

['The Road Home: A national approach to reducing homelessness'](#) , the Government's White Paper on homelessness was released by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Minister for Housing Tanya Plibersek on Sunday December 21.

The White Paper outlines the Rudd Government's strategy to halve homelessness by 2020, and provide supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it. Outlined in the White Paper are [interim targets for 2013](#) .

Funding for the strategy sees the Government committing to a 55 per cent increase on the current investment in homelessness, representing an additional \$800 million over four years. This funding includes a commitment to additional social housing for homeless people of \$400 million over the next two financial years.

The response to homelessness will be implemented through three strategies - **1. Turning off the tap: services will intervene early to prevent homelessness**

Initiatives under this strategy include:

- Increasing support for people in public and private rental housing to maintain their tenancies;
- Assisting up to 9,000 additional young people between 12 and 18 years of age, to remain connected with their families;
- Assisting up to 2,250 additional families at risk of homelessness to stay housed;
- 'No exits into homelessness' from statutory, custodial care, health, mental health and drug and alcohol services;
- Helping women and children who experience domestic violence to stay safely in the family home;
- Delivering community based mental health services under the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHAMs) to 1,000 difficult to reach Australians, including people who are homeless; and

- Establishing a network of 90 Community Engagement Officers to improve access to Centrelink services for people at risk of homelessness.

This section of the White Paper also makes mention of other reforms underway in other

portfolios of the Federal Government which will have an impact on 'turning off the tap'.

- [Closing the Gap Package for Indigenous Australians.](#)
- [National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy.](#)
- [National Child Protection Framework.](#)

2. Improving and expanding services: services will be more connected and responsive to achieve sustainable housing, improve economic and social participation and end homelessness for their clients

Initiatives under this strategy include:

- A workforce development strategy for specialist homelessness services;
- Testing new funding models that reflect the complexity of client's needs;
- Improving information technology systems for services; and
- Developing quality standards for specialist homelessness services.

3. Breaking the cycle: people who become homeless will move quickly through the crisis system to stable housing with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur.

Initiatives under this strategy include:

- Building up to 2,700 additional public and community housing dwellings for low income households;
- Allocating aged care places and capital funds for at least one new specialist facility for older people who are homeless in each of the next four years;
- Building up to 4,200 new houses and upgrading up to 4,800 existing houses in remote Indigenous communities;
- Providing assertive outreach programs for rough sleepers; and
- Improving services for older people experiencing homelessness.

Other features of the plan include:

- A national homelessness research strategy; homelessness research priorities will include population-based research, cost-benefit analysis of the effectiveness of interventions and longitudinal studies;
- A Council on Homelessness;
- The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to create a new National Partnerships on Social Housing, Remote Indigenous Housing and Homelessness within a new National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA); and

- The establishment of the Bea Miles Foundation to channel funding, in-kind support and sponsor innovation and research to support the work of governments and the not-for-profit sector in combating homelessness.

Download the [White Paper on Homelessness - 'The Road Home'](#). [Adobe Acrobat PDF - 722.52 KB]

Access the [full report and individual sections](#) via the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs website.