Preface

These guidelines provide the framework for the implementation and administration of the Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program.

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA or the Department) has a suite of documents (the Program Guideline Suite) which provide information relating to the program. They provide the key starting point for parties considering whether to participate in the program and form the basis for the business relationship between FaHCSIA and the funding recipient.

They are:

- **Part A: Program Guidelines** provides an overview of the Program and the Activities relating to the program;

- **Part B: Information for Applicants** which provides information on the Application, Assessment, Eligibility, Selection and Complaints processes; Financial and Funding Agreement arrangements.

- **Part C: Application Information** provides specific information on the Activity, Selection Criteria, Performance Management and Reporting. This part should be read in conjunction with the Standard Terms and Conditions.

- The **Application Form** which is completed by applicants applying for funding during a selection process.

FaHCSIA reserves the right to amend these documents from time to time by whatever means it may determine in its absolute discretion and will provide reasonable notice of these amendments.
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Information about the Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program

1 Program Overview

The identified aim under Outcome 2: Housing is to provide access to affordable, safe housing through: payments and support services; and rental subsidies to low and moderate income households. Two Programs have been established under Outcome 2 to support the identified aim

Program 2.1: Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention.
Program 2.2: Affordable Housing.

Program 2.1 Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention, program provides rental subsidies for low and moderate income households, and funds homelessness prevention initiatives to reduce the impact of homelessness.

The program enhances service delivery responses across a range of programs and service sectors by developing, implementing and supporting initiatives, trialling new responses and disseminating the knowledge/lessons. These include:

- funding for homelessness prevention
- research and information exchange
- funding for housing and homelessness policy, research, demonstration, data collection and surveys/evaluations.

Homelessness services funded under this program respond to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. These include a community based early intervention program, a strategic framework to improve collaboration and linkages between existing services, and specialist services.

1.1 Program Outcomes

Access to affordable, safe housing through payments and support services; and rental subsidies to low and moderate income households.

1.2 Objectives

There are two components under the Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program. The objectives for each component are as follows:

Homelessness Prevention

Provides funding to support innovative prevention and early intervention initiatives to reduce homelessness and its impact, particularly on families and young people. Activities under this component help break the cycle of homelessness and improve services that respond to homelessness in line with The Road Home, the Government White Paper on Homelessness.

Rent Assistance

To make payments to low and moderate income Australians receiving income support or family payments to assist with the costs of renting private and community housing. This is a payment and not a grant program and therefore does not form a part of these guidelines.
2 Responsibilities and accountabilities under the program

2.1 FaHCSIA responsibilities and accountabilities
Under the Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program FaHCSIA is responsible for:

- providing support and assistance to funded agencies through:
  - Management and communication of data;
  - Administration and analysis of reports;
  - Providing advice on and clarification of Australian Government policy; and
- Meeting the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement established with organisations;
- Ensuring that services provided under the Program are accountable to the Australian Government under the terms agreed in the Funding Agreement; and
- Administering the operation of the Program in a timely, accountable and efficient manner.
- Identifying suitable provider(s) to deliver the activity(ies);
- Working in partnership with the provider to ensure the program is implemented;
- Providing constructive feedback to the provider;
- Ensuring that the outcomes contained within the program guidelines are being met; and
- Evaluating the provider’s performance against program outcomes.

2.2 Service provider responsibilities and accountabilities
The Service Provider is responsible for:

- Meeting the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement established with the Australian Government;
- Contributing to the overall development of the Program through participation in site visits by FaHCSIA staff, participation in teleconferences and workshops; and
- Completing all activity goals and objectives as outlined in the Funding Agreement.

2.3 Role of the Minister
The Minister for Housing and Homelessness has overall responsibility for this Program. The final decision about locations, sites and applications will be made by the Minister on advice provided by FaHCSIA.

3 Risk management strategy
As part of FaHCSIA’s Common Business Model, funding agreements are managed according to a risk management approach. Funding recipients are assessed to identify low, moderate, high and extreme risks with appropriate treatments identified. Risks are assessed in regard to governance, financial management, viability, performance management and issues management.

The provider(s) will be subject to a financial viability check and risk management assessment prior to negotiating a Funding Agreement with FAHCSIA. These assessments will be the basis for the negotiation and monitoring of the funding agreement, including special conditions which may be necessary to manage the assessed risk to the Government. Monitoring of service delivery will focus on addressing areas of risk that have the most impact on the Program outcome.
Service delivery performance monitoring is focused on addressing risk areas that will have the most impact on Program outcomes.

As part of the overall risk management strategy for the Program, the Department requires service providers to:

- Identify and document risks in delivering Program services;
- Identify and document risk control strategies; and
- Implement adequate and effective policies and procedures to manage risks and achieve the control strategies throughout the financial year.

Throughout the course of the funding period the Department may be required to amend the extent and frequency of reporting requirements in response to a determination of adverse risk. The Department will provide reasonable notice of such amendments.

3.1 Financial Reporting

The Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention Program will be managed to ensure the efficient and effective use of public monies. This will be consistent with best value in social services principles, the FaHCSIA Funding Agreement and will aim to maintain viable services and act to prevent fraud upon the Commonwealth.

Funding must only be used for the purposes for which it was provided.

3.2 Evaluation

FaHCSIA periodically undertakes or commissions program evaluations and reviews to ensure program outcomes are met through quality, efficient and effective services. Where input is sought from service providers FaHCSIA will notify them of:

- The intention to conduct an evaluation;
- The focus of the evaluation;
- Who is conducting the evaluation;
- The time period in which it is to be conducted; and
- Where appropriate, the involvement sought.

4 Program Performance Framework and Reporting

The Department will monitor and evaluate ongoing Program performance and will ensure any accountability requirements are met by service providers. Service providers are required to provide performance reports in accordance with their funding agreements, using reporting templates where provided by FaHCSIA.

Information provided in reports and collected through on-line data collection systems, surveys, evaluations etc. contribute to the overall monitoring and evaluation of Program performance and inform three key aspects:

- How much has been done?
- How well has it been done?
- Did it make a difference?
In consultation with stakeholders, the Department will continue to develop a performance framework for measuring the effectiveness of service strategies and Program effectiveness while also contributing to the development of a sound, consistent evidence base for the Program as a whole.

### 4.1 Performance framework and reporting
The objective of the Homelessness Prevention component is to provide funding to support innovative prevention and early intervention initiatives to reduce homelessness and its impact, particularly on families and young people.

The key performance indicator used to measure this objective is the proportion of clients reporting an improved situation after assistance from homelessness prevention programs.

## 5 Information about the components and activities

### 5.1 Program Components

#### Homelessness Prevention
Provides funding to support innovative prevention and early intervention initiatives to reduce homelessness and its impact, particularly on families and young people.

#### Rent Assistance
To make payments to low and moderate income Australians receiving income support or family payments to assist with the costs of renting private and community housing. This is a payment to individuals and not a grant program.

### 5.2 Activities

The Homelessness Prevention component consists of the following activities:

#### Youth Homelessness Reconnect
To improve the level of engagement in family, work, education and the community of young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. The service strategy also has a service delivery component that aims at improving the level of engagement of newly arrived young people aged 12 to 21 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with family, work, education, training and the community. Total funding of $24.169m in 2013/14.

#### Household Organisational Management Expenses (Home) Advice Program
To prevent families from becoming homeless; provides assistance and support to stabilise and maintain their tenancies and/or home ownership. Total funding of $1.448m in 2013/14.

#### National Homelessness Strategy
The strategy provides funding for Projects which trial, evaluate and document new and innovative approaches that prevent, reduce or respond to homelessness. Total funding of $2.580m in 2013/14.

#### Homelessness Research Strategy
The strategy aims to improve the evidence on which the response to homelessness is based. Each element contributes to a cohesive and cumulative body of research that addresses the research priorities identified in the National Homelessness Research Agenda 2009-13. Total funding of $5.883m in 2013/14.

#### National Housing Priorities*
The NHP funding supports the development and implementation of homelessness prevention initiatives and supports the Housing and homelessness sectors to undertake research and stakeholder engagement which contributes to the reduction of the impact of homelessness. The fund also supports the housing and homelessness sector to carry out research and share information in order to inform housing and homelessness policy development. Total funding of $433,000 in 2012/13.
National Housing Research*
The National Housing Research (NHR) provides funding for research, development, demonstration and evaluation projects in relation to housing. Total funding of $648,000 in 2013/14.

*National Housing Priorities and National Housing Research are services which are not linked to a program component; rather they connect directly to the Housing Assistance and Homelessness Prevention program.