SUMMARY

Towards an Equitable and Inclusive Housing System for All

Housing—a platform for embedded healthcare, cultural, community and family services.

BRISBANE ALLIANCE
TO END HOMELESSNESS

Solving homelessness by taking the steps we need towards a future where homelessness being rare and brief is the norm, not the exception.

We are all committed to the prevention, reduction and end of homelessness in Brisbane.

Local Collaborators

Partners and Mentors

We acknowledge Queensland Government investment into housing and homelessness services in Brisbane and all partners and stakeholders who have contributed to the learnings in this paper.

Towards an Equitable and Inclusive Housing System for All

Housing — a platform for embedded Healthcare, Cultural, Community and Family Services.

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This paper and summary bring together our journey and thinking about how we continue the progress made to end homelessness in Brisbane. It reflects conversations, practice wisdom, feedback from people with lived experience, policy makers, practitioner's experiences and ideas. And is informed by international, national, and local evidence—based practice, including emerging practices, to the ever changing economic and social circumstances of a city such as Brisbane. This is a place-based reflection and experience. We have worked with Community Solutions USA and a national community of practice through the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness in developing the Brisbane Zero Project.

During COVID the public health directive to stay at home resulted in temporarily ending rough sleeping on the streets of Brisbane. People in overcrowded housing were also given an option of a safe place to stay. Over the months we witnessed the demand for housing and unmet needs for services in a very different way to business as usual. We have reflected on the data analysis of people surveyed using a common triage tool VI-SPDAT and Brisbane Know by Name List.

There are many learnings and opportunities which we have attempted to document as we have adapted from the Built for Zero methodology in the USA, which has also been effective in Canada. The paper is calling for more investment to increase supply of affordable housing, the creation of a supportive housing system, and investment into community services to mitigate the rise of homelessness and end homelessness for many more people who are currently living without a home. We acknowledge the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness in Brisbane.

We acknowledge and thank all our collaborators across Government and Non Government Organisations.

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Our proposed statement of purpose in moving beyond COVID

By 2025 homelessness in Brisbane will be widely understood as solvable, with favourable conditions in place that will improve outcomes for individuals, women and children, and families regardless of age, gender, cultural background, identity, diversity of need, capacity and any circumstances that impact on their lives. This will happen by creating opportunities to access housing, healthcare, cultural and community services.

As a collective we are committed to reducing the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness, reducing overall homelessness, and ending rough sleeping in our city.

Government departments, elected officials, policy makers and community organisations responsible for housing, healthcare, corrections, child protection, domestic violence, mental health and drug and alcohol services, aged care and disability services will be able to demonstrate improved integration and collaboration through measurable progress in preventing, reducing and ending homelessness across al age groups and population groups with diverse and specific needs.

Government—national, state, and local—with responsibilities will be equipped to track and report on progress in Brisbane. Healthcare institutions will have a clear role in this work, as we all work together to ensure public policies across all sectors adapt and change to accelerate progress towards ending homelessness and promoting health equity in Brisbane.

We will work together towards creating an equitable, safe and inclusive housing system for all as a platform for embedded healthcare, culture, child and family and community services through the Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness and all other collaborative efforts sharing the same goals.

This work will measure progress for individuals, families, women and children as well as policies and system change to make homelessness a rare, brief and non reoccurring experience in Brisbane.

We will track our collaborative effort through the number of organisations that are involved.

We will count how many individuals and families are experiencing homelessness, how many are housed, how many sustain their tenancy and/or return to homelessness to ensure we learn what needs to improve and/or create.

We will identify and learn new skills and technologies to measure our progress and for continuous improvement of our services and systems, including advocacy to address the need for greater supply of affordable housing and community services.

We will identify and report on how we adapt and how we change processes, policies and practices to achieve the shared goal of solving homelessness.

Housing is the critical foundation for a better life, stability and opportunity.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic there is no doubt that unless mitigating investment is made, homelessness will significantly rise, and many women and children will have no choice but to remain in homes that are unsafe: living with domestic violence.

We need government investment to provide:

- affordable housing to citizens who are employed
- public and social housing for people on low incomes
- a supportive housing system to provide housing with secure tenure and with services enabling people with multiple needs, capacities and abilities to sustain tenancies and have a quality of life in the community.

Housing First System Goals

Stop homelessness before it happens.

Create systems tailored to populations' needs, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led housing responses.

Match people with housing, healthcare and community services.

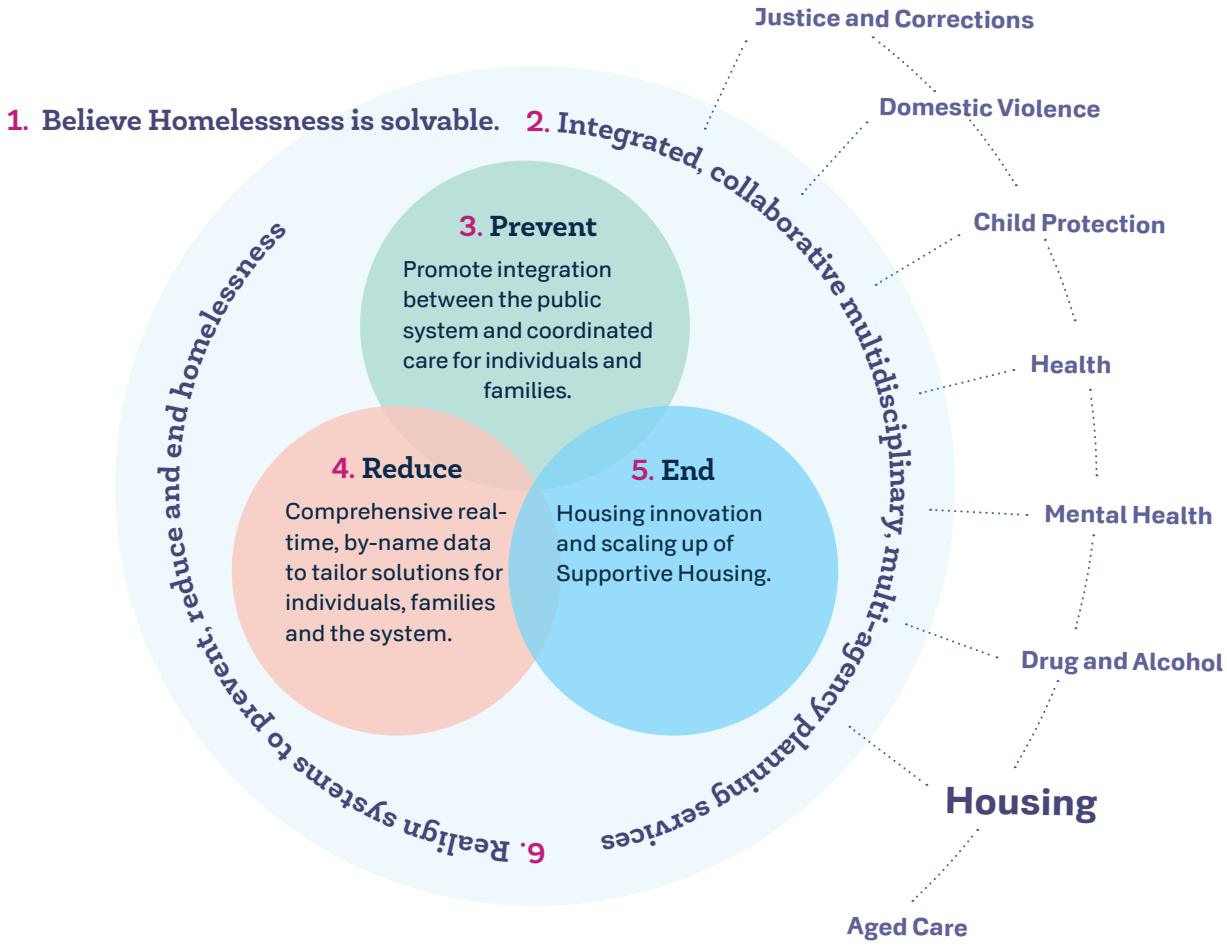
Know who is homeless and monitor their safety and risk.

Create access to long-term housing.

Systems improvement design and evaluation, including voices of lived experience.

Six Strategies

to create a more equitable, safe and inclusive housing system



Solving homelessness by taking the steps we need towards a future where homelessness being rare and brief is the norm, not the exception.

What we have learnt—along with adapting the learnings and approaches from other cities nationally and internationally—contributes to the identification of six clear strategies to support the most vulnerable and contribute to our work together in creating a more equitable and inclusive housing system for all.

1. **Believe homelessness is solvable by shifting systems** to achieve the shared goal of ending homelessness.

2. **Scale up** multi-sector leadership and investment to prevent, reduce and end homelessness by, in turn, scaling up supply of housing and services.

3. **Prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies** through improving coordination between public systems and specialist homelessness and domestic violence services to stop inflow of people into homelessness.

4. **Reduce homelessness with a data-driven approach** by maintaining a by name list of every person and family in the community who is homeless. This informs matching individuals and families needs with housing and services and tracking state of homelessness in our community.

5. **End Homelessness** by creating a supportive housing system through data-informed housing innovation, partnerships and systems change. This requires overall supply of social and affordable housing to be increased.

6. **Realign systems** through collaboration across government and with the NGO sector to plan and align housing services with need and resources.

The Brisbane Context*

This data has been collected through the VI-SPDAT—a common triage tool—over 12 months (2020-21). It provides insight into the multiple needs and systems that impact on people who experience homelessness. It provides a starting point for the planning and leadership required for the journey towards making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring in the lives of individuals, children and families.

Aboriginal + Torres Strait Islander Housing and Response

25% identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

28% of Heads of Household identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Mental Health + Substance Use

276 people reported being taken to hospital against their will.

84% had at least one mental health condition.

69% had experienced trauma.

67% used substances.

Families + Children

Average **2.8 years** homeless.

In the 6 months prior to the survey...

8% had a child removed by child protection services.

26% had a child living separately with another family member.

21% had a tri-morbid family member.

Women's health, safety + security

33% individuals and **30%** families disclosed having experienced Domestic Violence.

Social + Supportive Housing

67% of individuals and

79% of families identified multiple needs with high acuity scores.

Healthcare + Community Services

44% of individuals, and **55%** of families, disclosed having a chronic health condition.

Disability + Accessibility

11% of individuals, and **5%** of families, have a physical disability that limits mobility.

19% of individuals have an intellectual disability.

Justice

59% of individuals and **56%** of families disclosed having interacted with police within the 6 months prior to service engagement.

28% of individuals and **13%** of families disclosed having been held in custody within the 6 months prior to service engagement.

* Data based on analysis of VI-SPDAT data for Individuals (n=725) Families (n=264)

Balance the Investment

towards ending homelessness

Current investment in Social Housing (2020 – 2021)

$411.387M

Current Capital Expenditure

Queensland Budget Paper 2020–2021

$979M	Hospitals
$590.4M	Youth justice and public safety
$195.2M	One new prison

$822M

Balance the scales with double the investment in Housing to increase the supply of Supportive and Social Housing which will reduce reliance on Hospitals, Prisons and Juvenile Justice as starting point.

+ $67.32M

investment in healthcare, cultural, family and community services

$4M new investment piloting a community-managed assertive treatment outreach team for people with dual diagnosis (mental health + AOD + chronic disease).

$20M new investment two-generational family support and early childhood programs to support families to remain together.

$300k new investment for community care in-home and social connections.

$520k for NDIS connectors.

25% of funding to Aboriginal and Torres-Strait Islander managed services.

$24.6M maintaining COVID investment specialist homelessness and housing services.

$7.9M maintain COVID-19 investment integrating healthcare (mental health + AOD + chronic disease) with housing and homelessness services (Queensland Health).

$10M new investment to enhance healthcare with drug and alcohol (Queensland Health) in housing, homelessness and DV services.

Collective Impact

A timeline of campaigns

2001

179 people sleeping rough

2006

310 people sleeping rough

2010

2011

2011

98 people sleeping rough

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2016

216 people sleeping rough

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

Census Data 2001–2016

676 people surveyed using VI-SPDAT tool.

222 people housed

40 organisations collaborated as part of the campaign

2,638 people surveyed using VI-SPDAT tool

580 people housed

32 organisations collaborated as part of the Coalition to End Homelessness

1,012 people surveyed using VI-SPDAT tool

339 people housed between campaigns

1,832 people placed in emergency housing due to COVID-19 easing the number of people couch surfing or rough sleeping.

906 people surveyed using VI-SPDAT tool

42 organisations collaborated as part of the campaign

541 people assisted to access permanent housing: with others resolving/accessing housing with their own resources

271 people still in temporary accommodation

170 people sleeping rough

We have been strengthening our efforts to end homelessness. Setting targets was helpful, collaboration was key... but we have further to go to end homelessness.

50 Lives, 50 Homes | 2010-2013

By focusing on the most vulnerable people experiencing chronic homeless, our 50 lives 50 Homes campaign was successful in housing high above our targets.

500 Lives, 500 Homes | 2014-2017

After the close of 50 Lives, 50 Homes, the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign extended to families including women and children leaving domestic violence, boarding houses and rough sleepers.

The **580** households permanently housed, included **373** individuals and **207** families including **430** children (almost half under five).

Brisbane Alliance to End Homelessness | 2018 – present

Brisbane Zero including COVID-19 response | 2020 – present

Over the past two years we have been working on learning the *Built for Zero* approach which counts towards our ultimate goal: **ZERO**. In other words, that any episode of homelessness is a rare, brief and non reoccurring event.

Through effective collaboration and leadership, this approach has shown results during COVID-19.

We asked 906 individuals experiencing homelessness in Brisbane...

What do you need to be safe and well?

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For more information, see brisbanezero.org.au

Document Co-ordinated by Karyn Walsh.

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