Chapter 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

In January 2008, the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the Minister for Housing, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, announced the development of a comprehensive, long term plan to tackle homelessness.

s 47C, s 47B

The Commonwealth Government released the White Paper on Homelessness: *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness (The Road Home)*, in December 2008, setting two headline goals to guide the long term response to homelessness:

- to halve overall homelessness by 2020; and
- to offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020.

s 47C, s 47B

A number of related government commitments reflected the increased priority given to addressing homelessness associated with *The Road Home.* The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), commenced on 1 January 2009, initiating a whole-of-government approach to tackling the problem of homelessness and housing affordability. The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) was also announced by COAG in November 2008, designed to contribute to the NAHA outcome, "People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion".

1.2 The Review of the National Partnership on Homelessness

In May 2011, the Review of the NPAH Working Group (the Working Group) was established to undertake a mid-term review of the NPAH. The objectives of the review were to provide an assessment of progress towards the achievement of the outcomes of the agreement; address the performance reporting issues identified by a review by the Heads of Commonwealth and State Treasuries (HoTs) and in reports by the COAG Reform Council; and to review the NPAH performance framework.[1]

The NPAH was agreed by COAG in early 2009, committing resources of $1.1 billion by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to address homelessness.

The NPAH is designed to contribute to the following outcomes:
- fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough;
- fewer people will become homeless more than once;
- people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation; and
- people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing.

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[1] The Terms of Reference of the NPAH review are at Appendix 1

The review was undertaken by representatives of Commonwealth and State and Territory First Ministers' departments, Treasuries and line agencies with responsibilities related to homelessness, supported by data agencies and the COAG Reform Council, the Review of Government Services Steering Committee.

1.2.1 Methodology

In assessing progress against outcomes, the Working Group considered the jurisdictions' NPAH annual reports (the Annual Reports) and additional material on effective strategies, reviewed available data and publications on homelessness and consulted key community stakeholders with expertise in homelessness. In addition to the NPAH, the NAHA, other National Partnership Agreements and government programs targeted towards housing and/or homelessness have also been considered in measuring progress against outcomes.

The Working Group analysed each of the performance indicators in the current NPAH performance reporting framework according to the HoTs conceptual framework[2], considered the effectiveness of each indicator in measuring the targets of the NPAH and deliberated on the policy justifications for particular indicators.

In light of the National Disability Strategy and the National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage (Closing the Gap), the Working Group was also asked to give separate consideration in this review to outcomes for people with disability and Indigenous Australians. In arriving at its recommendations for a revised performance reporting framework, the Working Group considered whether particular indicators could be disaggregated by Indigenous status and disability, as well as age and gender.

For each indicator, a judgement was made as to whether there was sufficient justification for its retention and, if so, whether it should be revised to make it more effective. Consideration was also given to the introduction of new performance indicators. The appropriateness of the current benchmarks for the indicators was also considered.

Finally, the Working Group undertook cost benefit analyses both of its proposed changes to the performance reporting framework and of an alternative option to develop data that would enable robust measurement and reporting of the homeless population.

1.3 Progress against outcomes – findings and recommendations

1.3.1 Findings

The review found evidence of progress towards NPAH outcomes from survey data and stakeholder consultations, but noted that it is difficult to project, at this early stage of the agreement's life, whether the NPAH is on track to meet its 2013 targets, in part because:

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[2]http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/performance_reporting/conceptual_framework_ performance_reporting_feb_11.pdf

- there are data deficiencies: 2010-11 data is not yet available and 2010-11 was the first year in which all initiatives were fully operational; and
- data from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing (the Census) will not be available until the second half of 2012.

Quantitative Data

In relation to the first outcome, reducing the number of people becoming homelessness and the number sleeping rough, there is not *direct* evidence that progress has been made in reducing the numbers of homeless people and rough sleepers.

However, information on the number of homeless people in the period since the 2006 Census of Population and Housing (the Census) from informal surveys of rough sleepers, indicated reductions in the number of rough sleepers in Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide (but not Melbourne).   s 47C, s 47B

While data on usage of specialist homelessness services shows an increase in the number of homeless people receiving assistance, this could reflect increased access to support rather than changes in the homelessness population[3]. There is evidence of an increase in the support provided to rough sleepers in the services contributing to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) data collection from 2008-09 to 2009-10, which could mean that rough sleepers are more likely to obtain housing. (It should be noted, as indicated above, that data are not yet available for 2010-11, the year in which it would be expected that all initiatives NPAH would have become fully operational.)

There is also encouraging evidence of progress on the second outcome, relating to reductions in repeat homelessness. AIHW SAAP data shows that the proportion of clients experiencing repeat homelessness declined from 10.4 per cent in 2006-07 to 8.5 per cent of SAAP clients in 2009-10, from 19,541 to 18,690 people.

It is not possible to directly assess progress against the third outcome, that people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation. As outlined in Chapter 3, SAAP data indicate a reduction in the proportion of SAAP clients aged 12 to 17 years who re-engaged with family school and work from 200607 to 2009-10, although whether this reflects reduced need is not clear. However, there is evidence of improved access to education and employment, with nearly 90,000 homeless job seekers achieving job placements since 1 July 2009.

In relation to the fourth outcome, that people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing, there is clearer evidence of progress.

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[3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2009-10: Australia* , pp 5-6

Investment under the NPAH has increased assistance to homeless clients, with around 192 additional projects implemented in 2010-11 and assistance provided to clients on around 115,000 occasions. SAAP data confirm that there have been small but continuous increases in the proportion of SAAP clients receiving casework services. Data also indicate improved access to social housing for those in greatest need, with an additional 1,363 households housed in 2009-10 in comparison to 2008-09. **s 47C, s 47B**

s 47C, s 47B

Feedback from Consultations

Notwithstanding the limited availability of data, feedback from consultations indicates that the NPAH is seen as a useful mechanism for delivering a range of new programs and services in response to different localised needs and challenges and has allowed jurisdictions to address key service gaps. However, this flexibility may also have resulted in some inconsistency in approaches on issues such as exits from care.

Many jurisdictions and stakeholders have noted that the NPAH has resulted in improved collaboration between service providers and government agencies, as well as improved coordination among government agencies.

Planning has also been important, particularly the use of jurisdictions' Implementation Plans and their continual improvement through an annual review process, and the development by some jurisdictions of state and regional homelessness plans to ensure a better connected service system.

Stakeholders considered that through the NPAH, the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments have signalled their commitment to reducing homelessness. This has been effective in raising the profile of homelessness in mainstream services and the wider community and contributing to the overall effort to address homelessness.

The NPAH is only one part of a complex service system and it is difficult at this early stage of its life to attribute causality for progress against outcomes. For example, the increased access to social housing associated with the completion of stock under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (the Stimulus Plan)[4] was identified by a number of stakeholders as a significant factor contributing to progress against NPAH outcomes.

Improving ability to assess progress against outcomes

There are a number of initiatives underway that will improve the range and quality of relevant data to monitor progress against outcomes, including:
- the development of the new national Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data collection, which began on 1 July 2011 and with the first SHS data to be available from October 2012;

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[4] http://www.economicstimulusplan.gov.au/housing/pages/default.aspx

- continuing work by the ABS to review the assumptions underlying the interpretation of Census data to produce estimates of homelessness, in consultation with a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group; and
- work by ABS to explore whether Centrelink data can be used to provide an indication of changes in the homeless population between Censuses.

There was no evaluative material available to the Working Group at the time of the review to confirm the success of projects funded under the NPAH in reducing homelessness. A number of jurisdictions have commenced evaluations of NPAH initiatives which will provide further evidence regarding the effectiveness of NPAH service models and could assist any future review with attribution of outcomes and assessment of the longer-term impact of NPAH investments. Further material will become available through research projects funded under the National Homelessness Research Strategy and evaluations of key NPAH initiatives across a number of jurisdictions.

Additional and robust evaluative work by all governments and by the not-for-profit sector into the future would assist in assessing the value of continuing investment in this area.

A further examination of outcomes in 2012 would be timely given the need to consider whether, and in what form, specific investment for homelessness should be continued. An examination in 2012 could utilise the 2011 Census data which will become available in 2012, in addition to the new supported housing services collection.

1.3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1
Given the current gaps in data availability, the Select Council on Homelessness should report to COAG on progress against the revised performance framework recommended in this report in 2012 and 2013. The report should draw on data fro the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data collection, the Census and the jurisdictions' NPAH Annual Reports and evaluations. ~~Additional investment in robu~~ evaluation would assist in considering the value of continuing investment in this area.

Recommendation 2
The 2012-13 and 2011-12 NPAH Annual Reports should include a high-level summary of progress against outcomes.

Recommendation 3
Further consideration of a performance reporting system, built on robust and timely data, is required to ensure it is possible to monitor and evaluate progress before considering any future arrangements in this area.

Recommendation 4
In light of the findings of this review and the limited period before the expiry of the NPAH, there should be no substantial changes to the NPAH.

1.4 Performance reporting framework – findings and recommendations

1.4.1 Findings

The Working Group's analysis identified two broad categories of indicators to assess performance: broad indicators of population change reliant on Census data and indicators that rely on proxy measures relating to service users. Some performance indicators were found to suffer from data limitations and/or conceptual issues that prevented adequate measures of performance.

The Working Group considered that the indicators that related to key homeless population groups should be retained, in recognition of the impact that concerted government action for these groups is likely to make in reducing the overall level of homelessness. For these indicators, proxy performance measures, based on SHS data, were identified to be used as long-term proxy measures from 2011-12, since whole-of-population data for most indicators are not expected to be available during the life of the NPAH.

To improve the accuracy of reporting the real changes over time, the Working Group considered that all performance indicators (PIs) should be expressed in terms of proportions, rather than numbers, and differences in expressions should be standardised, including removing references to increases or reductions in the performance indicator descriptor.

In addition, the Working Group found that, wherever possible, indicators should be disaggregated by Indigenous status and disability, as well as age and gender.

The Working Group notes that the revised framework depends largely on proxy measures for most indicators. However, given the essential difficulty of measuring homelessness, the long lead times for developing data and the limited period of time before the NPAH concludes, the Working Group did not consider that significant investment in additional data sets for the purposes of this agreement was warranted or feasible.

1.4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 5
In recognition of the importance of addressing Indigenous homelessness, the following Performance Indicators should be added to the Performance Reporting Framework of the NPAH:
- *The proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless*; and
- *The proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping).*

Recommendation 6
The following Performance Indicators in the current Performance Reporting Framework of the NPAH should be revised to read as follows:
- PI 3 – *The proportion of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence.*
- PI 4 – *The proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing.*
- PI 5 – *The proportion of people in social housing and private rental who are supported to maintain or secure sustainable housing.*

- PI 7 – *The proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school or work.*
- PI 9 – *The proportion of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive case management.*

Recommendation 7
Performance Indicators *(PI) 8 (Number of children (under 12 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are provided with additional support to maintain contact with their school'), PI 10 ('Number of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are provided with legal services') and PI 11 ('Number of staff of specialist homelessness services provided with formal training and development opportunities') should be removed from the Performance Indicator Framework of the NPAH.* There is limited prospect of obtaining data to allow PI 8 to be measured during the life of the agreement. While PIs 10 and 11 relate to important matters they are not useful measures of progress against outcomes.

Recommendation 8
The framework in the table below, including performance measures and benchmarks should be adopted in the NPAH. The rationale for the recommended PIs, indicator measures and benchmarks is detailed in Chapter 5 of this report.

Table 1

Revised Number	Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Baseline/ Data Source	Performance Benchmark
PI 1	Proportion of Australians who are homeless	Proportion of Australians who are homeless	2006 Census* (baseline)/ 2011 Census	7 per cent reduction in the number of homeless Australians by 2013.
PI 2	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless	2006 Census * (baseline)/ 2011 Census	33.3 per cent reduction in the number of Indigenous homeless Australians by 2013.
PI 3	Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping).	Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)	2006 Census * (baseline)/ 2011 Census	25 per cent reduction in the number of rough sleepers by 2013.
PI 4	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping).	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)	2006 Census * (baseline)/ 2011 Census	Preferred direction: decrease
PI 5	Proportion of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence	Proportion of clients accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing following family violence	2011-12 to 2012-13 /SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
PI 6	Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing	Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings accessing specialist homelessness services who secure sustainable housing	2011-12 to 2012-13 /SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
PI 7	Proportion of people in social housing and private rental who are supported to maintain or secure sustainable housing	Proportion of people in social housing and private rental and accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing	2011-12 to 2012-13/ SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
PI 8	Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness	Proportion of people accessing specialist homelessness services who experience repeat periods	2007-08 SAAP (baseline)/ 2008-09 to 2010-11 SAAP;	25 per cent reduction in the number of people experiencing three repeat periods of

		of homelessness	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	homelessness at an emergency service in 12 months by 2013.
PI 9	Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school or work	Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) accessing specialist homelessness services who get support to access education, training or employment services	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
PI 10	Proportion of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive case management	Proportion of specialist homelessness services case managed clients with goals achieved	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.

*2006 baselines subject to revision by ABS

<u>Recommendation 9</u>
The Select Council on Homelessness should update the baselines for PIs 1- 4 following the publication by the ABS of revised estimates of the 2006 homeless population[5].

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report comprises five chapters. Chapter 2 provides further background and context for the commissioning of the report, including information on the NPAH and where the agreement fits in the context of the COAG, HoTs Review, and the role of the COAG Reform Council (CRC).

Chapter 3 reports on progress to date against the stated outcomes of the NPAH. It also examines the NPAH's contributions to these outcomes and lessons learnt. Chapter 4 examines factors outside the NPAH which may have contributed to NPAH outcomes, including national investment outside the NPAH and economic and social factors that may have contributed to changes in homelessness over the life of the NPAH. Findings from consultations with stakeholders are used to provide further insight.

Chapter 5 includes an analysis of the NPAH's 11 performance indicators using the HoTs conceptual framework and an assessment of the conceptual and data robustness of each indicator and the role that each indicator plays in measuring the targets of the NPAH. The recommendations of the CRC's *National Partnership Agreement: Early Assessment of Progress*[6] are addressed, as well as the relative costs and benefits of two options for revising the performance reporting framework. A revised performance framework for the NPAH is proposed.

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[5]

[6] Summary at Appendix 3

Homelessness NP Review Working Group

10 November 2011
Agenda Item 3

Final Report

Chapter 2

Talking Points:

- Chapter 2 is the background to the review – it gives a broader context to the review, including development of the NAHA and other reviews leading up to the NPAH review
- It was prepared by Treasury. Unfortunately s 47F could not join us because of HoTS process- but happy to ahve any comments and we will deal with then if we can.

Relevant papers
Agenda paper 3.2 – Chapter 2

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

2.1 The broader context

In January 2008 the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the Minister for Housing, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, announced the development of a comprehensive, long term plan to tackle homelessness.

In May 2008 the Commonwealth Government released a Green Paper on homelessness, *Which Way Home? A New Approach to Homelessness*, to inform the development of a white paper. It highlighted the challenges faced by people who are homeless and suggested ways to reduce homelessness in the long term.

The Commonwealth Government, with the agreement of State and Territory Governments, released the White Paper on Homelessness: *The Road Home (The Road Home)*, in December 2008, setting two headline goals to guide the long term response to homelessness:

- halve overall homelessness by 2020
- offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020.

A number of government commitments were announced that sought to address the issue of homelessness and reflected the increased priority to addressing homelessness associated with *The Road Home:*

- the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) aims to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing;
- the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) designed to contribute to the NAHA outcome, "People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion";
- the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing (NPASH) aimed to increase the supply of social housing and to contribute to a reduction in homelessness and improved outcomes for homeless and Indigenous Australians; and
- the Social Housing Initiative (SHI), a component of the Commonwealth's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, supports the construction of new social housing and the repair and upgrade of existing homes.

2.2 The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

The NPAH was agreed in January 2009. Under the agreement, the State and Territory Governments would provide additional support for homelessness initiatives with a focus on prevention, early intervention and breaking the cycle of homelessness through a better connected service system and the Commonwealth would commit to assisting in this effort and provide additional funding. Further detail of funding and key strategies and reforms is provided in Chapter 3.

The NPAH is designed to contribute to the following four outcomes:

1. Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough.
2. Fewer people will become homeless more than once.
3. People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation.
4. People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing.

The NPAH recognises that a reduction in homelessness will require targeting rough sleepers; people experiencing homelessness more than once; people escaping violence especially women and children; children and young people including those exiting care and protection; Indigenous people; and people exiting social housing and institutional care.[1]

2.3 The Heads of Treasuries (HoTs) Review

In December 2009, COAG requested HoTs undertake a review of agreements under the IGA framework for federal financial relations – National Agreements, National Partnerships and Implementation Plans. In considering the effectiveness of the performance frameworks of the existing agreements, the HoTs Review[2] identified there were widespread issues, which largely fell into two broad categories – data limitations and conceptual inadequacy.

The review noted that data limitations can include data being of poor quality, unreliable or infrequent, not comparable over time or between jurisdictions or unable to be sufficiently disaggregated by Indigenous or socio-economic status. It recommended that action needs to be taken to address indicators with data limitations where the limitations means that it is not possible to reliably use the indicator to assess progress against the outcomes of the agreement.

In relation to conceptual adequacy, the HoTs Review concluded that to be useful measures of the outcomes of the agreement, performance indicators require clear and logical links to the outcomes, which should be evident to the general public. In addition, a performance indicator must be able to identify whether real changes in the related outcome over time have occurred. It should also be clear the direction of change in an indicator which indicates progress.

2.4 Review of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

At its meeting of 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the underlying reform principles of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Federal Financial Relations continue to provide a strong foundation for

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[1] Paragraph 4, NPAH

[2] Heads of Treasuries, Report of the Review of National Agreements, National Partnerships and Implementation Plans under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, December 2010, unpublished

progressing COAG's agreed reform agenda and for achieving better policy and service delivery outcomes for all Australians.

However, COAG noted that the Heads of Treasuries (HoTs) review[3] and the COAG Reform Council (CRC) reports[4] had identified significant issues with performance reporting in the National Agreements and National Partnership Agreements that sit under the IGA. COAG agreed that a Steering Group, led by senior officials from First Ministers' departments and treasuries, should review the performance reporting frameworks underpinning the six National Agreements and the National Partnership on Homelessness (NPAH). COAG also agreed that the mid-term review of the NPAH, involving a review of progress made by the parties in respect of achieving the agreed outcomes and the identification of any issues with the agreement, should be brought forward and conducted in conjunction with the review of the performance reporting framework.

The HoTs Review and CRC Recommendations Implementation Steering Group (the Steering Group) was created to give effect to this decision. The Steering Group established six working groups, comprising senior officials from First Ministers' departments, Treasuries and relevant portfolio agencies, to undertake the reviews of the individual agreements.

In May 2011, the NPAH Review Working Group (the Working Group) commenced. Under the terms of reference provided by the Steering Group[5], the broad objectives of the review were to:
- provide an assessment of progress towards the achievement of the outcomes of the agreement;
- address the performance reporting issues identified by the HoTs review and CRC reports; and
- review the NPAH performance framework, using the conceptual framework developed by the HoTs Review.

The report of the review of the NPAH was originally to be provided to COAG by 31 August 2011. Following agreement by COAG, the deadline for reporting was subsequently extended until November 2011, to allow for the 2010-11 State and Territory Governments' NPAH Annual Reports to be considered in the review.

The Working Group held its first meeting on 13 May 2011. The group met a total of seven times between May and November 2011 - the final meeting being held on 10 November 2011.

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[3] Heads of Treasuries, Report of the Review of National Agreements, National Partnerships and Implementation Plans under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, December 2010

[4] Including the CRC reports on National Partnership Agreement: Early Assessment of Progress, (executive summary provided at Appendix 3) and the 2008-09 baseline report on the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

[5] The full terms of reference are provided at Appendix 1

2.3 The COAG Reform Council

The CRC assesses and publicly reports on the performance of governments against the objectives, outcomes and indicators of National Agreements and certain National Partnership agreements. Following a request by COAG in December 2009, the CRC also provided a report to COAG in July 2010 providing an early assessment of progress under the NPAH.[6]

In its report, the CRC expressed concerns about data limitations and made a number of recommendations for changes to improve the performance reporting framework. The CRC noted that some data are reported infrequently, such as through the Census of Population and Housing (the Census) which has a five year reporting cycle. This makes it difficult to measure annual progress.

On the performance reporting framework, the CRC found that:
- the performance indicators as currently set out in the agreement—with the exception of the three population indicators that utilise data from the Census—cannot be reported against; and
- the performance reporting framework is incomplete and, despite substantial data development efforts which were underway, was likely to remain so for the life of the agreement.

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[6] CRC, *National Partnership Agreement: Early Assessment of Progress*, the executive summary of which is provided at Appendix 3

Homelessness NP Review Working Group

Agenda Item 3
(chapter 3)

Chapter 3

Talking Points:
- This chapter looks at:
  - the available evidence on progress towards outcomes of the NPAH; and
  - the extent to which the initiatives and strategies funded under the NPAH may have impacted on homelessness.
- It highlights the complexities of this task including:
  - The lack of data and difficulties with comparability and attribution; and
  - The fact that initiatives have only been fully operational for a year.
- It discusses the work happening across government that will help address these difficulties in the future, including:
  - New SHS data collection
  - Centrelink flag
  - Evaluations by jurisdictions and others
  - Research projects
  - ABS work on counting the homeless
- There are discussions under each of the 4 NPAH outcomes outlining what conclusions can be drawn about progress:
  - Firstly, from the ancillary quantitative data sources
  - Secondly from the jurisdictions' outputs, with evidence drawn from the annual reports and case studies, as well as feedback from stakeholder consultations
- A section is included summarising the overall impact of the NPAH on outcomes

  - Quantitative data indicates:

    - Outcomes 1- **no direct evidence** that progress has been made in reducing the numbers of homelessness people

    - Outcome 2 - **evidence** of progress relating to reductions in repeat homelessness

    - Outcome 3 - **not possible to assess** whether people at risk of or experiencing homelessness are improving connections with families and their education or employment participation

    - Outcome 4 – **evidence** that progress has been made in improving services and access to housing for homeless people

- The final sections looks at impacts and some lessons learnt, including:
  - Difficulty recruiting and retaining skilled personnel; community support and data and evaluation.

Relevant papers : Agenda paper 3.3 – Chapter 3

Chapter 3

PERFORMANCE AGAINST OUTCOMES

3.1 Overview

This chapter considers the available evidence on progress towards outcomes of the NPAH and assesses the extent to which the initiatives and strategies funded under the NPAH may have impacted on homelessness.

Section 3.2 examines relevant available ancillary and qualitative data to draw some tentative conclusions about progress that has been made towards meeting the NPAH outcomes. Section 3.3 examines key outputs across jurisdictions and progress under NPAH in implementing reforms to the homelessness service systems. Section 3.4 draws together some of the lessons learnt at the mid-way point of the NPAH.

3.2 Assessing overall progress towards achievement of outcomes

The COAG Reform Council report on the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness: Early Assessment of Progress*[1] identified a number of key data gaps that have impacted on capacity to measure the outcomes specified in the agreement, as outlined below:

- there is a lack of longitudinal data on housing and socio-economic outcomes for homeless and at risk populations;
- the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing data (2011) and the homelessness estimates that rely on this data are not currently available to assess population indicators and interim targets; and
- the 2011 Census data does not align with the performance benchmark year of 2013. Some of the initiative and reforms under the NPAH may not have reached sufficient maturity by 2011 to assess their full impact.

A review by the ABS of the methodology for counting the homeless has also highlighted the complexities in measuring homelessness and the impact of methodological approaches to derive estimates of homelessness, given that people enumerated in the Census cannot be directly classified as homeless (except for those accommodated in supported homeless accommodation on Census night).

A key feature of the NPAH is the level of variation across jurisdictions in relation to service models and focus of effort. While all jurisdictions agreed to implement core outputs and strategies, they were each able to develop responses tailored to meet local needs. While this is a positive feature from a program perspective, it has also created challenges in relation to the comparability of data across initiatives and jurisdictions.

However, significant work is currently occurring across government to address data gaps and to enhance data collection and the range of evidence available to assess outcomes.

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[1] See Executive Summary at Appendix 3

Notwithstanding these gaps in direct data sources, a range of proxy measures were developed to assess effectiveness against outcomes. Whilst indicative in nature, these measures, described below, represent an important contribution in assessing and, in the future, evaluating, the contribution of the agreement and other measures to addressing homelessness in Australia. Supported by qualitative feedback through consultations and case-studies, they support the view that at this early stage of the agreement's implementation, encouraging progress is being made against the outcomes.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has developed a new national Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) data collection in conjunction with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, which began on 1 July 2011. The new collection replaces the previous Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) data collection. The scope of the SHS collection includes specialist homelessness providers funded under the NAHA and/or NPAH. The first SHS data will be available from October 2012.

In January 2010, Centrelink introduced a homelessness flag which supports the delivery system by alerting staff to a customer's vulnerable circumstances, and prompts the staff member to provide flexible servicing options when the person comes into contact with Centrelink. Over the first 18 months, the point-in-time count of customers with a flag steadily increased to stabilise at about 48,500 in June 2011. Over time, it is expected to become an increasingly valuable indicator of flows into and out of homelessness.

Other initiatives underway that will improve the range and quality of relevant data include:
- continuing work by the ABS to review the assumptions underlying the interpretation of Census data to produce estimates of homelessness, in consultation with a Homelessness Statistics Reference Group;
- work by ABS to explore whether Centrelink data can be used to provide an indication of changes in the homeless population between Censuses.
- research projects funded under the National Homelessness Research Strategy; and
- evaluations of key NPAH initiatives across a number of jurisdictions.

In the meantime, much of the evidence base used by the Working Group to assess the effectiveness of the NPAH to date was built by accumulating qualitative and anecdotal evidence and using relevant proxy and ancillary data to complement the scarce direct data sources currently available.

3.2.1 Ancillary data sources

Analysis of quantitative ancillary data suggests some improvements as a result of funded programs under the NPAH and other joint efforts of the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments.

Summarised below are the findings from trend analysis of such data, sourced from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection; capital city street counts of rough sleepers; public housing tenant and state-owned

managed Indigenous housing data; and data derived from the Centrelink Homelessness flag. A more detailed analysis by outcome measure is then provided.

In summary, these data suggest:

- emergency accommodation is generally meeting daily demand;
- repeat homelessness is dropping and there is a trend towards better continuity of support for emergency accommodation clients;
- there have also been small but continuous increases in the proportion of emergency accommodation clients receiving financial/employment services, personal support and case management;
- more households in greatest need were allocated public housing and sustained their tenancy for more than 12 months; and
- SAAP intervention has helped clients who are leaving social housing or private rental and are at risk of homelessness from progressing to primary homelessness (rough sleeping).

Outcome: Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough

Progress towards this key outcome is measured by a reduction in the total numbers of homeless people and rough sleepers over time. Complete counts have not been available in the inter-Censal years between 2006 and 2011. Trend analysis sourced from the SAAP Data Collection indicates an increase in the number of people receiving assistance (from 187,900 in 2006-07 to 219,900 in 2009-10), which could reflect increased access to support rather than changes in the homelessness population[2]. However, an increase or decrease in the number of people supported or the rate of use of services does not necessarily indicate an increase or decrease in the number of homeless or at risk of homelessness. On this basis, there is no *direct* evidence that progress has been made in reducing the numbers of homeless people and rough sleepers.
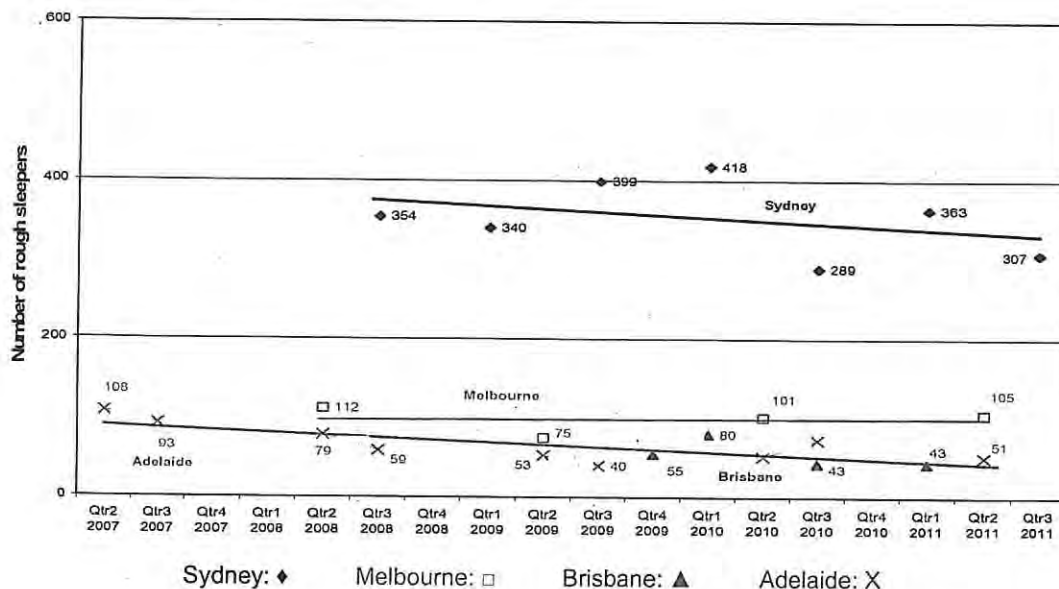
However, information on the number of homeless people available in the period since the 2006 Census of Population and Housing (the Census) can be derived from informal surveys of rough sleepers. Over recent years, the local councils of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, and the Government of South Australia have been conducting regular street counts of rough sleepers which indicate encouraging reductions in the number of rough sleepers in Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide (but not Melbourne). (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Trends in city street counts of rough sleepers: Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide

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[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2009-10: Australia* , pp 5-6. The estimated daily turn-away rate for SAAP accommodation has remained steady over this period at between two and three per cent.
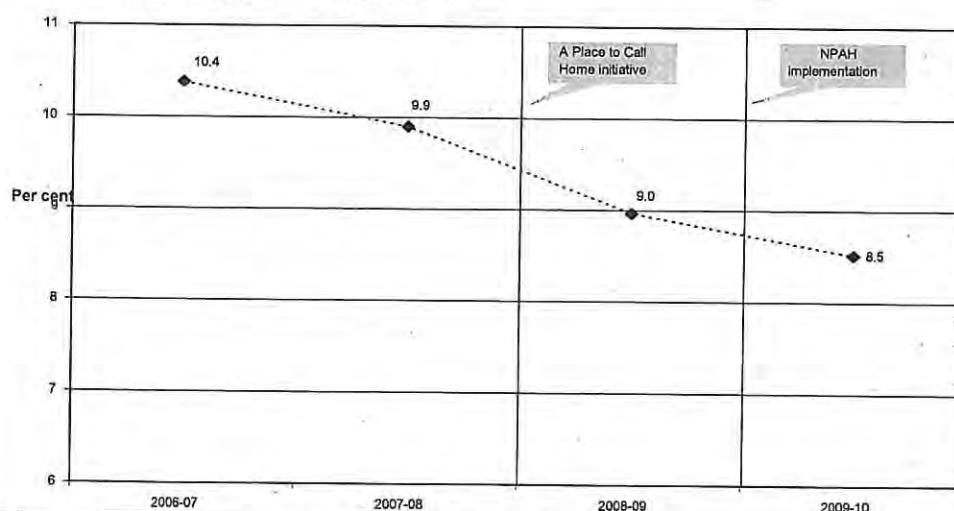
Number of rough sleepers

◆ 418
◆399 Sydney ◆ 363
◆ 354 ◆ 340
◆ 289 307 ◆

108 Melbourne □ 112 101 105
X
93 □ 75 ▲ 80
Adelaide 79 X 59 53 X X 40 55 ▲ 43 43 51
Brisbane

| Qtr2 2007 | Qtr3 2007 | Qtr4 2007 | Qtr1 2008 | Qtr2 2008 | Qtr3 2008 | Qtr4 2008 | Qtr1 2009 | Qtr2 2009 | Qtr3 2009 | Qtr4 2009 | Qtr1 2010 | Qtr2 2010 | Qtr3 2010 | Qtr4 2010 | Qtr1 2011 | Qtr2 2011 | Qtr3 2011 |

Sydney: ◆   Melbourne: □   Brisbane: ▲   Adelaide: X

Source: South Australia Government and local councils of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane

<u>Outcome: Fewer people will become homeless more than once</u>
No direct data are available to measure the number of people in the total population experiencing repeat homelessness. Instead, the COAG Reform Council (CRC) has adopted a proxy measure, using the proportion of clients of a SAAP agency who were identified by an agency worker as needing accommodation support more than once in a 12-month period. A possible limitation of this is that it only captures those people who accessed SAAP services and the ability to identify repeat need is likely to be influenced by the availability and nature of the services provided within a jurisdiction. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect the experience of SAAP clients could reflect any significant increase/decrease in repeat homelessness in the total population.

The trend in the SAAP proxy measure from 2006-07 to 2009-10 shows encouraging progress towards achieving this outcome, with repeat homelessness dropping from 10.4 per cent of clients and children with an identified accommodation need in 2006-07 to 8.5 per cent in 2009-10 (see Figure 4) from around 19,500 to 18,700 people. Although this is a relative measure using limited data, it does indicate a trend towards better support for SAAP clients.

Figure 4: Trends in per cent of SAAP clients (and accompanying children) who experienced repeat periods of homelessness

Per cent

10.4

9.9

A Place to Call Home Initiative

NPAH Implementation

9.0

◆ 8.5

| 2006-07 | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 |

4

<u>Outcome: People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation</u>

No direct data are available to directly assess connections with families and communities and it is not possible to draw any conclusions from the relevant data. However, some insight into this outcome is provided by SAAP proxy measures (see Figure 5). For clients aged 12 to 17, the level of re-engagement with family, school and work has declined from 13.5 per cent in 2006-07 to 10.6 per cent in 2009-10. The percentage of accompanying children under 12 who were provided with school liaison assistance declined from 9.0 per cent in 2006-07 to remain stable at 8.0 per cent for the following three years.

Figure 5: Trends in per cent of SAAP clients (aged 12-17) and accompanying children (under 12)
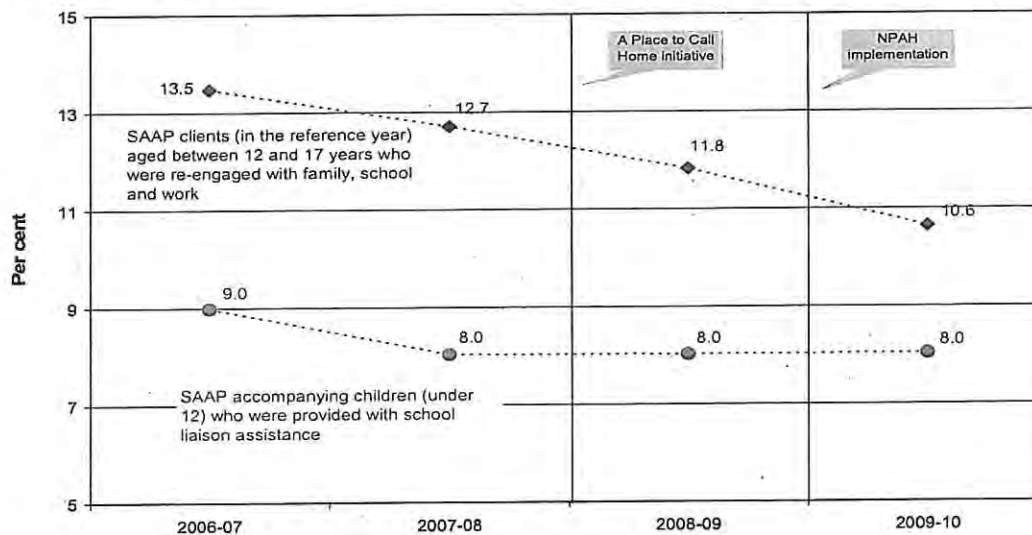

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) reports that since the commencement of Job Services Australia (JSA) on 1 July 2009, nearly 90,000 job placements have been achieved for homeless job seekers. As well, since the commencement of the Youth Connections program in January 2010 and to June 2011, over 6,000 young people who were assessed as being homeless or having unstable living arrangements have received assistance and 44 per cent of these were re-engaged with education training or employment.

<u>Outcome: People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing</u>

SAAP data indicate that there have been modest but continuous increases in the proportion of SAAP clients receiving financial/employment services, personal support and case management, as shown in Figure 6, pointing to one segment of the population receiving improved access to services. In 2009-10, 68.7 per cent of SAAP clients received case management assistance, thus allowing better identification of client needs and more appropriate service provision.

Figure 6: Trends in per cent of SAAP clients provided with financial/employment services, specialist services, general support/advocacy, personal support and case management
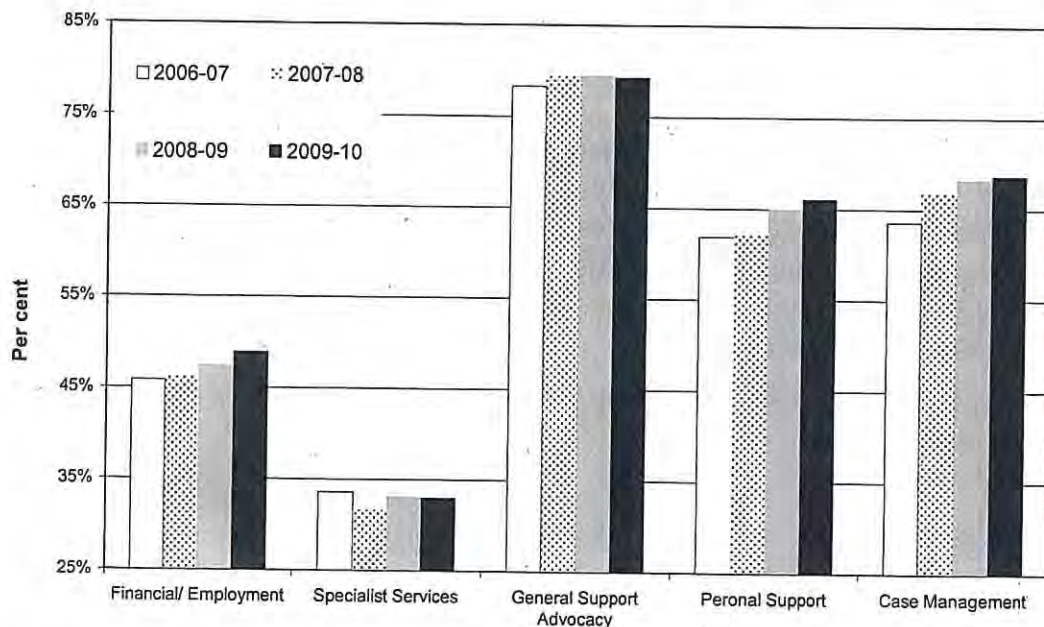
Source: FaHCSIA's analysis of SAAP client data

Consultations held by the Working Group indicated that the Social Housing Initiative funded in 2009-10 under the Nation Building and Economic Stimulus Plan (the Stimulus Plan) was also a significant factor in improving access to social housing. In 2009-10:

- 15,070 households in greatest need (a proxy measure for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness) were allocated public housing. This was an increase of 1,363 households (or 10.1 per cent) compared to 2008-09; and

- 11,656 households in greatest need that were allocated public housing had sustained their tenancies for 12 months or more. This was an increase of 1,310 households (or 12.7 per cent) compared to 2008-09.

Data on two proxy measures for one of the outputs of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA): 'People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are assisted to secure and sustain their tenancies' (adopted by the CRC) also show progress towards the access to housing component of this outcome.

The two proxy measures are:

- number of households newly assisted into social housing that were homeless or at risk of homelessness at the time of allocation; and

- number of households assisted into social housing that were homeless or at risk of homelessness at time of allocation and who sustain their tenancies for 12 months or more.

The percentage of SAAP clients (and accompanying children) who exited social housing or private rental into homelessness has declined steadily from 64.3 per cent in 2006-07 to 56.8 per cent in 2009-10 (see Figure 7). Although the numbers of SAAP clients increased overall, this decline could suggest that SAAP intervention has become more effective in helping those clients who are leaving social housing or private rental who are at risk becoming homeless.

6

Figure 7: Trends in per cent of SAAP clients (and accompanying children) who exited social housing or private rental into homelessness
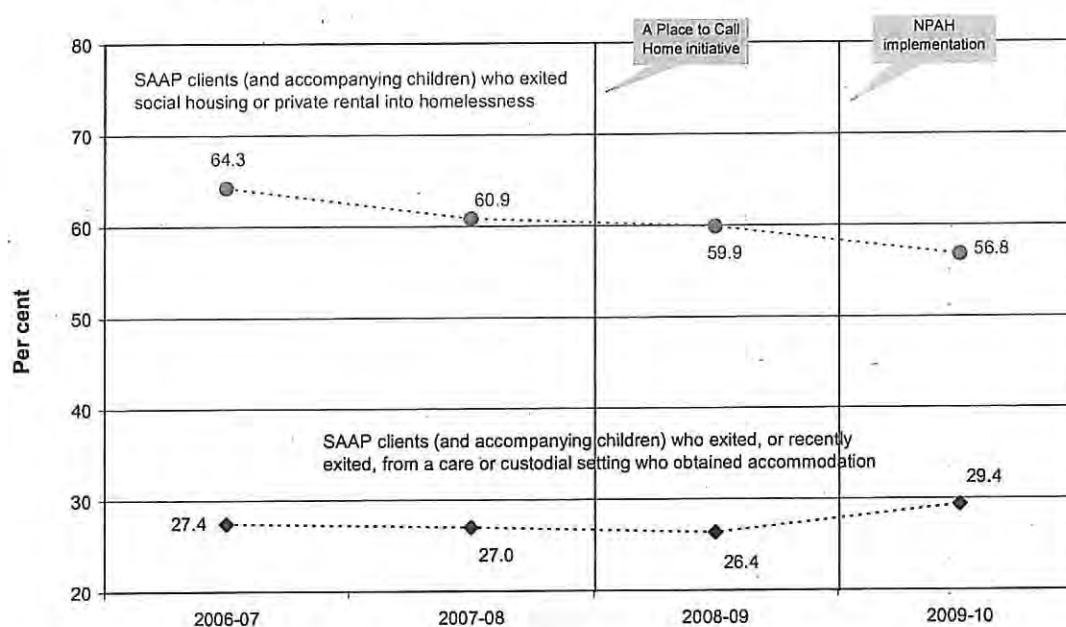
3.3 Impacts of the NPAH

3.3.1 Outputs and reforms under the NPAH

The NPAH provides for direct investment of $1.1 billion to expand existing efforts or invest in new activities to achieve the NPAH outcomes, as well as encouraging the implementation of significant reforms. Underpinning the NPAH is the recognition that service system reform is required to produce a more effective, responsive and targeted service system that will deliver better client outcomes.

Four core outputs are funded to achieve the NPAH outcomes:
1. Implementation of *A Place to Call Home* initiative;
2. *'Street to home'* initiatives for people who are chronically homeless or rough sleeping;
3. Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies; and
4. Assistance for people leaving child protection services, correctional or health facilities to access and maintain stable, affordable housing.

The State and Territory Governments are also able to fund twelve additional outputs according to the priorities of the particular jurisdiction. Appendix 5 provides a detailed analysis of the programs funded under the NPAH and assistance provided under each output. Overall, 171 initiatives were implemented in 2010-11, with assistance provided to clients on around 115,000 occasions. Service targets were exceeded for the majority of outputs (13 out of 16 outputs) in 2010-11.

Reform effort under the NPAH is focused around three key strategies:
1. <u>Prevention and early intervention</u>: More effort is required to intervene early to stop people from becoming homeless;
2. <u>Breaking the cycle of homelessness</u>: Investment is required in services that can help people who are homeless to get back on their feet, find stable accommodation and, wherever possible, obtain employment; and

3. A better connected service system: Reforms to the service system need to build more connected, integrated and responsive services which achieve sustainable housing, and improve economic and social participation of those at risk of homelessness.

3.3.2 Contribution to outcomes under the NPAH

The NPAH provides that the State and Territory Governments will each provide a detailed annual report (the Annual Reports) to the Commonwealth on the outputs, performance indicators and timelines detailed in their implementation plans. The Working Group considered the jurisdictions' 2010-11 Annual Reports as key inputs into this review. Indeed, the timeline for the review was extended to allow these reports to be considered.

Consistent with the NPAH requirements, the Annual Reports do not directly report against the NPAH outcomes or performance indicators. However, the Working Group considered there would be value in requiring future annual reporting to include a high-level summary of progress against outcomes. In addition, mechanisms for assessing and reporting progress against outcomes should be considered at the development phase of any future agreement following the NPAH.

The Working Group also obtained detailed case studies from jurisdictions to allow closer consideration of the impacts of funded projects on the NPAH's four outcomes. Summaries of a sample of these case studies are included in the boxes below.

To provide a broader perspective, the Working Group also consulted key advisory groups and peak bodies with expertise in homelessness. Eighteen separate consultations were undertaken, with organisations and individuals from all states and territories represented, including national and state bodies and advisory groups. Through these consultations, the Working Group heard the views of more than 100 people, including service providers and some individuals with first hand experience of homelessness.

Participants spoke about homelessness issues in general as well as providing their views on specific programs, initiatives and strategies under the NPAH. While some of the feedback was consistent across most groups consulted, there were also some contradictory views and particular opinions or comments were raised by only one or two of the groups. More information about the structure of the consultations, the groups consulted and the views expressed can be found at Appendix 4.

Outcome 1: Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough

The Road Home - The Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness (*The Road Home*)[3] and the NPAH both recognise that more effort is required to intervene early to stop people becoming homeless and/or to lessen the impact of homelessness. Jurisdictions have provided a significant focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. The Working Group's consultations also highlighted specialist or intensive tenancy support as being particularly effective in preventing people at risk of becoming homeless.

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[3]http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/progserv/homelessness/whitepaper/Documents/default.htm

Box 1

| Case studies – outcome 1 |

- In November 2010, the Australian Capital Territory established a Supportive Sustaining Tenancy Service, which has a strong focus on early intervention by targeting people at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless. The service provides intensive case management for clients across a range of tenures including private renters, mortgagees and tenants of public and community housing. A total of 383 at-risk tenancies were sustained after referral in 2010-11.
- Queensland has implemented a RentConnect Advisory Service to help people who are at risk of homelessness to find and secure properties in the private rental market. During 2010-11, a total of 3,860 discrete clients were assisted and 1,098 tenancies were known to be secured by clients in the private rental market.
- Western Australia has established a Remote Rough Sleeper Assertive Outreach that is successfully operating in the remote areas of Broome and Kalgoorlie. The program recognises that large regional centres with essential services act as meeting places for Aboriginal people from different communities and language groups. Assertive Outreach Workers employ a case management approach that recognises that clients require a range of accommodation options that may change with the client's needs. The program complements other programs assisting homeless people, including rough sleepers. A total of 65 primary clients were assisted during 2010-11, and 98 people in all benefitted from the initiative.
- The Northern Territory announced the Alice Springs Transformation Plan on 2 May 2009, which aims to expand social-support services to reduce homelessness in Alice Springs and deliver housing and infrastructure upgrades in town camps. Territory and Commonwealth governments are working in partnership with the corporate and community sectors, particularly Aboriginal organisations, to achieve the transformation and deliver sustainable improvements in service delivery. A key NPAH initiative has been the establishment of the Apmere Mwerre Accommodation Park. With a capacity to accommodate 150 visitors, Apmere Mwerre is helping to reduce overcrowding in town camps and provides a safe place for people from bush to stay when visiting Alice Springs. The facility is staffed 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Outcome 2: Fewer People will become homeless more than once

Jurisdictions have implemented a number of initiatives that target people who are: regular rough sleepers, repeatedly homeless; living with a high risk of homelessness; disempowered due to mental illness; and unaccompanied children. Some examples are provided in Box 2 below. 'Housing First' approaches, which focus on achieving housing as a primary goal were identified in some consultations as being particularly successful, although it was also recognised that for some clients, such as vulnerable young people, this approach may need higher levels of support.

Box 2

| Case studies – outcome 2 |

- Queensland has implemented a Street to Home initiative, which aims to support people who are sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness to move into stable, long-term housing. Support also focuses on achieving long-term lifestyle changes to enable engagement with community, education or employment where appropriate. Key principles of service delivery include:
  - o undertaking assertive outreach to identify and support people who are rough sleeping and people experiencing chronic homelessness where they are (i.e. parks, squats, shelters)
  - o using a 'housing first' approach to work with the client to move from rough sleeping or chronic homelessness into appropriate stable housing
  - o providing intensive case coordination to assist the client to remain in long-term stable housing and link clients with ongoing support as appropriate
  - o linking clients with other ongoing support as appropriate.

A total of 818 people were assisted in 2010-11 across 4 sites. The Street to Home Initiative has introduced a number of innovations and reforms in the housing and homelessness system to assist in improving the outcomes of people sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness.

> For example, the 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign aims to identify and house the 50 most vulnerable people in inner Brisbane and to raise public awareness. As of May 2011, 56 people have been provided with accommodation. The campaign is now working with the next 50 clients and will continue to focus on housing rough sleepers. The Department of Communities worked with the campaign to ensure quick access to social housing.
>
> - Tasmania has implemented two initiatives (the Stay and KEYS initiatives) that work together to provide an intensive, holistic and long-term response to assist clients to sustain their tenancies at key transition points when they are at significant risk of homelessness. Target groups include young people leaving care and protection or youth justice; adults leaving correctional and health facilities; and people experiencing multiple episodes or extended periods of homelessness. During 2010-11, 265 referrals were received by the Stay service, with 98 clients receiving casework support and 82 clients are residing in KEYS properties.

Outcome 3: People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities, and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation

Several jurisdictions have implemented initiatives that link access to accommodation with support to improve education training and employment outcomes. A number of consultations indicated that initiatives which combined access to training, education and employment with housing are particularly likely to be successful in assisting young people overcome disadvantage and secure sustainable housing.

> **Case studies – outcome 3**
>
> - The first Victorian Foyer model opened in February 2011 in Ballarat Karrung, providing 17 one and two bedroom self-contained units with communal living, kitchen and training space. The initiatve is providing integrated housing, education, employment and training and life skills support on site. Two units at Karrung are for young people transitioning from care orders or guardianship orders who need support to engage in education, employment and training. In the first five months of operation, 20 young people were supported at Karrung. In addition to accommodation services, outreach support has assisted 20 young people to complete accredited training courses and 80 young people to attend skill development workshops.
> - The Australian Capital Territory has implemented the Youth Integrated Education and Accommodation Program aimed at supporting young people who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness. By providing high quality and affordable housing within a supportive environment, the program is able to link young people with education, training and employment opportunities. Young people engaged in the program also have the opportunity to participate in mentoring and life skills activities, helping to build supportive relationships and prepare for independent living. The program has already experienced positive outcomes for young people involved. A total of 23 young people were accommodated during 2010-11 and 23 young people were engaged in employment, training or work.

Outcome 4: People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing

The NPAH notes that reforms are required to build more connected, integrated and responsive services. Improved linkages between specialist homelessness services and mainstream services will: assist clients to navigate through complex service systems and achieve better outcomes; reduce duplication of effort; and facilitate the transition from temporary accommodation to stable housing. The case studies in the box 4 below illustrate effort to help ensure that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will be supported by quality services with improved access to sustainable housing.

Box 4

> **Case studies – outcome 4**
>
> - New South Wales has established a Rural Interagency Project that is using service integration to improve client outcomes in the Riverina/Murray and New England regions. The project facilitates access to social housing and provides intensive support packages for young people, single adults and families who are homeless, sleeping rough or experiencing complex issues. Brokerage funds

are used to purchase case management, specialised support services and material items, such as furniture and financial aid. Coordination Groups (comprising government and NGOs) have been established to support inter-agency case management with agreed referral processes and case management protocols. During 2010-11 the two projects supported a total of 166 clients. Of these clients, 132 were housed and 139 were able to sustain their tenancies.

- Tasmania is implementing a Service Coordination and Improvement Program (SCIP) that will underpin significant changes to the social housing service system. Its primary focus is on: redesigning access and entry to Tasmania's social housing service system so it is easier for people to use and more efficient in its operations; improving service coordination and engagement of mainstream services, to streamline access to housing and support.
- Queensland is implementing Homelessness Community Action Plans in seven locations across the state. The aim is to produce locally-owned plans to guide the activity of human service providers, all tiers of government, the private sector, philanthropic organisations and volunteer groups, in their efforts to reduce homelessness. Community consultation forums were held across the 7 locations attracting over 400 participants from government and non-government organisations. Local implementation and leadership groups (drawing together government and non-government stakeholders) have collaborated to produce draft Homelessness Community Action Plans, with the implementation of identified actions commencing in late 2011.
- The ACT implemented a Central Intake Service for Homelessness Services (First Point) which became fully operational in November 2010. The service is auspiced by Connections ACT and co-located with Housing ACT's Central Access Point (CAP). First Point provides placement into homelessness and housing support services and facilitates access to other relevant services as required. It streamlines service entry points into the homelessness service system, ensuring that clients do not have to negotiate multiple agencies to access services. During 2010-11 a total of 2626 people contacted First Point and received a service response; 701 people were referred to accommodation; and 1590 people received support services.
- South Australia has undertaken substantial development work on a new, purpose designed, web-based case management and data collection system (Homeless to Home – H2H) to assist in information sharing and the case management of client who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Full implementation occurred in July 2011. The new system facilitates improved access to services and reduces the need for clients to retell their stories. It will also enhance reporting at a jurisdictional level and is linked with the Specialist Homelessness Service Collection managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- The Australian Government is also working to drive service integration and improvements across Commonwealth agencies. The Homelessness Delivery Review Board (HDRB) was established in December 2009 to monitor the implementation and progress of the reforms set out in the White Paper on Homelessness, *The Road Home*. The HDRB is comprised of Deputy Secretary level representatives from relevant Commonwealth departments. The Prime Minister's Council on Homelessness has also been established as a key national governance body overseeing homelessness reforms and the targets set out in both the White Paper and the NPAH. The Council has taken a strategic approach to the homelessness reform agenda and undertakes a detailed assessment of policy areas.

In addition to the case studies provided by jurisdictions, a majority of consultations identified one of the most positive aspects of the NPAH as being the degree to which it has increased cooperation, partnerships, engagement, communication and respect for and between services and agencies. Many also considered that its national approach enabled better consistency within the sector, between providers and State and Territory and Commonwealth agencies. The development by some State and Territory Governments of state/territory and regional homelessness action plans was seen as a positive initiative.

Consultations also confirmed the importance of access to housing, noting that the roll-out of the social housing initiative linked to the Stimulus Plan was important to the success of a number of programs. 'Housing First' was generally supported as a good approach to reducing homelessness, although some groups stressed that for

some, such as vulnerable young people, it is critical to ensure it is accompanied by appropriate levels of support.

3.3.3 Overall impact of the NPAH and contribution towards outcomes

Information from jurisdictions and consultations with stakeholders indicate that investment under the NPAH has funded assistance to homeless clients and improved coordination of services. The NPAH has generally been seen as a useful mechanism for delivering a range of new programs and services in response to different localised needs and challenges and has allowed jurisdictions to address key service gaps.

Many jurisdictions and stakeholders have noted that the NPAH has resulted in improved collaboration between service providers and government agencies, as well as improved coordination among government agencies. Despite some initial implementation issues, success has also been achieved through the use of evidence-based program development and by ensuring new programs were integrated with the existing service system.

Linking homelessness projects to additional social housing funding through the Stimulus Plan has also increased the attainment of successful outcomes, such as securing appropriate long term sustainable housing for clients.

Improved commitment from the sector and flexibility of organisations to deliver good outcomes in a timely fashion have also been valuable in progressing outcomes.

Consultations indicated that the NPAH resulted in a signalling by the Commonwealth and the State and Territory Governments of the importance of homelessness to their reform agenda, effectively raising the profile of homelessness in mainstream services and the wider community. The NPAH has also facilitated education of the community and key stakeholders about homelessness to engender ongoing support for homelessness initiatives

Planning has been important, particularly the use of state and territory Implementation Plans (and their continual improvement through an annual review process) and the development by several jurisdictions of state and regional homelessness plans, to facilitate a better connected service system.

In addition, the NPAH has provided an opportunity for jurisdictions to develop and implement more contemporary and targeted models of service delivery. The NPAH has provided the State and Territory Governments with the imprimatur to improve or reconfigure their strategies and actions to reduce homelessness and has been a useful mechanism for leveraging reform in homelessness services statewide.

This work has the potential to make a valuable contribution towards the evidence base from which longer term reform of the broader homelessness service system can be modelled, including the integration of specialist homelessness services and mainstream services. However, information on the specific outcomes of funded activities is limited. The Annual Reports do not specifically identify contributions to NPAH outcomes and at this early stage of the agreement's life, there was no evaluative material available to the Working Group to confirm the success of funded projects in reducing homelessness or to judge whether investment under the NPAH

had, in some cases, substituted for previous effort. The latter was raised as an issue in one consultation.

While data from the former SAAP collection have shown some improvement in access to services in the period to June 2010, data were not available to the Working Group for 2010-11, a period in which impacts of the NPAH may have been clearer. This is because services funded under the NPAH were still being established during 2009-10 and may not have been operational for the full financial year. Data from 2010-11 and subsequent years will provide a clearer picture, given that initiatives should be well-established by then.

Given the current gaps in data availability, there is a need to take further stock of progress in 2012. A number of jurisdictions (Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia) have commenced evaluations of NPAH initiatives, which will provide further evidence regarding the effectiveness of new NPAH service models and whether they are making a difference in improving client outcomes. Well-designed evaluations will also provide greater methodological rigour when addressing issues such as attribution of outcomes and the longer-term impact of NPAH investments.

The availability of data from the 2011 Census in 2012 and the need to consider whether, and in what form, specific investment for homelessness should be continued, would make further examination of progress towards achievement of the NPAH outcomes in 2012 timely.

3.4 Lessons Learnt

Appropriately skilled personnel

Recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled staff, particularly in non-urban areas and under current remuneration levels, has been noted by jurisdictions as a common barrier to success. This is compounded by a shortage of affordable housing for clients and staff, particularly in remote areas. Longer lead times were needed to establish new services and programs, especially those delivered by the non-government sector and in remote communities, and where clients' needs were increasingly complex.

It was suggested at some consultations that there have been instances when it would have been quicker and more effective for existing services to have delivered services, rather than establishing new services.

Opportunities have also been identified to educate and support staff, through sharing of resources developed by case managers; undertaking regional forums to identify gaps, barriers, solutions and provide information on new policy directions, research, and practice guides; and using of brokerage funds to buy in capacity. However, the latter is less successful where there is limited availability of capacity from other organisations.

Awareness and availability of related services

Consultations identified the risks associated with increasing awareness without ensuring the availability of corresponding resources to meet increased demand, especially in relation to family violence programs. In addition to services providing

accommodation, stakeholders encouraged the development of programs that help people become 'safe at home' and examples were provided of models that are working well and some that are not proving effective. The value of sharing information on service models was also highlighted.

Community support

In Indigenous communities (particularly in Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia), barriers included cultural factors, such as concepts of home and homelessness, and the need for more time to develop longer term relationships, particularly where the assistance takes the form of consultation rather than direct support.

In some instances, negative community response to placement of homeless people in supported accommodation in their community led to delays with placement of tenants in appropriate properties.

The breadth and complexity associated with the reforms has resulted in mixed responses from the sector in some jurisdictions and subsequent difficulties in getting cooperation and buy-in from some organisations. Garnering commitment from other areas such as hospitals and mainstream services was also a barrier, given that there is already a large demand on these services and it is often easier for the services to tend to people who are compliant and seeking assistance.

Data and evaluation

Gaps in data availability and ability to measure performance were barriers to developing, monitoring, reviewing, and improving services and programs. More engagement with the university and/or non-government sector could be undertaken to further enhance research and data collection efforts, to identify the most effective services into the future.

Homelessness NP Review
Working Group

10 November 2011

Agenda Item 3. s 47C, s 47B

(chapter 4)

Chapter 4

Talking Points:

- Chapter 4 examines the factors outside the NPAH that may impact on the NPAH homelessness outcomes, including:
    - national housing/homelessness initiatives, such as the NAHA and other National Partnership Agreements; and
    - national non-housing/homelessness initiatives, such as JSA, headspace and the Personal helpers and Mentors Program (PHAMS;)
- It also looks at the changing economic and social context of the NPAH, including:
    - housing affordability;
    - employment;
    - the natural disasters in Queensland and Victoria;
    - population growth and ageing;
    - trends in family breakdown;
    - increasing instances of mental illness; and
    - increased numbers of young people in detention.

- Appendix 6 goes into more detail on the issues covered

- Any comments on this chapter?
- Is there anything to add or remove?

Relevant papers
Agenda paper 3.4 – Chapter 4

Chapter 4

IMPACTING ON HOMELESSNESS OUTCOMES

4.1 – National investment on homelessness outside the NPAH

The NPAH comprises a small, yet targeted, amount of funding compared to investment in broader ongoing National Agreements, National Partnerships and other initiatives. In assessing the factors that may have affected achievement of the NPAH targets since its commencement in 2009, it is important to look at the impacts of other mainstream programs and targeted initiatives.

4.1.1 – National homelessness and/or housing initiatives

In addition to the NPAH, national agreements and programs targeted towards housing and/or homelessness which are most likely to have affected the changes to homelessness reflected in this review are outlined below. While many of these programs were developed independently of the NPAH, others may reflect the increased priority accorded to addressing homelessness associated with the NPAH and the Commonwealth's National Approach to Reducing Homelessness, *The Road Home.*

The National Affordable Housing Agreement

The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) aims to ensure that all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing. The NAHA provides greater flexibility for the State and Territory Governments to address housing affordability issues that are specific to their own jurisdiction and to direct funds towards the programs and services that have the greatest impact. The NAHA highlights the importance of addressing both homelessness and housing supply issues.

The National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing

The National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing (NPASH) aimed to increase the supply of social housing through new construction and to contribute to a reduction in homelessness and improved outcomes for homeless and Indigenous Australians. The NPASH specifically identifies people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and Indigenous Australians as target groups for the new social housing dwellings. Commonwealth funding of $400 million was provided to the State and Territory Governments from 2008 to 2010.

As at 30 June 2011, 1,960 new dwellings were either under construction or complete, including 1,781 social housing dwellings and an additional 179 affordable housing dwellings. Of these, 1,322 dwellings were tenanted as at 30 June 2011, including more than half by households identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Social Housing Initiative

The Social Housing Initiative (SHI) is a component of the Commonwealth's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan and supports both the construction of new social housing and the repair and upgrade of existing homes, through the provision of

1

$5.6 billion over 2008-2012. The objectives of the SHI include providing increased opportunities for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to gain secure long term accommodation. This initiative was announced in early 2009 after the NPAH was agreed and represents a significant boost in funding for new social housing dwellings.

At 31 August 2011, more than 12,200 new dwellings under the initiative had been tenanted with 55 per cent allocated to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Around 80,000 existing social housing dwellings received repairs and maintenance works, including major upgrades to around 12,000 social housing dwellings that were vacant or would have become uninhabitable without this work.

By 30 June 2012, the Commonwealth expects that construction of over 19,300 new dwellings will be complete, with the assistance of the not-for-profit sector, at a total cost of $5.2 billion.

The importance of the Social Housing Initiative in creating capacity to house people who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness was emphasised by participants in the consultation process, who identified this program as a significant contributor to the NPAH outcomes.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing
The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing provides $5.5 billion over 10 years to improve housing conditions in remote Indigenous communities. Since the commencement of the NPAH more than 800 new houses have been completed and over 3,100 houses have been rebuilt or refurbished nationally.

The investment is underpinned by property and tenancy management reforms. These include the introduction of priority allocation of housing and intensive tenancy support that helps tenants to understand and manage their responsibilities, ultimately providing more stable tenancy arrangements. The agreement aims to reduce the incidence of homelessness in remote Australia by 30 per cent by 2013 and by 50 per cent by 2018.

National Rental Affordability Scheme
The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) is a long term, $4.3 billion commitment by the Commonwealth Government to invest in 50,000 affordable rental homes that are rented at a minimum of 20% below market rent. The scheme was launched in July 2008 and as at 31 August 2011, there were 4,178 dwellings rented or available to rent and 20,408 reserved incentives for proposed dwellings.

4.1.2 – National non-homelessness and/or housing initiatives that impact homelessness

Some national programs that are not primarily aimed at addressing homelessness, may impact on changes to homelessness, either through providing direct assistance to people who are homeless or by contributing to the early intervention and

prevention goals of the NPAH. A number of programs that may have had an additional impact on homelessness since the start of the NPAH are outlined below.

Youth Connections – under the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions, this initiative funds providers to work with at-risk young people, including young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to help them attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and assist them make a successful transition through education and onto further education, training or work. Since its commencement in January 2010 and to June 2011, over 32,000 young people received support. 6,327 of this group were assessed as being homeless or having unstable living arrangements and 44 per cent of these re-engaged with education training or employment[1].

The National Youth Participation Requirement – COAG agreed to a National Youth Participation Requirement in 2009, which commenced on 1 January 2010, which made participation in education, training or employment compulsory for all young people until they turn 17. This was supported by an entitlement to education or training places for 15 to 24 year olds, and changes to Youth Allowance and Family Tax Benefit Part A, making education and training a precondition for these payments.

Job Services Australia (JSA) – commenced on 1 July 2009, with an increased focus on assisting the most disadvantaged job seekers, in comparison to the previous Job Network[2]. JSA includes specialist services at 29 sites for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and provides access to an Employment Pathway Fund to assist disadvantaged job seekers, including those who are homeless.

More than 26% of job seekers identified as being homeless in Stream 4 of JSA, which caters for the most disadvantaged job seekers, are achieving employment outcomes following assistance. Homeless job seekers are also undertaking education and training following assistance in Stream 4 at more than twice the rate of homeless job seekers under the former Personal Support Programme.

Jobs Fund and Innovation Fund projects – target disadvantaged job seekers. Of the 77 Innovation Fund projects to date, six target job seekers who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Within the Jobs Fund, nine projects had a specific focus on targeting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

headspace – provides a national coordinated focus on youth mental health and related drug and alcohol problems and aims to improve access to appropriate services for young people aged 12-25 years and to ensure better coordination between services. Additional funding was provided to headspace in the 2010-11 Commonwealth Budget to enable it to assist vulnerable and hard to reach young people, with homeless young people identified as a target group from

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[1] FaHCSIA , unpublished report
2 DEEWR, Evaluation Strategy for Job Services Australia 2009-2012

December 2010 [3]. Further funding announced in the 2011-12 Commonwealth Budget will strengthen the capacity to assist homeless young people[4].

Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHAMs) program – provides one-on-one support through outreach services to people whose lives are severely affected by mental illness. An expanded three sites and four new sites established in 2010 have a specific focus on homeless people with a requirement that 75 per cent of participants are from this target group. Another three new sites include homeless people as part of the target group. At 30 April 2011 there were 8,469 active PHAMs participants, 11 per cent of whom identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Emergency relief – provides support to address immediate needs in times of crisis. Within the $64.4 million provided by the Commonwealth in 2010-11, $6.1 million over 2 years has been assigned to 23 organisations to better support clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Community legal centres – under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, additional funds were provided to nine community legal centres for four years from 2010, to enhance access to justice for people at who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Weekly income support payments to vulnerable Australians – weekly payment of their income support benefits became available for up to 12,000 vulnerable people from 29 April 2010, to assist them to better budget their income, including to meet their rent payments and to help reduce the risk of homelessness.

Regional Development Australia Fund – established to support the infrastructure needs and economic growth of Australia's regions including funding facilities that provide specialist services and accommodation to homeless people.

The Australian Government's White Paper on Reducing Homelessness, *The Road Home* found that 17% of SAAP clients in 2004-05 reported a mental health problem. The upcoming National Partnership Agreement on Mental Health, announced in 2011, will provide $201.3 million to focus on stable accommodation and support; the presentation, admission and discharge planning in major hospital and emergency departments; and related support services. This focus will benefit people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and may contribute to the NPAH outcomes in its remaining period.

4.2 The changing context of the NPAH

This section looks at the economic and social context in which the NPAH has been operating to illustrate how external factors may have contributed, both positively and negatively, to changes in homelessness over the life of the NPAH so far.

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[3] 2010-11 Budget paper no.2, http://www.aph.gov.au/budget/2010-11/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-13.htm

[4] 2011-12 Budget paper no. 2, http://www.budget.gov.au/2011-12/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-12.htm

4.2.1 The economic context

There are a number of economic factors affecting homelessness, including jobs supply, incomes, growth in key prices such as rents and utilities and housing affordability. In addition, there were a number of extraordinary events taking places shortly before or during the life of the agreement, including the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and a number of natural disasters, which were likely to have had an impact on homelessness.

Despite these extraordinary events, relevant key economic indicators have remained reasonably resilient with the labour market performing well (but softening over 2011) and wages growing at around trend rates, although rental prices have generally continued to outpace incomes growth.

Housing affordability and utilities prices
Housing affordability and housing stress have been affected by a range of macroeconomic factors over the past few years. These factors have at times worked in opposing directions, and have affected households differently, depending on whether they are renters, outright owners, or owner-occupiers with a mortgage.

From a mortgagor perspective, measures of housing affordability have generally eased from three years ago, in line with slightly lower mortgage interest rates. For example, the Reserve Bank of Australia's index of housing affordability improved a little from 80.3 in the September quarter 2008 to 88.2 in mid-2011, a rise of about 10 per cent.

However, mortgage arrears have increased from around 0.5 per cent of the value of outstanding home loans to 0.8 per cent over this time, with increases in all major states, particularly Queensland[5]. However, the overall arrears rate in Australia remains very low by international standards, notwithstanding its increase over the past few years.

Rental affordability has continued to worsen over the period, with rents generally growing faster than average household income. The strong growth in rents reflects solid growth in underlying demand for housing in conjunction with sluggish growth in housing supply. Rents grew by an average 5 per cent per year, with most renting households devoting a larger share of their incomes to rental payments.

Ongoing strength in rent growth has seen an increase in most indicators of rental stress since 2007. According to the latest data from the HILDA survey (2009), the fraction of disposable income that renting households typically dedicate to rent payments increased from 22 per cent to 23 per cent between 2007 and 2009. The increase was largest for households in the bottom income quintile, with the median rent payment rising from 32 per cent to 37 per cent of disposable income.

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[5] These increases mainly reflect an earlier cohort of home buyers that entered the market between 2004 and 2008, when lending standards were somewhat looser than they are now and when house prices were rising strongly, particularly in Queensland, Western Australia, and the Western Sydney region of New South Wales. A small contribution from natural disasters earlier this year may also be a factor in Queensland.

In addition, households have faced strong rises in utility prices, along with strong growth in property rates and charges (Figure x). Since September 2008, for example, electricity prices have risen more than 45 per cent.

Figure x: Growth in Key Prices (September 2008-current)
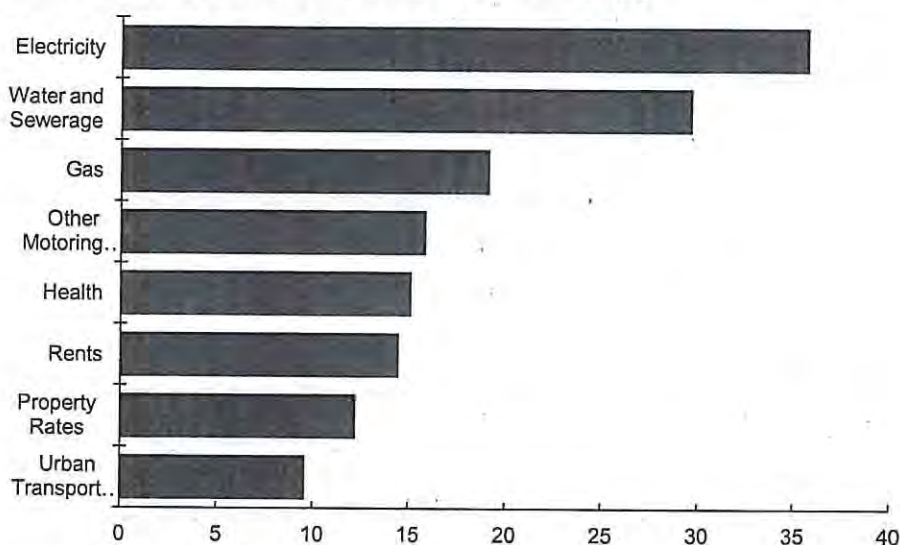
Employment

Since the onset of the GFC, the Australian labour market has been relatively resilient, creating over half a million jobs. In June 2009, the unemployment rate peaked at 5.9 per cent, the highest since July 2003. More recently, soft conditions outside the mining sector have seen the unemployment rate has increased from its recent low of 4.9 per cent to 5.2 per cent in September 2011, with only 41,100 jobs created in the nine months to September 2011 compared to 361,900 in 2010[6].

Labour force participation remained at around record highs throughout the GFC with the participation rate peaking at 66.0 per cent in November 2010. Average weekly hours have also remained buoyant at only around 1.4 per cent below the level seen in September 2008.

At the height of the natural disasters, over 30,000 jobs were affected between December 2010 and February 2011 in Queensland. Employment in that state is now around pre-disaster levels.

Wages and Prices

At the height of the GFC, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) peaked at 5 per cent through the year to the September quarter 2008, driven by increased costs of housing, transportation, financial and insurance services and food. CPI growth is now 3.5 per cent through the year to the September quarter of 2011, driven by strong seasonal rises in the price of utilities.

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[6] Since September 2008, the number of long term unemployed males aged 25-54 has increased from 24,900 to 36,800. This is below the aggregate long-term unemployment rate of 0.7 per cent and 1 per cent in September 2008 and September 2011 respectively.

While the increases in CPI raise cost of living concerns and can erode real incomes of low-income workers (if growing faster than wages), pensioners and other beneficiary recipients are compensated, to some extent, for these increases. Some concerns have been expressed that those benefits indexed to the CPI, including, for example, Commonwealth Rent Assistance, may not keep pace with price rises faced by consumers in specific areas and paying private rents.[7]

Wages growth has also outpaced inflation over the last 12 months to the June quarter 2011. The Wage Price Index (WPI) increased by 3.8 per cent through the year to the June quarter 2011 and private sector wages have recovered to increase by 3.8 per cent through the year. This is up from the recent trough of 2.6 per cent witnessed during the GFC.

4.2.2 The impact of natural disasters in Victoria and Queensland

Victoria

The 7 February 2009 'Black Saturday' bushfires took 173 lives and destroyed over 2,133 properties. It is estimated that almost 1,400 households lost their homes (not including holiday or second homes or residential investments). This level of destruction and displacement was an extraordinary emergency for Victoria.

On 7 February 2009, emergency accommodation was coordinated by Department of Human Services (DHS) regions, supported by housing staff. This was the first time Victoria's housing authority had been directly involved in the emergency accommodation response to a natural disaster.

Over 500 bushfire affected households were directly assisted to achieve permanent accommodation, with over 160 of these households now residing in public housing. 416 households were provided with financial assistance to secure private rental accommodation. 525 households were assisted with temporary housing options including public housing, caravans and units in temporary villages.

The January 2011 Victorian floods affected 26 municipalities (representing one third of Victoria's local government areas), 104 townships, more than 3,355 residential buildings and over 285 other buildings, and an estimated 7,625 people. In February 2011, those regions were again impacted as well as Gippsland and Southern Metropolitan regions. Over 700 households sought assistance after the floods from DHS in Victoria. Responses to assist displaced households with accommodation include public housing, caravans, movable units, Housing Establishment Fund grants, private rental assistance and provision of portable bathrooms.

Queensland

Between November 2010 and April 2011, Queensland was affected by a series of natural disasters. Significant flooding occurred in many areas of Queensland during late December 2010 and early January 2011. Up to 29,000 homes and businesses experienced some form of inundation and almost 7,000 people were accommodated

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[7] Benefits are indexed to either CPI or, for pensions, the higher of the CPI or the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI - which places a higher weight on those goods and services more typically incurred by aged pensioners and other transfer recipients). The PBLCI grew faster than the CPI in the past year, rising by 4.5 per cent through the year to the June quarter 2011.

in 74 evacuation centres. On 2 February 2011, Tropical Cyclone Yasi caused further destruction and monsoonal rains then caused further flooding impacts in regional Queensland post February 2011. With the combined impact of the floods and cyclone, all of Queensland's Local Government Areas were declared disaster affected as at March 2011.

As at 13 September 2011, 610 applications for social housing had been received from Queenslanders who reported being a victim of the floods or cyclone. People in flood affected areas were also assisted to find alternative private rental accommodation and there is agreement for an additional 123 rental properties to be made available under the Community Rent Scheme. Over 100 temporary units of accommodation were provided for use by displaced people.

RentConnect Service was an integral part of the government and community response to addressing housing needs in disaster-affected communities in Queensland, with officers visiting community locations to link with clients. This initiative is funded under the NPAH and provides information, advice and referrals to assist people to find and secure a property in the private rental market.

The Commonwealth also provided support to affected individuals through the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Program to support, with the Queensland and the Victorian governments, reconstruction efforts and social support activities - including mental health services, housing assistance and residential housing advice.

The impact of these natural disasters will need to be considered in assessing data from the 2011 Census and key population indicators associated with reductions in homelessness.

4.2.3 The social context

The Working Group has considered whether there have been any changes in social factors that may have affected changes to homelessness since the NPAH commenced. The Group considered changes in population numbers and characteristics; prevalence of mental health disorders; family violence and family breakdown rates; levels of social exclusion; and rates of out of home care and detention.

While the review found incremental changes, these were not of a scale to point to particular impacts on homelessness since the commencement of the NPAH. The key trends were:
- continued population growth[8] and ageing of the population[9], which will have long-term pressures on demand for affordable housing;
- a long-term trend of reductions in family violence and family breakdown, which are major triggers for homelessness[10];

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8 Australia to 2050: Future Challenges, January 2010 (Intergenerational Report 2010), Attorney-General's Department
9 ibid
10 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Women's Safety Survey, 1996 and Personal Safety Survey 2005.

- increases in the number of people in prison and youth in detention over the long term, both groups at risk of homelessness after they leave custody;
- progressive increases in the proportion of Australians estimated to experience a mental disorder over their lifetime[11], although it is not clear the extent to which this reflects increase in identification and reporting - a third of people who are homeless in inner city areas are estimated as having a severe mental illness[12]; and
- since 2005, the number of children under care and protection orders has increased by 57 per cent[13] and the number of children in out of home care has increased by 51 per cent.

More details of these and other social factors relevant to homelessness are in Appendix 6.

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[11] AIHW 2011. Mental health services - in brief 2011. Cat. no. HSE 113. Canberra: AIHW.

[12] *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, 2007; Herrman H, Evert H, Harvey C, Gureje O, Pinzone T, Gordon I. Disability and service use among homeless people living with psychotic disorders, in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2004; 38:965–974; Teesson M, Hodder T, Buhrich N. Psychiatric disorders in homeless men and women in inner Sydney, in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2004; 38:162–168

[13] AIHW 2011. Juvenile justice in Australia 2009-10. Juvenile justice series no. 8. Cat. No. JUV 8. Canberra: AIHW – this is for the period 30 June 2005-30 June 2010.

Homelessness NP Review
Working Group

10 November 2011
Agenda Item 3

(chapter 5)

Chapter 5

Talking Points:

- This chapter goes through an analysis of each of the 11 Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated measures and benchmarks in turn. For each PI there is:
    - a recommendation to retain, revise or remove
    - a rationale for the recommendation
- The conclusions are brought together in a table of the proposed revised framework
- There is also discussion of the cost benefit analysis, some transitional issues around the new framework – in particular, the new Specialist Homelessness Services data collection and the ABS review of Counting the Homeless – and the Working Group's response to the CRC's recommendations in its report on the *NPAH: Early Assessment of Progress*
- On page 8 we have highlighted some text on PI 8 - this is just an oversight
- There has been a suggestion that we produce a revised NPAH that takes account of the recommendations of the review to: s 47C, s 47B
    - include a revised performance reporting framework; and
    - require that the States report on progress against outcomes under *Reporting*.
        - What do people think?
        - Do we need to refer to this in the report? Or would the Working Group make a recommendation to the Steering Group, in parallel to this report, that the revised NPAH be adopted?

Relevant papers
Agenda paper 3.5 – Chapter 5

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

5.1 Overview

Consistent with its Terms of Reference[1], the Working Group examined the existing performance reporting framework under the NPAH[2], seeking to address any conceptual and data issues with the existing performance indicators. A revised performance indicator framework is proposed by the Working Group. This revised framework is summarised below at Table x below and the group's recommendations against each individual indicator are listed at section 5.2.

The Working Group began this process by undertaking a preliminary analysis of the 11 performance indicators in the current performance reporting framework of the NPAH using the HoTs conceptual framework. The group assessed the conceptual and data robustness of each indicator and the role that each indicator plays in measuring the targets of the NPAH.

The analysis, which drew on the work undertaken by the CRC and the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services Provision, identified that there were a number of performance indicators that suffered from data limitations and/or conceptual issues, which limited their value as measures of performance. Overall, the preliminary assessment identified that the measures drawing on population data were conceptually sound and, while subject to some data constraints, were able to be reported against. The lower level indicators were found to be both less effective measures of the outcomes of the agreement and more affected by data constraints.

The Working Group then considered each indicator and the overall performance reporting framework in order to determine if the indicator should be retained, modified, replaced or removed.

In this context, the Working Group took account of a number of factors particular to the context of homelessness. First, the nature of homelessness means that it is very difficult to gather information on the proportion of the population that is homeless. Even with significant efforts from data agencies, there is a wide margin of uncertainty in even the best available data on the homeless population which is drawn from the Census of Population and Housing (the Census). Obtaining this data is costly, complex and labour-intensive. Further, the Census only takes place every five years and the Working Group did not consider trying to collect this information more frequently was practical.

Second, the Working Group recognised that there are particular groups in the community at especially high risk of homelessness and that one of the effective ways of preventing and addressing homelessness is for concerted government action in this area.

In view of these limitations the Working Group, considered that a number of indicators should be retained (sometimes in a modified form or with different measures) because they

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[1] Provided at Appendix 1
[2] Provided at Appendix 2

were the best available measure of an outcome or because the indicator addressed an important policy area. In particular, the Working Group agreed that a number of indicators relating to key homeless population groups should be retained. For these indicators, proxy performance measures, based on specialist homelessness services data, were identified to be used as proxy measures from 2011-12, since whole-of-population data are not expected to be available during the life of the NPAH for most indicators.

A number of minor changes to improve clarity and coherence of the performance reporting framework were identified. The Working Group recommends that:

- all the performance indicators should be expressed in terms of proportions; and
- differences in expressions should be standardised, including removing all references to increases or reductions in the performance indicator descriptor (for example, it is proposed the indicator, 'Increase in the number of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing' be amended to 'Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing').

The appropriateness of the current benchmarks for the indicators was also considered. In a number of cases, changes to data sources and indicators meant that it would not be meaningful to develop a benchmark within the remaining life of the agreement. Where a benchmark is not recommended for a particular indicator, the desired direction of change for the indicator is now identified and the performance and outcomes will continue to be monitored.

The Working Group also recommended that, where possible, all indicators should be disaggregated by age, gender, Indigenous status and disability. These disaggregations would assist improved reporting to monitor progress in reducing the gap experienced by Indigenous people and to address disadvantage experienced by those with disabilities. The group noted, however, that disability information is subject to particular limitations and consequently is likely to restrict possible reporting options.

Finally, the Working Group undertook a cost benefit analysis of options for its proposed changes to the performance indicator framework, including an assessment of costs and benefits for further data development that would enable more frequent and detailed measurement and reporting of the homeless population.

5.2 Recommendations for revisions to the existing performance indicator (PI) framework

The Working Group proposes that in general the performance indicators be retained, despite some being subject to data limitations, to reflect policy intent and allow for future improvement. The Working Group agreed that, where appropriate, such indicators would be reported using more limited performance measures. To ensure this is transparent, the Working Group recommends the performance framework in the NPAH include performance measures alongside the performance indicators, detailing what components of the indicator will be measured. Where the whole indicator is able to be measured, the wording of the performance measure is the same as the performance indicator. Where the data is only able to measure some components of the indicator, or does not cover the whole of the population of interest to the indicator, the performance measure specifies the elements that can be measured, or the sub-population to which the data pertains.

5.2.1 Performance Indicator 1

PI 1 – The proportion of Australians who are homeless
- *It is recommended that this indicator be **retained**.*

This PI is an overarching indicator which was considered to be based on relevant data covering the population that is comparable between jurisdictions. It was considered to be a reasonably effective indicator with only minor data limitations and which demonstrates strong conceptual links to the outcome 'Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough'.

The performance measure (PM) recommended for this indicator is:
PM 1 – *The proportion of Australians who are homeless*

It is recommended that the performance benchmark (PB) for this indicator be retained, with minor changes to the wording as follows:
PB 1 – *A 7 per cent reduction in the number of homeless Australians by 2013*

The Working Group noted available data does not align with the baseline (2008) and benchmark (2013) years of the NPAH, since progress against this indicator could be fully measured only at the Census data collection points of 2006 and 2011. The group noted that the use of Centrelink data is being investigated to determine whether, together with SAAP and SHS data, it can be used as a data source to estimate progress for 2013.

5.2.2 Performance Indicator 2

PI 2 – The proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)
- *It is recommended that this indicator be **retained**.*

This PI was considered to be based on relevant data covering the relevant population and which is comparable between jurisdictions. It was judged to be reasonably effective indicator with strong conceptual links to the outcome 'Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough'.

The performance measure (PM) recommended for this indicator is:
PM 2 – *The proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness*

It is recommended that the performance benchmark for this indicator be retained, with minor changes to the wording as follows:

PB 2 – *A 25 per cent reduction in the number of rough sleepers by 2013*

The Working Group noted available data does not align with the baseline (2008) and benchmark (2013) years of the NPAH, since progress against this indicator could be fully measured only at the Census data collection points of 2006 and 2011. The group noted that the use of Centrelink data is being investigated to determine whether, together with SAAP and SHS data collections, it can be used to enable an assessment of progress to be estimated for 2013.

5.2.3 Performance Indicator 3

> **PI 3 – The number of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **revised**.*

The PI was assessed as demonstrating weak connections with the two relevant outcomes of the agreement: 'Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough' and 'People at risk of experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'.

There were also conceptual issues with this indicator, due to its use of number rather than proportion. This makes it unclear whether an increase, for example, would represent an improvement or a decline in performance, as this would depend on factors such as population growth or decline.

Nevertheless, this PI was considered important because family violence continues to be one of the main drivers of homelessness. Escaping domestic violence is the most common reason given by people for seeking help from specialist homelessness services.

The Working Group considered that retaining the indicator in a revised form will help to keep the focus on improving performance measurement of this key driver of homelessness.

Revised PI 3 – *The proportion of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence*

The Working Group considered that the performance measure for this indicator should focus on sustainable housing outcomes. The revised measure is a long-term proxy measure of outcomes for people who access specialist homelessness services, as data on outcomes for all homeless people who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence is not available and is not expected to become available during the life of the NPAH.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
PM 3 – *The proportion of people accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing following family violence*

PB 3
No performance benchmark is proposed for this indicator, due to the uncertainties associated with the replacement of the SAAP National Data Collection by the SHS collection in 2011-12. The preferred direction of this indicator is for an increase.

5.2.4 Performance Indicator 4

> **PI 4 – An increase in the number of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **revised**.*

The indicator was assessed as demonstrating weak connections with the two relevant outcomes of the agreement: 'Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough' and 'People at risk of experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'.

There were also conceptual issues with this indicator, due to its use of number rather than proportion. Again, this makes it unclear whether an increase would represent an improvement or a decline in performance, as this would depend on factors such as population growth or decline.

Nevertheless, this PI was considered important because people leaving prison and other care arrangements are at high risk of homelessness and are a key target for early intervention and prevention programs. Retaining the indicator will help to keep the focus on improving performance measurement of this issue.

Revised PI 4 – *The proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing*

The Working Group considered the performance measure for this indicator should focus on sustainable housing outcomes. The revised measure is a long-term proxy measure of outcomes for people who access specialist homelessness services, as data on the housing outcomes for all people who exit care and custodial settings is not available and is not expected to become available during the life of the NPAH.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
PM 4 – *Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings accessing specialist homelessness services who secure sustainable housing*

PB 4
No performance benchmark is proposed for this indicator, due to the uncertainties associated with the change of from the SAAP to the SHS data collection in 2011-12. In lieu of a specific benchmark, the preferred direction of this indicator is for an increase.

4.2.5 Performance Indicator 5

> **PI 5** – *Reduce the number of people existing social housing and private rental into homelessness*
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **revised**.*

The indicator was assessed as demonstrating weak connections with the two relevant outcomes of the agreement. 'Fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough' and 'People at risk of experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'.

Once again, this makes it unclear whether an increase would represent an improvement or a decline in performance, as this would depend on factors such as population growth or decline.

Nevertheless, this PI was considered important because eviction from social housing and private rental are common pathways into homelessness and its retention assists with continuing the focus on improving performance measurement on this issue.

Revised PI 5 – *The proportion of people in social housing who are supported to maintain or secure sustainable housing*

The Working Group considered the performance measure for this indicator should focus on sustainable housing outcomes. The revised measure is a long-term proxy measure of outcomes for people who access specialist homelessness services, as data on the housing outcomes for all social housing and private rental tenants who receive support through other programs to maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing is not available and is not expected to become available during the life of the NPAH.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
PM 5 – *The proportion of people in social housing and private rental and accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing*

PB 5
No performance benchmark is proposed for this indicator, due to the uncertainties associated with the replacement of the SAAP National Data Collection by the SHS data collection in 2011-12. In lieu of a specific benchmark, the preferred direction of this indicator is for an increase.

5.2.6 Performance Indicator 6

> **PI 6 – The proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness**
> * *It is recommended that this indicator be **retained**.*

It was considered that this indicator demonstrates a clear connection the outcome 'Fewer people will become homeless more than once'.

While it is subject to data constraints, the Working Group considered that this outcome was too important to go unmeasured and that no better indicator was available. The Working Group also took account on improvements in data that are likely to result from the revised measure (see below) and the improvements resulting from the transition from the SAAP to the SHS data collection.

PB 6
It is recommended that the existing performance benchmark be retained, noting that caveats may be applied to the data when it is reported to assist with interpretation of the results - in particular the extent to which comparability issues between SAAP and SHS data may be influencing the results. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) proposes to produce two measures for 2011-12 to assist with transitioning to the new data source: one SAAP-like measure and one that uses the improvements offered by the SHS data.

5.2.7 Performance Indicator 7

PI 7 – Number of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school and work
- *It is recommended that this indicator be **revised**.*

The indicator was assessed as demonstrating weak connections with the outcome 'People at risk of experiencing homelessness will improve connections with their families and communities and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation', because it only covers young people, not the wider population. Furthermore, the indicator as currently worded construes success only when young people are collectively engaged with family, school and work, which may not be appropriate or desirable for all young people, particularly 12-14 year olds.

There were also conceptual issues with this indicator, due to its use of number rather than proportion. As noted earlier, this makes it unclear whether an increase would represent an improvement or a decline in performance, as changes to the indicator would reflect factors such as population growth or decline.

The indicator focuses on young people because achieving employment, education and community connectedness is particularly important as a protective factor in reducing the likelihood of homelessness later in life. The Working Group considered that revising the indicator would address (at least in part) some of the conceptual issues. As outlined below, the revised indicator could improve the links to the outcomes by referencing a proportion and by developing a more effective measure (below) using the new data available under the SHS data collection that focuses on employment, education or training outcomes.

Revised PI 7 - *Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school or work*

The revised measure is a long-term proxy measure of outcomes for people who access specialist homelessness services, as data is not available and is not expected to become available during the life of the agreement on outcomes for all homeless young people who re-engaged with family school or work. The measure focuses on employment, education or training because using connections to family/community as a measure of success is problematic, since such connection is not always appropriate (for example, where young people are escaping abusive family relationships). It is also problematic from a definitional perspective in reaching agreement on where the concept of family begins and ends.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
PM 7 – *Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) accessing specialist homelessness services who get support to access education, training or employment*

PB 7
No performance benchmark is proposed for this indicator, due to the uncertainties associated with the replacement of the SAAP National Data Collection by the SHS collection in 2011-12. In lieu of a specific benchmark, the preferred direction of change in this indicator an increase.

5.2.8 Performance Indicator 8

> **PI 8 – Number of children (under 12 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are provided with additional support to maintain contact with their school**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **removed**.*

No data source has been identified for this indicator and therefore further data development would be required which is not likely to yield results during the course of the NPAH. It is difficult to define what is meant by 'maintain contact with school' as this could cover occasional contact, enrolment but non attendance, through to daily attendance. There are similar issues with the concept of what is meant by 'additional support'.

Despite the removal of this indicator due to lack of appropriate data, the Working Group acknowledges the importance of measuring outcomes for homeless children. Information on numbers of homeless children will be available through disaggregations of relevant indicators by age (eg PI 1 and PI 3 for accompanying children). The Working Group also noted that the SHS data collection will treat accompanying children seeking services as clients in their own right, which will enable more information to be collected than was previously available under SAAP. While it is still not possible to measure PI 8 in its current form, information will be available on student status or access to education in the SHS collection.

5.2.9 Performance Indicator 9

> **PI 9 – Number of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive financial advice, counselling and/or case management**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **revised**.*

This indicator is an output indicator and is only weakly connected with the relevant outcome, as it only measures how many families receive services, not the quality of these services or whether these services improve access to sustainable housing.

However, the Working Group recommends retaining this PI because it is the only indicator that contributes towards measuring the quality services component of the outcome 'People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'. References to financial advice and counselling have been removed because it was felt these services are captured in case management plans, where relevant.

Revised PI 9 – *The proportion of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive case management*

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
PM 9 – *The proportion of specialist homelessness services cased managed clients with goals achieved*

This long-term proxy measure has limitations because it only measures outcomes for people accessing the specialist homelessness services system. It is recognised that the measure of

8

goals achieved is an imprecise one that will be influenced by the extent to which the goals set are realistic. However, the Working Group determined that the measure is valuable as it gives an indication of client outcomes and no better measure of quality could be identified.

PB 9

No performance benchmark is proposed for this indicator, due to the uncertainties associated with the replacement of the SAAP National Data Collection by the SHS data collection in 2011-12. In lieu of a specific benchmark, the preferred direction of change for this indicator is an increase.

5.2.10 Performance Indicator 10

> **PI 10 – Number of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who provided with legal services**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **removed**.*

This indicator is an output indicator with only a weak and limited connection with the outcome 'People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'. The IGA suggests output indicators should only be used where no appropriate outcome indicators are available and the indicator is the best available proxy measure of the outcome. There is no substantive evidence to show that provision of legal services per se will help achieve a change in a person's homelessness status by improving their access to sustainable housing, so it does not appear to be a useful proxy. Furthermore, access to legal services is only one element of service provision and does not demonstrate quality of service.

5.2.11 Performance Indicator 11

> **PI 11 – Number of staff of specialist homelessness services provided with formal training and development opportunities**
> - *It is recommended that this indicator be **removed**.*

This PI is an input indicator with minimal connection with the outcome 'People at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing'. Measuring the provision of formal training and development for staff of services does not measure housing outcomes for clients. Additionally, data is not currently available to report against this indicator.

5.3 Recommendations for additions to the existing performance indicator (PI) framework

5.3.1

> **New PI (PI 2 in proposed revised framework) – Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless**

This indicator, which is currently reported as a disaggregation of PI 1, is proposed by the Working Group as an indicator in its own right. Adding this will give more prominence to the indigenous data and benchmark from the existing performance framework in accordance with COAG commitment to the National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap

in Indigenous Disadvantage (Closing the Gap), given that Indigenous people are overrepresented in the homeless population.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
New PM (PM 2 in proposed revised framework) – *Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless*

There is an existing benchmark relating to homelessness amongst Indigenous Australians, previously reported against using the disaggregated data from PI 1. It is recommended that the performance benchmark be retained as a benchmark for the new PI 2, with minor changes to the wording as follows:

New PB (PB 2 in proposed revised framework) – *33.3 per cent reduction in the number of Indigenous Australians who are homeless by 2013*

5.3.2

> **New PI (PI 4 in proposed revised framework) – Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)**

This indicator is proposed as an indicator in its own right rather than relying on the disaggregation of PI 2 – *Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)* - to demonstrate outcomes for Indigenous homeless people, given the over-representation of Indigenous people in the rough sleeper population.

The performance measure recommended for this indicator is:
New PM (PM 4 in proposed revised framework) – *Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)*

PB
There is no existing benchmark for indigenous rough sleepers. The working group determined that it was inappropriate to set a new benchmark at this late stage in the agreement, when all initiatives have already been decided and jurisdictions had no opportunity to adjust deliverables to meet new expectations. Additionally, the relevant data would rely on census data. As there will be no Census conducted in the remaining life of the agreement it was considered that it was unlikely agreeing the benchmark now could have any effect. The ABS review of the methodology for counting the homeless, which is now not due to report until May 2012, may also have unanticipated impacts on Indigenous rough sleeper numbers.

In lieu of a specific benchmark, the preferred direction of change for this indicator is a decrease.

5.4 Proposed revised performance indicator framework

Based on the findings of this review, the Working Group has recommended a revised performance indicator framework, including supporting performance measures, data sources and benchmarks, which is set out in its entirety at Table X below.

Table X: Proposed Revised Performance Indicator Framework

Revised Number	Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Baseline/ Data Source	Performance Benchmark
Performance Indicator 1	Proportion of Australians who are homeless	Proportion of Australians who are homeless	2006 Census (baseline) 2011 Census	7 per cent reduction in the number of homeless Australians by 2013.
Performance Indicator 2	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are homeless	2006 Census (baseline) 2011 Census	33.3 per cent reduction in the number of Indigenous homeless Australians by 2013.
Performance Indicator 3	Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping).	Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)	2006 Census (baseline) 2011 Census	25 per cent reduction in the number of rough sleepers by 2013.
Performance Indicator 4	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping).	Proportion of Indigenous Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)	2006 Census (baseline) 2011 Census	Preferred direction: decrease.
Performance Indicator 5	Proportion of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence	Proportion of clients accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing following family violence	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
Performance Indicator 6	Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing	Proportion of people exiting care and custodial settings accessing specialist homelessness services who secure sustainable housing	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
Performance Indicator 7	Proportion of people in social housing and private rental who are supported to maintain or secure sustainable housing	Proportion of people in social housing and private rental and accessing specialist homelessness services who maintain or secure sustainable housing	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
Performance Indicator 8	Proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness	Proportion of people accessing specialist homelessness services who experience repeat periods of homelessness	2007-08 SAAP (baseline) 2008-09 to 2010-11 SAAP 2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	25 per cent reduction in the number of people experiencing three repeat periods of homelessness at an emergency service in 12 months by 2013.
Performance Indicator 9	Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school or work	Proportion of young people (12 to 18 years) accessing specialist homelessness services who get support to access education, training or employment services	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.
Performance Indicator 10	Proportion of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive case management	Proportion of specialist homelessness services case managed clients with goals achieved	2011-12 to 2012-13 SHS	Preferred direction: increase.

Baselines for PI 1-4 to be revised following ABS review of the 2006 homelessness population

Indicators to be disaggregated by key population groups where appropriate. These may include: Indigenous, age, gender, geographic location, disability etc. Note that disability data have limitations.

Other data sources will be examined where appropriate to provide broader contextual information.

The indicators have been re-numbered to reflect the addition and removal of indicators as above. All of the indicators under the revised framework either provide a strong measure of the relevant outcome, or, where this was not possible, robust long-term proxy indicators providing information on for key policy directions. Acceptable data also exist that will allow all of these indicators to be reported against. The performance indicator framework currently contained in the NPAH is included for comparison at Appendix 2.

Benchmarks have not been proposed for a number of indicators due to the uncertainties associated with changing from the SAAP to the SHS data collection in 2011-12. The Working Group recommends against setting benchmarks for these indicators, even once data are available from the SHS data collection in October 2012, given the short time remaining between then and the end of the term of the NPAH.

5.5 Cost benefit analysis

The Working Group considered the relative costs and benefits of the proposed revisions to the performance reporting framework, as well as those of an alternative option of developing further data to fill existing data gaps and to better enable more timely and robust performance measurement and reporting.

The changes to the NPAH performance indicators and associated performance measures proposed in this report do not involve additional data development costs as they leverage off work that has already been funded, including in particular the development by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in conjunction with State and Territory Governments and the Commonwealth, of the new SHS collection to improve reporting on homeless clients.

The proposed approach has benefits in terms of improved information and accountability, including:

- Improved population-level indicators, which include increased emphasis on Indigenous homelessness in accordance with COAG commitment to Closing the Gap.

- Improved measurement of outcomes for key homelessness cohorts through service provision measures which will enable focus to be maintained on key policy issues.

The proposed changes to performance indicators will result in a better alignment with the outcomes of the NPAH, allowing for more meaningful reporting of performance. This will give all jurisdictions access to better information when addressing homelessness and potentially result in improved policy outcomes.

However, there remain limitations in reporting against those indicators that rely on measures drawn from the SHS collection because data are not available on the whole homeless population. The proposed performance measures based on specialist homelessness services data are long-term proxy or partial measures which capture outcomes for people who access these specialist homelessness services. However, this data is at best a rough indicator of outcomes for the wider population.

Despite this, these indicators are included in the proposed revised framework because the clients captured in the SHS data have been identified as the main identifiable and reported

Table 1:

Performance Indicator	Baseline	Performance Benchmark

s 47C, s 47B

s 47C, s 47B

Implementation plan

25. The Commonwealth will agree an Implementation Plan with each State and Territory to achieve the objectives of this Agreement. The Plans will be reviewed by the Parties on an annual basis.

    (a) The Commonwealth will, in consultation with each State and Territory, maintain the Plans and provide an agreed updated Plan to the relevant State and Territory following the review;

    (b) The Plans will include the timelines for achieving the performance benchmarks, including phased achievement of performance benchmarks where appropriate; and

group experiencing homelessness. By including indicators for this group, a better assessment of the performance of homelessness programs will be possible.

An alternate option involving undertaking significant further data development work to improve reporting of population level data was considered. However, obtaining accurate and timely population level data would require undertaking what would be, in effect, a more thorough and rigorous version of the national census collection but on a more frequent basis.

Such an exercise would result in better data on homelessness than the proposed approach and would have the advantage of providing an improved understanding and, potentially, enhanced policy outcomes. However, even if a significantly more reliable collection were possible, the Working Group considered that associated costs would be prohibitive, being several orders of magnitude higher than for the national census. Finally, given the lead in time for national censuses or surveys, it would not be possible to complete this further work during the life of the NPAH.

Thus, despite the benefits that would flow from the availability of comprehensive information on homelessness, the Working Group did not believe that taking on the cost was justified at this time.

5.6 Transitional issues

SHS data collection

The replacement of the SAAP National Data Collection by the SHS collection will result in data that are not fully compatible, as the two collections vary in both scope and the way information is collected about clients and children in particular. As the SHS collection has just commenced, the full extent of the data comparability issues are still being investigated by the AIHW. The AIHW proposes to produce two measures for 2011-12 to assist with transitioning to the new data source: one SAAP-like measure and one that uses the improvements offered by the SHS. SHS data for 2011-12 is expected to be available before the end of 2012.

SHS collection data will provide a more comprehensive picture of homelessness in Australia, including improved data on causes of homelessness, repeat homelessness, exits into housing, and children who are homeless. This will enable better assessment of the performance of homelessness programs.

ABS review of Counting the Homeless

It should also be noted that the homelessness population measures will be affected by the results of the ABS Review of the methodology for counting the homeless, which is currently expected to be released in May 2012. Revised estimates, which remove identified overestimation, would imply a possible downward revision of the 2006 numbers by around 40 per cent. However, ABS is working to establish whether new estimates for aspects of homelessness not attempted before – especially in regard to improved Indigenous homelessness estimates – can be derived using Census data, and whether a robust method can be developed for estimating aspects of 'couch-surfing' which has been incorrectly

reported in the Census. As that research has not been finalised at the time of this report, no analysis of the impacts of Census data on benchmarks has been included and baseline numbers are not currently able to be specified. The ABS will retrospectively adjust the population data for 2001 and 2006 to reflect the revised methodology and it is proposed that the Select Council on Homelessness review the baselines for PIs 1-4 once the ABS data becomes available.

5.7 Response to the COAG Reform Council (CRC) recommendations on performance reporting in the NPAH

As part of this review of the NPAH, the Working Group was asked to address the following recommendations made to COAG by the CRC in its *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness: Early Assessment of Progress 2009-10* in July 2010.

CRC Recommendation 1:
The COAG Reform Council recommends COAG note the council's assessment that:
- the performance indicators as currently set out in the agreement—with the exception of the three population indicators that utilise census data—cannot be reported against
- the performance reporting framework is incomplete and, despite substantial data development efforts underway, it is likely to remain so for the life of the agreement
- continued efforts to develop and measure the problematic performance indicators and benchmarks in the agreement are unlikely to provide useful information during the life of the agreement and risk diverting governments' focus from the broader data development task to measure the outcomes of the agreement
- all governments have shown a strong commitment to the continued improvement of the performance framework. The data development work now being undertaken to improve the quality and scope of homelessness data may in time result in a substantially improved data system on homelessness in Australia.

CRC Recommendation 2:
The COAG Reform Council recommends that COAG request the Housing Ministers Conference to:
- review the performance reporting framework for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, reporting to COAG by December 2010
- use the review to develop and implement a simplified performance reporting framework focused on indicators of the homeless population and program-based performance measures, as proposed in this early assessment
- separately bring forward a plan, during 2011, for the broader development of data to support the reporting of outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The plan should take into account the cost, benefits and relative prioritisation of data development options and COAG's agreed outcomes and objectives.

The Working Group noted that at the time that the CRC report was written there were large gaps in homelessness data, which impacted adversely on governments' ability to report on performance under the NPAH.

This lack of data led to a range of data development projects being progressed over the last eighteen months. In particular, the SHS data collection has been developed and implemented, enabling outcomes focused reporting, which is more consistent with the IGA performance reporting framework than program and output measures. Several indicators proposed in this review utilise this new data.

With regard to the specific recommendations for actions to be taken to review the existing performance framework, develop and implement a revised framework and bring forward a plan for data development in 2011:

- FaHCSIA, with input from the AIHW and state and territory departments responsible for housing and homelessness, began a review of the performance reporting framework for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in December 2010. This process was superseded by the COAG agreement at its meeting on 13 February 2011 to adopt the recommendations of the Heads of Treasuries review of National Agreements, National Partnerships and Implementation Plans, which included a review of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

- COAG specifically required that the review of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness consider the performance framework. The Working Group has considered changes to improve the framework, including those recommended by the CRC as a result of its own assessment.
  - The framework proposed in this report retains the population measures drawn from the Census and includes performance measures that draw on Specialist Homelessness Services data to measure sustainable housing and social inclusion outcomes.
  - The performance reporting framework will be supported by more standardised annual reporting on the outputs of NPAH initiatives against jurisdiction Implementation Plans, through a revised reporting template.
  - The new SHS collection will improve data collection and reporting on outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Homelessness NP Review
Working Group

10 November 2011

Appendices

Talking Points:

- Appendix 1 is simply the Working Group **ToR** for reference
- Appendix 2 reproduces the **performance reporting framework from the NPAH** for reference and comparison with the proposed revised framework
- Appendix 3 is the **executive summary from the CRC report, CRC's** *National Partnership Agreement: Early Assessment of Progress,* which is referred to in various places throughout the report

- I don't think we need to spend time on the first 3 appendices.

- Appendix 4 includes:
    - the 2 pager provided to participants before the consultations (including the questions);
    - **a summary of the key messages distilled from the consultations** in the form of a table, by frequency – the final column showing how many separate consultations gave the particular message
    - a list of organisations consulted

- Does anyone have any comments on appendix 4?

- Appendix 5 has more detail on **NPAH outputs** - including 2 tables: a summary of **financial investment in the NPAH by jurisdiction** (2008-09 to 2012-13) and a summary of **NPAH Outputs across Jurisdictions – 2010-11**

- Does anyone have any comments on Appendix 5?

- Appendix 6 includes more detail on the context of the NPAH, including paragraphs on issues such as population growth/ageing, family breakdown, mental health etc

- Does anyone have any comments on Appendix 6?

Relevant papers
Agenda paper 3.6 – Appendix 1: Working Group ToR
                    Appendix 2: Current NPAH performance reporting framework
                    Appendix 3: Executive summary from the CRC report, CRC's *National Partnership Agreement: Early Assessment of Progress*
                    Appendix 4: Consultations (methodology, table of key messages, organisations consulted)
                    Appendix 5: NPAH outputs
                    Appendix 6: Context

National Partnership (NP) Agreement on Homelessness Review Working Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Preamble

At its meeting on 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed that the underlying reform principles of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations continue to provide a strong foundation for progressing COAG's agreed reform agenda and achieving better policy and service delivery outcomes for all Australians. COAG established a HoTs Review and CRC Recommendations Implementation Steering Group to review and improve implementation of the IGA.

Role/purpose

The Working Group has been established to review the Homelessness NP on behalf of the Heads of Treasuries (HoTS) Review and CRC Recommendations Implementation Steering Group.

Term

The Terms of Reference are effective from May 2011 and continue until the review is complete (due August 2011, final recommendations to be back to Steering Group by 15 August 2011[1]).

Membership

Membership will consist of Senior Officers from First Ministers', Treasuries and relevant portfolio agencies from the Commonwealth and the States and Territories.

Key tasks

The Working Group will:

- Assess the performance reporting framework and reporting arrangements of the Homelessness NP against the conceptual framework developed by the HoTs Review. See http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/performance_reporting/downloads/conceptual_framework_for_performance_reporting_feb11.pdf
- In reviewing the performance framework:
  - o limit indicators to those necessary to measure performance and inform the public about reform progress; and
  - o include an analysis of the cost of developing data to support new performance indicators and performance benchmarks against the benefit of improved public accountability.

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[1] Subsequently revise to November 2011

- Assess progress towards the agreed outcomes, including through seeking expert advice from the COAG Reform Council, Ministerial Council data groups, data agencies, the Secretariat for the Steering Committee of the Review of Government Service Provision, and others as appropriate.
- Consider the implications for the National Affordable Housing Agreement's reporting framework homelessness objective.
- Consider any other issues of significance for the operation of the NP or the achievement of its objectives.
- As the review progresses, provide reports to the Implementation Steering Group on key issues.
- Deliver a final report to the Implementation Steering Group on progress towards outcomes and any action required, including specific recommendations for improved performance reporting, measurable performance indicators, a prioritised data development plan that takes into account the cost and benefits, and any issues regarding the Agreement.

Meetings

- The Working Group will meet as required.
- Meetings will be chaired jointly by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the South Australian Department of Premier and Cabinet.
- Commonwealth will provide secretariat support for the Working Group.

Process

1. Initial analysis of the Homelessness NP performance framework (including reporting) against the HoTs conceptual framework, taking into consideration the recommendations from the CRC and Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision.
2. Analysis of existing performance indicators and performance benchmarks that are identified as poor quality (at step 1) against the HoTs Review Conceptual Framework's guiding principles for rationalisation or change.
3. Analysis of additional and alternative performance indicators and performance benchmarks against a framework for prioritisation, including consideration of the costs and benefits of new or expanded data collections.
4. Consider the overall appropriateness and proportionality of any revised performance framework.
5. Assessment of progress against outcomes.
6. Identification and analysis of any other significant issues relating to the operation of the Agreement and the achievement of its objectives.
7. Draft recommendations and a report with supporting analysis (including a response to the CRC's recommendations).

PART 4 — PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS AND REPORTING

Performance benchmarks and indicators

23. This section sets out national performance indicators and benchmarks, for overall national performance. Performance against the indicators and the extent to which benchmarks are attained will reflect efforts by all three levels of government, noting that some factors are beyond the control of governments. The contribution of each level of government will vary according to the individual indicator or benchmark.

24. Performance Indicators have been developed where possible to measure outcomes. Where this is not possible output measures have been developed as substitutes to measure progress.

Table 1:

Performance Indicator	Baseline	Performance Benchmark
Proportion of Australians who are homeless	9,531 Indigenous people are homeless 104,676 Australians who are homeless	By 2013, a decrease of 7 per cent the number of Australians who are homeless to less than 97,350 people By 2013, a decrease of a third to 6,300 Indigenous Australians
	9,531 Indigenous people are homeless (ABS Census 2006)	who are homeless (ABS Census 2011)
Proportion of Australians who are experiencing primary homelessness (rough sleeping)	Eight people per 10,000 16,375 Australians rough sleeping or equivalent measures of 8 homeless people sleeping rough per 10,000 population (ABS Census 2006)	A decrease by 25 per cent the number of Australians sleeping rough to less than 12,300 people or equivalent measure of 6 homeless people sleeping rough per 10,000 population (ABS Census 2011)
The number of families who maintain or secure safe and sustainable housing following family violence	Interim Measure: 42,000 SAAP(a) support periods[b] for women and women with children	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans
Increase in the number of people exiting care and custodial settings into secure and affordable housing	Interim Measure: 4,736 SAAP[a] support periods[b]	The number of people released from such institutions into homelessness is reduced by 25 per cent (3,552) by 2013
Reduce the number of people exiting social housing and private rental into homelessness.	4,037 SAAP[a] support periods[b]	The number of people exiting from social housing and private rental to homelessness is reduced by less than 25 per cent (3,027) by 2013
The proportion of people experiencing repeat periods of homelessness	14,800 SAAP[a] clients required three or more support periods[b] in a 12 month period	25 per cent reduction (13,700) in three repeat periods of homelessness at an emergency service in 12 months
Number of young people (12 to 18 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are re-engaged with family, school and work	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans
Number of children (under 12 years) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are provided with additional support to maintain contact with their school.	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans
Number of families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who receive financial advice, counselling and/or case management.	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans
Number of people who are homeless or at risk who are provided with legal services	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans
Number of staff of specialist homeless services provided with formal training and development opportunities	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans	To be developed and agreed prior to finalisation of the Implementation Plans

(a) Use of SAAP service data is a proxy measure until better data becomes available under this Agreement
(b) Number of people not known – a client may receive more than one 'support period'

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness: Early
Assessment of Progress Report - Executive Summary

COAG
Reform Council

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness: Early assessment of progress

Advice to the Council of Australian Governments

9 July 2010

COAG
Reform Council

Executive summary

The task

In December 2008, COAG signed the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (the agreement), which commenced on 1 July 2009, and remains in effect until 30 June 2013.

At its meeting of 7 December 2009, COAG was advised that it was difficult to measure progress against the targets and benchmarks of the agreement. COAG subsequently requested that the COAG Reform Council (the council), by mid-2010, provide an early assessment of progress under the agreement. At a meeting of Deputy Senior Officials on 15 March 2010, it was agreed this assessment would focus on the measurement of the benchmarks in the agreement.

The council's approach

The council recognises that jurisdictions have shown strong commitment to improving the collection of data in a very difficult area to measure. Nonetheless, much, if not all, of this work is complex and will take several years to scope, resource and implement.

The council's approach has therefore been to identify practical improvements that would make performance reporting more workable *during the life of the agreement*. The council does not advocate replacing the agreement, or revisiting the programs funded under the agreement.

The council's assessment

The council's assessment covers three main areas: the performance measurement framework; bilateral implementation plans; and data development efforts currently underway.

The performance measurement framework

The framework for measuring progress towards the objective and outcomes of the agreement consists of 12 performance indicators. Each indicator is intended to have a benchmark setting out a performance target to be met, and a baseline to measure progress against.

The council has identified the following issues with the performance measurement framework:

* half of the performance benchmarks remain incomplete

* the indicators of the homeless population can only be measured every five years, at intervals which do not match the baseline and benchmark years in the agreement, and the methodology for calculating the homeless population is currently under review

* the outcome indicators—for families following domestic violence, people leaving care and custodial settings, people exiting mainstream housing, and young people—cannot be measured (although output-based proxy measures exist or are being developed and will tell some of the story)

* the output/service delivery indicators do not measure the *quality* of services to people facing homelessness, as contemplated by the outcomes in the agreement

* it is difficult to identify benchmarks for output/service delivery measures.

Measuring performance through the implementation plans

Bilateral implementation plans have been agreed by the Commonwealth with each State and Territory to translate the national-level outcomes and outputs into programs and strategies. The council recognises that the implementation plans are intended to be improved over time.

The council was not asked to review jurisdictions' progress against the implementation plans. However, the council notes that the following problems with the design of implementation plans also affect governments' ability to measure progress under the agreement:

- inconsistent application of the performance indicators and benchmarks in the agreement

- inconsistent reporting requirements for programs funded under the agreement.

Data development currently underway

The council is confident that in time, the development efforts of all governments will lead to a substantially improved data system on homelessness. The different development projects are outlined in part 3 of this paper.

The council notes, however, that long-term funding arrangements for many of the data initiatives under development are unclear. Given the breadth of the development task envisaged by governments, and the need to balance funding for data development against other priorities, governments will need to give consideration to which initiatives show the most potential for improving how progress towards the outcomes of the agreement is measured.

The council notes that some key initiatives, such as the new Specialist Homelessness Services Collection and the embedding of a homeless identifier flag in Centrelink data, are likely to allow better reporting of proxy measures for some performance indicators. However, it appears that this will not occur until 2012 at the earliest. In addition, data gaps will persist despite these improvements.

The way forward

While the council recognises that—consistent with the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations—an outcomes-based performance reporting framework has been pursued in the agreement, the data available lags significantly behind most of the agreement's current performance indicators. This has resulted in a performance reporting framework that by and large is unworkable and unlikely to be substantially improved by the time the agreement expires in 2013. Under the current framework, performance benchmarks are unlikely to be adopted and annual reporting on governments' performance is therefore not possible.

As such, a pragmatic approach is needed, one which aims to simplify the performance reporting framework. The council's proposed approach, as detailed in this assessment, is as follows:

- until better data exists, focus on COAG's targets for reducing the homeless population

- clarify how the targets are shared between jurisdictions

- establish an agreed basis for assessing the quality of services

- clarify the basis for reporting on programs cited in the implementation plans.

COAG
Reform Council

The council has made two recommendations to COAG in relation to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, in line with the council's assessment as summarised above and consistent with the proposed simplified approach to the performance reporting framework.

Box E.1   Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The COAG Reform Council recommends COAG note the council's assessment that:

- the performance indicators as currently set out in the agreement—with the exception of the three population indicators that utilise census data—cannot be reported against

- the performance reporting framework is incomplete and, despite substantial data development efforts underway, it is likely to remain so for the life of the agreement

- continued efforts to develop and measure the problematic performance indicators and benchmarks in the agreement are unlikely to provide useful information during the life of the agreement and risk diverting governments' focus from the broader data development task to measure the outcomes of the agreement

- all governments have shown a strong commitment to the continued improvement of the performance framework. The data development work now being undertaken to improve the quality and scope of homelessness data may in time result in a substantially improved data system on homelessness in Australia.

Recommendation 2:

The COAG Reform Council recommends that COAG request the Housing Ministers Conference to:

- review the performance reporting framework for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, reporting to COAG by December 2010

- use the review to develop and implement a simplified performance reporting framework focused on indicators of the homeless population and program-based performance measures, as proposed in this early assessment

- separately bring forward a plan, during 2011, for the broader development of data to support the reporting of outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The plan should take into account the cost, benefits and relative prioritisation of data development options and COAG's agreed outcomes and objectives.

Consultations with stakeholders

Information provided to participants

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP (NP) AGREEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS – DISCUSSIONS WITH PEAK/ ADVISORY BODIES

Introduction

In late 2008, the Commonwealth and states and territories agreed a National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness which came into effect on 1 July 2009. It provides resources of $1.1 billion over four years until 30 June 2013.

A Commonwealth-State working group, comprising First Ministers' departments, Treasuries and relevant line agencies, has been established to undertake a mid-term review of the Homelessness NP Agreement.

As part of this review, the working group will consider what progress has been made towards the agreed outcomes of the Homelessness NP Agreement, including through a focused consultation with key stakeholders - in particular national and state-level advisory and peak bodies. The timeframe does not allow for a broader or public consultation process as part of the mid-term review.

The consultation process

Thank you for agreeing to participate in these consultations.

Your views and insights will provide invaluable input and assist in building up a picture of how well the Agreement is working to date; what is having the most impact; where more effort may be needed and lessons to be learnt going forward.

The intention is to have a free-flowing conversation, rather than a rigidly structured discussion. However, as a guide, the questions below illustrate the issues we will be seeking to cover.

Note: The outcomes and outputs of the Homelessness NP Agreement are set out in full overleaf. **It will be useful to have this to hand for reference during the discussion.**

Thinking about how homelessness services have changed over the last few years:
1. *What programs/initiatives/policies do you think are having a positive effect on reducing homelessness? [for each]:*

     a. *Are you aware if this a program/initiative under Homelessness NP Agreement?*

     b. *What evidence is there to show this positive impact? (e.g. stats/evaluations)*

     c. *Do you have any views on whether it could be improved/scaled up/replicated elsewhere?*

2. *Of the examples of [programs/initiatives/policies] you have given, which do you think has made the most difference and for whom?*

     a. *What makes you choose that one? What evidence is there for this view?*

3. *What programs/initiatives/policies do you think are not having a positive effect/only limited impact on reducing homelessness? [for each]:*

     a. *Are you aware if this a program/initiative under Homelessness NP Agreement?*

     b. *What evidence is there to show this lack of impact? (e.g. stats/evaluations)*

     c. *Do you have any views on whether/how it could be improved to be more effective?*

Thinking about recent action by governments to reduce homelessness:
4. *What are some of the lessons that can be learnt? (This could relate to particular services, service coordination or client group; or the process of establishing services)*

THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS

The Agreement will contribute to achieving the following **four outcomes:**

- fewer people will become homeless and fewer of these will sleep rough
- fewer people will become homeless more than once
- people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will maintain or improve connections with their families and communities; and maintain or improve their education, training or employment participation
- people at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be supported by quality services, with improved access to sustainable housing.

The **four core outputs** under the review which all parties were expected to deliver are:

- Implementation of the *A Place to Call Home* initiative
- 'Street to home' initiatives for rough sleepers
- Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies including through tenancy support, advocacy, etc
- Assistance for people leaving child protection services, correctional and health facilities, to maintain stable, affordable housing.

Additional non-core outputs cover diverse issues such as:

- assisting older people, young people, those with substance abuse or mental health issues, or experiencing domestic violence obtain or maintain accommodation
- improvements in service coordination and provision and national state or local homelessness action plans
- Outreach programs to connect rough sleepers to long-term housing and health services
- Legal services provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Workforce development.

The Agreement also identifies three **key strategies** to focus activity:

- Ensuring effective prevention and early intervention strategies address both individual and structural causes of homelessness.
- Targeting of services to people who are regular rough sleepers; repeatedly homeless; living with a high risk of homelessness; struggling with the impact of cycles of homelessness; disempowered due to mental illness; and unaccompanied children.
- Ensuring a better-connected, integrated and responsive service system is in place.

How the information you provide will be used

A summary of the discussion will be drawn up for the Review Working Group as input to the review. A draft summary will be provided to you for comment before being forwarded to the working group. Your organisation may be listed as a contributor to the review but views will not be specifically identified.

A decision has not been made on whether the final report of the Review of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness will be made public.

Consultations with stakeholders

Table X Feedback received, by frequency

MESSAGE/LESSON	No. of consultations
NPAH has increased cooperation, empowerment, partnerships, engagement, communication and respect for/between services/agencies; better consistency between sector/state/CW; more of a shared language and approach.	10
Shortage of affordable/appropriate rental housing and importance of ongoing roll-out of NRAS.	9
Confluence of NPAH and stimulus funding: fortuitous timing has facilitated good outcomes for homeless people. Concerns about: a) what will happen when stimulus funding comes to an end; b) appropriate targeting – less visible homeless tend to receive lower priority.	8
NPAH has increased focus on homelessness; demonstrated government commitment; facilitated development of state/regional homelessness plans.	7
Many family violence programs have been extremely effective. However, demand is outstripping ability of services to respond and when 'safe at home' seen as the only answer ,can increase the risk of women being unsafe at home.	7
Specialist/intensive tenancy support services effective when appropriate to target group.	6
Effectiveness constrained by lack of data about service need: how many of which projects and where. Otherwise system will continue to grow historically and not in response to evidence. New SH data collection will lead to better outcomes.	6
Importance of family violence as a risk factor/pathway to homelessness for women and children; the value/effectiveness of properly supported (including from the police and justice systems etc) 'safe at home' type programs.	5
Importance of linking NPAH (and its review) to NAHA and other NPs (eg Mental Health) and reviews.	5
Brokerage funds very effective – particularly in rural & regional areas; importance of these funds not being prescriptive; hub approach worth considering.	4
For exiting care programs to be effective, pre- and post-leaving planning essential – in some programs not happening. Need for proactive, national approach.	4
NPAH has played a significant role in breaking down of barriers between specialist services and eg real estate agents, white goods manufacturers.	3
NPAH funds too focused on new projects – at the expense of making structural change and building on existing projects.	3
NPAH outcome measures are not robust – eg someone being housed for 3 months could be a success. No account taken of the fact that success is different for different groups/individuals in different services.	3
Youth (ie being young) seen as a 'plus' eg in DEEWR JSA criteria, whereas, in fact, often a 'minus'/risk factor.	3
'Housing first' approach can be a risk – particularly for young people.	3
NPAH reporting: while in some ways a 'burden' also has potential to benefit agencies via feedback loops, cross data sharing etc.	3
Programmes that include living skills for young people are valuable.	3
Increased focus on rough sleepers to detriment of other groups.	2
As a result of NPAH, NFPs have become more strategic/operate more like a business, increased financial literacy; has facilitated capacity building and innovation.	2
Right balance between building capacity/independence and providing enough support is not always achieved.	2
Homelessness Gateways play critical in linking people who are not clients of homelessness services to crisis accommodation.	2
Effective regional and Aboriginal initiatives lacking.	2
JSA has led to better engagement with employment services by people who are homeless. Those with very significant disadvantage are getting access to services, resourced according to need - but vulnerable young homeless/at risk people disadvantaged. Room for improved identification and service integration.	2
'Cultural' aspect of homelessness overlooked.	2
Insufficient account taken of the need for young people to transition at their own pace into training/employment.	2
Ability to leverage onto mainstream health services has led to good outcomes for rough sleepers.	2
Private housing rental assistance to obtain housing near services and other amenities, proving effective.	2
Inflexibility of programs/systems detrimental to outcomes.	2

Consultations with stakeholders

==Table X== Responses to questions on the effectiveness of the NPAH

NOMINATED AS MOST EFFECTIVE ASPECT OF NPAH	NOMINATED AS IMPORTANT TO INITIATE OR TO BE CONTINUED TO ALLOW TIME TO REACH POTENTIAL OR WHICH SHOULD BE ROLLED OUT MORE BROADLY	NOMINATED AS LESS EFFECTIVE ASPECT OF NPAH
• Education programs for young people, such as Colony 47, Create, Foyer and First Point • Safe at home programs • Brokerage model • Supportive Housing Program + Individual Support Packages • Awareness-raising of youth homelessness	• Rural Interagency Project (NSW) • Tenancy support services • Build on the "communication dialogue" that has begun since the NPAH • Need for reporting back to agencies data provided to government – establish a feedback process (not only numbers but also quality of outcomes) • Accommodation options for families • Develop responses for young people with dependent children themselves – critical to address intergenerational risk • More emphasis on early intervention and prevention programs going forward • Common Ground	• Housing First and Foyer models: except when used for chronically homeless people with good access to services, can be an ineffective use of housing resources – especially for young people • Coordination and timing between support and housing during critical transition stage needs further attention • Prevention – particularly children entering homelessness • Early intervention focused on initial tenancy concerns in the private rental sector • Common Ground (in the context of people being evicted into homelessness) • Role of mainstream services (eg Child Protection, Mental Health) not working as it should • Link to availability of housing has not been made strongly enough in NPAH

==Box X== External influences adversely affecting homelessness, nominated during consultations

- Growing population/demand
- Visa types that prevent people from working to support themselves
- Increased unemployment
- Ageing workforce
- Work disincentives for young people in social housing
- Changes to the way the States and Territory fund wage increases
- Changes to tender processes - element of competition resulting from this at odds with collaboration and best practice sharing/learning
- Over-riding impact of sector reform
- Lack of affordable housing
- Community objections, NIMByism
- "3 strikes" rule for evictions

Consultations with stakeholders

Table X List of consultations conducted by the Working Group

Peak/advisory body	Organisations represented	Location
ACT Joint Pathways		ACT
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute		National
Australian Youth Forum	— Streat – social enterprise — Phoenix House – Youth Services	National
Create Foundation		National
Homelessness Community Alliance, NSW	— Shelter NSW — NSW Federation of Housing Associations — NSW Women's Refuge Movement — Council of Social Service of New South Wales	NSW
Homelessness Australia		National
Housing NSW		NSW
National Employment Services Association		National
Northern Territory Shelter		NT
Prime Ministers' Council on Homelessness		National
NSW Premiers Council on Homelessness		NSW
Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum	— Queensland Council of Social Service — Department of Communities — Queensland Shelter — Queensland Youth Housing Coalition — Micah Projects — Mission Australia — Daumbal — The Queensland Aborignal and Torres Strait Islander Human Services Coalition	QLD
South Australia Homelessness Gateway Services Forum	— Uniting Care Wesley — Service to Youth Council	SA
South Australian Peak Bodies	— Homelessness South Australia — South Australian Council of Social Service	SA
Women's Services Network (WESNET)		National
Western Australian Council on Homelessness	— Western Australia Council on Social Services Community — Housing Coalition of Western Australia — Women's Council on Domestic and Family Violence	WA
Western Australian Housing Council		WA
Tasmanian Peak Bodies	— Shelter Tasmania — University of Tasmania — Housing, Tasmania	TAS
Victoria Council to Homeless Persons		Victoria

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness - Outputs

Under the NPAH, Australian Governments are contributing resources of $1.1 billion from 2009-10 to 2012-13. The Commonwealth is providing $538.6 million to state and territory Governments including $150 million for the *'A Place to Call Home'* initiative and allocating $11.4 million for long-term research. State and Territory Governments are matching Australian Government funding. A breakdown of funding by jurisdiction is provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Summary of financial investment in the NPAH by jurisdiction (2008-09 to 2012-13)

Jurisdiction	Commonwealth Contribution	Jurisdiction Contribution	Total
Australian Government (own purpose expenses)	$11.40m	0	$11.40m
Queensland	$135.13m	$149.50m	$284.63m
New South Wales	$140.40m	$251.90m	$392.30m
Victoria	$105.69m	$104.00m	$209.69m
Western Australia	$66.79m	$68.37m	$135.16m
Tasmania	$14.31m	$18.60m	$32.91m
Australian Capital Territory	$10.06m	$10.06m	$20.12m
Northern Territory	$25.60m	$29.39m	$54.99m
South Australia	$40.62m	$41.48m	$82.10m

Note: Figures in the table add up to more than $1.1 billion as the jurisdictions more than match the Commonwealth Government contribution. However, the Commonwealth only reports on matched funding

Key Strategies and Reforms

Outputs

Table 1 provides an overview of the outputs and progress against service delivery targets aggregated across jurisdictions. Overall, 171 initiatives have been implemented, with assistance provided to clients on around 115,000 occasions. Service targets were exceeded for the majority of outputs (13 out of 16 outputs)[1].

It should be noted that it is not possible to directly compare data across different outputs. Jurisdictions have implemented a range of service models that vary in terms of target groups, caseloads, output measures and the intensity and duration of support. For example, some initiatives may provide intensive support to clients with complex needs over longer periods of time (e.g. Common Ground), whereas other initiatives (e.g. early intervention initiatives) may provide short-term, less intensive assistance and have high volume caseloads.

As well, it is not possible to provide an overall net count of clients who have received assistance from NPAH funded services, nor to track the flow of clients in and out of homelessness and their utilisation of different services. The data relating to 'Totals of Assistances' may include multiple episodes of service for the one client. As well, the reporting does not support comprehensive reporting on the efficacy of the services provided.[2]

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[1] Figures for initiatives implemented and number of assistances do not include Victoria, which ...
[2] As above

Table 2. Summary of NPAH Outputs across Jurisdictions – 2010-11

OUTPUTS	INITIATIVES (National Totals)	TARGETS[1] (National Totals of Assistances)	ACTUALS (National Totals of Assistances)
Core Outputs			
16a – Implementation of the A Place to Call Home initiative	10	80[1] dwellings	103[1] dwellings
16b – Street to Home initiative for rough sleepers	27	11,802	14,414
16c – Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies, including tenancy support, advocacy, case management, financial counsell8ing and referral services	17	30,565	53,616
16d – Assistance for people leaving child protection services, correctional and heath facilities to access and maintain stable, affordable housing	40	7045	9241
Additional Outputs			
17a – Support services and accommodation to assist older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	2	78	41[1]
17b – Services to assist homeless people with substance abuse to secure or maintain stable accommodation	1	171	122
17c – Services to assist homeless people with mental health issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation	2	108	141
17d – Support to assist young people aged 12-18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to reengage with their family where appropriate and maintain sustainable accommodation and engagement with education and employment	6	572	926
17e – Improvements in service coordination and provision	20	13,450[1]	11,027[1]
17f – Support for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence to stay in their present housing where it is safe to do so	10	2,912	7,325
17g – Assistance for homeless people, including families with children, to stabilise their situation and to achieve sustainable housing.	17	14,854	16,563
17h – outreach programs to connect rough sleepers to long-term housing and health services	8	769	996
17i – National, state and rural including remote) homelessness action plans to assist homeless people in areas identified as having high rates of homelessness	2	10[1]	10[1]
17j – Support for children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of legal issues including family violence, tenancy or debt	5	865	677
17k – legal services provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of legal issues including family violence, tenancy or debt	1	117	52
17l – Workforce development and career progression for workers in homelessness services	3	75[1]	75[1]
Total	171[1]	83,393 assistances 80 dwellings	115,226 assistances 103 dwellings

National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness Context

Social Factors

<u>Australia's population</u>

The population is projected to grow from around 22 million people currently to 35.9 million people in 2050.[1]

Population ageing is projected to continue. The number of children is projected to increase by 45 per cent and the number of prime working-age people is projected to increase by 44 per cent between 2010 and 2050. This is expected to occur at the same time as the number of older people (65 to 84 years) more than doubles, and the number of very old (85 and over) more than quadruples.[2]

While the overall life expectancy of Australians continues to climb and educational attainment increases, gaps remain between the health and education outcomes of Australians living in cities and those living elsewhere.[3] Similarly, while there has been some progress in closing the gap of Indigenous disadvantage, Indigenous Australians continue to have poorer health, education and employment outcomes than non-Indigenous Australians.[4]

<u>Family breakdown</u>

While family violence rates in Australia have decreased slightly over the last decade, it continues to be a major driver of homelessness in Australia.[5] Many victims of family violence will not seek assistance from specialist homelessness services, but will stay with friends or family members in temporary arrangements. Despite this, escaping violence in the home is the most common reason provided by people who seek help from specialist homelessness services.[6]

Family violence is the principal cause of homelessness among women. Approximately half of women with children and young single women who seek assistance from specialist homelessness services do so to escape family violence.[7]

Many service providers report that many women who escape abusive, violent relationships return to the perpetrator numerous times, and therefore cycle in and out of homelessness.[8]

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[1] Australia to 2050: Future Challenges, January 2010 (Intergenerational Report 2010), Attorney-General's Department

[2] ibid

[3] ABS, 2011: 4102

[4] SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government. Service Provision) 2011, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2011*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Women's Safety Survey, 1996 and Personal Safety Survey 2005.

[6] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report, SAAP NDCA report series 12, cat. no. HOU 185, Canberra, 2008.

[7] ibid

[8] Flinders University, *Women, domestic and family violence and homelessness: A synthesis report*, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra, 2008.

Family or relationship breakdown is the main reason why males with children seek assistance from a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).[9] Young people and families in contact with youth homelessness services often cite family violence as reasons for needing assistance. Young people can be the victims of violence or may be violent toward other family members and so may enter the youth justice system or the child protection system as a result.

In 2009, there were 49,448 divorces granted in Australia, an increase of 2,239 (4.7 per cent) compared to 2008 - the first increase in the number of divorces granted since 2001.[10] While the proportion of divorces involving children has been generally decreasing, the number of children affected by divorce increased from 43,184 in 2008 to 45,195 in 2009, representing 49.1 per cent of all divorces granted.[11]

Transitioning from care, detention or other institutional settings

People leaving health services, care and protection settings or the criminal justice system are at an increased risk of transitioning into homelessness. Specialist homeless service providers report that many people seek support soon after discharge from hospital. This occurs more frequently for people being discharged from mental health services.[12]

People leaving the criminal justice system are also at risk of homelessness. With the numbers of people in the criminal justice system increasing over the last two decades, this is also a growing group of people at risk of homelessness.[13]

Young people leaving the youth justice and child protection systems also report high levels of homelessness.[14] Between 2006–07 and 2009–10 there has been a steady increase in both the numbers and rates of youth in detention in Australia.[15] Nearly half of all people seeking the support of specialist homelessness services are young people under 18 years of age.[16]

Mental health and substance abuse

Mental health and substance use disorders can be key contributing factors leading to homelessness and homelessness can also contribute to the further deterioration of mental wellbeing. People with a severe mental illness who are without family, community and clinical supports are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

Nearly one in two Australians will experience some form of mental illness at some stage during their life, and one in five Australians experience mental illness each

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[9] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) *Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report*, SAAP NDCA report series 12, cat. no. HOU 185, Canberra, 2008

[10] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2010). *Marriages and divorces, Australia, 2009* (Catalogue no. 3310.0).

[11] Ibid.

[12] Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2008). *The road home: A national approach to reducing homelessness.* Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

[13] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Prisoners in Australia*, ABS cat. no. 4517.0, Canberra, 2007

[14] J McDowell, *Report card: Transitioning from care*, CREATE Foundation, Sydney, 2008.

[15] AIHW 2011. *Juvenile justice in Australia 2009-10. Juvenile justice series no. 8. Cat. no. JUV 8.* Canberra: AIHW.

[16] AIHW. *Homeless people in SAAP: SAAP National Data Collection annual report*, SAAP NDCA report series 12, cat. no. HOU 185, Canberra, 2008.

year. [17] It is the largest cause of non-fatal disability of any disease in the country and a bigger barrier to workforce participation than any other illness in the country. The proportion of Australians estimated to have a long-term mental or behavioural problem increased progressively between 1995 and 2005 (this may reflect a real increase, an increase in the self-report of mental disorders, or both). [18]

Rough sleepers and people who are chronically homeless are more likely to have complex needs such as mental health issues, substance abuse and disabilities. A third of people who are homeless in inner city areas are estimated as having a severe mental illness. [19]

Childhood trauma

Childhood trauma is a principal characteristic of the long term homeless. The majority of people who are long term homeless have experienced major and often repeated childhood sexual or physical abuse, the involvement of child protection, or homelessness at a young age. [20]

A significant number of people who are chronically homeless were under the care of child protection systems in the past. Since 2005, the number of children in care and protection orders has increased by 57% [21] and the number of children in out-of-home care has increased by 51% [22]

Intergenerational disadvantage and social exclusion

Being homeless largely excludes people from full participation in the wider community, making it difficult to obtain or maintain employment or education. Children who experience homelessness are more likely to perpetuate that state into adulthood and have an increased risk of long-term poverty, unemployment, chronic ill-health, and other forms of disadvantage and social exclusion. [23]

Indigenous Australians

Indigenous Australians have a higher rate of homelessness than other Australians and homeless Indigenous Australians are almost twice as likely to sleep rough, or in improvised dwellings and shelters, than non-Indigenous Australians. [24] This rate may underestimate the true extent of Indigenous homelessness given that as well as the

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[17] Department of Health and Ageing (2010) *National Mental Health Report 2010: Summary of 15 Years of reform in Australia's Mental Health Services under the National Mental Health Strategy 1993-2008.* Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

[18] AIHW 2008. *Australia's Health 2008.* Canberra: AIHW.

[19] *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, 2007; Herrman H, Evert H, Harvey C, Gureje O, Pinzone T, Gordon I. Disability and service use among homeless people living with psychotic disorders, in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2004; 38:965–974; Teesson M, Hodder T, Buhrich N. Psychiatric disorders in homeless men and women in inner Sydney, in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 2004; 38:162–168

[20] Johnson, G., Parkinson. S, Tseng, Y., & Kuehnle, D. (2011) Long-term homelessness: Understanding the challenge. Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda.

[21] AIHW 2011. Juvenile justice in Australia 2009-10. Juvenile justice series no. 8. Cat. no. JUV 8. Canberra: AIHW – this is for the period 30 June 2005–30 June 2010.

[22] AIHW 2011. Child protection Australia 2009-10. Child welfare series no. 51. Cat. no. CWS 39. Canberra: AIHW – this is for the period 30 June 2005–30 June 2010.

[23] D'Addio A 2007. Intergenerational transmission of disadvantage: mobility or immobility across generations? A review of the evidence for OECD countries. OECD social employment and migration working papers no. 52. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

[24] AIHW 2011. A profile of Homelessness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Cat no. IHW 43, Canberra: AIHW

recognised challenges of measuring the true rate of homelessness in the broader Australian population, some homeless Indigenous people may not consider themselves as homeless if they have a strong cultural attachment to the place where they live. This may have also have implications for service providers in determining the service or accommodation needs of Indigenous clients.

Indigenous Australians are also over-represented as clients of specialist housing services[25]. Similar to the drivers of homelessness for non-Indigenous Australians, family breakdown, family violence and substance abuse have been identified as being factors causing homeless Indigenous Australians to seek support services.[26] However, Indigenous Australians are more likely to cite overcrowding as a reason for seeking assistance from specialist homeless services.[27] Consistent with the complex nature of Indigenous disadvantage, there is a higher prevalence of socio-economic and health and wellbeing factors which may contribute to the higher rate of Indigenous homelessness and the subsequent need for services, such as higher levels of unemployment,[28] low levels of home ownership (although this has increased),[29] more frequent contact with the criminal justice system and poor education and health outcomes[30].

Indigenous homelessness is most likely to occur outside of major cities whereas non-Indigenous homelessness is most likely to occur in major cities.[31] The significant mobility of Indigenous people living in rural and remote Australia[32] (for example due to the need to relocate to be closer to services, particularly health services or for cultural obligations), may also contribute to the higher rate of homelessness for Indigenous Australians, particularly in rural and remote Australia.

[25] AIHW 2011. Housing and homelessness services: access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cat. no. HOU 237. Canberra: AIHW.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2008). *The road home: A national approach to reducing homelessness.* Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. P50
[28] ABS 4704.0 - *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,* Feb 2011
[29] SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2011, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2011*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.
[30] Ibid.
[31] AIHW 2011. Housing and homelessness services: access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Cat. no. HOU 237. Canberra: AIHW.
[32] Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (2006). Indigenous mobility in rural and remote Australia. Queensland: Final report no 90.