



# Homelessness Action Plan

2021-2024



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## Introduction

The City of Fremantle set the vision for Fremantle to be a compassionate City that cares for the wellbeing of our people and the environment we share, through the Strategic Community Plan 2015-2025.

The Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2024 sets out the City's commitment to respond to the power of extreme social exclusion – homelessness. The plan's three-year timeframe is intended to keep actions current and achievable to meet community need in an evolving social landscape.

Housing and homelessness are complex issues that are the core responsibility of the State and Federal Governments. The City supports *All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10 Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030*, and the adopted housing first initiative as a key priority by the state government.

The creation of socially inclusive communities, where all people are connected, safe and welcomed is the responsibility of local governments. Ending homelessness requires a whole of community approach with coordinated and integrated strategies and responses.

Integral to the reduction of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness is partnerships. The City is committed to working with key sector stakeholders and people with lived experience through the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan over the next three years.

## Purpose

The Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2024 outlines our ongoing commitment to create and sustain a socially inclusive city.

It outlines a framework to respond to this complex challenge with limited resources. The scope of actions will:

- Direct evidence-based advocacy to increase investment in local services and resources to meet the needs of people in Fremantle.
- Support and coordinate the delivery of initiatives that provide opportunity for active participation community connection and resilience.
- Build a greater understanding in the broader community of the roles, responsibilities, and priorities in responding to homelessness and its impacts.

The City is committed to working with key stakeholders in improving the capacity of the community and reducing homelessness to functional zero.



## **Understanding homelessness**

People do not choose to enter homelessness. There are many contributing factors that force a person to enter homelessness all of which are complex and nuanced to individual circumstance.

The top five reasons for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services were: <sup>1</sup>

- Domestic and family violence
- Financial difficulties
- Relationship/family breakdown
- Housing crisis
- Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions

A person is considered to be experiencing homelessness- as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- Is in a dwelling that is inadequate
- Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable
- Does not allow them to have control of space for social relations.

## **Homelessness in the community**

Fremantle experiences a higher level of people experiencing chronic homelessness than most metropolitan local government areas. This is due to the large number of service providers in the area and being a second destination City after Perth.

The City utilises the By Name List as a key data source to understand the needs and circumstances of people experiencing homelessness in the Fremantle community.

The visibility of people forced to sleep rough on our streets was amplified through the global pandemic. This anecdotal feedback has been evidenced through the State Strategy and suggests that the number of people who are experiencing homelessness in the community is increasing.

Across Western Australia there are over 9,000 people experiencing homelessness each night, with over 4,100 people accessing Specialist Homeless Services every day and 2 out of 3 requests for accommodation through homeless services going unmet. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Specialist Homelessness Services- AIHW- [Homelessness Strategy](#)

<sup>2</sup> Shelter WA – ABS 2016 Census – [AIHW 2020](#)



## Strategic context

This action plan contributes to the achievement of the *City of Fremantle's Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2019-24*, addressing:

**Topic 1** Stakeholders partnerships and internal capacity.

- **Recommendation 2** Work with partners to increase social support available in the Fremantle community.
- **1.2.7** Create a homelessness plan/strategy for the City of Fremantle

## State context

*All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020–2030*. The Strategy sets out a vision for Western Australia where everyone has a safe place to call home and is supported to achieve stable and independent lives. The Strategy sets out a ten-year vision for how all levels of government, the community sector and the wider community can work together in Western Australia towards ending homelessness.

The Strategy, supported by the City of Fremantle, clearly sets out how local government can contribute to this vision:

- Making information on local services and supports available and accessible.
- Ensuring Rangers and front-line staff are informed and supported to interact with people experiencing homelessness and, where appropriate, refer them to local services.
- Working with Police to support and refer people experiencing homelessness to local services and supports.
- Coordinating volunteer and charity groups through a place-based approach that better meets the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Utilising land and assets to create places that are inclusive and can support vulnerable people.

## Focus areas

This action plan was formed by ongoing consultation with key stakeholders through existing working groups and partnerships. It has taken into consideration existing data, trends, and the review of best-practice approaches that are within the role and responsibility of a local government authority, as outlined in the State Strategy meeting the actions of the City's *Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan 2019-2024*.



### **Focus area 1 – Accessible information**

Develop and maintain accessible information to support decision making and connection to key services. We aim to increase the community awareness and understanding of social vulnerabilities, homelessness.

### **Focus area 2 – Support and assist**

We will work to support people who are sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness in the City.

### **Focus area 3 – Advocacy**

We will continue to advocate for the right resources and services be made available in Fremantle for greater impact in the reduction of homelessness across the continuum.

## **Monitoring, Reporting and Review**

The actions in the Homelessness Action Plan will be reported annually through the Corporate Business Plan. The plan will be reviewed within three years.



## Action Plan

| Action  | Recommendation | Responsibility  | Priority | Sequencing & stages   | Resourcing         |
|---|----------------|---|----------|---|--------------------|
| <b>Accessible information</b>   |                |   |          |   |                    |
| 1. Develop and implement an accessible directory of information and crisis support services operating in Fremantle and the wider metro region- printed and digital access.                | Ongoing        | Community Development                                 | High     | Update print document twice yearly<br>Digital update bi-monthly | Operational budget |
| 2. Provide access to tenancy information, and welfare advocacy through the Fremantle Community Legal Centre- including community legal information sessions.                              | Ongoing        | Fremantle Community Legal Centre<br>Lifelong Learning | Med      | Minimum 4 sessions per year                                     | Operational budget |
| 3. Develop and implement a communication framework to increase staff, stakeholder and community understanding of, participation in, and support initiatives that respond to homelessness. | Project        | Community Development<br>Communications               | Med      | Operational mid 2022  | Operational budget |



| <b>Support and assist</b>   |                                       |   |      |   |                    |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|------|---|--------------------|
| 4. Connect people with services and support to assist in exiting homelessness.  | Project                               | Community Safety<br>Lifelong Learning     | High | Library Connect<br>3 year commitment<br>ending 2024 | Operational budget |
| 5. Develop evidenced based, service partnership agreements with external accredited outreach providers.   | Ongoing                               | Community Development<br>Community Safety | Med  | Annually  | Operational budget |
| 6. Coordinate charity and volunteer goodwill groups to ensure services are targeted, and meet the needs of the community (Registration Process)                 | Policy endorsed by Council 25.11.2021 | Community Development<br>Community Safety | Med  | Annually  | Operational budget |
| 7. Develop and implement a protocol to guide a supportive and appropriate response from frontline staff when interacting with people experiencing homelessness. | Project                               | Community Development<br>Community Safety | Med  | Completed mid 2022<br>Updated quarterly             | Operational budget |
| <b>Advocacy</b>   |                                       |   |      |   |                    |
| 8. Advocate to WA State Government to deliver a sustainable supply of supported and diverse social housing and accommodation options.                           | Advocacy                              | Communications                            | High | Ongoing   | Operational budget |





|   |  |   |     |                    |                    |
|---|--|---|-----|--------------------|--------------------|
| 9. Advocate to State and Federal Governments for investment in services that will reduce the cycle of the housing/homelessness continuum.                                     | Advocacy                                     | Communications                              | Med | Ongoing            | Operational budget |
| 10. Explore innovative ways to create housing diversity through the review and assessment of the City of Fremantle's current Housing Affordability Policy.                    | Policy Review endorsed by Council 25.11.2021 | Strategic Planning<br>Community Development | Med | Ongoing            | Operational budget |
| 11. Maintain an evidence base on the trends of homelessness in the city to inform policy responses, innovative place-based program delivery and alternative housing solution. | Project                                      | Community Development                       | Med | Ongoing            | Operational budget |
| 12. Continue partnership with Imagined Futures, Human Services District Leadership Group for the South West Metropolitan Region   | Ongoing                                      | Community Development                       | Med | Quarterly meetings | Operational budget |



**NOTE: Actions listed here will be assessed against other strategic priorities of the City through the corporate budgeting process. Inclusion of an action on this list does not commit the City to delivering it: however, it identifies it as desirable and allows it to be scoped and fed into the corporate prioritization process.**

| <b>Responsibility and review information</b> |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Responsible officer:</b>                  | Manager Community Development |
| <b>Document adoption/approval details</b>    | OCM 25 November 2021          |
| <b>Document amendment details</b>            | Nil                           |