

ACT Implementation Plan

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON HOMELESSNESS

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Implementation Plan is a schedule to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) and should be read in conjunction with that Agreement. The objective of the NPAH is: *The Parties will sustain their commitment to reducing homelessness through sustained effort and partnerships with business, the not for profit sector and the community.*
2. The NPAH supports the Homelessness White Paper targets to reduce homelessness levels across Australia, recognising that a reduction in homelessness requires targeting key groups: rough sleepers; people experiencing homelessness more than once; people experiencing violence especially women and children; children and young people including those subject to or exiting care and protection; Indigenous people; and people exiting social housing, institutional care such as health and mental health services, juvenile justice, or adult prisons. It also recognises overcrowding as an important housing and homelessness issue.

PART 2: TERMS OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3. This Implementation Plan will commence on 1 July 2013, provided it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, represented by the Commonwealth and State Ministers with responsibility for homelessness.
4. As a schedule to the NPAH, the purpose of this Implementation Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how the reform or project is intended to be delivered and demonstrate ACT's capacity to achieve the outcomes of the NPAH.
5. This Implementation Plan will cease on completion or termination of the NPAH, including the acceptance of final performance reporting and processing of final payments.
6. This Implementation Plan may be varied by written agreement between the responsible Commonwealth and State Ministers under the overarching NPAH.
7. The Parties to this Implementation Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to the plan and its full implementation.

PART 3: STRATEGY FOR ACT IMPLEMENTATION

Initiative information – Service Continuity

Table 1: Description of initiatives including services funded under each initiative

Existing NPAH Services - Matched Funding is confirmed in ACT Forward Estimates and ACT Budget

These initiatives meet requirements for the 2013/14 NPAH to maintain the current level of services committed under the 2009/13 NPAH.

The ACT has confirmed full matched funding at \$1.480 million.

No	Initiative Title	Short description of Initiative	Service Provider/s for each Initiative	Output/s addressed (refer to Outputs in NP)
1	Building Housing Partnerships – Supportive Tenancy Service (STS)	The STS provides intensive case management for over 700 clients across a range of tenures, including social housing, private rental and home ownership. The service has a strong focus on early intervention, targeted at those at risk of losing their housing and becoming homeless.	Woden Community Service in partnership with Belconnen Community Services and the YWCA.	16(l) Support for private and public tenants to help sustain their tenancies, including through tenancy support, advocacy, case management, financial counselling and referral services.
2	Managed Accommodation Program (MAP)	MAP consists of two services – the Men’s Accommodation Support Service (MASS) and Coming Home. MASS provides accommodation and support to up to 20 single men with high and complex needs. Key outcomes of the program include securing and maintaining long-term accommodation, improving basic living skills, addressing complex health and substance abuse issues, and re-engaging with their families and communities. Coming Home is the women’s	Canberra Men’s Centre Men’s Accommodation Support Service (MASS). Toora Women Inc. (Coming Home) in	16(c) Support services to assist homeless people with mental health issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation. 16(e) Improvements in service coordination and provision. 16(b) support services to assist homeless people with substance abuse issues to secure or

		component of MAP. The service has the capacity to accommodate up to five women at one time, with a further five women provided with outreach support at any one time.	partnership with Beryl Inc and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.	maintain stable accommodation.
3	Youth Integrated Education and Accommodation Program – 'Our Place'	The Youth Foyer Model – <i>Our Place</i> – has grown into a robust and innovative response to youth homelessness and disadvantage. The service is operated by two organisations working collaboratively to provide an integrated and innovative approach to service delivery. The full service name includes the aim "Live, Learn and Achieve", which encompasses the holistic nature of the program. Already <i>Our Place</i> is demonstrably effective in providing support and opportunities for young people to engage in education, employment and training. All young people housed in the program (with the exception of a very new mother) are already engaged in this way.	Barnardos and Anglicare. Community Services Directorate (CSD) has a Service Funding Agreement (SFA) with Barnardos. Barnardos and Anglicare have a subcontract to deliver this program as a partnership.	16(d) Support to young people aged 12 to 18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to re-engage with their family where it is safe to do so, maintain sustainable accommodation and engagement with education and/or employment.
4	First Point (Central Intake Service)	First Point provides placement into homelessness and housing support services for people in the ACT, and facilitates access to other relevant services as required. In this way, First Point provides a primary, but not sole, access point into the ACT homelessness system. It operates on the basis of a 'no turn away' principle. This means that every homeless person who makes contact with the	Connections ACT	16(e) Improvements in service coordination and provision.

		Central Intake Service will receive a service response. In the event that assistance cannot be offered, the service aims to provide follow-up contact within 48 hours, and then regularly after that time until the person has received an appropriate service response.		
5	Street to Home	<p>The program works to assertively engage people experiencing chronic homelessness (particularly 'rough sleepers'), helping them to re-engage with support services to establish and sustain a successful tenancy. Street to Home coordinates the delivery of services to people on the streets, rather than requiring that they attend appointments in offices. The program provides support to up to a minimum of 30 rough sleepers at any one time, where they are found. It engages in active outreach, including mental health support, with rough sleepers who do not engage with mainstream services. Service users are supported to overcome barriers to find and maintain appropriate housing. It also organises and facilitates 'Who's New on the Streets'.</p> <p>Six properties have been allocated by Housing ACT. Two are utilised for crisis accommodation, and four are used as Housing First accommodation.</p>	St Vincent De Paul	16(h) Outreach programs to connect rough sleepers to long-term housing and support services.

6	Building Housing Partnerships – Transitional Support and Head Tenancies	<p>The purpose of the Building Housing Partnerships program is to help break the cycle of homelessness and disadvantage in our community. The program aims to achieve this by facilitating, coordinating, and delivering a range of support, assistance and living-skills programs for vulnerable tenants, including support to find training and employment.</p> <p>In line with ACT’s reform directions, Transitional Support and Head Tenancies shift focus from a transitional housing program to a transitional support approach, which is not tied to a particular dwelling. Individual support packages can be established to create supportive tenancies across a range of different types of housing tenures.</p>	<p><i>Multiple providers:</i></p> <p>Current Head Lease-</p> <p>Canberra Mens Centre Inanna Toora Inc.</p> <p>Current Transitional support-</p> <p>Inanna Catholic Care Communities@Work</p>	<p>16(g) Support services for homeless people, including families with children, to stabilise their situation and to achieve sustainable housing.</p> <p>16(e) Improvements in service coordination and provision.</p> <p>16(a) Support services and accommodation to assist older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>16(b) Support services to assist homeless people with substance abuse issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation.</p> <p>16(c) Support services to assist homeless people with mental health issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation.</p>
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7	Housing Accommodation & Support Initiative (HASI)	HASI was established to increase tenancy and clinical support for tenants with a mental illness. The aim of HASI is to provide integrated packages of housing and mental health support, to support sustainable tenancies in public housing for people with moderate to severe mental health issues and enhance community participation.	<i>Multiple providers:</i> Richmond Fellowship Mental Health Foundation CatholicCare Inanna Inc.	(c) Support services to assist homeless people with mental health issues to secure or maintain stable accommodation.
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Development Fund

[Note: Detail on successful bids will be provided at Attachment A.]

Reform Directions

8. A key focus of the 2013/14 NPAH is a commitment to the continuation of the existing services and reforms commenced under the 2009 Agreement.
9. The ACT's targets under the 2009-13 NPAH are embedded within all Service Funding Agreements (SFAs) with services to ensure that services are realigned with reform directions within the contracting period. The ACT will continue to realign service delivery during the life of the 2013/14 NPAH.
10. The development and direction for the Homelessness system from 30 June 2013 and beyond will include:
11. ***Supporting and enhancing the new Homelessness Service system***
In 2012, the ACT undertook a reform of youth homelessness services by focussing on an effective service system that supports people across a whole continuum from prevention through to stabilisation and maintenance, by focusing on the three key strategies of:
 - Early intervention and prevention;
 - A better integrated service system; and
 - Breaking the cycle of homelessness.
12. Seven new services were established under the reform, with the overall aim of ensuring young people are better prepared and supported to prevent homelessness (turning off the tap), and when in homelessness helping them make the transition out of homelessness to independent living, self-reliance and adulthood through the provision of accommodation and support services (breaking the cycle). The reform has seen an increase in collaborative practice amongst community organisations, with a more integrated and holistic service delivery method being offered through partnerships.
13. To support the sector, Joint Pathways, a collaboration of services supporting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the ACT Government, continues to make strategic policy decisions for the ACT Service response.
14. The Central Access Point (CAP), evolved from the refurbishment of Housing ACT Shopfront in Belconnen, has been responsible for streamlining access to services and housing and a unifying of housing and homelessness services. It has provided a portal for Directorate services and seen a Co-location of a number of Community Partners including:

The Conflict Resolution Service which works with individuals to assist in resolving conflict between tenants. Services include dispute counselling/coaching, mediation, facilitation, information and referral, community education, and training and professional development.

Advance Personnel assists people who have an intellectual, learning, physical or sensory disability to obtain and maintain employment. It assists people who are able to achieve award wage employment with support and to become as independent in their job as possible and maintain productive employment.

15. The Social Housing Register (formerly known as the Common Waiting List) is working well, offering a more connected, integrated and responsive service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; providing clients with a greater choice regarding available housing products; improving consistency of practice across social housing; providing clients with an easier and fairer way to access housing assistance; and providing a clearer understanding of housing demand which will, in turn, help housing providers become more responsive to those in housing need.

16. ***Assertive engagement and persistent support for rough sleepers, hard to engage groups and vulnerable Canberrans.***

The *Street to Home* program has made an impact on a core group of rough sleepers in the ACT, by responding to the needs of this group by engaging support from other services, such as mental health. The *Street to Home* service seeks to flexibly meet the needs of service users. *Street to Home* has established a committee comprising of police and rangers as well as representatives from youth, mental health and drug and alcohol services to help identify those in need and obtain support for them.

17. ***Sustaining tenancies to prevent repeat cycles of homelessness.***

This initiative continues to support many of the outcomes and targets identified in the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. It supports people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives that may place their tenancies at risk, for instance people displaying disruptive behaviours, people experiencing unemployment, poverty, neighbourhood conflict, domestic or family violence, relationship breakdown, mental health issues, eviction notices, financial hardship, rental arrears and other forms of debt.

18. Three partner organisations work together to respond flexibly to need as it emerges across Canberra, identifying demand and coordinating supports through a single point of access and referral. The service works in collaboration with First Point, the Central Intake Service for homelessness and housing support services.

19. It has also contributed significantly to reducing evictions and by association homelessness in the ACT. The ACT Government currently funds a range of housing support services. This includes two sustaining tenancies services, several community development services, a financial counselling service, a housing advice service for older people and a support and advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is also a pilot project funded to train young public housing tenants in pre-employment and life skills to facilitate them gaining employment and to sustain their tenancies.

20. ***Fixed Term Tenancies for new Housing ACT tenants with previous breaches of their tenancy.*** Fixed Term Tenancies are a 1 year lease provided to former tenants who have previously been evicted from Social Housing due to: anti-social or disruptive behaviour; debt; squalor; or abandonment.

21. These arrangements also apply to former tenants who abandoned their properties after legal action in the form of a notice to vacate. These 1 year leases contain special conditions and obligations regarding standards of behaviour, which outline terms in which tenants know that they can have successful tenancies.

22. Fixed Term Tenancies ensure that tenants are aware of the consequences of disruptive behaviour, debt recovery, property maintenance and abandonment, providing them with support and assistance to modify their behaviour, while outlining actions undertaken should the behaviour continue. They also provide a degree of certainty which minimises the impact of disruptive behaviour on the community.

23. ***Social Inclusion - building links to economic and social participation.***

The ACT Government is committed to recognising client's strengths, skills and existing networks as an integral part of the clients support process. The Community Services Directorate encourages services to work with clients to identify these areas of strength and ability when creating case management or support plans. Where the client identifies areas of challenge that require additional supports, the Directorate encourages the use of warm or facilitated referrals to actively link clients with appropriate support services to address the client's identified needs.

24. The Directorate encourages Specialist Homelessness Services to support clients to access appropriate community engagement opportunities including but not limited to social engagement, community activities, training and education pathways and employment opportunities. These strategies to encourage participation and belonging should form a part of the client's case management plan and be addressed according to individual client's circumstances.

25. In the context of changes to the national policy environment, the focus of programs such as the Tenant Initiated Grants has undergone significant adjustment with the criteria reframed with a stronger emphasis on skills relevant with new policy priorities such as economic participation through employment. The program is now better positioned to produce projects with outcomes related to education and training. Rewriting the program's criteria to include social inclusion, education and training, and employment, has allowed for a greater focus on participation in activities across the wider community.

26. *Our Place* – has grown into a robust and innovative response to youth homelessness and disadvantage. The service is operated by two organisations working collaboratively to provide an integrated and innovative approach to service delivery. The full service name includes the aim "Live, Learn and Achieve", which encompasses the holistic nature of the program. Already *Our Place* is demonstrably effective in providing support and opportunities for young people to engage in education, employment and training. As *Our Place* continues to develop the program aims to involve young people in sustainable practices such as permaculture gardening which includes utilising existing community skills to provide education and support to young people in learning these practical and important life skills.

27. *Our Place* is directly contributing to reducing the occurrence of youth homelessness while also assisting young people to remain engaged in personal development such as education. It is based on good practice models from Australia and internationally and in its first months of operation assisted 25 young people to gain stable accommodation and remain engaged.

28. ***Shift in the provision of support from crisis accommodation response to a "support in place" model.***

The 'housing first' principle is being applied to provide safe and secure accommodation to stabilise an individual's environment and then provide a continuum of support to break the cycle of homelessness. This reform has seen an increase in collaborative practice amongst community organisations, with a more integrated and holistic service delivery method being offered through partnerships.

29. The Housing First approach is a model that involves providing homeless people with a house as the first response to resolving their crisis. A support agency is identified to assist the individual or family to resolve crises and to build a network of support, consisting of natural supports and mainstream services to enable the person/persons to take over the tenancy in their own right and to be able to sustain that tenancy. The selection of a support agency would be based on

who had an existing relationship with the homeless individual/family and who had the expertise to best assist them.

30. The Housing First model of service is currently being provided by the ACT Government in a number of its programs including *A Place to Call Home* and the Men and Youth Exiting Detention programs. Within the programs for people exiting detention this has been an approach in place for over a year, the Canberra Men's Centre Accommodation Support Service has been able to extend its program to provide accommodation for men exiting detention, under a head leasing arrangement. It is also an approach that has been utilised for some people exiting from psychiatric care.
31. It is an intention of the ACT Government to be able to respond flexibly and in some situations to be able to provide a house as the first response. This will be determined on a needs basis. Specialist homeless services have been engaged to provide support within this model and it is the intention to continue to build on this model of intervention.
32. The collaborative approach to service reform in the ACT is a key component of creating effective partnerships across the Government and community sector. This is highlighted through the ACT Community Services Directorate (CSD) Strategic Plan with the vision of Participation: *To support people and communities to participate – to be engaged, to learn, to work and to have a voice.* Our desired outcome of participation is "...so that I can live my life to the full".
33. Participation continues to drive the diverse work of CSD with both vulnerable individuals and the broader community in collaboration with the Community Sector and other ACT Government agencies.
34. The Directorate is continuing to work towards participation by focusing on the five goals of the Plan.
 - A positive start: Individuals and families receive services and support when they are needed – "so that we can start strong". This describes CSD's goal to support individuals and communities at those critical initial stages of important transitions.
 - Support to grow and develop: Individuals and families have the skills, support and information to join in – "so that we can make the most of life". This goal recognises that skills are pivotal to participation and that the work of CSD seeks to ensure people access lifelong learning and experiences that underpin a full and rich life.
 - A productive life: People of Canberra are valued contributors to our community – "so that I can be my best". This goal is about how individuals contribute to the lives of others during their life and focuses the work of CSD in supporting Canberrans to be valued contributors to our community, through paid work, volunteering or caring.
 - A connected community: People of Canberra come together to build a vibrant, resilient and connected community – "so that we all get a go". Recognising that when people are connected, they have strong family, social and support networks, good levels of trust and community and civic engagement. They have opportunities to celebrate their culture and engage in recreational activities. This goal reflects the importance of connection as an underpinning element of participation and is about harnessing the assets within individuals, groups and neighbourhoods, so that people are more resilient in the face of challenges. This goal includes overcoming barriers that prevent people from taking part in social, economic and cultural life.
 - A leading organisation: Leading in the way we work for the people of Canberra – "by listening, responding and working together as we strive for excellence". This is a goal

focused on the way CSD works, which emphasises continuous improvement in staff capacity, service delivery, governance, collaboration and accountability.

Specialist Homelessness Services Quality System

35. The ACT Government supports the principles underpinning the development and introduction of a national quality framework, including:
36. Principles 1 and 4: The ACT Joint Pathways Group, with representation from the Community Sector and the ACT Government, continues to work together to develop a national quality framework and accept joint responsibility for quality service provision.
37. Principle 2: The ACT Government is undertaking a Community Sector Reform Program. The program is introducing reforms to the sector, including a Red-Tape Reduction that will, among other things, reduce the frequency of financial reporting and allow services to use auditors registered under the *Corporations Act 2001* if their gross receipts are greater than \$1,000,000.
38. Principle 3: ACT Specialist Homelessness Services continue to use the formal quality improvement strategies in *Raising the Standards- a Manual to Guide Quality Improvement in ACT community service organisations*. The organisations are expected to undertake an annual review of its practice against the Standards. The ACT has developed a Homelessness Charter- a statement of rights. The document promotes a rights based approach to homelessness service delivery. It is accompanied by a service guarantee, which is an individual organisational commitment to ensuring any client receives a service irrespective of which organisation they present to.
39. The Official Visitor Amendment Bill 2013 sees the introduction of an Official Visitor to homelessness services beginning September 2013. The Official Visitor may visit people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are staying at a multiple occupancy supported accommodation provided by an entity funded by the Territory. This will provide an additional mechanism in ensuring that vulnerable clients receive high quality service provision, and provide service users an alternative formal complaints system for resolving issues relating to their care.
40. Additionally, all specialist homelessness services are required to undertake Pre-Qualification which sets out standards of good practice in governance, management and service delivery in the human services sector. The Pre-Qualification Framework is a tool for continuous improvement and will:
 - Simplify, streamline and better coordinate the finding and purchasing of human services for individuals and groups;
 - Improve efficiencies, reduce duplications and costs for all human service providers; and
 - Provide a comprehensive single quality assurance framework.

Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services

41. Tenancy advice and advocacy services are provided by the Supportive Tenancy Service which supports people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives that may place their tenancies at risk, for instance people displaying disruptive behaviours, people experiencing unemployment, poverty, neighbourhood conflict, domestic or family violence, relationship breakdown, mental health issues, eviction notices, financial hardship, rental arrears and other forms of debt.

42. The service also provides information, case management and advocacy support to tenants who face a direct threat to their housing. This may take the form of negotiating with landlords and lenders, particularly where tenants have been served with legal notices, such as a Notice to Remedy or Notice to Vacate.
43. Tenants in the ACT are also supported by the ACT Welfare Rights and Legal Service and the ACT Tenants Union.

Estimated costs

44. The maximum financial contribution to be provided by the Commonwealth to the jurisdiction is \$1.48 million payable in accordance with Part 5 of the NPAH. All payments are exclusive of GST.
45. The Australian Capital Territory Government matched funding is \$1.48 million.

Risk management

46. A risk management plan is in place for service delivery initiatives. Risks have been actively identified, entered into a risk log and categorised in terms of impact and likelihood. This risk management plan does not need to be provided to the Commonwealth.
47. A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) has been developed and maintained by all housing and homelessness service delivery providers it funds or has an agreement with the ACT Government. Service providers involved in delivering or supporting critical business have a responsibility to identify potential impacts that threaten its organisation. Providers need to provide a framework for building resilience, and ensure they have the capacity for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its clients. A BCP will assist in ensuring the ability of their service or services to continue operating in the event of a disruption or emergency situation.
48. The ACT Government also uses the internationally accepted standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 as the basis for best risk management practice within the Territory. All services are required to undertake the ACT Insurance Policy (ACTIA) risk rating and must submit a risk plan with a Risk Treatment Plan for anything over a rating of 7.
49. A risk assessment for Development Fund projects has been developed and provided to the Commonwealth.

Relevant Territory Context

50. The geographical position of the ACT sees a number of impacts on its service delivery. The proximity of the ACT to NSW regional centres such as Queanbeyan and Wagga Wagga creates a higher transient cross border population. This means that a high number of people who do not meet residency criteria for public housing assistance are requesting support from Housing ACT and ACT based Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS). This leads to increased service demand which further impacts on the capacity of services to deliver outcomes in the ACT.
51. The relatively consistently high private rental costs in the ACT also means there is an over reliance on public housing as an exit point from SHS. This has meant that programs which offer accommodation are not seeing flow through in managed properties. While this is meeting the need of families supported through these initiatives, it is also contributing to a

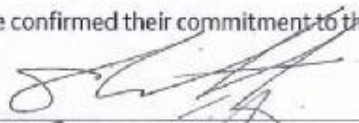
reduction in overall number of families/individuals receiving assistance. The ACT Government is committed to the expansion of community housing and affordable housing in the ACT to provide alternative exits from SHS into appropriate long term accommodation. This measure has seen some success with larger community housing providers being attracted to the ACT and partnerships developed with private property developers to create new affordable housing options.

52. A new Parliamentary Agreement has been signed which includes a commitment to new and innovative models for social housing including the construction of a Common Ground facility to combat homelessness.
53. The work that has been done in the ACT under the current NPAH has included the development of a number of strong initiatives, which are demonstrating real results in terms of improving outcomes for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It must be acknowledged that NPAH funding is a relatively small component of total funding for homelessness responses in the ACT.
54. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to relevant state or territory context. Key factors that have influenced the proposed direction are the positive results produced from the initiatives already implemented or underway. A number of initiatives implemented through the 2009-13 NPAH have exceeded expectations, with a number delivering more than double their target number of assistances as shown in the most current 2011-12 NPAH Annual report. The ACT has fostered innovation and best practice, effectively leveraging existing Territory and Commonwealth investment, and successfully worked in partnership with other service providers

Sign off

The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature

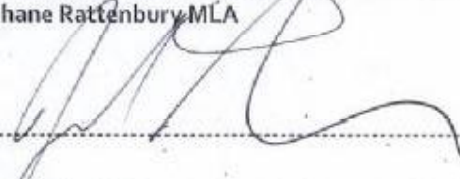


Date

5/7/13

The Hon Shane Rattenbury MLA

Signature



Date

25/7/13

The Hon Julie Collins MP

DEVELOPMENT FUND PROJECT

Description of Project

1. The Common Ground – ACT complex will consist of 40 one and two bedroom units and commercial and community space on the ground floor providing a range of services. The proposed homeless target group to be accommodated in the Common Ground is singles and couples without children and over 18 years of age who are experiencing chronic homelessness.
2. Common Ground – ACT will be located on a site near the Gungahlin town centre, close to commercial activity and employment, community facilities including a public library and health centre, and public transport. The facility will comprise one and two bedroom units with individual kitchen and laundry facilities. Security will be provided by swipe card access, controlled entry points and internal CCTV to assist physical safety in common and program areas.
3. Tenants will receive case coordination, linkage with mainstream and specialist services, social and economic inclusion, and tenancy management providing a holistic service delivery framework for people with complex needs.
4. The complex will accommodate a 50:50 mix of homeless and low income tenants. The mixed community will create a normalising environment for people with complex needs and to prevent pockets of disadvantage.
5. An application has been made by Argyle Community Housing for 40 units under the National Rental Affordability Scheme. This includes funding for the 20 affordable rental units in Common Ground - ACT.

Selection Criteria

6. The proposal is consistent with the outcomes of the NPAH under outcome 14(a).
7. The project addresses each of the selection criteria for the Development Fund, as outlined in the NPAH:
 - (a) States must match the Commonwealth contribution;

The Commonwealth will contribute \$4 million towards this project in 2013-14. The project includes \$7 million for construction and 0.556 million for operating expenses from the ACT Government in 2013-14. The ACT Government is also providing land which has an estimated value of \$2.2 million. The land contribution has been identified as the ACT contribution under the application for NRAS funding for the Common Ground development. Further approaches to the ACT Government are underway to seek an additional \$3 million in capital funding to meet the proposed development costs. The project is being re-scoped and re-designed to reduce the cost of the project to \$14m. The operating costs are now expected to be funded from the cross subsidisation from the affordable rentals by the operator, without further ACT Government funding.

The funding from NRAS Round 4b is for 40 units.

- (b) higher weighting will be given to those bids which demonstrate that a project is already in development and/or substantial progress is able to be achieved within the life of this Agreement;

The project will be constructed over 2012-13 and will be operational by December 2014. Expressions of interest from service providers will be sought in early in 2013-14 so that they can provide input and advice on the design and layout of the development, establish the service model, arrange for the set-up of the apartments and develop the protocols for the Program. By the end of the Agreement in June 2014, Stage 1 of construction will be complete. The aim is to undertake the project in two stages. Each stage may have its own separate head contractor. This is designed to improve construction timeframes and scale risks that could be associated with this development.

- (c) projects that help support individuals 'exit' homelessness into long-term and sustainable housing with necessary support;

The development of Common Ground – ACT provides an innovative housing initiative to address homelessness for chronic long term homeless people. The construction of a 40 unit mixed tenure development providing permanent housing options with on-site and assertive support to meet the needs of highly vulnerable people experiencing long term, chronic homelessness is key to the delivery of the housing and support to enable the chronic homeless to break the cycle of homelessness and exit homelessness permanently.

- (d) supportive housing programs targeted to highly vulnerable groups particularly chronic rough sleepers, Indigenous Australians, young people leaving care or detention or women and children experiencing domestic violence;

The target group to be accommodated in Common Ground – ACT is singles and couples without children and over 18 years of age who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

The model aims for a 50:50 mix of males and females to ensure that women are adequately supported to move out of dangerous and impoverished conditions, and to sustain independent accommodation in a safer and controlled environment. Linkages with Specialist Homelessness Services, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Service will be established to assist in the identification of women experiencing chronic homelessness.

Given their location and scale the units will also be appropriate for people who are mobility impaired or who have a disability. The project will also assist people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are chronically homeless and disproportionately represented in the numbers of homeless persons.

- (e) demonstrated capacity to deliver, and ability to effectively manage implementation risks;

The project will be delivered and managed by the Capital Team in Housing ACT that has extensive experience and expertise in delivering a range of accommodation projects. Housing ACT has a strong track record of delivering social housing projects on time and within budget. Most relevantly, as part of the Commonwealth's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, Housing ACT delivered a 42 unit development that is currently used to house young people who contract as part of their accommodation to engage in training, education or employment under an integrated housing and employment scheme, affordable housing tenants through a community/affordable

housing provider and social housing tenants. That project forms the blueprint for the Common Ground project costing and operations.

As part of a feasibility study, an ACT Government Reference Group has inspected Common Ground facilities in a number of other jurisdictions to identify key design and construction issues and risks. Housing ACT will have the benefit of this information when implementing the design and construction of Common Ground – ACT.

- (f) commitment to support ongoing service delivery once the capital project has been delivered;

The ACT Government committed to the development of a Common Ground and provided funding for a feasibility study in 2011-12 and funding in 2012-13 for site selection and preliminary design. Funding of \$7 million for the construction of a Common Ground was provided in the ACT Government 2013-14 Budget. The funding includes program funding in addition to the capital funding to construct the Common Ground.

The service provider will be engaged during 2013-14 to establish the service model, set up the apartments and develop the protocols for the Program. This will enable the Program to commence operations as early as possible once the construction is complete and immediately assist to reduce primary homeless families/rough sleepers by 2014-15.

The ACT Government funding will be stepped down once other funding sources increase. Service providers will be encouraged to contribute to the operating/program and support costs from their resources, rather than relying solely upon government funding. The Snow Foundation has pledged funding of \$500,000 over four years to assist with the costs of the Common Ground development. A small portion will assist with building, but the majority is intended to provide service support, including on-site support for formerly homeless tenants. The Snow Foundation has a long history of providing continuing philanthropic support to its projects, and it is likely that if the model is demonstrably effective the funding would be renewed.

- (g) cost effectiveness/value for money; and

The provision of Common Ground - ACT is estimated to deliver a benefit to cost ratio of at least 2.5 to 1. This ratio increases significantly where long term and chronically homeless persons secure long term stable housing that enables them to pursue training, education and employment, resulting in additional income and tax revenues.

These benefits flow from a relatively modest capital investment of about \$14m. This is a relatively inexpensive form of accommodation, and though the program and support costs may be substantial the benefits are also significant, both to the individual participants in the Program and to the community. Providing long term secure housing at just over \$0.300 million per unit (excluding the costs associated with the community and commercial areas on the ground floor) is a relatively inexpensive housing option, and is likely to result in substantial program cost savings that are to be derived from assisting homeless people off the streets and into stable and secure housing that will assist them into training, education and employment in the long term. There will be substantial savings in the Health, Mental Health and Policing and Justice Portfolios that have been demonstrated to outweigh the cost of accommodation and support.

The improvement in social wellbeing for the community as a result of the assistance to homeless people and the reduction in homelessness are inestimable.

A further element of the Common Ground approach is that it consists of a partnership between government, community and private sector interests. The Common Ground Canberra Board includes leaders from the private and not for profit sectors, and has attracted a wide range of offers for support “in kind” from various ACT groups.

(h) timely implementation.

The ACT Government is strongly committed to implementing the project in a timely manner. The project is also strongly supported by the Common Ground Canberra Group, which has undertaken significant work since its establishment in 2010, to build community and donor support for the project.

Milestones

8. The Table below shows the target completion dates for key milestones.

Table 1: Development Fund Milestones for Project

Project Milestone	Milestone Description	Milestone Date
Functional Brief Prepared		June 2013
Consultant Contract Signed		August 2013
Preliminary Sketch Plans		August 2013
Final Sketch Plans		September 2013
Environmental Impact Statement Required		October 2013
Development Application Lodged		October 2013
Environmental Impact Statement Complete		October 2013
- Consultation		Ongoing
Development Application Approved		November 2013
Construction Contracts Signed		November 2013
Construction Commenced		December 2013
Report to the Commonwealth due 31 January 2014		
Slab laid		December 2013
Report to the Commonwealth due 31 May 2014		
Stage 1 Construction Completed		June 2014
Stage 2 Construction Completed		December 2014
Stage 2 Final approvals		December 2014
NRAS Dwellings available to be let		December 2014