

# Submission to the Department of Communities

## Directions Paper for the 10 Year Strategy on Homelessness

Anglicare WA is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation dedicated to serving Western Australian individuals, families and communities. Our purpose is to work together in trusted relationships with people and families across Western Australia who partner with us on a journey to thriving.

Anglicare WA directly supports more than 2,500 people through 11 specialist housing and homelessness services every year across both metropolitan and regional locations. As a diverse and state-wide provider of community services, we are aligned to a vision for a future in which ‘Everyone has a place to call home and is supported to achieve stable and independent lives.’

Anglicare WA welcomes the opportunity to continue to contribute and provide input into the 10-year strategy on homelessness, and provides this submission as a response to the Directions Paper. The recommendations contained within the submission have been collated from across Anglicare WA, incorporating the views and responses of front line workers, program managers, researchers, and our executive.

### Summary of Anglicare WA Responses

In responding to the Directions Paper, many of our staff felt that the Western Australian Government has a responsibility to use the 10-Year Strategy as a vehicle to promote and establish Housing as a Human Right that all West Australians will be afforded. There was a consensus that while the Directions Paper presented a positive step forwards, it did not reflect the courage, leadership and commitment needed to achieve an end to homelessness in Western Australia. The Directions Paper was interpreted as indicative of a strategy that will emphasise consultation and planning rather than a commitment to the implementation and expansion of effective responses.

There was broad validation of the need to create an effective whole-of-community response to end homelessness, and our staff identified with the principles and key elements described in the Directions Paper as critical foundations to shaping such a response. There was a particular emphasis on the need to establish clear and visible targets that were tracked and reported against.

In defining and describing how a whole-of-community response might be achieved, many of our staff felt there was a need for a clearer and more developed understanding of how other State Government Strategies identified in the Directions Paper might intersect and integrate with the Homelessness Strategy. There was particular concern over the lack of specific reference to the need for future investment in Social Housing as a critical foundation for success in creating sustainable pathways out of homelessness. There needs to be an opportunity for all of these strategies to be aligned in terms of actions and accountability to each other, as well as exploring opportunities for collaboration and coordination of responses across focus areas.

The community services sector have demonstrated a strong commitment to working together to end homelessness in Western Australia, working in partnership under the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness to create a whole-of-community response. Despite the long term challenges we have faced arising from unstable funding, competitive tendering and the complexity of the different systems we have created, there is a recognition that it is our collective responsibility to end homelessness. We need the State Government to commit to being a genuine partner, and for this to be the main direction in which we head in developing any Strategy to End Homelessness.

## What is the best way to provide advice to government on emerging issues and trends on homelessness over the life of the Strategy?

### **Supporting Communities Forum**

There is an ongoing need for the public and community services sector to engage at a senior leadership level, where leaders and community representatives have an opportunity to develop a common understanding of emerging issues and trends on homelessness over the life of the strategy. Anglicare WA is supportive of the continuation of the Supporting Communities Forum as a vehicle for better collaboration, and would welcome an opportunity to be more actively involved at this level.

### **Pulse Meetings and WAAEH**

The Pulse Meetings facilitated by the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness have proven to be a valuable opportunity for key stakeholders and the broader community to connect and share information and ideas. The ongoing engagement in these meetings by Public Sector Policy staff provides an opportunity for improved collaboration and engagement with the community, and community services sector.

The Pulse Meetings provide a template that could be extended to hold a sector, regional or local focus and assist in driving the cultural change that is a critical foundation for system reform.

### **Shifting from policy development to policy co-design**

In traditional policy development most of the development work is conducted internally within government after a period of consultation, and often leads to responses that are fixed over time and unable to adapt to emerging trends. The Homelessness Strategy needs to hold a strong commitment to developing policy and system responses in a way that elevates and prioritises the voice of service users into policy conversations in a dynamic and ongoing way.

The development of the different cohort action plans under the WAAEH Strategy [Rough Sleepers, Youth] provide examples of an approach that includes all stakeholders and those with lived experience in co-designing solutions and actions. These approaches should be considered an ongoing methodology to designing a responsive system that can end homelessness rather than developing a fixed strategy to respond to it. Each year a series of co-design policy labs should be facilitated in each of the key strategy areas with a view to use them as a mechanism to provide advice and guidance to government.

### **Establish Robust Data Collection and Outcomes Measurement Early**

If improvements to data collection and outcomes measurement are prioritised early in the implementation of the plan, then the Government can both provide and share any emerging trends with the community and sector.

## How can the Strategy help stakeholders and services in your area to collaborate and work together?

### **Support Implementation of Sector and Community Led Action Plans**

Where there are successful efforts to collaborate that have been built from community and sector led initiatives, it is critical that these are supported by the State Government Strategy. The Whole-Of-Community response will work only when there is genuine engagement and co-production of the responses that draw together the communities to collaborate to end homelessness. This is particularly important in the development of cohort specific plans that tackle the needs of particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Anglicare WA has been providing in-kind resources and support to the development of the Youth Cohort Action Plan and Rough Sleepers [Advance to Zero Project] that are currently being facilitated under the WAEEH. These provide clear examples of collaborative initiatives that will require ongoing commitment and endorsement from the State Government in order to achieve their intended outcomes around sector reform.

### **Provide Clear Directions and Guidelines around Co-design**

Anglicare WA supports the commitment made towards co-design of programs with service users and communities, ensuring that the lived experience voice is included in any decision making around system reform.

The success of this commitment requires that there are clear directions and guidelines about what constitutes effective co-design and an intention to apply its principles across all levels of service procurement of new services.

### **Fund Collaboration as a Component of Contracted Services**

There is very limited current capacity within existing service contracts for programs to invest time and resources into developing the 'No Wrong Door' approach.

Expectations around system collaboration and co-ordination should be defined and contracted as part of service agreements for Specialist Homeless Services, with adequate resources allocated to support these activities.

If collaboration is sufficiently resourced; service providers would be expected to report on outcomes and progress as part of service agreements.

### **Regional Supporting Communities Forums and Pulse Meetings**

A number of Anglicare WA staff working in regional and remote areas identified a need for there to be more consistent and formal approach to supporting collaboration in regional areas. While the extension of the Supporting Communities Forums to regional areas provides one pathway to achieve this, there is also scope for building on existing cross-sector forums and networks to have a regular focus on homelessness.

## How can the Strategy support better data collection on outcomes for individuals?

There is a large amount of public sector data that identifies both the needs of the community and the service outcomes that have been generated, with a significant pool of information contained in the reporting of contracted services. This data is currently not utilised effectively across the system. There are no established protocols for sharing data, nor are the effective policies and practices in place that ensure privacy and consent remain critical foundations of any future data sharing initiatives. There are a range of sector led initiatives that have arisen to overcome the current barriers posed by an inflexible and siloed approach to data collection and collation.

### **Firm Commitments to Outcomes Measurement**

The Department is to be commended on its intention to align the whole-of-sector within an outcomes framework, which will allow for more meaningful measurement of the impact of the service system as a response to homelessness. Anglicare WA would encourage the State Government to incorporate a clear commitment to measuring meaningful outcomes for people over a tracking of outputs of services, and we look forward to these outcomes featuring in future procurement and contracting co-design.

### **Alignment of outcomes to the WACOSS Outcomes Measurement Framework**

There exists an excellent opportunity for the alignment of outcomes measurement in future through application of the Whole-of-Sector Outcomes Framework. Work conducted by WACOSS, involving extensive consultation with the community sector, has resulted in a framework which maps key domains of wellbeing critical to the delivery of effective community services. With the support of the Supporting Communities Forum Outcomes Framework Working Group, there is an opportunity for WA State Government Departments to align the outcomes of all services to the framework, along with data collected against agreed indicators.

Collecting homelessness data across these agreed indicators will provide improved ability to conduct streamlined reporting systems, cross-sector reporting and comparison of data. The Outcomes Framework is near completion and development of sets of possible indicators is underway.

### **Central Data Linkage and Analysis Unit**

The central role that data will play in tracking and measuring the outcomes of the Strategy will only be achieved if there is an intentional investment in the coordination and collation of data. The creation of a Centralised Data Linkage and Analysis Unit that could draw on existing public sector data and information from contracted services would provide the necessary expertise across the public (and research and community) sectors. This action is consistent with the recommendations of the *2016 Data Linkage Expert Advisory Group Review*

The resourcing of a centralised data unit would provide an opportunity for the development of protocols and processes that ensure that people accessing homelessness services are able to be confident in the privacy standards and protection of their information from use without their consent. It will also provide a platform to develop more efficient mechanisms for obtaining information that can be used to drive changes to social policy and other reform agendas.

### **Support Services to Collect Data**

With any significant change to data collection, there will need to be a recognition that front line staff will need additional support and training. The improvements to data collection need to result in clear benefits for service user outcomes in order to justify the additional time that will be taken away from working directly with people.

The provision of additional support, resources and training will need to be included in funding allocated to services so that they can develop the appropriate IT systems and back bone coordination to ensure data is collected and collated accurately.

### **Shared Database across Specialist Homelessness Services**

Currently service providers across the homelessness system are funded and required to input data into a client management system that can interface with SHIP/VALIDATA. The data that is held on the SHIP database is siloed and while individual service users are marked by a unique identifier, there is no system in place to allow for sharing of information across service providers in an efficient and useful way.

While there are efforts to use other platforms to create shared database across the sector, Anglicare WA recommends that the State Government explore the potential for AIHW to provide additional functionality within the SHIP software to allow for service users to consent to having their information shared across the service sector. This would provide a more secure and consistent approach to sharing data than the creation of discrete and separately administrated databases that seek to achieve the same outcome.

### **Common Assessment Tools that Measure Impact - Youth Homelessness Services**

Anglicare WA has been involved in discussions with the youth homelessness sector to co-design an intake tool that will provide a common measure of young peoples' support needs. Drawing from the successful implementation of the Calgary Acuity Scale, the sector has identified that there is a clear need for a common framework and reference to better understand the current service system, and to more rapidly identify and match service options for young people that are appropriate.

The Acuity Tool working group was comprised of representatives from Mission Australia, Anglicare WA, St Vincent De Paul, PICYS, Youth Futures and representatives from the Centre for Social Impact. Work on developing an MOU and the tool was suspended while the co-design of the Youth Cohort Action Plan was undertaken, and to ensure that the development of the tool was supported in the co-design process. While the co-design process is still underway, it is likely that the development of an Acuity Scale will be a prototype that emerges from the co-design process.

## **Are these the vision, principles and focus areas that you would like to see in the Strategy?**

While Anglicare WA is supportive of the vision, principles and focus areas that are outlined, the directions that are outlined in the paper imply that the current service system has 'failed' to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Western Australia. While the failure of the system to achieve a reduction in the number and rate of homelessness in Western Australia is evident in the data, the assumption that this was a result of the inefficacy of programs within the system to meet demand is unsupported.

There is a significant risk in Directions Paper that the current strengths and capacities of the system will be overlooked if the Homeless Strategy is based on the assumption that innovation and new untested models will provide the only solution to ending homelessness. There are several programs and service models that have been developed and independently evaluated in the Western Australian context, demonstrating a significant impact for the people who access them. They are listed in the *Homelessness in Western Australia: A review of the research and statistical evidence* as exemplar programs.

- 50 Lives 50 Homes
- Safe at Home
- Foyer Oxford
- Street to Home

If innovative and cost effective programs that have demonstrated a significant impact at scale are not resourced to continue in the State Government Strategy, there is potential for a large increase in unmet need and service gaps that will appear and require reinvestment into the system to respond.

### **Foyer Oxford**

Continued support of Foyer Oxford, and the addition of new Foyer models to WA should feature as an important component of the 10-year strategy, and would provide significant future impact on homelessness across the community of Western Australia. Without it, significant and increased demand on untested new social housing models would likely result, a loss of a critical leverage point for systemic reform, and perhaps leave more than 800 young people over the next 10 years waiting for ‘a place to call home.’

*Anglicare WA and our consortium partners have provided a separate submission to demonstrate the critical impact Foyer Oxford has had on supporting young people out of homelessness and into private housing.*

### **Housing Supply**

Recent AHURI research has found that much of the growth in Australian housing supply has been in the mid-to-high price segments. Furthermore the research indicates that this increase in the supply in these segments is not creating a ‘trickle-down’ effect into the low price segments by freeing up established housing stock. This lack of trickle-down is reflected in the findings of the WA Housing Industry Forecasting Group, which noted that, despite historically high levels of rental stock, “for those on the lowest incomes, conditions have not changed.” This outcome is the result of a long-term underinvestment in social housing together with the treatment of private rental properties as investment vehicles for individuals.

The intersection between the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-2020 and the State Housing Strategy 2020-2030, and the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness needs to be carefully and consistently developed. Cross referencing and identifying the clear lines of accountability across this important domain will ensure that the improvements to the homelessness service system are connected with access to affordable long term housing. Specifically, given that access to housing and rates of homelessness are inextricably linked, the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness should reference a commitment to the development of the improved supply of social housing as well as facilitated access to the private rental market.

## What actions would you like implemented as a priority under each focus area in the Strategy?

### Focus Area 1 – Sustainable Pathways out of homelessness

#### **Innovation in Service Provision**

Anglicare WA is supportive of the testing of new and innovative models of accommodation, where this is undertaken in a way that incorporates a rigorous independent evaluation and a strong commitment to co-design principles that serve to ensure the model is successfully integrated into a local context.

The increased focus on a Housing First approach is widely supported by Anglicare WA as a key strategy to providing sustainable pathways for some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in our community. The success of the 50 Lives 50 Homes program provides an approach an evidence base that could be expanded to additional regions and cohort groups.

Where there is a strong evidence base for the efficacy of a service innovation, and the model has undergone a robust independent evaluation then the Strategy should look to prioritise the expansion of that model where it might meet the needs of other service users. The Directions Paper indicates that the Strategy will look to further evaluate programs that have already demonstrated impact, which would cause an unnecessary delay to the implementation of effective solutions for our community. Anglicare WA suggests that it would be a better investment of resources to undertake an independent evaluation of programs that operate at scale but without a robust contemporary evaluation of their efficacy and impact. The independent evaluation of the Foyer Oxford program undertaken by KPMG, followed by PWC's examination of the model's efficiency, provides an example of a successful service innovation that is ready for expansion.

#### **Rental Affordability**

The 2019 Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot found that for a single on the Newstart Allowance, there were no affordable and appropriate private rental properties in the entirety of Western Australia. This report takes a 'snapshot' on a given day of the rental market and examines whether the properties being advertised are both affordable for a range of different low income types and whether those properties are appropriate for the composition of their household.

This lack of any affordable and appropriate rentals was also the case for a single on Youth Allowance, including those looking for share housing. A single on Newstart with one child was able to find just two affordable and appropriate properties across the state, though neither were in the Perth Metropolitan area. A single receiving the disability support pension was only able to locate 11 properties in Perth that were affordable and appropriate, and a further 9 in regional areas.

Recognising the significant impact of rental affordability on pathways out of homelessness, AnglicareWA supports the development of a private rental brokerage scheme which can provide an opportunity for individuals and families to find pathways into the private housing market. Within this brokerage scheme there is scope for offering proportional subsidies from government that are based on the length of the lease the landlord is willing to offer, with longer leases providing a more substantial subsidy.

### **Recurrent Funding for Proven Innovation**

Where there are successful trials of new evidence based models that are able to demonstrate clear outcomes, there needs to be a long term commitment to the ongoing and recurrent funding of those programs. This is an important consideration in the context of large scale infrastructure investments such as the testing of a Common Ground model of housing, which require a pre-commitment of recurrent service funding over the long term to ensure that there is a sufficient return on the capital infrastructure investment.

Discussion of the need for such large scale infrastructure investment within the discourse of the development of the 10-year strategy on homelessness, in the current context of long-term funding uncertainty for the exemplary large-scale Foyer Oxford is of particular concern to Anglicare WA.

### **Low Barrier Crisis Accommodation**

There were some questions raised by staff in Anglicare WA around whether the existing 'crisis accommodation' service system was currently meeting the needs of the community, and whether or not the addition of new services was required. The intentional repurposing and co-design of existing crisis accommodation could be undertaken as a process to establish a broader range of crisis accommodation services that could accommodate the needs of people needing short term housing. This includes repurposing existing services to provide a short term transitional response.

There was a consensus that the existing system was not sufficiently resourced to provide for the needs of individuals with complex support needs around their mental health or who may have ongoing problems in accessing housing due to substance misuse. Any future development of crisis accommodation should also seek to better integrate specialist mental health and alcohol and drug service provision to improve the capacity of services to support individuals with complex support needs.

Anglicare WA supports the development of a low threshold crisis accommodation service for young people in the metropolitan area, recognising exists a gap in service provision in this area. Such a service might provide a point of triage and support for young people who would otherwise be unable to access crisis accommodation due to unmanaged mental health issues, or high levels of problematic substance use, and as such would require a high risk threshold. Critically this service would need to be supported to provide an integrated and holistic model of care that extends to young people when they transition into more stable and longer term housing options.

### **Youth Crisis Accommodation – 'No Fail' System**

Improvements to system coordination in youth homelessness services are currently being explored in the Youth Cohort Action Plan, with early suggestions that the development of a 'No Fail' Co-ordinated Access meeting based on the Calgary Model would provide a significant improvements to access for young people with more complex support needs. In the Calgary model, representatives from each of the funded specialist homelessness services meet on a regular basis to discuss and coordinate access pathways for identified young people with needs that are not easily met through the service system. The meeting is chair by a representative of the funding body, and attended by representatives from specialist mental health and alcohol and other drug services.

## Focus Area 2 - Prevention and early intervention

### **Redesigning the System**

Contemporary research literature in defining effective approaches to homelessness emphasise that service systems should be designed to direct resources towards those at risk of losing housing rather than primarily supporting those already homeless with crisis responses. This paradigm shift is supported by AnglicareWA but will require the Strategy to recognise and support a transitional period in which crisis services are maintained to meet demand at current levels, and further investment is made into early intervention and prevention.

The 'Making Ends Meet' program, delivered through philanthropic funding by Anglicare WA in the Mandurah and Rockingham areas, is an example of an innovative model of homelessness prevention, focussed on supporting those at risk of losing their housing. The Making Ends Meet program provides rental and other subsidies for a fixed period, to people who are at risk of losing their rental property. During this period, the household is assisted to get back on track, through the provision of case management support focussed on underlying causes of the risks to housing stability.

### **Co-Designing System Responses with Young People for Young People**

Anglicare WA would strongly encourage the Strategy to hold a clear commitment to supporting, resourcing and implementing the actions that are developed through the Youth Cohort Action Plan currently being co-designed with support through the Western Australia Alliance to End Homelessness.

### **Developing a better response for LGBTIQ+ Young People**

Anglicare WA is keen to work with the State Government and other service providers to improve our understanding of the support needs of young people of diverse gender and sexuality, and particularly explore the capacity of the current system to provide appropriate accommodation to this cohort.

This will require a commitment to improvements in capturing diversity in data collection, and the potential for more targeted services where there are identified gaps. Anglicare WA staff commented that there should be an expectation that all youth accommodation service providers are able to provide support to young people of diverse sexuality and gender, rather than necessarily creating further specialist services.

### **Expansion of the Foyer model in Western Australia**

The Foyer Oxford program has been independently evaluated by KPMG, PwC, and Painted Dog Research, and the Foyer model has been extensively evaluated as part of an international approach to tackling youth homelessness. In every case it has been shown to make a significant difference to the lives of young people experiencing homelessness, and achieve sustainable impact in long-term outcomes for young people. The positive impact on the reduction of state and federal government expenditure as a result of successful Foyer interventions has been recognised in Sydney, where the first Social Impact Bond has been issued for a Foyer program.

The Foyer approach is now expanding rapidly across Australia: in Tasmania, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and the Northern Territory, fuelled by a strong commitment from state, territory, and federal governments. Foyer Oxford is the only Foyer project in Western Australia, and is currently without a long term funding commitment from the WA State Government beyond June 30 2019, despite the overwhelming level of public support and the strength of the evidence demonstrating its impact. The Foyer approach “helps to educate the community about homelessness to reduce stigma and shame” through its intentional approach to community engagement and high quality design.

### **No Exits into Homelessness from Institutionalised Care**

Anglicare WA positively welcomes the commitment in the Directions Paper to eliminating exits into homelessness from government institutions, prisons, hospitals and the out-of-home care system. This is a critical component of the strategy and one that needs significant cross sector investment, clear identified targets and a willingness to dedicate resources to achieving them.

Eliminating exits into homelessness from institutionalised care will require government institutions, contracted services and the community to hold each other equally accountable and responsible for ensuring that no-one ever exits into directly into homelessness from any part of the system. This will only occur if there is transparency, coordinated access and accountability built into the transformation of the system. Anglicare WA is committed to ensuring that our accommodation and housing services never exit an individual into homelessness.

### **Support for Home Stretch – Extend the leaving care age from 18 to 21**

While there are provisions made in Western Australia legislation for post-care support to be provided to young people aging out of state care, these provisions are non-binding, non-specific and non-mandatory. As such, young care leavers face a post-care system that is ad hoc and rarely targeted to meet their specific developmental and psychosocial needs. There is an overwhelming body of international evidence that demonstrates the profound impact that raising the leaving care age can have on reducing levels of youth homelessness, and significantly improving the outcomes for young people transitioning out of care.

Research conducted by Deloitte Access Economics, *Raising Our Children: Guiding Young Victorians in Care into Adulthood*, examined the cost-benefit of extending the leaving care age to 21 and found that in Western Australia for every \$1 spent on increasing the age limit to 21, it will save \$2.17 on the social issues it will prevent.

While there has been some progress to achieving this through the development of a small scale iterative trial to commence in 2019, it is important to recognise that this reform needs to be supported broadly and systemically in order to achieve a significant impact on reducing homelessness.

### **Holistic Approaches to Supporting Families to Prevent Homelessness**

Anglicare WA would consider it a priority to develop more person centred service responses to families who are at-risk of homeless, providing a longer term and flexible approach to support that is tailored to the needs of all members of the family. The current service system typically prioritises supporting lease holders, and places clear limits on the capacity of services to respond to other family members or individuals in over-crowded dwellings.

## Focus Area 3: System transformation

Anglicare WA is strongly supportive of establishing a 'No Wrong Door' approach to service delivery and partnering in the development of the tools and protocols needed to establish it across the sector.

### **Integrating Services Outside of the Contracted Service System**

The Directions Paper does not comment on the important role currently provided by a range of services that are not funding under existing service agreements. These services play a critical role in a Whole-Of-Community response and provide an important connection point for many people to access crisis accommodation and other support services.

An example of such a program is the Street Connect program, a detached youth outreach program that provides assertive follow and case management to young people who are at risk, street present and unable to access mainstream support services in the Perth CBD and surrounding areas. The Street Connect program has been providing a flexible and tailored service to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable young people in our community, who often have complex support needs and typically require long periods of assertive engagement as a foundation for outcomes. The program has been running for over 25 years and has provided an effective Street to Home style response, through supporting young people to access appropriate accommodation

The Street Connect program is currently working with the Adult Street to Home programs to coordinate outreach coverage across the Perth CBD, ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities to identify and engage with people who are rough sleeping. The Street Connect service provides support to young people up to 25 years of age, and will provide assertive follow up and case coordination to young people who are rough sleeping in the inner city.

### **Support an Aboriginal Led Co-design of Homelessness Services, Systems and Targets**

Anglicare WA believes that Aboriginal people and community need to be given the opportunity to develop and design service and system responses that best fit their needs, and that specialist services for Aboriginal people should ultimately be delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. The Strategy should incorporate an intention and action plan to achieve this as a priority.

### **Sustainable Funding of Services**

There has been escalating concern around funding of services which is now critically impacting the delivery of 24/7 homelessness services across Australia in large and small services alike. This is arising from the impact of the ERO on the ability of homelessness services to continue to meet contracted obligations and provide service users with a high standard of support and adequate clinical governance. Literature studying risk factors associated within Homelessness services have steadily indicated multiple morbidities associated with clients accessing such supports. However many services have been forced to manage an increasingly complex cohort whilst reducing operating costs, restructuring and reducing their level of service provision in order to remain in operation. This exposes many to draw on goodwill in managing escalating clinical risk in communities.

Anglicare WA has been able to obtain philanthropic support to assist in the recurrent funding of some of our service to ensure that there is adequate clinical governance in place to ensure services can operate as intended – with sound clinical governance in line with industrial obligations. With a significant number of service contracts in the homelessness sector continuing to roll over on a yearly basis, a commitment is needed in the State Government Strategy to ensure the Wage Price Index and CPI is reflected in indexation policy across homelessness services.

### **Trauma Informed Practice**

Anglicare WA supports the integration and application of trauma informed practice as a standard across the homelessness service system, and like many other community service providers, has undertaken the process of upskilling and developing the internal capacity of staff and programs to work from a trauma informed approach across all levels of service provision. This system transformation requires considerable planning and resourcing beyond the provision of training or upskilling of staff.

There is a need for the Strategy to recognise that incorporating a trauma informed approach across the system will also have implications on how services respond to risk, and to behaviours that would historically have resulted in eviction or termination of service provision. A trauma informed approach places increased demands around clinical governance and flexibility in accommodation service provision, which will need to be resourced in future budgets to have any impact on the experience of service users.

## **Are there any cohorts missing?**

### **People on temporary visas**

There are a significant number of people living in Western Australia who do not currently have Australian Citizenship or residency, which prohibits their access to a range of supports and services that can assist them when they are at risk or experiencing homelessness. The needs of those living in our community on temporary visas must be considered as part of the development of both the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness and the 10-Year Strategy for Reducing Family and Domestic Violence

### **People Aged Over 55**

According to the 2016 Census, there has been a 5% increase in the number of people aged over 55 who are experiencing homelessness. The Strategy needs to incorporate an intention to better understand and respond to the emerging needs of this cohort, and particularly explore how the service system might better accommodate and provide for their needs.

## **Young People Under 16**

There is no recognition in the Directions Paper to the needs and experiences of young people under 16 who experience homelessness. There is a significant deficit in existing policies and programs that cater to the needs of young people aged 12-15, who are often unsuitable and unable to access crisis accommodation services and rarely prioritised by the care system. While there exist reconnect services that aim to prevent this cohort from becoming homelessness, there needs to be a focus in the strategy that aims to explore better approaches and service offers for this important and vulnerable cohort. Programs like the Geelong Project provide an example of one approach to earlier identification and improved access to support for these young people.

If you would like to discuss this submission further, please contact Anglicare WA Practice Consultant Youth, [Andrew.kazim@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:Andrew.kazim@anglicarewa.org.au) or (08) 9240 7200.



**Mark Glasson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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