



Strategic Plan 2024–2029

Together we can end homelessness in Victoria

Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is the peak body representing organisations and individuals in Victoria with a commitment to ending homelessness.

Our role is to lead in action, build power through collective voice and uplift capability for the sector. It is a big role, but one we are ready for.

As a member-based peak we are not doing this alone. We are here with, for and alongside the specialist homelessness sector. We are here to complement and support other social service sectors looking to address some of the key drivers of homelessness. We are always here to listen, respond and lead action for positive progress.

This strategy is a guide for the next five years. It focusses on delivering impact that will see reform in the homelessness service system and build power in the specialist homelessness sector, demonstrated by a shared advocacy agenda for the sector, a stronger membership proposition and people with lived experience in more positions of influence.

This strategy sets out a plan for five years but lays foundations and delivers action that will go on well beyond this timeframe.

We are here to end homelessness in Victoria and together we know it can be done.

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Acknowledgement of Country

Council to Homeless Persons acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work.

CHP’s office is located in Collingwood, on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations. CHP’s work is focussed across all Victoria – the lands of many different Aboriginal people across thousands of generations.

CHP acknowledges the pride, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and we pay our respects to Elders, past and present.



Our commitment to diversity and inclusion

Council to Homeless Persons is committed to providing an inclusive, safe, and respectful association and work environment, free from discrimination, harassment and racism.

We recognise the impacts of inequity and discrimination and strive to remove the barriers these create.

We appreciate and celebrate diversity in all its forms and believe diversity of all kinds makes communities stronger and more effective.

Always was. Always will be.



Our commitment to reconciliation

Our vision for reconciliation is an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures across the country are valued and respected.

We acknowledge that the significant over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness is a direct and enduring consequence of colonisation.

Housing instability and homelessness are an ongoing barrier to reconciliation.

CHP envisages an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is meaningfully achieved, where all specialist homelessness services are culturally safe and responsive, and where the structural forces that can lead to homelessness do not impact disproportionately on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Our vision
An end to homelessness in Victoria.

Our purpose
To work with, for and alongside the specialist homelessness sector to co-create, support and deliver on the solutions to end homelessness in Victoria.

We believe...

- ◆ homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring.
- ◆ self-determination is the pathway to ending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness.
- ◆ ending homelessness is possible.
- ◆ homelessness is the outcome of structural inequity and inequality.
- ◆ in diversity, equity and inclusion for every Victorian.
- ◆ a collective voice for the sector will build more power, have more influence than any single voice alone.
- ◆ people with living and lived experience are crucial experts in ending homelessness.
- ◆ an equipped and resourced specialist homelessness sector can help us end homelessness.

Strategic Plan 2024–2029 Summary on a page



Our 5 year goals...

Action in the homelessness system

- ◆ a unified sector, clear on our focus to end homelessness in Victoria.
- ◆ meaningful system reform that builds the capacity to end & prevent homelessness, with a particular focus on over-represented communities.
- ◆ recognition of the voice of lived experience as a crucial and influential mechanism for change.

Achieved by:

- ◆ leading a shared sector advocacy agenda to end homelessness, building the profile of priority issues across the broader community.
- ◆ elevating the profile of lived experience to strengthen their agency in decision-making environments.

Power in the Specialist Homelessness Sector

- ◆ CHP is a valued, powerful & influential peak, and a trusted partner for other social service sectors looking to tackle the causes of homelessness.
- ◆ SHS is capable, equipped and resourced to end homelessness.
- ◆ Lived experience and the voices of over-represented groups are empowered to influence change.

Achieved by:

- ◆ evolving CHP's member model to strengthen engagement, building sector capacity by strengthening CHP's professional learning & development programs, & ensuring their financial sustainability.
- ◆ role modelling representation throughout CHP in the way we work and the work we do.

About Us

Since 1972, Council to Homeless Persons has worked with specialist homelessness services to lead and support advocacy, capability, and action to end homelessness.

Over this time, homelessness hasn't ended. In places and for parts of our community, the situation has only become worse. But in our work with the sector we have also seen great progress, and our belief remains that an end to homelessness is achievable.

The work is not done, and while that is the case we will continue working with our members towards our goal to end homelessness.

We do this through strong partnerships with people who have lived experience of homelessness. We do this by recognising sound evidence, and using this in combination with the voice of lived experience to inform and guide decisions about policy and practice.

We operate a Peer Education and Support Program (PESP) to provide those with lived experience the opportunity to play a key role, with agency and power, to contribute to the transformation of the homelessness system. We publish Australia's national homeless publication Parity, examining homelessness from personal, local, social, and global perspectives. We always seek to bring the sector together behind a shared agenda for action, using individual organisations' strengths to build power in the collective.





Purpose – Our Why

To work with, for and alongside the specialist homelessness sector to co-create, support, and deliver on the solutions to end homelessness in Victoria.

Our purpose is to be a significant contributor and leader in ending homelessness in Victoria. This means we exist to be at the table where relevant decisions and discussions are happening, to drive reform for and of the sector, to elevate the voice of living and lived experience, to be part of building the capacity needed to deliver on solutions.

We are here to lead, build power, and uplift capability, so that individually specialist homelessness services are stronger to deliver their services, and collectively the sector is unified behind a shared agenda to end homelessness in Victoria.

Our role is ‘what we do’. It is the everyday and practical focus on which we deliver with, for and alongside the specialist homelessness sector.



To be leaders

in action through policy development, advocacy, and representation in places of influence and decision-making.



To build power

by capturing and positioning the collective voice of specialist homelessness services and elevating those with lived experience of homelessness, building their agency to tell their story and influence for change.



To uplift capability

across the specialist homelessness sector, enhancing expertise by providing educational and professional development opportunities, and collaborating to support and build the sector workforce.

These beliefs guide our work. They influence how we go about our role and are our compass for how we'll deliver our strategy over the next five years.



We believe...

- ◆ for every Victorian, any experience of homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- ◆ self-determination is the pathway to ending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness.
- ◆ access to a safe and secure home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of all people, families, and communities.
- ◆ ending homelessness is possible.
- ◆ homelessness is the outcome of structural inequity and inequality.
- ◆ in diversity, equity, and inclusion for every Victorian.
- ◆ a collective voice for the sector will build more power, have more influence than any single voice alone.
- ◆ people with living and lived experience are crucial experts in ending homelessness.
- ◆ an equipped and resourced specialist homelessness sector can help us end homelessness.

The people at the centre of our strategy

We exist to end homelessness for all Victorians, but we recognise that there are a number of groups within our community that are over-represented in the homelessness system. We know that some face greater structural inequity than others. We know from our work and that of our sector and partners that to help people who most need access to safe and secure housing, we need to keep them and their needs at the centre of our strategy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians: A priority group, where housing targets need to be supported by culturally appropriate systems, practices, and accommodation types.

Older Victorians: Require stable, fit-for-purpose accommodation to allow for aging in place. The private rental market is insecure and can be unaffordable. The social and affordable housing system needs to consider accessibility.

Young people: Require housing and services that are focused on their long-term development. Options that build independence and support transitions from out-of-home care are required throughout the state.

People with disabilities: Require a range of social, affordable and market available housing options. Crisis accommodation and rooming houses are particularly inappropriate for people with disabilities.



Women: Urgently require housing and services. Older women, victim-survivors of family violence, single mothers, and women from multicultural backgrounds are particularly at risk and need greater access to crisis and long-term housing.

Low-income and key workers: Require access to social housing, affordable rental accommodation, and home ownership options.

People experiencing mental distress: Need access to appropriate and supportive housing options with wraparound support services. This is essential as poor mental health is a risk factor for homelessness and homelessness can lead to the deterioration of a person's mental health.

People in periods of transition: Critical moments where people often need the most support. Relationship breakdowns and transitions from the justice system, out-of-home care and health facilities leave people particularly at risk.

Regional Victorians: Urgently need more affordable housing with investment in both transitional/crisis housing as well as long-term rental accommodation.

LGBTIQ+ Victorians: Acknowledging that members of the LGBTIQ+ community are twice as likely to experience homelessness. There is a need to address gaps in knowledge and better embed inclusive practice among mainstream homelessness

Access to a safe and secure home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of all people, families, and communities.

With this belief at the heart of what we do, we need to always take note, understand and be responsive to the external context that prevents, limits, and threatens this belief.

The society we live in is continually changing, influenced by domestic and international events, and impacted by the very environment around us. This matters and has played an important role in informing the strategy for the next five years.

Strategy Context



Social, economic, and environmental crises.

The social, economic, and environmental landscape is constantly changing and impacting every part of our lives. This has been prevalent in the years leading up to this strategy with the global health pandemic, international conflict, and significant natural disasters – all of which are changing how we live, where we live and our very access to a place to live. Global pressures impact our local communities, and need a local response. As a member-based peak, we must listen and be ready to adapt to ensure we stay relevant in our actions and in the solutions we advocate for.



The cause of homelessness is too often misunderstood.

In Victoria, the top reasons for people seeking homelessness and housing support are structural rather than personal. Often a number of compounding factors occur concurrently. This includes poverty and financial difficulties; family and domestic violence; and lack of affordable homes. Requests for assistance are increasing in their thousands year-on-year, meaning we need our work to be about the whole system.



A workforce under pressure.

Pressure on the homelessness workforce is not new. However, the pandemic; changing work practices; emerging technology; economic pressures; and high expectations have led to a point where many SHS practitioners are burnt out or struggling. In response, we need to think differently about the future workforce and how the sector engages and supports its people, as well as attracting, retaining, and developing new talent.



Competitive and political landscape.

Whether it is for funding, workforce, or exposure amongst the noise of so many things going on and people trying to gain attention and traction, there is competition. In some contexts, it can be healthy. In others, it exacerbates challenges and can limit collaboration and impact. We need to acknowledge this competitive environment, our role in it, and the impact on our members. As an advocate, being political is critical to our role. But it also means knowing when to lead, when to complement and when to step away.



The work is important.

Too many in the Victorian community are without a safe and secure home. There are many structural and systemic reasons driving this, from the availability and affordability of homes, to the limited supports available to prevent people from experiencing homelessness. There needs to be a systemic response not just from our sector, but the many others seeking to address the drivers that all too often lead to homelessness. The work we do alongside the specialist homelessness sector is essential. It must always be person-centred, led by evidence and informed by lived experience. Finally, the work we do should at times be wider than Victoria, stepping up to have a presence in national campaigns and advocating federally, especially in light of the national homelessness strategy.



Our next five years

Council to Homeless Persons is heading into this strategy from a position of strength. It is a trusted and well positioned organisation. This is important to recognise as the next five years consists of building on its existing value and impact, alongside listening and responding to members, the sector, those with lived experience, and the wider community.

The next five years are about delivering. Delivering on a unified and shared agenda for action. Delivering on the actions and solutions that will make significant progress towards ending homelessness in Victoria.

We have purposely set an ambitious agenda and know together we can deliver real progress.



Vision – Our Hope

An end to homelessness in Victoria.

Our vision is to achieve an end to homelessness. This is a community that looks beyond just the “home”. It is about the supports needed to help people to stay in a safe and secure home. Our work is to positively influence the availability of safe and secure homes for everybody, as well as the supports needed to keep them in one. It is a vision that acknowledges the complexity of homelessness and the need to address structural inequity in a number of systems that lead to homelessness.

The impact we make matters. Over the next five years, we are focussed on leading meaningful outcomes. Outcomes that will see action in the homelessness system, and will build power in the specialist homelessness sector.



This strategy sets out what we want to achieve, or make significant and measurable progress towards, within five years.

1. Action in the homelessness system.

This means...

- ◆ Together the sector is unified and clear on our collective and individual focus to end homelessness in Victoria.
- ◆ There is meaningful system reform that builds the capacity for delivering on the solutions to end homelessness, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are over-represented in the homelessness system.
- ◆ The voice of lived experience is recognised as a crucial and influential mechanism for change in the homelessness system.

2. Power in the specialist homelessness sector.

This means...

- ◆ CHP is a valued, powerful, and influential peak for the homelessness sector, as well as a trusted partner working alongside other social service sectors looking to tackle the causes of homelessness.
- ◆ The specialist homelessness sector is capable, equipped and resourced to deliver on what is needed to end or prevent homelessness.
- ◆ People with lived experience and over-represented groups in our sector are supported and empowered to influence change. They have agency in their role and recognition in our structures.

1. To support action in the homelessness system, we need to...

... work with and alongside our members with a shared agenda. We need to be collaborating with and influencing partners across social and community service sectors. We need to be in the right discussions to lead reform. We need to elevate the voices of lived experience as a critical tool in determining better approaches and outcomes.

These strategies bring this focus to life...

1.1. System advocacy.

Together with the specialist homelessness sector we will create, evolve, and lead a shared advocacy agenda to end homelessness, and bring together members in shared advocacy action. This will be informed by lived experience and central to CHP positions, actions, and focus.

1.2. Reform action.

We will lead and support action for meaningful and practical reform. We will build profile of priority issues (informed by our shared advocacy agenda) across the broader Victorian community, government, influencers, and decision-makers through direct and indirect engagement and campaigns.

1.3. Elevate living and lived experience.

We will build the profile of people with lived expertise to raise awareness of their role and impact, to strengthen their position in government and at the tables and forums of discussion and support the continued building of agency in these roles.

These strategies are the focus for our work. They are not just the business as usual within our existing funding; they are the priorities we have highlighted as key drivers for impact. They are not delivered or worked on in isolation; they connect with and complement each other.

Progress and success in these strategies is...

- ◆ CHP has the continued authority and legitimacy through its members to represent a shared advocacy agenda for the specialist homelessness sector; leading and supporting relevant conversations, campaigns, and action; and seen and valued across stakeholders within and external to Government.
- ◆ CHP has demonstrable 'wins' in its advocacy and reform action, that build profile and awareness of the issues that matter to our sector in the pursuit to end homelessness in Victoria.
- ◆ Those with lived experience, in particular those from over-represented groups in the homelessness sector, have a greater voice and more power within positions of influence.

2. To build power in the specialist homelessness sector, we need to...

... be a valued and influential peak, with trust, connection and understanding with members. We need to be a support to the sector through high quality professional learning and development programs. In our choices about how we work and what we work on, we need to be leaders: role models for how we represent the diverse community we fight so hard for.

These strategies bring this focus to life...

2.1. Member evolution.

We will evolve and strengthen CHP's membership model with a focus on engagement and connection to and between members, and the development of a clear, shared commitment with and for the sector.

2.2. Sector capacity.

We will continue to strengthen CHP's professional learning and development programs based on listening to sector need and the emerging challenges and opportunities for services. Alongside this we will explore ways to ensure the programs' financial sustainability so as to be able to continue to support and uplift capability across the sector for long-term impact.

2.3. Sector representation.

We will role model representation throughout the organisation in the way we work and the work we do. This will encompass CHP governance ensuring diverse representation, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and the strengthening and development of appropriate policy and practice that provides a safe and inclusive environment for everyone to work, engage, be connected and to succeed.

Progress and success in these strategies is...

- ◆ That every member is better connected to and understands what we are focussed on, and is committed through their active engagement in their membership.
- ◆ CHP has a strong financial position. Funding that is diverse to provide agility in decision-making, meaning we can keep testing different approaches to action and have some time to see what does and doesn't work.
- ◆ Professional development and learning programs are financially viable and are focussed on meeting the prioritised needs of the specialist homelessness sector and its workforce.
- ◆ CHP has embedded representation within its governance, team, and practice. Reflecting and bringing to life the voices of diverse communities and ensuring their relevance, self-determination, and agency in delivering on solutions to end homelessness.

Enablers – Supporting Our strategy

These are the foundations and tools we need to deliver on this strategy. Each of these enablers needs strategic action to happen. Each of these are needed to make meaningful progress towards our vision.



Relevant and sustainable.

We will explore opportunities to diversify revenue and stay at the forefront of thinking and action in the sector. This is to ensure we have strong member engagement and the flexibility and security to help deliver on member and specialist homelessness sector outcomes.

Equipped and supported CHP team.

Our people are our most important asset. Over the course of this strategy, we will commit to continued investment in our individual and collective strengths, culture and supporting systems.

Engaged and unified specialist homelessness sector.

A focus on all members' connection to us and to each other, from right across Victoria. Investment in the tools, resources, and membership environment where members are open to sharing data, knowledge and learnings and are active in backing the peak's representative voice.

Collaboration within and beyond the sector.

We will partner and collaborate with people and organisations across and beyond the sector to strengthen influence; learn what is happening, working, and not working; and to be positioned to act and work towards addressing systemic problems.



Monitoring Progress

We are committed to making progress.

To do so we acknowledge the importance of meaningful measures of progress. Over the next five years, we will monitor this strategy through the identification, tracking and reporting of practical and meaningful measures.

This will encompass measures that help us understand our progress in delivering the work and action we have committed to; to understand how our advocacy, partnerships and member support are delivering demonstrable change; and how this change is contributing towards tangible progress in ending homelessness in Victoria.

Our measures will be embedded in our operational plans and be continually reviewed and refined, at least annually, over the next five years to ensure that they are capturing the right information, supporting valuable insights, helping guide future work and, ultimately, informing good decision-making.



Together we can end homelessness.

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Join our community online:

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