

# SA Housing Authority

## Update

A message to the housing and homelessness sector

Tuesday, 11 August 2020

### Report from the third meeting of the Sector Reference Group

The third meeting of the Specialist Homelessness Sector Reference Group (SRG) was convened by independent chair Ms Loretta Reynolds on Wednesday 5 August 2020.

SRG member, Peter Sandeman, CEO Anglicare SA, led a discussion about partnership learnings from the experience of the Adelaide Zero Project (AZP), as well as his learnings as a leader in the social services sector. As co-chair of AZP, and through his role as a partner organisation in AZP, Peter provided an informed perspective of the project, the key points included:

- The AZP is a Collective Impact initiative seeking to end street homelessness in the Adelaide inner city <https://dunstan.org.au/adelaide-zero-project/collective-impact/>. AZP uses a Collective Impact approach which is a structured form of collaboration whereby organisations and individuals from different sectors all work together on a common agenda to solve a specific problem.
- The AZP seeks to achieve a Functional Zero approach to homelessness, the definition of Functional Zero is when the average capacity of its housing system is greater than the existing need. <https://dunstan.org.au/adelaide-zero-project/background/>
- The methodology being used in AZP as a pilot project has broader applicability across the homelessness system and has an international reach which provides key learnings for the sector and government.
- Looking forward, there is a need to focus on supporting an individual's capacity to maintain their housing security, health, wellbeing and full citizenship – outcomes are more than providing a house.
- The AZP demonstrates an alliance model, and creates a structure for other partners to join in the future, and provides opportunities for joined up, dynamic, local and regional responses.
- The AZP alliance has backbone and project support provided by the Don Dunstan Foundation. For a broader South Australian 'alliance to end homelessness', it was discussed that the Office for Homelessness Sector Integration could provide a statewide backbone, with localised backbone structures.

The SRG discussed the options for expansion of Collective Impact methodology in South Australia with key structural elements including a 'backbone' function and other considerations including:

- Metropolitan and rural – in rural areas services already work collectively and there may be a stronger population based approach in metropolitan areas, however there was strong recognition that local projects achieve tasks collaboratively.
- Prevention of homelessness is a challenge for Specialist Homelessness Services providers which have historically provided a crisis response, and in order to seek earlier intervention points, prevention requires a multi-sectoral response.
- Recognising the value of Collective Impact methodology, being mindful that the AZP pilot project has focussed solely on the rough sleeper cohort, and recognising that different cohorts have distinctive vulnerabilities and needs.
- Highlighting the importance that outcomes use a lens of wellbeing, because homelessness is a symptom and not a cause.

Belinda Hallsworth, SA Housing Authority Executive Director of Strategy and Governance, engaged in a discussion with SRG about high level reform outcomes for clients and the service system.

- The overarching aim of the homelessness sector reforms is to:
  - Prevent homelessness in South Australia wherever possible.
  - Ensure that the needs of people at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness, domestic or family violence are addressed to increase their safety and wellbeing and to prevent people from cycling through the sector.
  - Ensure that people at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness have positive experiences with our homelessness and housing services, whenever they need to use them.
- The key reform goals are:
  - Increased focus on prevention and early intervention.
  - Service access points (and gateways) are streamlined to ensure that the customer has control - new Access Point commenced 1 July 2020.
  - Lived experience is embedded into the service system.
  - The first stage will be establishing a new consolidated housing advisory, advocacy and engagement service which include a focus on the customer voice to commence 1 October.
  - A connected and coordinated systems wide approach is taken to housing and homelessness issues.
  - All services have a commitment to learn and share from each other in a data driven manner and with an evidence base to build on successful outcomes.

Key discussions included:

- The importance of appropriate aspirational outcomes balanced with realistic expectation about what SHS providers can directly impact – an issue of attribution.
- Being clear that Functional Zero is a methodology and a measure but not an outcome.
- Outcomes should reflect both the client (individuals, families, population) and the system.
- professional development needed to support the sector to implement a high functioning system.

- Lived Experience should be valued and contribute to design of a responsive system, but we need to be clear about what we mean, value and expect.
- Safety First requires a conversation about how to work with a cohort that is often in absolute crisis when first contact is made.
- Cultural integrity as a principle of reform needs further consideration with a shift towards 'country centred responses' rather than place based, especially for Aboriginal clients.
- High level outcomes will be further defined and refined and the SA Housing Authority will work with SHS providers to develop KPIs and measures as reform progresses with the need for professional support and development.

Further discussions and communication across the homelessness sector will continue.

**Loretta Reynolds**

**Chair, Sector Reference Group**

**Ian Cox**

**Head, Office for Homelessness Sector Integration**



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SA Housing Authority

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