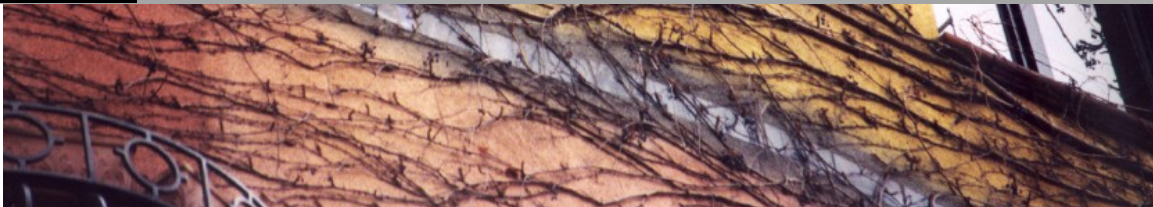


30th December 2010



QYHC

QYHC SUBMISSION TO QUEENSLAND
GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR REDUCING
HOMELESSNESS
[INCLUDING THE QUEENSLAND YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN]



A Proposal to Reduce Youth Homelessness in QLD

QUEENSLAND YOUTH HOUSING COALITION INC

QUEENSLAND YOUTH HOUSING COALITION SUBMISSION:

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR
REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

Priority 1: Common Vision and principles

Do you agree with the proposed vision statement and principles? If not, what changes would you suggest?

The proposed vision statement and principles that should guide the Queensland Government Strategy for Reducing Homelessness (QGSRH) should be based on a rights based framework.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) does not agree with the principles:

As the discussion paper notes the existing Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 should already be guiding the response to homelessness. The SAA Act notes that:

"Homeless people form one of the most powerless and marginalised groups in society. Responses to their needs should aim to empower them and to maximise their independence. These responses should be provided in a way that respects their dignity as individuals, enhances their self-esteem, is sensitive to their social and economic circumstances, and respects their cultural backgrounds and their beliefs."

Australia has acted to protect the rights of all of its citizens, including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, by recognising international standards for the protection of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms through:

- (a) the ratification of the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights; and
- (b) the ratification of the Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and on the Rights of the Child; and
- (c) the acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; and
- (d) the enactment of legislation such as the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 .

Legislation relating to homeless people should include a focus on the provision of appropriate support to meet the individual needs of the clients of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program ("SAAP") and on their right to an equitable share of the community's resources."

Key Point:

The principles that underpin the QGSRH should be based within human rights principles of which Australia is a signatory to. It would therefore be logical that the Queensland strategy is synchronized with the national agenda's particularly those that focus on Australia's human rights obligations.

QYHC does not agree with the vision as articulated in the discussion paper:

QYHC supports the changes made by the Specialist Homelessness Networking Strategy Reference Group:

“Prevent people from becoming homeless and empower people who are homeless to obtain and maintain safe, long-term housing with high quality support systems and connection to their community through a collaborative approach by all stakeholders”.

The current vision that has been developed within the discussion paper does not acknowledge the various dimensions that lead to social exclusion which at its extreme is homelessness. The current national Social Inclusion Agenda would be an excellent guide to develop the vision. The paper by Alan Hayes, Matthew Gray and Ben Edwards, Australian Institute of Family Studies prepared for the Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet titled ‘Social Inclusion – origins, concepts and key themes’ (page 5) noted that the dimensions of social exclusion included:

- *consumption*: the capacity to purchase goods and services;
- *production*: participation in economically or socially valuable activities;
- *political engagement*: involvement in local or national decision-making; and
- *social interaction*: integration with family, friends and community.

Therefore the vision needs to encapsulate that there are individual and structural dimensions that creates homelessness. As a result QYHC is of the opinion that a further enhancement can be made to the vision that acknowledges the multifaceted and dynamic nature of social exclusion and in particular these impact on an individual and the environment in which they live.

Key Point:

“Prevent people from becoming homeless and empower people to obtain and maintain safe, long-term housing with high quality support systems and connection to their community that acknowledges the relationship of the individual to their environment”.

This would also enable the development of strategic outcomes in Queensland that fit with our national and international human rights obligations (see QYHAP program logic for an example).

Will the proposed vision statement and principles provide sufficient clarity and guidance to stakeholders working to tackle homelessness?

Key point

The vision and principles will only provide clarity and guidance if they are able to develop practically into strategic, long, medium and short term outcomes (see Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan program logic for an example)

Priority 2: Person focused responses to homelessness

What are the key components of an effective person-centered approach to reducing homelessness?

Key point

QYHC agrees with the discussion paper that there needs to be specific strategies for particular groups. QYHC has developed a Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan (QYHAP – see attached).

The QYHAP discussed the need for the development of a robust policy and practice response must reflect and be based on an understanding of young people. In addition policy and practice models should focus on a strength based, as opposed to a deficit based, model of working with young people.

As a result the youth homelessness action plan must have at its basis:

- Pathways approach – understanding the causes and effects of homelessness (inc definitions of homelessness)
- Youth focussed practice – young people require differentiated and targeted responses that address their individual circumstances and needs (inc understanding of adolescent development)
- Interdependence – it is the whole community's responsibility to provide supportive environments and structural assistance to young people until they can access the full benefits of adulthood.
- Early intervention to prevent long term homelessness – better understanding of the policy and program implications of early intervention and prevention.

There must always be recognition of the structural/systemic issues that create social exclusion.

A person centered approach does not mean a 'one size fits all' either in terms of service model responses to young people, but it does mean we need to understand the particular characteristics of young people such as adolescent development.

How can we make best use of evidence about what services and programs work best for helping people exit out of homelessness?

Key point

The best use of evidence is to:

- (a) Have it publicly available;
- (b) Allow service to flexibly respond to the needs of young people in their area;
- (c) Support non government services to conduct research and collect data based on research; and
- (d) Enable robust policy debate between government and non government services

What gaps or barriers in the human service system do particular groups of people encounter when homeless?

There are a range of gaps for young people however they like the rest of the population are not a homogenous group and so there are a wide variety of barriers.

Key point

The Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan outlines a spectrum of support. The Spectrum describes and maps the elements that need to be in place in order to effectively respond to and end youth homelessness.

Key point

There are also barriers in systems and at time there may be the need for specialist service responses across the human service system. HHOT teams are an excellent example of this.

In fact health is an excellent example where we can demonstrate the need for specialist youth homeless service responses. The Innovative Health Services for Homeless Youth (IHSY) Program was introduced as a pilot program in 1991, in response to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (1989) 'Our Homeless Children' (Burdekin) Report which found that homeless young people exhibit chronic health problems but are reluctant to seek treatment through mainstream services which they regard as judgemental and unsympathetic to their needs and life situations. This program has been an important part of the suite of responses for young people. The program objective is still as relevant today as it was when the program was conceived.

Key point

That the IHSY be located within the Housing and Homelessness unit of the Department of Communities and that it maintains a focus on primary health care for homeless young people.

What strategies will ensure accommodation and support are tailored and flexible to address individuals' needs?

Key point

See the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan attached.

Priority 3 Help people avoid homelessness through prevention and early intervention

What are the key components of an effective early intervention and prevention approach for reducing homelessness?

Prevention and early intervention are the best options for reducing and ending homelessness.

Key point

Prevention requires a whole of community response to a range of systemic issue. Prevention can be addressed through the social inclusion agenda – this agenda is intrinsically linked to addressing issues such as poverty and family violence.

One of the key issues that causes youth homelessness is family violence. There have been a range of successful early intervention approaches that need to be expanded upon such as the Reconnect program and the Youth Support Coordinator Program.

The Reconnect program uses community-based early intervention services to bring about family reconciliation for young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Reconnect helps these young people improve their level of engagement with family, work, education, training and their local community. Reconnect breaks the cycle of homelessness, which can begin at an early age, by providing counselling, mediation and practical support to the whole family. Reconnect providers also 'buy in' services to target individual needs of clients, such as specialised mental health services. Reconnect service providers follow the seven good practice principles: accessibility of services client driven service delivery holistic approaches to service delivery working collaboratively culturally and contextually appropriate service delivery ongoing review and evaluation; and building sustainability. The National Youth Commission reported noted that this program needs to be significantly expanded.

What changes are needed for mainstream and allied services to provide more effective prevention and early intervention services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Chamberlain and Mackenzie in their report, Youth Homelessness: Four Policy Proposals (2004), note that schools in particular are key sites for intervention.

In Queensland there is Youth Support Coordinator Program that had its initial focus on young people at risk of homelessness in schools. Unfortunately there has not been a great understanding of the program from government and there have been significant changes to the YSC Program.

Prior to the changes announced this year the Youth Support Coordinator (YSC) Program aims to establish collaborative relationships between schools, TAFE Institutes and community services to enable better responses to the needs of young people experiencing personal, social or family difficulties.

YSCs are employed by community agencies and work directly with individual young people and their families as well as working developmentally both within schools and TAFE Institutes and with the wider community.

YSCs work with young people, and their families (where appropriate), individually and in group work settings and also undertake community development and capacity building in order to meet the following objectives:

- to develop linkages between schools, TAFEs, community organisations and the broader community to enhance access by young people and their families to support and assistance
- to assist young people and their families to resolve issues contributing to not transiting into and completing the senior phase of learning
- to contribute to the development of supportive school/TAFE environments that are responsive to the needs of young people at risk of not transiting into and completing the senior phase of learning
- to assist young people to develop social and personal skills for independent and successful community living
- to encourage and support community services to respond to the needs of students and their families

There are 113 full time funded positions located throughout the State and resources by three YSC Hub Facilitators. These positions are based in NGO's and the Hub Facilitators are located at the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition.

Key point

As schools are a key site for early intervention to prevent homelessness the YSC Program needs to re-focus back on young people at risk of homelessness.

The Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2004) note a range of other strategies such as student support infrastructure, pastoral care, mentoring and community placement programs.

QYHC has attempted to assist communities and services to establish a formal short-term accommodation and support option for young people who are in the early stages of family breakdown. This accommodation and support, the Community Placement Model (CPM) enables young people, with consent of

their families, to continuing their schooling and, where possible and appropriate, working towards family reconciliation. The concept of the Community Placement Model (CPM) as an early intervention model came about from a number of research projects and an ongoing understanding of the process that leads young people to become homeless and disengage from mainstream services. Research (Uhr and Chamberlain & MacKenzie) has shown that young people will "couchsurf" for a period of time before making a final break from home. Anecdotally QYHC is aware that there are a number of communities who currently assist young people and their families through the provision of family counselling and support whilst at the same time accommodating young people, through an informal placement process, into local community/family homes. The target group as a result of the above understandings therefore became young people between the ages of 12- 18 years who were still in school and had links to home. It was a natural process for QYHC to consider how we could support communities and young people into formalising this process. Further QYHC was concerned about keeping the process about supporting young people and their families in the most non intrusive manner possible and so trying to keep young people from transitioning into crisis orientated services and out of mainstream services in particular education or training. We have been working in a rural community for a number of years attempting to establish this program in their community after extensive research and broad community support including funding commitments.

Key point

The Queensland State Government need to pilot a CPM in a rural community in Queensland (with a preference for Warwick where there is already community support for the model).

Priority 4 People have access to stable housing with support

What can be done to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to achieve more stable housing as a step towards the best possible life outcomes?

The key housing issue for young people is affordability – young people's low income is a key barrier to accessing housing. Whilst affordable housing solutions are attractive and do increase housing supply there needs to be an acknowledgement that 75% of market rent is still too high for many young people.

Key point

There needs to be a greater supply of social housing at 30% of income.

The National Evaluation Report of SAAP IV (May 2004) found that the specialist homelessness services (SAAP funded service system) is working to capacity across the continuum of care spectrum of early intervention, crisis and post crisis.

This has been a consistent finding in all the SAAP evaluations. The report however raises questions as to how much can be achieved by specialist homelessness services (SAAP) on its own. The Evaluation Executive Summary comments on the need for a more whole of government approach and states that “Until a more systematic whole of government approach is adopted, major challenges will remain in providing joined-up services needed to reduce homelessness occurring and providing appropriate pathways out of homelessness”.

Key point

The QGSRH needs to maintain the foundation of specialist youth homelessness services. There can be improvement strategies but any major reform to the system must be dependent on improvements in allied and mainstream services.

Key point

There also needs to be an exploration of other housing and support models or how existing service can improve within a Housing First Framework.

How can support best be provided to people regardless of where they live?

Key point

QYHC has advocated that there needs to be ‘Transition to Independence’ workers located throughout the State. These workers need to be located within specialist youth homelessness services to ensure adequate follow up for young people who are moving to more independent accommodation.

What do housing and support services need to do more of, or do differently, to help people who are homeless to achieve independent, stable lives?

This is a complex questions as the key questions is what are the support needs of the person – and then who is best placed to provide this support. Some attempts have been made to address this issue through ‘panels’ and integrated case management issues.

Priority 5 Increased participation in education, training and employment

- How can we improve engagement in education and employment by people experiencing homelessness?
- For people with complex needs, what is the most effective ‘pathway’ back to employment?

Research has demonstrated that most young people who are homeless are couchsurfing with many of these young people still engaged in secondary education.

Key point

The Youth Support Coordinator program in Queensland has played an integral part in supporting young people in schools. The YSC Program has undergone key changes that have not maintained its focus on young people at risk of homelessness and the social and emotional support nature of the program. This needs to be re-examined to ensure good educational outcomes for homeless young people.

There can also be strong learning's from the Brisbane Catholic Education Marginalised students process and final outcomes such as a strategic framework, practical support to needy students, peer support, peer counselling and ways to empower students to take responsibility in the context of a caring and inclusive school community.

The Foyer model can be an effective housing and support model as long as it is **not** conditional housing.

Priority 6 Effective coordination and integration of services

What improvements to coordination and integration can be made to allied and mainstream services to improve services for homeless people and prevent or reduce homelessness?

What strategies should drive the integration of specialist homelessness services and mainstream and allied services to enable better service delivery to people?

Allied and mainstream services need to develop a youth homelessness response within all their strategic plans and there needs to be enforceability to the actions within the strategic plans. For example the Queensland Government 'Under 16 protocol' for specialist youth homelessness services is currently ineffective as there is no enforceability to its provisions.

Service agreements outcomes must have included within them the capacity for services to engage in partnerships and community development activities. If these are not included then there is limited capacity for coordination and effective integration of services.

What is the most useful range of services for specialist homelessness services to offer people who are homeless?

The current models within the specialist youth homelessness services in Queensland are:

- Crisis accommodation
- Medium term
- Long term
- Drop in

- Information and referral
- Outreach

There has also been a proposal for an:

- Transition to independence worker

There is no one size fits all that can be articulated and due to the geographical difference in Queensland it would be impossible to articulate this.

Key point

A service may provide one or more model of service however this can be dependent on what is needed in the area, geographical issues and what else is available in the area. A 'bottom up' regional planning process would be a better process to determine service integration and delivery issue.

Priority 7 More Community involvement

- What are some positive ways that homeless people have been supported by the wider community to achieve better life outcomes?
- Which people or organisations need to be involved in reducing homelessness?
- How can people recognise that someone is homeless? What practical things can people do to help?
- How can we achieve a shared responsibility among individuals and organisations in the community, including volunteers and for profit companies, to reduce the stigma of homelessness and provide better support to vulnerable people?

'Homelessness is everyone's business' – this is the key message that was supported by the Federal Government White Paper "The Road Home". The leadership provided by the Federal Government has created 'space' for for-profit and not-for-profit services to explore how they can work together to reduce homelessness.

Key point

Community education is a key to broader understanding of homelessness. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition has been conducting an annual Youth Homelessness Matters Day as part of a national campaign. It would be a positive benefit for the Queensland Government to contribute to this campaign.

The national census conducted every 5 years provides a robust enumeration source in terms of counting homeless young people. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has been conducting a campaign to increase the awareness of homelessness in Australia so that the count for 2011 can be as accurate as possible.

The QYHC has been working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics to ensure that homeless young people, particularly those who are couchsurfing, are accurately counted.

Key point

One of the key areas is to target those households where young people are couchsurfing and a great way to conduct this is through schools with a community education campaign. QYHC has been keen to conduct this community education project and with the State government support could make significant in-roads to reaching this target audience.

Priority 8 Effective place based responses

What currently works well in your region for preventing and permanently ending homelessness? What needs to change?

How can non-government and government coordinators be supported to undertake their roles effectively and lead to the success of Homelessness Community Action Plans in your region?

The White Paper on Homelessness articulates three key strategies:

1. Turning off the tap
2. Improving and expanding services; and
3. Breaking the cycle.

The White Paper on Homelessness notes that homelessness is everyone's business urging responses from government, business, not for profit sector and the community. Whilst it is easy to make this statement, the complexity comes when we attempt to bring these sectors of our community together in an integrated way in order to meet the outcomes and targets articulated through the White Paper.

There have been a number of reports¹ that have particularly focused on the concept of service integration.

Key point

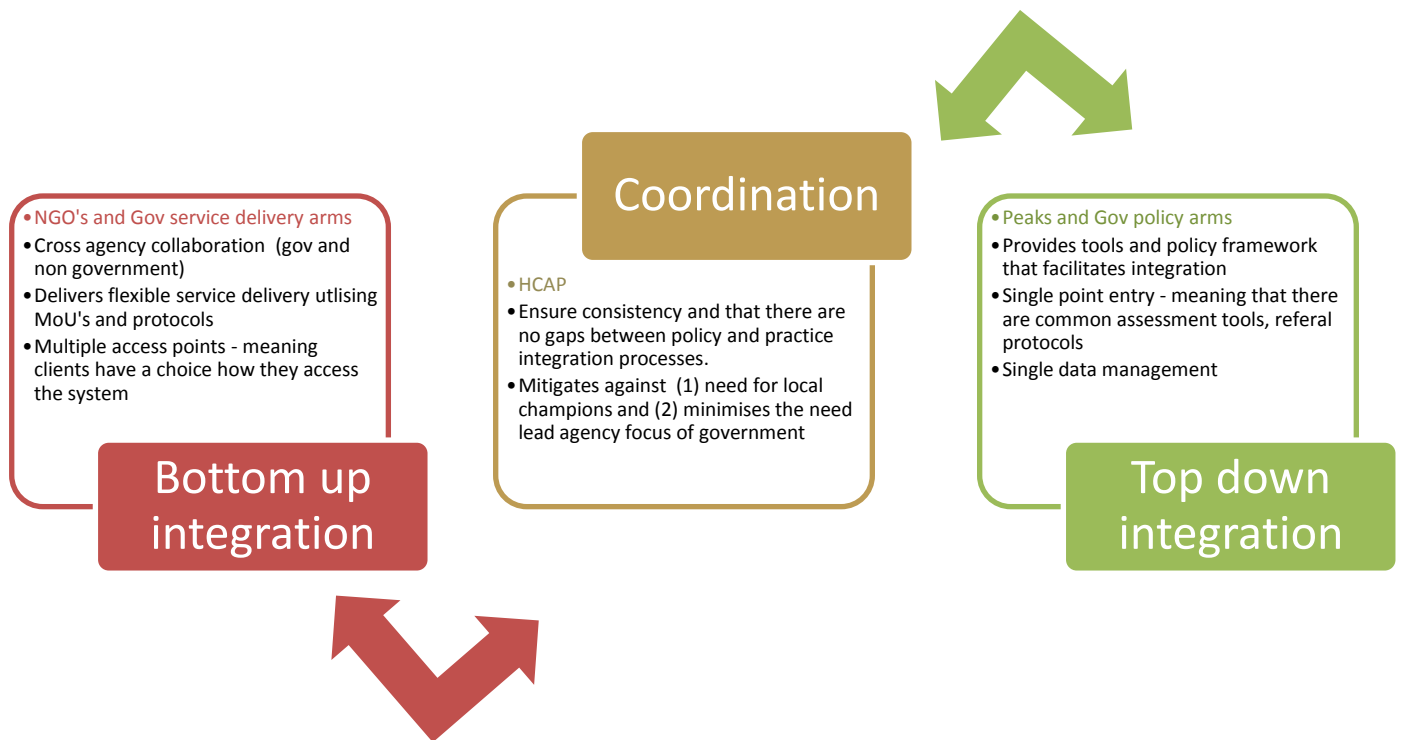
The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition believes that there are merits about 'top down' and 'bottom up' integration responses.

'Top down' integration needs to be about government providing the tools and mechanisms through the policy framework for the 'bottom up' integration to be able to occur. The 'bottom up' integration processes needs to be about cross agency collaboration, practice and needs identification.

¹ Bond, Sharon, (2010) Integrated Service Delivery for Young People: A literature Review, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne VIC

It is the opinion of the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition that integration is vital at the policy and practice level; these 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to integration each have essential strengths and neither approach works well in isolation. It is the point of synthesis or coordination between the two processes that is vital for broad positive social change to occur as coordination manages the points of convergence and divergence between the 'top' and 'bottom'.

Within the 'top down' and 'bottom up' processes there are vertical integration processes. In government this is about whole of government agenda's and within 'bottom up' processes these may take the form of protocols or Memorandum of Understanding.



For more detailed information see the QYHAP attached.

Priority 9 Improve capacity and strengthen services

What are the priorities in workforce development and training for services that have clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

The Queensland Government Strategy for Reducing Homelessness needs to be a high level document that sets up the infrastructure for workforce development and training.

Workforce development and training is dependent of the skill sets for the workforce that is currently in place.

Key point

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition currently has YSC Hub Facilitators that provide workforces development and support and QYHC strongly supports the establishment of a similar hub for specialist youth homelessness services.

In recent years there has been a significant decline in the resources that support non government services. In particular there has been an increasing divide in terms of wage parity between the government and non government sectors. This lack of resourcing has meant that services are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff. The impact of this on service delivery is immense. The lack of professionally trained staff can impact on the quality of service delivery, the ability to meet compliance and other regulatory frameworks and to conduct research and data to improve service delivery functions. Further the lack of continuity of staff can impact on community capacity building processes that are dependent on the developing of relationships with community members over a medium to long term period.

Key point

As a result a key issue is to acknowledge the workforce issues facing youth housing and homelessness service, in particular:

- To ensure wage parity between the government and non government services sector;
- To fund appropriate administrative support staff for youth housing and homelessness services;
- To ensure that funding of youth housing and homelessness services that provides an adequate client to staff ratio and to consider the specific issues for rural, rural and remote services; and
- Employment targets around the recruitment of indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people.

What models of best-practice service delivery or coordination in your area/region could be used more broadly across Queensland?

Key point

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is a statewide organization. To assist in the implementation of the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan there needs to be a youth homelessness hub that provides key support and resourcing. The Youth Homelessness Hub has been developed by QYHC (see Table 1) as an approach to sector development and support that would complement current policy initiatives.

The QYHC suggests the Hub can provide cohesion to the policy and practice approaches focusing on young people. The focus of the Hub would not be on regional planning processes but rather on ensuring that the development of

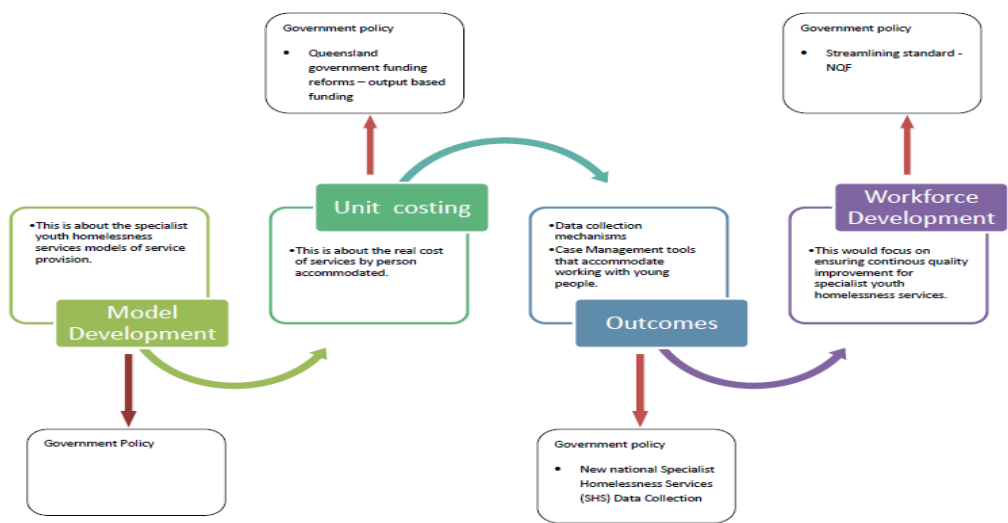
regional plans would be consistent with the broader youth service system. For example the process would ensure that a crisis service in Mt Isa would be run similarly to a crisis service in Mackay or Brisbane – consistency of service delivery providing surety for young people in the type of services they can receive regardless of where they are in the State. However we must remember that different geographical areas have different resources and so not all areas have the same accommodation and support services. The Hub approach could enhance referral processes across the State by mapping the service system.

The Youth Homelessness Hub aims to focus on continuous quality improvement around working with young people and on specific issues area or target groups of young people (see section 5) – focusing on quality practice. This aspect of the Hub work would contribute to the broader discussion on practice such as the National Quality Framework.

The Youth Homelessness Hub would contribute to the Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum by providing specific feedback on ‘bottom up’ issues for young people and youth services.

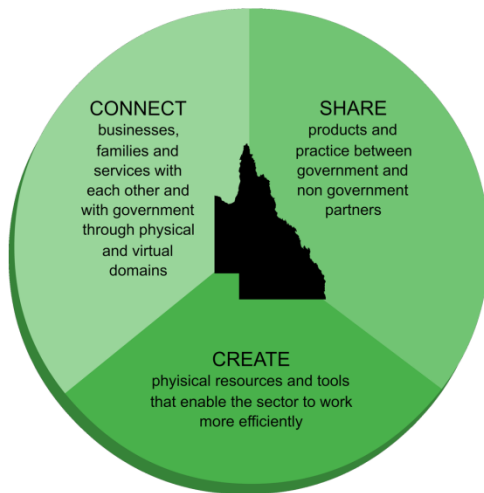
The type of work that the Youth Homelessness Hub could conduct with the specialist youth homelessness services is outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Youth Homelessness Hub Model



The Youth Homelessness Hub can enhance the current 1800 number that the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition conducts for young people across Queensland. This is currently self funded from Queensland Youth Housing Coalition resources and provides a central access point for young people.

If there is to be considerations regarding a regional intake process, based in local communities and specific to young people, this could interface with the 1800 number that the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition currently provides.



Further, young people's access to housing and accommodation is not limited to government or community resources. In keeping with the theme of the White Paper the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition can connect government, community and business. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition currently creates a range of physical and virtual resources for young people and service delivery agencies, and provides a range of products and practice material that is shared with members and the broader community.

What administrative tools or systems should be developed for use by specialist, mainstream and allied services to improve the quality and consistency of service delivery for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness?

There are a range of challenges facing non government organisations that impact on their capacity to undertake their services delivery functions.

The key issue for most youth housing and homelessness services is the inadequate funding to meet demand ie demand outstrips supply. Not only is there a need for funding levels to be considered but to enable continuity and meaningful strategies to be developed service agreements need to be longer, at least 3 -5 years, as opposed to pilots or 1 -2 year funding cycles.

Key point

Service agreements also need to be more focussed on outcomes than compliance and to allow for flexibility in service delivery to meet local need. At this point output based funding has constrained service delivery (focusing on a purchaser/provider model) and limiting flexibility and meeting client needs. In turn quality of service delivery has suffered due to the organizations attempting to meet unsustainable or unreachable targets with limited capacity to negotiate.

Whilst staff numbers have not increased to meet the demand, the compliance on services has dramatically impacting on service capacity. The onerous administrative constraint on services, in terms of increased compliance, needs streamlining by government.

Priority 10 Collecting and sharing data on outcomes for people who are homeless

How can the outcomes for people experiencing homelessness be measured more effectively?

Key point

The QGSRH needs to include, and be supportive of, the definition of homelessness – primary, secondary and tertiary.

The outcomes measurements should also not affect quality. The outcome measures need to be broad enough to support the client centered service delivery and therefore should not limit service delivery. With the focus on service integration there also needs to be support for community development and advocacy.

There are currently initiatives around the new minimal data sets and this need to be linked to regional homelessness action plans.

Key point

There also needs to be longitudinal studies of homeless people to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the homelessness service system.

QYHC would not support any tracking of young homeless people as this does not provide thematic data and has the capacity to inappropriately focus on individuals.

Key point

Services should be supported to develop their own data sets and research and to have appropriate IT to support this.

Lastly data collection has to be purposeful and must not be such that it creates a disproportionate administrative burden on services.

How can the exchange and analysis of data be improved to support better outcomes for people?

Data needs to be provided in an electronic format so that services can easily access.

Key point

The AIHW needs to provide ongoing training and support around data including the analysis of data.

QUEENSLAND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS IN QUEENSLAND©

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QUEENSLAND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN QUEENSLAND

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1. CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Government is currently considering consulting about a Queensland Government Strategy for Reducing Homelessness.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC) is advocating for a Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan to ensure that young people's housing and support needs are addressed adequately in the development of any government strategy around homelessness.

This section will articulate that Australia is signatory to a number of human rights treaties. These various treaties underpin the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan and the 'Plan' aims to comply with these treaties. It also outlines the theoretical framework and the principles to guide the implementation of the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan.

1.2 YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Human Rights are about the basic dignity of people and are enshrined in the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights². QYHC supports the fundamental tenet that all people have access to human rights.

Australia is a signatory to a number of human rights treaties, these are;

- International covenant on civil and political rights
- International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights
- Convention on the rights of the child
- Convention on the elimination of all form of racial discrimination
- Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
- Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

The human rights treaties provide a framework that includes the rights of all to shelter and are the basis of the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan.

² United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child³ relates to anyone under the age of 18, and is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations. It states that decisions that affect children should be based on their 'best interests'. As a signatory, Australia is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children and young people.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The development of a robust policy and practice response must reflect and be based on an understanding of young people. In addition policy and practice models should focus on a strength based, as opposed to a deficit based, model of working with young people.

As a result the youth homelessness action plan must have at its basis:

- Pathways approach – understanding the causes and effects of homelessness (inc definitions of homelessness)
- Youth focussed practice – young people require differentiated and targeted responses that address their individual circumstances and needs (inc understanding of adolescent development)
- Interdependence – it is the whole community's responsibility to provide supportive environments and structural assistance to young people until they can access the full benefits of adulthood.
- Early intervention to prevent long term homelessness – better understanding of the policy and program implications of early intervention and prevention.

1.4 PRINCIPLES

1.4.1 DEFINITION

Definition: key principles - fundamental source or basis underpinning the model.

1.4.2 PRINCIPLES FOR A POLICY FRAMEWORK

A rights based framework underpins equal opportunity and social justice. Equal opportunity focuses on treating all people equally and social justice focuses on marginalised groups and the power imbalances that are in the community. These concepts can provide a range of interrelated and essential principles that guides the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan and its components parts.

³ United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child

These principles would then guide mainstream and youth specific organisations in their service delivery.

Principle	To be included in Service Charters
<p><i>Availability:</i> this is about the capacity of the service, both at the people level and the resource level, to meet the needs of the client.</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services on the basis of need for the service • Remove discriminatory barriers • Respect the right of service users to have personal relationships • Treat all service users and their families with respect and without discrimination • Provide high quality and holistic services • Provide services that are flexible and responsive • Provide service users with opportunities to engage around service development.
<p><i>Accessibility:</i> has 4 dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non discrimination - Physical accessibility - Information accessibility 	
<p><i>Affordability:</i> this is sometimes referred to as economic accessibility.</p>	
<p><i>Acceptability:</i> youth homelessness facilities, goods and services must be respectful and culturally appropriate, i.e. respectful of the culture of individuals, minorities, peoples and communities, sensitive to gender and life-cycle requirements, as well as being designed to respect confidentiality and improve the social and emotional status of those concerned.</p>	
<p><i>Adaptability:</i> flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of young people within their diverse social and cultural settings.</p>	

Source Information: 1: This table has been adapted using such articles as Australian Human Rights Commission, Social Justice Report 2005

1.4.3 IMPLEMENTATION

Principles (founded on a rights based framework) are essential in ensuring that integrated models of service can interface in a more seamless manner. It must however be acknowledged that the application of Principles may vary depending on resource capacities in a local community or service.

For example the difficulty in terms of staff recruitment in rural, regional and remote areas impacts on the continuity of the quality of service delivery. There are not enough skilled people and there are no loadings to attract staff into more remote areas of Queensland. There must be special considerations made in terms of how rural, regional and remote communities are resourced to meet the needs in their location.

Further many of the models of service delivery that are developed pertain to an urban setting and these do not work in large parts of rural, regional or remote Queensland.

It must be noted that the gender and cultural overlays requires an ongoing analysis in these areas to ensure that the principles are being met.

1.4.4 YOUTH AS A CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICE

MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2003)⁴ clearly articulate that the homeless career is fundamentally different between young people and adults.

They also highlight that inadequate support for homeless young people can create a transition to adult homelessness where adult homelessness *"is not a separate career typology, but a continuation of the youth homeless career into adult homelessness"* (p.vi).

QYHC (2006)⁵ explored the roles and functions of workers, particularly examining 'relational practice' and the need for youth workers to understand adolescent development issues when working with young people.

QYHC acknowledges the adolescent development issues that impact on young people, families and communities and must be taken into consideration when developing policy and practice responses. Adolescence is a time for great change for young people and their families. In the main these changes occur between the ages of 12-15 years and generally young women mature earlier than young men.

These changes for young people are at a number of levels:

- Biological – physical
- Psychological – thinking and feeling
- Social – how they relate to the world around them

Adolescent development is generally seen to be in three stages:

- Early adolescence: 12-14 years
- Middle adolescence: 15 -16 years
- Late adolescence: 17 – 19 years

Dupree (2006)⁶ presented at the 4th National Homelessness conference and outlined the key principles and elements of relational practice. The key principles include:

⁴ MacKenzie and Chamberlain (2003) *Homeless Careers: Pathways in and out of homelessness* – a report from the counting the homeless 2001 project, funded by all State and Territory Governments and the Salvation Army

⁵ M. Leebeek, Adolescent Development and the role of SAAP, QYHC March 2006

⁶ <http://afho.org.au/conference/2006conferencepapers.htm>

- Personal frameworks (matched at the time of interview)
- Organisational philosophy
- Strength based practice
- A belief that young people have capacity and are working towards self determination
- The central belief that the core to human growth and well being is connectedness.

This section outlines the parameters on which the development of Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan will be based. Once the principles and concepts have been articulated then the specific components/content of the plan can be developed – these are articulated in the following sections.

An articulation of the principles and concepts could be through a Charter bedded in the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan.

2. YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN QUEENSLAND

In this section young people are defined to ensure consistency of understanding and to describe the unique stage of life. The numbers of homeless young people and where they are located in Queensland are described in this section.

2.1 DEFINING YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important to establish a common understanding of what we mean when we state 'young people'. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition defines young people as being between the ages of 12 to 25 years. This is a nationally agreed understanding being used by agencies including the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

This does not imply that the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is of the opinion that the accommodation, housing and support responses will be the same for all young people in this age cohort.

Consideration should be given to age, support needs and skill levels when developing responses to young people's accommodation and housing needs.

There are a number of legislative frameworks that guide accommodation, housing and support responses to young people. In general the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition breaks down the age group into three sub groups: 12-15, 16-18 and 19-25.

For young people between the ages of 12 – 18 there are a number of understandings that form the basis of Queensland Youth Housing Coalition position;

- Young people aged 12-18 have needs that are observably different to those under 12;
- Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family and have protective needs are clearly the responsibility of the Department of Communities Child Safety - the statutory child protection authority; and
- Young people aged 12-18 who are unable to live with their family, whether in care and protection or not, access specialist youth homelessness services.

For young people aged 12-18 the provision of accommodation options outside a statutory framework (ie residential care, foster care) should not preclude linkages with existing intervention services and the funding of new intervention services. For this age group, the discussion about service delivery needs to move beyond a question of 'in or not of care' to a discussion about

how statutory and non-statutory responses to young people's protective needs can complement one another.

2.2 YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition notes that the concept of risk must be placed within a continuum of care framework otherwise 'at risk' can be a very broad concept. QYHC would argue that risk factors must relate to the risk of becoming homelessness.

Young people 'at risk' of homelessness may be young people who:

- Have been harmed or continue to be at risk of harm from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or neglect;
- Have no significant caring adult figure who can exercise care and responsibility;
- Are engaged in risk taking behaviours and have families who are unable and/or unwilling to protect them from the harm this exposes them to;
- Experience family conflict and breakdown;
- Have no or limited support networks;
- Are unable to value and respect themselves;
- Experience emotional instability and/or mental health issues; and
- Experience education and employment issues.

The protective needs of young people may be further exacerbated as a result of particular disadvantage due to cultural and social impacts, these include:

- Young people with intellectual disability or learning difficulty;
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people;
- Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- Young people with psychiatric illness;
- Gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgender young people;
- Young people with substance abuse issues;
- Young people who are pregnant and parenting.

- Young people exiting child protection services, from either ageing out of care at 18 years of age or young people disengaging from child safety; and
- Young people exiting Juvenile Justice Services, particularly young people on dual child protection and juvenile justice orders.

2.3 YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN QUEENSLAND

The main mechanism to count homelessness in Australia is the ABS Census.

Of the 104,676 homeless people counted across Australia in the 2006 Census:

- 16,375 or 16% of the homeless population were people in the most extreme situation - 'sleeping rough' (i.e. in improvised dwellings or tents, or in streets, parks, cars or derelict buildings)
- 19,849 or 19% of all homeless people were staying in emergency or transitional housing—mainly in SAAP (specialist homeless) services
- The majority, 46,856 or 45% of all people experiencing homelessness were defined as homeless because they were staying with another household and had no usual residence
- 21,596 people or 21% were living in boarding houses

	Australia		Queensland	
	N	%	N	%
Boarding houses	21 596	20	5438	20
SAAP accommodation	19 849	19	3233	12
Friends and relatives	46 856	45	12 946	49
Improvised dwellings, sleepers out	16 375	16	5165	19
	104 676	100	26 782	100

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

A quarter of all homeless people were living in Queensland at a rate higher (69 per 10,000) than the national average (53 per 10,000). Queensland had the highest numbers of rough sleepers in Australia at 5165. Surprisingly most homeless (73%) are living in rural and remote communities (Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2008, p.37).

⁷ Dept. of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (2008) The road home: A national approach to reducing homelessness, Canberra , ACT

According the 2006 Census⁸, 76% were single-person households, 14% were couples without children and 10% were families. The only increase was in the numbers of families since the 2001 census. It is also thought that the number of couples and families could be undercounted as de facto's might have been missed in the count and people without their children (who may have been left with friends or relatives) have been counted as singles.

Across Australia there were 44,547 (43%) children and young people aged 0-25 who were homeless on census night in 2006. In Queensland children and young people made up 37% of all homeless people.

TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOMELESS POPULATION

	Australia			Queensland		
	N	%		N	%	
Under 12	12 133	12	58	2914	11	51
12–18	21 940	21		4469	16	
19–24	10 504	10		2624	10	
25–34	15 804	15		3820	14	
35–44	13 981	13	42	3471	13	49
45–54	12 206	12		3464	13	
55–64	10 708	10		3667	14	
65 or older	7 400	7		2353	9	
	104 676	100		26 782	100	

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

The table below demonstrated that there were more females than males in the age group 12—18 years however this trend reverses in the 19 –24 age group⁹.

⁸ Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2008), Counting the Homelessness 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics, p.viii

⁹ Chamberlain and MacKenzie (2009), Counting the Homelessness 2006:Queensland, Australian Bureau of Statistics, p.33

Australia

	Under 12	12–18	19–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	52	46	53	57	63	64	61	64	56
Female	48	54	47	43	37	36	39	36	44
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Queensland

	Under 12	12–18	19–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	52	49	56	58	64	62	59	68	58
Female	48	51	44	42	36	38	41	32	42
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.

There has been a substantial reduction in the rate of youth homelessness between 2001 and 2006 census (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2006 p.xi. Much of this has been attributed to lower unemployment and more significantly due to increases in the provision of early intervention services over the last 10 years (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2006 p.xii)

Whilst the number of homeless young people in the 12– 18 years age bracket has dropped since 2001 , this cohort still represent 21% of all homeless people nationally and 16% in the State. Young people (12 –18 yrs) are the largest group of people experiencing homelessness and the highest users of specialist homeless services.

3. HOMELESSNESS IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

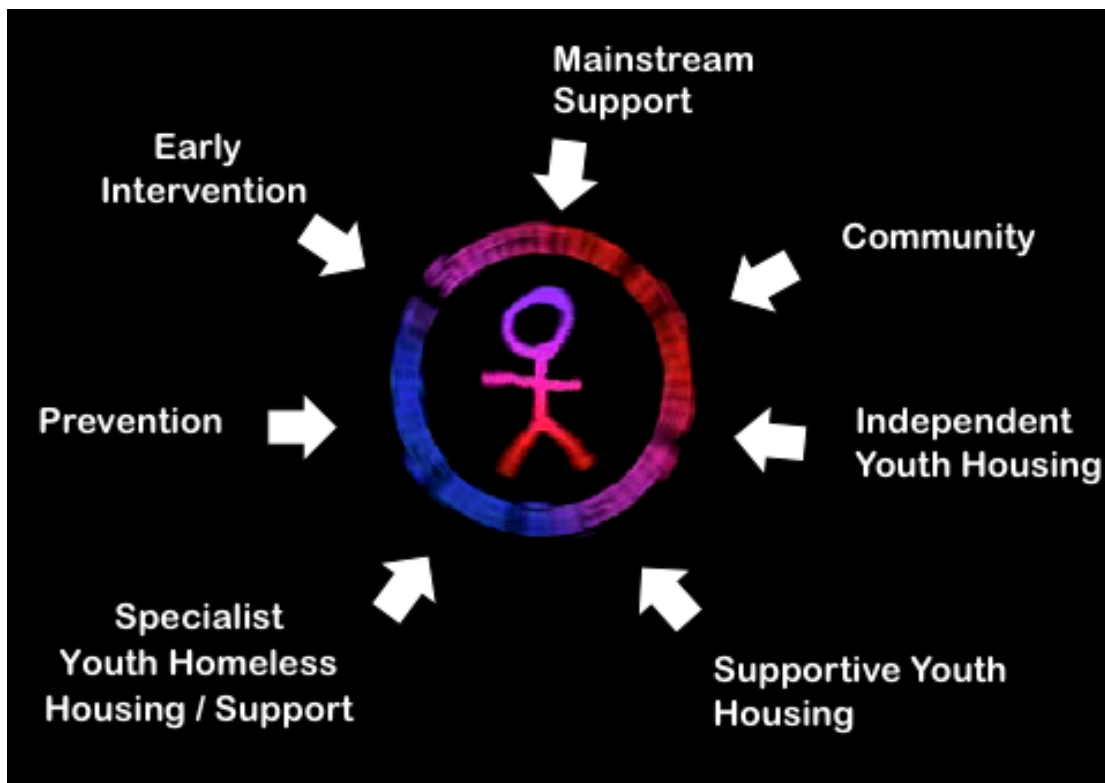
Homelessness has been traditionally conceptualised as a 'continuum' (Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 2003) which viewed the pathway through homelessness as directional. Another way of looking at homelessness is proposed through the Spectrum Model (NYCH Parity article). The Spectrum model is described in this section and its relevance to the government's response to homelessness

3.1 THE 'SPECTRUM' CONCEPT

The Spectrum describes and maps the elements that need to be in place in order to effectively respond to and end youth homelessness.

The Spectrum replaces the idea of a continuum, as the continuum was often misunderstood and associated with throughput, one direction and one point of entry and exit.

In the Spectrum concept prevention (as systemic work) has been distinguished from early intervention (as work done once a risk has been identified). The systemic work is critical to the Spectrum concept.



This 'wrap around' concept is centred on the needs and rights of the young person at risk of or experiencing homelessness, rather than on a particular model. The Spectrum concept is also premised on the basis that all models of service operate with a mixture of one or more of the different elements of the Spectrum.

The three Commonwealth key policy goals - Turning off the Tap, Improving and Expanding Service and Breaking the Cycle (Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 2008) fit in to the Spectrum as well.

There are a variety of different needs and risks for each young person (not just one point of entry into homelessness) and there needs to be a choice and mix of what are the most appropriate elements of the spectrum for service to use to meet the needs of young people.

3.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE SPECTRUM

3.2.1 SPECIALIST HOMELESS HOUSING AND SUPPORT

This part of the spectrum is linked to the existing homeless service system; services that have been in place for nearly thirty years. It assumes that if a young person is homeless today – right now – they will need a place to stay, a range of supports, they may need intensive support and they may need a place to start future planning. Unfortunately words like crisis, short term, and 'refuge' tend to be misunderstood and are often confused with the 'day/night' shelters in the US which are only beds for a night and do not provide case management and support. In fact services who work in this part of the spectrum can (and do) much more than provide a bed for the night.

3.2.2 SUPPORTIVE YOUTH HOUSING

Some young people who are homeless may not always need intensive support. This might be because they have been through a more intensive case planning process or have been ready to go straight to a supportive housing situation. Approaches which provide supportive housing include: Street to Home, Foyers, Common Ground, Multi House Models, Independent Living Programs or perhaps even 'student housing'.

3.2.3 INDEPENDENT YOUTH HOUSING

Young people have the right to access independent youth housing. This part of the Spectrum is where, as part of the pathway out of homelessness, young people have access to (long term) affordable housing that is independent of support. This is their place, their home. However there is not enough housing for young people. In the absence of this housing, young people are forced to use specialist homeless housing and supportive youth housing as their 'social housing', or they are required to sleep rough or couch surf.

3.2.4 COMMUNITY

Young people who have experienced homelessness have the right to belong to and actively participate in the community in order to build networks and interdependencies – such as belonging to sports clubs and being positively engaged with friends and family. Approaches that provide this sort of support include Reconnect and community development services. This work is often underestimated as part of the response to youth homelessness.

3.2.5 MAINSTREAM SUPPORT

Young people who have experienced homelessness are not just a 'homeless' client. They are also simultaneously 'clients' of other mainstream support services and have the right to access these services. Approaches here include support to access education, employment, health and wellbeing etc. This is an underdeveloped area of the spectrum.

3.2.6 EARLY INTERVENTION

This is similar to the White Paper's aim to 'Turn off the tap'. We need to identify and respond to an individual's risk of homelessness as early as possible in order to avoid the young person becoming homeless. This is still an underdeveloped area of the spectrum. Much more work needs to be done with particular groups of young people, including couch surfers, young people leaving care, and young people leaving institutions.

3.2.7 PREVENTION

The distinction here is that while early intervention relates to the work around individual risks, prevention is the work around preventing 'systemic' risk and the effects of poverty, social exclusion, and poor wellbeing. The work here includes that of Government, peak bodies and advocates who seek to address broader systemic concerns that contribute to or create homelessness. This area includes homelessness policy plans, media campaigns and work on domestic violence, child protection etc. It is assumed here that the other elements of the spectrum also contribute to the task of preventing youth homelessness.

4. KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness and the Queensland Implementation Plan are intended to provide a whole of government response to homelessness. The Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan aims to enhance the government's response to homelessness by ensuring that there is targeted response to young people both at a systems and client level. This section outlines how the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan will relate to the 'Strategy' and the 'Implementation Plan'.

4.1 STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND INTERFACE WITH THE QUEENSLAND STRATEGY FOR REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

The Federal Government White Paper on Homelessness (The Road Home 2008) provides a vision to end homelessness and identifies strategies to address the causes of homelessness. However it is the Federal Governments Social Inclusion agenda that provides a higher level vision for the national homelessness agenda. The Federal Governments' Social Inclusion priority includes '*Addressing the incidence of homelessness by providing more housing and support services*'¹⁰ and thereby should provide the vision for the strategic and long term outcomes for the *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness*¹¹.

It is essential, as Australia is a signatory to a range of human rights protocols, that rights based/social justice principles should guide the development of high level strategic and long term outcomes within the Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness. If these principles do not guide the strategic and long term outcomes then the social inclusion concept can mean imposed value based expectations about how young people should fit into society – blaming individuals whilst ignoring structural disadvantage. These value based expectations can be interpretative and in conflict with the UN treaties that Australia is signatory to. Social inclusion can run the risk of having processes that negate individual choice and are unable to recognise cultural, sexual or gender specific differences. The system as a result becomes rigid and based on mainstream ideas – and in turn may not address poverty or disadvantage.

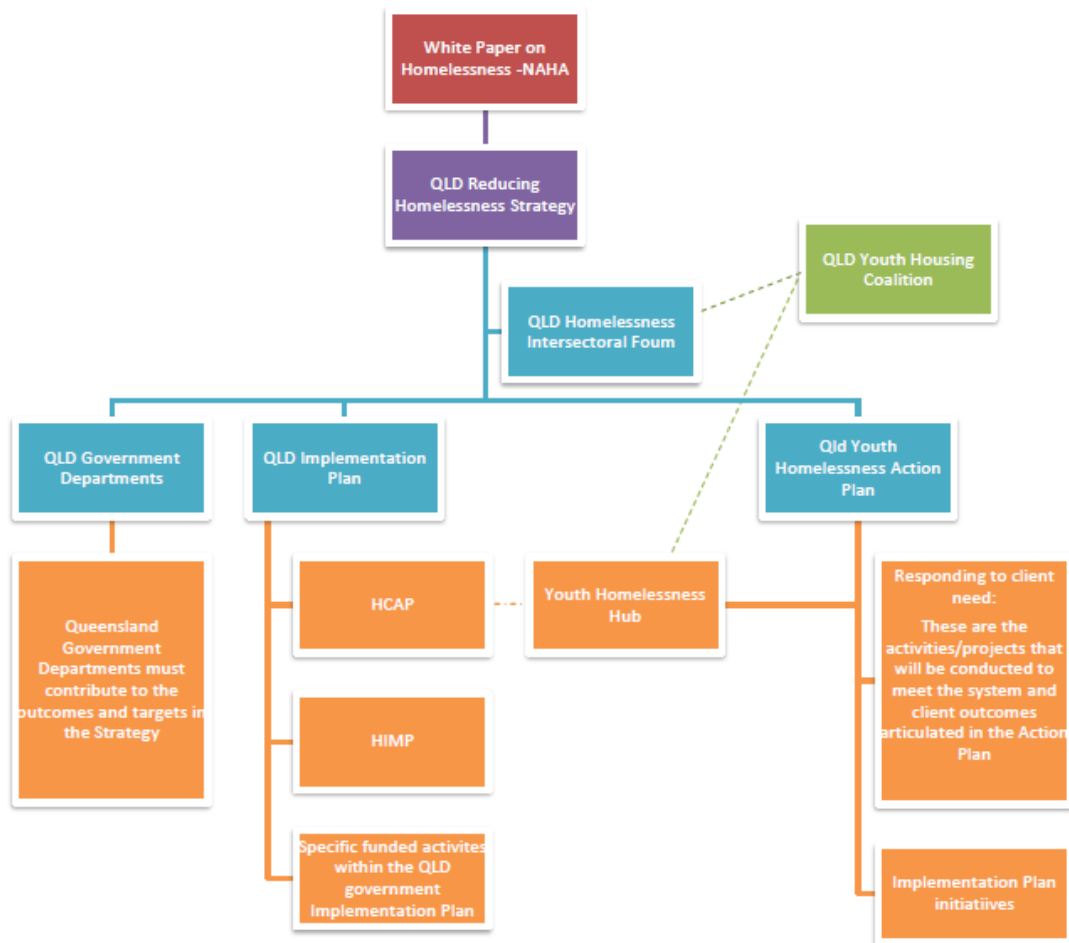
The social inclusion outcomes for young people, proposed in the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan, are strength based (not deficit focussed) and include (but are not limited to) key areas such as;

¹⁰ <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/SIAgenda/Priorities/Pages/default.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.public-housing.qld.gov.au/programs/homelessness/reducing/strategy.htm>

- Young people have a range of housing options;
- Young people are provided with information, support and access to services;
- Young people are able to make informed decisions and choices about service system support responses to meet their needs;
- Young people can participate individually and collectively in the decision making processes that impact on their lives; and
- Young people have access to an independent complaints mechanism and advocates.

The flowchart attempts to provide a visual map of how the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan interrelates to the *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness*.



This flowchart attempts to provide a visual map of the interrelatedness of components of the Queensland Strategy to reduce Homelessness with the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan – it does not include every component of the Queensland Government’s Implementation Plan.

4.2 INTEGRATION: OVERVIEW

The White Paper on Homelessness articulates three key strategies:

4. Turning off the tap
5. Improving and expanding services; and
6. Breaking the cycle.

The White Paper on Homelessness notes that homelessness is everyone's business urging responses from government, business, not for profit sector and the community. Whilst it is easy to make this statement, the complexity comes when we attempt to bring these sectors of our community together in an integrated way in order to meet the outcomes and targets articulated through the White Paper.

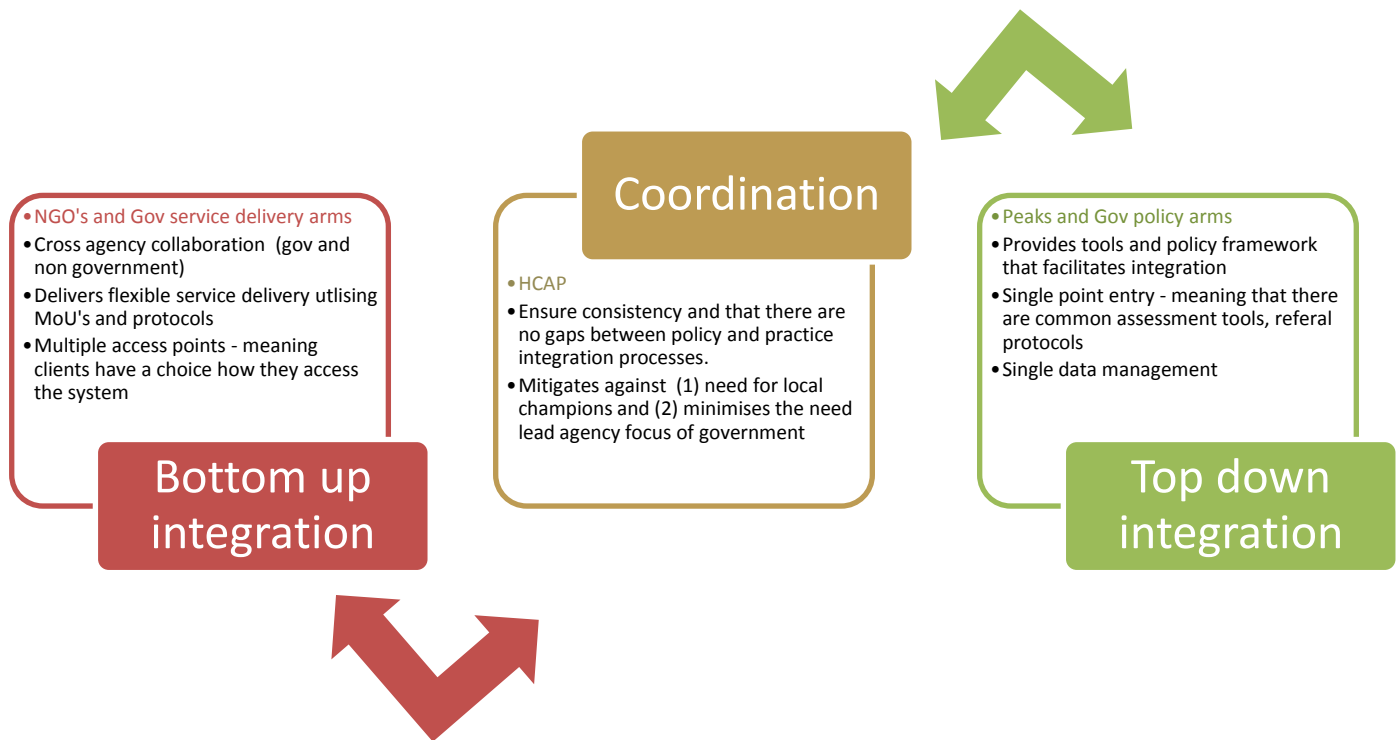
There have been a number of reports¹² that have particularly focused on the concept of service integration.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition believes that there are merits about 'top down' and 'bottom up' integration responses. 'Top down' integration needs to be about government providing the tools and mechanisms through the policy framework for the 'bottom up' integration to be able to occur. The 'bottom up' integration processes needs to be about cross agency collaboration, practice and needs identification.

It is the opinion of the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition that integration is vital at the policy and practice level; these 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to integration each have essential strengths and neither approach works well in isolation. It is the point of synthesis or coordination between the two processes that is vital for broad positive social change to occur as coordination manages the points of convergence and divergence between the 'top' and 'bottom'.

Within the 'top down' and 'bottom up' processes there are vertical integration processes. In government this is about whole of government agenda's and within 'bottom up' processes these may take the form of protocols or Memorandum of Understanding.

¹² Bond, Sharon, (2010) Integrated Service Delivery for Young People: A literature Review, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne VIC



4.2.1 POLICY FRAMEWORK – 'TOP DOWN' INTEGRATION

The Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan will be a key component of the *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness*. It is anticipated that the *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness* will ensure higher level outcome and targets.

The Federal Government has undertaken to develop a range of 'top down' integration processes such as national research processes as well as the development of a database system for specialist homelessness services.

The Queensland Government Implementation Plan for the National Partnership on Homelessness¹³ has already articulated a range of 'top down' integration projects through the Homelessness Information Management System which aims to:

- Develop and implement a common homelessness assessment tool;
- Develop and implement a vacancy management system;

1. ¹³ (2009) Queensland's Implementation Plan for the National Partnership on Homelessness accessed at www.public-housing.qld.gov.au/programs/rft/implementation_plan.rft 3/12/2010

- Develop a business case for a client management system; and
- Develop a case mix methodology.

It is essential that all these processes acknowledge the unique needs of young people and how they engage in mainstream, non-government and community services.

4.2.2 INTEGRATED YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SERVICES- 'BOTTOM UP' INTEGRATION

There is a range of 'bottom up' integration approaches in the youth sector and in some areas these have included local or place based approaches and the pooling of grass roots resources.

Currently under the Queensland Government Implementation Plan there is also a Service Integration project titled the "Homeless Youth Care Coordination Program" funded by FACSIA in the Brisbane region. This project is exploring an integrated service system approach in inner Brisbane to assist homeless young people with mental illness or complex needs.

'Bottom up' integration needs to be facilitated by policy frameworks to ensure sustainability. It is anticipated that some of the current systems improvements being developed through the Queensland Implementation plan will facilitate the 'bottom up' integration processes.

A range of 'bottom up' integration processes would ensure flexibility to the system including multiple entry points and thereby client choice about how they seek assistance. These are:

- Protocols and Memorandum of Understanding;
- Local needs based planning processes focussing on young people; and
- Workforce development processes such as youth specific practice forums.

4.3 TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SYSTEM

4.3.1 COORDINATION

The Queensland Government Implementation Plan has within it a Homelessness Planning and Coordination Initiative led by QCOSS in partnership with the Queensland Government. QCOSS¹⁴ have provided the following information on this:

"The QCOSS Homelessness Planning & Coordination Initiative provides a real chance to significantly reduce homelessness by bringing together all agencies and organisations involved or concerned with homelessness to

¹⁴ QCOSS Homelessness Planning Coordination article provided to stakeholders, 2010

develop local strategies and actions and commit to achieving them.

Over the next three years QCOSS will lead the development and implementation of Community Action Plans to reduce homelessness, harnessing the energy and expertise of local communities in: Cairns, Mt Isa, Hervey Bay, Caboolture, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Gold Coast.

The Initiative is funded under the Queensland Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPA-H) and in a Compact-style collaboration, will be implemented in partnership with the Department of Communities Homelessness Community Action Planning Initiative (also funded under the NPA-H)."

4.3.2 YOUTH HOMELESSNESS HUB

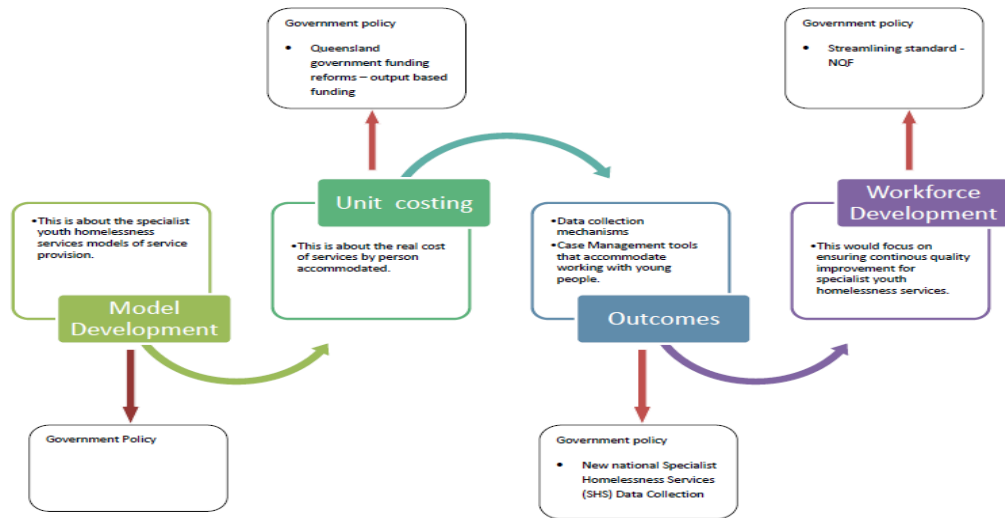
To assist in the implementation of the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan there needs to be a youth homelessness hub that provides key support and resourcing. The Youth Homelessness Hub has been developed by QYHC (see Table 1) as an approach to sector development and support that would complement current policy initiatives. The QYHC suggests the Hub can provide cohesion to the policy and practice approaches focusing on young people. The focus of the Hub would not be on regional planning processes but rather on ensuring that the development of regional plans would be consistent with the broader youth service system. For example the process would ensure that a crisis service in Mt Isa would be run similarly to a crisis service in Mackay or Brisbane – consistency of service delivery providing surety for young people in the type of services they can receive regardless of where they are in the State. However we must remember that different geographical areas have different resources and so not all areas have the same accommodation and support services. The Hub approach could enhance referral processes across the State by mapping the service system.

The Youth Homelessness Hub aims to focus on continuous quality improvement around working with young people and on specific issues area or target groups of young people (see section 5) – focusing on quality practice. This aspect of the Hub work would contribute to the broader discussion on practice such as the National Quality Framework.

The Youth Homelessness Hub would contribute to the Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum by providing specific feedback on 'bottom up' issues for young people and youth services.

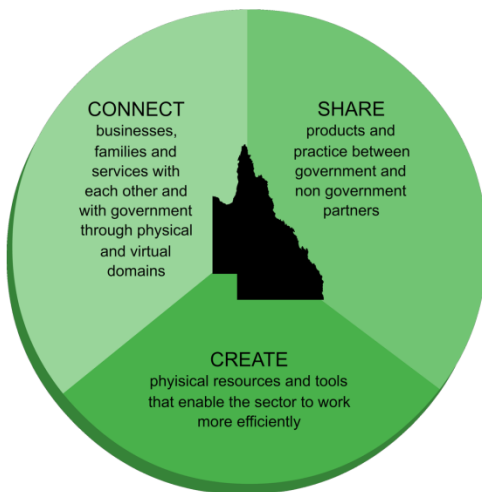
The type of work that the Youth Homelessness Hub could conduct with the specialist youth homelessness services is outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Youth Homelessness Hub Model



The Youth Homelessness Hub can enhance the current 1800 number that the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition conducts for young people across Queensland. This is currently self funded from Queensland Youth Housing Coalition resources and provides a central access point for young people.

If there is to be considerations regarding a regional intake process, based in local communities and specific to young people, this could interface with the 1800 number that the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition currently provides.



Further, young people's access to housing and accommodation is not limited to government or community resources. In keeping with the theme of the White Paper the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition can connect government, community and business. The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition currently creates a range of physical and virtual resources for young people and service delivery agencies , and provides a range of products and practice material that is shared with members and the broader community.

5. RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO CLIENT NEED

Young people are not a homogenous group. The reasons why young people are homeless and why they remain homeless are many and varied. The Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan needs to develop within it a range of strategies to meet these varying needs. This section outlines what some of the key target group and issues areas are.

5.1 OVERVIEW

There are a range of target groups and issue areas that the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan could focus on. These include:

- Specialist Youth Homelessness services
- Health
- Education
- Training and Employment
- Housing
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island young people
- Young people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people
- Young women
- Young people transitioning to adulthood from statutory care.
- Young people with intellectual disability or learning difficulties.

Each section would have system and client outcomes, with measures related to each outcome.

The Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan would ensure that there is a systems approach to young people.

Several examples are provided below.

5.2 HEALTH EXAMPLES BELOW

Systems outcome	Young people have increased access to primary health care services	Measure	Decreased presentation of homeless young people in emergency departments
Client outcome	Young people have improved health outcomes.		IYHSHYP data shows less incidence of chronic health episodes

5.3 HOUSING EXAMPLES BELOW

Systems outcome	Housing has improved social and emotional outcomes for young	Measure	Young people in low SES areas accessed the Department of Housing
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Client outcome	people. Young people have greater security of tenure.		scholarship. Young people have housing for duration of need.
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6. A POTENTIAL QUEENSLAND YOUTH HOMELESSNES ACTION PLAN PROGRAM LOGIC

The development of a Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan will need to be underpinned by program logic. The Program Logic proposed below integrates the concepts that have been discussed in sections one to four of this proposal.

The following is an example of how the Queensland Youth Homelessness Action Plan program logic could look like – it is only a framework. Currently there is no content that has been added – this would be developed in partnership with government and non government stakeholders. However the framework demonstrates:

1. how the principles and the theory underpins the program logic;
2. the NCCS clasifications that could define the outputs;
3. how the short, medium and long term outcomes could be from a client and system level;
4. the distinct measures for the outcomes; and
5. the strategic outcomes (based within the national social inclusion and homelessness agenda's).

Potential Program Logic for the QLD Youth Homelessness Action Plan



APPENDIX 1: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Young people: a person between the ages of 12 to 25 years