

# The Salvation Army National Homelessness Stream



MODEL OF CARE 2023-2026

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Research and other contributions have been collated through The Salvation Army Australia's National Homelessness Specialist team.

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# The Salvation Army Australia

## Our Vision

Whenever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love, and fight, alongside others, to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

## Our Mission

The Salvation Army Australia is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus. We share the love of Jesus by:

- **Caring for People**
- **Creating faith pathways**
- **Building healthy communities**
- **Working for Justice**

## Our Values

Recognising that God is already at work in the world, we value:

- **Integrity**
- **Compassion**
- **Respect**
- **Diversity**
- **Collaboration**

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Salvation Army acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders and acknowledge their continuing relationship to this land and the ongoing living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

We also acknowledge future aspirations of all First Nations peoples. Through respectful relationships we will work for the mutual flourishing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

We commit ourselves in prayer and practice to this land of Australia and its people, seeking reconciliation, unity, and equity.

## Our commitment to reconciliation

The Salvation Army recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Australia. Our vision for reconciliation is to be a faith movement committed to equity, freedom, and the righting of injustice.

We respect, value and acknowledged the traditions, spiritualities and languages of the oldest living cultural history in the world. We are intention about engaging in unified and positive relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

## Our commitment to inclusion

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive.



Artwork created in collaboration with The Salvation Army's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministries team





## Foreword and Introduction

From the amalgamation of the Australian Eastern and Southern Territories, and the establishment of The Salvation Army's Australia Territory in 2018 and following the restructuring of the Social Mission Department into four distinct national streams – Homelessness, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Youth, and Family and Domestic Violence – each stream has been tasked with producing a model of care.

It is anticipated that the Social Mission suite of models of care will not only underpin practice and service development but, through wide availability of each model of care to each stream workforce, contribute to a sound understanding of related areas of work across The Salvation Army. In leading the development of this model of care, the Homelessness Stream national team has adopted a consultative approach within the Homelessness and other Social Mission streams to produce a document that is recognisably Social Mission but distinct to the Homelessness Stream.

The Homelessness Stream Model of Care brings together, in a single foundational document, the evidence, research, practice wisdom, learnings, and experience required to provide a consistent and informed approach to homelessness service provision across the range of programs and services that make up the Homelessness Stream. Its development is part of The Salvation Army's commitment to ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience, and contemporary evidence-based research and literature, guide and inform our response to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. A cycle of review and evaluation of the model of care provides currency in practice and research understanding, plus keeps Homelessness Stream abreast of developments in homelessness and housing in Australia.



Together with other supporting documents, the model of care will enable the Homelessness Stream workforce to provide consistent, quality, innovative services that place individuals and their flourishing at the centre of everything we do.

The model of care will sit within a Homelessness Toolkit, which will be available to our workforce and provide a resource to learn and grow from, be supported by, and contribute to.

**Dr. Jed Donoghue**

General Manager, Homelessness Stream  
The Salvation Army Australia



# Part 1: Our Identity

## Our history in Australia

William Booth and Catherine Booth preached the Gospel to the poor and underprivileged in the London of the 1860s, developing from its Methodist beginnings a ministry that focused on practical care and assistance and rapidly grew internationally, adopting a simple uniform and the name The Salvation Army.

The Australian arm of The Salvation Army began in Adelaide in 1880, spreading to Victoria and New South Wales within two years, then to Queensland and across Australia.

An early feature of the Australian Salvation Army, and an enduring legacy, has been a commitment to social work and innovative practices to reach out to and assist marginalised people, including world's-first prisoner assistance, the "Prison Gate Brigade", and a Rescued Sisters Home dedicated to improving the circumstances of women in desperate straits<sup>1</sup>. Since these early days, The Salvation Army, internationally and in Australia, has become recognised for its commitment and service to marginalised peoples and has, from the early days, attracted government recognition and support to continue its work.

*From assisting discharged prisoners at the prison gates back in 1883 through to the network of life-changing social services we run today—our Australian story is one of empowering people, strengthening communities and bringing hope to those that find themselves in tough times<sup>2</sup>.*

## Our work today

The Salvation Army Australia's Vision, Mission and Values give the organisation a wide remit to engage across multiple life domains within the Australian community as a whole; from faith communities and community corps to specialised workforces across family and domestic violence, youth work, alcohol and other drugs, employment, aged care, housing, and homelessness. The organisation is also working closely with the Australian Defence Force and veteran ex-serving communities. The scale and quality of operations contribute to wide community recognition of The Salvation Army brand.

1. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-story/our-history>

2. <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-story/our-history/history-of-social-work/>

The Salvation Army has a highly recognisable social profile and internationally known red shield logo. The brand is strongly associated with the organisation's mission and values in the minds of Australians. The brand:

- Acts as a 'draw' for people in need who know what the organisation represents. Self-referral or referral through friends and community is common because of the consistent work that has built the brand over decades
- Represents an experienced, trusted, and respected advocate for disenfranchised and marginalised people
- Is recognised as a reliable, well-connected partner for similarly missioned organisations

## A shared work approach

The Salvation Army provides varied services and support across every state and territory in Australia. We are active in communities through churches and corps centres, hubs, and service centres, co-located with other services and agencies, in prisons, hospitals, and the armed forces. We undertake outreach to crisis centres, the streets, parks, urban, regional, rural, and remote communities.

In the 2021-2022 financial year, The Salvation Army Australia services, and programs:

- Delivered 1,864,000 sessions of care across the country
- Provided 1,026,000 bed nights to people experiencing homelessness
- Supported 9,900 women and children escaping family violence
- Served 1,520,000 meals to people in homelessness services, and offered \$32,607,000 in financial assistance<sup>3</sup>

Given the scale of operations and the Vision, Mission, and Values of The Salvation Army Australia, we are supporting large numbers of vulnerable people at any given time, many of whom experience multiple layers of disadvantage.

3. The Salvation Army Annual Report 2021-2022

## Local Mission Delivery

The Salvation Army, in restructuring to the single Australia Territory, has adopted a Local Mission Delivery framework (LMD), which brings together mission expressions across any given geographical area through a network of Area Leadership Teams (ALT). This enables a focus to provide holistic mission across mission expressions; to identify and realise opportunities, common interests, and issues, and collaborate on local and place-based projects that enhance the lives of the people and communities we serve.

*LMD provides an integrated, nationally consistent operating model that recognises the importance of every mission expression. The mission and the needs of society are too complex for any one expression<sup>4</sup>*

Adopting an intersectional perspective and working through the LMD structure enables The Salvation Army to understand and respond to a person holistically by coordinating care across Salvation Army mission expressions, bringing together skills, training, experience, and perspectives in a person-centred manner. Through LMD, The Salvation Army Australia better achieves our common Vision, Mission, and Values.

## The Salvation Army

### Social Mission Department

The Salvation Army's Social Mission teams provide quality, non-discriminatory social services through four primary areas of need:

- Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Homelessness
- Family Violence
- Youth

## Alcohol and Other Drugs Stream

As one of Australia's largest providers of alcohol and other drug treatment services, each of our services across Australia offers a unique program for people experiencing problematic drug and alcohol issues. Our alcohol and other drug services are dedicated to creating platforms and pathways for people to build their lives in ways that are meaningful and purposeful. Harm reduction is the overarching framework of our services. Our primary purpose is to prevent and reduce harm for both individuals and the wider community and to support the reduction and cessation of use.

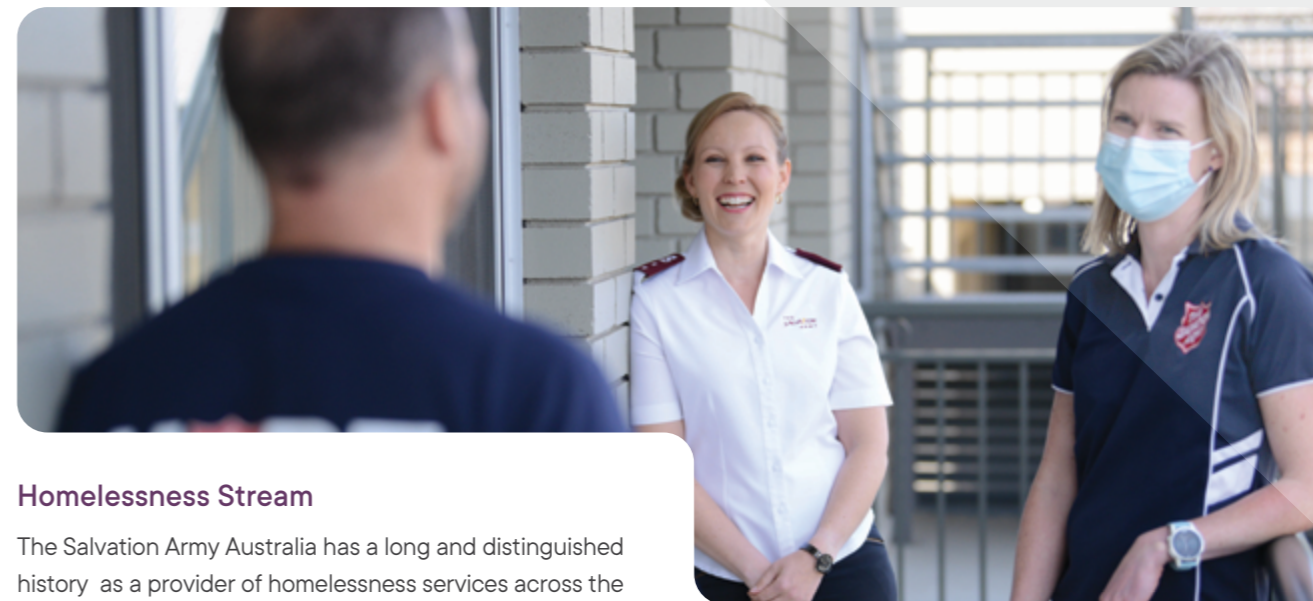
## Family and Domestic Violence Stream

The Salvation Army Family and Domestic Violence Stream offers specialist programs to families and individuals who are experiencing and recovering from family violence, modern slavery and forced marriage. We hold to account those who choose to use violence or abuse human rights through support and integrated interventions. Our services focus on prevention, restoration and healing using evidence-based theories and frameworks. We work towards a community which is safe and free from violence and challenges systemic gendered attitudes. We offer refuge, children's and parenting services, counselling, support, men's programs, accommodation and advice to families and individuals who are experiencing, or who have experienced, family violence.

## Youth Stream

The Salvation Army Youth Services offer an integrated suite of targeted programs engaging with young people across Australia on their journey to independence. Creating intentional avenues for young people to explore opportunities, build support networks, and access, participate and contribute to their communities, our services include housing and homelessness, driver training, education, employment and training, social and community activities, specialist therapeutic responses and youth justice programs.

4. The Salvation Army 2019 Local Mission Delivery Handbook



## Homelessness Stream

The Salvation Army Australia has a long and distinguished history as a provider of homelessness services across the country, with services provided to adults, and families with accompanying children. Services include accommodation, case management, assertive outreach support, financial assistance, together with connection and referral to other specialist services. Our philosophy is that every person is afforded dignity, respect, and quality of service and that no one should be without a safe, affordable, and secure home. The Homelessness Stream is guided by national, state and territory Agendas, linked to Reference and Working Groups to advance strategic priorities throughout the life of the Agenda. Development of a Homelessness Model of Care was identified as a Homelessness Stream priority through the consultative process that gave rise to the initial National Homelessness Stream Three Year Agenda, 2020-2023.

## Homelessness and The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is the largest single provider of homelessness services in Australia. In 2021-2022, we provided 317,800 sessions of care to people who were at risk of or experienced homelessness.<sup>5</sup> The size, scope and impact of The Salvation Army's homelessness services underscore the importance of this model of care as a vehicle to continue to strengthen and develop our contribution to ending homelessness in Australia.

Our strong relationship with government and engagement with faith, business, not-for-profit and academic forums strengthens our capacity for advocacy. Our data collection through SAMIS (The Salvation Army Australia's Service and Mission Information System) provides rich opportunities for research and program development, as well as highlighting the impact of a dedicated workforce and outcomes for the people we serve. It also facilitates advocacy, such as contributions to inquiries, commissions and policy or legislative reviews.

*The Salvation Army is the largest provider of homelessness services across the country, with services provided to adults, and families with accompanying children.*

In 2019 and early 2020, for example, the Homelessness Stream in Victoria provided multiple metropolitan and regional submissions to the Parliament of Victoria Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee as part of an inquiry into homelessness. As the largest single homelessness support provider in the state, the Homelessness Stream in Victoria took a lead role in providing a comprehensive report to the inquiry.<sup>6</sup> In developing this report, The Salvation Army's Policy, Research and Social Justice team worked with homelessness services to:

- Consult with over 70 staff
- Gain insights from over 40 people with lived experience of the service system
- Liaise with several significant stakeholder agencies, including the Council to Homeless Persons, the Victorian homelessness peak body

The Salvation Army's submission added considerable integrity and moral force to the inquiry. Across 2020 and 2021, updates on the impacts of COVID-19 were added.

5. The Salvation Army Annual Report 2021-22  
6. [https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a9815/contentassets/d031af5a60164fe092f4913d6fe51140/submission-documents/s207—the-salvation-army\\_redacted.pdf](https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a9815/contentassets/d031af5a60164fe092f4913d6fe51140/submission-documents/s207—the-salvation-army_redacted.pdf)



## Part 2: Homelessness in Australia

### The 'meaning' of housing

Definitions of homelessness, and housing policy more generally, tend to downplay the 'meaning' of housing in people's lives. Public debates, for example, focus on objective features of the housing, such as numbers of dwellings and rental costs. While we acknowledge the fundamental importance of these structural drivers of homelessness, it is worth remembering that housing-related issues are about much more than these quantifying measures. Safe, secure, and affordable housing is essential for health and wellbeing, community connection and a sense of belonging and identity. We know that housing provides the platform from which people can create and live 'a good life', whatever that may mean for them. Therefore, while we present information on homelessness in Australia, we recognise that beneath the figures and descriptions are people whose lives can be devastated by this experience. Our model of care speaks directly to what we intend to do to respond to the realities of homelessness for the people we work with.

### Defining homelessness

The work of Chamberlain and Mackenzie has had an enduring impact on how homelessness in Australia is defined and understood. The cultural definition of homelessness, as it is known, suggests "the minimum accommodation that people have the right to expect in order to live according to the conventions of contemporary life" is "equivalent to a small, rented flat with a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom".<sup>7</sup> Homelessness, they argue, should be understood relative to this minimum standard of housing. They identified three forms of homelessness, which underpin homelessness research, policy, practice, and service delivery to this day: primary, secondary, and tertiary homelessness.

#### Primary Homelessness / Rough Sleeping

People without conventional accommodation such as living on the streets, in deserted buildings, railway carriages, under bridges, in parks

#### Secondary Homelessness

People moving between various forms of temporary shelter including staying with friends and family (couch surfing), emergency accommodation, crisis accommodation, hostels, and boarding houses.

#### Tertiary Homelessness

People living permanently in single rooms in private boarding houses – without own bathroom or kitchen and security of tenure, inadequately housed, or subject to severe overcrowding.

Recognising that culture evolves across time, location and peoples, culturally framed definitions of homelessness require us to pay attention to social and historical contexts, in which some peoples may adopt a state of defined homelessness that would not be recognised as such by either themselves or others. Two examples involving Australia's First Nations peoples are:

- **The ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which has essentially resulted in a 'de-homing' of an entire people through constraint or denial of access to Country and culture,<sup>8</sup> and**
- **Variations to 'usual' living arrangements while engaged in cultural, community, or Country responsibilities and obligations are commonly not perceived by First Nations peoples as constituting periods of homelessness**

7. Chamberlain, C & Mackenzie, D 1992  
8. Chamberlain et al 2014

It is for these reasons that the Homelessness Stream Model of Care includes as a specific Foundation; that services be Accessible and tailored, such that they take account of diverse community needs and experiences of homelessness.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recognises the need to develop its own statistical definition of homelessness for the purposes of data collection and analysis.<sup>9</sup> Beginning in 2009 they worked in partnership with academics, policy makers and service delivery experts to develop what is known as the statistical definition of homelessness. This definition considers a person homeless if they:

- **Are in a dwelling that is inadequate, or**
- **Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or**
- **Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations,<sup>10</sup> and**
- **Do not have a suitable accommodation alternative<sup>11</sup>**

This last point is intended to exclude those who may choose to live in arrangements that fall outside of mainstream cultural norms.

*Acknowledging that homelessness is complex, contextual, and is contested conceptually, the Homelessness Stream Model of Care uses a working definition of homelessness according to both the statistical and cultural definitions outlined above. Consequently, throughout this model of care the terms 'rough sleeping', 'primary', 'secondary', and 'tertiary' homelessness are used to describe various experiences and degrees of homelessness. In using this language, the Homelessness Stream does not solely define people or groups of people by their experiences.*

## Who is experiencing homelessness?

Over the past five years, the characteristics of people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness has remained relatively stable.

Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) adult clients are most likely to be:

- **Female (60 percent)**
- **A single parent with one or more children (33 percent) or living alone (32 percent)**
- **Aged between 25-44 (51 percent)**
- **Experiencing one or more of the following:**
  - Family violence (39 percent)
  - Mental health issues (38 percent)
  - Problematic drug or alcohol use (12 percent)

They are also likely to have sought homelessness support in the past ten years, pointing to chronic disadvantage for most (61 percent) and are ten times more likely to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander than the general population (28 percent).<sup>12</sup>

### Stigma, discrimination, and marginalisation

SHS statistics suggest a relationship between individual characteristics or circumstances, such as gender and single parenthood, and an increased risk of homelessness. Several researchers have explored this relationship: is homelessness caused by mental ill-health or is mental ill-health a consequence of homelessness, or both? We recognise that both can be true but that the social, political, and cultural context of individual lives has an enormous impact on whether a specific characteristic results in disadvantage.

Providers of social support have a responsibility to recognise both their role in addressing disadvantage, and their capacity to positively impact systems that may add or contribute to the marginalisation of people. At The Salvation Army our response includes prioritising the voices of people with lived experience in shaping how we deliver services and addressing biases that will inevitably influence our work.



### Power and privilege

One way of thinking about the over-representation of certain people in homelessness statistics is to consider the dynamics of power and privilege. Power is often held by groups whose values and beliefs reflect dominant cultural norms, which can result in social and cultural minorities being subjected to discrimination, prejudice, or oppression. For example, the Australian Human Rights Commission highlights the prevalence of discrimination based on age, gender, race, ability, and Indigeneity. Privilege, on the other hand, confers unearned benefits to people based

on individual characteristics, such as being white, male, or heterosexual. Power and privilege are expressed in many ways, including attitudes about who is deserving and undeserving in society. Political policy and investment tend to reflect these attitudes in overt and covert ways. An example is the exclusion of people from pandemic-related supports because of their migratory or visa status. The dynamics of power and privilege are complex.

9. For more on the rationale for this development, see ABS Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0).

10. This latter point is the reason that 'overcrowding' is now included in ABS statistics on homelessness in Australia, and why its inclusion resulted in a 'spike' in the number of people said to be experiencing homelessness. See

Memmot P & Nash, D 2016 Indigenous homelessness: Australian Context, in E Peters & J Christensen (eds) Indigenous Homelessness, pp. 213-220

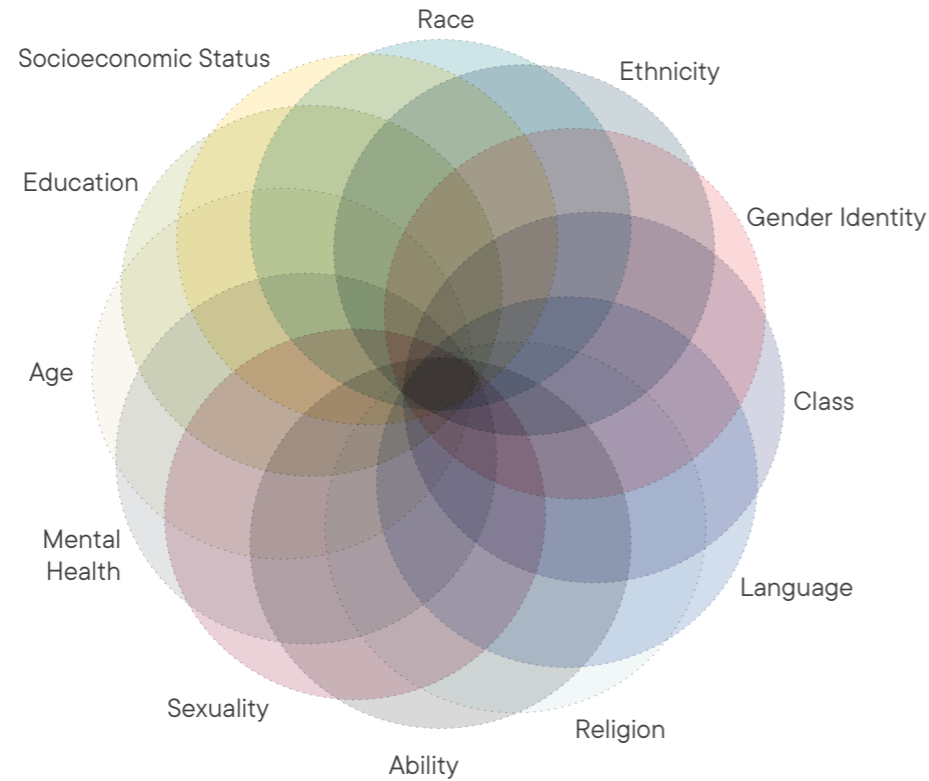
11. Ibid

12. Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW) 2022

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw



## Intersectionality

One concept that can help us understand these dynamics is intersectionality. Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These include racism, ableism, and sexism; all, or any of which can interact to create inequality and result in exclusion.

Dominant social identities hold power, often politically and through institutions of state. Biases, conscious or unconscious, reflect and amplify the dominant identity, privileging it at the expense of others, who find themselves correspondingly disadvantaged. When multiple parts of a person's identity are not privileged, disadvantage can be compounded.

13. ABS 2018 Census of Population and Housing: estimating homelessness

14. Image sourced from Homelessness NSW 2021, <https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Homelessness-in-Australia.pdf>

15. AIHW 2022, Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2020-21

## Individual characteristics

At the same time, it is important to recognise the relevance of individual characteristics, particularly individual biography. This might include experiences such as:

- **Intergenerational and/or complex trauma**
- **Child abuse and disrupted attachment relationships**
- **Time spent in institutional settings such as out-of-home care, prison, or hospital**
- **War, violence, and persecution**
- **Grief and loss**
- **Poverty**

These experiences can place individuals more at risk of homelessness and/or compound the trauma of homelessness and require skilled, ongoing, and wraparound support.

## Quantifying homelessness

### ABS Census homelessness data

Whole-of-population census data indicates that 116,427 people were homeless on census night in 2016, though the ABS acknowledge that limitations in data collection methodology means this number is likely to be higher.<sup>13</sup>

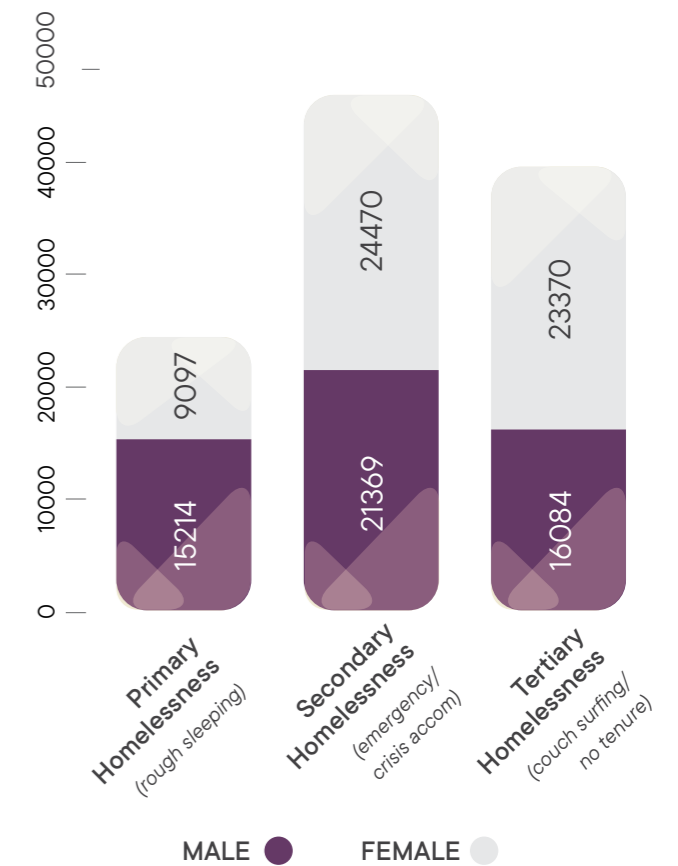
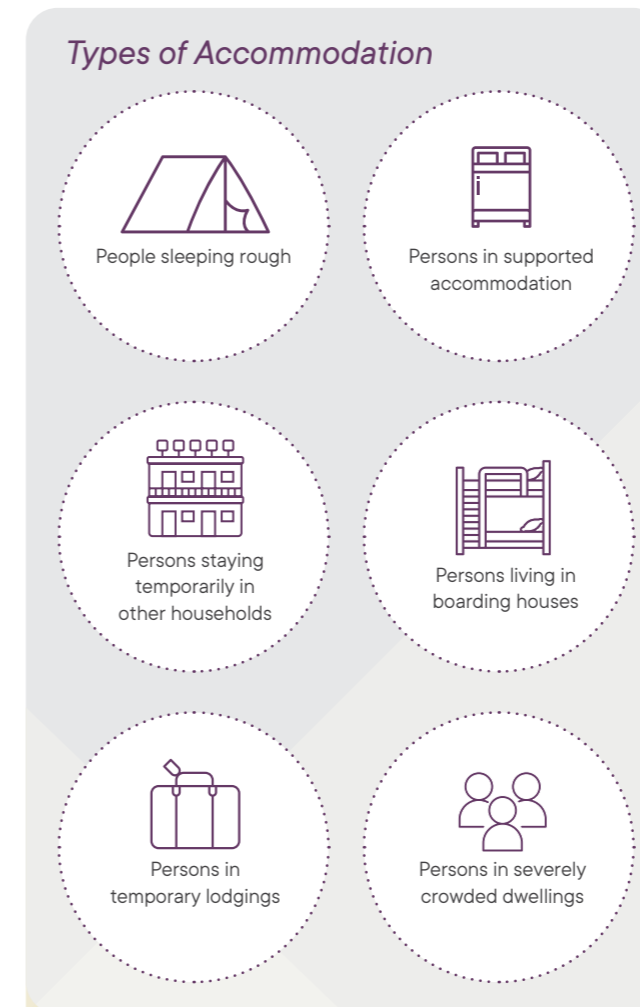
Of those, seven per cent were rough sleeping. The visibility of rough sleepers can mean that people associate homelessness with this population. However, most people experiencing homelessness are in some form of temporary accommodation such as:

- **Staying opportunistically with family, friends, or acquaintances or in supported accommodation (34 percent)**
- **In boarding houses (15 percent), or**
- **Living in severely overcrowded dwellings (44 percent)<sup>14</sup>**

### SHS homelessness data

Specialist homelessness agencies provide a wide range of services to assist those who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness, ranging from general support and assistance to immediate crisis accommodation.

SHS also collect data on who is homeless, or 'at risk' of homelessness. In 2020-2021, they reported that 278,300 people received homelessness support. Of these, 43 percent were homeless at the start of the support period, and 57 percent were considered 'at risk'. Notably, SHS data suggests a much higher rate of rough sleeping, which accounted for 22 percent of people who were homeless at presentation.<sup>15</sup>





## Forms of homelessness

### Primary homelessness (rough sleeping)

People experiencing primary homelessness are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. In 2020–2021, rough sleeping accounted for around 22 percent of people (24,311 people) who sought support from SHS agencies. Of those:

- 45 percent are sleeping in the open
- 21 percent sleep in a car
- 14 percent are in improvised dwellings
- 20 percent are in other forms of shelter, such as a boat or caravan

The profile is predominantly male, over 35, unemployed, living alone, and experiencing mental health and/or drug or alcohol issues.<sup>17</sup>

Analysis of SHS data identifies three patterns of service use among rough sleepers, which correlate to varying degrees of support need:

- **Once-off/short-term (44 percent) who were the least likely to report multiple support needs**
- **Episodic (42 percent) who cycle in and out of homelessness supports over time. More than half of this group reported a mental health issue, with 2 in 5 reporting additional vulnerabilities**
- **Chronic (13 percent) who are long-term rough sleeping and consistently engaged in the homelessness service system. They are highly likely to have a mental health issue with co-occurring problematic drug or alcohol use<sup>18</sup>**

Overall, rough sleepers are much more likely to be exposed to violence, suffer the impacts of extreme weather, and have a higher risk of premature death. Women who are rough sleeping are five times more likely than men to seek support for family violence or sexual abuse. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who represent 3.3 percent of the total Australian population, comprise 22.3 percent of people seeking assistance from SHS agencies due to sleeping rough.

21. Johnson, McCallum & Watson 2019  
22. AIHW 2022: see Table CLIENT.4  
23. Batterham et al. 2021

### Comparing ABS Census and SHS data on homelessness

So how to account for the differences in rough sleeping percentages between ABS Census data and SHS data? Put most simply, these are data collections with different collection purposes and methodologies.

#### Census data

Census data is a whole-of-population, five-yearly snapshot. Estimates of homelessness are based on responses to questions on 'usual residence', 'dwelling type', and 'number of bedrooms'.<sup>16</sup> There is no direct question that would identify homelessness in the Census, so further analysis, and other points of information lead to a 'likely' inference of homelessness. ABS acknowledges the potential for inaccuracy in their Census data

#### SHS data

SHS data is directly targeted and is only collected from people who are either seeking assistance because they are experiencing homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. The data collection is ongoing and cumulative, rather than a snapshot, so better able to identify trends over time and forecast demand into the future. SHS data is more likely to be accurate in establishing homelessness and 'at risk' status and differentiating between forms of homelessness

16. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, Information Paper: A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (cat. no. 4922.0)

17. AIHW 2018

18. Ibid

19. AIHW 2022: See figure CLIENTS.4 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/clients-services-and-outcomes>

20. Ibid: See figure CLIENTS.6



### Secondary and tertiary homelessness

In 2020–2021, 85,000 people sought assistance from SHS agencies due to secondary or tertiary homelessness. Of these:

- 54 percent were staying in short-term/temporary accommodation (secondary homelessness)
- 46 percent were couch surfing or staying with friends/family (tertiary homelessness)<sup>19</sup>

This group are most likely to be experiencing housing crises related to:

- A lack or end of tenure
- Living in inadequate dwellings
- Escaping family violence<sup>20</sup>

Secondary and tertiary homelessness involves frequent changes in sleeping arrangements and high levels of transience, which may be once-off or short-term, episodic, or chronic in nature. One indicator of the chronic nature of secondary and tertiary homelessness is evident in SHS statistics. In 2020–2021, 78,000 people who were homeless at the start of their support period exited SHS agencies, of these, 58 percent remained homeless. The remainder were either in secure housing (31 percent), unknown (nine percent) or in an institutional setting such as hospital or prison.

Evidence suggests that the longer people stay in transient accommodation, the more difficult it becomes to sustain tenancies if, and when, secure housing becomes available.<sup>21</sup> Transient housing can also risk exposure to unsafe housing and environments, lack of stability and connection, and dislocation from community, support networks, education, and employment. Children and young people are particularly at risk of developmental outcomes because of impacts such as interrupted schooling, trauma, and social isolation.

### At risk of homelessness

In 2020–2021, a further 127,177 people sought support from SHS agencies due to their housing being at risk. They can broadly be divided into two cohorts: the first includes people who are precariously housed; the second includes those who are living in an institution such as prison, hospital, or out-of-home care.

#### Precariously housed

Most of these people (68 percent) were living in private rental during the report period.<sup>22</sup> Compared to the national population, they are more likely to be female, Indigenous, living alone or a sole parent, be on income support and/or unemployed. By far the main reason people at risk of homelessness sought support related to experiencing family and domestic violence, followed by housing crisis and financial difficulties. They are also likely to experience at least one of the following risk factors:

- Vulnerability to discrimination in the housing or job markets
- Minimal social resources or supports
- Have a significant health, mental health or alcohol or drug use issue and/or have a disability<sup>23</sup>

#### People living in an institutional setting

A minority (nearly 6000 people) are considered at risk and were in institutional settings at the time they sought support, such as prison, hospital, or out-of-home care.

The issues facing people at risk of homelessness because of precarious housing can be vastly different from those exiting an institution. Their inclusion under the heading of 'at-risk' should not minimise the diversity within this population and consequently, the need for tailored and targeted service system responses.

## Emerging trends

While data outlines who is currently experiencing homelessness, it is useful to consider how this population is changing over time.



### Older people

Though a relatively small proportion experiencing homelessness, people over the age of 65 are the fastest growing group, with a 33 percent increase reported in the four years leading up to 2018–2019.<sup>24</sup> This is consistent with recent ABS Census data, which found a 31 percent increase in homelessness among women over 55 years. If this rate of growth continues, we can expect the numbers of older people experiencing homelessness to more than double in the next decade.<sup>25</sup>



### People experiencing mental health issues

At the same time, SHS agencies have experienced a 25 to 30 percent rise in people citing mental health issues as a key contributory factor to their homelessness.



### Evolving needs

The pandemic highlighted the dire circumstances for non-citizens, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, who fall outside governmental support systems. These trends point to deepening, as well as new forms of disadvantage in Australia, which need to be understood in the terms of structural, systemic, and social dynamics.



### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The proportion of Indigenous clients, who are already over-represented in the homeless population, continues to grow at twice the rate of non-Indigenous clients.<sup>26</sup>

## The drivers of homelessness

The Salvation Army acknowledges that homelessness is driven by structural factors. These include social, political, and economic circumstances that interact with or foster individual, interpersonal, and household level characteristics and experiences. This section considers some of the significant issues, however, is by no means complete.

### Structural homelessness

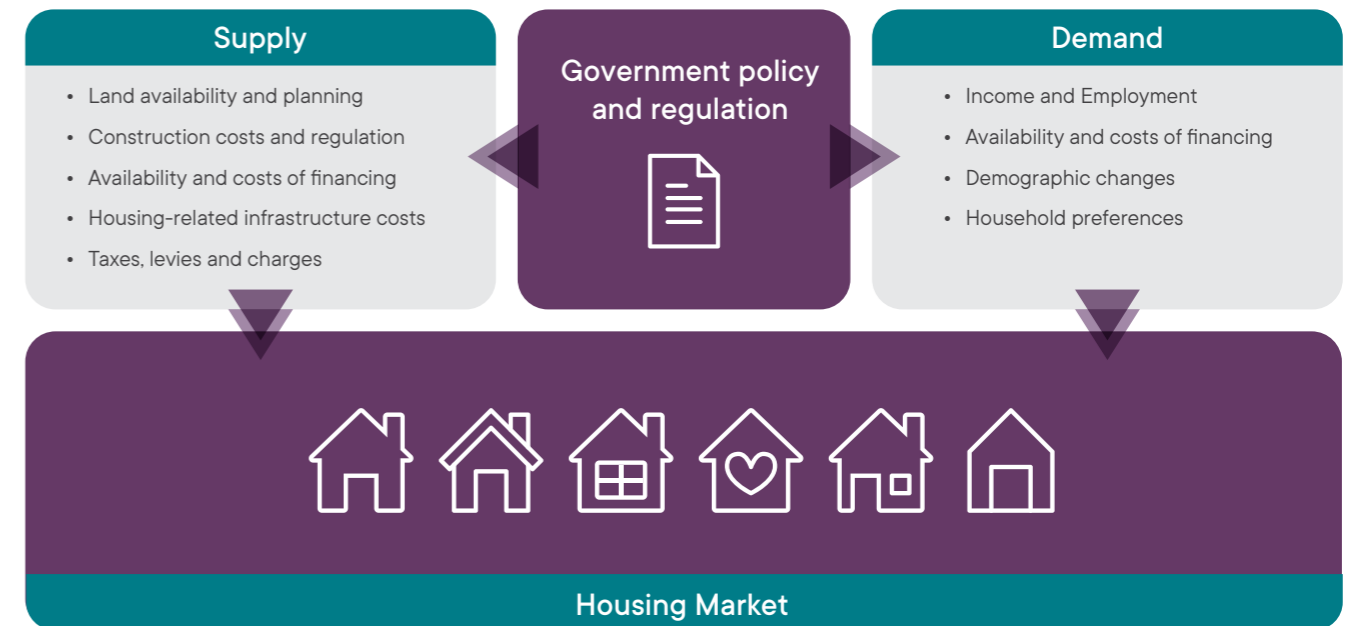
Housing is a fundamental part of the economy, but more importantly is essential for health and wellbeing. Where a dominant narrative about housing favours private ownership and investment over ‘social good’, government interventions and investment are predominantly made on the ‘demand’ side of the market. These interventions, such as homeowner grants and rental assistance, are intended to ease the burden and facilitate access to housing however, they are regularly absorbed by the market and, perversely, inflate their cost.

### Housing and homelessness policy

Federal, state/territory and local government policies form the structural background to homelessness in Australia. They create conditions where it is more likely that a rising number of people will fall into homelessness, as has been happening over the last decade and more and find it harder to accumulate the resources and assistance required to escape it.<sup>27</sup>

Current housing policy mechanisms include<sup>28</sup>:

Australian Government	State and Territory Governments	Local Governments
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	Homelessness services	Planning (administration)
Access to discounted finance	Social Housing	
Affordable housing subsidies	Private rental assistance	
Home buyer assistance	Home buyer assistance	
Homelessness services	Planning schemes (design)	



The supply of housing is a “key determinant of rents and house prices”.<sup>29</sup> The reality is that Australia has one of the lowest number of dwellings per person in the OECD, despite relatively high rates of housing construction in recent years. For people on low incomes, housing supply is only one part of the equation. Government investment in social and affordable housing is key. Social housing stock, as a percentage of total stock, has fallen over several decades to levels that place Australia lower than many comparable OECD economies.<sup>30</sup>

A recent review of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement suggests that it is not meeting its intended aims of responding to housing affordability and homelessness in Australia, though there is a lack of consensus on how the agreement might be improved.<sup>31</sup>

### Lack of Social Housing

*“The success of homelessness services relies on being able to help people out of homelessness support into affordable and secure long-term housing. But the lack of social housing and [affordable] private rentals... limits [their] ability to support people out of homelessness”<sup>32</sup>*

Decades of underinvestment in social housing has resulted in ongoing housing crisis for people on low-income. As of June 2021, there were:

- **176,000 households on the waiting list for social housing across Australia<sup>33</sup>**
- **850,000 households who were eligible to apply for social housing because of low income but chose not to<sup>34</sup>**

24. Pawson et al. 2020

25. PerCapita 2022

26. Pawson et al. 2020

27. Productivity Commission 2022, In need of repair: The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement: Study Report, p. 71

28. Ibid, p. 81

29. Ibid

30. Ibid

31. Pawson 2022 <https://theconversation.com/the-market-has-failed-to-give-australians-affordable-housing-so-dont-expect-it-to-solve-the-crisis-192177>

32. Productivity Commission 2022, Report on Government Services, p. 104

33. Ibid

34. Productivity Commission 2018

In practice, the main pathway into social housing is out of homelessness, and often in the context of family violence and ill-health. This led some authors to suggest it is less of a 'social' housing system, and more of a residual housing system for only the most disadvantaged members of society<sup>35</sup>, despite evidence showing that access to social housing will reduce risks of homelessness.<sup>36</sup>

Underpinning this lack of investment are changing political and social attitudes toward social housing and its tenants. In the post-World War Two era, social housing played a critical role in rebuilding the economy and housing veterans and their families. As a form of housing, it was viewed favourably by the public. Subsequent underinvestment and increasingly restrictive eligibility criteria changed the demographics of social housing tenants and public attitudes toward social housing over time. It was increasingly considered a "breeding ground [for] crime ... anti-social behaviour ... unemployment and poor educational outcomes".<sup>37</sup>

A lack of investment in social housing has not only resulted in huge waiting lists, but it has also stigmatised it and the people who live there. Several studies show the ambivalence of social housing tenants, who indicate very high levels of satisfaction with social housing, at the same time as hoping for their eventual departure. Investment in social housing means not only additional stock; it means destigmatising social housing and its tenants.

### Housing markets

Housing and labour market forces are strongly related to homelessness entry.<sup>38</sup> In the private housing market, renting in relation to home ownership is trending upwards from 20 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2020. At the

#### Australian rental vacancy rates as of:

	September 2022	September 2021
National	0.9%	1.7%
Combined Capitals	0.9%	2.1%
Combined Regionals	0.7%	0.6%

35. Fitzpatrick & Pawson 2014

36. Johnson et al. 2018

37. Arthurson & Darcy, 2015 38. Johnson et al. 2018

39. ABS 2022 Housing and Occupancy Costs

same time, conditions for renters are dire and getting worse.<sup>39</sup> Rental vacancy rates have an important bearing on the rate of entry into homelessness. The risk of homelessness is most acute when vacancy rates are at or below the one per cent vacancy level.<sup>40</sup> As of September 2022, national vacancy rates "held at the lowest point on record at 0.9%".<sup>41</sup> Most Australian cities are below this one percent tipping point, with Perth, Adelaide, and Hobart at 0.4, 0.3 and 0.5 percent respectively.

The paucity of rentals has led prospective tenants to engage in several tactics to be competitive, such as offering months of rent in advance or paying over the weekly rental asking price. Consequently, there is an "acute, and increasing, national shortage of private rental" options for households in the lowest income quintile<sup>42</sup> thus increasing the probability of households on low incomes being pushed into homelessness.<sup>43</sup> Adding to the challenge is the emergence of short-term rental markets, which have been disrupted by gig-economy entities such as Airbnb, thus shrinking availability of rentals for other purposes.<sup>44</sup>

### Housing affordability

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) "[a]ccess to good quality, affordable housing is fundamental to wellbeing. It can help reduce poverty and enhance equality of opportunity, social inclusion, and mobility".<sup>45</sup> Housing affordability "typically refers to the relationship between expenditure on housing (prices, mortgage payments or rents) and household incomes".<sup>46</sup>

#### Australians are spending more of their income on housing

Access to good quality, affordable housing is fundamental to wellbeing. In 2017-18, 5.5% of households spent at least 50% of their gross income on housing costs, an increase from 4.6% in 1994-95.

40. ACOSS 2018 Inequality in Australia

41. Domain Research 2022, Vacancy Rates: September 2022

42. Hulse et al 2019

43. ABS 2022 Housing and Occupancy Costs; Johnson et al 2018;

Productivity Commission 2022

A lack of affordable housing can:

- Force people on low incomes into housing that may be poorly maintained or lack amenities such as heating, cooling and access to green space
- Increase the likelihood of overcrowding
- Result in people staying in accommodation that may expose them to violence or crime
- Lead to poor construction standards
- Negatively impact child development outcomes
- Result in social disconnection due to frequent moves<sup>47</sup>

### Rental stress

A commonly used measure of unaffordability is 'rental stress', which refers to households that spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing. Recent ABS Census data indicates that 89 percent of low-income renters were in rental stress and nearly 1 in 3 households were paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent.<sup>48</sup> Over the past two decades, housing costs for private renters have doubled to a national average of \$379 per week.<sup>49</sup>

Rental stress alone is a poor indicator of other outcomes such as impacts on overall health, wellbeing, and quality of life.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, it cannot indicate whether rental stress is transitory, reoccurring, or ongoing, all of which may have differential impacts on household wellbeing.



44. Image below taken from ACOSS 2022

45. AIHW 2021, Housing Affordability

46. Ibid47. AIHW 2021, Housing Affordability

48. Ibid49. ABS 2022 Housing and Occupancy Costs \*Adjusted for inflation

50. Productivity Commission 2022, p. 90



### Cost of living

In economic terms, the 'cost of living' considers how the price of fundamental goods and services impact on household budgets. Cost of living indicators include the cost of housing, groceries, gas and electricity, petrol, clothing, and household goods such as appliances and furnishings. Since 2020, Australia has experienced a significant increase in the cost of living for all households, but the impacts have been most keenly felt by people on low incomes, including those on all forms of income support or pension.<sup>51</sup>

In 2022, ACOSS surveyed nearly 450 people living on JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment to gauge the impact of cost of living increases. They found that:

- **62 percent were skipping meals and 71 percent were cutting back on fresh foods**
- **96 percent of renters were in rental stress**
- **70 percent of people struggled to afford petrol, and**
- **70 percent are cutting their use of heating, with 28 percent reporting an existing energy bill debt**<sup>52</sup>

*"[I] can no longer afford to catch public transport so now have a 45 minute walk each way to meet my obligations to Centrelink...I am 68 years old and skipping medication and meals."*<sup>53</sup>

### Labour markets

Local labour market conditions also affect individual risks of homelessness. Demographic studies that concentrate on links between homelessness and unemployment find the link is weaker than one might expect, though low-income and high rental and housing costs do contribute to the likelihood of experiencing homelessness.<sup>54</sup> This reflects the ways poverty and disadvantage can have a geographical dimension. A recent Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) study suggests that "regions with low unemployment tend to have a smaller at-risk population, but they are more likely to experience homelessness because high rents aggravate shortages of affordable private rental housing."<sup>55</sup> Conversely, areas with high prevalence of affordable housing situated in low-income demographic areas may have a higher at-risk population, but fewer people experiencing homelessness.



### Income inequality

Income inequality continues to grow in Australia. Economic policies, such as tax cuts, tend to benefit people on higher incomes. Meanwhile changes to social security has increased inequality for people on income support. The most significant changes are:

- **Diverting sole parents and people with disabilities onto JobSeeker**
- **Increasingly restrictive eligibility criteria**
- **Rates of payment that are out-of-touch with the cost of living**

While strong employment growth reduced the level of income support being accessed overall, the indexation of social security payments has diminished their impact as a tool for responding to inequality and poverty.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, employment growth has been problematic. Underemployment, rather than unemployment, in an increasingly casualised and part-time workforce has had a disproportionate impact on young people, women, and carers.

The highest income earners are statistically more likely to be:

- Of working age
- Childless
- In full time employment
- Located in a major city

People on the lowest incomes are statistically more likely to be:

- A sole parent
- Over 65
- Unemployed
- Born in a non-English speaking country
- Located in regional or rural areas

### Bringing it all together

#### Mapping homelessness

The following graphic summaries issues discussed so far, specifically:

- **That structural and individual factors combine to create homelessness**
- **Homelessness has profoundly negative impacts on people and society, and**
- **Current responses to homelessness reflect existing housing and service system options**

51. ABS 2022, Selected Living Cost Indexes, Australia

52. ACOSS 2022

53. Ibid Quote from a person on JobSeeker in ACOSS report 2022

54 Johnson et al. 2018

55 Hulse et al 2019

56 ACOSS 2018

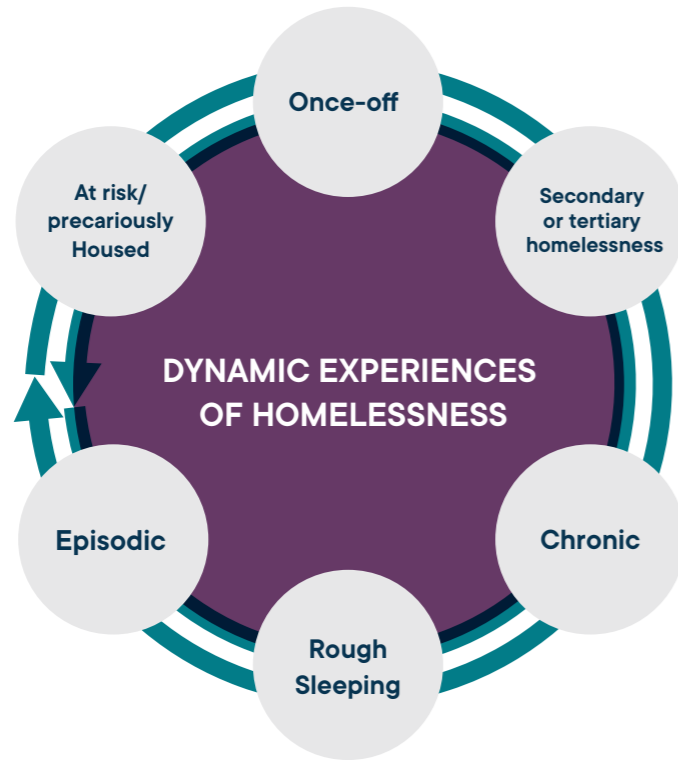
**AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS**

**Structural/Systemic Drivers**

- Housing affordability
- Lack of social housing
- Labour market trends such as increased casualisation and stagnating wage growth
- Shrinking welfare state
- Income inequality
- Housing and homelessness policy mechanisms

**Individual Characteristics**

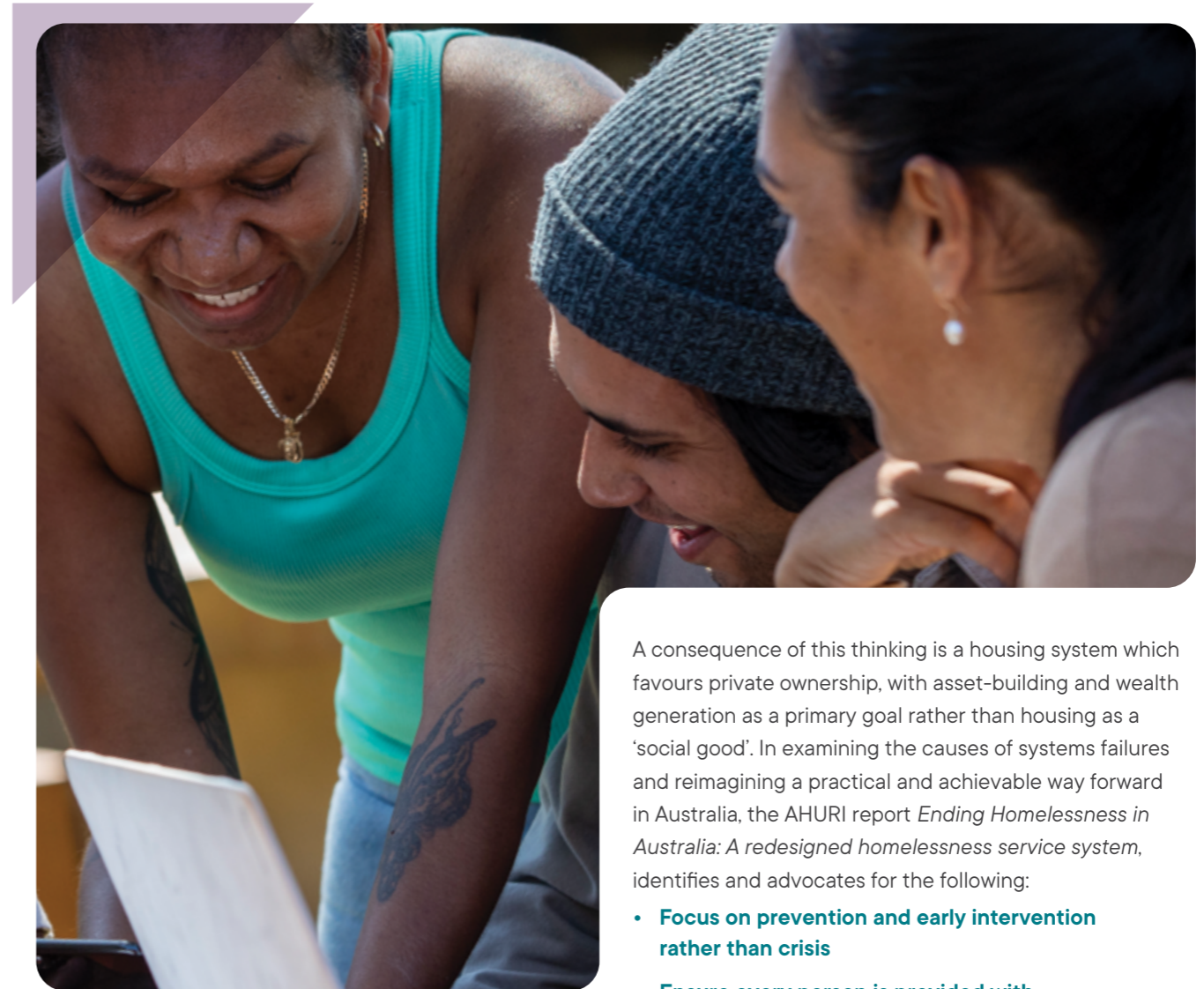
- Individual/biography, including:
  - Intergenerational and/or complex trauma
  - Child abuse and disrupted attachment relationships
  - Time spent in institutional settings such as out-of-home care, prison, or hospital
  - War, violence, and persecution
  - Grief and loss



**Barriers to exiting homelessness**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Lack of affordable housing options | Lack of suitable housing options (size, location, amenity, cost)   |
| Extended social housing waitlists  | Inflexible tenancy conditions (adapting to changes in family structure; maintaining tenancy during absence such as hospital stays, prison) |
| Stigma and discrimination          |  |
| Issues sustaining tenancy          |  |

**SAFE, SECURE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING**



A consequence of this thinking is a housing system which favours private ownership, with asset-building and wealth generation as a primary goal rather than housing as a 'social good'. In examining the causes of systems failures and reimagining a practical and achievable way forward in Australia, the AHURI report *Ending Homelessness in Australia: A redesigned homelessness service system*, identifies and advocates for the following:

- **Focus on prevention and early intervention rather than crisis**
- **Ensure every person is provided with appropriate and timely assistance**
- **Incorporate a Housing First response for people experiencing homelessness to quickly move into need and age-appropriate long-term housing options**
- **Develop long-term plans for an adequate supply of social and affordable housing<sup>57</sup>**

**Challenging the status quo**

Housing and homelessness are complex and dynamic issues. In many ways the picture of homelessness presented has developed out of the political, social, and cultural values that have underpinned decades of policy and service system development in Australia; specifically, the dominance of neoliberalism and its consequences, such as:

- **A shrinking welfare state and related attitudes to people experiencing hardship**
- **Over-reliance on markets to redress a range of social issues, and**
- **An unwavering commitment to the ideal of private home ownership rather than a social housing system**

The status quo of the service system is a result of deliberate choices and policy and results in many adverse consequences for significant parts of our population. The Homelessness Stream has developed a model of care, which articulates our guiding statement that ending homelessness is possible and can act as a change agent towards a better functioning system. This requires us to critically reflect on housing and homelessness through our own experience, research, and practice wisdom.

<sup>57</sup> Spinney et al 2020

The model of care provides a national overarching framework ensuring visibility and consistency in our approach to serving people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

## Part 3: The National Homelessness Model of Care

### Background and Purpose

The Salvation Army is the largest provider of homelessness services in Australia. In 2021-2022, we provided<sup>58</sup>:

**37,000 +**

people who experienced homelessness

**760,000**

crisis beds provided to people who experienced homelessness

**317,800+**

sessions of care provided to people who were at risk of or experienced homelessness

of everything we do. It also aims to share our work with a broad audience across The Salvation Army, as well as others who share our commitment to responding to homelessness in Australia, including external organisations and the general community.

### What is a Model of Care?

The model of care is a national overarching framework ensuring visibility and consistency in our approach to serving people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It specifies the guiding statements, approaches, and practices we use in designing, delivering, and developing homelessness services. It complements and supports existing mechanisms for best practice including:

- **Policies and procedures**
- **Accredited sector standards**
- **Social Mission Workforce Strategy**
- **Relevant national and state legislation**
- **The Salvation Army's Quality Management Framework**

The model of care is a living document that brings together evidence-based practice, research, practice wisdom and experience to provide a consistent, informed approach to service provision. As such, it is designed to be reviewed and updated in line with The Salvation Army's approach to continuous quality improvement.

The Homelessness Stream Model of Care (referred to as the model of care) is part of our commitment to ensuring that practice wisdom, lived experience, and contemporary evidence guide and inform our responses to homelessness. Good practice and research are ever evolving. With this in mind, we are committed to ongoing review and evaluation of the model of care in line with The Salvation Army's approach to continuous quality improvement. Together with other key documents, the model of care will support the Homelessness Stream workforce to continue to build quality, innovative services that place the flourishing of individuals, families, and communities at the centre

<sup>58</sup> TSA Annual Report 2021-22



## Development of the Homelessness Stream Model of Care

The model of care was developed by the National Homelessness Specialist Team through a collaborative process of research and consultation with a range of stakeholders. This included:

- **Establishing a Community of Practice with guiding terms of reference and a workplan**
- **A national and international literature review of homelessness-related research, policy, and practice initiatives**
- **Engagement with The Salvation Army Homelessness Stream and Australia Territory specific to homelessness assistance, with focus on intake, assessment, referral, case management, risk, and safety assessments**
- **Interviews with services and expert partners**
- **Consultation with those with lived experience of homelessness**

## Sustainability of the model of care

To enable the model of care to fulfill its purpose, the model must be sustainably embedded in service design and delivery, be actively referred to, and relevant to practice frameworks and responding to homelessness as it evolves in Australia. Effective implementation, and ongoing review of the model of care will ensure continuous quality improvement within The Salvation Army Homelessness Stream.

Key elements of model of care review, and continuous quality improvement, are:

- **Pilot, implement, evaluate, review, monitor**
  - The model of care will be piloted, implemented and subject to evaluation, monitoring, and review processes
- **Workforce development**
  - A workforce development plan will aid and support the Social Mission workforce strategy to ensure operationalisation of the model of care
- **Supporting resources**
  - Practice guidance for working in specific settings and with distinct groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families with accompanying children, people with disability, veterans, people who are rough sleeping and LGBTQIA+ communities
  - Associated practice tools, policies, and procedures
- **Lived experience participation**
  - People with lived experience will be consulted and involved in implementing, embedding, evaluating reviewing and monitoring of the model of care

## The model of care as part of a holistic response to homelessness

We work in partnership with other organisations and peak bodies to advocate for improved system-wide responses to homelessness, and to develop innovative approaches which provide people with the necessary supports to find and maintain permanent, stable housing. We are committed to supporting our workforce and providing frameworks and tools, which enable provision of consistently high-quality services across Australia.

The Salvation Army's response to homelessness is strengthened through key partnerships, plans, practice guides, resources, and models of care, including:

## External and internal partnerships and collaboration

- We work in collaboration with Salvation Army mission expressions and externally with other sectors, government, and peak bodies
- We recognise the strength of collaborative approaches and seek to work in partnership with mission-aligned organisations

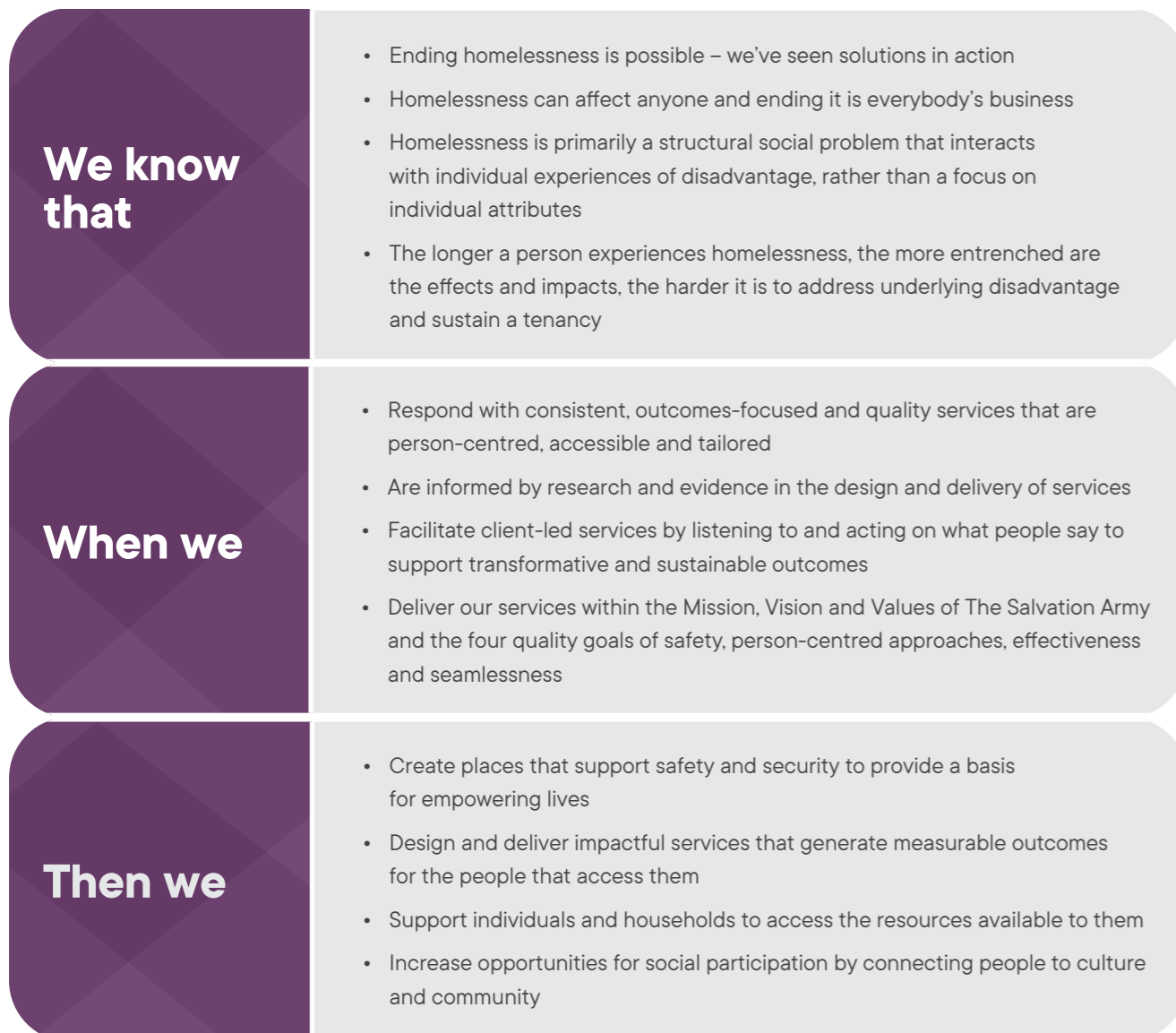
## Commitment to Vision through established governance structures

- National, state and territory Agendas, which identify and put into practice The Salvation Army Vision, Mission, and Values
- State Agenda Reference Groups support accountable progression toward national, state and territory Agenda priorities and the model of care
- Organisational culture that fosters accountability, inspires our workforce, and puts lived experience and those who use our services at the centre of all we do

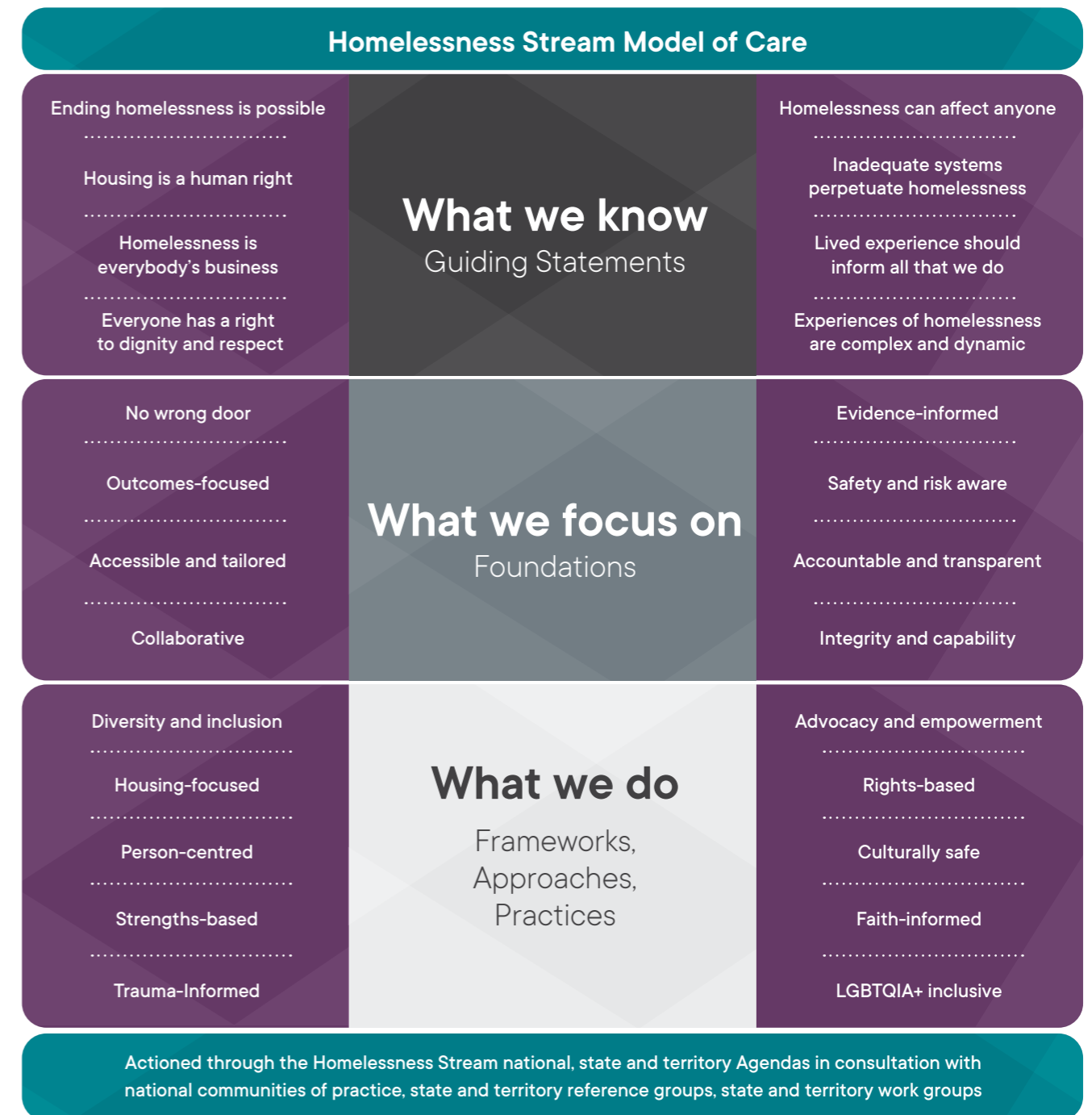
# The Homelessness Stream Theory of Change

A Theory of Change describes how and why we expect change to be achieved, and what those changes look like. The Homelessness Stream Theory of Change relates to the model of care by linking what we know (Guiding Statements) to what we focus on and what we do (Foundations and Frameworks), as steps that lead to the

transformative changes we expect to see: establishing safety and security, linking people to the services and resources that will have greatest impact, and supporting the connection to culture and community as the basis for increased social participation.



# Overview of the Model of Care



The model is structured in three parts:

**What we know**

The essential knowledge and context that underpins our approach to the issue of homelessness and our support to the people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

**What we focus on**

These foundational elements determine how clients find and are supported by us safely in times of need, and the dimensions of accountability that underpin their confidence in our services.

**What we do**

This toolkit of frameworks, approaches and practices focuses on practice guidance for the workforce.

# Guiding Statements

## What we know

The following are adopted as Guiding Statements of the Homelessness Stream.

### 1. Ending homelessness is possible

#### Key Statements:

Ending homelessness in Australia is possible. It requires a solution that considers the systems and structures that lead to homelessness, together with strengthening the ability to work with people to avoid it.

Concrete actions should be taken including:

- **Adopting a Housing First approach**
- **Reducing or removing conditionality of access to housing**
- **Matching availability and intensity of support services to meet individual and household readiness and need**
- **A focus on prevention and early intervention including tenancy sustainment**

Advocacy to improve collaboration between levels of government is a key area of engagement in ending homelessness, as well as increasing the supply of social and affordable housing, improving the standard of current housing stock, and supporting tenancies through improvements in legislation and regulation.

#### Links to the Model of Care:

Evidence-informed | Outcomes-focused | Collaborative | Advocacy and empowerment | Accessible and tailored

### 2. Safe, secure, and affordable housing is a human right

#### Key Statements:

Housing as a human right is enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

All persons should be afforded their human rights, including the right to housing

The Salvation Army recognises international standards for the protection of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms and recognise the central importance of enshrining human rights into service provision

#### Links to the Model of Care:

No wrong door | Accessible and tailored | Accountability and transparency | Advocacy and empowerment | Diversity and inclusion

### 3. Homelessness is everybody's business

#### Key Statements:

To address homelessness, we need to also concentrate on intersecting issues, including, poverty, education, employment, and discrimination.

- **Homelessness needs whole-of-community collaborative approaches to make use of evidence, experience, and innovative solutions to build a holistic response**
- **Lived experience must inform organisational policy and practice**
- **Organising as a sector working in partnership with government and across the political landscape ensures that all parts of the community:**
  - Hear from people experiencing homelessness
  - Are informed by subject matter expertise
  - Can be led through coordinated political engagement in a coordinated effort to end homelessness

#### Links to the Model of Care:

Collaborative | Advocacy and empowerment | Outcomes-focused



### 5. Homelessness can affect anyone; its impacts are far reaching and long lasting

#### Key Statements:

- **Homelessness can affect anyone; however, it is more likely for people who are disadvantaged, marginalised, or oppressed**
- **Experiences of homelessness range from uncomfortable to distressing and dangerous**
- **Being at risk of or experiencing homelessness will profoundly affect a person's ability to access and maintain employment, education and training, family and social networks, health, and wellbeing**
- **Though commonly mis-stated, individual factors such as mental ill-health, lack of employment, involvement with the justice system, alcohol and other drug use, and experiences of out of home care are not of themselves causes of homelessness, however, can place people at higher risk of experiencing or having repeated experiences of homelessness**

For those experiencing homelessness, their family members, friends, and the wider community, homelessness can contribute to:

- **Disconnection from family, friends, and community**
- **Mental and physical ill-health**
- **Decreasing personal safety and privacy**
- **Compromising access and participation in education and work**
- **Decreasing personal freedom of movement and expression**

#### Links to the Model of Care:

No wrong door | Safety and risk aware | Integrity and capability

### 4. Services uphold dignity and self-esteem and recognise the intrinsic value of human life

#### Key Statements:

- **Acknowledging that human life is sacred, and all people have unique and intrinsic value and should be treated with dignity and respect, The Salvation Army values the skills, contributions, and abilities of all people**
- **Empowerment of individuals, and households at risk of or experiencing homelessness is supported by employing non-judgemental, person-centred, and strengths-based approaches which acknowledge inherent power dynamics and offer opportunities for co-design of care planning**
- **Service design must acknowledge and afford every opportunity to support and encourage social, cultural, and economic beliefs and backgrounds**
- **Recognising the value of the voices and perspectives of those with a lived experience of homelessness, The Salvation Army supports and encourages lived experience participation as central to service design, development, and provision**

#### Links to the Model of Care:

Diversity and inclusion | Safety and risk aware

## 6. Homelessness in Australia is a result of systemic and structural failures or inadequacies

### Key Statements:

- Homelessness is not a choice. It often occurs as a result of poverty linked to absent, inadequate and/ or failed social structures and welfare supports, including the lack of safe, secure, and appropriate housing
- The Salvation Army advocates for increased social housing, supportive housing, tailored support services, a focus on prevention and early intervention, and commitment from government in the form of policies which support our diverse community
- Experiences of homelessness, and its impacts can be intergenerationally linked by persistent poverty and its effects

### Links to the Model of Care:

Diversity and inclusion | Advocacy and empowerment | Accessible and tailored

## 7. The voices of people with lived experience should inform all that we do

### Key Statements:

- People who have experienced homelessness are best placed to speak about the impacts of homelessness and the ways in which services and systems can be improved
- Prioritising the voices of lived experience can help challenge the stigma and discrimination that is sometimes aimed at people experiencing homelessness
- Our services are shaped and guided by:
  - A foundational principle of hearing, listening, and integrating the lived experience of those we serve in all that we do, coupled with
  - A rights-based approach that values human life and accords dignity to those that we serve

### Links to the Model of Care:

Advocacy and empowerment | Accessible and tailored | Outcomes-focused

## 8. Experiences of homelessness are complex and dynamic

### Key Statements:

- Experiences of homelessness are varied, often affected by complex and intersecting factors. To meet the needs of individuals, households, and cohorts, services must be tailored and flexible to need, duration and intensity
- To provide services that are accessible and welcoming, service design, development and provision must consider the needs of those overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness, including:
  - First Nations people
  - People with disability
  - LGBTIQ+ communities and people
  - Veterans
  - Older persons
  - Youth
  - Culturally and linguistically diverse persons

### Links to the Model of Care:

Accessible and tailored | Advocacy and empowerment | Diversity and inclusion

# Foundations

### What we focus on

The Foundations focus on key areas for our services to deliver the best possible response to the complex and dynamic needs of people using our services and to enhance and develop service delivery.

## No wrong door

*We strive to assist in the best possible way and work alongside each person to identify what is needed, what we can provide and to find and refer to services that can help in other areas*

We acknowledge that people at risk of or experiencing homelessness are often also experiencing a broad array of issues impacting their situation, some of which may be met directly by a Salvation Army homelessness service and some that may be met in another forum or by another kind of service.

A 'No wrong door' response intentionally assists people to connect with the most appropriate service for them, no matter what service that may be.

We do this by developing and maintaining:

- Strong internal and external referral pathways, partnerships, and agreements across a range of service sectors
- A holistic service model that includes a community support focus that facilitates recovery and wellbeing through links to community, faith, family, and friends
- Our knowledge of the service and system environment across sectors as well as current research and evidence-based practices and innovations
- Comprehensive and consistent screening and assessment practices to ensure a holistic understanding of the range of supports relevant to the needs of people who use our services

We acknowledge that adopting 'No wrong door' as a Foundation provides an often-essential element to service provision, above and beyond the strict commitments of a service agreement or contract. In so doing, we aim to provide a timely, tailored, and streamlined response to better assist people.

Underpinned and supported by:

- Local Mission Delivery
- Homelessness Stream national, state and territory Agendas

## Outcomes-focused

*We work with service users to understand what they want and need. We analyse our capacity to fulfil their aims and goals and engage in advocacy to address unmet needs.*

We are dedicated to measuring and understanding outcomes for people using our services as well as their experience of our services. We use this knowledge to inform and improve service design and delivery.

We do this by:

- Collecting quantitative and qualitative evidence of service delivery outcomes, including first-hand narrative accounts from those who use our services
- Regularly assessing, reporting, and reviewing the effectiveness of services and programs based on client outcomes
- Embedding reflective practice in our work so we can acknowledge what we do well and where we can improve

- **Acknowledging that service outcomes are measured in multiple ways including as specified in funding and service agreements and within the scope of specific service delivery guidelines. We identify and respond to any tensions between client needs and broader outcome measures by:**

- Embedding person-centred approaches in our work to ensure that individuals can articulate the outcomes they seek
- Being accountable and transparent about what we can offer so that outcomes are achievable and sustainable
- Capturing information on gaps between needs and service system capabilities and using this knowledge to inform external and internal program development and advocacy
- Recognising that we always do our best and are constrained by the ongoing impact of structural and systemic barriers to ending homelessness

Underpinned and supported by:

- Implementation of Salvation Army Quality Framework and continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes
- Homelessness Stream service reviews
- Homelessness Stream outcomes measurement framework (in development)

### Evidence-informed

*We adapt to meet the needs of people, using our data and reporting to understand and respond to emerging situations and trends, while maintaining an agile workforce, ready to provide the best care in challenging situations.*

What works, matters to us. We look at evidence and research to tell us how, when, and where best to assist. We safely collect, store, and analyse data, listen to the people accessing our services, and adjust our systems and services accordingly.

We do this by:

- **Involvement in, and knowledge of, contemporary practice, evidence, research, and advocacy particularly as it relates to upholding the cultural rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and creating safe and appropriate services that respect and celebrate diversity**
- **Analysing service, workforce and lived experience data to identify emerging situations and trends and use this information to inform:**
  - Workforce learning and development offerings including practice knowledge needs
  - Service development and delivery
  - Advocacy

Underpinned and supported by:

- Compliance with national, state and territory accreditation standards
- Implementation of Salvation Army Quality Framework and CQI processes
- TSA data management processes that reflect Privacy Principles and related legislation
- Social Mission Agenda development and review, and Policy, Research and Social Justice initiatives



### Safety and risk aware

*The safety of staff and the people we serve is the highest priority. We use established tools, practices, and systems to assess risk and act to ensure safety.*

We understand that protective factors and strategies to manage and contain threats to safety remain relative to the risks posed by those threats, and that mitigation of risk is a vital element in managing to achieve and sustain a safe environment.

We acknowledge that the risks people face, and associated safety measures, may differ according to specific experiences of homelessness and service contexts. We recognise and will respond appropriately and efficiently to known risks for the people we serve and our workforce alike, such as people who may be:

- **Injured, experiencing ill-health and/or may be exposed to violence**
- **Engaged in or exposed to substance use**
- **Have specific needs due to age or ability**
- **Experiencing/escaping family and domestic violence**
- **Leaving institutional care or custody**
- **Exposed to extreme weather**
- **Subject to discrimination or intolerance because of their identity such as gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality**
- **Conducting work in diverse settings, such as residential, community outreach, and lone worker**

This means:

- **Engaging in proactive assessments of safety and risk, using evidenced frameworks and practices, and validated tools and reporting mechanisms to evaluate situations**
- **Actively inviting participation in safe practices by our staff, the people we serve, and all others we encounter**
- **Using effective tools (including consistency in pre-screening, assessment, intake, risk and safety planning approaches, alert systems, and debrief/de-escalate interventions)**
- **Maintaining strong governance structures, informed by reporting lines from direct service across all levels of the organisation, supported by appropriate accountability and delegations' frameworks, and enabled through organisation-wide decision-making and communication capabilities**
- **Providing structured, supported opportunities to review safety and risk issues as they arise in our work, including participation in training, professional development sessions, supervision, and reflective practice sessions**
- **Using quality client information recording and review processes to gauge the effectiveness of services and identify and respond to events and incidents**

Underpinned and supported by:

- The Salvation Army National Capability Framework
- Workplace Health and Safety systems including SolvSafety
- The National Safeguarding System for children and young people

## Accessible and tailored

*We design services that are visible and accessible. Homelessness services are accessible to the people who use them, and those services should be tailored to fit individuals to the degree they are required and requested.*

Services should be accessible for people of all abilities, genders, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and identities. Tailoring a service means adapting what we do and how we do it to reflect the needs of the people using our services.

Our services have clearly articulated eligibility criteria and processes for referral. We creatively and flexibly work with people accessing our services to overcome barriers to effective support, whether these are time-limited and/or biopsychosocialspiritual in nature.

We do this by:

- **Establishing an open, transparent, and honest relationship with those we serve, setting realistic expectations, establishing roles and responsibilities, and seeking informed consent to respond to presenting needs**
- **Screening for vulnerability and prioritisation of services, allowing for rapid response to acute, chronic, or high-risk issues**
- **Applying assessment practices that are consistent and comprehensive, and identifying an appropriate service response to the situation**
- **Seeking input on, and responding with, reasonable adjustment to any specific requirements related to age, gender, ability, health, culture, ethnicity, faith, or identity**
- **Providing an environment that is inclusive, culturally respectful, family-friendly, and child-safe**
- **Designing services that meet people where they are, including assertive outreach responses in the community, as well as a suite of engagement and other services to support people in a variety of settings**

- **Building in step-up step-down service capacity so intensity can alter in line with presenting need**
- **Providing clear communication in a variety of styles, languages, and modes of delivery**
- **Engaging in strategies to promote services with clear information on eligibility, aims and methods, and an emphasis on providing information to vulnerable groups who are over-represented in experiencing homelessness**
- **Living the principles of dignity, independence, and equal opportunity**

Underpinned and supported by:

- The Salvation Army Australia Territory Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- Gender Equality Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Social Mission Inclusive Practice Framework and Procedure



## Accountable and transparent

*We work in a way that is open and accountable to the person we are assisting and to the community, using professional standards and services to support the work we do. Our homelessness services are accredited through audit and assessment by a qualified external and independent review body.*

We provide visibility, transparency, and accountability in all we do by:

- **Participation in quality assurance and accreditation processes in every Australian state and territory**
- **Data collection, analysis, reporting, case review, auditing and procedures that make visible and accountable outcomes from service provision across the country**
- **Through internal service reviews, conducting surveys and interviews with those who are currently using or have used our services**

Underpinned and supported by:

- The Salvation Army's Policy Hub
- Approved Authorities Matrix (AAM)
- Centralised incident management, feedback, and review software system
- Mission enablers such as legal, financial, administrative, and human resources

## Collaborative

*We work with others to holistically address the needs of people in our services and attain our aim of ending homelessness; we coordinate across mission expressions within TSA and beyond.*

Understanding the power of collective impact and collaboration across sectors, we are agile in our dealings with peers and prospective partners and orient ourselves with the outcomes of people who access our services at the centre of what we do.

We have developed a strong identity and position within the service system, sector, and community in responding to homelessness and its impacts. We work together with other organisations and specialist service providers to ensure that we target support and provide services that meet the needs of those we serve. Open communication and strong networks allow us to share experience and knowledge with others and provide leadership where required.

We do this by:

- **Remaining informed, curious, and open to opportunities for collaboration, and creative ways of working to benefit individuals and impact structures and policy**
- **Using our experience, evidence, and research to support adaptive service models and embrace the breadth, variety, and forms of collaboration**
- **Aligning with, communicating, sharing, and leveraging the TSA vision, organisational reach, and reputation**

Underpinned and supported by:

- The Salvation Army Australia Mission, Vision and Values
- Homelessness Stream national state and territory Agendas
- Local Mission Delivery
- Mission enablers

## Integrity and capability

*We check and monitor our work and people to ensure a workforce that will manage sensitive matters with honesty and in good faith. Our workforce is supported through a program of in-house and external training and has access to a wide range of professional development opportunities which further equip them to perform to a high level of effectiveness and integrity.*

We recognise the implicit power differential between our workforce and the people who access our services and have policies and processes to govern how that differential is treated.

We do this by:

- **Focusing on capability as an organisation and individually, and have rigorous workforce support and training structures to support our staff and workforce to achieve and maintain high-quality, professional, and informed service delivery**
- **Adopting person-led participatory practices to counter power imbalances by understanding that the people who access our services are best placed to make decisions regarding their needs and provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness and design of our services**
- **Acknowledging, where power must be held (through access to and dispersal of resources, procurement of services), that an informed and shared decision-making approach is taken**
- **Statutory obligations are monitored and safeguarded by the organisation, especially vulnerable people and children**
- **Maintaining an emphasis on The Salvation Army Mission, Vision and Values, underpinned by a strong code of conduct**
- **Organisation-wide required trainings in ethical work practices and behaviours**
- **Integrity checking processes linked to recruitment, including required police and Working with Children Checks**
- **An Approved Authorities Matrix, determining the limits and extent to authorising capabilities in any circumstance and for all roles within the organisation**
- **Adopting rigorous policy platforms, monitoring and reporting mechanisms governing statutory obligations, financial dealings and procurement, and the dispersal of resources**
- **Probity checking processes linked to financial transactions and money-handling**

Underpinned and supported by:

- Salvation Army Governance, including Quality and Safeguarding Department
- The Salvation Army Quality Management Framework
- Internal Audit, Risk and Compliance Department
- Human Resources Department

## Frameworks, approaches and practices

### What we do

The model of care is informed by several frameworks, approaches, and practices, which are used as part of a 'toolkit' to support good practice in responding to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Our practice is:

- **Diversity and inclusion**
- **housing-focused**
- **Person-centred**
- **Strengths-based**
- **Trauma-informed**
- **Advocacy and empowerment**
- **Rights-based**
- **Culturally safe**
- **Faith-informed**
- **LGBTIQA+ informed**

### Diversity and inclusion

*We work proactively to overcome the prejudice to which some groups in our society are subject, and provide welcoming, quality services to all, valuing every person in every part of our society*

We recognise the diversity in our community and celebrate and respect each person. We are inclusive and collaborative, with participation of people we serve at the centre of all that we do. We recognise that, through application of an intersectional lens, the often debilitating and oppressive effects dominant power structures have on multiple aspects of identity and social position can be countered.

Through our recruitment policies and practices, we intentionally bring together people with a variety of experiences, perspectives, strengths, problem-solving

techniques, and approaches to work. Diversity in our workforce builds our capability to engage in relevant, respectful ways and relate to diverse client groups.

We do this by:

- **Embedding a consistently respectful approach to identity and difference in people including areas such as cultural, racial, sexual and gender-related, age-related, locational, religious, political, and neurodiversity**
- **Empowering and training our workforce to adopt an intersectional lens to the understanding of disadvantage, acknowledging that some forms of diversity are subjected to negative stereotyping and oppressive practices**
- **Ensuring reflective practice is embedded in service provision**
- **Extending a universal, welcoming approach, including the design and operation of welcoming and inclusive spaces and facilities for people seeking service and support**
- **Bringing the voice of people with lived experience into our strategic planning, service design, and reflective practice**



### Aboriginal Inclusion Icon

This icon was inspired by the colours of the Aboriginal flag. Black represents people, red represents the land and yellow represents the sun. A concentric circle design reflects the 'meeting place' symbol traditionally used in Aboriginal art. The meeting place symbol represents 'community' and therefore The Salvation Army's commitment to an inclusive community. The icon has been approved and endorsed by the Territorial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team.



### Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Icon

The Torres Strait Islander inclusion icon reflects traditional patterns used in artwork and wood carving. It features the colours from the Torres Strait Islander flag: green, which represents land; black, which represents people; and blue,

which represents the sea. The traditional headdress - the dhari - is the centrepiece of the icon as a recognisable symbol of the Torres Strait Islander culture. The icon has been approved and endorsed by the Territorial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team.



### Capacities Inclusion Icon

The well-known wheelchair symbol of disability is slowly being replaced with symbols such as this one to recognise the varying types of disabilities and capacities - many of which are unseen.



### Sexual Orientations Inclusion Icon

This is a world-recognisable flag of pride for the LGBTQIA+ community to represent diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and intersex status.



### Cultures and Languages Inclusion Icon

Sometimes called the 'flag of Earth', this symbol depicts the many cultures and languages that make up our one world.

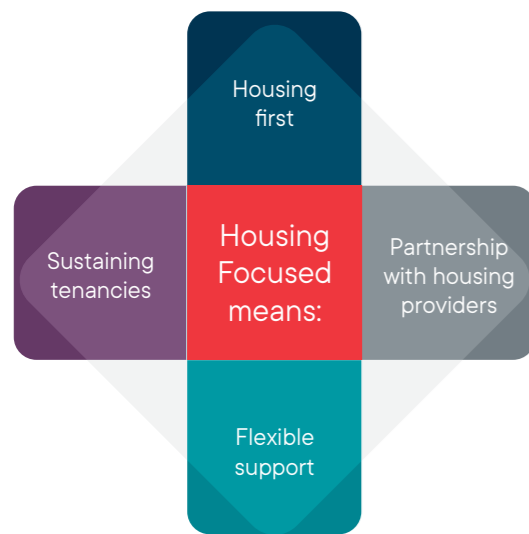
Underpinned and supported by:

- The Social Mission Lived Experience and Participation Resource
- Social Mission Inclusive Practice Framework and Procedure
- The Salvation Army Australia Territory Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan
- Gender Equality Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Housing-focused

In line with our guiding statements, we believe that ending homelessness is only possible with a strong focus to assist people to keep or find suitable, safe, affordable housing. We employ a variety of approaches to housing, mirroring the diversity of need

We believe that access to safe and affordable housing is a basic human right and we are committed to defending this right:



- **By walking alongside people to provide assistance to access and maintain safe and affordable tenancies**
- **Through advocacy to governments, service systems, and community and private accommodation providers, to uphold the rights of all people to safe and affordable housing**

## Housing First Principles

In principle, and where possible, we endorse a Housing First response. We draw on the Housing First Principles for Australia<sup>60</sup>, developed through Homelessness Australia and the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness.

- People have a right to housing without conditions
- Housing and support are separate. This means support continues regardless of engagement or tenancy status
- Support is flexible to individual needs and provided for as long as it is needed
- People have choice in terms of their housing and self-determination in terms of support and who they choose to live with
- Workers are responsible for actively engaging with and being available to people without coercion
- Fostering social and community inclusion is key
- Practice is recovery-oriented, meaning it is not focused on an absence of 'symptoms' but recovering a sense of self, hope and respecting dignity of risk and individual strengths and resilience
- A harm reduction approach is taken where people are supported to be safe, make informed decisions, and determine whether and how to change their behaviour

Housing First is a strengths-based approach, which recognises that when people are appropriately housed their chances of recovery, identifying, and reaching goals are increased. Housing First has now been adapted for use in many different countries and is proving an effective way of reducing homelessness.<sup>61</sup>

Housing First responses typically include:

<b>Access to housing</b>	<i>Immediate or timely access to permanent housing</i>
<b>Assertive outreach</b>	<i>Services provide support to people where they are at</i>
<b>A harm reduction approach</b>	<i>Offering support to people aimed at reducing risks and harmful effects associated with substance use, but not requiring abstinence to access or keep housing</i>
<b>Individualised, recovery-oriented supports</b>	<i>Supports are readily available and proactive in their efforts to engage people, but participation is optional and responsive to changing needs over time</i>
<b>Social and community inclusion</b>	<i>Support services provide opportunities for social connection and participation</i>
<b>Preservation of tenancy</b>	<i>There is no exit into homelessness and people who leave for short periods (for example due to hospitalisation) can return</i>
<b>Service brokerage</b>	<i>People are supported as needed to sustain their tenancy<sup>62</sup></i>

### Housing First support while waiting for appropriate housing

Suitable housing is not always available as soon as it is needed. A person can still be supported with a Housing First approach while they wait for suitable housing.

We recognise that there are circumstances where some of the Housing First Principles may not apply:

- **They may be superseded by other considerations**
- **Another approach may be preferred within a service system or circumstance, or**
- **A lack of resources, including access to safe and affordable housing, may render an outcome to be unrealistic or unachievable**

### Housing-focused support

Service support will provide prevention and early intervention to support people whose tenancies are at risk by:

- **Providing information and contact points, in many languages and across platforms, to assist people to identify and connect with appropriate supports when needed**
- **Early screening to identify the least intrusive assistance required**

- **Targeting brief interventions and case management support to address barriers to sustaining tenancies**
- **Providing targeted brokerage for financial assistance**
- **Providing assistance to access, and be supported through, legal, appeals and tribunals processes**
- **Working across professional disciplines and with specialist workforces to provide services that are equipped to address needs, peoples, communities, and groups, such as family violence, alcohol and other drugs, health and mental health, Indigenous services, and services that support children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness**
- **Provision of ongoing flexible support including:**
- **Services that can assist for the duration of need**
- **Partnering for collective impact, flexible, multi-disciplinary support services**
- **Timely resolution of lost tenancies to avoid the accumulation of debt**
- **Advocacy and assistance to minimise the effect of debt on access to future housing**

60. Homelessness Australia 2020  
61. Pleace, N 2012  
62 Pleace 2012, p. 5



*Our services place the individual at the heart of care and recognise in practice an individual's right to guide the work we do together; acknowledging that we facilitate, rather than determine, a person's journey*

### Working with registered housing providers and agencies

Provision of housing and tenancy management should be separate from support, in line with the Housing First Principles. Continuity in support if the housing conditions or tenancy break down, and vice versa, is vital in preventing homelessness and allows for a point of assistance in trying to maintain or repair the tenancy.

We work in a variety of partnerships and collaborations with agencies whose role is tenancy management, and often in tripartite arrangements between the property owner, tenancy manager, and support agency.

Registered housing providers and agencies, like Salvation Army Housing (SAH), are usually not-for-profit community housing providers with social landlord responsibilities. These agencies provide a range of housing and tenancy settings including short-term, medium-term, and long-term options.<sup>63</sup>

Our work with registered housing providers includes:

- **Partnering for housing and support**
- **Joint ventures, which may include:**
  - New builds of social and community housing
  - Repurposing of land or housing stock for social housing purposes,
  - Refurbishment or upgrade of existing housing
- **Partnering to respond to government or privately funded opportunities to increase or develop social housing and support opportunities**

### Person-centred

Person-centred practice places the individual at the heart of care and recognises and reinforces an individual's abilities, strengths, and capacities. A care plan built on the aspirations of the person builds motivation, open engagement, and resilience, while ensuring safety and transparency.

Person-centred practice within homelessness adjusts to the individual needs of people, through respectful, strengths-based engagement to address stigma and marginalisation. This approach can restore dignity and trust and improve self-agency.

A person-centred approach:

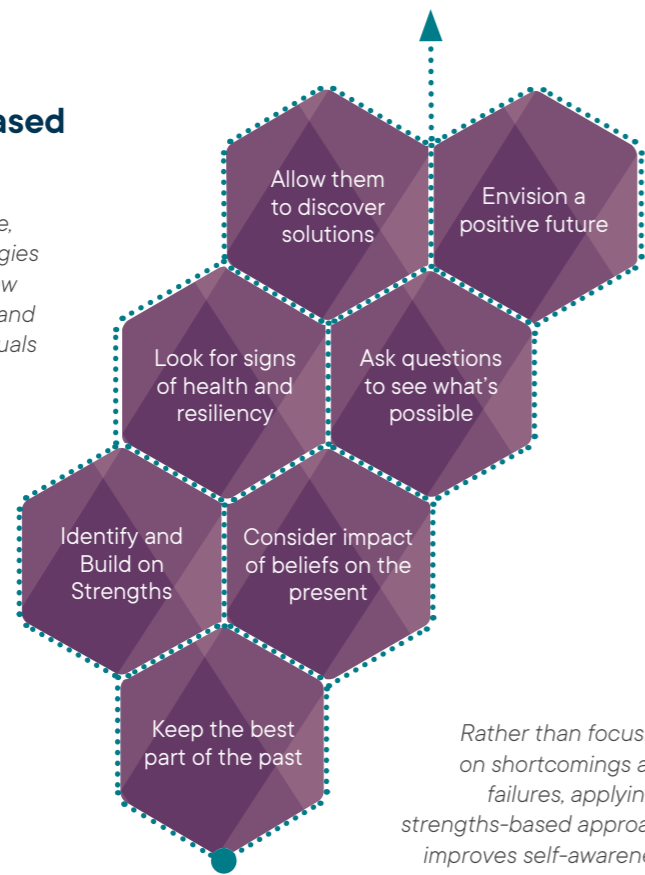
- **Supports the person, at the centre of the service to be in control of making decisions about their life**
- **Considers each person's life experience, age, gender, culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and identity**
- **Requires flexible services and support to suit the person's wishes and priorities**
- **Is strengths-based, with people acknowledged as the experts in their life, focusing on capacity and need**
- **Includes the person's support networks in the care plan**

A person-centred approach should support and enable a person to build and keep control over their life.

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/housing/>

## Strengths-Based Approach

Any policies, practice, methods, and strategies that identify and draw upon the strengths and capacities of individuals and communities.



Rather than focusing on shortcomings and failures, applying a strengths-based approach improves self-awareness and develops confidence.

### Strengths-based

Our services recognise and reinforce an individual's abilities, strengths, and capabilities, linking to communities supports, harnessing these to work through and overcome difficult situations<sup>64</sup>

Strengths-based approaches are person-centred by design, seeking to work collaboratively to understand the situation from the point of view of the person. The focus is on strengths that can contribute to effective solutions rather than on any inherent deficit or barrier. Engaging people in a forward-thinking, solutions-focused approach harnesses strengths, ambitions, and hope.

Where a person is considered positively, uniquely, and holistically, responses will maximise a person's understanding and mastery of their situation and bring holistic resources to bear from within a person's experience, cultural context, close community, and through access to broader community assets. We do this by using strength-based rather than deficit-based ways of thinking.

In practice this is supported through:

- **A suite of developed frameworks, approaches and practice guidelines that are documented and embedded in service processes**
- **Accessing learning and professional development, developing training resources, modelling, and mentoring expectations, enabling reflective practice to support practice frameworks**
- **Establishing and maintaining leadership that models culture and behaviour aligned with a strengths-based approach, including:**
  - Promoting an ethos of collaboration and an emphasis on individual well-being
  - Encouraging shared commitment and accountability
  - Maximising participatory opportunities at all levels
  - Trusting in professional practice to underpin professional judgement and adaptive practice

<sup>64</sup> Adapted from Switchboard 2022 Strengths-based Approach, <https://switchboardta.org/resource/strengths-based-approach/>

<sup>65</sup> Furlong, M 2021, Every grain of sand: Preventing homelessness deaths. Parity, 34(7), 5–12.

<sup>66</sup> Adapted from Blue Knot Foundation 2022, see <https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/resources/trauma-informed-services/>

## Principles of Trauma-Informed Care



### Trauma-informed

We acknowledge the traumas that lie at the heart of experiences of homelessness; our services support positive environments that provide safety and opportunities for people to gain control and self-determination

Homelessness is a traumatic experience, often compounding previous trauma including complex and/or intergenerational traumas. These are particularly important to understand in the context of colonisation. The experience of homelessness has a significantly detrimental impact upon health, wellbeing, community, and economic participation. There is a strong link between shortened life expectancy and homelessness.<sup>65</sup> Service responses require a trauma-informed approach to understand, identify, and respond appropriately to the impact of trauma on the lives of people accessing homelessness services.

Trauma-informed services<sup>66</sup>:

- **Attune to the possibility of trauma in the lives of everyone seeking support**
- **Apply the core principles of respect, safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and empowerment**
- **Accommodate the characteristics of trauma survivors including people from diverse backgrounds**
- **Minimise the risks of re-traumatisation and promote healing**
- **Emphasise physical and emotional safety for everyone**
- **Recognise all coping strategies as valid attempts to cope**
- **Collaborate with people, and affirm their strengths and resources**
- **Recognise the importance of respect, dignity, and hope**
- **Focus on the whole context in which a service is provided and not just on what is provided**

### Creating trauma-informed services and supports

Our workforce has contemporary knowledge and understanding of trauma (neurobiological models, behavioural manifestations, and response strategies) together with the skills and opportunities to provide support. This places safety at the centre, and opportunities for the empowerment, recovery, and healing. We aim to provide trauma-informed spaces in services, residential and other facilities, which enhance a sense of safety.

In line with trauma-informed practice, we recognise the need for our workforce to be adequately supported, in light of the potential of exposure to vicarious and secondary trauma and other workplace stressors. Adequate reflective supervision, access to wellbeing support, and capable and informed line management are essential elements in ensuring a well-supported workforce.

The Salvation Army takes a workforce-wide approach to supporting staff and the people who access our services.

*Our workforce protects and upholds the human rights of people in our services and advocates where service systems marginalise or exclude people experiencing homelessness. We encourage people to share their experience with us so we can continuously improve*



### Advocacy and empowerment

*We work for, with, and through people to address barriers and improve systems, working with others, when necessary, to empower people to work on their own behalf*

The empowerment approach respects individuals as experts in their own lives, recognising that the intensity of required support will vary according to context and capacity. Empowerment aims to keep the person as the central focus, maximising an individual's capacity to act independently and on their own behalf. Through empowerment and advocacy, we use our skills, knowledge, and experience to amplify the agency and voice of the people we work with.

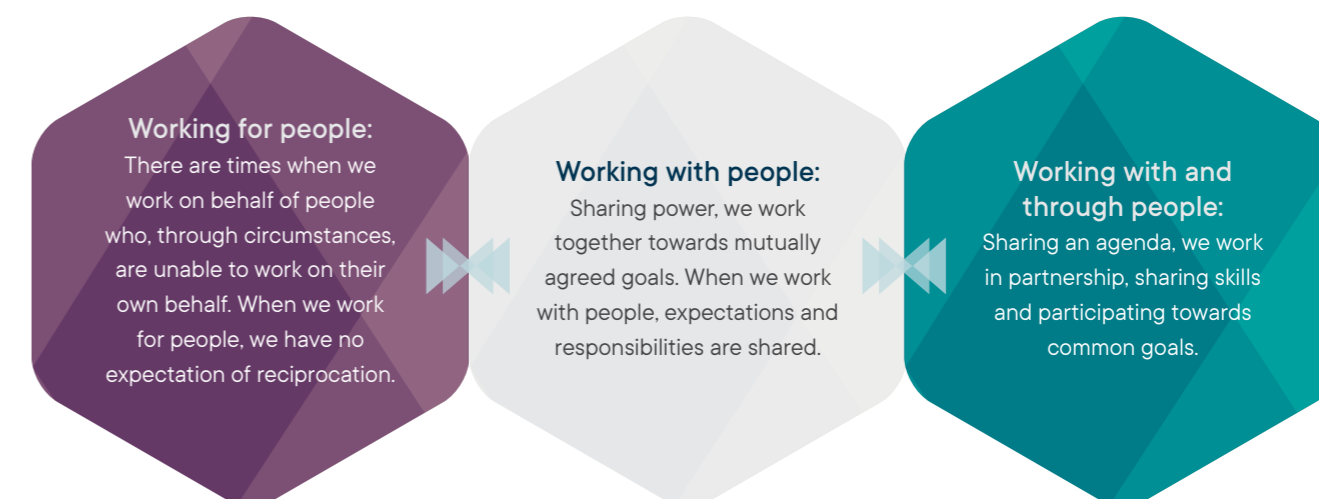
Critical to the empowerment approach is the 'power-with', rather than 'power-over' aspect: where agency or capacity is compromised as we work on behalf of others, we must seek to share awareness of and decision-making in the services being delivered, to the fullest extent possible.

We recognise that there may be 'for', 'with' and 'through' stages in a process as individuals recover capacity and agency.

Led through the Policy and Advocacy team as part of Policy, Research and Social Justice Department, The Salvation Army is actively involved in a program of advocacy. As the largest provider of homelessness services in Australia, The Salvation Army is uniquely placed to influence policy and social systems towards ending homelessness nationally.

*As part of our vision to "live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia", The Salvation Army advocates to influence key decision makers and those who have the power to implement social policy change. This includes our advocacy with federal and state members of parliament. We know from experience that systems-based advocacy, which addresses the root causes of social problems, can make the most difference to those experiencing hardship and injustice<sup>67</sup>*

### We do this by:



<sup>67</sup> <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/get-involved/advocacy/>



From the Homelessness Stream and services perspective, the advocacy approach allows us to address marginalisation, discrimination, and oppression through advocacy and empowerment practices directly involving individuals accessing our services. More broadly and systemically we address sector and service system gaps and issues.

Advocacy and empowerment are linked through a common aim: to maximise self-reliance and self-advocacy, and effect full social participation.

We advocate for, and empower those we serve by:

- **Providing information and advice on services and service systems**
- **Ensuring equity of access on behalf of those we serve**
- **Identifying and working to address gaps in structural responses, services and systems, and challenging policies and practice that further marginalise or disadvantage people experiencing homelessness**
- **Developing a capacity for self-agency and self-determination among individuals, groups, and communities**
- **Collaborating with others (including individuals, agencies, government entities) aimed at improving the service response to, and outcomes for, an individual, group, or community**
- **Reforming policy in partnership with the sector and government to improve service quality and outcomes for people experiencing homelessness**

Underpinned and supported by:

- The Salvation Army's Policy, Research and Social Justice team
- The TSA Advocacy Approach, Policy, Research & Social Justice Toolkit, Salvos Central

### Rights-based

#### Human rights

People experiencing homelessness experience violations of human rights. The inability to access safe and secure housing is at the centre of these violations.<sup>68</sup>

Some rights are protected in federal legislation:

- **Age Discrimination Act 1992**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**
- **Racial Discrimination Act 1975**
- **Sex Discrimination Act 1984**
- **Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986**

There are no federal protections to the rights of children and Indigenous peoples' cultural rights; rather, these are embedded in state and territory legislation.<sup>69</sup>

Currently, only Victoria has a Charter of Rights, while ACT and Queensland have Human Rights Acts. All states and territories have anti-discrimination and/or equal opportunity legislation.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission 2022, What are human rights?  
<sup>69</sup> AHRC 2022, Human Rights in Australia  
<sup>70</sup> See <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work>  
<sup>71</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission 2019, <https://humanrights.gov.au/free-and-equal>

In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Australia is a signatory to the following human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In 2021-2022, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) received 3,736 complaints, which is up from 3,113 complaints received in 2020-2021 (20% increase):

- **52 percent of complaints were lodged under the Disability Discrimination Act**
- **16 percent of complaints were lodged under the Sex Discrimination Act**
- **12 percent of complaints were lodged under the Racial Discrimination Act**
- **6 percent of complaints were lodged under the Age Discrimination Act**
- **13 percent of complaints were lodged under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act**

In 2019, the AHRC commenced the Free and Equal project to build agreement across the Parliament, government and the community about what we can do collectively to better promote, protect and fulfil human rights.<sup>71</sup> The project is ongoing. The following framework summarises the intent of human right law reform:



**Respect:**

Government should ensure that it does not engage in or support discrimination



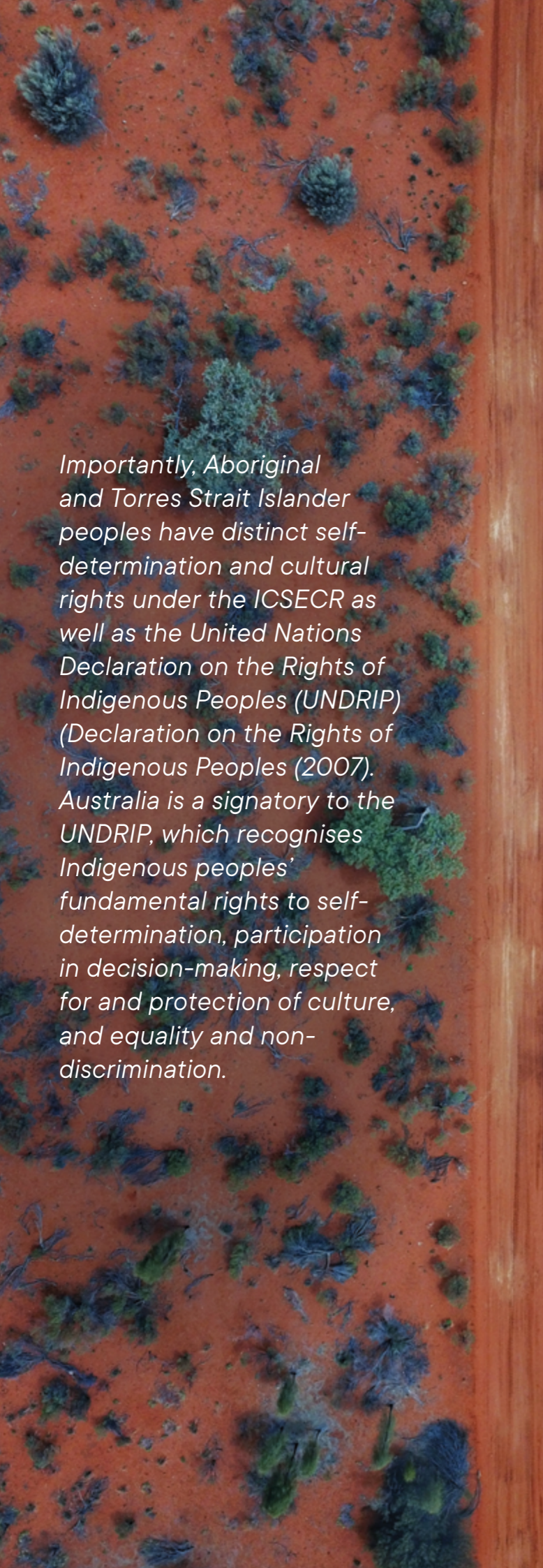
**Protect:**

Government should take actions to prevent any person or organisation from discriminating against others, and ensure that discrimination is prohibited by law



**Fulfil:**

Governments should take positive actions to eliminate discrimination, including by taking measures to reduce barriers between different groups, and enhancing the protection and development of groups and individuals that experience inequality and discrimination



Importantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have distinct self-determination and cultural rights under the ICSECR as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)). Australia is a signatory to the UNDRIP, which recognises Indigenous peoples' fundamental rights to self-determination, participation in decision-making, respect for and protection of culture, and equality and non-discrimination.

**Rights of people experiencing homelessness**

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of [them]self and [their] family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond [their] control*<sup>72</sup>

We recognise, uphold, and defend the rights of people who access our services. We safeguard the rights of vulnerable people by providing assistance to, and advocacy for, those who suffer discrimination and marginalisation because of protected characteristics (including age, disability, health status, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity/parental status, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation). We ensure participation by children and young people, and provide assistance to those not yet able, or unable to participate fully.

The Salvation Army Australia supports this through observance of related legislation and regulatory frameworks including:

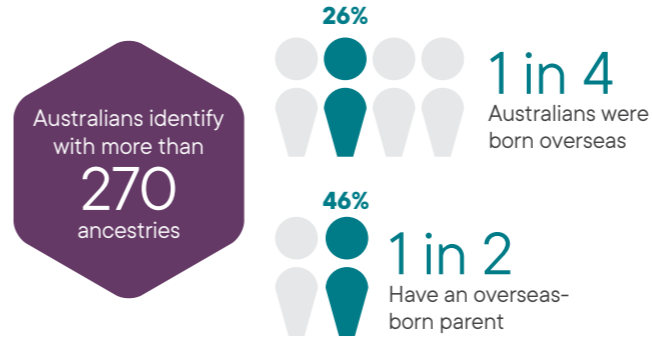
- **Consumer protection, encoded in legislation and regulations, includes general prohibitions pertaining to 'unconscionable conduct', false and misleading claims, misleading or deceptive conduct, unfair terms, fitness for purpose**
- **National, state and territory quality and accreditation standards and processes**
- **The Salvation Army Working Together client charter, Code of Conduct, Grievance Policy and related procedures**

72. United Nations 1948  
73. Nipperess, S & Williams C, 2019 Critical Multicultural Practice in Social Work: New Perspectives and Practices, Taylor & Francis Group

**Culturally safe**

*A fundamental feature of our services is respecting and accommodating a person's cultural identity and affiliation, celebrating, and valuing all people in culturally safe environments where difference is held as a virtue.*

Australia is a party to the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICSECR). As such, cultural safety is relevant to working respectfully with people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and supporting the right to enjoy and benefit from culture, community, faith, and language (International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (1966), Article 15.)



Importantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have distinct self-determination and cultural rights under the ICSECR as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP 2007) to which Australia is a signatory.

The historical and contemporary context of service delivery in Australia highlights the critical importance of cultural safety. It acknowledges and responds to<sup>73</sup>:

- **The ongoing impacts of colonisation**
- **The dominance of Anglo-European values, norms, and ways of working**
- **Living in one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world**
- **Significant migrant populations including refugees and asylum seekers**
- **Emerging and ongoing displacement of peoples due to natural disasters**

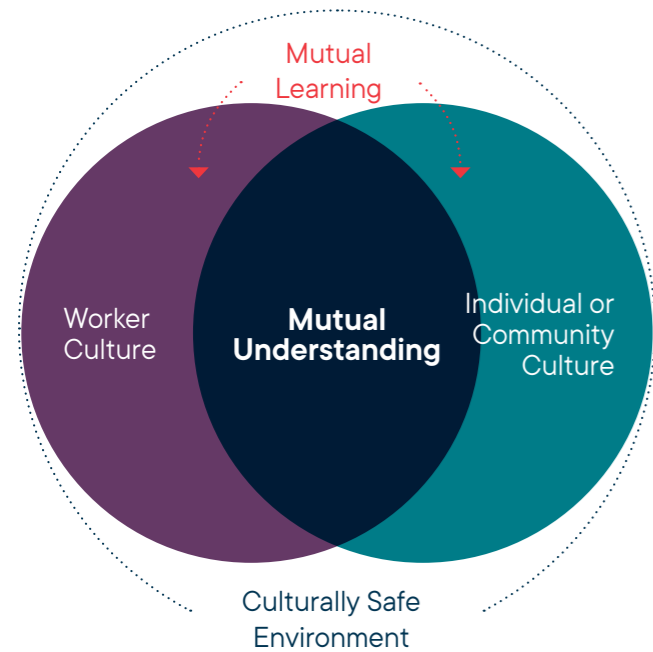
**UNDRIP RECOGNISES INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TO: SELF DETERMINATION LAND, TERRITORY AND RESOURCES FREE PRIOR & INFORM CONSENT SELF-DETERMINED DEVELOPMENT CUSTOMARY LAW TRANS BORDER ISSUES PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING RESPECT FOR AND PROTECTION OF CULTURE EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The concept of cultural safety means:

- **Respecting, listening and valuing people's unique identity**
- **Working proactively with people to recognise and promote diverse cultural values and ways of working**
- **Building relationships around the values of "trust, respect, diversity, active participation and power redistribution"<sup>74</sup>**

Cultural safety promotes an environment where a person's or group's cultural identity is respected and central to providing care. Cultural identification is a key element in intersectional disadvantage. Where a culture is not adequately celebrated, recognised, and valued by society at large, individuals are often marginalised by broader society.

Cultural safety requires that we:



- **Continually review culturally supportive practices in service delivery**
- **Reflect diversity in our workforce by developing recruitment strategies that ensure employment and training opportunities are accessible to all groups and communities**
- **Critically self-reflect on an ongoing basis on individual beliefs, and the impact of these on others**

<sup>74</sup> Gopalkrishnan, K 2019, Working with Community Groups, in C Williams and S Nipperess (eds), Critical Multicultural Practice in Social Work: New perspectives and practices, p. 216.

### Faith-informed

*We build on the rich tradition of supportive pastoral practices that meet physical, psycho-social, spiritual, and emotional needs, without discrimination or obligation, connecting to people in the way and to the extent they wish<sup>75</sup>*

Spirituality can often provide comfort and a sense of stability in times of trauma or crisis. It can promote a sense of connectedness to the past, to Country and to family, a sense of belonging and hope.

A great deal of peer reviewed research has been undertaken during the past 50 years to qualify and quantify the positive effects of faith and spirituality in the lives of individuals and communities. However, very little has been done to create an ethical model of service that workers from all backgrounds can be trained in and use as part of their professional practice toolbox. Faith-informed practice has been created in response to that need, drawing inspiration from The Salvation Army's rich tradition of supportive pastoral practices that meet physical, psycho-social, and emotional needs without discrimination.

Faith-informed practice is guided by an individual's experience and seeks to engage with people in a way that is safe and self-directed. Recognising that faith-based organisations have been a source of suffering for some people, practice leans into a trauma-informed approach and is responsive to the physical, mental, and emotional cues of an individual.

Faith-informed practice is person-centred and upholds an individual's right to choose every aspect of their support. It emphasises:

- **A strengths-based approach that supports people to develop their own understanding of faith and spirituality according to their needs and abilities**
- **Recognition that every person has a unique experience and deserves to feel heard and valued regardless of their alignment with the theology or practices of The Salvation Army**

<sup>75</sup> Note: this section is courtesy of the work being undertaken in Queensland as part of the Queensland Homelessness Stream Agenda priorities through the FaithInformed Practice Working Group led by Major Emma Johnson

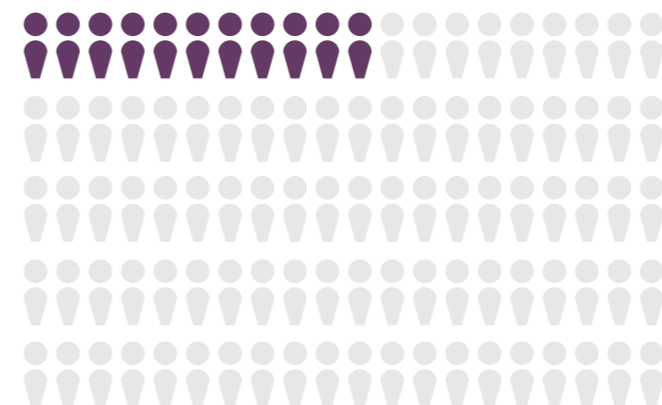
- **Engagement with people in a way that is culturally safe, demonstrating sensitivity towards cultural practices, language, religion, and spirituality**
- **Inclusive language and behaviours that promote healthy professional relationships with all people regardless of age, ability, gender, income, sexual identity, social status, religion, or spirituality**
- **Collaboration with the wider Salvation Army and other faith-based organisations to provide relevant information, access to services, resources, and pastoral support**

### LGBTIQA + Inclusive

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual: we affirm the rights of the people who identify through this evolving (hence '+') acronym, which represents people's expression of their own gender, sexuality, and sexual characteristics*

LGBTIQA+ is a term encompassing a broad and evolving representation of human sexualities, gender identities, and variations of sex characteristics. These are defined not only through research and evidence, but also through the lived experience and self-affirmation of people's continuing history of advocacy and challenge to repressive and restrictive laws, moral codes, and community attitudes.

**Up to 11 in 100 Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity**



**In 2011 there were 6,300 children living in same-sex couple families. 9 in 10 are in female same-sex couples families**



The term LGBTIQA+ itself is not exhaustive, there are many other terms and expressions used by people to identify across a spectrum of sexuality, sex characteristics and gender experiences. The terms are frequently expressed differently, and is often contested from both within and external to represented communities.



### Acknowledging harms and marginalisation

The Salvation Army's Social Mission LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Framework recognises that:

*LGBTIQ+ people have experienced marginalisation and oppression over many generations. Homosexual relationships were decriminalised federally in 1973, though equality, visibility, and safety has been slow to follow ... In 2017, the Australian public voted in a plebiscite which affirmed marriage equality. While this has resulted in a positive change towards LGBTIQ+ equality, the debate which preceded the vote highlighted ongoing homophobia, transphobia, and cis- and hetero-sexist views in our community.<sup>76</sup>*

Structural violence and harassment	arising from homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia, and explicit discrimination
Structural ignorance and unconscious bias	including heteronormativity and/or cisgenderism, often manifesting as assumptions of heterosexuality and/or misgendering
Personal experience	high risk factors including family conflict, childhood sexual assault, younger age of first homeless episode, mental health, and substance issues

### Rights, respect, and dignity

Sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status are all protected attributes in countries, including Australia, that are signatories to the International Convention on

Human Rights. This is as a result of the adoption in 2017 of the Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10 (Principle 33: The Right to Freedom from Criminalisation and Sanction based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression or Sex Characteristics).<sup>77</sup> In Australia, this is enshrined in law under the federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984, as well as state and territory statutes and laws: for example, Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 1995.

Key factors contributing to high rates of experiences of homelessness by LGBTIQ+ communities and people include<sup>78</sup>:

Essential to both affirming and affording respect and dignity to the lived experience of people, our services provide a high standard of service in line with The Salvation Army's Diversity and Inclusion Policy,<sup>79</sup> which confirms:

- **Fair, equitable, constructive, and respectful engagement**
- **Elimination of both direct and indirect discrimination**
- **Behaviours, processes, and procedures that support diversity and inclusion**
- **Equality and merit-based decisions across the employment/engagement cycle**
- **Equitable access to services and support that is responsive to individual need**
- **Establishing and maintaining an effective complaints management process**

Underpinned and supported by:

- Established practice, policy, and legislative requirements, including The Salvation Army's Social Mission Inclusive Practice Framework and Inclusive Practice Procedure
- Providing services in line with Rainbow Tick Standards
- Respectful engagement with LGBTIQ+ people through workforce training, and development opportunities and initiatives, understanding that everyone should be correctly affirmed, recognised, and information recorded in their personal records in line with how they identify
- Providing LGBTIQ+ safe and welcoming spaces and environments, including prominent display of LGBTIQ+ resources, posters, and materials

*Practical responses to homelessness among the communities in which we live take the elements described in the Model of Care and apply them to situations at hand and the varied circumstances and situations in which people find themselves in any given context.*

<sup>76</sup> The Salvation Army Social Mission LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Framework  
<sup>77</sup> International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) 2017  
<sup>78</sup> McNair, R & Andrews C 2020  
<sup>79</sup> The Salvation Army Australia 2022, Inclusion, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/inclusion/>

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