Homelessness Action Plan

2026-2031

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Town of Victoria Park

Acknowledgement of Country

Ngany kaaditj Noongar moort keny kaadak nidja Wadjak Noongar boodja. Ngany kaaditj nidja Noongar birdiya – koora, ye-ye, boorda, baalapiny moorditj Noongar kaadijtin, moort, wer boodja ye-ye.

The Town of Victoria Park (the Town) acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land and respect past, present and emerging leaders, their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, which continues to be important today.

We recognise the Whadjuk Noongar people as the traditional custodians of the greater Victoria Park area. It's Noongar name is Mindeera and to the Whadjuk people, Mindeera is a place that has strong social, spiritual, cultural and historic significance.

The Town also acknowledges that homelessness disproportionately impacts First Nations people in Australia, a reflection of the ongoing effects of colonisation, systemic disadvantage, and intergenerational trauma. Addressing homelessness in a meaningful and sustainable way requires not only recognising these historical and structural factors but also ensuring that First Nations voices are at the centre of the conversation.

Their lived experiences, cultural knowledge, and community leadership are essential to developing solutions that are both effective and culturally appropriate. The Town is committed to listening, learning, and working in genuine partnership with First Nations communities to end homelessness.

Commitment to Diversity

The Town acknowledges that the diversity of our residents is what makes our community unique. Diversity can be reflected in a number of ways including:

- Ethnicity and race
- Disability
- Language
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Age and generation
- Socioeconomic status
- Religion, faith, and other beliefs.

This diversity means our business practices need an understanding of how social and cultural background can influence interpretation and participation in the community. We acknowledge these impacts, and we are striving to present all communications to be inclusive and available to everyone.

If you or someone you know needs this document in another format, please contact the Coordinator Community Development on (08) 9311 8111 or at admin@vicpark.wa.gov.au.

Thank you to contributors

The Town would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this plan. A special thanks goes to support services and lived-experience contributors.

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Mayor's Message

[Placeholder for Mayor's Foreword]

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Introduction

The Homelessness Action Plan (2026-2031) (the Plan) provides a strategic framework to guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives aimed at addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in the Town over the next five years. Informed through a combination stakeholder engagement, including those with lived experience, environmental scanning, and review of the Town's previous activities, the Plan also recognises and aligns with the WA State Government's All Paths Lead to a Home, and the National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Guided by principles of compassion and respect, inclusiveness, right to housing, partnership and collaboration, and a "no wrong door" approach, the Plan focuses on strengthening local responses while recognising the complexity of the issue and the importance of coordinated action.

The Plan's vision is:

A connected and compassionate community working together to ensure people experiencing homelessness can access support and secure a place to call home.

To achieve this vision, the Plan seeks to strengthen collaboration between government, community organisations, businesses, volunteers, and residents; increase community understanding of homelessness and available supports; and build local capacity to respond effectively to emerging and ongoing challenges.

Three key outcomes underpin the Plan:

Connection – strengthening relationships, partnerships, and coordination across the Town, service providers, community organisations, and the broader community to support more integrated responses.

Understanding – increasing awareness of homelessness and housing insecurity, reducing stigma, promoting empathy, and improving access to clear and accessible information about available support services.

Capacity – enhancing the ability of the Town, community organisations, and residents to respond effectively through dedicated coordination, practical support initiatives, early intervention approaches, and community education.

Implementation will occur through annual action plans aligned to available resources and emerging community needs. Progress will be monitored through the Town's Social Impact approach, with regular reporting to Council and community to ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement.

The Homelessness Action Plan 2026-2031 reflects the Town's commitment to working collaboratively with stakeholders to build a more inclusive, compassionate, and resilient community, where people experiencing homelessness are supported with dignity, and where everyone has the opportunity to access safe and appropriate housing.

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Background

What is Homelessness?

As defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), homelessness occurs when a person does not have suitable or adequate accommodation. While many people think of homelessness as sleeping rough on the street or in a car, it also includes situations such as couch surfing, overcrowding, and some forms of short-term accommodation.

There are many different reasons why a person may experience homelessness, and it is rarely caused by a single factor. Often homelessness and housing insecurity results from a combination of individual and structural factors that increase a person's risk. These factors do not determine whether someone will experience homelessness; however, they can contribute to increased vulnerability.

Examples of Individual Factors	Examples of Structural Factors
• Trauma • Mental health conditions • Family and domestic violence • Alcohol and other drug dependency • Chronic health conditions • Family or relationship breakdown • Prior interactions with the justice system • Sudden death of a loved one • Disability	• Housing supply and affordability • Employment opportunities • Economic inequality • Discrimination • Loss of cultural identity, power and control • Limited access to services • Living in remote areas • Environmental disasters (fire, flood, earthquake)

These factors demonstrate that homelessness and housing insecurity is a complex social issue, highlighting the need for prevention strategies, early intervention, and coordinated community-wide responses.

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Current challenges

Homelessness in Australia is increasing due to multiple complex and interconnected factors. Key drivers include economic hardship, housing availability and affordability, and family and domestic violence. The adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including income instability and rising living costs, have contributed to increasing housing unaffordability.

For support services, this has resulted in significant pressure. Many services are operating at or beyond capacity, supporting a rapidly increasing number of people experiencing homelessness, including many individuals facing homelessness for the first time.

Unfortunately, homelessness and housing insecurity support services often become the safety net, catching those who fall through the gaps of other systems. When individuals encounter barriers to accessing healthcare, mental health support, family services, financial counselling, education, family and domestic violence support, and other services early on, they are placed at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness.



Information and Fact Sheets - Shelter WA

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that 121 people were experiencing homelessness in the Town of Victoria Park in 2021 (ABS, 2021). However, this figure is likely to underrepresent the true extent of homelessness due to recognised limitations in Census data collection and reporting. In comparison, during the 2025–26 financial year, Town officers received or identified 141 reports of people sleeping rough in public spaces, which were subsequently recorded in the coordinated outreach response spreadsheet.

Roles and Responsibilities

State & Federal Government Roles

The complexity of homelessness in Australia requires a coordinated effort across federal, state, and local governments. The state and federal governments play the primary role in ending homelessness through providing:

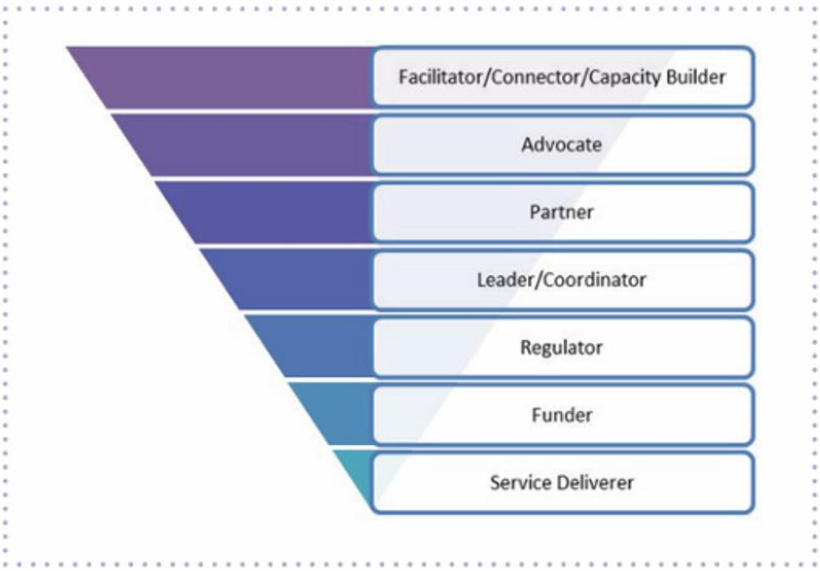
- social housing
- affordable or subsidised housing programs
- crisis, short- and medium-term accommodation
- funding of homelessness specialist services
- welfare support, including income support
- employment and training assistance
- health and mental health services
- services through the justice system, including the police, courts, and corrective services.

As the tier of government closest to the community, local governments are well positioned to be a central point of information and a connector for both the community and other levels of government.

Our Role

While the Town recognises that primary responsibility for addressing homelessness sits with state and federal governments, local government also plays a key role alongside the community sector in supporting local responses.

The Town is committed to facilitating connections, promoting access to support services and awareness-raising initiatives, partnering with stakeholders, and advocating to other levels of government to assist people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.



Depending on the degree of support required, the Town may adopt a specified role, which may evolve over time. However, the Town recognises primary responsiblity for service deliverer and funder in the homelessness sector sit with state and federal governments.

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Guiding Principles

Compassion & Respect	The Town recognises that people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity are among the most vulnerable members of the community, and that homelessness can arise from complex circumstances including disadvantage, trauma, grief and loss, family and domestic violence, mental ill-health, financial hardship, social isolation, or a significant life event. The Town is committed to responding with compassion and respect through a trauma-informed, person-centred approach that upholds dignity, respect and inclusion. The Town will seek to ensure its interactions are empathetic, nonjudgemental, and culturally sensitive, while respecting individuals' rights to self-determination.
Inclusiveness	The Town encourages and promotes inclusive access to public spaces and amenities, acknowledging the rights of people experiencing homelessness, whilst also acknowledging the responsibility of all community members to respect the rights of others to live in a safe and peaceful environment.
Right to housing	The Town recognises that access to housing that is affordable, secure and appropriate is a basic human right and essential to people's wellbeing and their participation in society. The Town acknowledges its role in understanding local housing needs, including homelessness and housing stress, and in using its planning, land use and advocacy functions to support diverse and inclusive housing outcomes. The Town will work collaboratively to advocate for and support local housing solutions.
Partnership & collaboration	The Town acknowledges that ending homelessness and housing insecurity requires a committed, whole-of-community response. The Town will work collaboratively in partnership with all levels of government, homeless support services, businesses, community organisations and neighbouring local governments towards a coordinated, effective, and evidence-based approach to ending homelessness in the local community and the greater inner-city region.
No wrong door	The Town acknowledges that people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness often connect with the Town. The Town is committed to implementing a 'no wrong door' approach to ensuring people in need are not turned away and are provided with information to be connected to services that meet their needs.

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Plan on a Page

This 'Plan on a Page' captures the intended Theory of Change and shows how the Homelessness Action Plan aims to achieve its desired outcomes.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Vision

A connected and compassionate community working together to ensure people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness can access support and secure a place to call home.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Objectives

Organisations, community groups and volunteers across the Town collaborate to provide coordinated support, share resources, explore creative solutions, and provide culturally safe and inclusive responses.

The Town community has greater understanding of, and empathy towards, people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

There is a shared aspiration that everyone has a safe and appropriate place to call home.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">We will achieve the objectives by working towards the following Outcomes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Connection

Outcome 1:
Increased connection across the Town, organisations, and the community.</td><td colspan="2">Understanding

Outcome 2:
Increased understanding of homelessness and the supports that are available.</td><td>Capacity

Outcome 3:
Increased organisational and community capacity to respond to the challenges of homelessness.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">We will achieve the outcomes through a targeted approach in the following Focus Areas</td></tr>
<tr><td>Advocacy</td><td>Information</td><td>Collaboration</td><td>Coordination</td><td>Education</td></tr>
</table>

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Actions

Outcome 1: Connection

Increased **connection** across the Town, organisations, and the community.

Description: Fostering connection, collaboration, and coordination between the Town, state government, service providers, and the wider community to support coordinated responses and explore creative solutions.

Key Focus Area	Actions
Advocacy	**1.1 Lead and support advocacy efforts** Leverage the Town's existing advocacy role and work collaboratively with partner LGAs / peak bodies to advocate for systemic change at state and federal levels.
Collaboration	**1.2 Strengthen service coordination** Strengthen coordination across the local service sector, including volunteer-led organisations, to improve information sharing, reduce duplication, and enhance the effectiveness of local responses to homelessness.
Collaboration	**1.3 Support inclusive and culturally appropriate homelessness responses** Continue to strengthen partnerships with organisations that deliver inclusive and culturally appropriate homelessness support services, working together to ensure responses are accessible, respectful and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.
Collaboration	**1.4 Explore creative solutions together** Advocate for, support, and explore creative, locally appropriate solutions that: • strengthen homelessness support services, • empower community-led initiatives, and • contribute to increasing the supply of safe, affordable housing.

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Outcome 2: Understanding

Increased **understanding** of homelessness and the supports that are available.

Description: Increasing understanding of homelessness and awareness of available supports through clear and accessible information, education, and engagement.

Key Focus Area	Actions
Information	**2.1 Provide access to information** Develop, maintain and provide clear and accessible information to help residents, staff, and people at risk of homelessness understand available supports and how to navigate the local system.
Education	**2.2 Increase community awareness** Increase community understanding of homelessness through education, information sharing and opportunities to build empathy.
Advocacy	**2.3 Listen to lived experience** Build on an evidence-based approach by further embedding the voices of people with lived experience in homelessness planning and action. Strengthen participation and co-design mechanisms so that priorities, actions and decisions reflect both research evidence and lived realities.

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Outcome 3: Capacity

Increased organisational and community **capacity** to respond to the challenges of homelessness.

Description: Supporting increased capacity to respond to the challenges of homelessness through coordinated actions, responsive service delivery and investment in practical supports.

Key Focus Area	Actions
Coordination	**3.1 Continue to resource a dedicated homelessness function** Maintain and strengthen a dedicated homelessness function within the Town to support coordination, proactive responses, and sustained focus on homelessness outcomes.
Coordination	**3.2 Enhance safe spaces and practical supports for those facing entrenched homelessness** Invest in low-threshold, practical supports that improve safety, dignity, and daily living conditions for people experiencing entrenched homelessness.
Coordination	**3.3 Recognise and respond to emerging housing vulnerability** Adapt approaches to better identify and support people experiencing emerging housing stress before issues escalate into homelessness.
Education	**3.4 Provide educational early-interventions** Build the capacity and resilience of the community by delivering educational opportunities.

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Delivering and Embedding

Implementation Plan

The Town will develop an annual implementation plan, aligned with the annual budgeting process, for each outcome to support the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan.

The implementation plan will be updated annually to align with the Town's available resources and aim to respond to evolving stakeholder and community trends and needs. Deliverables will be modified annually to reflect budget considersations, completion, refinements, or newly identified priorities.

The implementation plan will be delivered by the Town, with significant support from internal and external stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This plan will be monitored and evaluated aligning to the Town's Social Impact Approach (refer to Appendix 3 for more information), social change principles and the defined Plan on a Page / Theory of Change model. This approach will support meaningful evaluation, inform continuous improvement, and help measure progress towards intended outcomes.

Reporting

Progress towards the outcomes and implementation plan deliverables will be reported to council through an annual impact report, quarterly corporate reporting, and the Town's annual report. The annual impact report will be made available on the Town's website to provide transparency and to communicate progress to the community.

Conclusion

The Town recognises that homelessness and housing insecurity is a complex issue which requires a coordinated, compassionate, and evidence-informed response. While the Town does not have direct responsibliity for housing and homelessness services, it has an important role to play fostering connections, supporting local partnerships, advocating for systemic change, and building a community that is inclusive and respectful of all people.

This Plan provides a framework for the Town to contribute to positive outcomes for people at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness. Together, we can help create a more connected, compassionate, and inclusive community where everyone is treated with dignity and has a safe and appropriate place to call home.

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References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). *Information paper: A statistical definition of homelessness (2012)*. ABS.

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Shelter WA. (2026). *Homelessness in Western Australia – Latest Statistics and Factsheets.*

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Western Australian Government. *All Paths Lead to a Home*. (2020). Western Australian Government.

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Appendix 1: Strategic Alignment

The Homelessness Action Plan 2026-2031 aligns closely with the Town of Victoria Park 's Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032. The Homelessness Action Plan contributes to achieving key strategic objectives, including:

- S1 – Helping people feel safe.
- S2 – Collaborating to ensure everyone has a place to call home.
- S3 - Facilitating an inclusive community that celebrates diversity.



This Plan is positioned alongside existing Town plans and sits under the Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The following principles have guided development of the Public Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023–2028 and associated plans.

- Strengths Based - Community and stakeholder assets, strengths and capacities are recognised and built on.
- Culturally Safe and Inclusive - Culturally safe and inclusive approaches are used within the work that the Town facilitates, supports, and undertakes.
- Evidence Based - An evidenced based approach is used by the Town, with a focus on early intervention to enhance the level and scope of social impact.
- Shared Responsibility - Addressing social barriers is a shared responsibility to create an inclusive community. The Town is supportive of creating environments that foster a shared responsibility.

- Innovation and Better Practice - The Town seeks innovative ideas and better practice solutions, with health and wellbeing themes and principles integrated into Town policies, procedures, and practices. Sustainability - Integrating sustainability principles in the Town's approach, resourcing and delivery of health and wellbeing endeavours.

State and Federal Government Alignment

The Town's Homelessness Action Plan 2026-2031 recognises and aligns to the Western Australian Government's All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030, which has a vision that 'Everyone has a safe place to call home and is supported to achieve stable and independent lives.'

The Town's Homelessness Action Plan 2026-2031 also aligns to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan which is a 10-year strategy designed to help more Australians access to safe and afforable housing and to reduce homelessness across the country, as well as Homes for Australia: A National Plan (2026).

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Appendix 2: Informing the Action Plan

In 2025, The Town rescinded its Homelessness Policy to shift focus to development of a new Homelessness Action Plan 2026-2031 (the Plan). In November 2025, the Town engaged Janali & Co to undertake stakeholder engagement to support development of the new Plan.

Key stakeholders included Town staff, people working and volunteering in the sector, community members with lived experience of homelessness, and Elected Members. The themes identified reflect the combined perspectives of the 45 individuals who contributed during the engagement process, eight of whom had lived experience of homelessness and eight Elected Members.

Feedback was gathered through a combination of engagement methods including interviews, a staff survey, a lived experience Story Drive and an Elected Member Concept Forum.

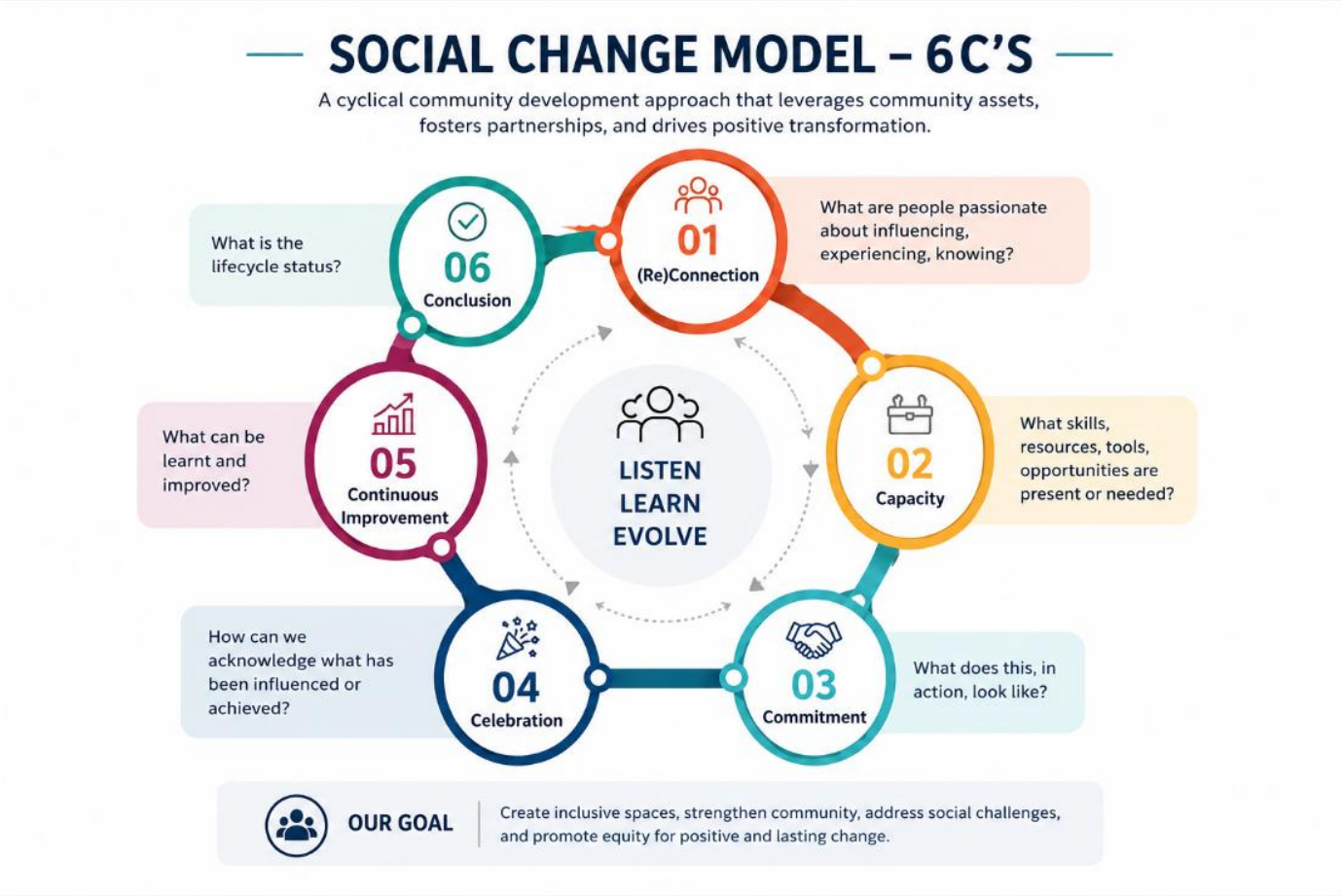
Overall, the engagement findings have highlighted that homelessness in the Town is increasing in both scale and complexity. More people who have never experienced homelessness before are now at risk, increasing pressure on already stretched services. At the same time, safety, dignity, and access to basic amenities remain key concerns for people rough sleeping. Collectively, these insights have helped to inform outcomes and actions for the Plan.

While many drivers of homelessness sit beyond local government control, the Town has a clear role in advocating to both state and federal government, as well as fostering coordinated, inclusive and compassionate responses that improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

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Appendix 3: Social Change Model

The Town adopts a Community Development social change model which focuses on leveraging community assets to address social challenges, promote equity, and foster positive transformation in society.



Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (TOC) is a tool used by organisational program managers and evaluators to describe how a program is expected to work. It is a framework that visually shows the opportunity or problem a program is expected to address, within a particular situation, and the assumptions underpinning the development of the program. A TOC also identifies the expected pathway between various elements of a program and expected social outcomes for the stakeholders involved with the program. With a TOC, the elements of a program are the planned activities developed by an organisation to bring about expected social outcomes.

What are social outcomes?

Social outcomes are the changes in the knowledge, skills, awareness, behaviour, level of functioning or status, experienced by stakeholders, resulting from their involvement with the planned activities. Stakeholders within the context of a TOC are those people or organisations that experience this change.

Demonstrating social impact

As a tool describing how a program is expected to work, a TOC can also show the connection between planned activities and social outcomes applicable to each stakeholder group, over the immediate, medium, and long-term. A long-term social outcome is often described as a social impact. Impact is considered as the expected fundamental change and or unintended consequences occurring in a community, as the result of a program being delivered, or system being modified over at least five years. The TOC model is a tool used in this Plan as well as all associated plans.

Key stakeholders

The groups of people who are expected to experience the most significant and relevant change from the planned initiatives are:

- Community members experiencing homelessness
- At-risk and vulnerable members of the community
- Community organisations and groups in the Town
- Town staff
- Residents of the Town

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Appendix 4: Who are we?

The Town of Victoria Park is a vibrant, diverse, community-minded urban community located just 10 minutes from Perth's CBD, across the causeway on the south side of the Swan River. Covering 17.9 square kilometres, it is centred around the bustling main street of Albany Highway.

As a local government located close to the Perth CBD and a number of close neighbouring local governments, the Town is well positioned to support the homelessness sector and broader homelessness response.

[Placeholder for Town of Vic Park Map]

The Towns proximity to the CBD provides close access to essential services such as emergency accommodation, healthcare, mental health support, homelessness service providers, and public transport.

Being situated near other local governments creates opportunities for regional collaboration, enabling councils to share resources, coordinate service delivery, address cross-boundary issues, and develop consistent approaches to supporting people experiencing homelessness.

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