

# Homelessness Strategy – Everyone's Business

February 2024



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## Kurna Acknowledgement

City of Adelaide tampendi, ngadlu Kurna yertangga banbabanbalyarnendi (inbarendi). Kurna meyunna yaitya mattanya Womma Tarndanyako.

Parnako yailtya, parnuko tappa purruna, parnuko yerta ngadlu tampendi. Yellaka Kurna meyunna itto yailtya, tappa purruna, yerta kuma burro martendi, burro warriappendi, burro tangka martulyaiendi.

Kumarta yaitya miyurna iyangka yalaka ngadlu tampintheta.

City of Adelaide acknowledges the traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.

And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

## Homelessness Strategy Foreword



There is a perception that housing isn't a local government issue.

But when it comes to tackling homelessness, councils have a social responsibility to look after residents, especially when it's never been tougher to find a place to live.

As a capital city, the City of Adelaide has one of the highest proportions of homelessness in South Australia, with about 400 people sleeping rough, couch surfing or between accommodation on Census night in 2021.

The City of Adelaide's new Homelessness Strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention to achieve zero functional homelessness in our city.

This new Strategy couldn't come at a more important time, with our city on the cusp of a once-in-a-generation population boom. If we want the number of people living in the city to double, we don't want the rate of homelessness to grow proportionately.

This Strategy adopts an integrated and collaborative approach, emphasising the importance of working alongside state and federal government, and neighbouring councils, to find ways to house those who fall through the cracks.

We also know those experiencing homelessness aren't just wanting a roof over their head. They need essential wrap-around services to help them build a healthy and connected life.

Our community strives to become a city that's focused on equity, civility, and leaving nobody behind. With its housing-first focus, the City of Adelaide's Homelessness Strategy charts the way ahead.



**Jane Lomax-Smith**

**LORD MAYOR, CITY OF ADELAIDE**

## Introduction

As a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute of Global Homelessness to become a Vanguard City, the City of Adelaide is committed to solving homelessness through a community development approach. A focus on prevention and early intervention will link people to support services while improving social connections and increasing community capacity.

*Homeless people form one of the most powerless and marginalised groups in society. Responses to their needs should aim to empower and to maximise their independence – Supported Accommodation Program Act 1994 (SAAP)<sup>1</sup>*

We want homelessness to be a rare, short-term and non-recurring experience. By working with the state and federal government we can address the drivers of homelessness and ensure there is safe and affordable housing for people to create a home.

A safe and affordable home is a human right. For too long public policy at state and federal levels has worked to reinforce the idea that housing is a commodity rather than a human right and the critical social infrastructure on which communities and lives are built.

*The centre of our social, emotional, and sometimes economic lives, a home should be a sanctuary—a place to live in peace, security and dignity – United Nations*

Australia is in the grips of a long-term and worsening housing crisis. Housing costs continue to rise and people are locked out of ownership and rental markets. Risks and experiences of homelessness are increasing across all communities.

City of Adelaide is growing its population as a capital city. It is important that experiences of homelessness do not grow proportionately. As with most capital cities, the City of Adelaide has higher rates of homelessness compared with suburban and regional areas, including rates of what can be described as 'temporary homelessness', a reality of the centralisation of services in the CBD and the

city's role as a gathering place for those who visit from other areas for appointments, cultural events or to see family and friends.

Evictions, displacements, discrimination, inequality and poverty are key drivers of homelessness. Stigma regarding the experiences of homelessness remains. Community sentiment often positions people experiencing homelessness as 'other' when homelessness is a widespread experience that can happen to anyone.

Homelessness and poor health outcomes are strongly associated, as homelessness can lead to and exacerbate pre-existing health conditions. Conversely, mental illness may also lead to homelessness. People experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience poor health and premature mortality than the general population.

Action is needed to end homelessness. The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness has a slogan 'Homelessness is Solvable'. The City of Adelaide is committed to doing what we can to achieve this aim. This Homelessness Strategy – Everyone's Business, is Council's commitment to working to end homelessness and outlines the role Council will play and how Council will use its resources to do so.

This Strategy outlines Council's commitment to divert people from entering homelessness. City of Adelaide's Housing Strategy "Investing in Our Housing Future" outlines Council's approach and targets to increasing housing supply and diversity.

### Our Goals

1. Housing – People have a place to call home.
2. Closing the gap – Aboriginal and Torres Strait people have equitable outcomes.
3. Safety and support – People are safe and have access to support.
4. Wellbeing and connection – People are well and living connected lives within their communities.

<sup>1</sup> Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 – preamble

Housing is the basis of stability and security for an individual or family. The centre of our social, emotional, and sometimes economic lives, a home should be a sanctuary—a place to live in peace, security and dignity – United Nations.



## Drivers of Homelessness

Homelessness is a systemic issue which requires a multidisciplinary public policy response whilst assisting and supporting individuals. Homelessness cannot be solved without improvements to social services, primary and secondary health services and addressing Australia's housing crisis. Causes of homelessness vary greatly, but homelessness is not a choice, homelessness is a result of failed broken systems.

In Australia the top individual factors which may contribute to a person's risk of homelessness are poverty, unemployment, shortage of affordable housing, family breakdown, domestic violence, mental illness, sexual assault, addiction, financial difficulty, gambling and social isolation.<sup>2</sup>

Young people are more likely to become homeless because they often experience difficulties securing long-term accommodation and are particularly affected by poverty and the shortage of affordable housing in Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness and under-represented as homeowners and face intersectional challenges in accessing suitable housing. Housing solutions in the regions, addressing lower levels of inter-generational wealth transfer, health inequalities and economic participation limit access to housing.

Research also shows that homelessness is experienced differently by different demographics.

Nationally, the ongoing reduction of social housing and increasing housing unaffordability has contributed to increased housing stress making already vulnerable Australians more vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. Solutions to homelessness cannot be considered without increases in permanent supportive housing (like Common Ground), transitional housing, social housing and improvements in housing affordability. In addition, retaining people in housing also needs to be supported by wrap around services.

In the City of Adelaide there are several crisis and transitional forms of accommodation which are either at capacity due to demand or due to lack of housing available to transition vulnerable people once they are ready for more permanent accommodation (e.g. Common Ground and St John's Youth Services Inc). This transitional accommodation must be established with appropriate wrap around services. It is crucial that regardless of the population transitional or crises housing serves, that there is enough appropriate and affordable housing to transition into.

## Defining Homelessness

There are numerous definitions for homelessness used in Australia. For the purposes of this Strategy someone is experiencing homelessness if they:

- Are in an improvised dwelling, tent or sleeping rough; or
- Have no security of tenure e.g., are staying in temporary lodgings, supported accommodation or couch surfing; or
- Do not have control of, and space for social relations for example, severely crowded dwellings; and
- Do not have access to suitable alternatives.

Research conducted for Greater Adelaide<sup>3</sup>, illustrates the different ways particular groups of people experience homelessness:

- Sleeping out is more often experienced by men.
- Women are more likely to access homelessness services.
- Young people are more likely to couch surf or be in temporary accommodation rather than sleeping rough.

The lack of an agreed definition of homelessness creates challenges for measuring levels of homelessness, as multiple definitions have contributed to multiple methods and data sets being used to understand levels of homelessness in Australia. The true extent of homelessness is difficult to gauge and likely to be higher than the available data would suggest.

<sup>2</sup> Homelessness | Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>3</sup> Counting homelessness



## Measuring Homelessness

There are numerous ways to measure homelessness, with no data set being complete due to the often-hidden nature of some forms of homelessness.

Key data sets include:

- Census data – which relies on ABS staff to locate people experiencing homelessness to ensure their inclusion in the data.
- South Australian Housing Authority's Homeless to Home (H2H) data held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) – which relies on collecting data on people accessing specialist homelessness services, and agencies providing generalist and/or specialist support for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness many of whom are operating as part of South Australia's Homelessness Alliances.
- Adelaide Zero Project – which uses a 'By-Name' list to understand who is experiencing homelessness in the City of Adelaide and provides granular data on the specific needs of people experiencing homelessness in terms of housing and support.

While the ABS Census provides a national data set, it is point in time, collected only every five years and resource intensive to collect more regularly. Census data is widely acknowledged to underrepresent some groups among the homeless population. Other data sets such as those collected by the South Australian Housing Authority and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, rely on reporting about people accessing services.<sup>4</sup> While a useful indicator, this data does not account for seasonal and other fluctuations in homelessness, nor reflect the cyclical and chronic nature of homelessness. More granular data about homelessness is needed.

Data exists for the City of Adelaide, captured in near to real time, through the Adelaide Zero Project, the Collective Impact initiative to end homelessness in inner Adelaide, of which the City of Adelaide is a founding partner.

The Adelaide Zero Project's comprehensive data dashboard provides data about who is actively homeless in the City of Adelaide (people known to services to be sleeping out), people who have been housed who were previously sleeping out and people no longer known to the system (inactive) (see Our Progress – South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness).



<sup>4</sup> Counting homelessness: Working creatively to generate complex descriptive profiles of the health and demographics of people experiencing homelessness in Adelaide (wiley.com)

# Homelessness in the City of Adelaide

ABS data for the City of Adelaide reports 398 people experiencing homelessness on Census night in 2021.<sup>5</sup> In September 2023, the Adelaide Zero Project reported 212 'actively homeless' people, which was a decrease from 222 in August 2023.<sup>6</sup> There was also a reduction in newly identified people sleeping rough for the first time in the inner city.

Census data reports increased numbers of people experiencing homelessness across Australia, from 116,427 in 2016, to 122,494 in 2021. This data represents an increase of 5.2% over the five-year period.

South Australia experienced similar trends in levels of homelessness, with a 48.6% increase over the same timeframe (an increase from 936 people in 2016 to 1,391 people in 2021. This is a trend consistent with most other Australian States.<sup>7</sup>

Australia wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in homelessness statistics. More than a third of people who are actively homeless in the inner city according to Adelaide Zero Project data identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. 2021 Census data recorded 11.3% of homeless people identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Both of these data points are a significant overrepresentation considering that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 1.7% of the total population of Greater Adelaide at Census 2021.<sup>8</sup>

## Ending homelessness: Roles and Responsibilities

The housing and homelessness sector in Australia is complex. A coordinated effort by all levels of government and non-government sectors is needed to end homelessness.

## Government

Australia is facing a housing crisis. The crisis is challenging what has been a relatively consistent housing and public policy landscape for all levels of government for more than two decades. The supply of housing is now a consideration of particular political interest, with a clear mismatch between demand and supply, especially in terms of diversity of the types of housing and accommodation offerings people need.

**Federal Government** is responsible for tax settings, financial rules, and income support policy. It provides funding and support for housing, including for social housing and rental assistance. The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is the major funding agreement between federal, and state government. A renegotiated Agreement is expected to be operational in 2024.

**State Government** is responsible for social housing and homelessness services. In large measures, state government sets policy and process for housing, with responsibilities around land use planning, building codes and major housing projects, all critical factors in enabling housing supply. The state government plays a leading role in wrap-around services provision for vulnerable community groups and people at risk of experiencing homelessness.

**Local Government** has a role in local planning policy, development assessment and community development. It can seek to change land use policy at the local level. Councils support affordable housing through rate setting and rebates to not-for-profit housing providers.

Local government also has a role in the provision and management of the public realm and elements of social infrastructure to support communities.

<sup>5</sup> Our Progress – South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (saaeh.org.au)

<sup>6</sup> Our Progress – South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (saaeh.org.au)

<sup>7</sup> Estimating Homelessness: Census, 2021 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

<sup>8</sup> Counting homelessness

Areas with quality public realm, high amenity and access to social infrastructure are more appealing for residents and attract development of new housing.

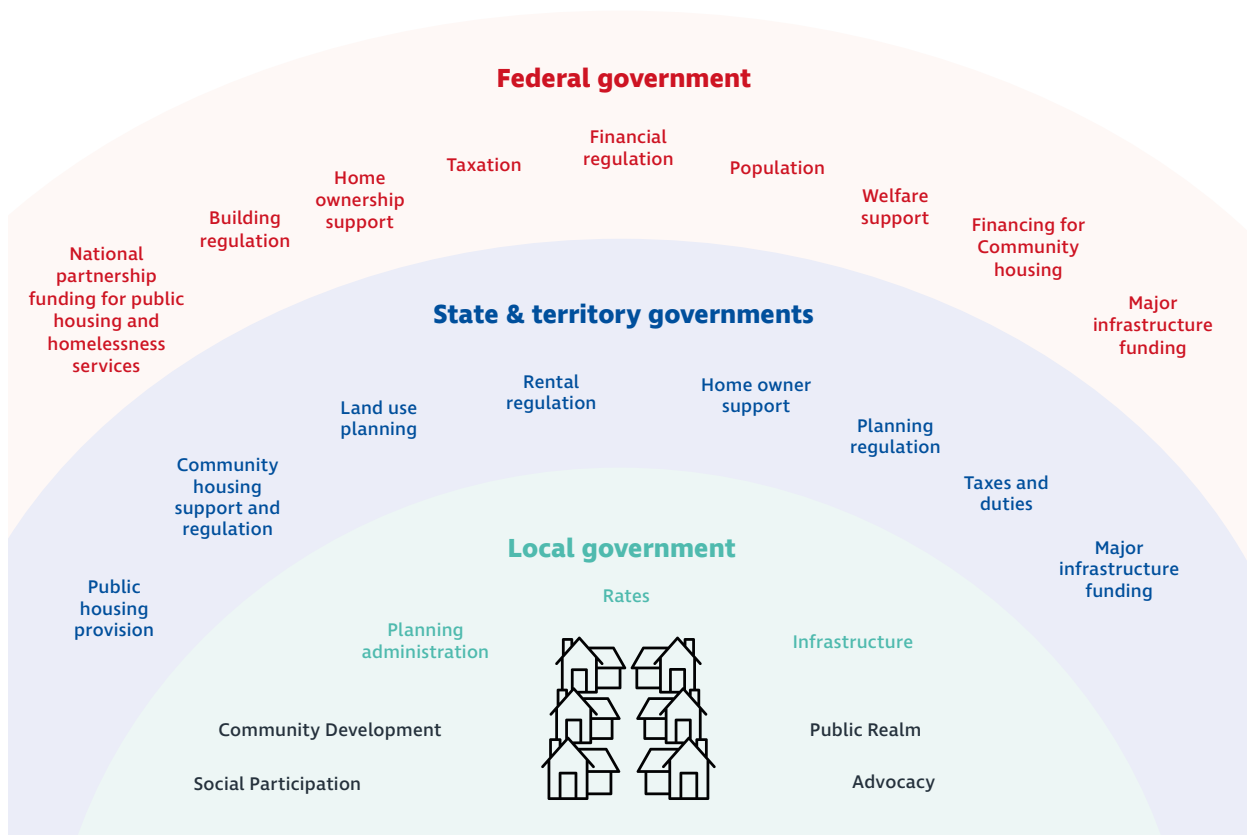
Councils support the homelessness sector through leadership, partnerships, facilitation and advocacy for services.

**Private and Community Sectors**


Not-for-profit agencies, including community housing providers and private industry play a role in housing and homelessness through delivery of

housing and support services. Community housing providers build and manage affordable rental properties, often for under-represented groups such as people with disability and older people.

Provision of affordable housing by the private sector is not mandatory. Incentives and inclusionary zoning policies assist with delivery of limited affordable housing by the private sector. Provision could be improved with greater clarity and certainty of requirements.



AHURI Housing Policy Levers of Commonwealth state and territory, and local governments.

A close-up photograph of a dark blue, paneled door. The door features a brass knocker in the center, a brass handle on the left side, and a brass keyhole at the bottom center. The door is set against a dark background, and the lighting highlights the texture of the door and the metallic sheen of the hardware.

The City of Adelaide supports a 'housing first' approach to homelessness which means that we believe a home is the foundation for building a healthy and connected life.

## Our Policy

Every person has the right to an adequate standard of living, and access to safe and affordable housing is one of the most basic human rights.

Intersectional factors lead people to experiences of homelessness including poverty, family and domestic violence, inequality, racism, trauma, discrimination, and a shortage of appropriate affordable housing. Climate change is having real impacts on the security of housing with extreme weather events leading to emergency responses and displacement.

The City of Adelaide supports a 'housing first' approach to homelessness which means that we believe a home is the foundation for building a healthy and connected life. However, homelessness is not just about housing, it is also about the supports that wrap around someone who is experiencing marginalisation and vulnerably which enable them to maintain their home.

People experiencing homelessness should have their rights upheld. All people should have access to support services, social infrastructure, and opportunities for social connection.

We will continue to pursue a housing first agenda alongside the state and federal government, through our Housing Strategy, and a partnership approach to specialist homelessness services through our commitment to the Adelaide Zero Project and Towards Home Alliance.

We will also work to prevent homelessness through a community development approach that focuses on prevention and early intervention by linking people to support services while improving social connections and increasing community capacity at a local level.



## Council's Role in Homelessness

Council's roles in responding to homelessness is to Lead, Partner, Facilitate and Advocate for housing and homelessness services.

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<b>Housing – People have a place to call home</b>	Intervene in the housing market to increase housing supply and address housing affordability	Partner with the state and federal government and sector partners to develop a shared definition of homelessness	Facilitate improved governance of the homelessness sector including financial support where appropriate	Advocate and support culturally appropriate accommodation and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity  Advocate for funding and development of public and social housing
<b>Closing the gap – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable outcomes</b>	Establish meaningful relationships to respond to the aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities  Establish a relationship with the First Nations Voice to Parliament in South Australia to influence the way decisions are made that affect Aboriginal people	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to assist Council in its goal of being a socially inclusive city	Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities creates healthy relationships, embraces diversity and promotes harmony	Advocate to the state and federal government for action on culturally safe support services and housing
<b>Safety and support – People are safe and have access to support</b>	City of Adelaide employees have a good understanding of how to prevent and respond to homelessness in line with the values and protocols of Council  Investigate options to provide amenity improvements for people experiencing homelessness such as lockers	Partner with the state government and sector partners to resource activities to collect meaningful homelessness data	Facilitate improved outcomes for people experiencing rough sleep and city users to effectively manage the public realm and Adelaide Park Lands to ensure safety, accessibility and amenity is maintained, in accordance with Council by-laws, by assisting police and homelessness service providers in providing referrals to relevant services	Advocate for whole of government responses, across all tiers, to address systemic barriers to access to services and supports, including:  Increased funding and funding flexibility to homelessness services  Stronger correlation between homelessness and all related response and intervention systems including mental health services, hospitals, corrections, employment services

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<p><b>Wellbeing and connection</b>                      – People are well and living connected lives within their communities</p>	<p>Lead discussions with state government on equitable funding for both Public Libraries SA and City of Adelaide’s community centres to reflect the scope of services provided and the expectations of the community and homelessness sector partners</p> <p>City of Adelaide proactively builds community knowledge and understanding of causes of impacts on individuals through various communication mechanisms</p> <p>Provide leadership across the local government sector on options that could be adopted to meet locals needs</p>	<p>Partner with the sector, state and federal government to determine strategies for addressing the drivers of violence against women</p> <p>Partner with the state government to connect people to services such as programs for financial wellbeing, neighbourhood development and community connection</p>	<p>Facilitate a response across the sector to understand and address food insecurity and essential services</p>	<p>Advocate to the state and federal government for increased funding for the homelessness sector, including specific funding for prevention and early intervention programs, based on quality data and evidence</p> <p>Advocate for a Priority Care Centre in the city to support accessible and affordable healthcare options, and sobering up facilities that divert people from emergency departments</p> <p>Advocate for additional and integrated on site health care responses within existing homelessness and connected services and via assertive outreach service</p> <p>Advocate for the establishment of a mobile multi-disciplinary health care unit van</p>







# Goal 1 – Housing – People have a place to call home.

## The Situation

Local government does not have a mandate to provide homelessness services, support or housing but there is a community expectation and moral imperative that Council actively responds.

To support a housing first approach to homelessness, housing supply must be addressed alongside a coordinated approach to homelessness prevention and early intervention.

Solutions to homelessness cannot be considered without increases in transitional housing, social housing and improvements in housing affordability. Helping vulnerable people who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing homelessness, maintain a home requires wrap around services.

Housing tenure in the City of Adelaide like other capital cities, is markedly different from Greater Adelaide or Australia as a whole, with 49.9 percent of residents in City of Adelaide renting in the private market, compared with a Greater Adelaide average of 22.1 percent.

Nationally we are facing a housing affordability crisis, including within the City of Adelaide. Recent pressures on the economy and a limited focus on housing by all levels of government have combined to create an unaffordable housing market, with limited supply and very low vacancy rates.

Currently 33 percent of low to moderate income households are experiencing rental stress in the city, a figure which has been increasing in the last 10 years. This means that 33 percent of households who are typically key workers, spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. In 2021 this was equivalent to over 2000 households living in rental stress. Low vacancy rates of one percent, mean that there are very few rentals available for people to move into. Not only does this contribute to increasing rent prices but it also means homes simply are not available for people who want to live in the city.

The SA Homelessness Alliances are now well established. City of Adelaide will continue to work collaboratively with the South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, and other key stakeholders, supporting the success of this best-practice, evidence-based approach to coordinated service delivery.

## Our Ambitions

City of Adelaide has a long history of public policy focused on homelessness, and social and affordable housing in the city. The scope and breadth of our housing legacy, and our approach, are outlined in our Housing Strategy including commitments to housing choice and diversity, adaptive reuse for housing and creating conditions for new housing models such as built to rent to thrive in the city.

City of Adelaide has identified a need for interventions in the housing market to foster and grow a new affordable rental asset class for city workers and residents. A shift in federal and state policy settings to reduce focus on small scale private investment in housing and elevate social housing and affordable rental housing through institutional investment is crucial.

In 2018 a goal was set to reach functional zero homelessness by 2025 with commitment from the state government to support this goal by supplying up to 20 properties per month. In the current homelessness climate 20 properties per month is not enough to reach functional zero homelessness and a whole of system response is required to meet the housing need.

City of Adelaide supports strategies for maintaining tenancies and keeping people safe during extreme weather events in line with climate justice principles.



## Targets

- Housing Outcomes – A whole of system response to supplement the state government committed housing and reach functional zero by 2025.**

## Bold Moves

Lead	Partner
<p><b>Leverage Planning Policy</b></p> <p>Partner with the state government to amend the state wide Planning and Design Code by 2025 to facilitate improved housing supply and choice.</p> <p><i>Partner: State Government, State Planning Commission</i></p>	<p><b>Housing Support &amp; Tenancy Reform Program</b></p> <p>Partner to introduce a Housing Support &amp; Tenancy Reform Program focused on legislative reform and early intervention for older people, women, renters and people at risk of entering homelessness by 2025.</p> <p><i>Partners: Mission Australia, Flinders University, Toward Home Alliance, Real Estate Industry, Women’s Safety Service SA</i></p>

## Principles

- All people have a right to a home and housing first approach.
- Housing and support services are separate, that is people can have housing solutions regardless of their service need.
- Recovery oriented practice that stabilises housing situations for people with mental health issues.

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<p><b>Housing</b></p> <p><b>People have a place to call home</b></p>	<p>Intervene in the housing market to increase housing supply and address housing affordability</p>	<p>Partner with the state and federal government and sector partners to develop a shared definition of homelessness</p>	<p>Facilitate outcomes for the homelessness sector including financial support where appropriate</p>	<p>Advocate and support culturally appropriate accommodation and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing or at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity</p> <p>Advocate for funding and development of public and social housing</p>

## Key City of Adelaide Functions

- Homelessness
  - o Adelaide Zero Project
  - o SA Homelessness Alliances
- Housing
  - o Adaptive Reuse
- City Planning and Heritage
  - o Planning Policy

## What City of Adelaide has Already Done

### Partner

#### 1000 Housing Outcomes

City of Adelaide is a founding partner of the Adelaide Zero Project which in 2023 reached 1000 housing outcomes for people experiencing rough sleeping. The 1000 housing outcomes is the legacy of five years' collaboration and effort across government, Council, the homelessness sector and community.

*"We know every capital city in Australia has a unique experience of homelessness. 60 per cent of people experiencing rough sleeping in South Australia are in the Adelaide CBD. We applaud the Adelaide Zero Project for reaching this milestone and remain committed to working collaboratively with all partners to reduce the issues that result in homelessness so that everyone in our communities can live with safety and certainty."*

Lord Mayor, Dr Jane Lomax-Smith

## Leading Practice: Case Study

### Housing First

Finland adopted a 'housing first' approach to homelessness, the fundamental premise of which is that everyone is entitled to somewhere to live, even people with complex psychosocial, health and financial issues such as addiction or poor credit ratings. The theory is that it is more effective to tackle the multiple issues often faced by a person experiencing homelessness if that person has a stable home. This approach has seen homelessness decrease from approximately 3,500 to 1,000 between 2008 and 2020, which equates to an almost 30 percent reduction in people experiencing homelessness. This is a figure significantly higher compared to other European countries.<sup>9</sup>

The City of Helsinki's approach to homelessness seeks to prevent homelessness through local outreach and the development of preventive services which were provided at a person's home, at the same time as reducing homelessness through a housing first approach. Helsinki's approach highlights prevention as the key component in the reduction of homelessness and the need for affordable and available housing using housing stock owned by the city.

<sup>9</sup>Housing First: Combatting Long-Term Homelessness in Finland | Successful Public Policy in the Nordic Countries: Cases, Lessons, Challenges | Oxford Academic (oup.com)

Governments of all levels should engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to understand the needs, barriers and opportunities for housing.



## Goal 2 – Closing the Gap – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable outcomes.

### The Situation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to experience homelessness and are underrepresented as homeowners.

The effects of colonisation, racism, discrimination and intergenerational trauma contribute to an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across a range of systems including health, child protection and correctional services.

More than a third of people who are actively homeless in the inner city according to Adelaide Zero Project data identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Census data for 2021 recorded 11.3 percent of homeless people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Both of these data points are a significant overrepresentation considered against the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 1.7 percent of the total population of Greater Adelaide at Census 2021.<sup>10</sup>

### Our Ambitions

The City of Adelaide should be a welcoming and culturally safe place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our approach should be co-designed, co-led and co-delivered with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people, including through identified positions within City of Adelaide. Our efforts to address homelessness must be aligned with the principles of our Reconciliation Action Plan.<sup>11</sup>

Governments of all levels should engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait people to understand the needs, barriers and opportunities for housing. All levels of government have a role to play in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait leaders to lead conversations about transitional accommodation solutions and identify long-term strategies to address housing outcomes. Housing options are needed on Country and in the regions, Greater Adelaide and the city.

### Targets

2. **Housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people actively experiencing homeless in the City of Adelaide is less than a third of homeless people.**
3. **Employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – City of Adelaide achieves an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target of 2 percent of all City of Adelaide employees by 2024.**

### Bold Moves

<b>Facilitate</b>
<p><b>Co-Design for Transitional Accommodation</b></p> <p>Co-design, co-lead and co-deliver with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other levels of government, transitional accommodation solutions and identify long-term strategies to address housing outcomes.</p> <p><i>Partners: Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, specialist housing providers, State Government</i></p>

<sup>10</sup> Counting homelessness

<sup>11</sup> Reconciliation initiatives | City of Adelaide

## Principles

- Culturally led, self-determined and safe responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness.
- The public realm creates cultural safety through design and representation.
- The voice of people with lived experience of homelessness and at risk of experiencing homelessness is heard and valued by the City of Adelaide.

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<b>Closing the gap</b>  <b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable outcomes</b>	Establish meaningful relationships to respond to the aspirations of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities  Establish a relationship with the First Nations Voice to Parliament in South Australia to influence the way decisions are made that affect Aboriginal people	Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to assist Council in its goal of being a socially inclusive city	Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities creates healthy relationships, embraces diversity and promotes harmony	Advocate to the state and federal government for action on culturally safe support services and housing

## Key City of Adelaide Functions

- Reconciliation
  - o City of Adelaide Reconciliation Committee
  - o Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity and Respect training for City of Adelaide Employees
  - o City of Adelaide Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan

## What City of Adelaide has Already Done

### Partner

#### Puti on Kurna Yerta – Bush in the City

In the wake of the COVID pandemic several regional and remote visitors were prevented from returning home due to natural weather events on the land and public imperatives. Puti Kurna Yerta (Bush in the City) was set up in the southern Adelaide Park Lands as culturally-led, temporary accommodation and multi-agency service hub.

The City of Adelaide supported the establishment of Puti Kurna Yerta to keep vulnerable visitors to Adelaide safe and facilitate a return to Country for those wishing to return home.

The Bush in the City was supported by the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce lead by the Department for Human Services with engagement of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities represented by Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Executive Board.

As a culturally inclusive, safe space, the Hub saw relevant agencies working in collaboration with staff and interpreters from Iwiri Aboriginal Corporation, the Kurna Nation Aboriginal Corporation, and other appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

## Goal 3 – Safety and Support – People are safe and have access to support.

### The Situation

Building and maintaining community safety requires a whole of community approach with residents, visitors, businesses and all levels of government working together to support a safe and inclusive environment for all. People without a home are more reliant on public spaces to meet their needs, including access to food, period products, places of refuge, public toilets, drinking water and phone charging points. People deserve to feel safe in their community. Women, children, young people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience violence and sexual assault.<sup>12</sup>

Domestic and family violence is a driver of homelessness for women and children and it is the leading reason why women and children leave their homes in Australia.

Climate change is worsening homelessness both in terms of being a driver and how homelessness is experienced by individuals through health and wellbeing effects, and the ability to access support. Extreme weather events have real impacts, and our response must be broader than existing code red and blue procedures to ensure the burden and impact of climate change are not disproportionately experienced by marginalised people.

The experience of homelessness must not be conflated with other public space uses such as public congregation, asking for money, drinking and drug use.



<sup>12</sup> Personal Safety, Australia

<sup>13</sup> Investigative panel into building and retaining an effective homelessness sector workforce | AHURI

<sup>14</sup> What is Climate Justice?

The workforce providing support and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness also needs to be safe and well supported. The homelessness sector has been characterised by low remuneration, job insecurity and large workloads.<sup>13</sup> The stability and security of the homelessness sector is vital to achieving public policy goals.

An agreed definition of homelessness would assist in accurate and timely data collection. Having accurate data will correctly represent the problem and assists to direct coordinated, timely responses and prevention initiatives.

### Our Ambitions

The City of Adelaide wants to create a well-designed city that meets the diverse needs of a growing number of residents and city users in ways that create strong and welcoming neighbourhoods and places.

We will create public spaces and streets that are active, safe and high amenity, providing direct pedestrian and cycling links to shops, public transport and open spaces.

We will provide places of refuge including community centres, libraries and areas to shelter. Our management of public spaces will consider the impact on people experiencing homelessness and promote dignity and respect.

We acknowledge the impacts of climate change on people experiencing homelessness and ensure our responses reflect climate justice principles related to representation, inclusion, and protection.<sup>14</sup>



## Targets

- 4. City Amenities – City of Adelaide managed public amenities including public toilets, drinking water, charging points and places of shelter are available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week and located across a range of key city locations.**

## Bold Moves

Lead	Partner
<p><b>Emergency Shelter</b></p> <p>Investigate in partnership with Alliance partners whether City of Adelaide community infrastructure is made available in response to extreme heat and cold weather such as state government announcements of Code Red and Code Blue.</p>	<p><b>Annual Homelessness Roundtable</b></p> <p>Host an annual Homelessness Roundtable to acknowledge the sector workforce and partners and identify opportunities for celebration, action, and collaboration.</p>

## Principles

- Work in coordination with direct service providers, police and health services to provide support for people experiencing rough sleeping.
- People experiencing rough sleeping are referred to services before being moved on from locations
- Identifying and providing proactive referrals to appropriate specialist services for people who are homeless and experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Take a proactive approach to prevention and early intervention in homelessness.
- Flexible support, choice, self-determination, and active engagement without coercion.
- Harm reduction approach where regulatory responses are underpinned by harm minimisation and diversion strategies.
- On-street giving initiatives by the community and businesses is integrated to ensure engagement of people experiencing homelessness with support services.
- The voice of people with lived experience of homelessness and at risk of experiencing homelessness is heard and valued by the City of Adelaide.

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<p><b>Safety and support</b> <b>People are safe and have access to support</b></p>	<p>City of Adelaide employees have a good understanding of how to prevent and respond to homelessness in line with the values and protocols of Council</p> <p>Investigate options to provide amenity improvements for people experiencing homelessness such as showers and lockers</p>	<p>Partner with the state government and sector partners to resource activities to collect meaningful homelessness data</p>	<p>Facilitate improved outcomes for people experiencing rough sleeping and city users to effectively manage the public realm and Adelaide Park Lands to ensure safety, accessibility and amenity is maintained, in accordance with Council by-laws, by assisting police and homelessness service providers in providing referrals to relevant services</p>	<p>Advocate for whole of government responses, across all tiers, to address systemic barriers to access to services and supports, including:</p> <p>Increased funding and funding flexibility for homelessness services</p> <p>Stronger correlation between homelessness and all related response and intervention systems including mental health services, hospitals, corrections, employment services etc.</p>



## Key City of Adelaide Functions

- Libraries and Community Centres
- City Maintenance
- Community Safety – Regulatory Services
- City Operations
- City Planning and Heritage
- Sustainability

## What City of Adelaide has Already Done

<b>Lead</b>
<b>Sleeping Out in the Adelaide Park lands</b> City of Adelaide engages with specialist housing services as a first response for people sleeping out in the Adelaide Park Lands.
<b>Facilitate</b>
<b>Lord Mayor Homelessness Roundtable</b> A Lord Mayor’s Homelessness Roundtable was held in 2023 to bring together experts from across the sector to identify service gaps, practical opportunities to partner, amplify early intervention, discuss opportunities and challenges with data collection and ways in which the City of Adelaide can support and advocate to state and federal government for relevant transitional accommodation and services that directly address a reduction of homelessness. The sector will come back together in twelve months to assess commitments and progress. <i>“Council has an important role in bringing people together to see if we can work together in a more committed, focused way.”</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Lord Mayor, Dr Jane Lomax-Smith</b></p>



## Goal 4 – Wellbeing and Connection – People are well and living connected lives within their communities.

### The Situation

Local government has a unique opportunity to ensure local communities understand the drivers of homelessness and are empowered to work alongside government and non-government service providers to prevent homelessness.

City of Adelaide can work alongside specialist homelessness services to ensure support is easy to access, flexible, immediate, and available for as long as needed.

An integrated response to housing, homelessness and mental health with appropriate wrap around services provides an opportunity for people to stabilise their mental health and exit the cycle of disadvantage created by inconsistent access to appropriate supports.

Evidence shows that providing long term housing coupled with the appropriate supports can be successful in delivering sustained tenancies for people with complex needs.<sup>15</sup> For those experiencing homelessness with complex needs, once housing is secured, a multidisciplinary team of support workers can address individual needs through services such as drug and alcohol counselling or mental health treatment.

The 2021 Census reported 25 percent of people experiencing homelessness were aged 12-24 years. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of homelessness on educational and employment outcomes and connectedness to community life. A focus on prevention of youth homelessness by keeping young people connected with their families, communities and providing education/training or employment opportunities is needed.

### Our Ambitions

A community development approach will underpin our work to support local communities. Community development principles include empowerment, human rights, social justice, self-determination, and collective action.<sup>16</sup> Our approach will be person-focused and recognise the value of lived experience.

City of Adelaide will support action to address the drivers of homelessness including poverty, family and domestic violence, inequality, racism, trauma, discrimination, and a shortage of appropriate affordable housing. We will work to address the social determinants of health<sup>17</sup> through a partnership approach with state and federal government.

Our work will acknowledge that those most at risk of homelessness are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women experiencing domestic and family violence, young people, people with physical and mental health conditions, people who have experienced trauma and brain injury.<sup>18</sup>

Our libraries and community centres provide Council's frontline community services including information about homelessness services, community responses and peer support. We will enhance our service offer through these critical community services to ensure the community has access to information and redirection to essential state government social support services.

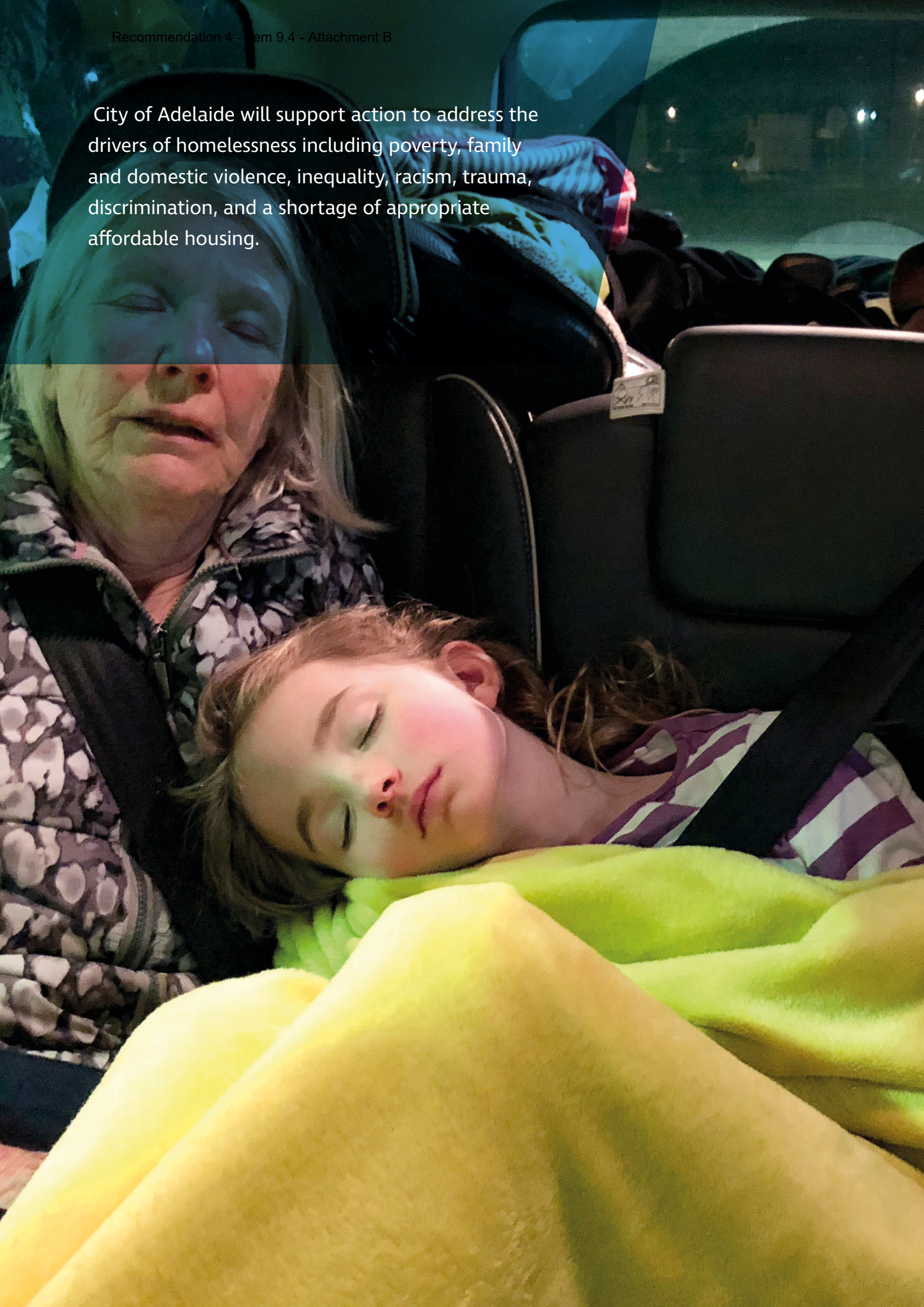
<sup>15</sup> ending\_homelessness\_in\_australia-bulletin\_no\_1\_understanding\_homelessness-taking\_action.pdf (aaeh.org.au)

<sup>16</sup> What is community development? | Australian Institute of Family Studies (aifs.gov.au)

<sup>17</sup> Social determinants of health (who.int)

<sup>18</sup> Counting homelessness: Working creatively to generate complex descriptive profiles of the health and demographics of people experiencing homelessness in Adelaide (wiley.com)

City of Adelaide will support action to address the drivers of homelessness including poverty, family and domestic violence, inequality, racism, trauma, discrimination, and a shortage of appropriate affordable housing.



## Targets

### 5. City of Adelaide frontline employees can identify the risk factors for homelessness and provide information on appropriate referral pathways and services.

#### Bold Moves

<b>Lead</b>
<p><b>Social Workers in Libraries</b></p> <p>From 2024 the City of Adelaide will have a social work service within our libraries whose role will include coordinating peer support programs</p> <p><i>Partners: State Government, Toward Home Alliance</i></p>

#### Principles

- A community development approach builds social connections and inclusion across city neighbourhoods.
- A primary prevention approach that addresses the drivers of violence against women by promoting gender equality.
- The voice of people with lived experience of homelessness and at risk of experiencing homelessness is heard and valued by the City of Adelaide.

Role	Lead	Partner	Facilitate	Advocate
<p><b>Wellbeing and connection</b></p> <p><b>People are well and living connected lives within their communities</b></p>	<p>Lead discussions with state government on equitable funding for both Public Libraries SA and Council’s community centres to reflect the scope of services provided and the expectations of the community and homelessness sector partners</p> <p>City of Adelaide proactively builds community knowledge and understanding of causes of homelessness and impacts on individuals</p> <p>Provide leadership across the local government sector on options that could be adopted to meet locals needs</p>	<p>Partner with the sector, state and federal government to determine strategies for addressing the drivers of violence against women</p> <p>Partner with the state government to connect people to services such as programs for financial wellbeing, neighbourhood development and community connection</p>	<p>Facilitate a response across the sector to understand and address food insecurity and essential services</p>	<p>Advocate to the state and federal government for increased funding for the homelessness sector, including specific funding for prevention and early intervention programs, based on quality data and evidence</p> <p>Advocate for a Priority Care Centre in the city to support accessible and affordable healthcare options and sobering up facilities that divert people from emergency departments</p> <p>Advocate for additional and integrated on site health care responses within existing homelessness and connected services and via assertive outreach services</p> <p>Advocate for the establishment of a mobile multi-disciplinary health care unit van</p>

## Key City of Adelaide Functions

- Community Development
- Social Planning
- Library Services
- Community Safety
- Regulatory Services

## What City of Adelaide has Already Done

### Partner

### Benches of Hope

City of Adelaide supported Adelaide street artist Leah Grant to lead and mentor members of the community, including women impacted by violence, students, and supporters to paint five street-side benches across the city as a message of hope, resilience and healing.

The action was taken on 25 November 2022 as part of the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women and the 16 days of activism that followed culminating on Human Rights Day.

Public Art has the power to connect people, to share messages and encourage conversation and action. Benches of Hope raises awareness about gender-based violence and creates spaces of public safety through art. Each bench features butterflies as the foundational symbol of the campaign. City of Adelaide is proud to support the campaign which runs globally every year and calls for an end to violence against women and girls.

*"Painting the bench to bring awareness to International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women brought so much fun, joy and happiness whilst painting these Benches of Hope that I almost forgot the reason we were painting them."*

**Bronwyn, North Adelaide resident**



## How the Strategy was Developed

### Homelessness Roundtable 10 August 2023

55 attendees.

### Homelessness Policy Discussion Paper

We looked at existing housing and homelessness policy in Australia.

### Policy Review

Our existing policy and plans informed this Strategy. We learnt from what works and included it in this Strategy. The Strategy is clear about the outcomes we want and the roles we will play.

### Literature Review

The Strategy draws on the work of Leanne Mitchell in her Churchill Fellowship report, *Everybody's Business: What local government can do to end homelessness*.<sup>19</sup>

### Consultation

The City of Adelaide works with the building, development and social services sector, and other levels of government. We consulted on the draft Strategy with:

- Homelessness service providers
- Precinct groups
- Community Housing Providers
- Other levels of government
- Philanthropic groups
- Community.

<sup>19</sup> Leanne Mitchell - Churchill Trust

## Strategic Alignment

### *Federal Government*

#### **Closing the Gap**

Seeks to improve housing and homelessness outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes shared decision making through a Housing Policy Partnership.

#### **National Housing and Homelessness Plan**

The federal government is developing a National Housing and Homelessness Plan. The Plan will set a shared vision for policy. It seeks a more coordinated response by all levels of government.

### *State Government*

#### **Future Directions for Homelessness**

The state government outlines a commitment to working with the specialist homelessness sector to design a new system that will better meet the needs of South Australians at risk of or experiencing homelessness. State government commitments under the Future Directions for Homelessness Strategy include:

- Preventing people from falling into homelessness
- Ensuring people get the right support, when they need it
- Rapidly rehousing people into safe, stable and long-term housing so they don't cycle in and out of homelessness.

### *Local Government*

#### **City of Adelaide's Strategic Plan**

The City of Adelaide's Strategic Plan 2024 – 28 sets out that our Objectives are to 'Support our communities to thrive' and to 'Encourage bold, interesting and purposeful development'. It states that 'Our Places - Will be interesting, purposeful and safe' and 'Our Community – Will be vibrant, connected and inclusive'.

### **City of Adelaide's Housing Strategy**

Housing policy touches on a wide range of planning, finance and governance structures. The City of Adelaide's Housing Strategy acknowledges councils need to consider land use, zoning, building codes, infrastructure development, public finance, taxation, fee structures and legal, administrative and regulatory frameworks supporting infrastructure crucial to housing.

In Australia, roles are split between levels of government. We need to find ways to partner and influence to achieve the following:

1. More affordable housing choices for people renting in the city.
2. Identify key redevelopment sites that could leverage opportunities for affordable housing and adaptive reuse.
3. Drive innovation in housing product, environmental sustainability and delivery models to grow diverse affordable housing stock.
4. Attract institutional and not-for-profit investment into the City of Adelaide as a targeted economic opportunity for city worker housing.
5. Leverage the delivery of affordable housing through government land holdings.
6. Integrate across levels of government for a more coordinated approach.

### **City Plan**

City of Adelaide is developing City Plan as a spatial tool to support population growth through targeted intervention and investment in housing and social infrastructure.

### City of Adelaide Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

City of Adelaide is committed to demonstrating best practice in access and inclusion planning. In implementing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), we recognise that it isn't impairment, but rather the barriers that exist in the community, that limit people's ability to fully participate and create a disabling environment. Council's DAIP advocates for the delivery of housing outcomes for people with disability.

### City of Adelaide Reconciliation Action Plan

Our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (Stretch RAP) outlines our role for Council to advocate for better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with other levels of government. This includes working with Aboriginal Community controlled organisations, non-government and government organisations to identify opportunities to support the delivery of programs to community involving health, housing and social wellbeing.

City of Adelaide is also focused on developing our existing working relationship opportunities with state government to collectively develop and support strategies in addressing homelessness and the safety of remote visitors in the city.





## Governance and Collective Impact

City of Adelaide works with a broad range of organisations in the homelessness sector and is open to new partnerships that achieve goals set out in this Strategy. Some of our key and enduring partnerships include:

### SA Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce

Multi-agency government Taskforce lead by the Department for Human Services, with representation across the state government, along with the City of Adelaide, City of Port Adelaide Enfield and the National Indigenous Australians Agency.<sup>20</sup>

### Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services supports a range of reconnect services such as community connections program, financial wellbeing programs, child and family supports and Aboriginal services.

### SA Homelessness Alliances

The SA Homelessness Alliances are now well established. City of Adelaide will continue to work collaboratively with the Homelessness Alliances, South Australian Alliance to End Homelessness, and other key stakeholders and support best practice, evidence-based approaches to coordinated service delivery.

The Toward Home Alliance, established by the SA Housing Authority, has primary responsibility for offering services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the City of Adelaide and, among other activities, drives the Adelaide Zero Project in conjunction with other project partners.

The Toward Home Alliance comprises of Baptist Care SA, Mission Australia, The Salvation Army, Sonder, Hutt St Centre, Aboriginal Family Support Services and Lead Agency Lutheran Care alongside government partner the South Australian Housing Authority.

### Adelaide Zero Project

The Adelaide Zero Partnership supports the Advance to Zero methodology. Advance to Zero is an approach for ending homelessness being applied in communities nationally, assisting them to reach Functional Zero homelessness; a measure that

recognises the dynamic nature of homelessness. 'A community reaches Functional Zero when the average capacity of its housing system is greater than the existing need'. The Adelaide Zero Project implements the Advance to Zero methodology by:

- Tracking levels of homelessness through regular updates on key metrics, operational data, outcomes, challenges, and opportunities of the project.
- Identifying existing, future, and potential partners in the Adelaide Zero Project, including the role and reporting requirements required by the South Australian Housing Authority.
- Using the data generated by the Adelaide Zero Project from the 'By-Name' list to understand the drivers of movement of people experiencing homelessness from the regions into the city.
- Advocacy for prevention of homelessness broadly and supporting the actions of the Toward Home Alliance and the state government.

### Communities of Practice

The City of Adelaide facilitates networking across homelessness sector service providers through organisation and participation in Communities of Practice to ensure whole of community responses to homelessness in the city.

### Local Government Association of South Australia

The Local Government Association of South Australia facilitates the Local Government Homelessness Network for South Australian Councils to share information and knowledge, and advocate across the sector.

### Flinders University Centre for Social Impact

The Centre for Social Impact (CSI) has a longstanding history of working with the South Australian Housing Authority (SAHA) and the housing and homelessness sector. This work includes redesigning the South Australian homelessness service sector as a reformed outcomes-focussed alliance system. CSI also has a long association since inception with the Adelaide Zero Project.

<sup>20</sup> Government-of-South-Australia-Department-of-Human-Services-Annual-Report-2021-to-2022.pdf (dhs.sa.gov.au)

## Resource Plan

### Support for Homelessness in the City of Adelaide

City of Adelaide responds to homelessness through the activities of multiple teams and programs. These include:

Positions	Function
Social Planning Team	Provides advocacy, referrals and linkages of vulnerable people and people sleeping rough in the city and Adelaide Park Lands for existing services such as Street Connect, Department for Human Services, and SA Police for anti-social behaviour, building relationships between stakeholders including residents, businesses and service providers with the aim to achieve a more cohesive community response to homelessness.
Team of Community Safety Officers	Ensure uses of public spaces (including the Adelaide Park Lands) are safe and that public facilities are accessible for the whole community. Their role can involve education and enforcement of by-laws, which may at times require officers to issue cease-camping notices in the Adelaide Park Lands and make a referral to Street Connect. <sup>21</sup>
Regulatory, Cleansing and Community Connections Teams	Respond to public cleansing across the city.
Place Coordinators	Provide a conduit to businesses and community members.
Community Centres and libraries	Provide shared spaces where all are welcome. These facilities provide public computers, Wi-Fi, borrowing services, a place to rest/chat and information about emergency assistance and accommodation.

<sup>21</sup> Street Connect

The City of Adelaide does not provide direct specialist support for people experiencing homelessness. Council has key financial levers it uses to support organisations responding to homelessness:

### **Adelaide Zero Project Strategic Partnership**

City of Adelaide has been a major partner of the Adelaide Zero Project since 2018. This partnership originated through the City of Adelaide's former partnership with the Don Dunstan Foundation.

Council has approved a partnership agreement with the Australia Alliance to End Homelessness until June 2024 to the value of \$335,301, enabling City of Adelaide to provide a primary coordination role for Adelaide Zero Project.

### **Rate Rebates**

City of Adelaide facilitates the delivery of specialist homelessness services by city based charitable organisations by providing up to 100 percent rate rebates (subject to eligibility). Ratepayers can apply for a reduced rate if they directly support homelessness.

### **Community Impact Grants**

Community Impact Grants are provided to a range of community partners who support prevention of homelessness and homelessness responses. The allocation of grants considers capacity building of specialist homeless services, programs and events that engage the community, promote social inclusion and increase independence.

### **Community Impact Strategic Partnership**

Community Impact Strategic Partnership for up to three years. Council offers these grants through a competitive process open to all community organisations.

### **Sustainability Incentive Scheme**

The Sustainability Incentive Scheme provides a range of financial incentives for people to address the cost-of-living pressures, such as energy efficiency improvements.

## **Contact Details**

### **City of Adelaide**

Contact our Customer Centre  
25 Pirie Street, Adelaide  
Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm  
customer@cityofadelaide.com.au  
Submit an online enquiry  
8203 7203

### **Government of South Australia**

Street Connect  
Use Street Connect if you've seen someone you think is sleeping rough in the Adelaide CBD or surrounding parklands.  
Street Connect  
Call 000 now if there's an emergency and someone's in immediate danger.

**Adelaide.  
Designed for Life.**

