

ORDINARY MEETING 25 JANUARY 2023	12
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CAIRNS LGA SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN 2023-2026

Rachel Wicks | 52/2/4-01 | #7107535 |

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

Endorses the Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2023-2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Consistent with the experience of other regions across the state and nationally, the Cairns LGA has been experiencing increasing levels of housing distress over recent years, spanning the community housing and private property markets (rental and ownership). With varied and compounding drivers underpinning this trend, including the sustained impacts of COVID-19, in November 2021 Council engaged in a focussed discussion on mitigation strategies. It was acknowledged that the situation was most profoundly affecting vulnerable groups and that Council had varying degrees of influence over different parts of the housing market.

The housing market is a significantly complex system and there are many components of it that impact on the affordability, supply and availability of the various housing types that exist. Research suggests that the contemporary housing market exists in a continuum – spreading from private market housing to government delivered housing options. Within this continuum, there are many different iterations of housing types and this forms the basis of the approaches to action contemplated within the Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 (CSAHHP).

In March 2022 following further discussion, Councillors supported an approach to develop a Housing and Homelessness strategy to outline its position in relation to bolstering diverse housing outcomes in the Cairns LGA. It was proposed that officers investigate a full suite of non-statutory social, economic, and financial policy and statutory planning levers within the local planning scheme (CairnsPlan 2016 v3.1).

In November 2022, Council considered a draft of the CSAHHP. The Plan outlines Council's position on a range of drivers and desired housing and homelessness outcomes. The document covers a raft of interventions aimed at facilitating responses to issues affecting supply, affordability, access, and tenancy sustainment. The approach acknowledges that responsibility for achieving positive outcomes across the housing continuum is a shared one and requires collaboration across the three tiers of government, the community services sector, and the private market.

The measures include formalising Council's existing initiatives and propose additional options for consideration. The measures are framed by housing segment or cohorts most affected and span both Council-delivered initiatives as well as a range of advocacy opportunities. Council will seek to champion these advocacy positions through external partners and peak bodies.

Once endorsed, individual measures of significance will be investigated for further consideration prior to commencement. The Plan will be monitored, and progress reported to Councillors annually prior to a more formal review in 2026.

BACKGROUND:

Consultation with Councillors via three workshops: 24 November 2021, 30 March 2022 (during which Councillors agreed to progress a specific Housing and Homelessness strategy), and 30 November 2022.

The Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 outlines Council's position in relation to housing and homelessness by advocating for, stimulating, incentivising, and facilitating diverse housing affordability and availability options.

The CSAHHP applies the Housing Continuum model (the spectrum of housing types available intended to be responsive to all needs – from crises (non-market temporary; non-market permanent) to private ownership (market permanent), with a particular focus on those segments intended for people most in need.

In its approach, the CSAHHP acknowledges that:

- A collaborative approach is required across the three tiers of government, community services sector and industry to ensure the range of housing products needed (across all private and non-market segments) to meet the level of housing demand (and anticipated need).
- That private rental and home ownership within the private market is most influenced by free market forces and State and Federal Government regulation. Council influences these arrangements within Council's planning scheme, that seeks to influence the range of supply, location, mix and style of housing in the Cairns LGA.
- Those most affected by housing insecurity and homeless are vulnerable groups and households on very low and low incomes, who are largely excluded from the private market. These households are most dependent on public, social and affordable housing types that are provided and/or subsidised by State and Federal Governments. Local Government can contribute to these parts of the housing continuum through non-statutory levers (social, economic policy and planning levers). It is these arrangements that are the focus of the CSAHHP.

COMMENT:

Based on feedback from Councillors, Officers have investigated and outlined a suite of operational, policy and planning measures, together with a range of advocacy options that Council can progress over the next four years.

Once endorsed, based on the proposed completion schedule (Section 4 of the Plan), Officers will work to prioritise the range of measures and present considerations back to Councillors for endorsement. Officers will monitor ongoing progress and provide advice back to Councillors on significant emerging needs, trends, or barriers to implementation.

Option 1: (recommended):

Endorses the Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2023-2026.

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 and requests further information from Council officers before reconsidering this matter.

CONSIDERATIONS:**Council Finance and the Local Economy:**

Implementation of the Plan's core responses will be incremental. The order will be based on a prioritisation of need, resourcing availability and as external opportunities arise (e.g., State and Federal policy and funding announcements).

This process will be completed by each area of Council responsible for response options. Lead areas will undertake a detailed review of the implications of progressing measures and will include stakeholder consultation. Significant considerations will be presented to Councillors for consideration and endorsement.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The Plan has relevance to the following strategic goals in Council's Corporate Plan:

1. Design of Liveability
2. Robust Economy
3. Community and Culture.

Links to other strategic documents includes Cairns LGA Community Safety Plan (CBD Pilot) 2022-2026 and the Cairns COVID-19 Local Recovery Plan 2020.

Carriage of the CSAHHP sits with Lifestyle and Community, who will monitor implementation. This includes an annual review to assess ongoing alignment with priorities and relevance to trends and undertaking a formal review every four years – in line with the Corporate Plan.

CONSULTATION:**Development of the Draft CSAHHP:**

1. Three engagement sessions with Councillors – between November 2021 and November 2022.
2. Incremental consultation occurred across Council units including Planning, Growth and Sustainability (joint workshops and content development); Finance and Business Services; Community Life; and Disaster Management – including integration with other Council planning processes.
3. Informal external engagement with Chair and Co-Chair Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network.

Ongoing Development:

1. Additional engagement with internal and external stakeholders will be carried out as part of the incremental development and implementation of core responses.
2. Significant matters will be presented to Councillors for endorsement prior to implementation.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026

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CAIRNS LGA SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

PLAN
2023-2026

Contents

Acronyms.....	4
Acknowledgements	5
Executive Summary	6
PART A: Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 Framework	8
1. Introduction.....	8
2. Development Approach and Scope	10
2.1. Development Approach.....	10
2.2. Scope of the CSAHHP.....	10
2.2.1. Links to Other Plans.....	12
3. Overview of Housing and Homelessness.....	13
3.1. The Housing Continuum	13
3.2 Defining Affordability	13
3.3 Social and affordable housing as essential infrastructure.....	15
3.4 Profile of Social and Affordable Housing.....	16
3.4.1 Cairns LGA Profile	16
3.5 Defining Homelessness.....	17
3.6 Drivers and Trends.....	18
3.6.1 Cairns LGA Profile	19
3.7 Benefits of Reducing Homelessness.....	21
4. The Housing and Homelessness System.....	23
4.1 Role of the Three Tiers of Government.....	23
4.2 Local Government’s Role in the System	25
4.3 Role of Human and Social Community Services	26
4.4 Comparison of Local Government Approaches.....	28
PART B: Core Response and Advocacy Options.....	30
1. Overview	30
2. Core Response Options	31
CRO 1.1: Local Planning Scheme (CairnsPlan 2016 v3.1) - Provisions for Social and Affordable Housing	31
CRO 1.2: Provisions for All Hazards	31
CRO 1.3: Health and Social Impact Assessment	31
CRO 1.4: Local Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing	32
CRO 1.5: Financial Relief for Social and Affordable Housing Providers.....	32
CRO 1.6: Regional Social and Affordable Housing Development Forum.....	33
CRO 1.7: Community Housing and Specialist Homelessness Sector Capacity.....	33
CRO 1.8: Cairns LGA Community Resilience Strategy.....	33

CRO 2.1: Coordinated Outreach and Service Policy	34
CRO 2.2: Early Intervention Specialist Support Service	34
CRO 2.3: Green Waste Hardship Policy for Vulnerable Residents.....	34
CRO 2.4: Insurance Vulnerabilities – Structural Non-Compliance.....	35
CRO 3.1: Coordinated Outreach and Service Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness.....	35
CRO 3.2: Public Space Management Protocol.....	35
3. Core Advocacy Options.....	37
CAO 1.1: Formalise Local Government Involvement in the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council	37
CAO 1.2: Extension of NRAS (or Similar) Housing Support Program.....	37
CAO 1.3: Increase State Investment and Joint Planning in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing	38
CAO 1.4: State Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing.....	38
CAO 1.5: Planning System Reforms - Review of the State Planning Scheme, Far North Queensland Regional Planning Scheme 2009-2031 (FNQRP), and Associated Regional Infrastructure Plan.	38
CAO 1.6: Community Engagement - Cultural Change and Social Acceptance	39
CAO 1.7: Regional Workforce Strategy – Incorporating Housing.....	39
CAO 2.1: Addressing Insurance Vulnerabilities – Under and Un-Insured Households.....	39
CAO 3.1: Diversionary Services: Extension of Night Diversionary Capacity	40
CAO 3.2: Diversionary Services: Establish a Day Assertive Outreach Rest and Recovery Program	40
CAO 3.3: Diversionary Services: Establish a Pro-Social Activation Program – Adults Cultural Mentoring	40
CAO 4.1: Coordinated Exit Processes – Health.....	41
CAO 4.2: Feasibility Study In-Reach Homelessness Coordination Program	41
CAO 4.3: Coordinated Exit Processes – Institutional Living.....	41
CAO 4.4: Expansion of Crises Accommodation – Young Women.....	41
CAO 5.1: Coordination of Transient Populations.....	42
CAO 5.2: Coordination Mechanism - First Peoples.....	42
4. Overview of Core Response and Core Advocacy Options and Proposed Completion Schedule.....	43
References.....	45

Acronyms

AIHW	Australian Institute Health Wellbeing
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
CAO	Core Advocacy Options
CASS	Cairns Alliance of Social Services
CCWG	Case Coordination Working Group
CCVYP	Case Coordination of Vulnerable Young People
CHHI	Cairns Housing and Homelessness Integration Initiative
CHHN	Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network
CSAHP	Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan
CHP	Community Housing Provider
CSP	Community Safety Plan
CRDVS	Cairns Region Domestic Violence Service
CRO	Core Response Options
DCYJMA	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
DCHDE	Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy
DVPO	Domestic Violence Protection Order
DFV	Domestic and Family Violence
H&H	Housing and Homelessness
H&PIT	Homelessness and Public Intoxication Taskforce
H&S	Human and Social
JCU	James Cook University
LGA	Local Government Area
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
MA	Mission Australia
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia
QCOSS	Queensland Council of Social Services
QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
SIM	Sector Integration Mechanism
SVDP	Saint Vincent De Paul Society
UDIA	Urban Development Institute of Australia

Acknowledgements

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of our region, the Djabugay; Yirriganydji; Bulawai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples.

We extend this respect to all Elders past, present and future, and other First Peoples within our region.

Council also expresses its appreciation to the region's human and social services and acknowledges their expertise and invaluable contributions toward the implementation of the CSAHHP and addressing housing and homelessness in the Cairns LGA.

Version Control

Version	Endorsed
Version 1 – 21 st October 2022 (Rachel Wicks, Coordinator Community Resilience)	

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Executive Summary

This Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 outlines Cairns Regional Council's position in relation to responding to issues of housing and homelessness in the Cairns LGA.

The CSAHHP recognises that Local Government plays a critical role in advocating for, stimulating, incentivising, and facilitating diverse housing affordability and availability options. The particular focus of the CSAHHP is on those vulnerable groups most excluded from mainstream housing options and who are over-represented in the data. This includes those households on very low and low incomes, as well as those on middle incomes who are increasingly being displaced from the housing market. This displacement is increasing pressure across the housing system.

The CSAHHP applies the Housing Continuum model (the spectrum of housing types available intended to be responsive to all needs – from crises (non-market temporary; non-market permanent) to private ownership (market permanent), with a particular focus on those segments intended for people most in need.

As the private market is most influenced by State and Federal regulation and free market forces, the CSAHHP focusses on both statutory as well as broader non-statutory measures to facilitate outcomes – social, financial and broader policy, program and planning measures. Accordingly, the report outlines a suite of Core Response Options that focus on fully exploring and exploiting available levers supported by a range of Core Advocacy Options that Council will seek to champion over the next four years. This includes the principles and values underpinning this work.

Framed around cohorts of need and segments of the Housing Continuum most effected, the scope of Core Response Options (CRO) and Core Advocacy Options (CAO) include:

Cohort 1: Universal	
CRO 1.1	Local Planning Scheme Provisions for Social and Affordable Housing
CRO 1.2	Provision for All Hazards
CRO 1.3	Health and Social Impact Assessment
CRO 1.4	Local Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing
CRO 1.5	Financial Relief for Social and Affordable Housing Providers
CRO 1.6	Regional Social and Affordable Housing Development Forum
CRO 1.7	Community Housing and Specialist Homelessness Sector Capacity
CRO 1.8	Cairns LGA Community Resilience Strategy
CAO 1.1	Formalise Local Government Involvement in the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council
CAO 1.2	Extension of NRAS (or Similar) Housing Support Program
CAO 1.3	Increase State Investment and Joint Planning in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing
CAO 1.4	State Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing
CAO 1.5	Planning System Reforms – Review of the State Planning Scheme, FNQ Regional Planning Scheme 2009-2031 (FNQRP), and Associated Regional Infrastructure Plan.
CAO 1.6	Community Engagement – Cultural Change and Social Acceptance
CAO 1.7	Regional Workforce Strategy – Incorporating Housing

Cohort 2: At Risk Residents	
CRO 2.1	Coordinated Outreach and Service Policy
CRO 2.2	Early Intervention Specialist Support Service
CRO 2.3	Green Waste Hardship Policy for Vulnerable Residents
CRO 2.4	Insurance Vulnerabilities – Structural Non-Compliance
CAO 2.1	Addressing Insurance Vulnerabilities – Under and Un-Insured Households.
Cohort 3: People Sleeping Rough	
CRO 3.1	Coordinated Outreach and Service Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness
CRO 3.2	Public Space Management Protocol
CAO 3.1-3.3	Diversionary Services – Extension of Night Diversionary Capacity; Establish a Day Assertive Outreach Rest and Recovery Program; Establish a Pro-Social Activation Program – Adults Cultural Mentoring
Cohort 4: People Transitioning from Care	
CAO 4.1; 4.2	Coordinated Exit Processes – Health; Feasibility Study In-Reach Homelessness Coordination Program
CAO 4.3; 4.4	Coordinated Exit Processes – Institutional Living; Expansion of Crises Accommodation – Young Women
Cohort 5: People Experiencing Hidden Homelessness	
CAO 5.1	Coordination of Transient Populations
CAO 5.2	Coordination Mechanism – First Peoples

PART A: Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 Framework

1. Introduction

Adequate, safe, and secure housing is a cornerstone of community health, wellbeing, productivity and functioning. A home is also a fundamental and universal human right. Housing is also critical infrastructure in terms of creating upward social and economic mobility. The role of housing and links between housing access, health status, economic participation and individual opportunity is well evidenced (COA, 2016; UI, 2022; NHFIC, 2020; QShelter, 2021; AIHW, 2022).

Research demonstrates that Local Governments across Queensland are facing key challenges related to levels of housing distress and homelessness. However, despite recent escalations fuelled by a range of complex and interrelated forces – including the impacts of COVID-19 and related stimulus measures - there is also broad acknowledgment that the current situation is not a crisis, nor a short-term disruption (JCU, 2021; Eslake, 2022).

Rather, there is general agreement that this chronic stressor is the culmination of long-term structural failures, unaddressed levels of social and

economic inequality and disadvantage, and market failure. This includes a sustained underinvestment in essential infrastructure including social and affordable housing by consecutive state and federal governments (JCU, 2021; QCOSS, 2021; FNQROC, 2022; Eslake, 2022).

While the full magnitude of the problem is unknown, it is clear that the situation is undermining the effective health, wellbeing, functioning, and long-term resilience of regions and populations' abilities to withstand future disruptions or shocks. The impact is most acute for vulnerable cohorts and responses must also recognise that homelessness rarely occurs in isolation. Rather housing and homelessness are complex issues, and certain groups (women and children, youth, First Peoples) and health concerns (family and domestic violence, mental health, disability, age-related) are over-represented in the data. The result is a legacy of highly visible, frustratingly entrenched, and complicated issues for local communities to manage (CoM, 2020; CRC, 2021).

'60 Years of Housing Failure'

"What governments of both persuasions have done over recent decades have pursued policies that have added to upward pressure on prices and added to the decline in rates of home ownership."

(Saul Eslake, 2022).

'More people are now renting and renting for life'

"An increasing number of people who rely on rental properties in the private market for life are struggling. It's an intense struggle to find something and secure that property. The competition is something we haven't seen before."

(Fiona Caniglia, CEO QShelter, 2022).

While recognising that the private market is most influenced by State and Federal regulation and free market forces, Local Government plays a critical role in advocating for, stimulating, incentivising, and facilitating diverse housing affordability and availability options. This occurs through both statutory local planning schemes, as well as broader non-statutory measures. The Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 (CSAHP) outlines Cairns Regional Council's position in relation to its contribution to responding to housing duress and homelessness in the Cairns LGA (PIA, 2022; QShelter, 2020).

While the CSAHP acknowledges the need to consider the efficacy of the broader Housing Continuum and the need to reduce reliance on any

one segment, the focus of the CSAHP is primarily on social and affordable housing and those most in need of support. Accordingly, the majority of consideration is given to those measures most likely affected by non-statutory interventions and the potential role of Council and contributing partners.

The CSAHP describes a range of measures that seek to leverage financial, program, service, and planning mechanisms both within Council and externally. The measures are aimed at stimulating supply, access and sustaining tenancies, service coordination, sustainability, and risk reduction. It is proposed that these responses are delivered through a mix of non-statutory, social, and economic policy, planning and advocacy initiatives.

2. Development Approach and Scope

2.1. Development Approach

Development of the Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homeless Plan 2023-2026 (CSAHHP) has been based on an iterative process over the past 12 months. This included:

- ✚ A self-audit to establish an internal baseline of Council contributions to addressing housing and homelessness.
- ✚ A comprehensive literature review to inform a comparative analysis of best practice approaches across LGAs - Queensland and Nationally.
- ✚ An affordable housing consultation forum with specialist housing and homelessness services, agencies, and peak bodies.

- ✚ Desk top reviews focussed on understanding contemporary frameworks aimed at reducing homelessness by the human services sector and current policy and advocacy platforms of state and national peak bodies, Local Government, and agencies (QShelter, 2021; CRC, 2021; 2022).

The CSAHHP is intended to be a living document, responding to emerging trends, drivers, and policy environments. This approach seeks to account for the cross-sectoral and multi-tiered system in which responsibility and support for housing and homelessness sits. This includes future iterations being informed by and leveraging from formal policy setting processes underway.¹

2.2. Scope of the CSAHHP

The geographic scope of the CSAHHP is primarily the Cairns LGA. However, the porous characteristics of the drivers and effects of housing and homelessness, including the mobility of affected cohorts and the nature of Cairns as a service hub, requires that a regional lens is applied. Accordingly, consideration is given to regional issues and opportunities that span neighbouring LGAs and are captured in cross-regional planning approaches.

In this regard, the CSAHHP also considers engagement needs across other tiers of government (Queensland and Australian), Local Government collectives, the human and social services sector and private industry.

In developing the CSAHHP, Council has applied the widely accepted 'Housing Continuum' model that describes the spectrum of housing types available

(adapted from CHMC, 2018; NWC, 2016) (refer Figure 1). The continuum represents the span of housing from crises driven (non-market temporary; non-market permanent), targeted at vulnerable groups, through to housing options afforded to those with increased capacity (market permanent).

Those policies targeted to 'non-market temporary' and 'non-market permanent' fall outside of Council's regulatory planning system. It is these non-statutory interventions - social policy, planning, financial - and the vulnerable groups they support that are the primary focus of the CSAHHP.

In this way, the scope of the CSAHHP aligns with and contributes to Council's vision for a more inclusive, equitable and resilient LGA and delivers on corporate goals related to improved lifestyle and liveability, including increased levels of

¹Processes include the pending Queensland Government's Regional Housing Strategy that incorporates the Cairns LGA, as well as Council's development of the Towards 2050 Growth Strategy that incorporates a housing needs assessment and supply study. This study will incorporate social and affordable housing for the first time. The growth strategy will ultimately inform the review of the Cairns LGA planning

scheme and will influence the range of supply, location, mix and style of housing in the Cairns LGA. The Social and Affordable housing data obtained as part of the Towards 2050 project will inform the settlement pattern to ensure there is sufficient land available for housing to meet the needs of the population and provide sufficient choice, affordability, and access to appropriate housing.

wellbeing and amenity (refer 2.2.1 Links to Other Plans).

The CSAHHP is focussed on operational and strategic responses and is not intended to provide a comprehensive profile of Housing and Homelessness across the LGA. Rather, the CSAHHP will form a sub-plan of Council’s overarching Community Resilience Strategy, which will include an in-depth study of chronic regional stressors.²

The CSAHHP is structured into two sections. The first providing an overview of the housing and homelessness system, including the local context, and the second focusses on responses.

It is intended that the CSAHHP undergo an annual review to ensure it remains responsive to emerging needs, and a formal review every four years.

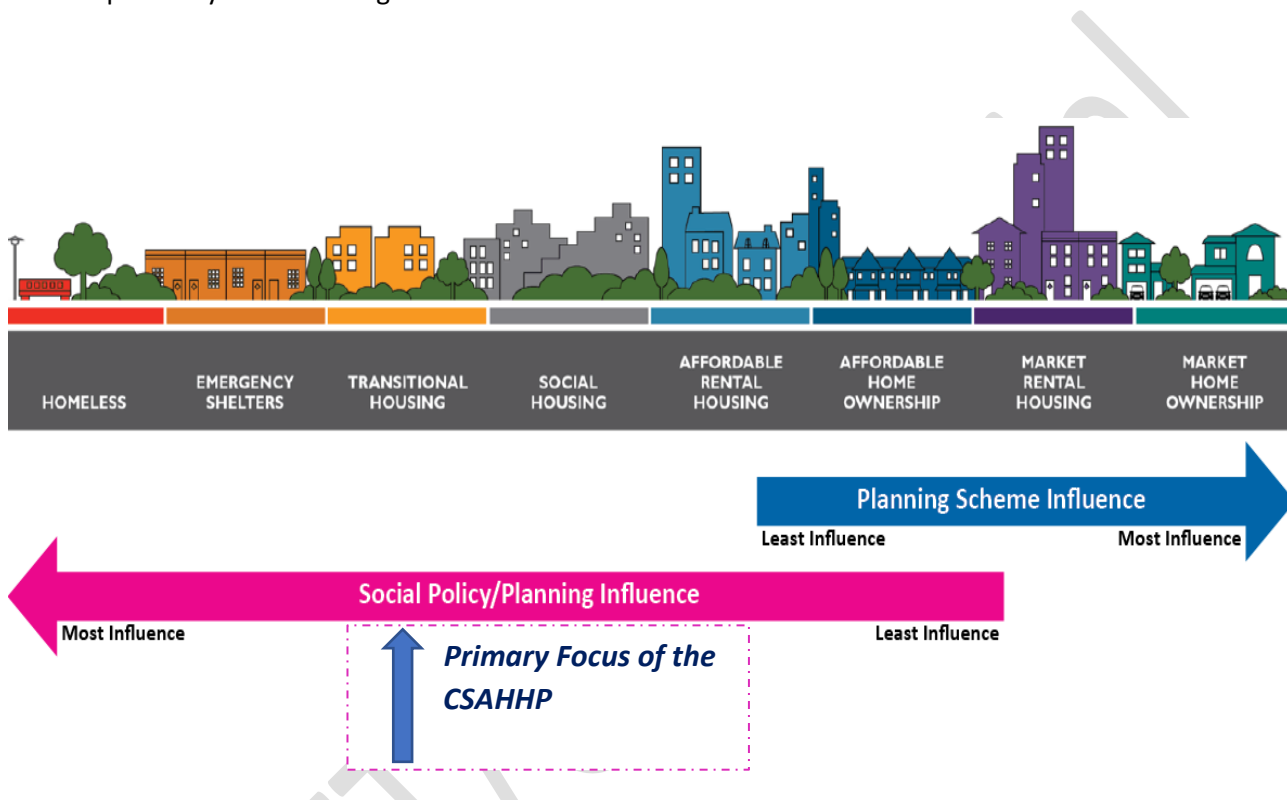


Figure 1 – Local Government Influence Across the Housing Continuum – Focus of the CSAHHP (adapted from CHMC, 2018, NWC, 2016).

² Council aligns with the Resilient Cities framework in its social policy and planning. The framework supports holistic approaches to building community resilience in the face of complex and intersecting challenges effecting the long-term health and wellbeing of societies and their ability to reduce susceptibility to impacts both during times of disruption and ongoing. Importantly this includes the undermining effects of chronic social stressors – homelessness, mental health, domestic violence, climate change – serious conditions that become amplified during adverse events (including acute shocks) and hinder a community’s ability to rebound and thrive.

The framework integrates economic, physical, and social dimensions and emphasises their interdependence.

This approach acknowledges that focussing on the most vulnerable cohorts results in universal benefits, particularly in times of crises. Council is also a role model city under the United Nations Making Cities Resilient Campaign (100RC, 2019; CoM, 2022; UN, 2018).

Council’s statutory planning arrangements are mandated by Queensland Government planning policy.

2.2.1. Links to Other Plans

The CSAHHP links to and incorporates shared objectives across a number of Council-related strategies (and emerging strategies), through which aspects of housing and homelessness are considered.

Organisational Strategies include:

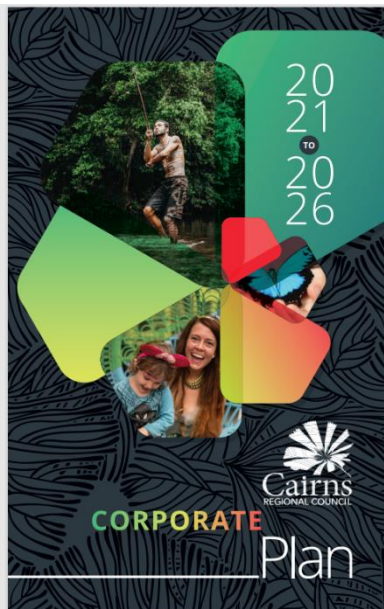
- ✚ Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026.
- ✚ Cairns LGA Community Safety Strategy (CBD Pilot) 2022-2024.
- ✚ Cairns Regional Council Economic Development Strategy (2022-2026).
- ✚ Shared Vision Cairns 2050.

- ✚ Cairns LGA COVID-19 Local Recovery Plan, 2020.
- ✚ Cairns Regional Council Community Resilience Strategy (under development).
- ✚ Our Cairns Coast: Coastal Hazards Adaptation Strategy 2022.

Regional Strategies include:

- ✚ LGAQ Advocacy Action Plan 2022, FNQROC 2022.
- ✚ Wet Tropics Regional Resilience Strategy, QRA 2022.

The CSAHHP will ultimately form a sub-plan of Council's overarching Community Resilience Strategy, together with the community safety plan, community development plan and other targeted social policy areas.



Our focus

Creating a safe, sustainable and connected place that supports a quality life.

Strategies

- Proactive advocacy and collaboration with state and federal governments
- Address opportunities for sustainable travel choices
- Enhance community wellbeing, safety and natural disaster resilience
- Deliver valued suburban community infrastructure
- Deliver contemporary land use planning that supports growth, liveability and sustainability

Key performance indicators

- Improved feeling of community safety and wellbeing
- More people choosing sustainable transport options
- Improved connectivity of cycleways and footpaths

Cairns Regional Council's overarching Corporate Plan includes goals related to enhancing liveability, wellbeing, and community safety.

3. Overview of Housing and Homelessness

3.1. The Housing Continuum

The Housing Continuum is one framework that represents the spectrum of housing options available to a community (adapted from CHMC, 2018; NWC, 2016). For the purposes of the CSAHHP, this representation includes the housing types from non-market transitional, to non-market permanent, to market permanent (refer Figure 2).

Within this model, the continuum represents the span of housing from crises driven (non-market temporary), through to housing options afforded to those with increased levels of capacity (market permanent) (refer Figure 3). This latter end of the spectrum, 'market permanent' is largely influenced by both statutory and free market forces that together drive housing supply and affordability. As legislated by the State Government's planning

scheme, these considerations are primarily codified within Council's local regulatory planning scheme and associated policies, which aim to influence housing supply and diversity overall.

At the other end of the spectrum are those people largely marginalised from the private market and forced to rely on various forms of supported and/or subsidised housing or have a heavy dependence on properties at the lower end of the private rental market. Policies targeted to these groups span 'non-market' and 'non-market permanent'.

This overall system intends to account for the needs of all members of society, including responding to their welfare needs during times of adversity (COA, 2016; QShelter, 2022).³

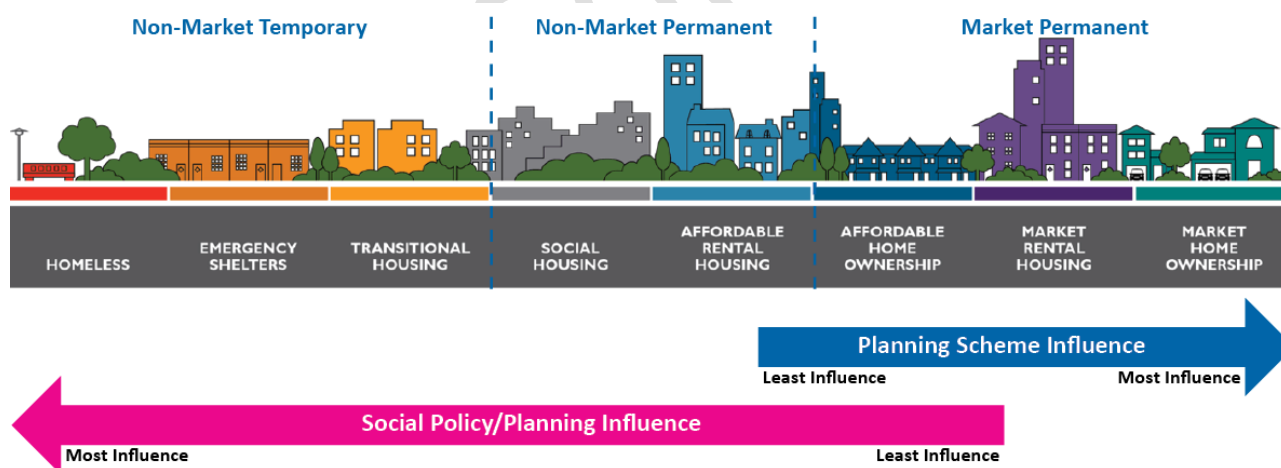
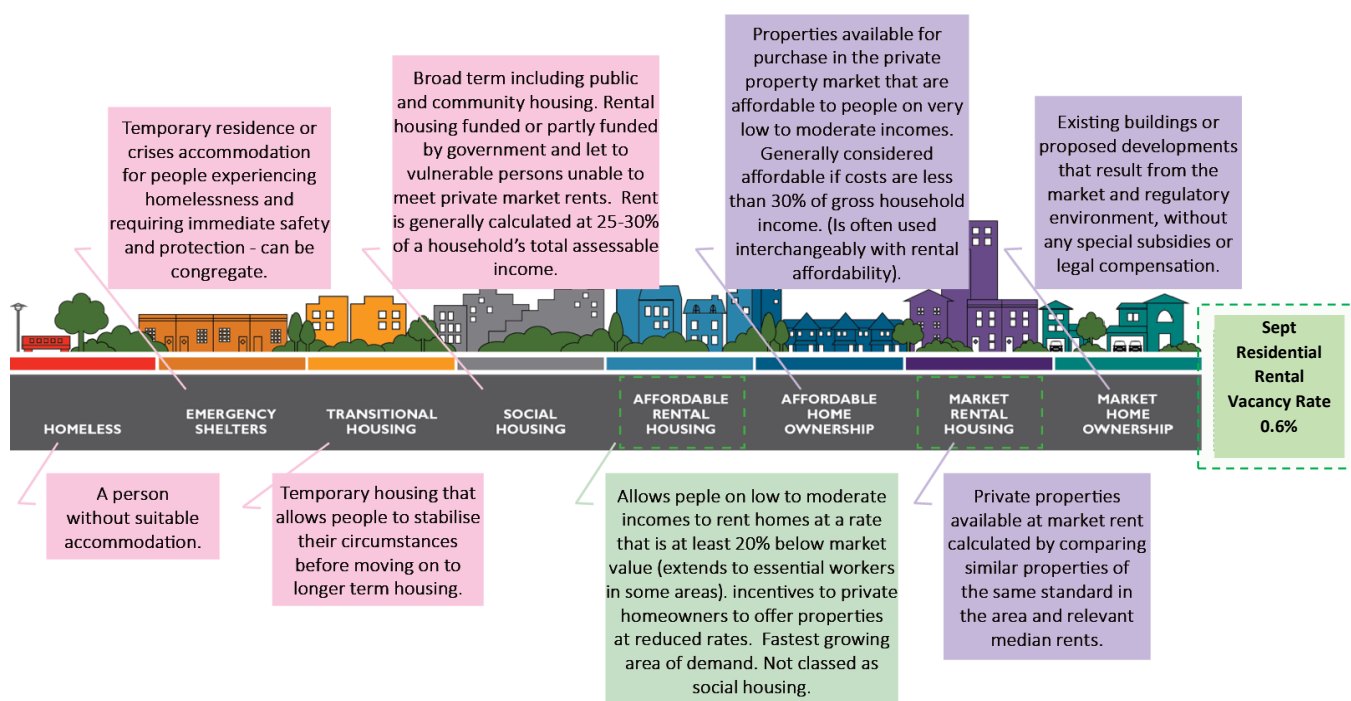


Figure 2 – The Housing Continuum – Market Types and Local Government Influence (adapted from CHMC, 2018; NWC, 2016).

³The Housing Continuum provides a linear representation of the range of options available. Concerns exist that while this framework proposes to represent the ideal progression of housing as part of social inclusion and upward social mobility, the model does not represent the true progression of people's experience or desires. In reality, there is no linear movement through the continuum, rather people move

in response to changing circumstances – personal (e.g., health), structural (e.g., supply) and macro-level (e.g., COVID-19). Nor does the model account for people's individual desires. For example, desires for safety and security may be met via the private rental market as opposed to ownership or sleeping rough may appear as choosing to remain homeless or having adapted to this state (IHA, 2017; AIHW, 2021; GA, 2022).

Figure 3 – The Housing Continuum – *Housing Options* (adapted from CHMC, 2018; NWC, 2016).



3.2 Defining Affordability

References to affordability can have a different meaning depending on its application along the Housing Continuum. For the purposes of the CSAHHP, the following definitions relate to 'Affordability', recognising the relationship of influence between them (AIHW, 2021; Azmi and Bujang, 2021).

Affordable Housing, as compared to Housing Affordability, is defined as:

- ✚ 'Affordable housing' will be defined as the range of subsidised housing products that are affordable to those on low to moderate incomes and experiencing housing stress. Dwellings are usually available through some type of housing assistance program.⁴⁵⁶

✚ 'Housing affordability' will be defined as the relationship between expenditure on housing (e.g., prices, mortgage, rents) and household incomes. This a general concept applied to the housing market to measure the range of household incomes that can, and cannot, afford appropriate housing in various locations. Applies largely to non-market permanent segments (AHURI, 2011, 2012; CoA, 2016; AIHW, 2022; QShelter, 2018).

Affordability measures include:

- ✚ The 'Residual Income' approach, which considers whether the cost of housing impedes a household's ability to meet other basic needs.⁷

⁴As distinct from Social Housing, this term includes public and community housing (QShelter, 2018).

⁵Research indicates that affordable housing is 'a significantly underdeveloped segment' within the continuum - the 'missing' middle (CoA, 2016).

⁶While often referred to as subsidised housing, the circle of support is far broader and includes policies, programs or services that are not subsidised or aimed at those on very low to low incomes (AIHW, 2021).

⁷ This approach acknowledges that definitions are culturally bound and geographically located, dependent on a household's financial situation, housing demand, tenure type, and cultural acceptance. Those on the lowest incomes (lowest 40% of households) have the least capacity to respond to drastic changes in circumstances – the 30/40 rule (AIHW, 2022).

- ✚ The 'Ratio' approach, in which the cost of rent is compared to a household's income.

It is generally accepted that housing costs should not exceed 30% of a household's gross income. Expenditures above this level are described as 'Housing Stress' or 'Rental Stress' – that can either be temporary, ongoing and/or severe (AHURI, 2011, 2012; COA, 2016; QShelter, 2018).

Affordable housing reduces the amount of a household's income that is needed for rent, leaving money for other necessities.

Estimates are that with inflation at a 32 year high, households on low to median incomes are spending between 30% and 50% of household income on rent.

(Core Logic, 2022; QShelter, 2022; QCOSS, 2022).

3.3 Social and affordable housing as essential infrastructure

Adequate housing is a cornerstone of community health, wellbeing, functioning and prosperity. A safe and secure home is also a fundamental human right. As a key determinant of health, the role of housing and links between housing costs and exclusion, health status, social participation and connection, and the level of opportunities afforded in a person's life are well established (QShelter, 2021; AIHW, 2022).

Economically, housing is a driver of participation and productivity as well as consumption, investment, and savings in the economy and is essential to enabling upward social and economic mobility. Exclusion from housing is a key indicator of levels of inequality and inequity within populations and undermines a region's economic potential (COA, 2016; QShelter, 2021; AIHW, 2022).

However, the events of the past several years, including the impact of COVID-19 in reshaping patterns of migration and employment, rapidly escalating cost of living pressures, and stimulus fuelled heating of the housing market, have exposed a housing system under duress across the state and nationally and amplified the focus on all forms of housing as essential infrastructure (JCU, 2021; CRC, 2021; SGS, 2021; QShelter, 2022).

In this context, the inability of the free market to meet the needs of all people without government intervention is clear. This is particularly the case for the most vulnerable in society – those on welfare or in the lowest wage brackets. The importance of social and affordable housing, crises

accommodation and tenancy support services have never been more acute as the numbers of people experiencing homelessness increase and communities grapple with the scale of the problem (Anglicare, 2021; CHHN, 2022; QShelter, 2022).

In addition, to structural policy that has had inflationary effects and displaced many from the private rental and property markets, sustained underinvestment in social (including public) housing by consecutive State and Federal Governments has had an equally devastating effect (Eslake, 2022; QShelter, 2022; QCOSS, 2021).

"Decades of underinvestment by governments in 'non-market' housing has led to social housing numbers falling to record lows."

(SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

Despite an increase of 25% in the national population from 1996, over the past decade Queensland has had no net increase in public housing. Federal Government funding has also failed to keep pace with need - \$1.6b compared to \$2b 10 years ago.

The result, a 2% drop in national social housing stock from 6% in 1996 to 4% currently.

(SGS, 2019; QShelter, 2021; CHHN, 2021; CRC, 2021).

3.4 Profile of Social and Affordable Housing

Data indicates an overall nett decline in social and affordable housing provision over recent decades, despite increasing demand. From 1997 to 2018 the proportion of public housing tenants halved nationally from 6% to 3% (SGS, 2021). The Australian Productivity Commission reports that while some 400,000 households nationally currently reside in social housing, there are a further one million people in need (PC, 2022).

Across Australia, analysis estimates that over one million new homes will be needed for people on very low and low incomes by 2036 (Constellation Project, 2020 cited PIA, 2022).

3.4.1 Cairns LGA Profile

For the Cairns LGA, social housing makes up 4.5% of rental housing, representing approximately 5,200 properties (October 2022), and the average wait time for access is 11 months.⁸ In this context, the level of current under supply is gauged at approximately 5300 homes with some 2100 people waiting on the local register of need for social housing. Of this group, some 87% are high or very high needs (JCU, 2021; DCHDE, 2021; 2022; CHHN, 2022).

Research indicates that an additional 11,500 dwellings will be required by mid next decade. As of June 2021, an additional 326 dwellings had been added to the portfolio (refer Figure 4) (JCU, 2020; 2021; DCHDE, 2021; 2022; CHHN, 2022).

Within the 2021/2022 budget, the State Government announced plans for 234 new

This includes 200,000 additional affordable homes and 730,000 new social housing dwellings (in addition to current wait lists) (Gurran *et al.*, 2018 cited PIA 2022).

AHURI research predicts these additional social housing dwellings will cost between \$146,000 to \$614,000 per dwelling dependent on location (AHURI, 2020; 2022).

QCROSS estimates that Queensland is experiencing a shortfall of homes for some 50,000 people based on current levels of need (QCROSS, 2022).

properties (comprising a mix of units and houses) for the Cairns region over the next four years with additional supply expected through the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative (DCHDE, 2021).

Levels of Housing Stress within the Electorate of Kennedy (inclusive of Cairns LGA) include rental stress levels of 17.6% and mortgage stress levels of 46.5% (EH, 2021). Reports also indicate that the region is experiencing significant labour shortages, particularly across essential workforces (including health and social services and service industries among others) due to a lack of housing affordability and availability (CASS, 2022; CHHN, 2022).

Reports indicate that this combination of effects is leading to an escalation in levels of housing stress and homeless (CASS, 2022; CHHN, 2022).

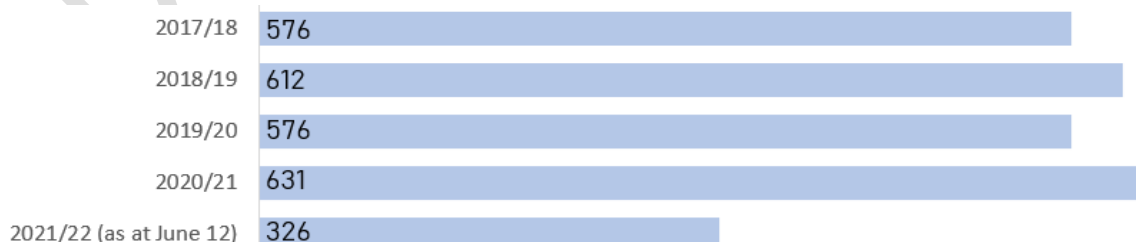


Figure 4 – FNQ Social Housing Construction Including Cairns LGA 2017-2022 (DCHDE, 2021).

⁸ Reports indicate that wait times for social housing can be up to four years (QCROSS, 2022).

3.5 Defining Homelessness

People can be at risk of homelessness or become homeless due to a range of factors, often occurring at the same time. These are due to personal, structural or at times, macro-level drivers. Being homeless can take many different forms depending on a person's circumstances.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines homelessness as occurring when:

"A person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- ✚ Is 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."

(ABS, 2012).

Categories of homelessness include:

- ✚ **Primary homelessness** is experienced by people without conventional accommodation (e.g., sleeping rough, tents, cars or in improvised dwellings);⁹
- ✚ **Secondary homelessness** is experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another (e.g., emergency accommodation, youth refuges, 'couch surfing' within other households); and

⁹ Also referred to as 'Rooflessness' (ACH, 2022).

¹⁰ People living in situations of couch surfing or overcrowding for example, is often called 'hidden homelessness', unlike other forms of more visible homelessness. Due to the lack of visibility, the numbers of people living in these forms of homeless are likely under-estimated. It is estimated that for every visible homeless person, there are another 13 that are not seen (CHP, 2022; MA, 2020).

- ✚ **Tertiary homelessness** is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (e.g., overcrowding, boarding housing, caravan parks or other temporary lodgings) (CACH, 2001).¹⁰

Within these categories, among other terms, people often may be classified as:

- ✚ **Rough Sleeping:** This form of homelessness includes those with no shelter or who are living in non-conventional accommodation. This includes living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting, staying in cars or railway carriages, living in improvised dwellings, or living in the long grass. Often this sleeping rough occurs in public spaces (although may occur on privately owned land), and this group are then sometimes referred to as Public Place (or Space)

Dwellers. This group may include people who are transient (at times referred to as 'itinerant') (HA, 2022; AIHW, 2016; Memmott et al., 2003).¹¹

- ✚ **Chronic Homelessness:** Chronic Homelessness is described in terms of duration and recurrence of periods of homelessness. Those experiencing this sustained form of homelessness have generally been living without housing for a period of 12 months or at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. People in this category are often linked to rough sleeping, substance use, mental illness

Homelessness is not Rooflessness'

A 'home' must have a sense of:

- Security
- Privacy
- Safety
- Control of one's living environment.

(ABS, 2012).

¹¹ It is accepted that at times persons sleeping in public spaces may have a dwelling ('home') either in another area of the same community or in another community. Persons may reside in this way intermittently or for an extended period of time. People may have a cultural preference for sleeping in the open, also called informal camping (Memmott et al., 2003).

and high levels of engagement with emergency and specialist services. Chronic homelessness is also much more frequent among men than women (Farrell, 2010; Flatau *et al.*, 2021).

Further to this, it is recognised that people can experience situational and episodic homelessness – states that reflect degrees of instability for those generally residing in permanent housing (refer Figure 10).

3.6 Drivers and Trends

Homelessness is a complex issue, and those people experiencing homelessness often identify a range of compounding causes. Within this cohort there is evidence of the over-representation of some groups, including women, women with children, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people with chronic health needs (CHHN, 2021; CASS, 2022).

Those most impacted are women head of households (including those with children fleeing domestic violence), people with a disability (age-related, physical, and psychological), and young people (including young parents) among others. The data also increasingly highlights the plight of older Australians, including growing numbers of women over 50 (CHHN, 2022; QCOSS, 2022, QShelter, 2022).

Domestic violence is a key driver of homelessness for women and children, and youth, with 1.5% of the population experiencing domestic violence and two-thirds of cases resulting in relocation (Deloitte Access Economics, 2021). Reports also indicate that nationally some 31% of people experiencing homelessness have a mental health concern and live with complex co-morbidities. Health data also highlights that this group are frequent presenters to emergency departments (AIHW, 2019; CASS, 2022).

AHURI estimates that around 1.3 million households Australia wide are in rental stress.

By early 2023, the Reserve Bank of Australia estimates 1 in 4 households will be experiencing mortgage stress.

(AHURI 2019 cited AIHW, 2021; SGS, 2019; ABC, 2022).

“Homelessness is not a choice. Homelessness is one of the most potent examples of disadvantage in the community, and one of the most important markers of social exclusion.”

(Department of Human Services, 2002).

Traditionally it those households on very low and low incomes that are most exposed to housing insecurity. However, across the country property prices have been at an all-time high in some areas over the past two years and growing rental demand and constrained supply have resulted in an extremely competitive rental market. Housing is currently tracking above 7% inflation and combined with broader cost of living pressures is affecting a range of affordability measures (SGS, 2021; PIA, 2022; SQM, 2022; CHHN, 2022; Core Logic, 2022) (refer Figure 5).

The result is a widening degree of vulnerability from non-traditional cohorts facing housing instability and exclusion, unable to meet market prices. This includes those in low-medium wage brackets and essential workforces. Data indicates that demand from low- and middle-income earners is particularly acute in high amenity and job rich settings and regional areas are particularly severe. These areas are now at their most unaffordable in the period measured by the Rental Affordability Index (SGS, 2021; PIA, 2022; SQM, 2022; CHHN, 2022; QShelter, 2022; QCOSS, 2022).

People experiencing homeless often face significant challenges. People with lived experience describe having no sense of safety and stability, a loss of routine (including personal care), feelings of hopelessness and depression.

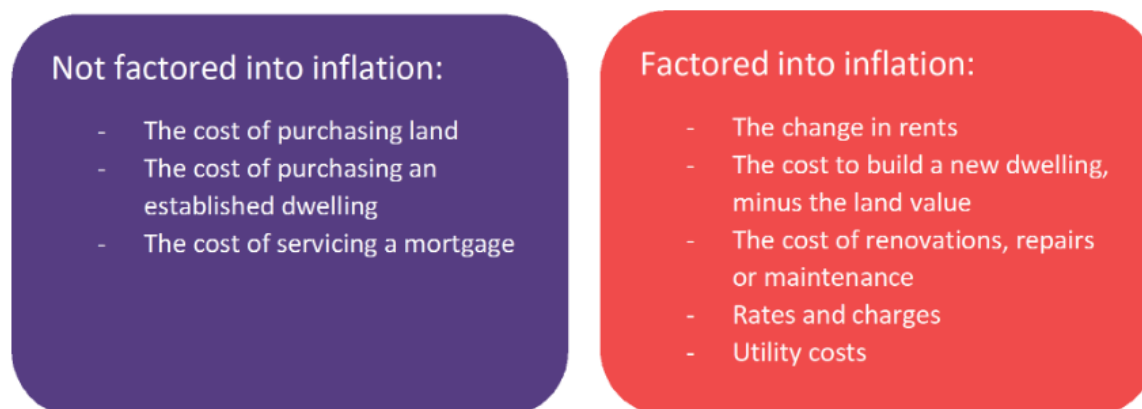


Figure 5 – Inflationary Effects on Housing (Core Logic, 2022).

3.6.1 Cairns LGA Profile

Data indicates that the demand for social housing in Cairns continues to outstrip available stock, with current levels of unmet need estimated to be 5,300 dwellings. These levels are anticipated to increase to 11,500 homes by mid next decade (JCU, 2020).

Previously identified as a homelessness ‘hotspot’, in May 2021, QCOSS estimated that some 4784 people in the Cairns region did not have a safe place to sleep (CHHN, 2022; QCOSS, 2021; Memmott *et al.*, 2003).

Of this cohort, local services estimate rough sleepers account for approximately 130 people per night ongoing. This number can escalate upwards of 240 depending on circumstances (e.g., mobility of remote communities; travel to Cairns as a service hub for health, court, and family support needs) (PIHT, 2019; CASS, 2022; CHHN, 2022).

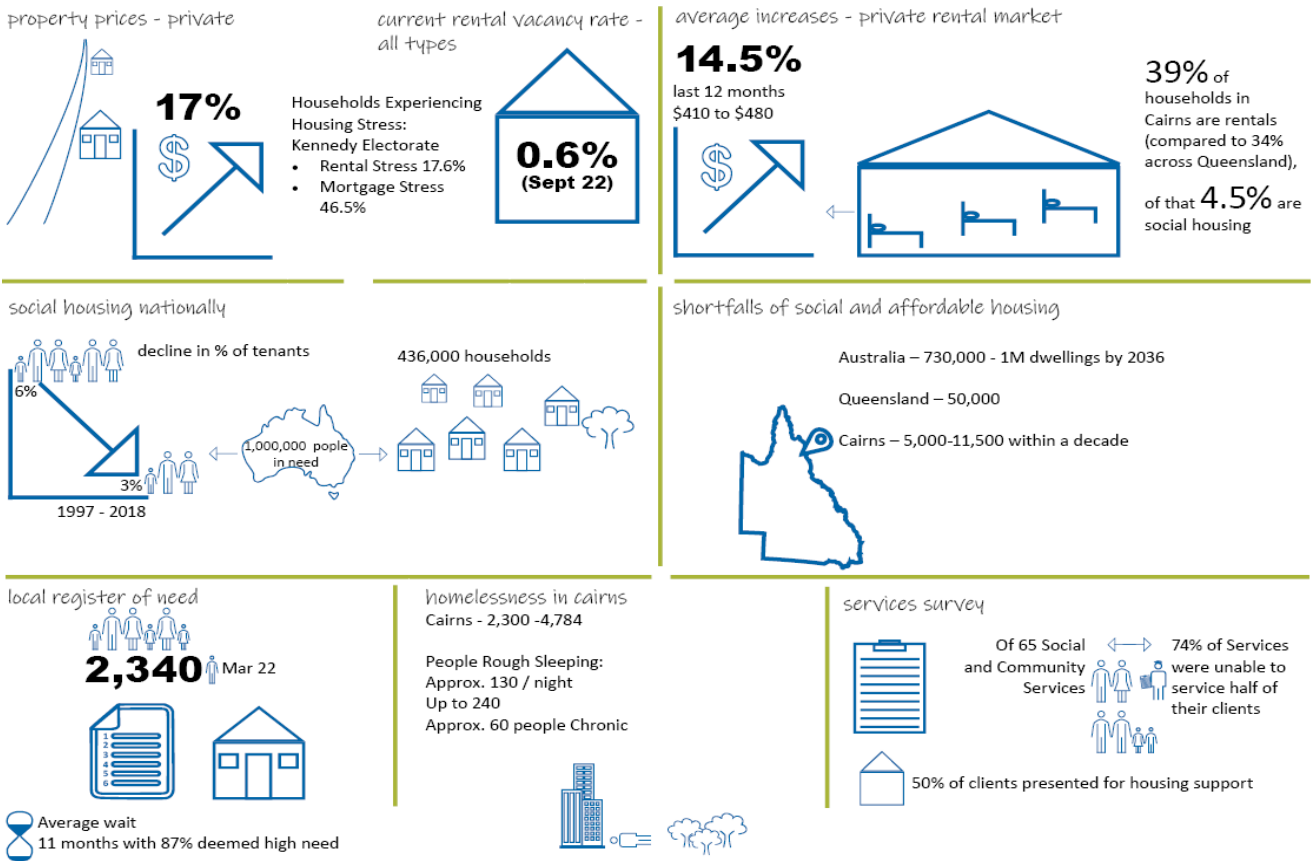
Approximately 60 people in this group are described as chronic rough sleepers and 50 persons per night are accommodated in diversionary services.

This group experiences significant un-met health needs. Research carried out in 2017 identified that a significant proportion of people sleeping rough live with an acquired brain injury and complex co-morbidities (AIHW, 2019; PIHT, 2021; CASS, 2022; PIHT, 2021).

As of September 2022, the rental vacancy rate was 0.6%, a slight increase of 0.1% from previous months.¹² It is estimated that 39% of the population rents in the Cairns LGA, increasingly for life. Reports also indicate that a wider range of households locally are facing housing distress and exclusion due to being unable to meet market rents. Drivers include property prices up by 17% and rental costs by 13% over the past two years, growing rental demand and constrained supply based on an extremely competitive rental market among many factors (SGS, 2021; PIA, 2022; SQM, 2022; CHHN, 2022; KPMG, 2022).

¹² Reported to be the tightest rental vacancy rate since 2008. A ‘healthy’ vacancy rate, in which levels of demand match levels of available housing stock, is

reported to sit between 2.5 and 3% (CHHN, 2021; QShelter, 2022).



(ABS, 2021; CHHN, 2022; DCGDE, 2021 and 2022; PC, 2022; QCOSS, 2022; QShelter, 2022; SGS, 2021).

In 2021, SVDP estimated there were 2,300 people experiencing homelessness in Cairns.

The Lived Experience:

*For 'Julie' making sure her three children have done their homework and have clean and ironed uniforms for school each day has become almost impossible since she started living in her car three months ago....

'Jake' says while he appreciates his uncle letting him live in a tent on his property, it's hot and getting a good night's sleep for work is really hard. He's scared of losing his job....

'Carly' describes the challenges of trying to store fresh fruit and vegetables and cooking a healthy meal for her family of six while living in a four-berth caravan with a fridge the size of a small esky...

At 17, 'Dan' left home due to family conflict and is now struggling to stay in TAFE as he is couch surfing and needs to move every two weeks so he doesn't wear out his welcome...

(*Indicative only – CRC, 2021).

3.7 Benefits of Reducing Homelessness

Significant investment is spent across the housing, health, and human and social support system to address housing instability and homelessness. In addition, this growing cohort is putting increased demand on an already overstretched service system, resulting in ongoing unmet need, anxiety and distress for service users and staff (CHHN, 2022; CASS, 2022).

In a recent survey, 65 social and community services across Cairns reported that almost 50% of people seeking help had presented for housing and homelessness support (with up to 67% seeking help from non-housing and homelessness funded services). In the same survey, 74% of respondents cited that they were unable to service, or only partially able to service, 50% or more of their presenting client base (QShelter, 2022; CHHN, 2022).

Estimates indicate that there are net savings in reducing homelessness, of around \$13,100 per person through reduced service demand on other parts of the system (QShelter, 2022). Research also demonstrates that for every \$1 invested in social housing, \$3 is returned in community benefits and improved wellbeing (refer Figure 6) (SGS, 2019).

Additional cost to Australia in foregone benefits and additional social outlays,
No action = \$25 billion annually by 2051 (in 2021 dollars).
 Investment in providing adequate social housing,
Right Action = benefits reaching almost \$110 billion.
 (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

Benefits extend to community safety and amenity, social connection and cohesion, increased brand credibility and management and workforce stability among many others. In addition, boosts in social housing supply have a deflationary effect (rather than inflate demand), helping to stabilise the overall market (Eslake, 2022; QShelter, 2022; CRC, 2022).

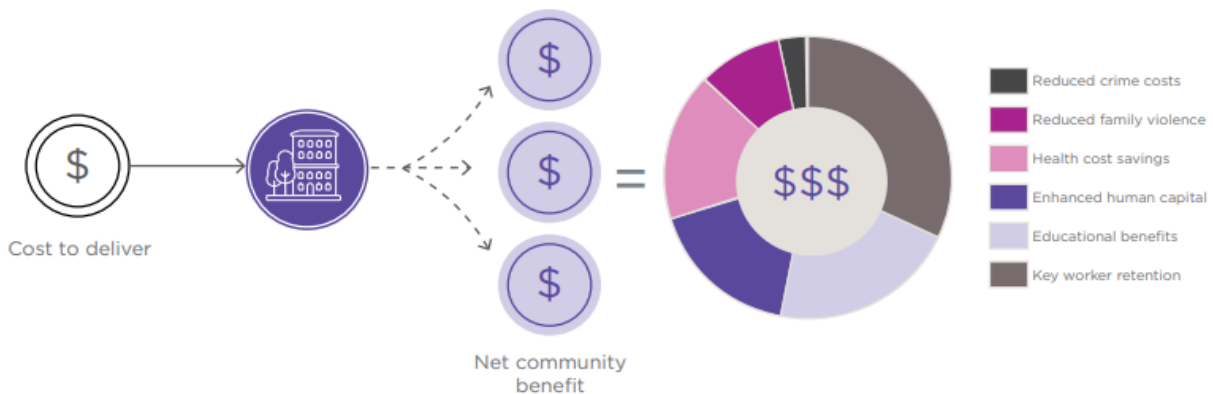


Figure 6 – Cost Benefit Analysis Social Housing (SGS Economics and Planning, 2019).

In this context, it is clear that a reliance on any one policy response will be inadequate and ineffective to resolve this complex issue – this includes building a way out of this wicked problem via social housing alone. Analysis indicates that all parts of the system must be scrutinised, and all levers fully exploited to amplify the efficacy of the system as a whole. The spectrum of options from crises sheltering through to private home ownership must work seamlessly and at an optimum level to meet society's range of housing needs and ultimately reduce demand on any one segment. This approach can only be achieved by galvanising government, private and community services partnerships that harness the capacity, resources, and ingenuity of all contributors to produce the broadest social benefits.

This approach also acknowledges that rarely is housing insecurity or homelessness driven by one factor in isolation, such as housing availability or lack of financial capacity. Rather, the combined and cyclic effects of poverty and disadvantage,

mental health, domestic violence, addiction, age, and disability among other challenges must be fully recognised and incorporated into solutions (CHL, 2022; QShelter, 2022).

Preparing now for the region's needs over the next 25, 30 and 50 years - a region of over 260,000 residents by 2050 and forecast to be an increasingly older, culturally diverse, and more mobile – also ensures the region is more resilient to externalities, such as global trends driven by a shifting climate, increased levels of forced migration, changing geo-political landscapes and workforce altering technologies among others (Kuestenmacher, 2022; CRC, 2022; CSIRO, 2022; CHL, 2022).

Addressing the needs of the region's most vulnerable is critical to building collective resilience, through inclusive policies that enable full and equal access to opportunity and participation in all aspects of life to generate the broadest community benefits.

4. The Housing and Homelessness System

Every local government across Queensland, and Nationally, is affected to some extent by the challenges of housing and homelessness. The nature and degree of the issue is different for each region due to a range of factors including demographics, socio-economic, health and wellbeing profiles, and geographic location. Within the Cairns LGA the level of need and challenges associated with addressing housing and homelessness are well established (QCOSS, 2018; CHHN, 2018).

Housing and Homelessness are complex issues, as are the driving forces that expose people to the risk of becoming or remaining homeless. This includes the inherent relationship homelessness and housing affordability (Flatau *et al.*, 2021).

Likewise, the solutions to these issues are equally complex. Acknowledging that responsibility for

“Public concern over housing affordability arises from housing being the single largest expenditure item in a household budget and the increases in housing and rental prices.

This situation creates problems for the medium- and low-income groups.”

(Quigley and Raphael, 2004 cited Azumi and Bujang, 2021).

addressing housing and homelessness is a whole of community responsibility, there are specific roles for the three tiers of government, the community sector, and the private sector (QCOSS, 2018).

4.1 Role of the Three Tiers of Government

Collectively, all three tiers of the Australian Government system (Federal, State and Local) influence the supply, access to and sustainment of housing. This includes through monetary policy, funding and/or direct provision of housing and homelessness services, tenancy legislation, leveraging the planning system to supply affordable homes and influence housing design, subsidies, and loans to housing developers and tenants, partnering with the private and community housing sectors to grow supply among other strategies (QShelter, 2021).

Historically, funding for social and affordable housing has been allocated by the Federal Government (some 70%) to the State and Territory Governments. These funds are used to acquire, construct, or retrofit existing housing and to deliver

a range of products and services to assist people to source and sustain housing. There are strong links between Commonwealth provision of welfare supports and income to the States and Territories for social housing through available rent (QCOSS, 2021).

The Commonwealth and Queensland State Governments have the responsibility in relation to legislating, planning for, and funding responses to housing and homelessness. To this extent, the role of Local Government in this context is not specified in Australian legislation (refer Figure 7). Rather within this system Local Governments have varying responsibilities that are defined and mandated by the State Government, particularly in relation to influencing supply (refer Figure 8).

Figure 7 – Roles and Responsibilities Across Tiers of Government (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2020).

Australian Government	State and Territory	Local Government	
Housing demand (including tax incentives and migration policy).	Determining and funding public housing and transferring housing to community housing providers. Zoning laws.	Zoning application.	Planning Schemes: Zones land and provides outcomes to which development should meet.
Home ownership.	Home ownership.	Support infrastructure (e.g. trunks, roads, parks) and services.	
Social housing investment - via the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.	Major infrastructure funding.	Rates.	August 2022 – Federal Government announces plans to establish a new National Plan on Housing and Homelessness. Estimated to take 18 months to develop. Includes a \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund, the returns of which will deliver 30,000 social and affordable homes within its first five years. These dwellings are on top of existing State Commitments. First step is the establishment of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council (NHSAC) to oversee the process (ABC, 2022)
Welfare support - including provision for Rental Assistance (social housing and private subsidies).	Housing and Homelessness products and services.	Policy intervention and other incentives to support certain types of development outcomes (outside of the planning scheme).	
Major infrastructure funding.	Land release.		
	Taxes and duties.		

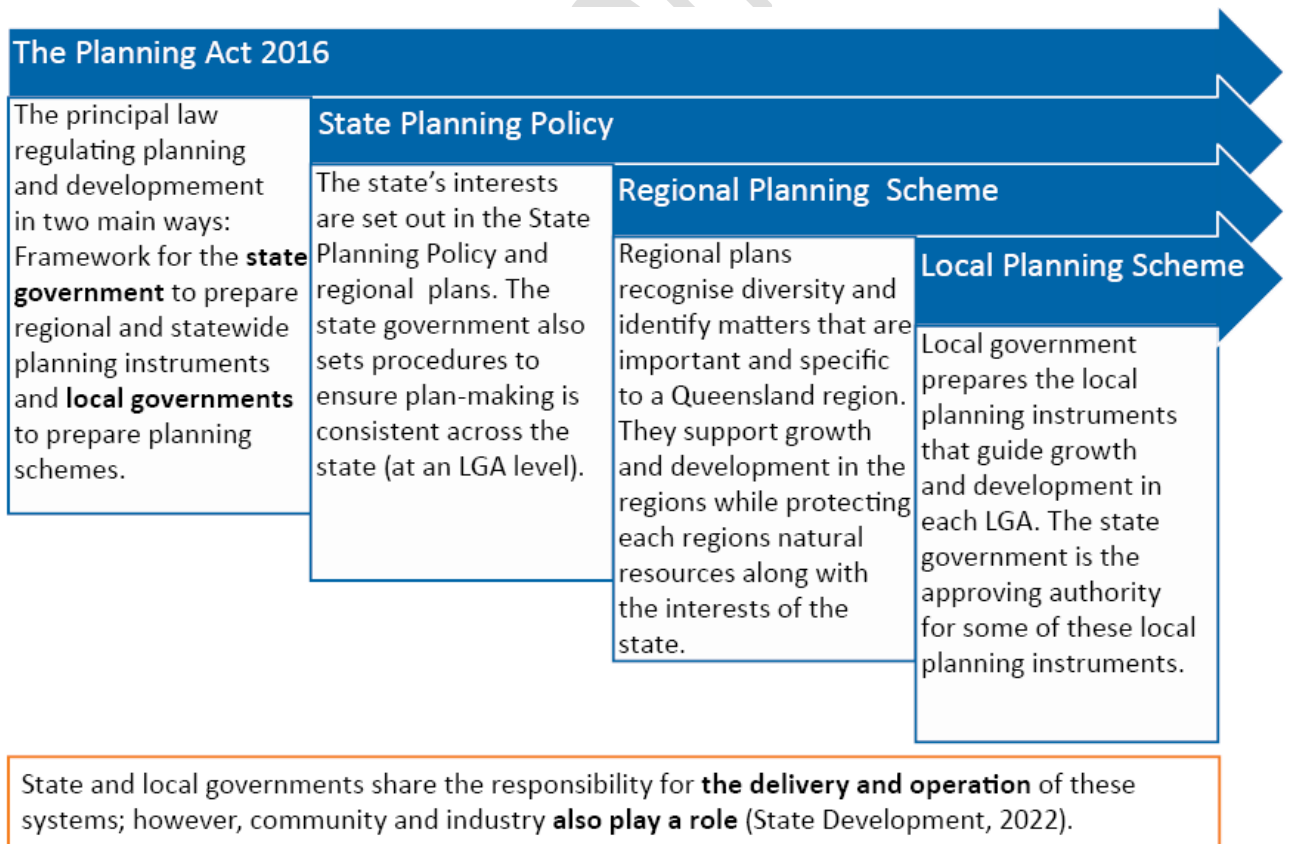


Figure 8 – Queensland State and Local Government Planning Relationship

4.2 Local Government's Role in the System

Within the State planning framework, each Local Government manages local interests by developing a Planning Scheme in consultation with the community, industry, and others. The scheme outlines how Councils' plan to manage and regulate growth and change, together with the preferred type of development, including key infrastructure needs. The local planning scheme has a critical influence over market-based supply of housing, through setting out direction and intentions related to suitable types of dwellings, locations, and densities (State Development, 2022; Department of Environment, 2022; QShelter, 2021).¹³

However, it is broadly acknowledged that supply alone cannot solve homelessness. In addition, Councils can create policy, programs or financial levers that seek to influence among other aspects, the provision of social and affordable housing

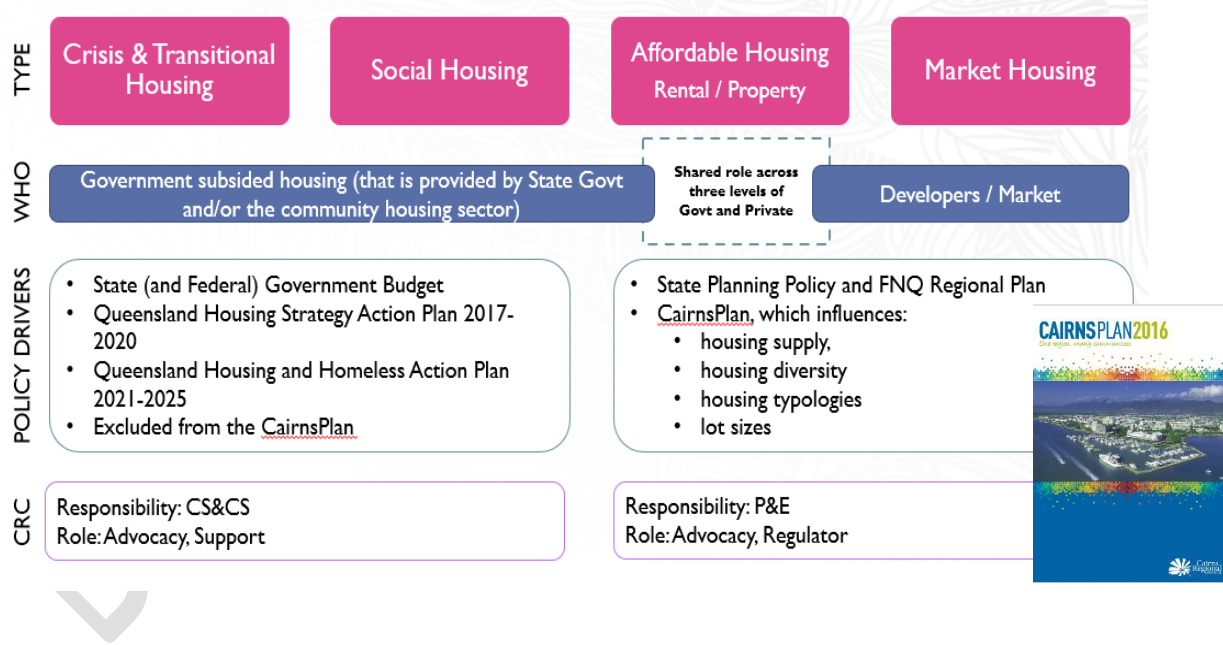
(refer Figure 9).¹⁴ As outlined in Part B, the CSAHHP is focussed on the more informal social policy and planning levers and the community structures needed to support the most vulnerable.

Council's approach is to enhance wellbeing between the connection of people and space.

This includes ensuring that the spectrum of housing needs is seamlessly integrated, fostering communities where diversity is normalised, valued, and embraced.

(CRC, 2021)

Figure 9 – Cairns Regional Council – Existing Policy Levers



¹³ At the time of preparing this plan, Cairns Regional Council had commenced a series of processes to review the Cairns Plan 2016. This included development of the 2050 Growth Strategy to inform the planning scheme review, including the development of a Housing Needs Assessment. At its meeting March 2022, Council endorsed the need to incorporate Social and Affordable Housing into the scope of the assessment. The results of this assessment will also inform future iterations of this Housing and Homelessness Plan (CRC, 2021).

¹⁴ Research indicates that the scope of influence varies significantly between Local Government Areas. Responses are dependent on location and access to other services or auspicing bodies, size of the Local Government and access to external resources, and extent of Council appetite among others. For example, in some LGAs this includes the direct provision of social and affordable housing, while in other Councils this role is limited to awareness raising and advocacy (CRC, 2021).

4.3 Role of Human and Social Community Services

Many people face complex drivers and barriers to accessing and sustaining housing, particularly within the private rental market. These interrelated structural, social and health issues (chronic stressors) include poor mental health, financial distress, unemployment, domestic violence, addictions, chronic health as well as age-related and discrimination among others (refer Figure 10).

The State and Federal Governments fund welfare supports and specialist services and programs that

aim to support vulnerable people along a journey to secure and sustain housing. These supports are delivered by a range of agencies and community-based organisations. This mix of services includes Community Housing Providers who own or manage assets (on behalf of government, investors, or private home owners for example) that is used for community housing as well as specialist housing services (SHS) who support people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and have complex needs to access and sustain tenancies. f

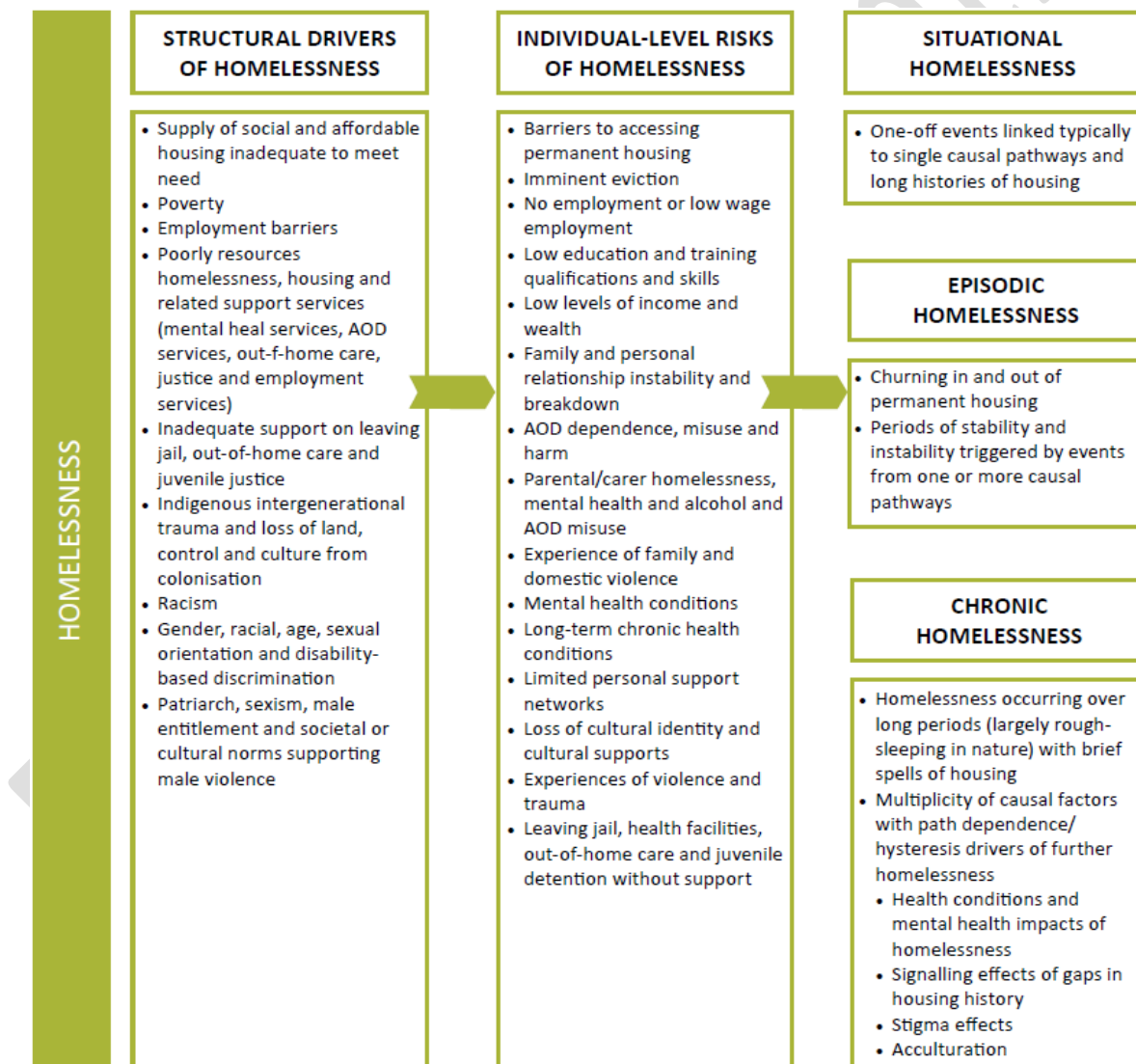


Figure 10 – Drivers of Homelessness - Extract of Ending Homelessness in Australia Model (Flatau *et al.*, 2021).

Council works in collaboration with these organisations to meet the needs of the community and supporting the capacity of this work is a key focus of the CSAHHP. This includes adopting the ‘Housing First’ Model (AHURI, 2018; AIHW, 2022) (refer Figure 11).¹⁵

The Cairns Housing and Homelessness sector have strong and collaborative service integration models. This work largely occurs through the Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network, the lead sector-based network for community services in the region. Council further supports this work via the Human and Social Sub-Committee (incident or event response and recovery) and the Community Safety Working Group.

Why the Housing First Model?

An evaluation conducted by Mission Australia (2013), found that after two years of participation, 97% of clients were still living in secure housing.

The associated cost savings to government equated to \$8,002 per person per year. (AHURI, 2022).

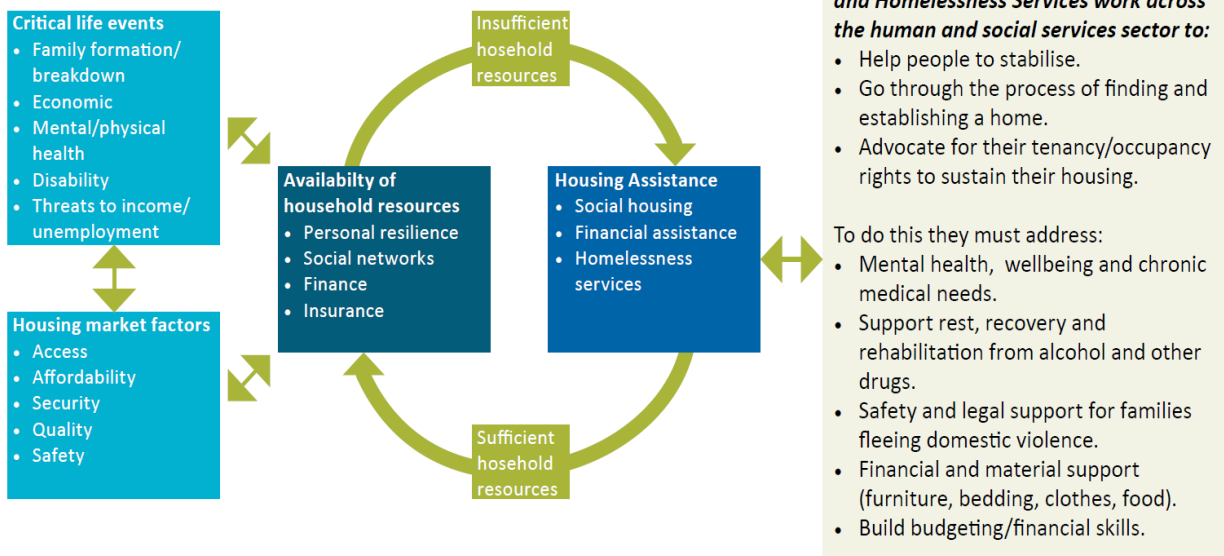


Figure 11 – Adapted from “Drivers for Housing Assistance Model” (AIHW, 2022).

¹⁵ ‘Housing First’ requires safe and permanent housing as the first priority for those experiencing homelessness. Once housing is secured, wrap around supports via a multidisciplinary team work to address the client’s complex needs (e.g., drug and alcohol counselling or mental health treatment). However, this engagement is voluntary and is not required. Clients are assisted to

sustain their housing while working towards recovery. This model is predominantly designed for people sleeping rough (i.e. those sleeping in improvised dwellings, tents, cars and parks). The model is constrained in Australia by the lack of affordable housing (AHURI, 2022).

4.4 Comparison of Local Government Approaches

Local Governments have a significant influence on the housing supply and mix through land use planning, provision of infrastructure and management of public spaces. They are a critical partner in providing diverse housing solutions (including social and affordable housing) and in responding to homelessness in all forms through innovative cross-sector partnerships (QShelter, 2018; Kratz and Jayawardena 2020; CHP, 2019).

A review of the literature indicates that conventional thinking of Local Government's contribution to addressing affordable housing includes building approval processes; local urban planning and development approval processes; and rates and charges that influence housing affordability. However, Local Governments across Australia are reshaping this view and are forming a broader perspective of the issue (AHURI, 2002; FaCHSIA, 2012; UA, 2012; Kratz and Jayawardena 2020).

BBC Consulting developed a Continuum of Local Government Roles in Housing (1999) to facilitate understanding of the scope of involvement. The spectrum spans:

- ✚ Partnerships
- ✚ Needs Assessment
- ✚ Integrated Planning
- ✚ Infrastructure and Service Provision
- ✚ Development Controls and Building Approvals
- ✚ Facilitation
- ✚ Direct Provision and Management (BBC Consulting cited AHURI, 2012).

Recent policy advocacy undertaken by peak bodies outline additional measures for Local Government to leverage from or enhance these core roles in order to address the complexities of contemporary housing pressures, including:

Comparative analysis of Local Governments identified the following principles were embedded in strategies aimed at addressing Housing and Homelessness:

- Housing is a universal basic human right – everybody has a right to a 'home'.
- Housing First – Housing is a cornerstone to health and wellbeing.
- Safe and secure housing is fundamental to a socially just and fair society and produces benefits for all community members.
- Social and affordable housing is 'essential infrastructure', that should be equally prioritised.
- Local Government has a role to play across the full 'Housing Continuum'.

(CRC, 2021; QShelter, 2021; Rakhimbekov and Abdikerova 2021).

1. Develop a specific housing and homelessness strategy and action plan - that include a charter of rights or policies specifically for at risk or vulnerable cohorts.
2. Ensure planning schemes provide diverse housing options that accommodate design and location options suitable for people at different life stages and abilities, cultural and social groups, and geographic needs, including applying universal planning principles.
3. Ensure planning mechanisms that 'protect' affordable housing and encourage co-design to address complex problems and to leverage from local strengths and resources.¹⁶

¹⁶ Examples include City of Willoughby (lower North Shore of Sydney) issued a Draft Housing Strategy to 2036; City of Parramatta (25km west of Sydney CBD) developed the Affordable Rental Housing Policy 2019;

Brisbane City Council created a Charter of Rights for homeless people; City of Port Phillip have established protocols for assisting people who sleep rough as well as a Homelessness Action Strategy.

Across Queensland, and Nationally, the review revealed a broad range of innovative approaches. Examples include:

- Charter of Rights for homeless people.
- Establishment of housing policies and dedicated staff resourcing.
- Establishment of non-profit community housing cooperatives.
- Inclusionary Zoning, Land banking, and Community Benefit Zoning.
- Reforms to expand secondary dwelling forms and occupancy.
- Subsidies and Loans to Developers or Entrepreneurs.
- Sustainability requirements for cost of living and hazard reduction.
- Process of Health and Social Impact Assessment applied.
- Tiered rates relief or other financial relief measures for Community Housing Providers and persons experiencing poverty.
- Hosting regional round tables and famil tours.

(CRC, 2021).

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PART B: Core Response and Advocacy Options

1. Overview

This section outlines a series of inter-related Core Response Options and Core Advocacy Options. Core Response Options are those applied internally within Council. Core Advocacy Options represent those position statements and recommendations that Council will seek to champion for implementation through external partners, including peak bodies or functional lead agencies.

The Core Response and Advocacy options include but are not limited to those outlined below. These initiatives are cross-cutting and mutually reinforcing. In this way, aspects of each will likely be used ongoing and/or may be intensified as part of targeted responses as new needs or situations present.

The Core Response and Advocacy Interventions have been developed based on those cohorts identified as most in need of responses and/or, most likely to benefit from the impact; and /or segments of the Housing Continuum most effected.¹⁷ These include:

- ✚ Universal – strategies of benefit to all parts of the community and segments of the Housing Continuum.
- ✚ At Risk Residents – strategies aimed at vulnerable persons who reside in social and affordable housing, private rental or privately owned properties that may be at risk of housing stress or homeless due to a range of factors. Aimed at preventing escalation of circumstances.
- ✚ People Sleeping Rough – Those that are experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough, primarily in public spaces.
- ✚ People Transitioning From Care – Those persons existing from institutional care

arrangements (e.g., health; corrections; child safety).

- ✚ People Experiencing Hidden Homelessness – Those persons living in unsafe, unstable, and overcrowded arrangements (e.g., couch surfing; hotel accommodation).

¹⁷ As determined by Cairns Affordable Housing Forum 2021 (CRC, 2021); Cairns Regional Council COVID-19 Recovery research and engagement (CRC, 2020; 2021); Page | 30

Sector prioritisation processes (CHHN, 2021; 2022); Cairns Regional Council Community Safety Plan (CBD Pilot) 2022-2026 (CRC, 2022).

2. Core Response Options

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 1 – Universal			
PURPOSE: All available levers (advocacy, policy, financial, statutory planning levers) are applied to facilitate an increase in levels of access to social and affordable housing and improve housing affordability for very low- and low-income households in the LGA.			
How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Sector Integration Mechanism	Timeframe
CRO 1.1: Local Planning Scheme (CairnsPlan 2016 v3.1) - Provisions for Social and Affordable Housing	CRC	SIM: CHHN	2027
DESCRIPTION: The need to expand access to diverse supply options is well established. Council is undertaking a series of studies to inform the Towards 2050 Growth Strategy, which will consider the needs of a significantly larger population. One technical study within this body of work is a housing needs assessment and supply analysis. In 2022, Council committed to this study including a review of social and affordable housing requirements. The Strategy will ultimately inform the review of the local planning scheme that influences the range of supply, location, mix and style of housing in the Cairns LGA. This measure proposes that Council apply the findings of this study to fully explore and consider all available options to expand the levers in the statutory planning system to maximise diversity of housing supply. This includes ensuring housing is located close to services, employment, and amenities. Additionally, this data should be used to inform the Regional Plan being developed by the State.			
CRO 1.2: Provisions for All Hazards	CRC	SIM: CHHN	2027
Research indicates that the Cairns LGA will experience significant future effects of accelerated climate change and other forms of natural and man-made disruptions. This measure proposes that Council's review of the Cairns LGA statutory and non-statutory planning systems consider including a requirement for an all hazards (physical) fit for purpose risk assessment, related to built infrastructure. A particular focus should be applied to infrastructure identified for housing and associated community infrastructure, given the recognised levels of increased exposure for vulnerable cohorts. The assessment should also consider mitigation and adaptation measures. The review should inform the provisions required to increase Council's capacity to be responsive during times of crises, that warrant interim accommodation and housing arrangements for effected cohorts. Integration should consider relevant aspects of the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CR, 2021) and the Wet Tropics Regional Resilience Strategy (QRA, 2022).			
CRO 1.3: Health and Social Impact Assessment	CRC		2024/2025
DESCRIPTION: There is currently no requirement for Councils to formally consider potential social, community, and health effects of projects (both intended and unintended) outside of significant projects. The only trigger in the local planning scheme to request a social/community impact assessment, including situations in which existing stock of social and affordable housing is proposed to be demolished for infill development, is a discretionary provision in the Planning Scheme Policy for "Structure Planning". This measure proposes that Council introduce a Social and Health Impact Assessment process into the application or planning proposal stage for any new major construction or redevelopment, that ensures consideration of social indicators. The framework will guide the community and Council on how to consider and address a new development proposal, policy or plan that may impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community (including considerations for vulnerable populations and measures to mitigate impacts to social inclusion). The framework can extend to the protection of existing social and affordable housing or appropriate placement of new infrastructure close to amenities and infrastructure. This approach would complement the Emerging Community Zone (new urban areas) that requires a structure plan and may be required to consider housing diversity and/or beyond a land use tolerability			

<p>vulnerability matrix. It would also strengthen the current planning scheme policy that supports the code, which identifies that a social and community impacts assessment report may be required by Council to support a development application that requires a structure plan. The Local Planning Scheme is supported in this respect by the housing choice and affordability components of the Far North Queensland Regional Plan and the liveable communities and housing State Planning Policy. The assessment may also be considered for application across non-statutory policy and planning initiatives.</p>			
<p>CRO 1.4: Local Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing</p>	CRC		2023/2024
<p>DESCRIPTION: In 2017, Council undertook a strategic review of its land to determine any parcels that were surplus to service delivery need. The review provided Council with a standardised assessment framework and included 1866 parcels and considered future community and infrastructure requirements. Council has recently commenced the review of 934 freehold parcels and will revisit the recommendations of 2017, as well as review any newly acquired land. This includes an audit of all council owned or controlled sites that contain dwelling like structures that may be surplus to needs. It is anticipated this current review will be completed in 2026. This measure proposes that Council seeks to incorporate specific criteria and prioritisation processes into future reviews that consider the availability of land or other assets specifically suitable for crises, social and affordable housing purposes, applied across all council land assets in addition to those that are identified as surplus to needs. These parcels could be contributed cost free, sold at a lower cost, or leased at a ‘pepper corn’ rate as a means of stimulating development. This approach could provide opportunity for joint partnerships to be brokered with the State Government, developers, and community housing providers to increase local supplies. In addition, Council’s in-kind contribution may include access to designers, project management staff, or engineers for example among other technical or specialist skills sets. It is recommended that this review be undertaken every five years.</p>			
<p>CRO 1.5: Financial Relief for Social and Affordable Housing Providers</p>	CRC	SIM: CHHN	2023/2024
<p>DESCRIPTION: Through Council’s (COVID-19) Investment Incentive Policy, Council may waiver, in their entirety, the infrastructure charges payable for certain development types. As well as being an economic driver, this policy has the potential to increase housing supply. Council also maintains a Financial Assistance for Not For Profit Organisations - Fees & Charges Policy under which certain fees and charges are heavily discounted or waived for certain types of non-profit organisations providing services for defined categories. These include waste disposal at transfer stations (excluding green waste), planning and development assessment and application costs, plumbing applications. Council also offers financial assistance to not-for-profit organisations towards development assessment costs. This assistance is provided by waiver of infrastructure charges up to a maximum of \$500,000. In addition, Council also contributes rates-based financial support for non-profit organisations providing housing support for certain vulnerable cohorts and has commenced a review of this model. This measure proposes Council undertake a holistic review to explicitly consider all potential levers to sustain or stimulate access to social and affordable housing, and in particular, strategies to support Community Housing Providers and Specialist Homelessness Services. In particular, the review should consider all forms of non-market temporary and non-market permanent housing and relevant cohorts, and span rates, charges, and fees among others. This includes a review of the differential rating structures and rates relevant to social and affordable housing and the span of providers. The review may also consider options related to temporary accommodation types, that at times can be disrupters to the long-term housing supplies (e.g., Air B&B) and may include opportunities to incentivise or pursue public and private partnerships. It is recommended that this review be conducted every three years.</p>			

CRO 1.6: Regional Social and Affordable Housing Development Forum	CRC	SIM: CHHN; Cairns Chamber of Commerce, UDIA, PIA.	2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: An important feature of responses to increasing housing is the whole of housing industry approach. This approach combines the strength of ‘for profit’ (private) and ‘not for profit’ housing providers to address housing supply, affordability, and homeless issues. This measure proposes Council facilitate a bi-annual forum to bring together all potential partners to establish a concept-ready sector and explore and seek to address barriers that may prevent the uptake of emerging opportunities. This includes outcomes of the recent Housing Summit, convened by the State Government (October 2022). A whole of housing industry approach provides Council and Community Housing Providers with a range of partners and potential levers and resources to facilitate developments. Connection between the various parts of the spectrum also increases innovation and preparedness for emerging funding opportunities (such as Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative; Housing Investment Fund) that require shovel ready projects or established partnerships.</p>			
CRO 1.7: Community Housing and Specialist Homelessness Sector Capacity	CRC	SIM: CHHN; CCWG; H&PIT	2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: The community services sector provides critical support to people across the Cairns LGA to secure and sustain housing outcomes and are a core partner for Council in reducing levels of homelessness. This includes the region’s community housing providers and specialist housing and homelessness services. The sector are also essential partners in Council’s response and recovery arrangements, including planning for acute shocks or community disruptions. Due to a range of compounding factors, people accessing these services are transcending traditional at risk or vulnerable groups, and services are reporting unprecedented levels of demand and unmet need (CHHN, 2021; 2022). Council can make a valuable contribution to the sector’s efforts by raising awareness, facilitating cross-sector and multi-agency processes, or conducting advocacy that helps to strengthen the capacity of the service system to achieve housing outcomes. Council currently participates in a range of coordination and service integration networks, including the Cairns Housing and Homelessness Network, the Housing and Public Intoxication Taskforce, and the Case Coordination Working Group as well as facilitates the Human and Social (Response and Recovery) Sub-Committee that all consider aspects of housing and homelessness. This measure proposes that Council continue to explore this partnership with a view to strengthening opportunities to engage, undertake joint planning and collaborate for housing and homelessness outcomes. This includes Council’s contribution to building evidence of patterns, trends and service barriers/needs and undertaking advocacy. A current opportunity for collaboration exists that includes facilitating engagement with the development, social entrepreneurial and real estate sectors to improve housing outcomes. Additionally, opportunity exists for Council to champion the service sector reforms as outlined in the QShelter ‘Go For Gold’ advocacy paper, that includes strengthened CHP management and ownership rights to better leverage equity and resourcing for growth opportunities (QShelter, 2022).</p>			
CRO 1.8: Cairns LGA Community Resilience Strategy	CRC	SIM: CHHN	2023/2024
<p>DESCRIPTION: This measure proposes Council incorporate a holistic view of housing and homelessness as part of developing the Cairns LGA Community Resilience Strategy. Once developed, the strategy will seek to reduce levels of vulnerability across the community by increasing levels of individual and collective resilience to absorb and respond to acute shocks (e.g., global financial crises; COVID-19) and chronic social stressors (e.g., mental health, climate change). This includes the intersectionality of these issues. This view of resilience considers the key drivers that expose communities to impacts, such as levels of housing disadvantage. The Community Resilience Strategy will inform future reviews of this action plan and associated policies. This will include addressing the interface between domestic and family violence, health and wellbeing, unemployment and housing instability and homelessness. The Strategy will also highlight calls for increased health infrastructure, including acute mental health, detox,</p>			

and rehabilitation services, together with increased investment in community-based primary care services and a redistribution of funding into early intervention and prevention as opposed to acute and crises responses. Consideration must include the inherent links between poverty, inequality, and housing exclusion.

TARGET GROUP – COHORT 2: At Risk Residents (Private Rental or Ownership)			
PURPOSE: Service responses are flexible and coordinated to avoid people from becoming at risk or entering into homelessness due to contact with Council.			
How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Sector Integration Mechanism	Timeframe
CRO 2.1: Coordinated Outreach and Service Policy	CRC	SIM:	2023
DESCRIPTION: Cairns Regional Council has legislated regulatory responsibilities for matters related to public health and safety, nuisance, or environmental hazards throughout the LGA. This includes management to ensure minimum standards of building and property maintenance and appropriate usage. Council acknowledges that many residents face various levels of hardship and disadvantage, related to health (physical and mental health), financial constraints, or social isolation for example. In extenuating circumstances, these conditions prevent some residents from being able to comply with directives to remedy property-related breaches or to meet the associated financial implications. Council deploys extensive resources to undertake these compliance functions that could work in unison to support a more efficient and mutually beneficial resolution and prevent further escalation. These resources span Revenue (financial relief), City Safe (Council) officers authorised under Local Laws, and regulatory services officers among others. This measure proposes Council increase the effectiveness of current approaches by establishing a whole of organisation outreach and service protocol. The protocol would seek to streamline engagement and external service referrals from the outset and guide an iterative response for people facing genuine hardship. This approach would balance the responsibility for regulation with awareness of vulnerable cohorts that may put them at risk of homelessness. It is proposed that this approach incorporate an internal Housing and Homelessness Coordination point.			
CRO 2.2: Early Intervention Specialist Support Service	CRC		2023/2024
DESCRIPTION: In extenuating circumstances the level of vulnerability of some residents will make compliance with remedy breaches or Penalty Infringement Notices extremely difficult without intensive specialist support. In these cases, repeated and sustained engagement by Council officers or the issuing of PINs is often ineffective and represents a low return on investment. The situation also results in distress for residents and Council staff. The specialist skills required to work with this cohort sit outside of Council, residing with specialist housing and homelessness services (SHHS). This measure proposes Council formalise and resource a SHHS to implement a joint approach to support an early resolution with complex clients, preventing unnecessary escalation. This type of service is not eligible for traditional community sector funding.			
CRO 2.3: Green Waste Hardship Policy for Vulnerable Residents	CRC		2023/2024
DESCRIPTION: There are occasions in which Council is requested to assist residents to treat green waste post a weather-related or other acute incident in which residents are experiencing personal hardship and are therefore unable to meet their own needs. This measure proposes that Council establish a policy to provide clarity in these situations. The support may apply to households assessed as having no other support options and are facing significant hardship and disadvantage (physical or mental health, financial, social isolation). To be eligible, residents must be on private property and support is restricted to the			

treatment of low-risk green waste. The policy may apply during business as usual and cover other forms of assistance by exception.			
CRO 2.4: Insurance Vulnerabilities – Structural Non-Compliance	CRC		2024/2025
<p>A James Cook University report commissioned by Cairns Regional Council in 2020, considered levels of exposure due to no or under insurance of households (structural and contents) across the Cairns LGA (Osbaldiston <i>et al.</i>, 2020). Together with additional data, this research highlight concerns as to the extent of under-insurance or non-insured properties. While the concerns are shared for both homeowners and people renting, there are particular concerns for this latter group. Costs appear to be a major barrier, particularly for those on lower or fixed incomes who face substantial issues entering the insurance market. In addition, anecdotal evidence indicates that there may be some level of risk for property owners that have not sought appropriate structural assessments and associated Council approvals (e.g., retaining walls, sheds), which may void insurance coverage. This measure proposes Council explore and further consider approaches that may support residents to address these issues through awareness raising and/or complementary initiatives (such as an amnesty period).</p>			

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 3 – People Rough Sleeping (All ages)			
PURPOSE: Service responses are adequate and effective in reducing the number of rough sleepers across Cairns, particularly those experiencing chronic and unaddressed health conditions, and outcomes are sustained.			
How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CRO 3.1: Coordinated Outreach and Service Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness	CRC	SIM: CSWG; H&PIT	2023
DESCRIPTION: Cairns Regional Council has legislated regulatory responsibilities for matters related to public health and safety, nuisance, or environmental hazards throughout the LGA. This includes the management of behaviours in public spaces as well as Council owned land and facilities. This includes people that may be illegally camping or utilising public spaces beyond their intended purpose (e.g., residing in public facilities). Council deploys extensive resources to undertake these compliance functions that can work in unison to coordinate responses to those experiencing homelessness. These resources span City Safe (Council) officers authorised under Local Laws and regulatory services officers among others. The measure proposes Council establish an outreach and service protocol to implement an approach that balances responsibility for regulation with awareness of vulnerabilities of people experiencing homelessness, including barriers to accessing housing and accommodation. The outreach and service protocol will create greater efficiencies and reduce tensions by streamlining engagement processes and coordinating referrals to specialist services. It is proposed that a Housing and Homelessness Coordination point be established to coordinate this function across Council (related to CSP CBD Pilot 2022-2026).			
CRO 3.2: Public Space Management Protocol	CRC		2023
DESCRIPTION: Cairns Regional Council deploys significant resources to maintain the cleanliness and amenity of public open spaces. This includes vegetation management, rubbish/debris removal, and maintenance of public infrastructure (e.g., seating, cooking facilities and exercise/play equipment). The resources are also activated to respond to instances of hygiene breaches, public health risks and the associated wider aesthetics. This measure proposes Council establish a Maintenance and Cleanliness Response Protocol to ensure agile and responsive deployment of CRC resources to prevent or rectify impacted sites. Interventions will seek to reduce the effects related to access, usage and perceptions of all public space users and assist in the response phase while service interventions are being established.			

This may include providing sorting, transportation, and interim storage of personal belongings (e.g., hoarding). The protocol includes coordination across CRC business areas and trigger points for activation.

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3. Core Advocacy Options

Council will champion and seek to advance the implementation of the following recommendations through external parties. This includes supporting external partners in the execution of advocacy strategies as they align to Council's position.

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 1 – Universal			
PURPOSE: All available levers (advocacy, policy, financial, statutory planning levers) are applied to facilitate an increase in the supply of social and affordable housing and improve housing affordability for very low- and low-income households in the Cairns LGA.			
How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Partners/Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CAO 1.1: Formalise Local Government Involvement in the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council	LGAQ	SIM: FNQROC	Commence 2023
DESCRIPTION: In August 2022, the Federal Government announced plans to establish a new National Plan on Housing and Homelessness. The Plan is estimated to take 18 months to develop and includes a \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund. The intention is to use the returns from the Fund to deliver 30,000 social and affordable homes within its first five years. These dwellings are on top of existing State Commitments. Historically Local Governments have not been included in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and with the absence of an overarching strategy, marginalising the voice of Councils across Australia, particularly those in rural and regional areas. Together with the new National Plan, a National Housing Supply and Affordability Council (NHSAC) is being established to oversee the process. This measure proposes that Council support the LGAQ and ALGA (and other parties) to ensure the interests of Local Governments be represented in this forum and reflected in the new National Plan. This includes the calls for increased funding for social and affordable housing to keep pace with demand and ensure avoidance of further cost-shifting to the States and Territories (data indicates that historically, costs to the States are some two to three times more to service the social housing system than is provided under the current National H&H Agreement (National Shelter, 2022). Local housing needs will be expressed via mechanisms including the FNQ ROC and the CHHN.			
CAO 1.2: Extension of NRAS (or Similar) Housing Support Program	LGAQ	SIM: FNQROC	Commence 2023
DESCRIPTION: The Australian Government has managed the National Rental Affordability Scheme since 2008. The scheme assists low-and medium-income households to increase access to affordable housing and is due to expire in 2026. The scheme aimed to increase the supply of new and affordable rental dwellings by providing an annual financial incentive for up to ten years. This incentive is issued to housing providers ('approved participants') to provide affordable rental dwellings at least 20 per cent below market rates. It is estimated that across Queensland some 5000 properties will be affected. Of these some 36 properties in the Cairns region will be affected, potentially resulting in rent increases or loss of lease arrangement for tenants by the cessation of funding (DSS, 2022). This includes properties across Gordonvale, Edmonton, and Woree – areas experiencing relatively high levels of disadvantage (ABS, 2022). This measure proposes Council advocate for an extension to this program or development of an alternate system. This includes acknowledgement that renting is often a life-long housing situation for many cohorts and this reliance should be reflected in future schemes (QShelter, 2022). A key relevant infrastructure class is social and affordable housing owned and/or managed by government and community housing providers.			

CAO 1.3: Increase State Investment and Joint Planning in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing	LGAQ	SIM: FNQROC	Commence 2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: Council is about to commence engagement with DCHDE to develop the Regional Housing Plan to influence the provision of social and affordable housing across the northern region. This measure proposes Council also seeks the development of a Local Housing Plan, with a scope beyond Indigenous Housing needs, to enable more detailed planning considerations. A long-term view should seek to plan for the seamless integration of households into the suburban landscape regardless of tenure, to increase levels of participation, social connection, and cohesion, and may consider the inclusion of social indicators as part of assessment processes. This may include joint measures to promote supply diversity of new and protection of existing social and affordable housing. Through these processes, Council is calling for increased investment and fast-tracking of new builds, as well as increased standards and inclusions aimed at reducing household expenses (as a contribution to cost of living), such as solar, insulation etc (including during retrofits). Council also seeks an expansion of the number of head leasing subsidies available under the Community Rent Scheme and increased investment to address housing deficiencies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, given levels of vulnerability and overrepresentation in housing data. A call for action by the State Government to implement interim measures aimed at addressing the immediate housing crises for vulnerable residents while longer-term measures are realised is also a key priority.</p>			
CAO 1.4: State Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing	LGAQ		Commence 2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: The state Government undertakes a strategic review of its land and assets on a cyclic basis that considers future community and infrastructure requirements. This measure proposes that the Queensland Government seeks to incorporate specific criteria and prioritisation processes that consider the availability of land or other assets suitable for social and affordable housing purposes, particularly those that are identified as surplus to needs. These parcels could be identified as a Land Bank for future development. This approach could provide opportunity for joint partnerships to be brokered with the Local Government, developers, and community housing providers to increase local supplies. These approaches would also facilitate the long-term provisioning of community infrastructure to support social participation and inclusion outcomes. The above outcomes also reflect the key elements of the State Infrastructure Strategy 2022, in particular the social and affordable housing infrastructure class.</p>			
CAO 1.5: Planning System Reforms - Review of the State Planning Scheme, Far North Queensland Regional Planning Scheme 2009-2031 (FNQRP), and Associated Regional Infrastructure Plan.	LGAQ	SIM: UDIA; PIA	Commence 2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: Land supply is critical to effecting housing affordability. The current FNQ regional plan is designed to manage growth as opposed to support considered growth. In some cases, the current framing of the FNQRP inhibits the flexibility of Councils from releasing or changing land designations to increase residential development and options based on emerging need (without requiring a Temporary Land Use Instrument) and constrains the pace of land releases. In part, this is exacerbated by the absence of an overarching mechanism to consider and coordinate the spectrum of housing system interventions across the housing continuum under the FNQRP. The FNQRP is now under review. This measure proposes Council lobby for the FNQ regional plan to incorporate statutory strategies for housing supply and diversity with clear actions and responsibilities for all parties, which includes the State Government. The FNQRP must also reflect the outcomes of The State Infrastructure Strategy 2022, that sets out to align infrastructure investment across agencies. To ensure this alignment, Council also supports calls for the Queensland</p>			

Government to establish an overarching governance model to provide holistic consideration of housing and housing affordability matters.			
CAO 1.6: Community Engagement - Cultural Change and Social Acceptance	State Government	SIM: UDIA; PIA; FNQ ROC	Commence 2023
<p>The PIA identifies that affordable housing is a complex and multi-faceted issue that is influenced by a wide range of demand and supply factors. Across the housing spectrum, planning can influence some aspects of affordability and supply through the provisioning for efficient and cost-effective delivery of quality, well-located, sustainable and fit for purpose housing. This includes the integration of social and affordable housing as part of a seamless community profile that enhances quality of life and lowers the cost of living. However, when discussing growth within communities, the most cost-efficient approaches such as limiting urban sprawl and legacy developments that are expensive to maintain ongoing, undertaking infill in urban areas, or increasing density, are often not well understood nor resonate with the perceived values to some segments of the community and inhibits Council's ability to foster the most appropriate solutions. This measure proposes that Council advocate for the Queensland Government assist Local Councils to build community capacity for successful change, including levels of awareness, knowledge, and sentiment. This includes strategies to shift expected norms, increase trust in the system to manage change well and in line with community values and preferences. Approaches should seek to build community awareness, appreciation, and acceptance for certain types of development to reduce barriers to best practice planning and development (Studio THI, 2022).</p>			
CAO 1.7: Regional Workforce Strategy – Incorporating Housing	Queensland Government	SIM: Cairns Chamber of Commerce, Workforce North	Commence 2023
<p>The effects of the competitive housing market on the region's workforce planning and retention are extensively reported. Businesses and industry all report challenges in attracting and retaining adequate workforce levels, particularly within professional and technical sectors including essential workers. Sector leads report a 'labour force bleed' from the region, and broad ranging skills shortages. However, it is not clear if this is due to an absence of skills, or if people are unable to express their skills due to the unavailability of housing. This churn affects the region's ability to maintain critical service industries, including health (including allied health) and education among others (Workforce North, 2022; CASS, 2022). This measure proposes that Council lobby the Queensland Government to prepare a regional workforce strategy that both integrates individual sector specific strategies, as well as accounts for housing needs and supply.</p>			

TARGET GROUP – COHORT 2: At Risk Residents (Private Rental or Ownership)			
PURPOSE: Service responses are flexible and coordinated to avoid people from becoming at risk or entering into homelessness due to contact with Council.			
How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Partners/Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CAO 2.1: Addressing Insurance Vulnerabilities – Under and Un-Insured Households	LGAQ	FNQROC	Commence 2023
<p>The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has revealed that more than 62,000 properties in North Queensland are currently un-insured, and a quarter are under-insured, due to storm-inspired premiums. A James Cook University report commissioned by Cairns Regional Council in 2020, also considered similar levels of exposure of households (structural and contents) across the Cairns LGA (Osbaldiston <i>et al.</i>, 2020). Together with data from other research projects, the results highlight concerns as to the extent of under-insurance or non-insured properties. While the concerns are shared for both homeowners and people renting, there are particular concerns for the latter group. Costs appear to be a</p>			

major barrier, particularly for those on lower or fixed incomes who appear to have substantial issues entering the insurance market. This is particularly the case for cyclone and related flooding coverage. This measure proposes Council continue to advocate for increased access to the \$40 million North Queensland Strata Title Resilience Pilot Program and the \$10b Reinsurance Pool. In addition, it is proposed that Council continue calls to the Insurance Council of Australia to work with members to apply updated risk profile indices to facilitate a reduction in premiums.

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 3 – People Rough Sleeping (All ages)

PURPOSE: Service responses are adequate and effective in reducing the number of rough sleepers across Cairns, particularly those experiencing chronic and unaddressed health conditions, and outcomes are sustained.

How Core Intervention Option	Lead	Partners/ Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CAO 3.1: Diversionary Services: Extension of Night Diversionary Capacity	State Government	SIM: H&PIT	Commence 2023
CAO 3.2: Diversionary Services: Establish a Day Assertive Outreach Rest and Recovery Program	State Government	SIM: H&PIT	Commence 2023
CAO 3.3: Diversionary Services: Establish a Pro-Social Activation Program – Adults Cultural Mentoring	State Government	SIM: H&PIT	Commence 2023

DESCRIPTION: Reports indicate that a high percentage of people who are sleeping rough are also engaged in heavy drinking. Current data indicates that some 70-80 people per day are highly intoxicated in the Cairns CBD or surrounds. This does not include the regular fluctuations based on people transiting through Cairns from surrounding communities, or those choosing to drink in public out of concern for risking tenancies. Currently there is one adult diversionary centre (Lyons Street) to service the Cairns area operating a bus service during the hours of 5-8am and 5-9pm daily. Within this cohort, services also report high levels of frequent presenters. In 2022, upgrades were commenced at the site for an additional 14 beds, expanding the site to a 50-bed facility. This includes a women's wellbeing space. However, this increased capacity is based on 2018 needs assessment figures. In addition, it is widely accepted that in the absence of day-time diversionary and pro-social activation interventions, current levels of churn will continue. Wrap-around place-based supports are vital to break the current cycle of churn and reduce ongoing service dependency. The measure proposes that Council advocate for additional services to address these gaps for people consuming alcohol during the day. Without them, when people exit overnight rest and recovery services sober, a critical window of opportunity is lost for diversion into pro-social recovery programs. This includes connection to cultural activities and mentors.

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 4 – People Transitioning from Care			
PURPOSE: Service responses are adequate and effective to prevent people exiting care into homelessness or remaining homeless.			
How Core Operational Intervention	Lead	Partners/Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CAO 4.1: Coordinated Exit Processes – Health	State Government	SIM: CHHN/CCWG/CHHII	Commence 2023
CAO 4.2: Feasibility Study In-Reach Homelessness Coordination Program	State Government	SIM: CHHN	Commence 2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: Modelling reveals that people experiencing homelessness place significant demand on emergency departments and other hospital services. As frequent presenters they are more likely to present at emergency departments, their stay is longer than the general population, and they are more likely to return. In addition, evidence indicates that many chronic rough sleepers have critical and unmet complex health needs (including acquired brain injury) (Synapse, 2018; QH, 2020; CHHN, 2021). This includes those leaving health care with ongoing treatment plans (including wound management) or return to country transport arrangements that exit into local rough camping cohorts. This measure proposes Council advocate for coordinated discharge and exit processes across health departments as well as between Queensland Health, specialist housing and homelessness services, QPS, and on occasion Council, is vital to ensure people are not exited into situations of homelessness. In the longer term, Council is highly supportive of the establishment of an in-reach (hospital-based) homelessness coordination model (refer Royal Perth Hospital) for patients identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Examples of this model demonstrate a dramatic decrease in the number of patients presenting to emergency and results in significantly improved health outcomes for patients (HH, 2022). (Linked to CIO 3.1).</p>			
CAO 4.3: Coordinated Exit Processes – Institutional Living	State Government	SIM: CCWG/CHHII/CCVYP	June 2023
CAO 4.4: Expansion of Crises Accommodation – Young Women	State Government	SIM: CHHII/CCVYP	June 2023
<p>DESCRIPTION: Reports indicate that on occasion people exiting various forms of institutional living are exited into temporary or unstable forms of accommodation and housing (CHHN, 2022). This may include those exiting custodial arrangements (e.g., corrections, youth justice) or institutional care (e.g., child safety). Supporting these groups requires increased coordination across relevant agencies, access to specialist and wrap around supports, and responsive crises arrangements. Failure to provide this support may result in highly vulnerable people being further exposed to risk, increasing the chances of adverse outcomes including recidivism or exploitation. This measure proposes that Council champion the strengthening of coordinated discharge and exit processes, including reinstating key governance and coordination mechanisms (such as the HPIT and PCG). There is also an urgent need to expand the capacity of transitional and/or crises accommodation for some groups, such as young mothers and women exiting care and the establishment of transitional housing with forensic mental health supports for those newly released from long-term institutionalisation.</p>			

TARGET GROUP: COHORT 5 - People Experiencing Hidden Homelessness			
PURPOSE: Service responses are adequate and effective to reduce levels of Hidden Homelessness, including the prevalence and risks of overcrowding.			
How Core Operational Intervention	Lead	Partners/Sector Integration Mechanism (SIM)	Timeframe
CAO 5.1: Coordination of Transient Populations	State Government		
DESCRIPTION: As a regional service centre, Cairns experiences high levels of visitation from neighbouring regions attending to health, justice/custodial, or in response to other family or community matters including fleeing conflict. At times, this may result in people becoming stranded in Cairns or choosing to remain longer than anticipated. This exacerbates levels of overcrowding, which risks local tenancies, escalates levels of antisocial behaviour, puts additional strain on local services and agencies, and results in vacant properties sitting dormant in source (home) communities. This measure proposes that Council seek to secure a regional approach to coordinating movements that may overwhelm local arrangements and further strengthen Return to Country processes. This includes an agency led process to develop an MOU between Indigenous Controlled Councils and Cairns Regional Council. This coordinated would also assist in preparations and improved arrangements during extreme weather events.			
CAO 5.2: Coordination Mechanism - First Peoples	State Government		June 2023
DESCRIPTION: The particular vulnerabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and overrepresentation of this cohort in housing and homelessness data is well established. The absence of a dedicated coordination mechanism undermines efforts to drive culturally appropriate models of support for this cohort and avoid escalation of risk, particularly given this group's underlying health status and levels of housing stress (including overcrowding) and the need to increase levels of help seeking behaviours (Group of 8, 2020; Centre for Aboriginal Policy and Economic Research, 2020). This measure proposes that Council continue to advocate for a place-based coordination mechanism to assess and manage localised responses for First Nations peoples, with the response led by the requisite authority to influence cross-agency activities and associated resourcing.			

4. Overview of Core Response and Core Advocacy Options and Proposed Completion Schedule

Legend:

- COM – Commence
- DFC – Draft for Consideration – indicates those significant matters that require Councillor consideration and endorsement.
- IMP – Implement
- REV – Review Cycle
- Indicates ongoing – requiring multi-year implementation/advocacy investment.

Target Cohort of Impact	2023	2024	2025	2026	Next Iteration
Cohort 1: Universal					
CRO 1.1 Local Planning Scheme Provisions for Social and Affordable Housing				DFC	IMP (2027)
CRO 1.2 Provision for All Hazards				DFC	IMP (2027)
CRO 1.3 Health and Social Impact Assessment		DFC	IMP		
CRO 1.4 Local Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing				IMP	
CRO 1.5 Financial Relief for Social and Affordable Housing Providers	DFC	IMP		REV	
CRO 1.6 Regional Social and Affordable Housing Development Forum	IMP				
CRO 1.7 Community Housing and Specialist Homelessness Sector Capacity	IMP				
CRO 1.8 Cairns LGA Community Resilience Strategy	DFC	IMP			REV
CAO 1.1 Formalise Local Government Involvement in the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council	COM				
CAO 1.2 Extension of NRAS (or Similar) Housing Support Program	COM				
CAO 1.3 Increase State Investment and Joint Planning in the Provision of Social and Affordable Housing	COM				
CAO 1.4 State Government Owned Land and Assets for Social and Affordable Housing	COM				
CAO 1.5 Planning System Reforms – Review of the State Planning Scheme, FNQ Regional Planning Scheme 2009-2031 (FNQRP), and Associated Regional Infrastructure Plan.	COM				
CAO 1.6 Community Engagement – Cultural Change and Social Acceptance	COM				
CAO 1.7 Regional Workforce Strategy – Incorporating Housing	COM				

Cohort 2: At Risk Residents						
CRO 2.1	Coordinated Outreach and Service Policy	IMP				
CRO 2.2	Early Intervention Specialist Support Service	DFC	IMP			
CRO 2.3	Green Waste Hardship Policy for Vulnerable Residents	DFC	IMP			
CRO 2.4	Insurance Vulnerabilities – Structural Non-Compliance		DFC	IMP		
CAO 2.1	Addressing Insurance Vulnerabilities – Under and Un-Insured Households	COM				
Cohort 3: People Sleeping Rough						
CRO 3.1	Coordinated Outreach and Service Protocol for People Experiencing Homelessness	IMP				
CRO 3.2	Public Space Management Protocol	IMP				
CAO 3.1-3.3	Diversionary Services – Extension of Night Diversionary Capacity; Establish a Day Assertive Outreach Rest and Recovery Program; Establish a Pro-Social Activation Program – Adults Cultural Mentoring	COM				
Cohort 4: People Transitioning from Care						
CAO 4.1; 4.2	Coordinated Exit Processes – Health; Feasibility Study In-Reach Homelessness Coordination Program	COM				
CAO 4.3; 4.4	Coordinated Exit Processes – Institutional Living; Expansion of Crises Accommodation – Young Women	COM				
Cohort 5: People Experiencing Hidden Homelessness						
CAO 5.1	Coordination of Transient Populations	COM				
CAO 5.2	Coordination Mechanism – First Peoples	COM				

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