

**Local Government Homelessness Knowledge Hub Case Study**



*City of*  
**Joondalup**

Submitted by **City of Joondalup**  
Case Study **Regional Homelessness Plan**

## Background

The Regional Homelessness Plan (Plan) is a collaboration between the City of Joondalup and the City of Wanneroo.

The idea for the Plan stemmed from the Joondalup Wanneroo Ending Homelessness Group (JWEHG) a group of members initiated by the state government in 2011. JWEHG has a shared vision to end homelessness and is a key driver in the homelessness space delivering on the Plans' actions.

JWEHG share information, improve referrals, and work collaboratively to end homelessness in the northern region. JWEHG led by the Red Cross, is comprised of representatives from government, community groups, a peak body, faith-based organisations, service providers and a person with lived experience and is open to all community stakeholders with an interest in preventing and ending homelessness.

In 2016 the need for a plan to address a regional approach to prevent and address homelessness was identified through:

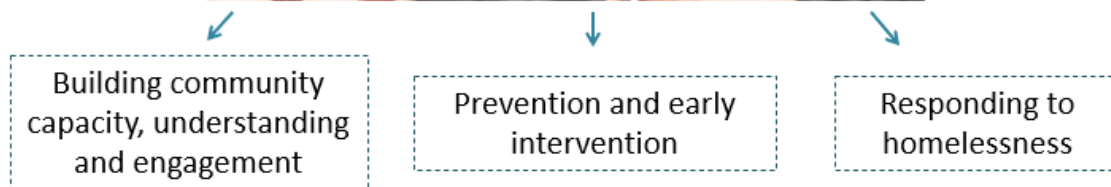
- Statistics and qualitative data from Local Governments reflecting an increased amount of people experiencing homelessness on an annual basis dating back to 2012.
- An increase of residents accessing hardship and homelessness services with many at capacity on an ongoing basis.
- A Shelter WA report highlighting homelessness issues, service gaps and areas for protocol improvements.

The Plan's vision and purpose:

*'The Cities of Joondalup and Wanneroo are committed to ensuring that people at risk of or experiencing homelessness have the optimum opportunity to improve their circumstances*

*'The purpose of the plan is to articulate publicly the collaborative commitment of preventing and responding to homelessness in the region.'*

# Three Key Pillars of the Regional Homelessness Plan



The Regional Homelessness Plan 2018/19-2021/22 has resulted in a number of positive outcomes to support and improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness. Examples include:

## **Pillar 1: Building Capacity, Understanding and Engagement**

*Goal – Stakeholders communicate and collaborate effectively with clear purpose to end homelessness.*

- Training was delivered for key employees on important topics such as the role of Local Government in responding to homelessness and challenging existing beliefs and stereotypes to broaden understanding and foster empathy. This supports the Cities in delivering a compassionate, person-centric response to homelessness.
- Capacity building and collaboration with JWEHG resulted in multiple targeted initiatives such as the implementation of a Food Relief Collaboration Group, which aims to maximise food relief services for community, and reduce duplication across the region.
- Partnerships were formed with agencies that deliver support to people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness to facilitate collaboration and support people transition out of homelessness.
- Assistance provided to community groups to support development and submission of successful funding applications to facilitate local community initiatives that benefit the wider community, including vulnerable community members.
- National Volunteer Week 2019 campaign featured a series of videos developed to profile local volunteer services delivering support to people at risk of, and experiencing homelessness. The aim of this was to acknowledge the importance of volunteers and highlight the impact they can have.

- The Cities worked with Community Field Officers from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2021 to aid accurate data collection for the census to better inform homelessness statistics in the north metropolitan region.
- Research and engagement with businesses located in areas where people sleeping rough frequent to broaden understanding of homelessness and facilitate a more effective and compassionate response.
- Delivery of the Regional Homelessness Networking Forum in August 2021, highlighted key state priorities and funding opportunities in the homelessness space. The forum was attended by approximately 85 people from across the homelessness sector including CEOs and senior executives.

### **Pillar 2: Prevention and Early Intervention**

*Goal – People have a strong sense of wellbeing and are capable of recognising triggers that lead to homelessness enabling them to take action early.*

- Development and distribution of the Joondalup and Wanneroo Hardship and Homelessness Directory which incorporates local and metro key service providers so information on homelessness support services is easily accessible.
- Facilitation of partnerships with a number of agencies that align with the prevention of homelessness such as financial counselling and food relief groups to ensure the community have access to key support services.
- Advocacy for the continuation or implementation of key homelessness support services that support vulnerable community members and enable them to improve their circumstances.
- Development and implementation of the Community Response and Recovery Fund in July 2021 which supported community response and recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Delivery of annual awareness campaign throughout Homelessness Week and Anti-Poverty Week to increase community understanding on the issues that surround poverty and raise awareness on available support services.
- Implementation of a variety of supports initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic such as “Emerge Stronger” and provision of community care packs to minimise social isolation and facilitate community connection.

### **Pillar 3: Responding to Homelessness**

*Goal - People sleeping rough have their basic needs met and ultimately are transitioned into appropriate support services.'*

- Development of a Homelessness Management Procedure guiding City employees on demonstrating a compassionate approach to people experiencing homelessness. The procedure is delivered in collaboration with service providers and considers both public and private property.
- Coordinating services to respond and support people experiencing homelessness on public property to ensure access to essential goods such as food and to facilitate opportunities to transition out of homelessness.
- Program of regular engagement with community groups and organisations and individuals has enabled better understanding of community need, the development of targeted responses, connections, and collaborations, and contributed to the Local Impact Assessment and Recovery Response report, which was presented to the State Government

- The Cities worked together to identify and liaise with agencies to encourage them to apply for state funding to provide homelessness outreach services in the northern suburbs.

## Case Evaluation

Review of the purpose, direction, achievements, and areas for development has included:

- What's worked well and what could be improved.
- The role of the Joondalup Wanneroo Ending Homelessness Group (JWEHG).
- Environmental scanning and forecasting emerging challenges for the region.
- Alignment to Commonwealth and State strategies and priority areas.
- Reviewing strategic priorities – what should be included in the future.

## Key Learnings (City of Joondalup)

- The power of partnership; fostering strong linkages with staff and community leaders has been invaluable, to not reinvent the wheel, to exchange ideas, resources and collaborate as well as a sign of solidarity to the community and broader sector.
- Raising awareness; lifting the profile of the issue of homelessness and the ways local government and the community can respond and work together to end homelessness is invaluable. This has helped in terms of leveraging networks of support, both internally and externally.
- Addressing 'wicked problems' and contentious issues; it can be resource intensive or challenging to get buy in or make progress on responses that effectively address issues that are multifaceted, require systems change, are sensitive etc. When those setbacks come, it is important to remember the vision, take stock, consult, and refocus.
- Information and advocacy; regional collaboration around data gathering at a local area has been an ongoing and a challenging issue. It's an area of continual focus and a priority as it is integral to the identification of understanding trends, service gaps and advocacy. Advocacy is largely a new area for community development at the City of Joondalup and could be instrumental in engaging state and federal governments in identifying needs at a regional level in terms of service provision and social housing. It can take time to initiate change.
- Understanding the role of different tiers of government and the community sector; it can be frustrating when there are serious gaps in resourcing, service provision etc. Ensuring a focus on what local government can do in terms of facilitator, information provision, profile raising etc is vital.