

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development:

Homelessness Strategy update

- 1. What are the performance measures for the six month trial of the homelessness project recently announced?**

As part of this project, Aboriginal Hostels Limited will:

- provide 24 hour, seven day a week accommodation service, up to a maximum of 30 beds per day;
- provide meals, including breakfast, lunch and dinner and a light supper;
- provide a report of bed usage on a quarterly basis; and
- provide an evaluation at the end of the six month contract.

- 2. Who will determine eligibility for individuals to be accommodated and what discussions have been held with NT Shelter?**

Pathways for referrals to the program are:

- Larrakia Nation Patrols;
- Darwin City Council Assertive Outreach Service; and
- Danila Dilba Health Service.

NT Shelter meets quarterly with the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development to discuss service development and policy, which includes the short stay accommodation.

3. Where are the Better Pathways Centres going to be set up and when?

The Darwin Better Pathways Centre will be located in the Darwin CBD. The opening of the Better Pathways Centre is dependent on Development Consent Application timeframes and an internal fit out of the building. Completion is expected during 2019.

4. The KPMG homelessness and accommodation responses to rough sleepers report was dated April 2018 yet only released publicly in December – why is that?

The report was developed with input from key homelessness stakeholders and provided to stakeholders for feedback in mid-2018. It was released in December 2018, following the announcement of funding for programs identified in the report.

5. How much did that report cost?

The KPMG report 'Homelessness and Accommodation Response to Rough Sleepers' cost \$274 057.

6. The report, like the Riley report, identified “open structure” living as a viable option as well as a managed hostel. Are you considering that option as well? If so, where, when and at what cost?

This option is not being considered at this time.

- 7. The report identified a suite of eight supports including improved access to public toilets and showers, increasing storage options and improved access to bedding such as swags. Are you going to implement any of these supports or fund NGOs to provide these supports?**

The Better Pathways Centre's primary aim is to provide rough sleepers with a space that is safe and secure. Services and facilities at the Better Pathways Centre may include:

- meal services and dining areas;
- consulting rooms for in-reach services;
- laundry, toilet and shower and storage facilities;
- activity spaces for arts, education and external services; and
- common areas.

A Request for Proposal will be released, which will allow non-government organisations to tender for funding to deliver the service.

- 8. When did you release the Pathways out of Homelessness strategy?**

The Strategy was released in May 2019.

- 9. How much has it cost to develop the Pathways out of Homelessness strategy? What budget is being allocated for the delivery of the strategy?**

A consultant was engaged through a competitive process to assist with the development of the Five Year Action Plan 2018-23 at a cost of \$81 085.00.

- 10. When will you start your evaluation of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative and will you release the results? (Strategy, p19, Rec: 2.2)**

Advice from the Department of Health indicates that the evaluation will be completed by December 2020.

- 11. Point 4.1 in the strategy says there is an “opportunity to improve the way the Bond Assistance Scheme operates to increase access for eligible people”. Would that mean an increase in funding for the Scheme or how else would you improve it?**

A review of the Bond Assistance Scheme is required to understand how the program may operate more effectively. This will be undertaken as part of the Homelessness Strategy.

- 12. The strategy refers to a lot more work and engagement with and for the non-government sector. For example, point 4.2 – “Work with the non-government sector to engage key industry stakeholders in the development of accommodation responses for vulnerable Territorians to access the private rental market”. Given the increased engagement for NGOs will you increase their funding or at least protect their funding from your government’s three percent efficiency dividend?**

In 2019-20, the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development manages and administers over \$25 million in grant funding for NGOs for a range of housing and homelessness support services across the Northern Territory, including accommodation and private rental options.

- 13. Please explain the meaning of “sector realignment of service responses” (p31).**

As part of the Northern Territory Homelessness Strategy, we will be working with the Specialist Homelessness Services sector to undertake a detailed analysis of client needs and the service delivery environment.

- 14. Which part of the strategy would include the plan to provide high vis vests to rough sleepers?**

There is no plan in the Strategy to provide high-vis vests to rough sleepers.