1. **About the Housing First Homelessness Initiative**

In December 2019, alongside the release of *All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia’s 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020–2030*, the Western Australian State Government announced $34.5 million in new funding over five years for the Housing First Homelessness Initiative (HFHI).

The HFHI addresses homelessness and rough sleeping by using a housing first approach, where people are placed in housing as a first priority and then provided wrap-around support.

The initiative will expand successful housing first collective impact approaches to new locations in regional and metropolitan Western Australia, including Bunbury, Geraldton and Rockingham/Mandurah.

It will use private rental subsidies to quickly house individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with wrap-around supports.

2. **Why Bunbury?**

The Department of Communities (Communities) conducted a thorough analysis of potential locations for the HFHI in regional areas and identified Bunbury as a region with strong demand for homelessness accommodation.

According to the ABS Census of Population and Housing, there were an estimated 230 people experiencing homelessness in the Statistical Area Level 3 Bunbury on Census night in 2016, of these:

- 36 people (16%) were living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- 11 people (5%) were living in supported accommodation for the homeless
- 13 people (6%) were living in boarding houses or temporary lodgings
- 109 (47%) people were staying with others temporarily
- 59 people (26%) were living in severely crowded dwellings.

Earlier this year a census of known rough sleepers was undertaken in Bunbury by local organisations. This process identified approximately 70 people sleeping rough in Bunbury.

3. **How much funding is being allocated to Bunbury?**

Approximately $4.1 million has been allocated to Bunbury over five years for direct service provision and private rental subsidies.

This funding will deliver private rental subsidies for 20 individuals or families each year, as well as approximately 2.5 new full-time equivalent positions to provide assertive outreach and case management for people experiencing homelessness.
4. How long until people will start being housed?
Communities is working closely with community service organisations to implement the HFHI as quickly as possible.

It is anticipated that the first contract under the HFHI for the Housing First System Coordinator will be in place by 1 July 2020, with subsequent contracts for Housing First Support Workers to conduct assertive outreach and case management in place by 1 October 2020.

This will enable all community service organisations who become involved in the HFHI to plan for their organisation to best support clients who will be accessing the program.

5. What part of the contract is being issued first? What is the next step? And how are local Bunbury organisations involved?

The Housing First System Coordinator function will be delivered by Ruah Community Services from 1 July 2020 (subject to negotiation), which recognises the significant capability developed by Ruah in this area over some years. This will ensure that the HFHI is well coordinated across many community sector service providers in the different locations. This function also involves collecting data and information on individuals experiencing homelessness to better meet people’s needs.

The subsequent procurement processes commencing from July 2020 will provide opportunities for local Bunbury organisations to be part of the HFHI through the provision of case management, outreach and after-hours support services.

6. What is the timeframe for when things are going to start happening?
Following agreement on the Housing First System Coordinator role, other parts of the initiative can be rolled out subject to procurement processes.

It is expected that this will occur around October 2020 and will start to happen on the ground when contracts are finalised and community sector service providers are ready to activate service delivery.

7. Why are you not putting people in hotels, similar to the program run in Perth?

Programs such as the Hotels with Heart pilot provided us with valuable insights into an emergency response for people who are sleeping rough, however as health restrictions ease across Western Australia, we must shift our focus away from temporary short-term solutions towards helping people experiencing homelessness into long-term accommodation consistent with a housing first approach.

To find out more about the 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness and the HFHI please visit our website or email the Homelessness Team at the Department of Communities.

Web:  www.communities.wa.gov.au/HFHI
Email:  homelessness.strategy@communities.wa.gov.au

Alternatively, please read the Housing First Homelessness Initiative FAQs – All Locations.