover both housing and homelessness policy, and also related areas that can affect homelessness, including income support. For many people, homelessness is triggered by personal crises related to finances, relationship breakdown or compromised health conditions (both physical and mental). The key reason for people seeking support from Specialist Homelessness Services is financial difficulties (39%), followed by family and domestic violence (37%) and housing crisis or eviction (37%).³² To reduce homelessness, the Plan needs to adequately consider the structural and societal factors that lead to people becoming homeless and unable to afford housing. This requires having an adequate social and financial safety net in place.

An adequate social and financial safety net

Despite a recent small increase, the base rates of JobSeeker (\$54 a day), Youth Allowance (\$44 a day) and related payments, continue to sit well below the poverty line.³³ This is directly linked to the risk of people becoming homeless because they cannot afford rent. In 2021–22, 79% of all clients aged 15 and over who presented to Specialist Homelessness Services for assistance named income support payments as their main form of income.³⁴ Recent developments, such as the success of the 2020 Coronavirus Supplement and JobKeeper payments, demonstrate that an adequate income support rate can reduce homelessness. Homelessness Australia found that when income support payments were doubled during 2020, homelessness dropped by 5%.³⁵ Once these increased payments were ended in May 2021, homelessness increased again by 6,425 people nationally, up 7% from May 2020.³⁶

31 RMIT University (2018). Expert comment on Australia’s growing rate of homelessness. [Weblink](#).

32 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

33 Davidson, P., Bradbury, B. & Wong, M. (2023). Poverty in Australia 2023: Who is affected. Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report no. 20. Australian Council of Social Service and UNSW Sydney. [Weblink](#); Services Australia (2023). How much you can get. [Weblink](#).

34 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

35 Homelessness Australia (2021). We can, and did, dramatically reduce homelessness with increased income support, new data shows. [Weblink](#).

36 Homelessness Australia (2021). We can, and did, dramatically reduce homelessness with increased income support, new data shows. [Weblink](#).

Despite strong evidence of the effective protection income support provides against homelessness, income support payments remain below the poverty line. The base rates for both JobSeeker and related payments and Commonwealth Rent Assistance need to be significantly increased. This will help minimise and prevent homelessness and assist people on income support to access appropriate housing.

Tenancy support and wraparound services

Along with financial issues, eviction is another main cause of homelessness. The most effective change we can make towards ending homelessness, along with increasing income support, is to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place through early intervention and tenancy support programs. Early intervention and tenancy support programs are an evidence-based way to help people maintain their tenancies and avoid eviction, and the Plan should commit to expanding these services as a way to prevent homelessness.

A large amount of funding for homelessness in Australia is directed towards crisis management, and services to support people after they have become homeless.³⁷ However, in its review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, the Productivity Commission found that, prevention and early intervention programs need to be prioritised as they are proven to be effective in helping to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place.³⁸

For people at risk of homelessness, early intervention and tenancy support can prevent their situation escalating, improve their long-term housing outcomes and ensure they are adequately housed while they access the wrap around supports they need. These programs are also a great support in preventing homelessness for people who have multiple and complex needs, such as many of the participants in programs run by Jesuit Social Services.

Wraparound supports, such as supported accommodation, tenancy support and transitional support for those exiting prison or out of home care are essential services for supporting people with complex needs, to maintain housing and live well in our community. This must include those with experiences of trauma and mental ill-health. We have existing examples of early intervention models that are effective and able to be scaled up, such as Perry House and Dillon House, two supported accommodation services run by Jesuit Social Services.

Perry House and Next Steps/ Dillon House

Jesuit Social Services offers a range of programs which provide supported, wraparound housing services for people with multiple and complex needs. In particular, Jesuit Social Services provides supported housing for young people who have been involved with the justice system through our Perry House and Dillon House/ Next Steps programs. Perry House provides a Specialist Forensic Disability Accommodation (SFDA) residential-based living skills program for young people who have been involved with the justice system and who also have an intellectual disability and are at risk of, or are experiencing, homelessness. Dillon House/Next Steps, is a Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program which was recognised by the 2017 Victorian Homelessness Achievement Awards, is a supported housing program for 16 to 24-year-olds involved with the justice system who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness.

These programs, and other similar targeted initiatives, represents good response to supporting people with complex needs who are unable to access inadequate public housing infrastructure and an unaffordable private rental market, but much more is needed. In particular, more specialist housing and support programs are needed for young people exiting out of home care and custodial settings who need support to develop their independent living skills.

37 Hand, T. & MacKenzie, D. (2023). Efforts to find safe housing for homeless youth have gone backwards. Here's what the new national plan must do differently. *The Conversation*. [Weblink](#).

38 Australian Government Productivity Commission (2022). In need of repair: The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement Study Report. [Weblink](#).



“All I really want is a place to call home so I can feel safe and concentrate on my goals.”

Case Study: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had a history of involvement in the justice system, had a long history of out-of-home care, going through different residential care facilities. He'd been couch surfing and sleeping rough on the street. All his moving around was due to him having a very insecure relationship with his stepmother and father.

When [REDACTED] was initially connected to Jesuit Social Services, Housing Programs [REDACTED] [REDACTED] saw in [REDACTED] what he often sees in the young people he works with.

“A lot of participants come to us with a sense of hopelessness and helplessness because they've always been pushed to the side. They've been told that they're not enough or that they'll never be good enough.”

[REDACTED] recognised that what [REDACTED] really needed in order to have a chance at getting back on the right track was a stable and supportive place to live. [REDACTED] needed somewhere he could understand his offending behaviour and process some of the trauma he'd experienced. And so, four months after [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] first met, [REDACTED] moved into Dillon House.

Over the 12 months that [REDACTED] lived at Dillon House, he reengaged with education – one of the goals he really wanted to achieve. [REDACTED] school attendance rate was 85% and he also did well in Dillon House's shared living environment.

Towards the end of his 12 month placement, [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that we was ready to reach for his next goal: living on his own.

[REDACTED] connected [REDACTED] to another one of our Housing Programs – the Link Housing Program – and [REDACTED] was supported into his own rental property. It was in this supported independent accommodation that [REDACTED] continued developing positive living habits, including keeping his place in good repair and paying his rent on time.

What we're asking for

Many initiatives, including Jesuit Social Services programs, have been developed to support people with multiple and complex needs to sustain private and public tenancies, but more growth in housing and support options is needed. Jesuit Social Services advocates for the Plan to include expansion of and significantly increased investment in specific initiatives targeted at people with complex, multiple and intensive long-term support needs, such as the specialist housing and intensive support programs accessed by the participants of our Next Steps and Perry House programs. These specialised housing support programs help meet the needs of people at risk of homelessness who often are not served by existing housing services, and along with a proper increase in income support, growth in these programs would make a real impact in helping to end homelessness.

Recommendations

4. Raise the base rate for JobSeeker and related payments from \$54 to at least \$78 a day, as per calls by the Raise the Rate Campaign, in order to lift people on income support above the poverty line and increase their ability to afford access to appropriate housing and prevent homelessness.
5. Benchmark Commonwealth Rent Assistance for private tenants with low incomes to actual rents/ rents paid, requiring a 100% increase in the maximum rates for this payment in 2023-24.
6. Increase investment in targeted, specialised and holistic programs of housing and support for people whose multiple and complex needs are not met through the private rental markets or community housing systems. These programs should include targeted initiatives offering outreach and wrap around supports for people with a range of needs including:

- young people exiting out-of-home care and custodial settings;
- young people at risk of homelessness;
- victim-survivors of family violence;
- people with mental ill-health, experiences of substance misuse and trauma;
- people with disabilities; and
- people seeking asylum and refugees.

7. In accordance with NT Shelter's Supplementary Submission to the Plan, adopt a needs-based funding allocation method for homelessness services in the NT.



3. The impact of climate change and disasters on housing security, sustainability and health

The effect of climate change has implications for access to appropriate housing, as housing plays a key role in providing protection and shelter during weather extremes. Climate change disproportionately impacts people living in social housing, people living on low incomes and people experiencing homelessness.³⁹

Extreme temperatures and Australian housing stock

Australian homes are often insufficiently designed and ill-equipped to withstand both cold and hot temperatures.⁴⁰ This is without factoring in the impacts of climate change and ever-increasing extreme temperatures and climate events, which studies have shown will continue well into the future in Australia.⁴¹ Public housing is shown to be particularly ill-equipped for and affected by higher temperatures.⁴² In Victoria, studies have shown that temperatures inside public housing properties can measure as higher than outside temperatures.⁴³

Additionally, it is often assumed that due to Australia's milder weather, properties here are less affected by colder temperatures, but this is not the case. A 2023 study found that during winter, 81 per cent of Australian homes measured below the safe minimum indoor temperature standard set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is 18 degrees Celsius.⁴⁴ WHO has set this as a minimum standard, as living in temperatures lower than

39 Baker, E., Lester, L. H., Bentley, R., & Beer, A. (2016). Poor housing quality: Prevalence and health effects. *J Prev Interv Community*, 44(4), pp. 219–232. doi:10.1080/10852352.2016.1197714; Wade, M., Gooder, H., & Flook, N. (2021). Health, housing and ecological justice: Climate change and preventing homelessness deaths. *Parity*, 34(7), 41–43. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.071023218872576>

40 Baker, E., Lester, L. H., Bentley, R., & Beer, A. (2016). Poor housing quality: Prevalence and health effects. *J Prev Interv Community*, 44(4), pp. 219–232. doi:10.1080/10852352.2016.1197714

41 CSIRO. (2021). *Climate change in Australia*. CSIRO: Canberra. ([Weblink](#)).

42 Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) (2021). *Report: Feeling the Heat*. ([Weblink](#)).

43 Ibid, p. 11

44 Barlow, C. F., Daniel, L., & Baker, E. (2023). Cold homes in Australia: Questioning our assumptions about prevalence. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 100, pp. 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2023.103124>; World Health Organization (WHO) (2018). *WHO Housing and Health Guidelines: Recommendations to promote healthy housing for a sustainable and equitable future*. Pp. 33–36. ([Weblink](#)).

this over a sustained period has been shown to have potentially serious impacts on health.⁴⁵

Health impacts

Lack of adequate heating, cooling and ventilation within homes, particularly social housing, is a serious concern for health. Exposure to both high and low temperatures is a much greater risk for more vulnerable population groups including those with existing health issues, disabilities, elderly people, children and people experiencing homelessness.⁴⁶ Exposure also tends to exacerbate existing health issues, such as organ failure in hot temperatures or lung and respiratory issues in cold temperatures.⁴⁷ Indoor mould issues also tend to disproportionately occur in rental properties, affecting people of lower socioeconomic status in particular, which also has adverse health impacts.⁴⁸

Heatwaves are a higher cause of death in Australia than other natural disasters or weather events, and furthermore, studies have shown that Australia actually has higher rates of cold climate-related deaths than countries such as Sweden, which experience much more extreme cold temperatures than Australia.⁴⁹ WHO reports that “winter mortality is greater in countries with milder climates than in those with more severe winter conditions...mild winters often have homes characterised by poor domestic thermal efficiency that are harder to heat than well insulated houses in more extreme climates.”⁵⁰

Heating and cooling for people on low incomes and renters

Those with low incomes are often unable to afford the costs of both heating and cooling their homes, causing further exposure and health issues. According to a report by the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), “there is a strong correlation between some housing types and financial hardship, which limits the options for keeping cool inside.”⁵¹ Additionally, 20.8 per cent of Victorians live in poverty, and 51.4 per cent of people living in public housing live below the poverty line, meaning that those in public housing are especially disadvantaged in this regard.⁵²

Rental properties, both public and private housing, tend to be of poorer quality and design, requiring greater amounts of both heating and cooling.⁵³ However, currently no state or territory in Australia requires for there to be cooling in rental properties, and only Victoria and Tasmania require a heater in rental properties by law.⁵⁴ In the current rental market, in particular with high demand and low availability, landlords have the responsibility but are not incentivised to pay for cooling and retrofitting of rental properties, despite the improved quality of life that would result for renters who live in the properties.⁵⁵ WHO recommends retrofitting and insulation as the best approaches for mitigating impacts of extreme temperatures on health.⁵⁶

45 WHO (2018).

46 Hughes, L., Hanna, E., & Fenwick, J. (2016). The Silent Killer: Climate Change and the Health Impacts of Extreme Heat. Climate Council of Australia. ([Weblink](#)).

47 Ibid, pp. 4–15; WHO (2018), pp. 35–36

48 Coulbourn, L., & Miller, W. (2022). Prevalence, Risk Factors and Impacts Related to Mould-Affected Housing: An Australian Integrative Review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 19(3), 1854, pp. 1–26. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19031854

49 Barnett, A. (2015). Cold weather is a bigger killer than extreme heat – here’s why. ([Weblink](#)); Hughes et al. (2016). P. 14

50 WHO (2018), p. 32

51 VCOSS (2021), p. 11

52 VCOSS (2021), p. 11

53 VCOSS (2021), p. 11; Coulbourn, L., & Miller, W. (2022). Prevalence, Risk Factors and Impacts Related to Mould-Affected Housing: An Australian Integrative Review. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 19(3), 1854, pp. 1–26. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19031854

54 Kolovos, B. (2022). ‘My apartment is literally baking’: Calls for minimum standards to keep Australia’s rental homes cool. *The Guardian*. ([Weblink](#))

55 SQM Research. (2023). Residential Vacancy Rates. ([Weblink](#)); Liu, E., Martin, C., & Easthope, H. (2019). Chilly house? Mouldy rooms? Here’s how to improve low-income renters’ access to decent housing. ([Weblink](#)).

56 WHO (2018)

Place-based disadvantage

Living in poverty and experiencing high exposure to heat has a demonstrated impact on people's ability to perform in their employment, further entrenching disadvantage.⁵⁷ This highlights that people can experience place-based and multiple and complex disadvantage, which is further exacerbated by harsh temperatures and housing conditions. The 2021 edition of our Dropping Off the Edge (DOTE) study demonstrates how some of the most vulnerable people in society experience multiple and long-term disadvantages based on where they live, and how this disadvantage intersects with climate change impacts, and is compounded with higher rates of poverty, and less access to education, employment and services such as public transport and healthcare.⁵⁸

Western Sydney is an example of this, as an area which faces place-based and multilayered disadvantage including high levels of poverty and a greater concentration of public housing.⁵⁹ In Western Sydney, it is predicted that if emissions continue to increase, there could be a fivefold increase in the number of days per year over 35 degrees Celsius by 2090 (up from under nine days per year).⁶⁰ As we have discussed in the previous section, people living in public housing are particularly vulnerable to weather extremes. This further entrenches the fact that in NSW the areas with the greatest disadvantage are those with high levels of public housing.⁶¹

Unique, multiple and place-based disadvantages can also be experienced in parts of the NT. The NT has a higher Aboriginal population than other states and territories, and people there can be affected by factors such as geographical isolation, overcrowding, higher and prolonged temperatures and often limited housing and social infrastructure.⁶² For an example of place-based disadvantage we can look at the regional town of Katherine, where homelessness is "31 times the national average", and most people who are homeless are Aboriginal.⁶³ In Katherine in 2019, there were 54 days where temperatures reached 40 degrees Celsius or above, and two thirds of the people who presented to hospital there were homeless, with increased admissions due to higher temperatures and wet weather.⁶⁴

People experiencing homelessness are a particularly vulnerable population group in the context of climate change; they are largely unable to escape weather extremities, in addition to also often experiencing other intersecting and complex disadvantages, which further impacts on health and mortality.⁶⁵ One study reported "for 19% of people, an extreme weather event was a factor in their pathway to homelessness".⁶⁶ People experiencing homelessness residing in urban areas are also at higher risk of being unable to escape extreme temperatures as these areas tend to remain hotter.⁶⁷ For instance, in Melbourne's western suburbs of Brimbank, Melton, Maribyrnong and Wyndham, which have higher rates of poverty and entrenched disadvantage than some other

57 Tanton, R., Dare, L., Miranti, R., Vidyattama, Y., Yule, A. and McCabe, M. (2021). Dropping Off the Edge 2021: Persistent and multilayered disadvantage in Australia, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne. P. 21.

58 Ibid

59 Tanton et al. (2021), pp. 63-83; AIHW (2022). Social housing dwellings by Statistical Area 4. ([Weblink](#))

60 Melville-Rea, H. & Verschuer, R. (2022). HeatWatch: Extreme Heat in Western Sydney. The Australia Institute: Canberra. ([Weblink](#))

61 Tanton et al. (2021), p. 78

62 Tanton et al. (2021), pp. 168-177

63 Wade et al. (2021)

64 Quilty, S. & Wood, L. (2019). 'How a rethink of emergency care is closing the gap, one person at a time' The Conversation, 20 December, 2019. ([Weblink](#)); Quilty, S., Shannon, G., Yao, A., Sargent, W., and McVeigh, M.F. (2016). 'Factors contributing to frequent attendance to the emergency department of a remote Northern Territory hospital', Medical Journal of Australia, 204(3), pp. 111e1-111e7. ([Weblink](#)).

65 Ibid

66 Every, D. & Richardson, R. (2017). Building the Disaster Resilience of the Homeless Community. Report prepared by CQUniversity and the Red Cross in collaboration with VCOSS, NCCARF and ShelterSA for the National Emergency Management Project. P. 3. ([Weblink](#))

67 Quality & Wood (2019); Quality et al. (2016)

suburbs, average temperatures are 8–11 degrees Celsius higher than regional areas.⁶⁸

What we're asking for

With the inevitable impacts of the climate emergency, it is vital that the Plan implements specific considerations regarding climate and housing, with particular consideration of place-based disadvantage and the impacts of climate change on more vulnerable populations. The Plan needs to include strategies for prevention of homelessness and displacement as a result of climate change and natural disasters, as well as strategies for emergency response planning for people who are already experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. Also, landlords need to be provided with incentives to provide cooling and retrofitting of rental properties.

Recommendations

8. Ensure effective implementation of climate safe and energy efficient design in planning and construction of new public and community housing, as well as retrofitting of pre-2003 social housing.
9. Provide equitable access to energy-efficient housing, and invest in energy efficiency improvements for low-income homes to cut emissions and energy bills.
10. Strengthen minimum rental standards to enable equitable access to energy efficient housing to reduce negative health and mortality impacts of both hot and cold temperatures. This includes legislating cooling requirements in rental properties and implementing incentives for landowners to retrofit pre-2003 built homes.
11. Invest in place-based responses to addressing extreme weather, housing and entrenched disadvantage,

including in the NT and Western Sydney, and ensure these responses are developed in partnership with local communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

12. Implement future and emergency planning for preventing homelessness and displacement as a result of extreme weather and natural disasters, as well as response planning to provide solutions to cope with weather conditions for those who are already experiencing homelessness or newly experiencing homelessness.

4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing

Housing challenges disproportionately experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The impacts of colonisation, racism and dispossession continue to be felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in Australia today. As a consequence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to experience insecure housing, live in overcrowded houses and experience homelessness, including intergenerational homelessness, than non-Indigenous Australians. For example, in 2021–22, 28% (72,900) of all clients for specialist homelessness services in Australia were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.⁶⁹ This disparity is significant given that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 3.2% of the total population. Severe overcrowding as a form of homelessness also disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – they are almost 3 times as likely to live in overcrowded conditions compared with non-Indigenous Australians.⁷⁰

Many organisations, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association and Homelessness Australia, have stated that a separate Aboriginal and Torres

68 Jesuit Social Services (2022). Collaborative Action Plan: Mobilising Climate Just and Resilient Communities in Melbourne's West. In collaboration with Centre for Just Places and Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation. P. 33. ([Weblink](#)).

69 AIHW (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

70 AIHW (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

Strait Islander Housing and Homelessness Plan is urgently needed to address these acute housing challenges.⁷¹ Proponents for a separate national plan have stated that a distinct self-determined and strength-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Homelessness Plan would address the diversity of unique issues, disparity in outcomes and distinct drivers of First Nations homelessness.⁷²

What we're asking for

In 2021, the House of Representatives Standing Committee Inquiry into Homelessness found that housing responses needed greater inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and perspectives in order to be effective.⁷³ This inquiry also highlighted the effectiveness and appropriateness of Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing services, and recommended a coordinated national policy response to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing that was co-designed with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and grounded in self-determination.⁷⁴

We emphasise the need for the development of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Homelessness Plan, developed in consultation with Aboriginal Community Controlled Housing Organisations, to address the housing challenges disproportionately experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We also highlight the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework as a positive example that could be drawn on, and stress that a new national plan must be supported by additional funding.

Recommendation

13. Develop a 10-year National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing and Homelessness Plan in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, supported by allocation of additional funding.

5. Children and young people

Homelessness among children and young people

Children and young people have unique pathways into, and experiences of, homelessness. The latest Census found that over 28,000 young people aged 12–24 were homeless in 2021, making up nearly a quarter of Australia's homeless population.⁷⁵ This number is a conservative estimate given that Census data currently does not accurately capture the number of children and young people who are couch-surfing or experiencing overcrowding. Additionally, over 39,000 young people in 2021–22 presented alone to specialist homelessness services seeking assistance.⁷⁶ These numbers are extremely concerning, not least because experiencing prolonged youth homelessness has been found to be a strong predictor of experiencing homelessness again later in life.⁷⁷

Compared with the general population, young people have higher unemployment rates, lower incomes, shorter private rental history, and they receive less income support if they are on Youth Allowance. These factors leave children and young people uniquely vulnerable to homelessness.⁷⁸ Other drivers of youth homelessness include poverty, domestic and family violence, family breakdown, mental ill-health, poor educational outcomes and

71 Homelessness Australia (2023). We need the National Housing and Homelessness Plan to set an aim to end homelessness. [Weblink](#); Breen, J. (2023). Aboriginal women and girls in homelessness crisis. ABC Listen. [Weblink](#).

72 Homelessness Australia (2023). We need the National Housing and Homelessness Plan to set an aim to end homelessness. [Weblink](#).

73 AIHW (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

74 AIHW (2022). Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021–22. [Weblink](#).

75 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2023). Estimating Homelessness: Census. [Weblink](#).

76 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). Parity: Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan. Vol. 36 Issue 2.

77 Parliament of Victoria (2021). Final Report: Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria. [Weblink](#).

78 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). Parity: Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan. Vol. 36 Issue 2.

interactions with the justice and out of home care systems.

We draw particular attention to children and young people exiting the out-of-home care system. While all states and territories have now committed to extend support to young people leaving out-of-home care up to the age of 21, many advocates including the Home Stretch campaign maintain that further supports are needed to ensure these young people do not experience homelessness.⁷⁹ Children and young people transitioning from out-of-home care experience a disproportionate rate of homelessness, and governments can do more to support these young people to access and maintain housing.⁸⁰ Transitional, ongoing and wraparound supports are needed to ensure these children and young people do not experience homelessness and can have their financial, social and housing needs met.

Children and young people face unique housing challenges

Children and young people also face specific barriers in gaining access to social housing and the private rental market. Currently, the extremely competitive private rental market is unaffordable for many young people, especially those on low incomes. Anglicare's 2022 Rental Affordability Snapshot found that out of 45,000 rental listings surveyed, only one rental (a share house) in Australia would be classified as affordable for a person on Youth Allowance.⁸¹ Home ownership now also requires several decades of savings or access to generational wealth for many young people. As a result, more and more young people require social housing, specifically public housing.⁸² Unfortunately, the current social housing business model is very difficult for young people to access and is not set up to provide targeted initiatives and supported housing options for adolescents and young adults.⁸³

In 2021, only 2.8% of public housing principal tenants in Australia were young people aged 15–24, which is of particular concern given that they make up a disproportionately large portion of the homelessness population. This disparity amongst public housing tenants is thought to be due mostly to the income-related barriers young people face. If they rely on Youth Allowance for their income, their income is automatically lower than other potential social housing tenants, making them unattractive tenants from the perspective of social housing providers. The Council for Homeless Persons reported that across 5000 tenancies, social housing providers would receive \$7.2 million less housing single young people than if they housed single Jobseeker recipients.⁸⁴

Children and young people can also face unique challenges regarding housing sustainability if they lack independent living skills, as this can make it more difficult to maintain a tenancy. Overall, the unique challenges children and young people face in terms of vulnerability to homelessness and access to affordable housing make a very strong case for the need for a coordinated policy response specifically for children and young people.

What we're asking for

Children and young people's distinctive pathways into and experiences of homelessness, as well as their developmental needs and unique housing challenges, must be considered in order to provide an appropriately targeted and coordinated policy response. Children and young people need tailored housing and homelessness solutions. A unique set of systems and services, including schools and child protection services, also must be mobilised to prevent and respond to child

79 Hermant, N. (2023). Children leaving out-of-home care will soon get more support, but the old policy has left a stark legacy. ABC News. [Weblink](#); The Home Stretch (2023). [Weblink](#).

80 The Home Stretch (2023). [Weblink](#).

81 Anglicare Australia (2022). National Report April 2022: Rental Affordability Snapshot. [Weblink](#).

82 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). Parity: Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan. Vol. 36 Issue 2.

83 Hand, T. & MacKenzie, D. (2023). Efforts to find safe housing for homeless youth have gone backwards. Here's what the new national plan must do differently. The Conversation. [Weblink](#).

84 Council to Homeless Persons (2023). Parity: Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan. Vol. 36 Issue 2.

and youth homelessness.⁸⁵ As a result, many youth homelessness services and advocates including Homelessness Australia and the Council for Homeless Persons have called for the development of a dedicated National Housing and Homelessness Plan for Children and Young People.⁸⁶

Services and experts in the child and youth homelessness space have been advocating for a separate national plan, developed in collaboration with youth organisations and youth homelessness services, for a significant time now. This is the agreed best path forward towards improving outcomes and getting closer to the goal of ending child and youth homelessness in Australia. A dedicated plan needs to map out both the reforms needed for the prevention of child and youth homelessness and the services needed for best practice responses to support children and young people without homes.⁸⁷

Having the response to child and youth homelessness as simply a focus or priority area in the Plan would be an insufficient approach to tackling the complexity of the policy and service response necessary to address this issue.⁸⁸ This approach has also been tried before. For example, the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement includes children and young people as a priority homelessness cohort. However, in its 2022 review of this agreement, the Productivity Commission found that “requiring States and Territories to include these priorities in their strategies has not driven reforms or improved outcomes”.⁸⁹

A dedicated plan is needed, and it should include targets and investment regarding supported housing programs for children and young people. The three housing programs managed by Jesuit Social Services and the supported housing

services of Dillon House, Perry House and the Link Youth Justice Housing Program are unique in the service system and the only housing model of their type in Victoria. Funding for expansion of similar programs for children and young people needs to be included in a dedicated plan.

Recommendation

14. Develop a 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan for Children and Young People, supported by allocation of additional funding.
15. Invest in transitional, ongoing wraparound support programs for children and young people exiting out-of-home care.



85 Homelessness Australia (2023). The 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan key messages and submission guide. [Weblink](#).

86 Homelessness Australia (2023). The 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan key messages and submission guide. [Weblink](#).

87 Homelessness Australia (2023). The 10-year National Housing and Homelessness Plan key messages and submission guide. [Weblink](#).

88 Council for Homeless Persons (2023). Parity: Towards a New Child and Youth Housing and Homelessness Plan. Vol. 36 Issue 2.

89 Australian Government Productivity Commission (2022). In need of repair: The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement Study Report. [Weblink](#).



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