

## Hon Michelle Lensink MLC

Minister for Human Services

Thursday 24 September 2020

### **Building a better homelessness system for SA**

Preventing and reducing homelessness is the focus of a nation-leading new homelessness system for South Australia, launched today by the Marshall Liberal Government.

The Minister for Human Services Michelle Lensink released the *Future Directions for Homelessness* paper, which sets a new direction for South Australia.

Following extensive consultation with homelessness providers and South Australians with lived experience, the much-needed and long overdue reform sets out to:

- Prevent people from falling into homelessness:
- Ensure people get the right support they need, when they need it
- Rapidly rehouse people into safe, stable and long-term housing so they don't cycle in-and-out of homelessness

Minister Lensink said the new plan focused on organisations working together to create better outcomes for South Australians.

“For too long, the focus has been on the crisis end and people spend years and years cycling in and out of homelessness – our ultimate aim is to get people off the streets for good,” said Minister Lensink.

“Our new approach focuses on organisations delivering homelessness services in alliances, rather than as separate organisations, to provide services for those who need them.

“Currently, we are funding around 75 separate homelessness programs in South Australia delivered by over 30 organisations, at a cost of \$71.5 million this year. The system is, understandably, difficult to navigate for someone in crisis.

“Our new vision will maintain homelessness funding and most importantly, improve outcomes for people using the system.

“The Marshall Liberal Government’s reforms are leading the way in Australia and while our goals are ambitious, by working together we can reduce homelessness in our state.”

Minister Lensink said homelessness providers demonstrated they can work together towards the shared aim of getting more South Australians into long-term, safe and stable housing – as seen in the Marshall Liberal Government’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

“There’s been a silver lining to the COVID-19 pandemic in that the Marshall Liberal Government, in partnership with our service providers, has collectively housed 250 South Australians who were rough sleeping from temporary, motel-accommodation into long-term housing,” said Minister Lensink.

“Our collective COVID-19 pandemic homelessness response is proof everyone can work well together towards our aim to stop people falling into and cycling through the homelessness system.”

A “Safety First” principle will be a focus of the alliances for anyone affected by domestic and family violence. This means that safety is the primary concern for any support provided to that person or family.

The SA Housing Authority will now facilitate workshops with the sector to work through the reform process and later this year, services will be invited to tender their new alliance approaches, with the new system to be operating by July 2021.

The alliance model system has been successfully introduced in other cities, including Glasgow in Scotland.

“We are working very closely with the homelessness sector to make this new vision for our homelessness system a reality,” said Minister Lensink.

The Marshall Liberal Government has already made a start on homelessness reform with the announcement of the new \$3 million Housing, Advice, Advocacy and Engagement Service, to be operating by 1 October 2020.

**The new reform includes:**

- \$71.5 million annually for homelessness services in South Australia, including the \$3 million Housing Advocacy, Advice and Engagement Service
- The Marshall Liberal Government has committed an additional \$20 million for the Homelessness Prevention Fund - the tender for the first \$6 million has been released
- \$7.3 million COVID-19 pandemic response to help people sleeping rough stay safe
- \$4 million to open 40 additional crisis beds for people experiencing domestic and family violence, including a nine-bed perpetrator trial.