



Please see below an outline of the key issues raised by Shelter SA with State Government regarding Specialist Homelessness Services policy & funding. If you or your organisation wishes to write to Minister Zoe Bettison, please feel free to write a short letter endorsing Shelter SA's key issues or use the material below to develop your own correspondence.

Shelter SA has gathered the views of our members and key stakeholders who are employed within specialist homelessness service provider organisations, funded by the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. State Government has produced a new Road Map for a Future Homelessness System from July 2015 given the expiration of Homeless to Home, the SA homelessness strategy. Homeless to Home however, laid the foundation for a significant reduction in homelessness in South Australia through alignment with the Rudd Commonwealth Government's long term vision of halving homelessness by 2020. The National and State strategies both contain reasonable and sound objectives that now require review and reporting rather than another reform of the system, which is working well. Shelter SA applauds the South Australian State Government's commitment to a long term approach to a pervasive social issue rather than one that fits within a shorter term election cycle.

Shelter SA has achieved consensus around suggestions for State Government about how to proceed which are well matched to the participant contributions at the 'planning for the future' workshops led by DCSI. In keeping with the question addressed at the 'planning for the future' workshops Shelter SA provides the following suggestions for State Government consideration to better add value, within the same funding we have (or even less) by:

- Continuing with the SA reform process;
- Maintaining and strengthening the endorsement of "The Road Home" and "Homeless to Home" and accompanying long term vision to significantly reduce homelessness by 2020;
- Making homelessness everyone's business – led by the Premier to add vision, authority and direction for all Ministers and all State Government portfolios and departments; and
- Avoiding a competitive tendering process for specialist homelessness services.

An opportunity exists now to seek the support of Premier Weatherill and all other relevant Ministers and State Government departments for their long term commitment to significantly reducing

homelessness by 2020 and the investment already made in partnership with the Federal Government, by continuing to endorse the National homelessness strategy “The Road Home”.

State Government can add value by implementing the Road Map for 2014 and beyond, to build on the South Australian strategy “Homeless to Home” – without creating another reform process – if South Australia wishes to send a positive message about the investment Federal and State Governments have made in homelessness services, the reforms and their success to date it is vital that another reform process is not undertaken. South Australia can continue to reap the benefits of the 2009 reforms and the investment State Government has already made in the agencies in the sector, demonstrate confidence in them and retain the knowledge and experience of the workers to benefit our vulnerable citizens.

Homelessness must be elevated to Premier and Cabinet level and the Road Map endorsed by the Premier to provide his leadership and directive to ensure that homelessness is everyone’s business. Shelter SA members and stakeholders are of the view that other ministers, portfolios and all government departments must take responsibility for clients who are eligible for their services, if they are homeless. There are issues around intake, discharge/release and transition within and between mainstream systems including but not limited to health (including hospital and primary care), aged care, disability, child protection, young people under Guardianship of the Minister (entering and exiting foster care), emergency services (police, ambulance), justice system (prisons and courts), hospital and mental health. Without the Premier’s leadership, there is less directive or accountability for mainstream services to accept responsibility for their client groups who experience homelessness or to act upon that responsibility.

Shelter SA strongly recommends against a competitive tendering process and offers the following comments and suggestions about contracts beyond June 2015. The view of Shelter SA members and stakeholders consulted to date aligns with the strong message emanating from the future planning workshops to avoid a competitive tendering process because it will:

- Interrupt and downplay the progress that has already been made;
- Be divisive and harmful to the collaborative efforts and sense of the sector working together;
- Create unnecessary expenditure that does not produce client outcomes and is a drain on agency resources needed to respond to a competitive tender process; and
- Enable significant cost savings to State Government around procurement processes.

Specialist homelessness services comply with a range of reporting requirements on their service agreements. As the contract manager for specialist homelessness services, DCSI holds a large amount of data that relates to the performance of individual agencies including their progress on meeting key performance indicators and outcomes/outputs. Service providers have already been through a preferred provider process, which was costly to them and State Government. It is assumed that if agencies are underperforming then they are being managed by their DCSI contract manager towards improvement. Based on existing data held by DCSI, it is recommended that all satisfactorily performing agencies receive a guarantee that they will continue to be funded at a level to be determined in the future, beyond June 2015. It is assumed that agencies which are

underperforming have entered into quality improvement processes and that they will not be treated punitively. Anecdotally, agencies report that they are achieving key performance indicators around target numbers of clients in the first three to six months - this situation reflects the increase in demand they currently respond to, how agencies already “do more with less” and could be verified utilising existing data within DCSI.

When the State Government can commit to their level of funding, this should be communicated to the sector as quickly as possible to ensure some certainty for agencies and staff. When the Federal Government discloses how and if it will fund homelessness in South Australia, this should also be communicated to the sector as quickly as possible. When both levels of Government have revealed their intentions, then DCSI contract managers can quickly and easily re-negotiate service agreements if required and simply prepare service contract variations beyond June 2015. Contracts for between three and five years would optimise the capacity of the sector to continue to positively impact homelessness.

If State Government is serious about reducing homelessness it must also invest in the supply of social and affordable housing as currently demand exceeds supply and there is no way to exit clients from what is meant to be transitional, temporary or emergency accommodation including motels. A coordinated, consistent effort across Government portfolios is urgently required.