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*Overview Report: Community engagement
report back and strategic advice for improving
the provision of specialist homelessness
services for Aboriginal people in NSW*

For the NSW Department of Communities and
Justice

20 February 2020



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Cox Inall Ridgeway (CIR) acknowledges and pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations of Australia.

This report, the contents and recommendations have been authored by CIR. The report represents the independent insights and analysis of CIR, not DCJ, the NSW Government or any other organisation. While all care has been taken by CIR to present quotes and other information accurately, transcripts were not taken, so quotes are not verbatim. Please contact CIR if you have any concerns about any aspects of the report or identify a correction that is needed.

Thank you to all the organisations, staff and community members who participated in this project, and shared their advice, knowledge and insights. For more information about the project or this report contact CIR Head of Research Sylvie Ellsmore at sylvie.ellsmore@coxinallridgeway.com.au or 0403 977 213.

Overview

Introduction

People who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness represent some of the most vulnerable people in Australia. Homelessness¹ can profoundly affect a person's mental and physical health, their education and employment opportunities, and their ability to participate fully in society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are much more likely to experience homelessness than other Australians.²

Specialist homelessness services provide support to people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.³ These services can take the form of casework, referrals to dedicated housing services, domestic violence prevention and response, mental health services, assertive outreach for people sleeping on the streets, drop-in services and temporary accommodation assistance, crisis accommodation and other forms of support.

In NSW the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) provides funding for not for profit organisations to deliver specialist homelessness services.⁴ Specialist homelessness services are provided under six separate program funding streams, which include individual one-off projects. The funding streams include:

- Specialist Homelessness Services program (SHS),
- Inner City Restoration (ICR),
- Service Support Fund (SSF),
- Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE),
- Homeless Youth Assistance Program (HYAP) and
- Youth Crisis Accommodation Enhancement (YCAE).

Specialist homelessness services are focused on those groups at greatest risk of homelessness including Aboriginal people, young people, families, single men and women (with or without children) escaping domestic and family violence. Under the *Going Home Staying Home* reforms of 2013-14, all specialist homelessness services in NSW were re-tendered resulting in the current Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program. The other funding streams and one-off projects represent subsequent initiatives to supplement or complement the core SHS program to respond to specific circumstances, needs, or government priorities.

Aboriginal people access specialist homelessness services at a significantly higher rate than other Australians. In 2017-18 nearly one third (29%) of the clients accessing NSW's specialist homelessness services were Aboriginal.⁵

The NSW Government is committed to increasing Aboriginal involvement in the design and delivery of services impacting Aboriginal people, including specialist homelessness services. Currently the number of Aboriginal organisations funded to provide specialist homelessness services is low – of 224 current contracts⁶ supporting the delivery of specialist homelessness services, only 14 of these involve Aboriginal providers.⁷

In most parts of NSW there is no Aboriginal-run service for Aboriginal people to access, and the level of Aboriginal staff across the sector does not reflect the makeup of the clients seeking to

access services. In addition, there is no current formal mechanism for Aboriginal organisations to provide advice to the NSW Government about the design and delivery of homelessness services or policy at the strategic level.

About this report

In July 2019 DCJ engaged Aboriginal social change agency Cox Inall Ridgeway (CIR) to collect feedback about ways to strengthen the role of Aboriginal people in the homelessness sector. The community engagement and related research undertaken by CIR informed the development of strategic advice to the Department.

The focus for community engagement activities was Aboriginal organisations representing Aboriginal people in NSW (i.e. state-wide and peak Aboriginal community-controlled organisations), and Aboriginal organisations or staff working in the homelessness sector. Other priority stakeholder groups were: DCJ staff, agencies involved in District Housing Implementation Groups, representatives of the Industry Partnership and non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers. The report is also informed by local level consultations undertaken in inner-Sydney and the Hunter.

Organisations were contacted asking for feedback and participation in the project. Community engagement was undertaken over July to September 2019 and took the form of:

- Phone interviews and phone meetings,
- Face-to-face meetings held at the CIR office in Ultimo or at the offices of SHS providers in Sydney,
- Group face-to-face meetings in Newcastle,
- An Aboriginal state-wide forum held in Redfern, and
- Exchange of information through email.

CIR spoke to approximately 50 individuals from 34 organisations. The majority of individuals consulted were Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander. The organisations who participated in the project were:

- Four (4) Aboriginal peak community-controlled organisations: the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC), the NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec), the Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association (ACHIA), and the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ ACT (ALS NSW/ACT),
- The Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO),
- Homelessness NSW, representing the Industry Partnership (Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) and Yfoundations),
- Ten (10) Aboriginal homelessness service providers, including members of the NSW SHS Aboriginal Reference Group (Homelessness NSW),
- Seventeen (17) non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers, prioritising Aboriginal staff within those organisations and organisations based in the inner-Sydney or Hunter regions, and
- DCJ staff involved in the SHS program, the inner-Sydney or Hunter regions or the Aboriginal Outcomes team (10 people in total).

This report summarises the outcomes of the community engagement and related research undertaken by CIR for the project. It provides strategic advice in the form of possible actions and directions for change which could strengthen the voice and role of Aboriginal people in the design and delivery of specialist homelessness services.

The insights collected from the community engagement and research is presented below against key themes or issues which were a focus of the consultations:

- The accessibility of specialist homelessness services for Aboriginal people,
- The suitability of specialist homelessness services for Aboriginal people, including whether services are culturally appropriate,
- Aboriginal involvement in the specialist homelessness services workforce,
- Specialist homelessness services contract management, and
- Procurement of future specialist homelessness services contracts.

Selected insights

Homelessness is a growing issue in Australia. The five years from 2011 to 2016 have seen a marked increase in the number of homeless people in Australia, with the overall national homelessness rate rising by 14% in the period, and rough sleeping growing by 20%. Homelessness is growing fastest in NSW (by 27% from 2011 to 2016) and in capital cities (estimated homelessness in Sydney increased by 48% from 2011 to 2016).⁸

While the *rate* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless reduced over the same period (that is, the proportion of people within the community that is homeless), the *number* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless continues to grow overall, as the population increases.⁹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain much more likely to be homeless than the non-Indigenous population.¹⁰ While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 3.5% of the NSW population, they represented 7.3% of the people who were homeless in NSW on Census night in 2016.¹¹

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience homelessness differently to other Australians. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be sleeping rough or be a victim of crime and of family violence.¹²

Types of homelessness, national figures, 2016

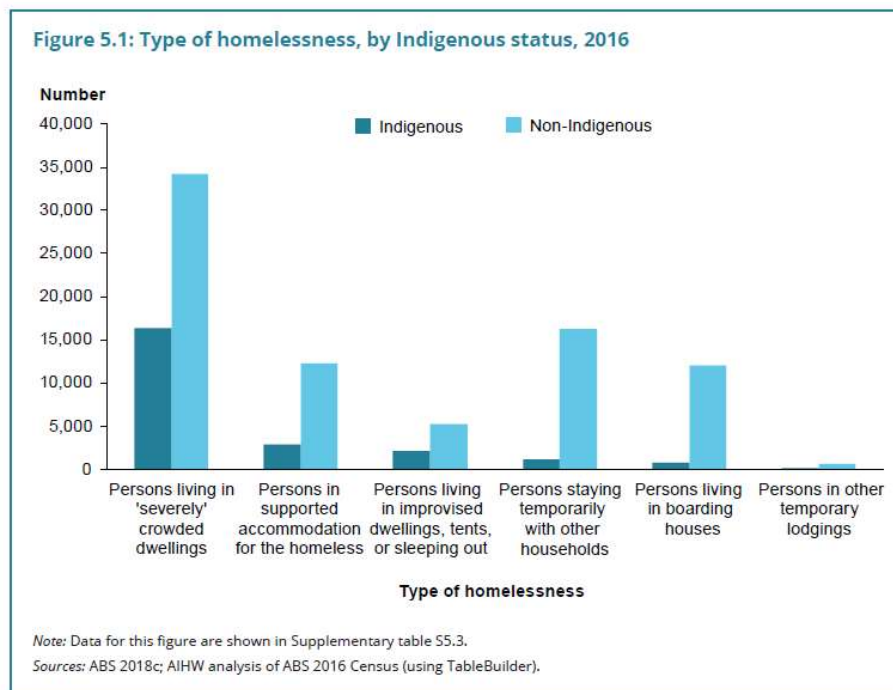


Table extracted from AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: A focus report on housing and homelessness*. Figures are national.

Accessibility of specialist homelessness services for Aboriginal people

The provision of specialist homelessness services support has grown across all population groups in recent years.¹³ The growth in the number of people accessing specialist homelessness services is likely to be a result of both increased demand for services due to increased homelessness; and better assessment, referral and reporting of service provision.¹⁴ This includes more accurate reporting of the Aboriginal status of clients accessing specialist homelessness services.¹⁵

Between 2011 and 2018, the number of Aboriginal specialist homelessness service clients in NSW increased from 11,140 to 19,419 clients, according to data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).¹⁶ Over 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who access specialist homelessness services nationally are female, often having experienced domestic violence.¹⁷

The consultation for this project heard that within the growing homelessness population Aboriginal people have high and complex needs. CIR asked specialist homelessness service providers about the priority areas of need or gaps that exist for Aboriginal clients. The key areas identified by specialist homelessness service providers through the consultations were:

- A lack of access to appropriate and affordable long-term housing, and a lack of transitional housing.
- A lack of services including refuges for victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence was reported as impacting between 30 and 60% of specialist homelessness service clients.
- A gap in support for Aboriginal tenants at risk of losing existing housing, and a gap in support for new tenants to maintain housing. Some Aboriginal homelessness service providers

expressed frustration that they were increasingly being asked to provide support when a tenancy was breaking down, but support was not available to ensure tenancies were sustained.

- A lack of integrated or holistic approach to clients' needs (as discussed below).
- A lack of drug and alcohol programs, particularly rehabilitation places.
- For people sleeping rough especially, a lack of access to mental health services, and
- More people exited from custody who have no place to stay or supports. One specialist homelessness service provider estimated that 20% of people sleeping rough in inner Sydney were people exiting custody.

There is significant diversity across and within regions. While within NSW the greatest number of Aboriginal homeless people are found in south eastern (including inner) Sydney and the Hunter region (including Newcastle), there are particular difficulties in regional and remote areas where there are often fewer local services to access.

Specialist homelessness service providers reported that a key driver for Aboriginal people seeking to access specialist homelessness services either within or out of area was lack of social, community or affordable housing or temporary housing when leaving a domestic violence situation. A specialist homelessness services provider on the Central Coast reported an increase in homeless people staying in the Central Coast due to its proximity by rail to Sydney, and opportunities for relatively safe rough sleeping in bush land.

It was suggested through the consultation that any Aboriginal homelessness sector strategies or solutions developed should:

- Acknowledge regional and local diversity,
- Acknowledge the high and complex needs of Aboriginal people facing homelessness, and
- Ensure resources are directed to priority areas of need.

The consultation heard that Aboriginal homelessness service providers, particularly smaller providers, regularly operate at or above capacity. Cooperative service delivery arrangements and referral pathways exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers, however it was also reported that some non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers may be referring Aboriginal clients to Aboriginal homelessness service providers at rates that exceed what Aboriginal homelessness service providers are funded to deliver, and are therefore not sustainable.

Suitability of services

The consultation heard that Aboriginal clients prefer, in the main, to access an Aboriginal-run service, where one is available. Existing Aboriginal homelessness service providers and Aboriginal staff have strong connections to their respective local Aboriginal communities, and this knowledge supports effective service delivery. Due to the low numbers of Aboriginal homelessness service providers, most Aboriginal clients do not have access to an Aboriginal-run service.

Aboriginal homelessness service providers were reported to deliver appropriate, holistic and culturally safe¹⁸ service where possible within existing resources.

“We work with them on a holistic level, to provide them all the inputs they need in order to create a stable outcome re housing. ... We deal with much more than housing. Helping with payments, dealing with social workers if they have them, or getting them access to ones if they

don't. We help them with medical and mental health appointments, getting a mental health plan. For job network meetings or to get to work we provide them transport. We accompany them to court. We're involved in restoration programs, where people are seeking to have their children returned to them from care. At the moment I'm working with a woman who had her son removed at 4 weeks old. He's now nearly 3. We're working on getting him back to mum, it's taken 7 months so far." *Aboriginal homelessness service provider*

Many non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers have also implemented detailed strategies to increase the cultural competence of their workforce and organisation. Activities to support cultural competence which are being implemented by organisations included:

- Cultural awareness training, typically as one-off training,
- Aboriginal employment strategies, including recruitment strategies, and mentoring, supervision and professional development programs for Aboriginal staff,
- Community outreach programs, for example support for NAIDOC Week events,
- Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs),
- Aboriginal service development units within organisations,
- Cultural camps for staff,
- Participation in forums and conferences about Aboriginal issues,
- Signing up to the *Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord* (as discussed below),
- Partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, and
- Including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, Aboriginal art and/or organisational commitments to self-determination in offices.

DCJ supports and works with the homelessness sector around a number of sector-led development activities, including programs to increase the cultural capacity of homelessness services. Homelessness sector initiatives are coordinated by the Industry Partnership (or IP), which was established in 2013 between DCJ and the three sector-peak organisations: Homelessness NSW, Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) and Yfoundations. A proportion of funding provided by DCJ to Homelessness NSW supports the employment of an Aboriginal Senior Project Officer based at Homelessness NSW.

Initiatives coordinated by the Industry Partnership include the *Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord*, which was launched in 2017. The Accord is a voluntary, high level document which aims to increase Aboriginal participation in specialist homelessness services and support the capacity of Aboriginal organisations providing specialist homelessness services. Homelessness NSW reports that as of July 2019, 56 organisations had signed up to participate in the Accord.¹⁹

Across the sector both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers reported that some non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers are providing more culturally appropriate services than others. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homelessness services emphasised that where good practice was being implemented, it tended to rely on 'good' managers within an organisation, or the skills of Aboriginal staff. Increased cultural awareness training, cultural competence training, trauma informed training, support for specialist homelessness service providers to 'embed' culturally safe practice within their organisations was suggested, and potentially mandated cultural competence standards in service contracts should be considered.

"One of our programs has 30% Aboriginal clients, the other 15%. We don't have any Aboriginal staff. We recognise the gap. We include cultural awareness in our selection criteria for staff

now. We're developing a RAP. We have an internal working group. We talk to other organisations – local Aboriginal partner organisations- to get advice. We are organising cultural awareness training.” *Non-Aboriginal homelessness service provider – Metropolitan*

Specialist homelessness services workforce

Recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff in the sector remains a challenge. Aboriginal staff play a key role in ensuring effective service delivery for Aboriginal clients and increasing the cultural competence of the homelessness sector.

The consultation heard that many mainstream organisations have none or only one Aboriginal worker. It was reported by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers that there was high pressure for Aboriginal staff to work outside the scope of their role and beyond hours for which they are paid, because of the expectations from clients, the community and the organisation. Where only one Aboriginal worker was employed in a non-Aboriginal organisation, it was reported that they may be expected to be involved in ‘all things Aboriginal’ for the organisation.

Suggestions of ways DCJ could support increased Aboriginal employment in the sector from the consultation included but were not limited to:

- Increased sharing of examples of good recruitment and staff development practices,
- Sponsoring Aboriginal mentoring and professional development initiatives,
- Sponsoring traineeship programs, and
- Mandated Aboriginal employment targets.

Some specialist homelessness service providers reported success with caseload management for managing workload issues, including negotiating lower caseloads through DCJ contracts. However, reducing caseloads appeared to be a solution which had only been implemented by larger organisations, or organisations with partnerships with larger organisations which allowed clients to be transferred. Most Aboriginal homelessness service providers are small to medium organisations, some employing less than 2 full time staff.²⁰

Aboriginal-led specialist homelessness services delivery

A key theme from the consultation across stakeholder groups was the need for greater resources to be invested in the delivery of specialist homelessness services to Aboriginal people, and greater funding certainty for Aboriginal homelessness service providers. Aboriginal homelessness service providers are more likely to rely on government funding compared to other organisations.²¹ The small scale of most Aboriginal homelessness service providers was an additional challenge reported. These factors have a significant impact on the sustainability of existing Aboriginal homelessness service providers.

Relationships with the other organisations in the sector were identified as a key area of support for some Aboriginal staff and for Aboriginal homelessness service providers. The consultation heard multiple examples of long-running cooperative arrangements between specialist homelessness services in different areas. The pooling of resources - with the support of the Industry Partnership - to meet regulatory challenges was identified as a successful strategy implemented in the past by organisations, for example several services pool resources to engage the same auditor to meet audit requirements.

There was general support from stakeholders consulted for new Aboriginal organisations to be encouraged into the sector, as a means to increase diversity and client choice in regions where there are no Aboriginal-led services. Throughout the consultations Aboriginal peak organisations noted that many Aboriginal organisations generally are overstretched and struggle to meet existing requirements to receive government funding, including accreditation standards. Entering the homelessness space was not seen as a priority or attractive for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. A comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy was suggested to encourage more Aboriginal organisations in the long term. In the short term it is suggested that the priority should be support for existing Aboriginal homelessness service providers and Aboriginal staff working in non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers.

Strengthening Aboriginal voices in the design and delivery of specialist homelessness services

In terms of further consultation and the development of a specific Aboriginal homelessness sector strategy, there was interest from Aboriginal homelessness service providers and sector representatives to be involved in the future.

While it was acknowledged that the voice of Aboriginal people in designing and delivering Aboriginal homelessness responses needs to be strengthened, there wasn't a consensus of support for the formation of a new Aboriginal peak body or a specific Aboriginal homelessness forum at the State-level. The preference from state-wide, regional and local Aboriginal organisations consulted was to find ways to strengthen existing forums in the short term as the mechanism for Aboriginal people to provide advice at the State level, and the local level rather than start something new.

Suggestions about potential forums that could be used or strengthened to provide advice at the state level included:

- The Aboriginal Reference Group convened by the Industry Partnership. This forum could be strengthened through resources to facilitate larger numbers of Aboriginal organisations and staff travelling to participate in meetings.
- The Premier's Council of Homelessness. This forum could be strengthened with expanded Aboriginal membership.
- The Aboriginal Peak Reference Group for housing, convened by AHO to consult on the existing policy review process. This forum could be extended beyond its current Aboriginal housing policy review process.

In the short to medium term there was interest in supporting key Aboriginal stakeholders who participated in the consultation to meet again, and work with DCJ towards on a shared agenda.

Other future issues

The introduction of Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation standards for specialist homelessness services is the focus of a number of providers over the next 12 months. The Industry Partnership is implementing a number of programs to support services to prepare for accreditation.

In terms of future contract procurement processes, the key message was that it was important to learn the lessons from the *Going Home Staying Home* process. A future procurement process is most likely to successfully engage Aboriginal organisations if Aboriginal organisations are

prioritised, and a tailored strategy is developed which allows flexibility and longer lead time for organisations to engage.

Considerations and future directions

The key strategic recommendation from the community engagement is that **DCJ develop and fund an Aboriginal homelessness sector development strategy**. The strategy should aim to improve homelessness services for Aboriginal people, by supporting existing Aboriginal organisations and staff in the homelessness sector and an expanded or stronger role for Aboriginal organisations and communities in the future, including in the design and delivery of future homelessness services. Improving homelessness services should assist to reduce Aboriginal homelessness, including by supporting Aboriginal people at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless, and by increasing the number of Aboriginal people who are supported to secure suitable, sustainable housing and other forms of supports. The strategy should be informed by the consultations undertaken to date through this project.

The strategy should prioritise service delivery to Aboriginal clients by Aboriginal organisations, consistent with the NSW Government's commitment to supporting self-determination. The strategy could prioritise one or more avenues for regular, ongoing Aboriginal input or advice to the NSW Government, in relation to homelessness policy and service delivery. Such a mechanism should be a topic of further discussion and consultation (see strategic recommendation three, below).

It was an original intention of this project to develop such a strategy. Through the life of the project it became clear that development of such a strategy required a longer consultation process, greater discussion to find areas of consensus between key stakeholders, and greater involvement of industry representatives who are currently leading a range of sector development activities relevant to any future strategy.

The second key strategic recommendation is that **DCJ reaffirms its commitment to self-determination**. It was suggested during the consultations that DCJ could make a written statement affirming its support for Aboriginal self-determination, consistent with the *Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord* being voluntarily implemented within the sector. The commitment would be positively received by stakeholders as a gesture of good will and indication of the department demonstrating leadership for change from the top.

The third key strategic recommendation is that **DCJ commit to, and resource, further Aboriginal community consultation to inform future decisions regarding specialist homelessness service design and delivery**.

The bringing together of key Aboriginal state-wide organisations, Aboriginal homelessness service providers, Aboriginal staff and homelessness sector representatives was identified as a valuable outcome of the consultation, and the start of a conversation about increased coordination. Future or ongoing consultation should include peak Aboriginal organisations, Aboriginal homelessness service providers, Aboriginal DCJ staff, DCJ SHS program staff, and key Aboriginal staff or program leads within the sector.

While there is no one peak Aboriginal homelessness body in NSW or Australia, a number of Aboriginal peak bodies' work relates to or intersects with homelessness. One of the aims of this project was to investigate the establishment of a formal mechanism for Aboriginal input at the

strategic (State) level. The consultation heard a range of views about the most appropriate structure for ongoing engagement between the Aboriginal sector and DCJ.

Generally, there wasn't support for the establishment of a new ongoing mechanism for Aboriginal input into homelessness policy or service design at the strategic level. Instead it was recommended that existing avenues continue to be used, such as direct discussions between DCJ and Aboriginal peaks, program-based forums such as those convened by the AHO and practitioner forums convened by the Industry Partnership.

There was strong consensus that the conversations continue between key stakeholders which are focused on strengthening Aboriginal voices and improving integrated responses to address homelessness, with the support of DCJ. In the first instance, it is recommended that the key stakeholders who met as part of this project have the opportunity to provide a response to the report back and strategic advice arising from this project. Additional stakeholders that could be included in that discussion are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board of DVNSW, additional members of the Homelessness NSW Aboriginal Communities of Practice, and the Aboriginal program within the Tenants Union of NSW.

Other considerations and proposed directions for improving and developing service provision for Aboriginal people are outlined below.

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>1. DCJ develop and fund an Aboriginal homelessness sector development strategy</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p> <p>Aboriginal State- wide organisations</p> <p>Aboriginal staff and services in the sector</p>
<p>2. DCJ reaffirms its commitment to self-determination</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>3. DCJ commit to, and resource, further Aboriginal community consultation to inform future decisions regarding specialist homelessness service design and delivery</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p> <p>Aboriginal State-wide organisations</p> <p>Aboriginal staff and services in the sector</p>
<p>4. DCJ prioritise strategic alignment and clearer linkages between other government and sector frameworks and policies that impact on Aboriginal homelessness, such as housing policy, in the development of any future Aboriginal sector development plans or strategies</p> <p>Homelessness policy exists within a complex framework of housing, community services, health and other policies. It is recommended that in the development of any Aboriginal sector development plans or strategies DCJ prioritise strategic alignment and clear linkages with other government and sector initiatives that impact on Aboriginal homelessness.</p> <p>One area where better alignment was suggested was in relation to the AHO <i>Aboriginal Social Housing Strategy</i>. It is recommended that DCJ, AHO, AbSec, ACHIA and NSWALC in particular work more actively with the Industry Partnership (sector peaks) to leverage opportunities to align relevant key strategies such as this.</p> <p>It is also recommended that DCJ discuss with the sector and Aboriginal peaks the potential development of an integrated Aboriginal homelessness and housing strategy as has been developed in other jurisdictions.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p> <p>Aboriginal State-wide organisations</p>
<p>5. DCJ to work in partnership with Homelessness NSW to build on sector development activities that are already underway.</p> <p>These include the <i>Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord</i>, the Communities of Practice forum, the Community Housing for Aboriginal People (CHAP) train the trainer program, and ASES accreditation support. There are opportunities to strengthen the relationship between Homelessness NSW and DCJ.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>6. DCJ improve strategies for mapping the needs of Aboriginal communities, to ensure that future homelessness services and resources for Aboriginal communities are being directed to priority areas of need</p> <p>The consultation heard from providers and Aboriginal organisations that there is a need to better map the needs of Aboriginal communities to inform where and what homelessness services are delivered or will be needed (for example to respond to the projected growth in the number of Aboriginal young people). It was suggested that available knowledge and data was not shared or used to maximum effect.</p> <p>This mapping was seen as particularly important in terms of designing or approving future SHS funding packages to service communities across the State. Identification of priority needs should be linked to the development of service packages and funding arrangements.</p> <p>Closer collaboration between DCJ, service providers, homelessness peaks and relevant agencies is recommended, to ensure relevant knowledge sharing and effective mapping and planning of future service delivery.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p> <p>Relevant agencies and services</p>
<p>7. DCJ review the effectiveness of current forums, including District Housing Implementation Groups (DHIGs), to identify and coordinate agency and services responses to emerging Aboriginal homelessness needs</p> <p>The consultation heard from providers that current cross-agency forums are of varying effectiveness as a mechanism to identify and respond to emerging unmet local or regional homelessness needs. This includes DHIGs, which bring together a range of relevant government agencies and services in some regions.</p> <p>Suggested improvements from the consultations included the creation of clearer or more robust pathways to escalate urgent issues identified by the DHIG or equivalent forums to relevant, senior government decision makers, to address gaps that have been identified in the region.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p>
<p>8. DCJ review the implementation of the 'No Wrong Door' policy, to ensure it is operating as intended</p> <p>The consultation heard from Aboriginal homelessness service providers across different regions that they are regularly being referred Aboriginal clients which could be supported by a non-Aboriginal homelessness service provider, or that they do not have the capacity to support. The No Wrong Door policy requires the provider at the point of contact to support clients unless there is a good reason to refer.</p> <p>It is recommended that DCJ review how the current policy is operating in light of these reports and consider if action is needed to ensure non-Aboriginal providers are offering appropriate support to Aboriginal clients, and are not inappropriately referring clients to other services.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>9. DCJ work with the sector to expand the sharing of best practice examples, templates, case studies and options for non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers, and other relevant Aboriginal services, to grow the cultural competence of services and build culturally safe organisations</p> <p>The consultation heard many positive examples of cultural capacity building work being voluntarily undertaken by specialist homelessness service providers, in many cases with the support of the Industry Partnership. However, significant examples of culturally unsafe service provision were also reported.</p> <p>It is recommended that existing training and sector development activities being led by the Industry Partnership, with the support of DCJ, be further expanded particularly in relation to practical, cultural capacity building support for non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers working with Aboriginal clients.</p> <p>Non-Aboriginal providers consistently suggested that they would appreciate more guidance to increase cultural competence for working with Aboriginal clients.</p> <p>Noting that the capacity, size, context and nature of specialist homelessness service providers varies, the importance of sharing diverse or flexible examples of good practice was emphasised throughout the consultation.</p> <p>Industry resources should be co-developed with Aboriginal people working in the sector and draw on best practice cultural principles and evidence of success in other program areas.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p> <p>Aboriginal State-wide organisations</p> <p>Aboriginal staff and services in the sector</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>10. DCJ explore opportunities to expand the delivery of training in cultural competence and trauma informed care</p> <p>Specialist homelessness service providers consistently reported that cultural awareness training for working with Aboriginal people was being provided in some form to staff. However, it was also reported that training was often challenging to organise or access, or inadequate – for example did not address the needs of clients who have lived experience of trauma.</p> <p>It is recommended that relevant training be more readily available. It is also recommended that training focus on building cultural <i>competence</i>. That is, training should aim to provide staff with the skills and support they need to put their awareness or knowledge of cultural differences into practice appropriately. This will help create services that are culturally safe for Aboriginal people.</p> <p>It is also recommended that DCJ work with the sector to improve the availability of relevant, high quality training. The Industry Partnership, AbSec, the AHO and ACHIA are amongst the state-wide organisations consulted for the project who identified they were currently developing or delivering relevant training and would be interested to discuss partnership opportunities with DCJ and the homelessness sector to expand the delivery of training.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p> <p>Aboriginal State-wide organisations</p>
<p>11. DCJ implement specific requirements that organisations demonstrate their ability to provide culturally competent services, in order to receive funding to provide homelessness services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people</p> <p>The new ASES will require services to be culturally appropriate, but do not specify core capabilities or requirements in relation to delivering culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal clients. It is recommended that specific requirements be included in DCJ funding requirements, which spell out an appropriate standard of training or expected demonstrated capability from specialist homelessness service provider staff. Such requirements should be developed in consultation with the sector.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p>
<p>12. DCJ prioritise the implementation of comprehensive cultural competence training and strategies within the department</p> <p>The consultation heard that improving the cultural capability of DCJ staff would assist effective homelessness service delivery and design. Skills or experience developing positive relationships with Aboriginal organisations and communities was also identified as valuable, particularly for staff responsible for engaging with Aboriginal homelessness service providers and managing contracts.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/Corporate</p> <p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>13. DCJ investigate implementing mandated cultural competence standards for all specialist homelessness service providers, drawing from examples of effective practice in other sectors</p> <p>While it is recommended that cultural competence minimum standards be established, further investigation is needed to articulate what the standards should include, and how they would be assessed and enforced.</p> <p>DCJ should refer to existing work undertaken by the Industry Partnership such as the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Competence Standards</i> project, and in other jurisdictions such as the South Australian <i>Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Self-Assessment Instrument</i>.</p> <p>The health sector in particular has made considerable progress in embedding and mandating cultural competence measures into national safety and quality standards for all health services. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has developed supportive resources including user guides for effectively servicing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health which could provide guidance.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p>
<p>14. DCJ ensure appropriate priority to Aboriginal employment levels in selection processes for service contract extensions and future tenders</p> <p>The homelessness workforce should be as reflective as possible of their client group. It is recommended that organisations be required to demonstrate their capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal staff, if they are to receive funding to service Aboriginal clients.</p> <p>In terms of growing the capacity of the sector generally, it is recommended that DCJ work with the Industry Partnership and take an enabling approach to helping organisations in recruitment, retention and career development strategies for Aboriginal staff. Models and examples of good practice approaches that have worked in other sectors are available.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p>
<p>15. DCJ prioritise increasing and retaining Aboriginal staff at all levels in both Central and District offices</p> <p>The consultation consistently heard that there are a low number of Aboriginal staff, and a high turnover of Aboriginal staff, within DCJ. Increasing Aboriginal employment within DCJ would benefit the sector and improve relationships with Aboriginal organisations and communities.</p> <p>The NSW Government has committed to growing its Aboriginal workforce, and the FACS <i>Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2017 to 2021</i> identifies increasing Aboriginal staff as a focus area.</p> <p>It is recommended that DCJ prioritise increasing Aboriginal staff numbers in Central and District offices that work on homelessness issues. Strategies to retain and promote Aboriginal staff should also be reviewed, in coordination with the Aboriginal Outcomes Team.</p>	<p>DCJ Central/ Corporate</p> <p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>16. DCJ provide existing Aboriginal providers with funding certainty through multi-year contracts</p> <p>Current Aboriginal homelessness service providers receive funding from a range of DCJ programs. A significant number reported that they had previously received funding on a short term basis, for example on a 6 or 12 months basis, and are concerned about future funding certainty. It is recommended the sustainability of existing Aboriginal organisations in the sector be supported through secure multi-year funding, ideally for three years or more.</p>	DCJ SHS Program
<p>17. DCJ increase funding available to existing Aboriginal homelessness service providers</p> <p>Levels of funding to service Aboriginal homelessness clients was identified as a key challenge for Aboriginal organisations currently delivering specialist homelessness services. The majority of Aboriginal homelessness service providers reported that they were operating at unsustainable levels.</p> <p>Increasing funding would help sustain Aboriginal involvement in the delivery of homelessness services in the short to medium term, pending the development of future strategies to expand Aboriginal involvement in the sector in the future.</p>	DCJ Central/ Corporate DCJ SHS Program
<p>18. DCJ support expanded service delivery by existing Aboriginal homelessness service providers</p> <p>A number of Aboriginal homelessness service providers consulted for the project expressed an interest in expanding their service delivery, if increased funding became available.</p> <p>It is recommended that DCJ work directly with existing Aboriginal providers in a flexible and ground-up approach to understand how services want to grow, acknowledging great diversity among regions and organisations.</p> <p>Beyond strategies to sustain the existing level of specialist homelessness service delivery by Aboriginal organisations currently in the sector, it is recommended that DCJ discuss with individual Aboriginal providers their interest in expanding geographical reach, servicing more clients, and increasing services focused on prevention and early intervention.</p>	DCJ SHS Program Aboriginal providers

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>19. DCJ investigate the creation of a funding model that acknowledges the additional costs of servicing Aboriginal clients in line with culturally safe best practice and in light of the likelihood of complex needs</p> <p>Within the homelessness client cohort, Aboriginal clients tend to have high and complex needs. It is recommended that DCJ investigate developing a funding structure which acknowledges that Aboriginal clients more often require intensive support from service providers.</p> <p>It is recommended that DCJ investigate options such as a ‘service loading’ for Aboriginal clients. Evidence of the successful use of Aboriginal client loadings in creating positive incentives for services to provide culturally appropriate care to Aboriginal people in the health sector (such as the Medicare Practice Incentives Payments Program) could be drawn on.</p> <p>Such an approach would incentivise specialist homelessness services providers to support Aboriginal clients, and may assist in addressing the potential inappropriate referral of Aboriginal clients with complex needs which was reported during the consultation for this project.</p>	DCJ SHS Program
<p>20. DCJ review existing JWAs with Aboriginal partners to establish the viability of creating new, separate contracts for service delivery</p> <p>The consultations collected feedback from a number of parties to current JWAs – that is, arrangements where a lead organisation sub-contracts to other services and Aboriginal organisations.</p> <p>The consultation heard concerns about how some JWAs were operating. However, it was outside the scope of this project to investigate options for specific JWAs currently in operation. It is recommended that DCJ have further discussions with current organisations involved in JWAs.</p>	DCJ SHS Program
<p>21. DCJ hold further discussions with Aboriginal peak bodies and Aboriginal homelessness service providers about their interest and capacity to auspice, mentor or support other Aboriginal organisations in the sector</p> <p>The consultations heard interest among some Aboriginal organisations, for example, to take on auspicing roles to support or mentor other Aboriginal organisations, in order to support Aboriginal organisations to take on the provision of specialist homelessness services in the future, or for existing Aboriginal organisations to expand the services they provide, including to other geographical areas. Resource requirements of providing such support should be included in the discussions.</p>	DCJ SHS Program Aboriginal State-wide organisations

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>22. DCJ further investigate including mandated targets with future contracts in relation to: levels of service to Aboriginal clients; levels of Aboriginal staffing; and Aboriginal involvement in the governance of organisations</p> <p>The consultation heard mixed views across specialist homelessness service providers about the inclusion of targets within service contracts.</p> <p>The key reasons that targets were supported by Aboriginal organisations in particular was accountability. It would be consistent with the feedback received through the consultation for commitments to be included in specialist homelessness services contracts in the form of targets, or an explicit Aboriginal ‘service level objective’.</p> <p>Further investigation is required regarding the practicality of inclusion of targets, including how they would be audited and enforced.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p>
<p>23. DCJ adopt a strengths-based approach to contract management</p> <p>A strength-based approach would encourage DCJ and service providers to work together to ensure issues are identified and resolved early. It would involve an approach to contract management which acknowledges the particular strengths of Aboriginal providers, including understanding of client needs. It would facilitate flexibility and trust, enabling Aboriginal providers to implement innovative, community-based service models and solutions to any challenges identified.</p> <p>DCJ should consider whether its contract management functions are sufficiently developed and resourced to implement this kind of approach.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>DCJ Districts</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>24. DCJ to investigate opportunities to provide start up incentives or establishment grants to support Aboriginal organisations to take on future specialist homelessness services contracts</p> <p>One of the areas explored through the consultation was the barriers and opportunities for more Aboriginal organisations to become involved in the delivery of specialist homelessness services. Homelessness service delivery is complex and multi-faceted, and the requirements for specialist homelessness services are in the process of change with the introduction of ASES standards.</p> <p>Start-up grants, establishment grants or ‘capability supplement’, could encourage more Aboriginal organisations to consider becoming involved in the sector, or to expand their existing role within the sector – for example to extend service delivery to additional regions.</p> <p>Funding would ideally be sufficiently flexible to support accreditation processes, administration and systems building, staff training and recruitment, and any required asset purchasing. A similar approach has been trialled in other sectors such as Out of Home Care and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.</p> <p>It is recommended DCJ work in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to develop and deliver appropriate training and capacity building, for example by funding access to governance and other training offered by the CHIA/ACHIA NSW and AbSec (which is a Registered Training Organisation).</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p>
<p>25. DCJ work with the sector and peak Aboriginal organisations to develop tender requirements for non-Aboriginal organisations which facilitate genuine partnership approaches with Aboriginal organisations</p> <p>Some specialist homelessness services and Aboriginal organisations consulted for the project expressed concern that processes for organisations to prove that they had a successful track record providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people were not sufficiently robust.</p> <p>It is recommended that future funding requirements include revised criteria for organisations to demonstrate they have a ‘footprint’ within relevant local Aboriginal communities, as an indicator of organisation’s ability to provide appropriate services to Aboriginal clients. Priority should be given to organisations that can demonstrate that they have established long running relationships and/ or successful partnerships with Aboriginal organisations in the local area, rather than one-off projects or events.</p>	<p>DCJ SHS Program</p> <p>Industry Partnership</p> <p>Aboriginal State-wide organisations</p>

Recommendation or suggested area for action	Who
<p>26. DCJ develop an earmarked, Aboriginal-specific tender process for future specialist homelessness services funding which prioritise funding for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations</p> <p>DCJ should consider the opportunities provided through NSW Government Aboriginal procurement policies to facilitate this approach to future procurement.</p> <p>The NSW Government has established Aboriginal procurement policies and targets which enable government contract and tender processes to be leveraged to support Aboriginal employment opportunities, expand Aboriginal owned businesses, and increase Aboriginal involvement in the delivery of government services.</p> <p>Aboriginal procurement policies can support greater flexibility in traditional tender processes, for example by allowing agencies to prioritise Aboriginal organisation to receive funding for services.</p>	DCJ SHS Program

Terminology used in this report

The term Aboriginal: refers to the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters of New South Wales. Indigenous is the term sometimes used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who collectively are the Traditional Owners of Australia’s lands and waters.

In NSW it is common practice for government agencies and community organisations to use the term Aboriginal, rather than Indigenous or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, to refer to services or policies which are primarily for Aboriginal people but are also inclusive of Torres Strait Islander people who are living in NSW. For example, Torres Strait Islanders clients may be included in counts or descriptions of ‘Aboriginal’ specialist homelessness services clients in NSW.

In this report:

- The term **Aboriginal** is used when referring to NSW organisations, services (including homeless services) or NSW policies which are aimed primarily at Aboriginal people, not-with-standing that these services are also open to Torres Strait Islanders.
- In relation to the reporting of data, either **Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or Indigenous** is used depending on the term used in the source where the data was reported.
- The term **non-Indigenous** is sometimes used when referring to services or programs for the general Australian population which are not specifically targeted to Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander people, or figures which only count people who identify as other than Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander.
- The term **Aboriginal organisation** is used to refer to Aboriginal-led organisations in NSW.
- Specific Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nation names are used where known.
- Terms used in quotes, titles or extracts from other documents are unchanged.

The term '**specialist homelessness services**' is used to refer to the types of services being delivered to people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. The term '**specialist homelessness service providers**' is used in this report to refer to the range of not for profit organisations that are contracted by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to provide homelessness services. This includes both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations.

Where an organisation that is providing specialist homelessness services is Aboriginal-led they are referred to in this report as an **Aboriginal homelessness service provider**. Services which are not Aboriginal-led are referred to **non-Aboriginal homelessness service providers**. This report also refers to the broader category of **organisations**, which includes providers that provide specialist homelessness services and other non-government organisations.

It is noted that the term **Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS)** is commonly used in the sector to refer to the range of homelessness services that are funded by DCJ, as well as to refer to the specific SHS funding program which is administered by DCJ.²² '**SHS providers**' is a common term used in NSW to refer to the organisations funding by DCJ to provide homelessness services, regardless of the specific program under which they are funded. For example, the Service Support Fund (or **SSF**) also provides funding for a small number of organisations that support and contribute to the delivery of specialist homelessness services.

To avoid confusion about the sources of funding for organisations in this report the terms Specialist Homelessness Services (capitalised), SHS and SHS providers are generally avoided in this report, unless included in a quote or referring to the *specific* SHS funding program.

Department of Communities and Justice: During the course of the CIR's engagement with the former **Department of Family and Community Services** or **FACS**, for this project, the name of the department changed, following a re-structure and merger with the former Department of Justice. In this report, the name DCJ is used throughout to refer to the department. It may be read as interchangeable with FACS.

In consultations with the sector, the names FACS or Family and Community Services were predominantly used, due to the sector's familiarity with those terms. Where used in quotes these names are unchanged. FACS or Family and Community Services are also used when referring to or quoting from historical documents.

End notes and references

¹ **Definition of homelessness:** The AIHW advises in relation to the definition of homelessness: “There is no single definition of homelessness. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness, for the purposes of the Census of Population and Housing, as the lack of one or more elements that represent ‘home’. The ABS statistical definition of homelessness is ‘... 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; 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).” From the AIHW webpage (2019a) *Homelessness and homelessness Services Snapshot* (Release Date 11 September 2019) <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/homelessness-and-homelessness-services> (accessed 27 September 2019)

² AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/1654e011-dccb-49d4-bf5b-09c4607eccc8/aihw-hou-301.pdf.aspx?inline=true> (accessed 27 September 2019)

³ AIHW (2019a), *Homelessness and homelessness Services Snapshot*, as above, notes that in relation to SHS data collection, a person is considered homeless if they are living in non-conventional accommodation (such as living on the street), or short-term or emergency accommodation (such as living temporarily with friends and relatives).

⁴ Family and Community Services (FACS) (2019a) Webpage ‘Our homelessness programs’ at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/funded/programs/homelessness/specialist-services/our-programs> (accessed 27 September 2019)

⁵ AIHW (2019c) ‘Fact sheet: Specialist homelessness services 2017–18: NSW’, *Specialist homelessness services annual report 2017–18* at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-2017-18/fact-sheets-by-state-and-territory> (accessed 27 September 2019).

⁶ The term ‘contract’ is used in this context with the general meaning of a service funding component from the six funding streams that a provider has been contracted to deliver. It does not equate to the number of Program Level Agreements (208) which may include funding from more than one funding stream, or the number of contracted providers.

⁷ FACS (2019b) *Background Paper: specialist homelessness services Recommissioning in 2020 and Aboriginal Service Provision*, unpublished.

⁸ Hal Pawson, Cameron Parsell, Peter Saunders, Trish Hill and Edgar Liu for Launch Housing (2019) *Australian Homelessness Monitor 2018*, <https://www.launchhousing.org.au/australianhomelessnessmonitor/>, accessed 2 October 2019

⁹ States and Territories table, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2019a) 3238.0.55.001 - *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*, Released 31 August 2018, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001#targetText=The%20final%20estimated%20resident%20Aboriginal,of%20the%20total%20Australian%20population> accessed 2 October 2019

¹⁰ AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness*, as above.

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (31 August 2018) 3238.0.55.001 - *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2016*, as published on the ABS website at <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001>

¹² AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness*, as above.

¹³ Valentine, K., Zmudzki, F., Fotheringham, M., & Smyth, C. (2017). *Early Review of the Specialist Homelessness Services Program* (SPRC Report 03/17). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/file/0006/428127/Early_Review_of_SHS_Program.pdf, accessed 4 October 2019

¹⁴ Valentine et al (2017). *Early Review of the Specialist Homelessness Services Program* as above.

¹⁵ Valentine et al (2017) *Early Review of the Specialist Homelessness Services Program*, as above and FACS (undated) *Specialist Homelessness Services data for 2015–16 Analysis of the preliminary data*, at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=389738>, accessed 4 October 2019

¹⁶ Table S6.10, AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness*, as above.

¹⁷ At p56, AIHW (2019b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness*, as above.

¹⁸ ‘Culturally safe’ service delivery goes beyond services delivered with cultural awareness. Culturally safe services embed practices that demonstrate competence in working with people from different cultures, rather than demonstrate cultural awareness or competence only in selected programs or amongst selected staff. Culturally safe services provide an overall environment where people of different cultures feel respected and supported (ie ‘safe’). For discussion of cultural safety see: ‘Cultural Safety Continuum’ by Sadie Heckerberg (2010) as quoted in Heckerberg (2019) *Cultural Safety in Indigenous Research*, presented to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/presentations/cultural-safety-indigenous-research>. ‘What is Cultural Competence? A discussion of the literature’ in Universities Australia and Grote E (2011) *National best practice framework for Indigenous cultural competency in Australian universities* and CIR (2019) ‘Best Practice Service Delivery’ in *Review of the Indigenous Legal Assistance Program*, at <https://www.ag.gov.au/LegalSystem/Legalaidprogrammes/Pages/Legal-assistance-review.aspx>.

¹⁹ Homelessness NSW (2019) *Annual Report 2017-18*, <https://www.homelessnessnsw.org.au/about-us/annual-reports>, accessed 10 October 2019

²⁰ From interviews conducted by CIR for this project and analysis of internal funding data provided by DCJ (FACS). Funding for providers is also recorded in the FACS Annual Report: 2017-18 - Volume 3: *Funds granted to non-government organisations*, at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=637243>, accessed 4 October 2019

²¹ Flatau, P., Zaretsky, K., Valentine, K., McNelis, S., Spinney, A., Wood, L., MacKenzie, D. and Habibis, D. (2017) *Inquiry into funding and delivery of programs to reduce homelessness*, AHURI Final Report No. 279, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/279>, doi:10.18408/ahuri-8209001, accessed 14 October 2019. Flatau et al (2017) reports that services with the highest proportion of government funding were those where the main client group was Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) (95.5% of funding), domestic violence (90.5% of funding) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (90.5% of funding): at p25.

²² **National definition of SHS:** The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) collects and reports national data about specialist homelessness services. It uses the term ‘Specialist Homelessness Services’ or SHS to refer to the services being delivered, and ‘SHS funded agencies’ to refer to the organisations that deliver the services. See AIHW (undated) *Specialist Homelessness Services Collection* (SHSC) webpage at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-our-data/our-data-collections/specialist-homelessness-services-collection>.