SAAP REFORM: The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and funding arrangements for Specialist Homelessness Services

An Evidence Based Policy Paper

Table of Contents

1.) Introduction page 2
2.) Background: From SAAP to NAHA page 2
3.) The National Picture page 5
4.) Discussion page 15
5.) Conclusion page 16
6.) Table 1: Current status of service agreements and consultation processes between state and territory funding bodies and Specialist Homelessness services page 19
7.) Table 2: Information about CAP and Specialist Homelessness Services. Page 21
1. Introduction

Homelessness Australia has produced this paper in response to concerns raised by a number of our members about the lack of clarity at a national level of future funding arrangements for the sector formerly known as the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and now funded through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA). When the NAHA replaced the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) in 2009, SAAP services became known as specialist homelessness services as described in the White Paper, *The Road Home*.

This paper summarises Homelessness Australia’s current understanding of future directions for specialist homelessness services in each state and territory.

The paper documents what we currently know about present and proposed directions for services previously funded under SAAP. We will continue to update the document as new information comes to hand.

2. Background: From SAAP to NAHA

Since 1985, Australia has had a dedicated national program that provides services to people experiencing homelessness. The new national response to homelessness outlined in the White Paper needs to build on this foundational response.

These new funding arrangements under the NAHA combine what was SAAP with funding for CAP (crisis accommodation program) and social housing.

New funding arrangements could result in states and territories pulling in different directions. For the foreseeable future specialist homelessness services funded via the NAHA will continue to provide the bulk of the support to people experiencing homelessness.

It is the view of our members that NAHA services, like SAAP before them, continue to be considerably under-funded. Minimal indexation indexes of less than 2% per year have failed to keep pace with the significant increase in demand for services. This has resulted in funding per client declining in real terms over the past 10 years.

This in turn has led to the loss of beds, high staff turnover as conditions cannot be maintained or improved and some services have been unable to sustain service delivery at the same level.

---

A summary of the information that has been provided by state/territory Governments to the homelessness services sector is outlined below.

We are concerned however about the direction that the NAHA will take in a number of states and territories.

There are some exemplary models of service delivery and yet we see very little focus on building on the foundations to enhance and expand the homelessness service delivery system. Talk of change and reform should be balanced against the capacity to enhance and build on existing models that are working effectively.

The sector has continually evolved to meet both the changing needs of particular client groups and the changing requirements of funding bodies.

Specialist homelessness services are often referred to as crisis accommodation providers yet this does not accurately capture the evolution of the sector over the past three decades. During that time period many services have evolved to become providers of short and medium term supported accommodation, while some are also providers of community housing as well as supported accommodation.

In the youth sector a number of services are also providers of Foyer like models of service delivery that support young people to remain engaged with education, employment and vocational training while receiving accommodation and support.

Providers of youth homelessness services have demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration and sharing limited resources with other providers of community services over many years now. They have worked closely with youth peaks in each state and territory to address the significant issue of youth homelessness at a policy level while simultaneously evolving at a practical level to meet the needs of young people who come to experience homelessness from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The domestic and family violence sector has also continuously evolved over the course of more than three decades and women’s services too are now providers of short, medium and longer term accommodation. In addition, the domestic and family violence sector has undergone significant changes in recent years in a number of jurisdictions, the result of which is now an integrated accommodation and support service delivery system.

Women’s services and the peak bodies that support them have demonstrated a willingness to engage with courts and law enforcement to ensure that victim safety and perpetrator accountability remains at the forefront of the response to domestic and family violence. This is further evidenced by the involvement of the
sector in the development of the national plan to prevent violence against women and their children and the development of safe at home models.

Generalist services have likewise evolved to effectively connect clients to the support services they need, such as primary and mental health professionals and assertive outreach case workers who work closely with clients to ensure that they are supported to re-enter stable housing. While many of these services are still viewed as crisis accommodation providers, they have evolved over many decades to form an integral part of what is now described as a holistic response to homelessness by providing assessment and referral and varying levels of case management to clients to enable them to address the key issues that have led them to experience homelessness.

The sector has continued to provide accommodation and support to a growing number of Australians since the establishment of SAAP in 1985. This is evidenced by the National Data Collection Agency reports on the use of government funded SAAP/specialist homelessness services that indicate the number of clients they supported has increased from 83,200 in 1996/97 to 125,800 in 2008/09, an increase of more than 50%².

This mirrored the trend in the first decade of the operation of SAAP though the report cautions that the data for that period is not directly comparable with the datasets kept between 1996/97 and 2008/09³.

Data concerning the use of SAAP/specialist homelessness services by accompanying children tells a similar story, though comparable records are only available for the period 2001/02-2008/09. It shows that in 2001/02, services funded through the SAAP supported 50,800 children. This has continued to increase over the past eight years reaching a high of 79,100 children in 2008/09, an increase of 56%⁴.

The capacity of SAAP/specialist homelessness services to respond to increasing numbers of clients and accompanying children is a testament to the resilience of the sector and its ability to continually stretch limited resources further and further.

In the context of the NAHA and the new approach to homelessness which is supported by both specialist homelessness services, new service models funded through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) and permanent housing for people who have experienced homelessness through the

---

³ AIHW 2010, ibid, p.87.
⁴
A Place to Call Home (APtCH) initiative, Homelessness Australia agrees that further reform of the sector will ensure that specialist homelessness services can become fully integrated into the new approach.

We contend however, that where reform/change is needed, the Commonwealth must remain actively engaged with states/territories to ensure funding arrangements support developments. Successfully implementing new funding arrangements for specialist homelessness services will be one of the keys that underpin the achievement of the White Paper targets.

As we are now in the third year of the NAHA which expires in 2013, Homelessness Australia believes it is important to take stock of where states and territories are up to in terms of administrative and funding arrangements for specialist homelessness services and whether or not the sector believes it is being actively engaged in consultation and decision making processes in the new funding environment post-SAAP. That is the core aim of this evidence based policy paper.

3.) The National Picture

3.1 Directions for reform in individual states and territories

NSW

No additional capital funding has been promised for Specialist Homelessness Services in NSW. The Department of Community Services had previously stated that one of the challenges for SAAP will be aligning with a more integrated homelessness services delivery system but it is unclear as to what this will mean for Specialist Homelessness Services.

We have received the following feedback from peak bodies and service providers in NSW:

- The concept of specialist homelessness services as the foundation of the homelessness response is good.
- If we do not continue to press the case for an on-going Commonwealth/State Commitment to increase funding for specialist homelessness services and a guarantee that this funding will continue we will be left with a series of well-promoted, resource intensive new models and tenancy support programs for social housing tenants to the detriment of services funded through NAHA that are at risk of becoming unviable.
- It should be acknowledged that specialist homelessness services will continue to deliver essential services that will support and enhance the aims and goals in the White Paper.
- It is important to recognise that many specialist homelessness services existed well before NAHA, and indeed before SAAP and should be
referred to as specialist homelessness services that were funded through SAAP.

- Some service providers in NSW have told us that they are unsure about what future arrangements for specialist homelessness services will look like.
- Some providers are concerned about plans for “consolidation”, whereby services are being asked to cover larger areas. There are fears, particularly expressed by providers in the north east of the state that service providers are being asked to cover larger areas and that this may advantage larger providers at the expense of smaller services who may have a local area focus.
- There is concern about what a change of Government might mean for the homelessness sector in New South Wales. It should be pointed out however that funding is guaranteed for specialist homelessness services until July 2013 when Homelessness Australia expects that a new NAHA will be negotiated for a further five years.

VICTORIA

Homelessness Australia has been unable to ascertain any detailed information from providers in Victoria about the length of service agreements or the current status of sector reform in Victoria. We are unsure if the recent state election and change of Government has had an effect on this.

We are aware that the domestic and family violence sector has been through a significant process of reform to its operation.

We have not been able to ascertain how extensive the consultation process has been in Victoria or whether or not the level of involvement from the sector or ability to negotiate the terms and conditions of service agreements is viewed as adequate by providers in Victoria.

QLD

In 2009, three year service agreements were offered with no changes to the content or clauses in service agreements negotiated under SAAP V. These agreements are due to expire in July 2012 and new clauses may be added at this time.

There has been a mixed response from our member services in Queensland to questions that we posed around ability to negotiate the terms and conditions of service agreements, the level of consultation that has occurred between Government and providers.
A number of members have stated that they feel secure in terms of funding for their service and are generally quite happy with the reform process that is taking place in Queensland. Some have expressed the view that they are reasonably well informed about the developments that are afoot for specialist homelessness services through the role of the networker at the Queensland Council of Social Service and participation in multi-agency committees.

Others feel that the consultation process in Queensland has not been as open and transparent as they would have liked.

The Department of Communities has told representatives from the sector that it cannot refer to SAAP specifically in new agreements or documentation about Specialist Homelessness Services.

WA

In late 2009, the Western Australian Government hosted a series of seven workshops involving governments and representatives from homelessness services and peak bodies.

The workshops are focused on specific client cohorts, i.e. aged, mental health, youth, women, etc. Future arrangements for Specialist Homelessness Services and service agreements were covered in the workshops and there was general agreement that the WA Government had engaged in a genuine consultative process with the sector.

New service agreements were negotiated with specialist homelessness services in early 2010 after feedback from detailed consultation forums held in November was considered.

Feedback from providers in WA:

Most service agreements are 3 year agreements and those that are shorter in duration might have been made to fit into funding cycle.

There is a commitment by the Department of Child Protection to look at rolling separate contracts from SAAP 5, NAHA and other National Partnership Agreements into one when the funding cycle is complete and new contracts are issued.

Different agreements have been incorporated with recognition of the true cost of an FTE with some brokerage. Many agreements have different outcome requirements and this is reflective of a collaborative approach between NGOs and with the Department of Child Protection.
In the main providers are very satisfied with the level of consultation and the ability to negotiate aspects of their service agreements. New service specifications were developed by collective representation of NGOs.

There are concerns about ongoing funding after 2012 but the state appears supportive of specialist homeless services and they have regular service reviews to ensure effective delivery of service.

We have not been made aware of any further plans for reform except with services who are not meeting service standards who are assisted to improve before any action is taken.

An evaluation of the NPAH programs has commenced and a forum is being planned for April to share learnings and best practice on integrated and mainstream services.

SA

We have received mixed reports from providers about the level of consultation/engagement with the sector. Some providers have stated that the level of consultation on the part of DFC was extensive while others were unimpressed as the forums seemed to cater for only a limited number of providers.

Some consultation occurred with the sector but not specifically around the issue of future arrangements for services previously funded under SAAP. There have been changes to the content of service agreements to reflect the terms agreed to by the SA Government under the NAHA (outcomes and outputs).

Many people in the domestic and family violence sector felt that their concerns and feedback had been listened to. Other providers in that sector were not so convinced that this had been the case.

Service Agreements are now between NAHA- Specialist Homelessness Services and the Minister for Housing. The Service Agreements require the service to meet the policy objectives of the National Affordable Housing Agreement and National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness whereas previously services were required to ensure that their services achieved the aims of the SAAP as specified in the SAA Act.

The SAA Act is mentioned in interim agreements but new legislation will be referred to in future agreements signed off on after it is drafted.

The service description component of the agreements has also been altered to reflect the scope of the NAHA though the services provided are essentially
similar. The service description component does specifically include the priority outcomes in the NAHA and NP on Homelessness.

Service Providers were asked to achieve all of the requirements of the previous SAAP Performance Management Framework or other recognised service excellence framework by 30 June 2010.

Some outputs have been modified to reflect the outcomes and outputs in the NAHA and Homelessness NP and include a post support component for people assisted to transition into longer term accommodation by the service.

The Homelessness Services Team from Housing SA and service providers were engaged in a limited consultation process for a period of around six months as Government sought to seek feedback on the new NAHA Specialist Homelessness Services Agreements and determine an appropriate contract period for future agreements.

Some “SAAP like” programs are being expanded to align with outcomes and outputs in the NP and new service agreements will reflect this. The two programs earmarked for expansion are the Supported Tenancies Program and the “Throughcare” program for people exiting prisons.

South Australia has recently come through a period of significant reform to both the homelessness service sector and the domestic and family violence sector. This has meant that nearly all service agreements have changed in some way.

South Australia has moved to align service responses with Housing SA regions. This regionalisation of services has resulted in changes being made to the way in which services are expected to respond to the needs of clients.

Whereas previously providers were required to respond to people accessing their services or housed in their properties, they are now being asked to respond to all people who match their client group in a given region (e.g. Eastern Adelaide) no matter what type of accommodation they are residing in.

For its part, Government has altered aspects of the way in which it relates to service providers as a result of regionalisation. Program Managers are now making more frequent visits to services and engaging directly more often.

The reforms that have happened across SA are significant. In 2009, service providers had to prove they were eligible to tender by participating in. In 2010 there were two tender rounds for all youth, adult/generalist, domestic and family violence, Aboriginal specific and additional services.
We are informed that not all providers were particularly happy with the tendering process or the outcomes that flowed from it. There are still problems for providers in terms of adjusting to the requirements of the new agreements. Some service providers faced cuts to program funding while others have expanded their budgets and capacity to respond to homelessness. Concerns have been raised by some providers about the tendering process while others say the anxiety and tension of any tendering process would have resulted in the teething problems services are experiencing in SA.

Homelessness Australia understands that the majority of new service agreements are set for three years. This is an improvement on the 12 month contracts some providers had been negotiating but many in the sector have been advocating for five year agreements.

The following concerns have been raised by some of our members in SA:

- There is considerable disquiet within the homelessness services sector in South Australia about the proposed ‘Competitive Tendering’ process. Many within the sector have openly opposed competitive tendering and continue to do so and have indicated that they do not want it to be seen as a model for other states/territories to follow.
- It was pointed out that while the rhetoric is to achieve ‘joined-up’ services, the tendering process encourages the exact opposite approach by requiring services to compete against each other and in fact can create an environment in which services are reluctant to share information.
- There has traditionally been a great willingness to share information and resources between providers in SA and there has been a reasonably positive working relationship between providers and government. Some service providers believe that the consulting and tendering process that was utilised during the latest period of sector reform did not encourage this spirit of cooperation and could have been approached in a more constructive way.
- There is significant concern about the fact that agreements are no longer tied to a specific Act of Parliament (we are still waiting for new legislation to be drafted) as previous Service Agreements were tied to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994.
- Service providers have expressed a great deal of concern about the process of reform that has been taking place in SA. They have told Homelessness Australia that while they broadly agree with the intended outcomes of the homelessness implementation plan and the reforms, they are not as impressed with the process employed to help get them there.
- Services have been asking for five year contracts for years now without success.

TASMANIA
Two year service agreements were entered into with Specialist Homelessness Services from July 1st 2009. These will expire on 30 June 2011 and the Tasmanian Government has been engaged in an ongoing reform process with a view to changing the content of service agreements to reflect the priorities of the new funding environment and the new approach to homelessness.

All Service Agreements make note of Housing Tasmania’s intent to review the SHS system in Tasmania by June 2011. In the interim, service providers are expected to continue their operations in accordance with principles outlined in the SAAP Integrated Continuum of Support for Homeless People and those at risk of Homelessness document.

Homelessness Australia has been informed that Housing Tasmania has recently informed specialist homelessness service providers that service agreements will be extended for a further 18 months until January 1, 2013.

Homelessness Australia understands that the brokerage component of funding for specialist homelessness services is administered differently and is re-negotiated every twelve months.

In early February 2011, Housing Tasmania asked for Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from consultants to undertake a whole of system review not just of specialist homelessness services but also associated programs such as Private Rental Support Services and Supported Residential Facilities and virtually all other providers delivering housing/homelessness services to clients (thus excluding peaks such as Shelter Tasmania).

Service providers have expressed little confidence that there will be much room for negotiation when the content of new service agreements is determined in July.

The sector has been very vocal in voicing its concerns and criticisms about the lack of engagement to the Department, in particular the fact that services are given very little in the way of time between when an existing agreement expires and a new one must be signed. Services find this very frustrating as they are given insufficient time to consider the content.

Homelessness Services through the state affordable housing consumer peak Shelter Tasmania have been calling for greater certainty through the application of five year service agreements for a number of years now but have thus far been unsuccessful. In addition, organisations are required to comply with both mandatory and service specialist standards. The major difference between new and previous agreements has been the introduction of mandatory quality and safety obligations on 1 July 2009. These requirements are in keeping with the Quality
Improvement Council Standards and the quality reviews undertaken by specialist homelessness services.

Consultation prior to release of Funding Agreements about quality and safety reporting requirements: There were 2 information sessions for services with funding agreements already drawn up so little chance for any changes.

A number of our member services expressed the view that the adherence to the quality and safety standards placed a significant impost on services, particularly smaller providers.

Current service agreements note that the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 will be replaced by new national legislation. The sector is still waiting for an exposure draft of this legislation. The NAHA and NP on Homelessness are cited as providing the strategic framework for Government to improve housing affordability, detailing the outcomes as agreed upon in the NAHA.

There are four standard Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) noted in new agreements:

- **Outcome 1**: (Clients are assessed and supported according to their need). Proportion of SHS clients’ assessed support needs that were met.

- **Outcome 2**: (clients requiring accommodation are accommodated). Proportion of housing/accommodation services needed by SHS clients that were met;

- **Outcome 3**: (Clients are assisted in their transition to independence). Proportion of SHS clients moved to independent accommodation;

- **Outcome 4**: (Clients are engaged in education, training or employment): Proportion of SHS support periods in which clients are classified as ‘primary/secondary school student’, ‘post-secondary student/employment training’, ‘employed full time’ or ‘employed part time’ after SHS support.

Tasmania has committed to matching Commonwealth funding but there has been no increase in capital funding beyond the indexation rate of 3.3%.

Homelessness Australia understands that no additional funding was provided to assist services in meeting the increased administration required with the introduction of the new Quality and Safety Framework and additional insurance cost.

Another addition to the content of service agreements was the incorporation of consumer outcomes in the areas of education, employment and training in
service agreements. We are not yet aware of any providers in Tasmania who have been asked to formally report on these outcomes.

When services were funded under SAAP, service agreements were entered into for three years. Shelter Tasmania has been advocating for new agreements to be extended to five years to provide greater certainty but has received no indication from the Department about whether it agrees with extending the life of agreements or not.

We are told that there is unrest in the sector as providers fear that KPMG may be given the brief and proceed to consolidating services and recommending that smaller services may be amalgamated or defunded. There is angst in the sector that has been generated by the outcomes of the KPMG review in South Australia.

Housing Tasmania are currently contemplating the establishment of a Housing and Homelessness Gateway. Tasmania has established a similar gateway in the wake of its child/family support reform process. The Gateway may provide access to a common waiting list for community and public housing and a bed register for specialist homelessness services.

The Tasmanian Government released *Coming in from the Cold*, the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan 2010-2013 last year. This outlines 5 main initiatives which underpin Tasmania’s homelessness plan.

**ACT**

Services previously funded under SAAP have been offered new three year service agreements; a number of services are in the process of finalising these at the moment. Some changes were made to the clauses in service agreements and providers believe that these were made to reflect the new funding and service environment and to align more closely with the outputs and outcomes outlined in the NAHA.

Homelessness Australia understands that Linkages programs have only been offered one year agreements.

The terms of the agreements for new services now include direct references to the targets under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and a recognition that the changes in the policy environment may lead to changes in agreements. A limited consultation process was undertaken and feedback from the homelessness sector was incorporated into the development of reforms to the sector.

Recently, the ACT Government has produced a discussion paper outlining significant reforms to youth services. The reforms will have an impact on the way
that services are delivered to young people in the ACT including youth homelessness services.

NT

The Northern Territory Government funds 36 providers of specialist homelessness services.

New service agreements were negotiated in July 2010 and a series of workshops were held with providers in the latter part of 2010 to determine requirements for new agreements and also to consult broadly about what the key features of the NT homelessness strategy should look like.

NT Shelter hosted its second Homelessness Summit in November 2010. The event gave homelessness service providers an opportunity to discuss a range of key issues that are affecting them. Providers at the summit expressed the view that there should be more transparency around funding and policy decision making. Providers noted that it was often difficult to get accurate information about funding amounts, availability and expenditure from different funding sources.

There was general agreement amongst service providers that service agreements should be extended to five year periods to give providers certainty around program funding. One to two year agreements make medium term planning very difficult.

Providers felt that tendering arrangements and processes should be less competitive and proscriptive and focus on flexibility, collaboration and harnessing the strengths of particular NGOs.

Providers expressed concern that brokerage amounts allocated to providers were not always sufficient to enable services to drive innovation and service integration.

There was also a need for funding bodies to recognise and provide sufficient resources for the additional complexities and costs of service delivery in remote communities.

It was suggested that key NT Government agencies that provide funding for and administer arrangements for specialist homelessness services must be adequately resourced to do so.

In essence, providers believe that adequate, stable, transparent and flexible funding arrangements underpin the delivery of quality homelessness services.

4.) Discussion
Homelessness Australia has contacted our Board, Councils and Members seeking information on current arrangements for specialist homelessness services and seeking information about the status of reform processes that we believe are underway in most jurisdictions. The impetus for this paper was the need to respond to concerns raised by members from a number of jurisdictions who had stated that they were unsure about what the future might hold for specialist homelessness services in the post-SAAP funding environment of the NAHA.

A number of jurisdictions have embarked upon significant reform processes in both their homelessness and domestic and family violence service sectors. We understand that in some jurisdictions, these reform processes had commenced prior to the release of the White Paper and the adoption of the new approach to homelessness, while in other states and territories reforms have been undertaken with a view to aligning the existing specialist homelessness services sector with the outputs and outcomes specified in the NAHA and with the goals and targets outlined in the White Paper.

In 2008/09, specialist homelessness services provided support to 204,900 people including 79,100 children. For the foreseeable future at least, these services look set to provide the bulk of the response to people who are experiencing homelessness in Australia.

In at least two jurisdictions, concerns have been raised about the process of strategic and service sector reforms. There were mixed views from providers about the level of sector involvement in the reform process and whether or not concerns had been listened to. Other providers in these jurisdictions conceded however that in any significant reform process there will be providers who are happy and those who are unhappy about how things unfold.

**Conclusion**

---

This paper has sought to provide a national picture of current and future arrangements for specialist homelessness services as we reach the half-way mark in the life of the NAHA.

A number of jurisdictions have embarked on significant processes of reform to both their specialist homelessness services and domestic and family violence sectors. In any reform process there will be teething problems and due to the competitive nature of tendering processes, there will also be winners and losers.

One common conclusion across all states and territories has been unanimous opposition to current competitive tendering arrangements. Providers have told Homelessness Australia that while they see in the language articulated in the White Paper a policy direction that seeks to promote joined-up service delivery and enhanced service integration as key goals under the new approach to homelessness, competitive tendering processes create and foster an environment that in fact, runs counter to these goals.

A number of providers across a number of jurisdictions have told us they believe that competitive tendering arrangements do not encourage providers to share information and resources or work collaboratively together. In some cases, an environment of mistrust and suspicion is fostered as providers worry that services may gain too great an insight into their service delivery models and use this insight to their advantage at the next round of tendering.

A second conclusion that we can draw from consulting with the sector in preparing this paper is that there is significant variation between jurisdictions in terms of both the flow of information to the sector about the goals and the nature of the reform process and the proposed future arrangements for specialist homelessness services.

In some jurisdictions information is regularly conveyed to the sector by state/territory departments through interagency forums and meetings. Some of these forums have been in operation prior to the implementation of the NAHA. While some providers expressed the view that flow of information at these forums is often one sided, they do provide an opportunity for both providers and Government to exchange information about the keys issues affecting service delivery and where states and territories are up to during processes of significant reform.

What is clear from our consultations and research is that many providers would like to see the level of transparency and the flow of information between state and territory improved. In some jurisdictions the lack of information flowing to the sector has led to confusion and scepticism about the security of future funding for specialist homelessness services. While we are aware that funding for specialist homelessness services is guaranteed through the NAHA until 2013, some providers are fearful about their
future. We have heard for example from our service providers in WA that the flow of information between Government and providers in that state has been strong and the consultation process has been generally well received by providers.

Some of these fears have also flowed from what providers have described as processes of consolidation or regionalisation where services have been asked to cover larger geographical areas and service clients from across these regions. In other cases, providers have informed us that larger providers are being favoured at the expense of smaller services. One of the key strengths of the specialist homelessness services sectors is its diversity and the mix of larger and smaller providers. Homelessness Australia is concerned about reports that are emerging from some jurisdictions that reform and tendering processes are adversely affecting the diversity of the sector.

In the context of the development and implementation of the National Quality Framework for providers of homelessness services, Homelessness Australia believes that it is critical that the diversity of the sector and the mix of smaller and larger providers is supported and maintained.

We conclude that for the foreseeable future at least, specialist homelessness services will continue to provide the bulk of accommodation and support options to people who are experiencing homelessness. Homelessness Australia believes that these services will also be critical to meeting the goals and targets outlined in the White Paper including the headline goals of halving homelessness by 2020.

We need to see more consistency between jurisdictions in terms of the flow of information to peak bodies and service providers about proposed future arrangements for specialist homelessness services under the NAHA.

In other states, the consultation process has received a mixed response while in some jurisdictions there is a feeling that there has been little or no consultation and this has led to rising levels of anxiety and uncertainty about future arrangements for specialist homelessness services under the new approach to homelessness.

Of particular concern across all jurisdictions is the lack of clarity around funding and administrative arrangements for the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) which provides capital funding for the maintenance of buildings used to accommodate people in specialist homelessness services. One jurisdiction informed us that funding that was provided through CAP is now drawn from the NAHA but we have not been able to source specific information about the level of funding provided under the NAHA for what was CAP.

Homelessness Australia hopes that this paper will provide both the sector and the Department with an overview of what we have been able to determine is
happening in each jurisdiction with respect to current and future arrangements for specialist homelessness services. We have found it relatively easy to garner information from some states and territories and more difficult to gather information from others.

As we begin thinking about what we would like to see included in a new NAHA when the current agreement is renegotiated in 2013 it will be important that the Commonwealth plays a role in facilitating greater consistency in terms of the flow of information to the sector about the future of specialist homelessness services.

Homelessness Australia is also hopeful that the National Quality Framework and new national homelessness legislation will provide opportunities for us to clarify and clearly define where specialist homelessness services fit in the new approach to homelessness in the post-SAAP funding environment.
### Table 1: Current Status of Funding Agreements and Consultation processes between State/Territory Government Funding Bodies and Specialist Homelessness Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Agreement Period</th>
<th>Agreements Expire</th>
<th>Consultation Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Rolling process every 12 months over the next 3 years</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Indirect consultation through Departmental/SAAP Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>A series of dedicated workshops that were sector/client group specific were held. The most extensive and well planned consultation process we are aware of occurred in WA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>30 June 2013</td>
<td>Some providers have told us that the consultation process was a good one and that a number of sector concerns were taken on board. Others felt that only certain providers were involved in the consultations which were largely one way anyway. Feedback from SA has certainly been very mixed, perhaps due to the extensive reform process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Agreement Duration</td>
<td>End Date</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>2 year agreements</td>
<td>30 June 2011</td>
<td>The Tasmanian Government has undertaken a consultation process around the development of its state homelessness action plan and strategy, coming in from the cold. There is concern however that consultation about the content of new service agreements to be negotiated in June has been minimal and there is little hope that providers will be able to negotiate many of the clauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>3 year agreements</td>
<td>30 June 2012</td>
<td>No formal consultation sessions were held though providers are kept informed of developments in the homelessness space through the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>12 month interim agreements</td>
<td>30 June 2010</td>
<td>Workshops were held with providers from different client groups. Government has responded to sector concerns by ruling out competitive tendering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Information about Existing Homelessness Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Territory</th>
<th>Current Status of the Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP)</th>
<th>What arrangements are proposed for the tendering process for new service contracts?</th>
<th>What changes are planned to the content of service agreements?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Competitive Tendering</td>
<td>NSW has flagged changes to the content of service agreements to align with the NAHA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yet to be communicated to the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Yet to be determined.</td>
<td>Changes were made to reflect the outputs and outcomes in the NAHA and to align to the broader objectives of the WA homelessness IP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>WA embarked on a tendering process following significant consultation with the sector which included a series of workshops.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Our understanding is that CAP funds are now part of the NAHA SPP.</td>
<td>SA engaged in competitive tendering despite opposition from the sector.</td>
<td>We have been provided with a copy of a new Service Agreement by Managers from the Homelessness Strategy division of Housing SA. We have been informed by them that Service Agreements have been changed so that outputs and outcomes align with the outputs and outcomes in the NPA on Homelessness and the NAHA. Service Agreements have also been changed to reflect the alignment of service provision with Housing SA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>The CAP was untied under the new NAHA. Currently, funding for capital items for SHS are considered through normal asset management processes. A set of guidelines for SHS providers and how they can address routine maintenance and requests for capital upgrades has been drafted but not viewed by sector to date. The sector has been told despite concerns that all new services under the NP on Homelessness will be tendered out, however the process is unknown at this stage. New 2 year funding Agreements are now in place from 1st July 09 to end of June 2011. Previously contracts were for 3 years for Specialist Homelessness Services previously funded by the SAAP. Information sessions were provided to services in June 09. Changes include additional reporting to align with the NPs on client education and employment outcomes. Also, compliance with additional Tasmanian quality and safety standards framework, for all funded organisations. Services are now required to report 6 monthly against specified quality and safety standards. There are also additional insurance costs. No additional resources have been provided to services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>The NT Government has ruled out competitive tendering in regions.</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some changes flagged.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response to concerns raised by the sector.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>