

Tweed Shire Homelessness Issues  
Paper  
Final Report

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## Final Report

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Project Background.....	1
1.1.1 Definition of Homelessness .....	1
1.1.2 The Housing System .....	3
1.2 Objectives and Scope .....	3
1.3 Project Method.....	4
2.0 Study Area and Policy Context .....	6
2.1 Tweed Shire LGA.....	6
2.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Tweed Shire .....	7
2.2.1 Implications of Demographic Trends on Homelessness .....	12
2.3 Policy Context.....	14
2.3.1 Federal Government Context .....	15
2.3.2 State and Regional Context.....	16
2.3.3 Local Context.....	17
2.3.4 Implications of Policy Context on Homelessness .....	18
3.0 Homelessness in the Tweed Shire.....	19
3.1 Existing Homelessness Population .....	20
3.1.1 Primary Homeless .....	22
3.1.2 Secondary Homeless.....	23
3.1.3 Tertiary Homeless .....	24
3.2 Identifying Subgroups within the Homeless Population .....	25
3.3 Issues Affecting Homelessness in The Tweed .....	26
3.4 Existing Services and Programs for Homeless People in the Tweed Shire .....	30
3.5 Identified Service Gaps, Barriers & Opportunities.....	35
3.5.1 Crisis and Short Term Accommodation .....	35
3.5.2 Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation .....	36
3.5.3 Support for People to Sustain Tenancies .....	37
3.5.4 Services for Families/Young People.....	38
3.5.5 Support for People with Mental Illness.....	39
3.5.6 Food Services.....	40
3.5.7 Services for Public Space Liaison and Assertive Outreach .....	40
3.5.8 Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation .....	41
3.5.9 Better Co-ordination and Collaboration.....	42
3.5.10 Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council.....	43
3.5.11 Transport to Support Services .....	45
3.5.12 Education and Community Awareness.....	45
4.0 Responding to Homelessness – Good Practice Responses .....	47
4.1 Case Studies.....	47

4.2	Tweed Shire Council.....	54
4.2.1	Opportunities for Tweed Shire Council .....	58
4.3	Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network.....	59
4.3.1	Opportunities for TSHH Network .....	61
5.0	Summary.....	63
6.0	References.....	72
	Appendix A – Stakeholders Consulted.....	75
	Appendix B – Existing Services & Stakeholders .....	76

## Index of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b>	Project Method.....	4
<b>Figure 2.</b>	Context Map.....	6
<b>Figure 3.</b>	Forecast Age Structure, Tweed LGA 2006, 2021, 2031 .....	8
<b>Figure 4.</b>	Household Type, Tweed LGA 2006, 2021, 2031 .....	9
<b>Figure 5.</b>	Median Rent, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW*, 2010 to 2013 .....	10
<b>Figure 6.</b>	Median Sale Price, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW*, 2010 to 2013.....	11
<b>Figure 7.</b>	Federal, State and Local Planning/Policy Context .....	14
<b>Figure 8.</b>	Percentage of Homeless People by Operational Group, Tweed LGA, and NSW, 2011 .....	20
<b>Figure 9.</b>	Percentage of Homeless People by Gender, Tweed LGA and NSW, 2011 .....	21
<b>Figure 10.</b>	Percentage of Homeless People by Indigenous Status, Tweed LGA and NSW, 2011 .....	21
<b>Figure 11.</b>	Primary Homeless, Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011.....	22
<b>Figure 12.</b>	Secondary Homeless, Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011 .....	23
<b>Figure 13.</b>	Tertiary Homeless by Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011 .....	24

## Index of Tables

<b>Table 1.</b>	Summary of Stakeholder Consultation.....	5
<b>Table 2.</b>	Forecast Population 2006 – 2031 .....	7
<b>Table 3.</b>	Median Rent, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW*, 2001 to 2011 .....	10
<b>Table 4.</b>	Summary of Service Providers.....	30
<b>Table 5.</b>	Leading Practice Case Studies .....	47
<b>Table 6.</b>	Examples of Council Responses to Housing and Homelessness .....	55
<b>Table 7.</b>	Summary Service Gaps, Challenges, Barriers and Opportunities .....	63

# List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CaLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
COAG	Council of Australian Government
CMH	Community Mental Health
CTTT	Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal
DES	Disability Employment Services
EMT	Executive Management Team
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GCHC	Gold Coast Housing Company
GP	General Practitioner
HACC	Home and Community Care
HASI	Housing and Accommodation Support Services
HECS	Higher Education Contributions Scheme
HPIC	Homeless Persons Information Centre
ICL	Indigenous Community Links
LGA	Local Government Area
MCC	Murwillumbah Community Centre
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCAP	North Coast Accommodation Program
NCCH	North Coast Community Housing
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
NSW	New South Wales
PHAMS	Persons Helpers and Mentors Scheme
QLD	Queensland
SAAP	Supported Assistance Accommodation Program
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Service
TICA	Tenant in Common Association
TSC	Tweed Shire Council
TSSH	Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network
TSP	Tenancy Support Program
WA	Western Australia

# Executive Summary

## Project Background

In June 2013, Tweed Shire Council engaged Thao Ashford Planning Consultant (lead consultant) together with Laurel Johnson and Fiona Caniglia to conduct research into Homelessness in the Tweed Shire to identify issues relevant to the homelessness service sector and homeless people. The desired outcome of the project is a **Homelessness Issues Paper** that highlights homelessness in the Tweed Shire and includes a body of research and demographic information to inform the Council including the Tweed Shire communities and support the activities of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network.

For the purposes of this project, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census definition for homelessness has been adopted. The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the cultural definition of homelessness to enumerate the homeless population on Census night. This definition distinguishes between people in primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness:

- » **Primary homelessness:** people without conventional accommodation such as living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc.
- » **Secondary homelessness:** people moving frequently between various forms of temporary shelter including staying with friends and relatives, in emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses on a short term basis (12 weeks or less).
- » **Tertiary homelessness:** people living in boarding houses on a medium to long term basis (13 weeks or longer). Residents of private boarding houses do not have separate bedrooms and living rooms; they do not have kitchen and bathroom facilities of their own; their accommodation is not self-contained; and they do not have security of tenure provided by a lease.

## Project Methodology

The two key components that have informed the development of this report include baseline data (such as Australian Bureau of Statistics census and existing literature including policy) and consultation with key stakeholders, service providers and homeless people. The **baseline assessment** for this project included a review of existing literature and information such as current policy documents to develop a context for the project. A review of demographic trends was also undertaken to ascertain the number and characteristics (i.e. gender, age etc) of the homeless population in the Tweed Shire and the general Tweed Shire population. Finally, the baseline assessment considered the existing homelessness services and programs in the Tweed Shire and surrounds to understand the current services/programs available and to identify gaps and unmet need. Critically, the project involved extensive **consultation** with both internal and external stakeholders for the purposes of obtaining information required for this study and for identifying potential opportunities that exist in responding to homelessness in the Tweed Shire.

## Study Area Context

The Tweed Shire LGA is located in the north-east corner of New South Wales, about 860 kilometres north of Sydney and around 100 kilometres south of Brisbane. Tweed Shire is bounded by the Queensland border, the Scenic Rim Region and Gold Coast City in the north, the Pacific Ocean in the east, Byron Shire and Lismore City in the south, and the Kyogle Council area in the west.

The expected population growth in the Tweed over the next 20 years together with the current relatively high cost of housing will further exacerbate housing availability and housing affordability issues currently experienced in

the region. As a result of population growth, there is a real possibility that the cost of private rental accommodation will increase resulting in people on very low incomes (i.e. government benefits) being squeezed out of that market. The high competition for private rental accommodation means that the “least desirable” tenants are missing out entirely. Young people who have never lived independently will have almost no chance of acquiring private rental housing, both because they cannot afford it and because they have no rental history.

Housing market data from Housing New South Wales shows the cost of rental housing in the Tweed is not affordable to households on low and moderate incomes. The high cost of housing in Tweed is likely to impact on homelessness in the following ways:

- » The increase in house purchase prices will inevitably lead to high mortgages, which can result in mortgage defaults when people cannot afford to continue to make payments, consequently leading to repossession.
- » These dispossessed households may join the social housing waiting list, lengthening it further.
- » The increase in the number of people seeking private rental accommodation will drive up demand for rental property and therefore drive up rents and reduce vacancies.
- » People on lower incomes, dependent on income support may compete poorly in the private rental market compared to people exiting home ownership and those who have employment.
- » The lack of affordable rental accommodation can force people into temporary accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels and motels, thereby increasing the demand on this type of accommodation.
- » People may be forced to couch surf or sleep rough in the absence of other available accommodation.
- » The shortage of affordable rental accommodation can contribute to homelessness, as it reduces the opportunities for people on lower incomes to find suitable housing in the Tweed.

The two age groups that are expected to increase in the coming years are young people aged 15 years and under and people aged 65 and over. From the consultation with service providers in the region it was noted that emerging groups of homeless people amongst others, include young people and seniors, particularly older single women (refer to Section 3.2). The data shows that Tweed Shire has a larger proportion of people from New Zealand residing in the community when compared to New South Wales and this group was also identified as an emerging and ‘at risk’ of homelessness group due to Australian regulation regarding access to housing and income support for this group.

## Policy Context

Homelessness is an issue that affects many parts of Australia. Whilst this study focuses on the Tweed Shire, it is important to acknowledge policy and planning efforts to address homelessness across all levels of government, which provide key context to this Study. The existing policy context is an important basis for a planned response to homelessness. This is a unique period in Australia’s history where a significant new policy platform relating to homelessness has been launched and is now being implemented through state and regional level action plans. Many key stakeholders, such as the Tweed Shire Council, will be engaged in direct implementation and also participate in governance arrangements relating to these plans.

The broader policy context is important as a foundation for service delivery, and the design of new directions to address homelessness. There is an emphasis on long term, permanent solutions to homelessness including exits to sustainable housing where people are supported to keep their housing. The policy context is also working to reform the Specialist Homelessness Service System to reflect a less crisis driven approach. Across all of the different elements of the policy context is strong acknowledgement of the importance of partnerships and integrated service delivery.



## Extent of Homelessness in the Tweed Shire

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data, in 2011, there was an estimated 308 homeless people in the Tweed Local Government Area. Of this number 14% were classified as primary homeless, 60% were classified as secondary homeless and 26% were considered tertiary homeless.

- » The primary homeless in Tweed Local Government Area is dominated by males aged between 45 and 54 accounting for 39.5% of the total primary homeless population. Other significant age groups include people aged between 35 and 44 (23.3%). Information was sought from service providers and the homeless to supplement Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data with more detailed local information. Service providers interviewed commented that the number of homeless people has grown significantly over the last few years. Estimates of the number of primary homeless in the Tweed area from service providers consistently report around 200 people sleeping rough each night. Lunch with Friends, a meal service provider operating in the Tweed/Coolangatta region keeps records of the number of homeless people who access their services. Data received from Lunch with Friends indicated that anywhere between 65 to 100 people attend lunch at Goodwin Park (2013) at meal times twice weekly.
- » Homeless children under the age of 12 made up the largest proportion of secondary homeless, accounting for 18.4% followed by homeless people between the age of 35 and 44, This group accounted for 17.3%.
- » The two largest age groups within the tertiary homeless sub group in Tweed are homeless people aged between 45 and 54 (20.0%) and homeless youth aged 12 to 18 years (17.5%)

Through the course of the project, different subgroups have been identified within the homeless population in Tweed including:

- » **Single Men** - Considered the largest sub-group within the homelessness population in Tweed Shire and make up a large number of rough sleepers.
- » **Single Women** - Have very complex needs requiring a lot of support and were reported to be increasing in the Tweed Shire.
- » **Families/Elderly People** - There has been a noticeable increase in the number of families and elderly people in Tweed Shire at risk of being homeless due to loss of employment, escaping domestic violence, unaffordable rents.
- » **Young People** – It has been estimated around 170 young people are homeless each night in Tweed Shire aged between 15 to 17 years of age. For young people who are homeless, the causes include family breakdown, generational trauma, drug and alcohol abuse (parents), leaving foster care and stress due to decreasing affordability.
- » **People from New Zealand** - An emerging group in the Tweed Shire is people from New Zealand. The issue with people from New Zealand is that they are not eligible for entitlements such as Centrelink and HECS support or social housing.
- » **Aboriginal People** - Reported by a number of stakeholders as one of the larger groups of homeless people in the Tweed Shire and it was noted that homelessness for this group is also increasing.

## Existing Homelessness Services in the Tweed Shire

An audit of existing services available to homeless people in the Tweed Shire was undertaken as part of this study. In addition to identifying existing service providers, the audit also captured key stakeholders such as Council staff, rangers and other government organisations as well as community organisations and networks both within and outside of Tweed Shire; refer to Appendix C for complete list of services and stakeholders. Overall the audit showed that Tweed Shire has a broad range of homeless services including general support through services at Murwillumbah Community Centre, Fred's Place (St Vincent De Pauls) and Red Cross. There are also a number of specific services targeted at women (Tweed Shires Women Services), mental health (Youth

& Family Service, Tweed Community Mental Health, Mental Health Services, New Horizons), youth (St Josephs Youth Services, Reconnect) and housing support (North Coast Community Housing, New Horizons, OnTrack). It was noted that there is an extensive number of individual food services operating in the Tweed region and across the border into the Gold Coast. Section 3.5 provides further analysis around the capacity/demand and barriers associated with existing services in the Tweed Shire.

## Issues Affecting Homelessness in the Tweed Shire

For many people the 'cause' of homelessness is an underlying collection of vulnerabilities produced by a combination of individual and structural circumstances. Individual circumstances include family breakdown, histories of institutionalisation, drug or alcohol addictions and poor mental or physical health. Service providers suggest that repeated episodes of homelessness and the length of time spent on the streets has a cumulative, traumatising effect, further compounding existing issues and further compromising an individual's ability to maintain stable accommodation.

The following have been identified through literature and consultation as key factors that can contribute to people becoming homeless in the Tweed Shire:

- » **Social Exclusion** - Social exclusion exacerbates a person's vulnerability to homelessness and takes many forms. Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, four groups have recently been identified as being at particular risk of homelessness, namely: those with a mental illness, female victims of family violence, refugees and asylum seekers and young people. The most recent census also found that migrants were one of the fastest growing groups among homeless people overall and that people from certain countries were over-represented including India, China, Afghanistan and New Zealand.
- » **Drug or Alcohol Addiction** - Drug or alcohol addiction increases a person's vulnerability to homelessness. It was reported through the consultation that in Murwillumbah, one of the causes of homelessness is drug abuse in families.
- » **Mental Illness** - Mental health problems are common among the homeless community and can provide the catalyst for homelessness. According to service providers in the Tweed, homeless men with mental illness are commonly undiagnosed and not medicated. It was commented that this presents challenges for the individual trying to access currently available assistance/services (targeted at mental health clients who are homeless) which requires a client to be diagnosed. It was also suggested by stakeholders that the closure of psychiatric institutions and the transfer of the management of mental health problems into the community has resulted in increased levels of homelessness and incarceration of people with mental health problems.
- » **Family and Relationship Breakdown/Domestic Violence** - Service providers noted that untenable home environments are often the catalyst for episodes of homelessness among young people, variously exposing young people to long-term distressing behaviours, such as sexual, physical or verbal abuse or drug or alcohol abuse. Homelessness in Tweed Shire is often a result of family breakdown and or domestic violence.
- » **A Background of Institutionalisation** - Released prisoners are highly vulnerable to episodes of homelessness and often have pre-existing mental or physical health issues, including drug and alcohol problems, that leave them significantly more at risk of both homelessness and death than the general population if they are not supported once released from prison. Stakeholders commented that people who come out of jail struggle with the basics of life and with integrating back into the community which often results in homelessness or re-offending to go back to prison. People exiting from hospital can also be vulnerable to homelessness or may lose their housing during hospitalisation.
- » **Cost of Living Pressures** - The housing market data from Housing New South Wales shows the cost of housing in the Tweed is not affordable to households on low and moderate incomes and this was further supported by service providers and stakeholders consulted as part of this study. It was commented by service providers that current rent assistance is not enough to secure and/or sustain

private rentals without significant sacrifice in other basic life needs such as food, health care and transport.

- » **Access to Social Support Services** - For many, the ability to access social support is an important factor impacting on their overall ability to maintain stable accommodation. Service providers suggest that many formerly homeless people rely heavily on existing social support networks to help them through the transition period and need to continue to access homeless services once housed to help them sustain tenancies. In the long-term, a lack of ongoing, wrap-around support for people can also affect securing housing and sustaining that housing option.

## Service Gaps and Barriers

Through the consultation the following have been reported by service providers and stakeholders as gaps and barriers for homeless people in Tweed.

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers
<b>Crisis and Short Term Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited short term or crisis accommodation available in the Tweed Shire</li> <li>• Sub-standard temporary accommodation (tents, caravans with insecure tenure and others)</li> <li>• You must be a family to get crisis (temporary) accommodation. Single men cannot access temporary accommodation</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of affordable housing – insecure tenures</li> <li>• Lack of appropriate long term housing options affordability and availability issues</li> <li>• Pet friendly accommodation is scarce</li> <li>• Significant lack of affordable, appropriate social housing with homeless people and service providers describing that you will wait for years within this system</li> </ul>
<b>Support for People to Sustain Tenancies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support options with the scope to assist people with wrap around assistance over the long-term</li> <li>• More support for clients to stay in private rentals</li> <li>• Support for real estate agents and landlords to maintain tenancies</li> <li>• Support for people in social housing tenancies to sustain those tenancies</li> </ul>
<b>Services for families/young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are not enough services for young people and their families in times of crisis</li> <li>• Combination of low income and no rental history makes it very difficult for young people to access the private rental market</li> <li>• Young people are vulnerable to living in over-crowded circumstances or to couch surfing</li> </ul>
<b>Support for People with Mental Illness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a protocol with mental health services with a clear contact person in mental health to assist clients</li> <li>• Eligibility is a barrier to clients accessing existing homelessness services (such as a diagnosed mental illness as many people are not diagnosed)</li> </ul>
<b>Food Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordination of a range of food services</li> <li>• Opportunity to ensure good spread of locations and populations through some coordination</li> <li>• No breakfast services in the region during the week</li> </ul>
<b>Services that do Public Space Liaison &amp; Assertive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assertive outreach in situ is an essential feature of any holistic, integrated homelessness response</li> <li>• There are no specialist public space liaison officers within Council or based in other agencies</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers
<b>Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant unmet need for active, assertive outreach into key locations where an assessment and referral is possible</li> <li>• Need for training/capacity building opportunities to better support the role of council staff and rangers</li> </ul>
<b>Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless people experience drug and alcohol issues and sometimes these are combined with other factors such as mental illness and chronic diseases</li> <li>• Opportunities for drug and alcohol rehabilitation are very limited in the region</li> </ul>
<b>Better Co-ordination of Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better partnerships with Real-estate agents, Police, Council, Education, Health (i.e. Hospital)</li> <li>• Better co-ordination of services</li> <li>• True partnerships and collaboration are difficult to achieve because of the competitive nature of the funding environment</li> <li>• It's important for the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network to actively participate in forums such as the Northern Rivers Housing Forum as it is a good opportunity to link into decision makers</li> <li>• The Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network can play a big role in advocacy and partnership building with peripheral stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Estate Agencies play an essential role because so many people rely on the private real estate market for a housing option</li> <li>• Engagement with the Real Estate Industry is important to building the capacity of that sector and increasing the supply of affordable rental stock</li> <li>• There is a lack of internal coordination mechanisms to support community development, parks staff and rangers engaging with each other</li> </ul>
<b>Transport to support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The location of key services provides good access for some communities but is a barrier for others</li> <li>• Transport in the search for housing and for accessing services and then for moving around once housing is secured (a lot of affordable housing is in more remote locations of the Shire)</li> </ul>
<b>Education &amp; Community Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness needs a whole of community response – it is not just homelessness services; the sector need Council on board, particularly around the use of public spaces, and also hospitals, and the general community</li> <li>• Misconception about who is homeless</li> <li>• Awareness of what is available to homeless and at risk people</li> </ul>

## Opportunities for Tweed Shire Council

The following summarises the opportunities for Tweed Shire Council as a result of this study which could potentially become the Homelessness Policy implementation plan:

### **Crisis and Short Term Accommodation:**

- » Advocate to other Governments for short term/crisis accommodation in the Tweed Shire local government area.
- » Consider encouraging the provision of a secured, supervised and controlled overnight parking site for cars and caravans for homeless and at risk people somewhere in the Shire.

**Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation:**

- » Consider developing an affordable housing strategy to increase the delivery of affordable housing.
- » Make residents aware of the opportunities for secondary dwelling development in the Shire.
- » Advocate for changes to income tax that may inhibit the effective use of secondary dwellings and the rental of rooms in dwellings (for example, for boarders).

**Food Services:**

- » Consider providing seed funding for the establishment of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network website.

**Services that do Public Space Liaison and Assertive Outreach:**

- » Consider developing an internal training, coordination and communication mechanism for all staff involved in directly engaging with homeless people e.g. referring them onto services and providing local law officers with the necessary information to be able to respond appropriately.
- » Consider developing a protocol or MOU with Police to improve public space responses.

**Better Co-ordination of Services:**

- » Maintain an active role within the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network.
- » Assisting the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network develop stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination). This should include a purpose/vision, objectives, roles, responsibilities, a prioritised action plan and decision making provisions.

**Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council:**

- » Consider developing a comprehensive housing and homelessness policy and protocol with a significant emphasis on Council's core roles and on strategic partnerships. This should include strategies and partnerships for monitoring data and emergent trends on an annual basis or as data is available.
- » Shared training involving police, Council officers and the real estate industry is explored.
- » Consider producing a services referral and information directory to assist internal staff in their direct engagement with homeless people.

**Education & Community Awareness:**

- » Consider providing seed funding for education and community awareness project.
- » Considers providing support for a Homeless Connect event one to two times each year.

**Opportunities for Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network**

The following summarises the opportunities for Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network as a result of this study:

**Crisis and Short Term Accommodation:**

- » Undertake a specific project and working group to advocate and address lack of crisis and short term accommodation.

**Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation:**

- » Pursue program level funding options for ongoing support programs and housing supply strategies and develop an integrated supportive housing approach to all housing in the region.

**Support for People to Sustain Tenancies:**

- » Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation (*particularly the North Coast Accommodation Project and Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness*)

**Services for families/young people:**

- » Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation (*particularly the Young People Leaving Care Support Service and Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody*)

**Support for People with Mental Illness:**

- » Continue to work with mental health service providers and encourage ongoing involvement in the TSHH Network.

**Food Services:**

- » There is scope for more coordination of food services which could be a function of the TSHH Network or a sub-group of the TSHH Network.
- » Regular analysis at the TSHH Network level about the broader systemic issues driving this intense demand for food services should be ongoing.

**Services that do Public Space Liaison & Assertive Outreach:**

- » Look at securing funding for a specialist public space liaison officer/s.
- » Actively work with mainstream roles within Council and Police to develop a shared model for addressing public homelessness.
- » Mapping and monitoring of hot spots as much as possible.

**Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation:**

- » Identify drug and alcohol services and encourage their involvement and inclusion in the TSHH Network.

**Better Co-ordination of Services:**

- » Consolidate membership of the Network and actively engage stakeholders who may not be direct homeless services but are important to the success of homelessness responses (such as Police and others) to attend Network meetings.
- » Stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination).
- » Adopt some work projects that will engage the agencies in actual collaboration on specific client needs and projects.
- » Present this study to the New South Wales Homelessness Governance Group to influence the extent that the Regional Homelessness Action Plan produces tangible results for the Tweed Shire area.
- » Develop a protocol about collaborative work to pursue funding with the aim of reducing competition between agencies.
- » Multi-agency learning and development activities are developed and offered in the region to increase the capacity for emergent practice and collaboration.
- » Access shared learning and development to enable shared frameworks for practice to develop and be consolidated.

***Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council:***

- » Undertake a specific project and establish working group to engage real estate agents more directly in identifying private housing options.

***Transport to support services:***

- » Consider a specific project to identify community transport options to augment the public transport system and improve the access of homeless people to services.

***Education & Community Awareness:***

- » Consider a specific project relating to education and community awareness for example projects such as the one Fred's Place is looking to undertake to demystify homelessness.
- » Regular contact with schools to inform young people of homelessness and homelessness services.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

In June 2013, Tweed Shire Council engaged Thao Ashford Planning Consultant (lead consultant) together with Laurel Johnson and Fiona Caniglia to conduct research into Homelessness in the Tweed Shire to identify issues relevant to the target group. The desired outcome of the project is a ***Homelessness Issues Paper*** that highlights homelessness and homeless service issues in the Tweed Shire. The Issues Paper includes a body of research and demographic information to inform the Tweed Shire Council (TSC) and Tweed Shire communities about homelessness in the Shire and to support the activities of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness (TSHH) Network.

### 1.1.1 Definition of Homelessness

For the purposes of this project, the Australian Bureau Statistics (ABS) Census definition for homelessness has been adopted. The ABS uses the cultural definition of homelessness to enumerate the homeless population on Census night<sup>1</sup>. This definition distinguishes between people in primary, secondary and tertiary homelessness:

- » **Primary Homeless** – Primary homelessness includes people without conventional accommodation such as living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks, etc. Primary homeless under the Census category of “improvised homes, tents and sleepers out” are usually transient, moving from place to place regularly, without conventional shelter other than those squatting in derelict buildings or living in vehicles<sup>2</sup>. Homeless people are very transient. People may be in a particular location and accommodation type on Census night but a week later they may have had to move somewhere else. This makes counting the primary homeless difficult and leads to discrepancies in the Census data due to under counting or over counting of homeless people. These issues are much more obvious in small area data (such as that sourced for the Tweed Shire) than when the data is aggregated on a state or national level.
- » **Secondary Homeless** – Secondary homeless includes people staying in emergency or transitional accommodation provided under the Specialist Homeless Service (SHS) Programme and previous Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme (SAAP) on a temporary basis, operationally defined as 13 weeks or less. In addition to people staying in SHS/SAAP accommodation, those who are staying temporarily with other households who have no permanent address are also considered under the secondary homeless classification. These people are generally referred to as couch surfers and often move from one home to another. Little has been documented in the literature on couch surfing which appears to be a “hidden” form of homelessness. The literature does however identify couch surfing as an ‘entry point’ for homelessness and suggests this may be particularly true for “...*young people and*

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<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain C, Mackenzie D (2009) Counting the Homeless 2006 Western Australia, Catalogue number HOU209, Canberra Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

<sup>2</sup> ibid



women escaping domestic and family violence who are temporarily accommodated by friends or relatives in large numbers.<sup>3</sup>

The literature also suggests that Indigenous people are significantly over-represented among this 'hidden' homeless population. Homelessness Australia believes that cultural norms – principally, the obligation to offer accommodation to members of one's family or kinship group - may preclude Indigenous Australians from identifying themselves as homeless. Hence, the number of Indigenous Australians counted as secondary homeless on Census night may "...significantly understate the problem of Indigenous homelessness that is masked by overcrowding."<sup>4</sup>

- » **Tertiary Homeless** – In this study the tertiary homeless population comprises people living in boarding houses, temporary lodgings (caravan parks, backpackers hostels) and in severely crowded dwellings. These people are homeless because they have no security of tenure and the accommodation does not have the characteristics identified in the minimum community standard<sup>5</sup>. A person becomes part of the tertiary homeless category if they have been living in any of the accommodation types listed above for more than 13 weeks.

Recent work undertaken by the ABS in late 2012 further refined the above definition of homelessness, from a statistical perspective, through its Homelessness Statistics Reference Group. The following provides a quick summary of the new definition of homelessness as defined by the ABS in 2012.

*The new ABS definition of homelessness is informed by an understanding of homelessness as 'home'lessness, not rooflessness. It emphasises the core elements of 'home' in Anglo American and European interpretations of the meaning of home as identified in research evidence (Mallett, 2004). These elements may include: a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space. Homelessness is therefore a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'. In brief, the ABS statistical definition is that:*

*When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:*

- » *is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or*
- » *has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or*
- » *does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.*

*The definition has been constructed from a conceptual framework centred around the following elements:*

- » *adequacy of the dwelling; and*
- » *security of tenure in the dwelling; and*
- » *control of and access to space for social relations.*

3 Homelessness Australia (2011) *Homelessness and Affordable Housing*, accessed 1 November 2011, <[http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Fact%20sheets/Fact%20Sheets%202011-12/Homelessness%20&%20Affordable%20Housing%202011-12\(3\).pdf](http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Fact%20sheets/Fact%20Sheets%202011-12/Homelessness%20&%20Affordable%20Housing%202011-12(3).pdf)>

4 Homelessness Australia (June 2011), *Submission in response to the Australian Bureau of Statistics discussion paper on the methodological review of Counting The Homeless*, accessed October 24 2011 <<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/UserFiles/File/Policy/Submission%20in%20response%20to%20the%20Australian%20Bureau%20of%20Statistics%20discussion%20paper%20on%20the%20review%20of%20Counting%20the%20Homeless%202006.pdf>>

5 Chamberlain C, MacKenzie D (2009) *Counting the homeless 2006: Western Australia*. Cat. no. HOU 209. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## 1.1.2 The Housing System

People transition through different forms of housing at different times in their lives. The housing continuum can be described as different tenure arrangements from crisis accommodation to home ownership. People enter the housing continuum at various points and do not necessarily move through in a linear manner, but instead transition between tenures based on what is available and their housing needs at the time. For example, rough sleepers can move in and out of emergency accommodation and up and down the housing continuum depending upon circumstances and the availability of accommodation. People “falling out” of the private rental market can move into homelessness more easily than moving into social housing given the length of the social housing waiting lists.

### **Crisis/Short Term Accommodation**

Typically includes motels/hotels, apartments, caravan sites, cabins, on-site vans, other types of self-contained accommodation and backpacker beds. Crisis/short term accommodation is considered an important component of the overall supply of accommodation.

### **Social Housing**

Housing New South Wales (Housing NSW) is the State’s main provider of social housing. In NSW, the social housing sector encompasses Public Housing, Aboriginal Housing, and Community Housing. Housing NSW manages the major part of the social housing sector. However, it is in the process of transferring ownership and management responsibility to the community housing sector.

### **Private Rental and Home Ownership**

Private rental and ultimately home ownership are the long term solutions for homelessness. Accessing private rental is often a major barrier for homeless people due to affordability and often discrimination.

## 1.2 Objectives and Scope

The Issues Paper will include an analysis of:

- » Geographic concentration and demographic profile of homeless populations in the Tweed
- » Issues contributing to homelessness in the Tweed including but not limited to:
  - Family breakdown/domestic violence
  - Unemployment
  - Mental health
  - HIV-Aids and other chronic health problems
  - Ageing, neglect and dementia
  - Youth leaving home and youth at risk
  - Alcohol and other drugs
  - Exiting from corrective service systems
  - Children leaving State care
  - Lack of affordable private market housing and government subsidised housing
  - Tenancy issues/Tenant In Common Association (TICA) and difficulty accessing private real estate market
- » Homeless Service Provision in the Tweed including but not limited to:
  - Service system gaps i.e. Prevention, Early Intervention, and Long-term support
  - Role of outreach services in providing continuity of care
  - Inequitable funding allocation and location of homelessness services both within the Tweed Shire and Northern Rivers region servicing the Tweed community

- Cross-Border service delivery and funding issue

## 1.3 Project Method

Figure 1 shows the method used to undertake the Tweed Homelessness Issues Paper (this report). The two key components that have informed the development of this report are baseline data (such as ABS census and existing literature including policy) and consultation with key stakeholders, service providers and homeless people.

**Figure 1.** Project Method



Source: Thao Ashford Planning Consultant, 2013

### **Baseline – Understanding Homelessness & the Extent of Homelessness in the Tweed Shire**

The Baseline assessment for this project included the following:

- » Review of existing literature and information such as current policy documents to develop a context for the project.
- » Review of demographic trends to ascertain the number and characteristics (i.e. gender, age etc) of the homeless population in the Tweed Shire.
- » Audit of homelessness services and programs in the Tweed Shire and surrounds to understand the current services/programs available and to identify gaps and unmet need.

### **Consultation – Identifying Issues, Gaps & Opportunities in Homelessness Service Provision**

The project involved consultation with both internal and external stakeholders for the purposes of obtaining information required for the Tweed Homelessness Issues Paper and for identifying potential opportunities that exist in responding to homelessness in the Tweed Shire. Table 1 provides a summary of the consultation program undertaken for the project (refer to Appendix A – Stakeholders Consulted).

**Table 1.** Summary of Stakeholder Consultation

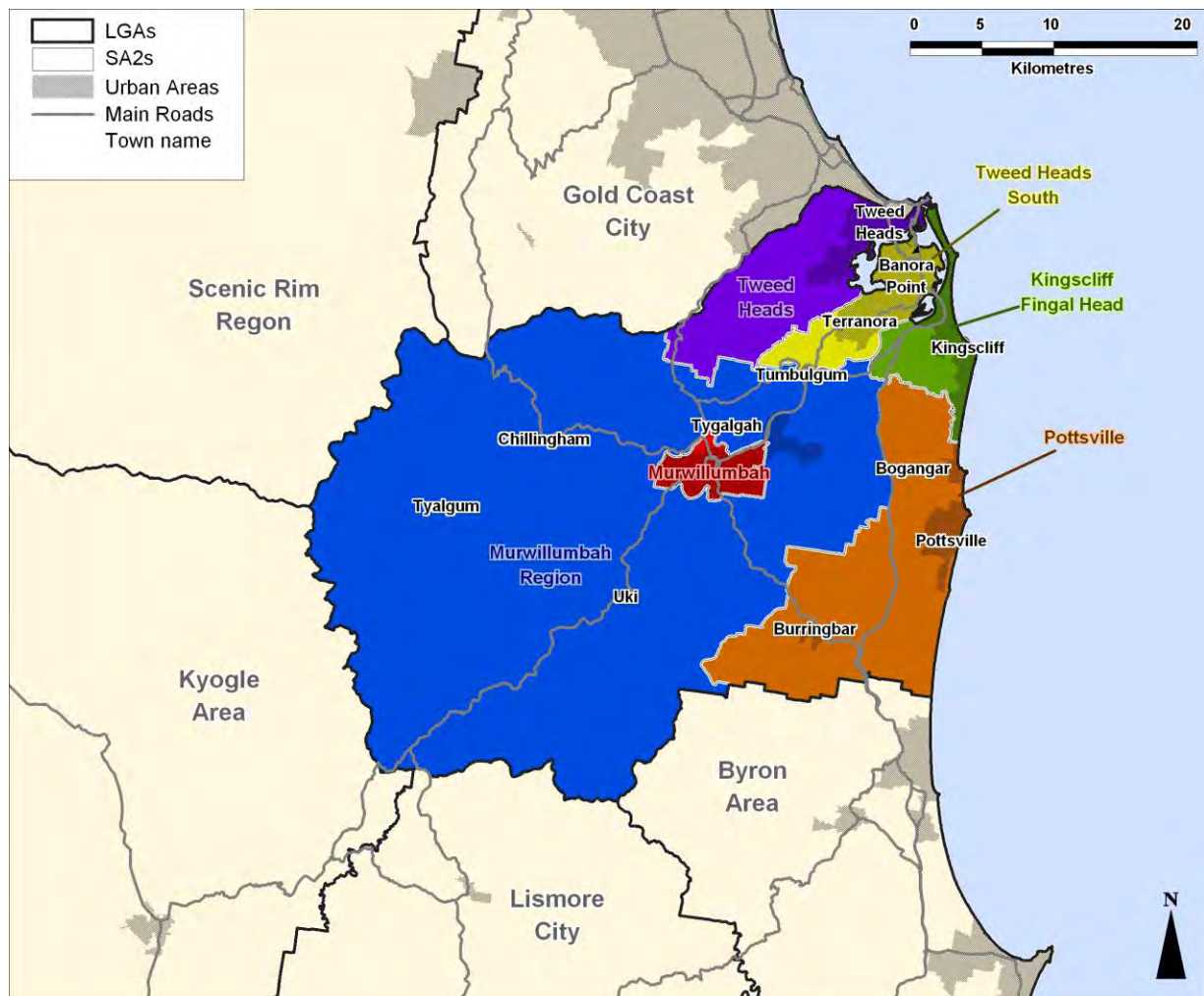
STAKEHOLDER	METHOD OF CONSULTATION	PURPOSE
Local Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Tweed Shire Council</li> <li>» Gold Coast City Council</li> <li>» Clarence Valley Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Targeted discussions (face to face &amp; telephone)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The main objective of this consultation was to establish issues, challenges, opportunities and needs for the homelessness population in the Tweed Shire.</li> <li>» Another purpose was to inform the Council officers of homelessness and homelessness issues in the Council area and case examples of the work of other council's addressing homelessness.</li> </ul>
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Targeted discussions (face to face &amp; telephone)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» To identify the range of services and models of service provision for homelessness services in the Tweed Shire Council area.</li> <li>» To ascertain the extent to which service providers share information, resources and planning and provision of homelessness services.</li> <li>» Identify gaps in services and any ideas about ways to fill those gaps.</li> </ul>
Community Organisations and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Targeted discussions (face to face &amp; telephone)</li> <li>» Workshop</li> </ul>	A workshop was facilitated with the TSHH Network. The purpose of this workshop was to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Present and validate information;</li> <li>» Discuss trends and issues affecting homelessness in the Tweed Shire;</li> <li>» Identify and verify areas of need and service gaps;</li> <li>» Present and explore potential delivery models and opportunities.</li> </ul>
Meal and Food Distribution Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Workshop</li> </ul>	A workshop was facilitated with the meal and food distribution services. <p>The purpose of this workshop was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Discuss trends and issues affecting homelessness in the Tweed Shire;</li> <li>» Identify and verify areas of need and service gaps;</li> <li>» Identify referral pathways for homeless people and links to other homelessness services.</li> </ul>
Councillors and Executive Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Presentation of Information</li> </ul>	To inform Councillors and the Executive Management Team of the key findings from the research and consultations and the content of the Tweed Shire Homelessness Issues Paper. Seek feedback from Councillors and Executive Team.
Homeless People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Targeted discussions (face to face)</li> </ul>	To identify homelessness issues in the Council area including key locations for homeless people and current service utilisation, gaps and opportunities.

## 2.0 Study Area and Policy Context

### 2.1 Tweed Shire LGA

The Tweed Shire Local Government Area (LGA) is located in the north-east corner of NSW, about 860 kilometres north of Sydney and around 100 kilometres south of Brisbane. Tweed Shire is bounded by the Queensland (QLD) border, the Scenic Rim Regional Council and Gold Coast City (both in QLD in the north, the Pacific Ocean in the east, Byron Shire and Lismore City in the south, and the Kyogle Council area in the west (refer to Figure 2).

Figure 2. Context Map



Source: Thao Ashford Planning Consultant, 2013

## 2.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Tweed Shire

The predominant data sources used for the population and demographic characteristics analysis included:

- » Tweed Shire Council Community Profile, Profile ID 2013
- » Tweed Shire Council Population Forecasts, Forecast ID 2011
- » ABS Census Time Series Profile for Tweed LGA and Rest of NSW
- » NSW Housing Sales and Rents Report, 2013

### Existing and Expected Population

According to the 2011 ABS Census data, the Tweed LGA had an estimated resident population of over 88,000 people. The majority of residents reside in the main townships of Tweed Heads South – Banora (27.1%) and Murwillumbah & Districts (11.3%). Population projections sourced from TSC Forecast ID indicate that by 2031 it is expected that the resident population of the area will increase to just over 128,800. The catchment areas of Cobaki – Piggabeen, Bilambil-Bilambil Heights, South Coast – Pottsville and Mid Coast Casuarina are expected to be the focal point for the majority of residential growth over the next 20 years (refer to Table 2).

**Table 2.** Forecast Population 2006 – 2031

Catchment	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Change between 2006 and 2031	
							number	Avg-annual % change
Bilambil - Bilambil Heights	3,558	3,856	4,392	6,461	8,643	9,581	6,023	4.04%
Cabarita area	3,268	3,368	3,341	3,600	4,130	4,201	933	1.01%
Cobaki - Piggabeen area	513	540	2,018	5,424	8,794	11,931	11,418	13.41%
Mid Coast - Casuarina	2,054	2,819	3,996	5,234	5,992	7,323	5,269	5.22%
Murwillumbah & District	9,522	9,962	10,546	11,418	12,508	13,887	4,365	1.52%
North Coast - Kingscliff	8,296	8,779	9,770	10,724	11,051	11,363	3,067	1.27%
North East Hinterland -	2,772	2,879	2,913	2,940	2,957	3,008	236	0.33%
North West Tweed - Tyalgum	2,921	2,728	2,739	2,763	2,790	2,810	-111	-0.15%
South Coast - Pottsville	5,306	7,249	8,213	8,945	10,036	10,872	5,566	2.91%
South East Hinterland -	3,254	3,173	3,210	3,396	3,710	4,083	829	0.91%
South West Tweed - Uki	2,152	2,312	2,395	2,495	2,591	2,693	541	0.90%
Terranora	2,722	2,919	3,240	3,865	4,634	5,447	2,725	2.81%
Tweed Heads	7,606	7,858	7,893	8,228	8,892	9,764	2,158	1.00%
Tweed Heads South - Banora	23,055	23,950	23,952	24,521	25,263	25,393	2,338	0.39%
Tweed Heads West	6,092	6,071	6,139	6,276	6,425	6,509	417	0.27%
<b>Tweed Shire</b>	<b>83,091</b>	<b>88,463</b>	<b>94,757</b>	<b>106,290</b>	<b>118,416</b>	<b>128,865</b>	<b>45,774</b>	<b>1.77%</b>

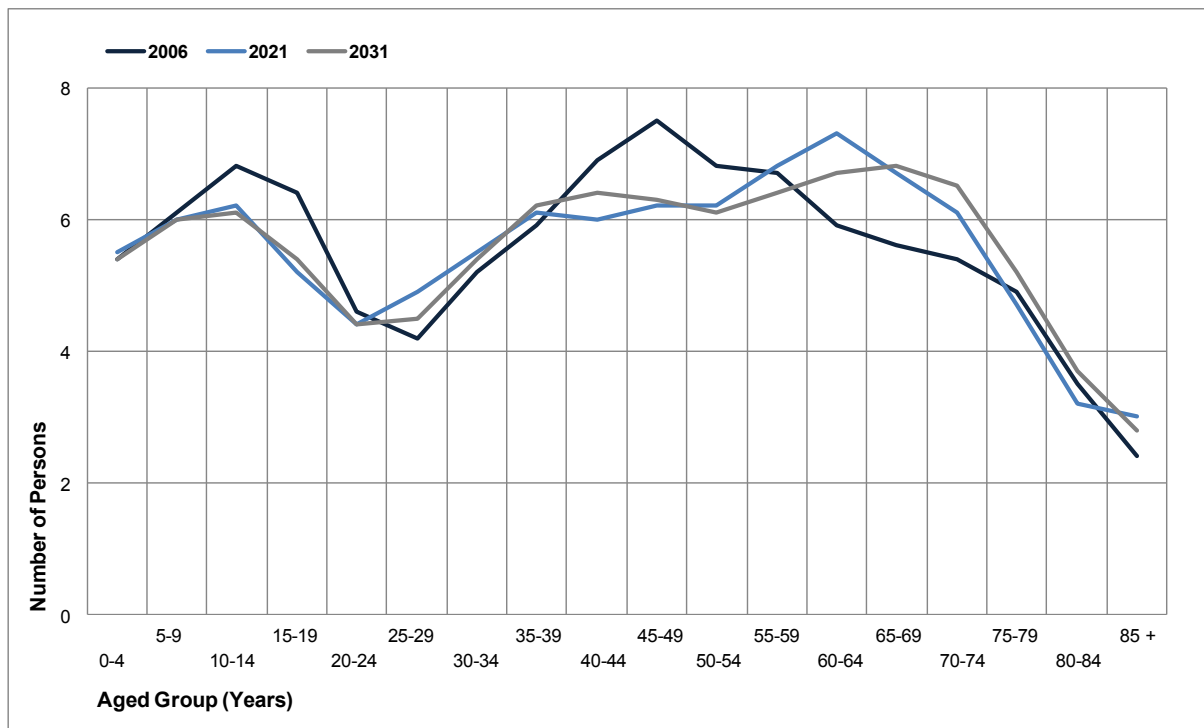
Source: Tweed Shire Council, Forecast ID, 2011

### Age Profile

The current population of the Tweed LGA according to the ABS Census 2011 is characterised by a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (under 15) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (65+). Overall, 17.8% of the population was aged between 0 and 15, and 22.9% were aged 65 years and over, compared with 19.4% and 18.0% respectively for Regional NSW.

The number of people aged under 15 is forecast to increase by 3,712 (24.4%), representing a rise in the proportion of the population for that group to 17.8% (refer to Figure 3). The number of people aged over 65 is expected to increase by 7,117 (39.4%), and to represent 23.7% of the population by 2021. The age group which is forecast to have the largest proportional increase (relative to its population size) by 2021 is 85 and over year olds, who are forecast to increase by 58.9% to 3,178 persons.

**Figure 3.** Forecast Age Structure, Tweed LGA 2006, 2021, 2031

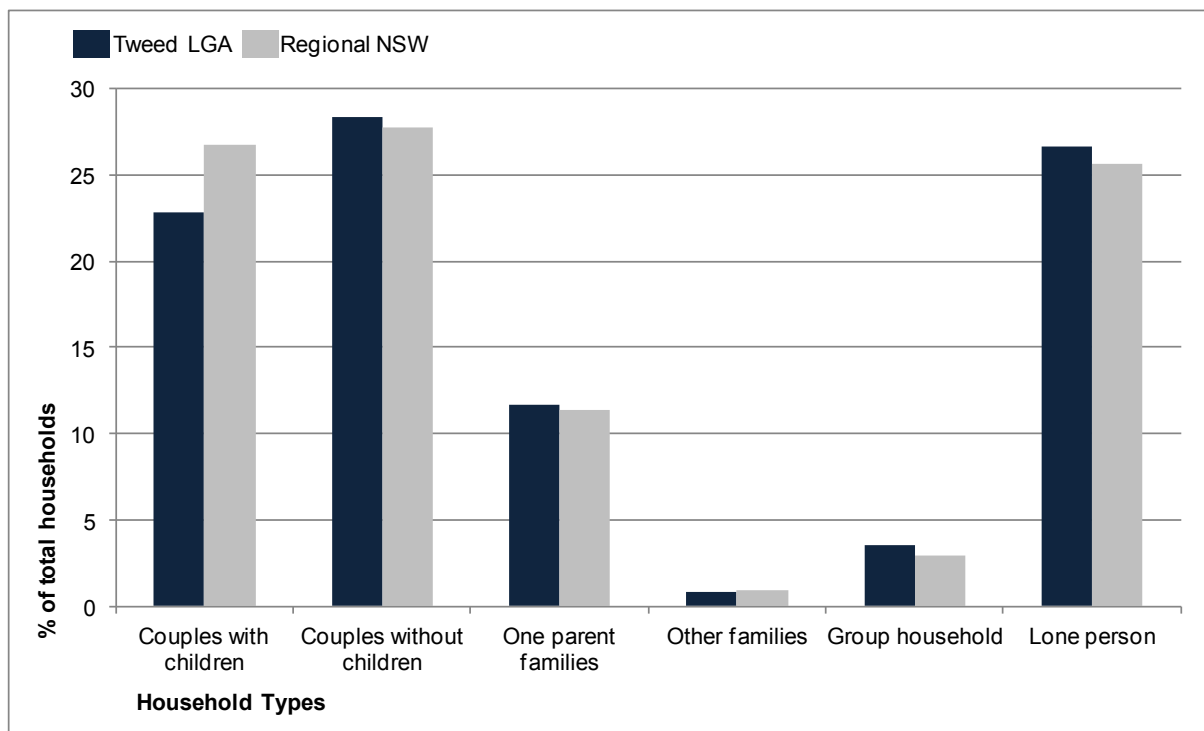


Source: Tweed Shire Council, Forecast ID, 2011

### Household Profile

Analysis of the household/family types in Tweed Shire in 2011 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a lower proportion of couple families with child(ren) as well as a similar proportion of one-parent families. Overall, 22.8% of total families were couple families with child(ren), and 11.7% were one-parent families, compared with 26.7% and 11.3% respectively for Regional NSW.

There were a higher proportion of lone person households and a higher proportion of couples without children. Overall, the proportion of lone person households was 26.7% compared to 25.6% in Regional NSW while the proportion of couples without children was 28.3% compared to 27.7% in Regional NSW.

**Figure 4.** Household Type, Tweed LGA 2006, 2021, 2031

Source: Tweed Shire Council, Forecast ID, 2011

### Cultural Profile

Analysis of the country of birth of the population in Tweed Shire in 2011 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a larger proportion of people born overseas, and a larger proportion of people from a non-English speaking background. Overall, 15.0% of the population was born overseas, and 4.6% were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 10.8% and 5.2% respectively for Regional NSW.

The major differences between the countries of birth of the population in Tweed Shire and Regional NSW were:

- » A larger percentage of people born in United Kingdom (6.4% compared to 3.7%)
- » A larger percentage of people born in New Zealand (2.9% compared to 1.1%)

### Indigenous

ABS Census data shows that in 2011, 3.5% of the Tweed LGA population identified as indigenous. This is an increase from 2006 which shows the overall proportion as 2.9%. It should be cautioned that for a number of reasons (i.e. participation in census) there may be undercounting of the actual number of indigenous people.

### Housing Cost and Affordability

The capacity to afford accommodation is strongly related to risk of homelessness. Table 3 below illustrates the median rents from 2001 to 2011 for Tweed LGA compared to the Rest of NSW which excludes Sydney. As can be seen over the last 10 years median rents have increased. Between 2006 and 2011 median rents in Tweed LGA has increased by 43% compared to 38% increase for Rest of NSW. When compared to the Rest of NSW the median rent in Tweed LGA has historically been higher.



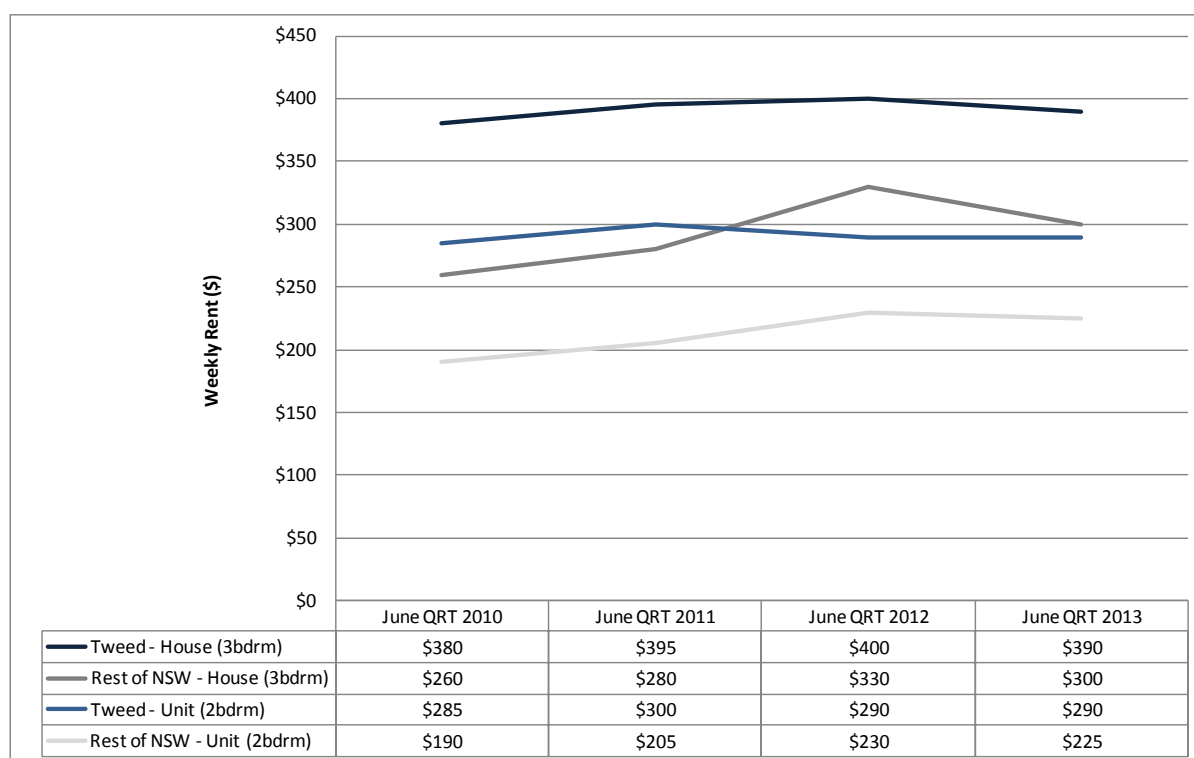
**Table 3.** Median Rent, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW\*, 2001 to 2011

Median Rent (\$/Week)				
	2001	2006	2011	% Change (2006 – 2011)
<b>Tweed LGA</b>	\$150	\$210	\$300	43%
<b>Rest of NSW (excl Sydney)</b>	\$120	\$160	\$220	38%

\*Rest of NSW excluding Sydney

Source: ABS Census Data, Time Series Profile Tweed LGA and Rest of NSW, 2011

Figure 5 provides more recent and detailed median rent data for the Tweed LGA compared to the Rest of NSW over the last 3 years (June Quarter 2010 to 2013). The data provides a breakdown of weekly median rent for a house and unit in Tweed compared to Rest of NSW. As can be seen, the median weekly rent for both a house and unit in Tweed is significantly higher when compared to the Rest of NSW. Between June Quarter 2010 and 2012 the median rents in Tweed have increased steadily indicating declining affordability in the region, however recent June Quarter 2013 data shows a decrease in median rents to similar levels experienced in 2010/2011 which could mean a reprieve in the Tweed housing market.

**Figure 5.** Median Rent, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW\*, 2010 to 2013

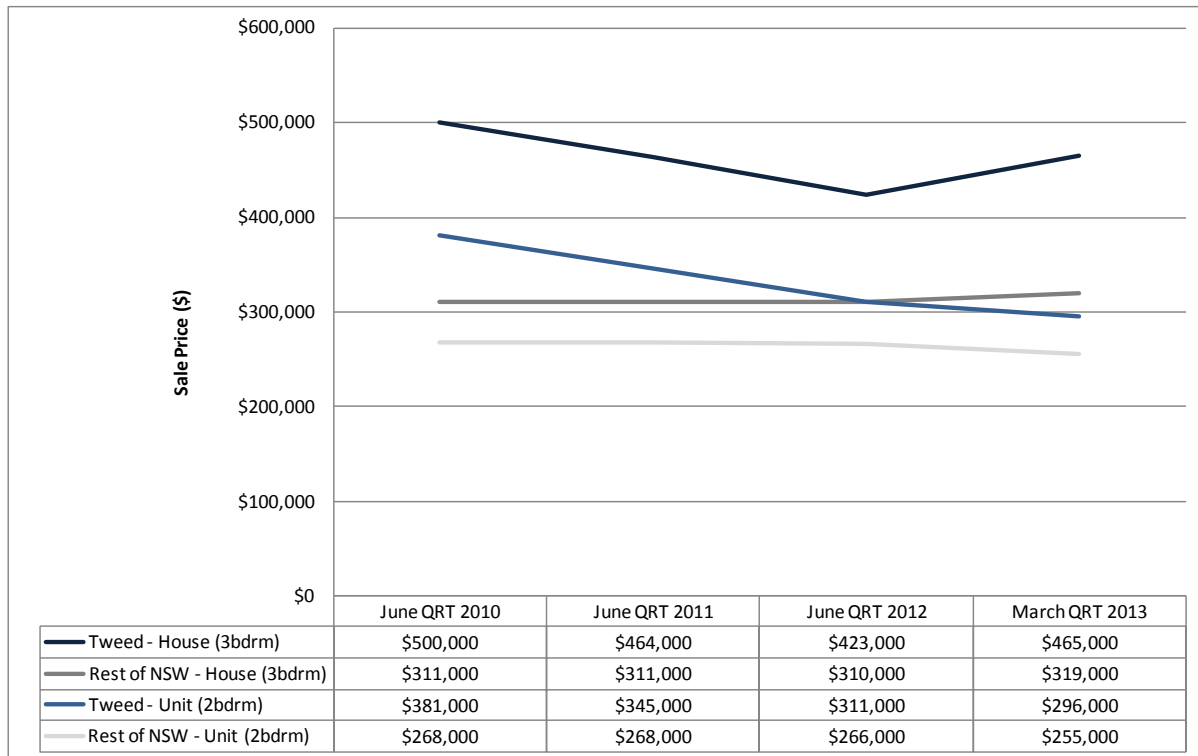
\*Rest of NSW excluding Sydney

Source: NSW Housing, Rents and Sales Report, 2013

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/About+Us/Reports+Plans+and+Papers/Rent+and+Sales+Reports/>

Similar to median rents, median sale prices in Tweed are significantly higher when compared to the Rest of NSW (refer to Figure 6). Whilst the cost of a unit has slowly declined over the last 3 years in Tweed from \$381,000 (June QRT) in 2010 to \$296,000 in 2013 (March QRT) the cost of a house has fluctuated with a decline between 2010 and 2012 June QRT and an increase from 2012 June QRT to March QRT 2013.

**Figure 6.** Median Sale Price, Tweed LGA vs. Rest of NSW\*, 2010 to 2013



\*Rest of NSW excluding Sydney

Source: NSW Housing, Rents and Sales Report, 2013

<http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/About+Us/Reports+Plans+and+Papers/Rent+and+Sales+Reports/>

*The Northern Rivers Social Profile* produced by Regional Development Australia in May 2013 provides useful information pertaining to housing stress. The following information has been summarised from the Northern Rivers Social Profile report:

- » Mortgage and rent stress are two housing-related stress measures calculated on a per household basis. Research published by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute classifies a household to be in housing stress if its housing costs exceed 30% of income and the household income is in the bottom 40% of income distribution (Rowley and Ong 2012).
- » In 2011, Tweed LGA reported 39.1% of households in rental stress and 16.0% of households in mortgage stress compared to 29.4% and 11.0% respectively in the Rest of NSW.
- » A recently published report of an annual study conducted by Anglicare Australia (2013) which surveys the affordability of rental properties for people living on government benefits and the minimum wage across a number of regions found no affordable rental properties for this population in the LGAs of Ballina, Byron, Lismore or Tweed.

## 2.2.1 Implications of Demographic Trends on Homelessness

A number of issues emerge from the demographic information including population pressures and increasing median rents beyond the increase for New South Wales generally (excluding Sydney). This information highlights that the rental market can face significant demands from people across different demographic groups. The result is often that people on lower, fixed incomes are less able to compete for private rental accommodation, in a broader context of long waiting lists for social housing. Without access to social housing, households on low, fixed incomes or jobless households may be unable to successfully enter the private rental market or sustain their tenancy because of affordability issues. This context forces some people into a degree of homelessness which can be difficult to overcome. At the very least, some households in this situation will be forced into locations where transport and other infrastructure is not adequate adding to the precarious nature of their circumstances as well as affecting the capacity to find employment and access needed services.

The broader issues driving homelessness also impact on the capacity of certain individuals and households to find appropriate, affordable housing and to sustain that housing. Complex, interrelated factors such as mental illness, drug and alcohol use and disability can result in people needing access to intensive, ongoing support to both find and sustain housing. This level of support is not available for everyone who needs it and therefore, some households who need housing may not either find housing, or sustain housing that they have managed to access. This is also an issue for some social housing tenancies where people are highly vulnerable and struggling to live completely independently. The broader housing pressures detailed in this section of the report are the context for homelessness because of the downwards pressure on vulnerable households when housing supply is constrained.

The factors contributing to homelessness are many and varied. The key factors identified through the demographic analysis are summarised below. Many are interrelated and can impact on or result from each other. The overall conclusion drawn is that all factors contribute to the demand and supply of accommodation and consequently the homelessness cycle.

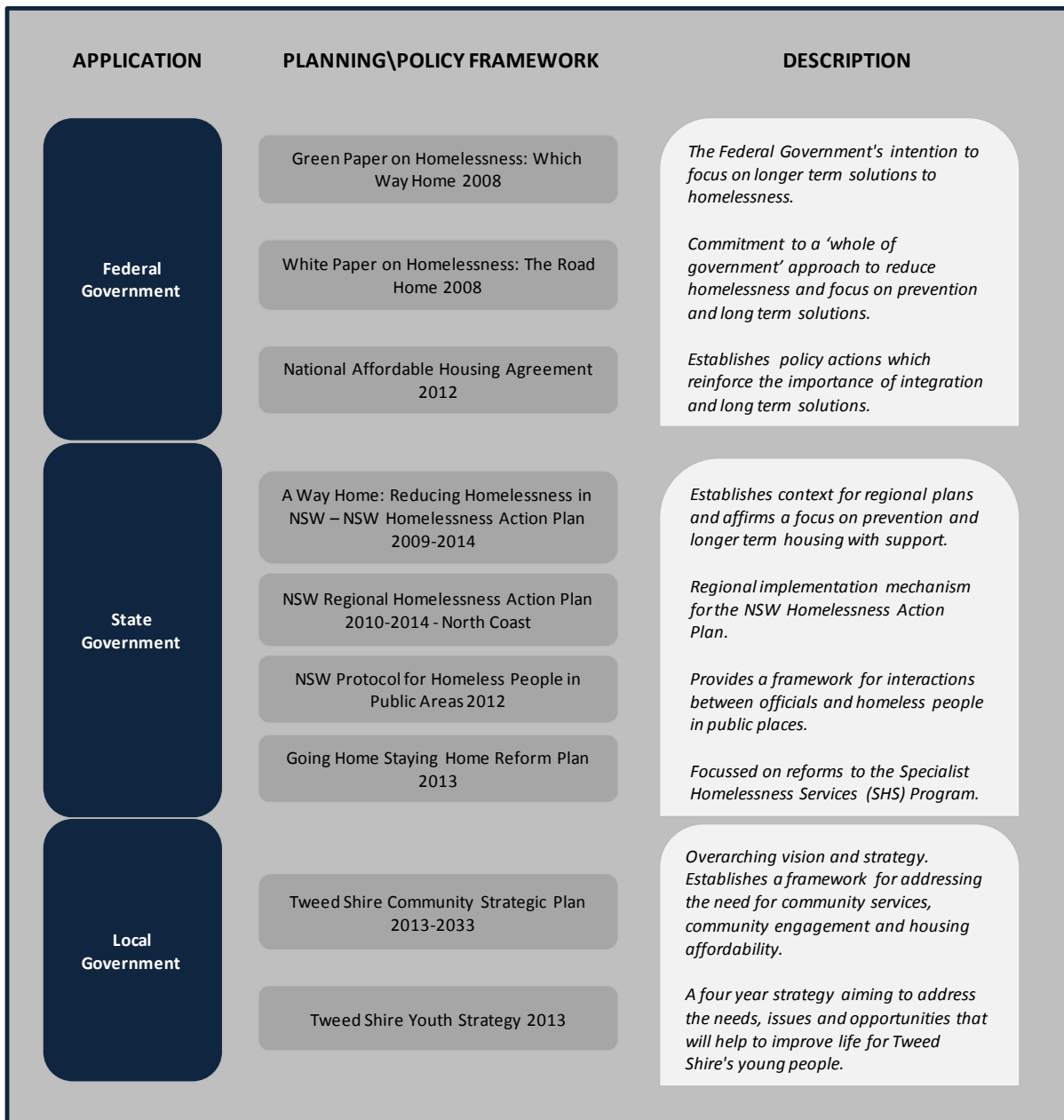
- » The expected population growth in the Tweed over the next 20 years together with the current high cost housing market will further exacerbate housing affordability issues currently felt in the region. As a result of population growth, there is a real possibility that the cost of rental accommodation will increase resulting in people on very low incomes (i.e. government benefits) being squeezed out of the private rental market. The high competition for private rental accommodation means that the “least desirable” tenants are missing out entirely. In this market context, young people who have never lived independently will have almost no chance of acquiring private rental housing, both because they cannot afford it and because they have no rental history.
- » Housing market data from Housing NSW shows the cost of housing in the Tweed is not affordable to households on low and moderate incomes. The high cost of housing in Tweed is likely to impact on homelessness in the following ways:
  - The increase in house prices will inevitably lead to high mortgages, which can result in mortgage defaults when people cannot afford to continue to make payments, and consequently leading to repossession.
  - The dispossessed people may join the social housing waiting list, lengthening it further.
  - The increase in the number of people seeking private rental accommodation will drive up demand for rental property and therefore drive up cost and reduce vacancies. People on lower incomes, dependent on income support may compete poorly in the private rental market compared to people exiting home ownership and those who have employment.

- The lack of affordable rental accommodation can force people into temporary accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels and motels, thereby increasing the demand on this type of accommodation.
  - People may be forced to couch surf, live in overcrowded accommodation or sleep rough in the absence of other available accommodation.
  - The shortage of affordable rental accommodation can contribute to homelessness, as it reduces the opportunities for people on lower incomes to find suitable housing in the Tweed.
- » The two age groups that are expected to increase as a proportion of the Tweed Shire population are young people aged 15 years and under and people aged 65 and over. From the consultation with service providers in the region it was noted that emerging groups of homeless people amongst others, include young people and seniors (refer to Section 3.2). The data shows that Tweed Shire has a larger proportion of people from New Zealand residing in the community when compared to NSW. This group was also identified as an emerging group of people at risk of homelessness due to their limited access to Australian social housing and housing benefits.

## 2.3 Policy Context

Homelessness is an issue that affects many parts of Australia. Whilst this study focuses on the Tweed Shire, it is important to acknowledge policy and planning efforts to address homelessness across all levels of government, which provide important context to this Study. The existing policy context is an important basis for a planned response to homelessness. This is a unique period in Australia's history where a significant new policy platform relating to homelessness has been launched and is now being implemented through state and regional level action plans. Many key stakeholders, such as the Tweed Shire Council, will be engaged in direct implementation and also participate in governance arrangements relating to these plans. Figure 7 below illustrates the federal, state and local planning/policy context for this study and the following sections provide a brief overview of each.

**Figure 7.** Federal, State and Local Planning/Policy Context



Source: Thao Ashford Planning Consultant, 2013

## 2.3.1 Federal Government Context

**Green Paper on Homelessness: Which Way Home: New Approach to Homelessness, 2008** – This paper was developed in the context that over 100,000 people were identified as homeless with over 50% of those aged under 25 and heralded the Federal Government's intention to focus on longer term solutions to homelessness. Until that time, the dominant approach to homelessness was through the Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program which provided emergency accommodation for a limited period of support (usually three months).

*Which Way Home* flagged the importance of all government departments and diverse agencies including mainstream agencies playing a role in ending homelessness. It began to establish the importance of homelessness less as the responsibility of a small, specialist sector and more as a responsibility of various government and non government agencies working in an integrated way.

### **Implications for this study**

*This paper highlights the extent that service system responses need to shift from crisis approaches to longer term and preventative responses.*

### **White Paper on Homelessness: The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness, 2008**

– This paper identifies three key strategies for addressing homelessness, which are:

1. Turning off the Tap: Services will intervene early to prevent homelessness
2. Improving and expanding services which aim to end homelessness: Services will be more connected, integrated and responsive to achieve sustainable housing, improve social and economic participation and end homelessness for their clients
3. Breaking the Cycle: People who become homeless will move quickly through crisis system into stable housing with the support they need so that homelessness does not recur

*The Road Home* outlines a commitment to a „whole of government’ approach that:

- » Demonstrates national leadership
- » Focuses on prevention and early intervention
- » Provides the support needed by homeless people to ensure increased economic and social participation
- » Encourages closer collaboration between services
- » Increases access to safe, affordable housing linked to appropriate support services
- » Recognises the complexity of homelessness and that different groups experience homelessness

### **Implications for this study**

*This paper was the context for all state and regional level plans for ending homelessness. It was important that this paper established targets for reducing homelessness and shifted the focus to prevention and long term solutions. This was based on a thorough review of evidence of what actually works.*

*Regional planning has supported dialogue at the regional level about what current resources and programs are available. The recent government changes at the Federal level may result in changes to the policy direction*

**National Affordable Housing Agreement, 2012** – Is an agreement between the Federal Government, all States and Territories as well as Local Governments. It establishes a framework for all parties "to work together to improve housing affordability and homelessness outcomes for Australians". The Parties to this Agreement are committed to:

- » Providing direction for a range of measures including: social housing; assistance to people in the private rental market; support and accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and home purchase assistance;
- » Working towards improving coordination across housing related programs to make better use of existing stock and under-utilised Government assets and achieve better integration between housing and human services, including health and disability services; and
- » Reducing the rate of homelessness.

#### ***Implications for this study***

*This agreement is important as a context for delivering social and affordable housing in Australia. It is mostly focussed on housing although it documents the agreement of all parties to reduce the rate of homelessness. It also focuses on improved integration between specialist and mainstream agencies as part of the solution.*

## 2.3.2 State and Regional Context

**A Way Home: Reducing Homelessness in NSW – NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009-2014** – Sets the direction for statewide reform of the homelessness service system to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness'. The State Plan seeks to improve early intervention to prevent and reduce homelessness in New South Wales. It looks to build and improve an integrated approach to homelessness and aims to bring all relevant agencies and services to work together to open doors and improve circumstances for people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. The State government has set targets as part of its policy framework including:

- » A reduction of 7% in the overall level of homelessness in NSW by 2013
- » A reduction of 25% in the number of people sleeping rough in NSW by 2013
- » A reduction of one third in the number of Aboriginal people who are homeless in NSW by 2013

#### ***Implications for this study***

*This Plan further establishes the context for regional plans and affirms a focus on prevention and longer term housing with support. It is positive that some governance arrangements exist and it will be important to establish the status of the regional governance group and what relationship if any it has to the Tweed area.*

**NSW Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2014 North Coast, 2010** – Is the regional implementation mechanism for the NSW Homelessness Action Plan. Regional Homelessness Actions Plans have been developed to identify effective ways of working locally to respond to local homelessness issues. They include local level implementation mechanisms for State-level policy responses to support reform of the homelessness service system as well as regionally-specific projects that reflect the characteristics of local homelessness, informed by evidence about successful strategies. Regional Homelessness Committees have been established to support the development and implementation of Regional Homelessness Action Plans.

**Implications for this study**

*The Plan provides an opportunity to consider existing funded programs as a basis for expanding service delivery and adopting effective models. Relevant projects identified include:*

- » North Coast Accommodation Project
- » Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness (Richmond/Tweed and Mid North Coast)
- » Young People Leaving Care Support Service
- » Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody

**NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Areas, 2012** - The protocol aims to provide a framework for interactions between officials and homeless people in public places. This protocol adopts the definition of primary homelessness as the most relevant for people in public space. The Protocol establishes that homeless people have rights to be in public places and to participate in public events. It also confers responsibilities on homeless people to respect others.

**Implications for this study**

*The interpretation and implementation of this policy may have significant implications for how rough sleeping is addressed. There is a challenge to ensure that engagement in public space links well with opportunities for other types of assistance including support and permanent housing.*

**Going Home, Staying Home Reform Plan, 2013** – This policy document is focussed on reforms to the SHS Program which it states has not been the focus of significant reforms in 30 years. Going Home Staying Home is a reform initiative that will make specialist homelessness services easier to access and deliver a better balance between early intervention, crisis and post-crisis support. It will ensure resources are allocated based on need – both in terms of location and client groups – rather than history, and focus on the quality of the services. It will also improve the structure and contracting of services and develop the SHS sector workforce".

**Implications for this study**

*The reform plan will have implications for Tweed and opportunities for innovation and remodelling service delivery may exist.*

### 2.3.3 Local Context

**Tweed Shire Community Strategic Plan 2013/2023** – The Tweed Shire Community Strategic Plan 2013/2023 is the peak visionary document for Tweed Shire for the coming decade. Its primary purpose is to document the community's priorities and objectives for the Tweed during this period. It has been adapted from the Tweed Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021, which was produced with considerable active involvement by the community. The Plan refers to public safety issues and the intention to target public safety through active involvement in the Community Safety Precinct Committee which may be relevant to the safety of homeless people or the perceptions of safety in public spaces used by homeless people. The document establishes that the community must be inclusive of minority groups e.g. youth, older people, aboriginal people and signals the intention to work with other stakeholders to achieve services responding to the needs of a range of target groups including disadvantaged and minority groups.



**Implications for this study**

*Objective 2.2 relates to improved opportunities for housing choice with specific actions focussed on supporting the provision of a wide range of housing types in new and existing urban areas including supporting the supply of affordable housing, and reducing housing stress and homelessness. There is also an action to advocate for services responding to a range of community needs (Objective 2.3.1).*

**Tweed Shire Youth Strategy, 2013 – 2017** This is a four year strategy aiming to address the needs, issues and opportunities that will help to improve life for Tweed Shire's young people. It includes shared solutions and priorities. It emerges from a national policy framework about the wellbeing of young people and fits with the Community Strategic Plan.

The Youth Strategy identifies a range of outcomes including that young people will have access to services and affordable places to live. It includes a demographic profile of Tweed and of young people in the region. Notably, some parts of the Tweed Region have quite high, relative levels of socio-economic disadvantage while in some areas there is a very high proportion of young people who are unemployed.

**Implications for this study**

*In the consultation phase, young people raised concerns about their safety in public space and of wanting to be safe from homelessness. Young people also indicated concerns about violence and drug abuse. The main action relating to homelessness and housing was for the Housing and Homelessness Network to facilitate solutions for youth homelessness. There were other related actions to do with public space, safety, transport, education and employment.*

## 2.3.4 Implications of Policy Context on Homelessness

The broader policy context is important as a foundation for service delivery, and the design of new directions to address homelessness. There is an emphasis on long term, permanent solutions to homelessness including exits to sustainable housing where people are supported to keep their housing. The policy context is also working to reform the SHS system to reflect a less crisis driven approach. Across all of the different elements of the policy context is strong acknowledgement of the importance of partnerships and integrated service delivery. As the report moves on to describe more about the service system and the specific issues relating to homelessness in Tweed Shire, one important question is how well the current service system achieves integration and what mechanisms either exist or could be developed to support stronger service integration into the future.

## 3.0 Homelessness in the Tweed Shire

During the consultation process stakeholders were asked about their understanding and views on homelessness in the Tweed Shire. It was commented that there are different drivers for homelessness throughout the Tweed region. For example, in Tweed Heads it was noted that one of the causes of homelessness is people escaping domestic violence and relative housing affordability compared to Gold Coast and in Murwillumbah declining housing availability and affordability, drug abuse in families and family breakdown seem to be significant factors. One service provider noted that they see a lot more homelessness in Murwillumbah than other areas of Tweed Shire. Stakeholders also reported that the majority of people sleeping rough are local people and are generally not transients from elsewhere.

It was consistently reported amongst stakeholders that there is a significant problem with homelessness and low housing affordability in the Tweed Shire and there is the perception that it is getting worse. The comment was made that homelessness in Tweed Heads South is much more hidden compared to the coast (Tweed Heads/Coolangatta) where people are more visible because they are attracted to the beach. It was reported that there are a lot of people couch surfing and living in cars particularly in Banora Point, Chinderah and Kingscliff...

Many stakeholders commented on the increasing number of people in Tweed Shire who are accessing services that are on the verge of homelessness (i.e. at risk of homelessness), for example parents and children living with extended family because of housing pressure. It was also reported that there is a large proportion of vulnerable people living in caravan parks that are at risk of becoming homeless due to caravan park closures (one service provider reported that 450 caravan sites have closed in the last 5 years) and high rent costs. It was reported that there are currently seven caravan parks operating in Tweed Shire and about 80% of tenants are on Centrelink payments. Around 30 to 40 people in each of the caravan parks seek help from services. Other issues reported regarding caravan parks are the quality of some of the accommodation provided and the insecure tenure attached to this type of accommodation.

An issue that was raised by a number of stakeholders in relation to homelessness in the Tweed is the use of public space particularly Knox Park in Murwillumbah. It was commented that the general public are afraid to use the park due to perceptions of safety and anti social behaviour. The example was provided that the presence of drugs and syringes in the park are a problem. Stakeholders reported that homeless people in Knox Park are very visible and consequentially are often blamed for anti social behaviour, vandalism etc., though they may not be the perpetrators.

When interviewed as part of the project homeless people reported how difficult it actually is to enter the private rental market and that waiting for social housing was sometimes a 10-year wait. They reported how hard it actually is to find a place to sleep and that carrying belongings all day trying to find somewhere is a constant struggle. People talked about being an extended family to each other and congregating because it is safer and you get some support from being part of a homeless community. Nonetheless being together in public space adds to visibility and leaves people vulnerable to being moved on or attracting negative attention.

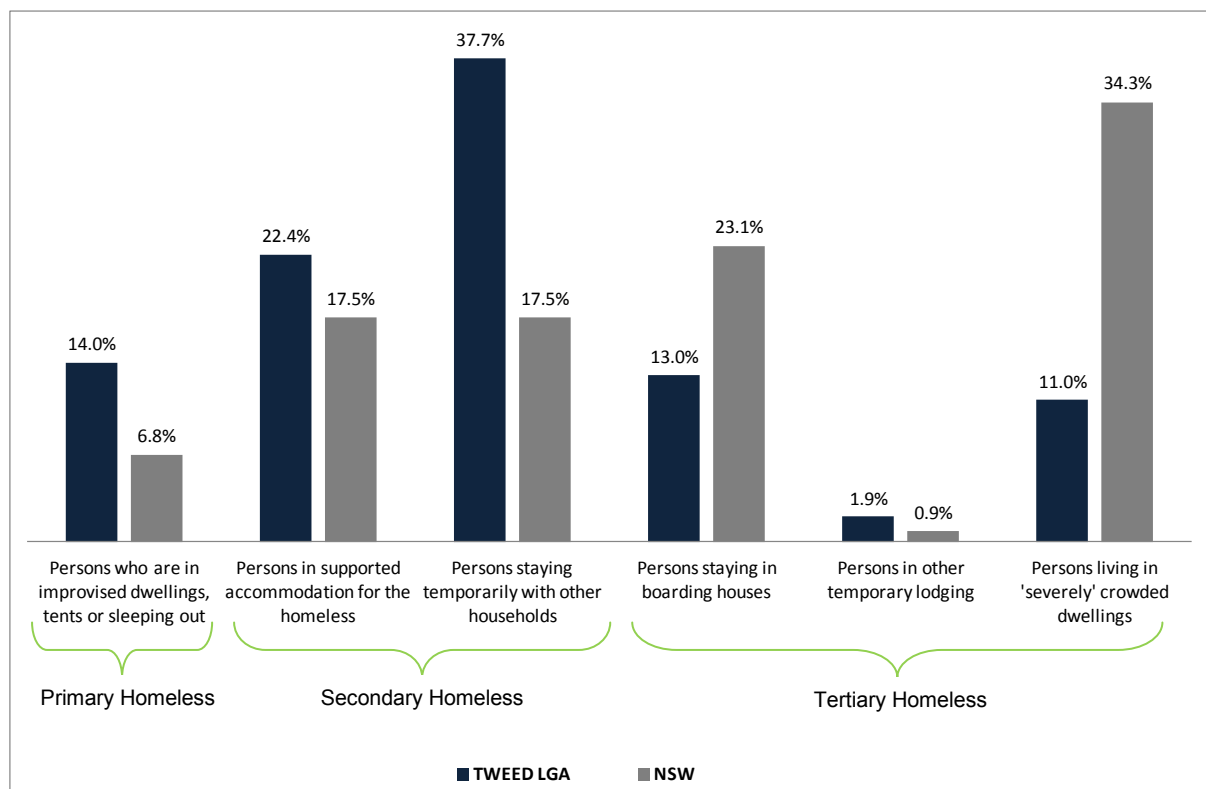
## 3.1 Existing Homelessness Population

According to ABS data, in 2011, there was an estimated 308 homeless people in the Tweed LGA. Of this number 14% were classified as primary homeless, 60% were classified as secondary homeless and 26% were considered tertiary homeless (refer to Figure 8).

Figure 8 shows the percentage of homeless people by operation group (as defined by the ABS) in Tweed LGA compared to NSW in 2011. The following comparisons were made:

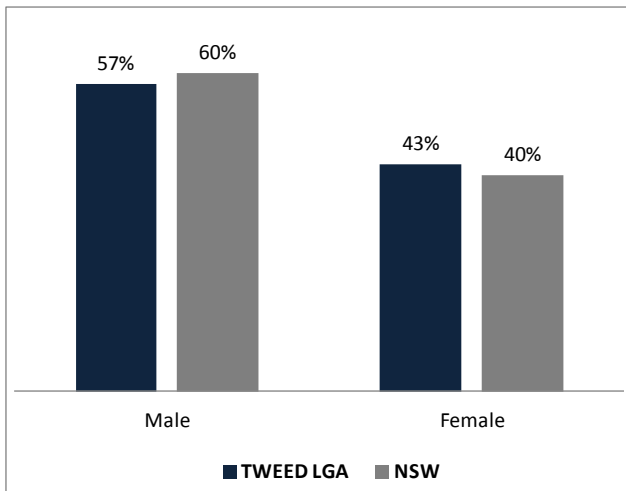
- » Tweed LGA has a higher percentage of primary homeless and secondary when compared to NSW
- » Tweed LGA has a lower percentage of tertiary homeless when compared to NSW
- » Within the secondary homeless category, Tweed LGA had a significantly higher percentage of persons staying temporarily with other households (37.7% compared to 17.5%)

**Figure 8.** Percentage of Homeless People by Operational Group, Tweed LGA, and NSW, 2011



Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

**Figure 9.** Percentage of Homeless People by Gender, Tweed LGA and NSW, 2011

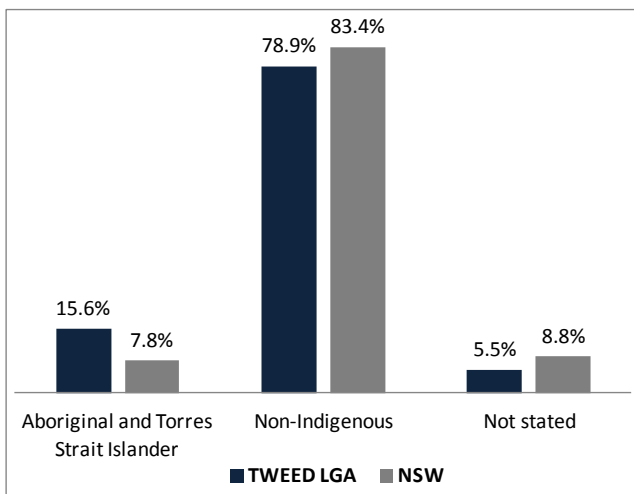


As shown in Figure 9, in 2011, 57% of homeless people in Tweed LGA are male and 43% are female. The data reflects historical trends where males have been the dominant group amongst the homeless population however it was reported through the consultation undertaken as part of this project that the number of homeless females is on the rise.

When compared to NSW, the proportion of homeless male and female are similar, although NSW has a slightly higher percentage of homeless males and a slightly lower percentage of homeless females.

Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

**Figure 10.** Percentage of Homeless People by Indigenous Status, Tweed LGA and NSW, 2011



It was reported through the consultation undertaken as part of this study that Aboriginal people are one of the largest groups of homeless people in Tweed LGA and it was noted that this group is increasing. The ABS data indicated that in 2011, 15.6% of the homeless population in Tweed LGA were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The proportion of homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Tweed LGA is doubled when compared to NSW. Consequently NSW has a higher percentage of non-indigenous homeless people when compared to Tweed.

Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

Homelessness Australia believes that the number of Indigenous Australians counted as “secondary homeless” staying with friends and relatives” on Census night significantly understates the problem of Indigenous homelessness that is masked by overcrowding.

### 3.1.1 Primary Homeless

As noted above, in 2011 the ABS indicated that there were an estimated 14% (43 people) of total homeless people living in improvised dwellings (primary homeless) in the Tweed LGA compared to 6.8% in NSW. Figure 11 shows the age group of the primary homeless in Tweed LGA compared to NSW. As can be seen, the primary homeless in Tweed LGA is dominated by people aged between 45 and 54 accounting for 39.5% of total primary homeless population. Other significant age groups include people aged between 35 and 44 (23.3%).

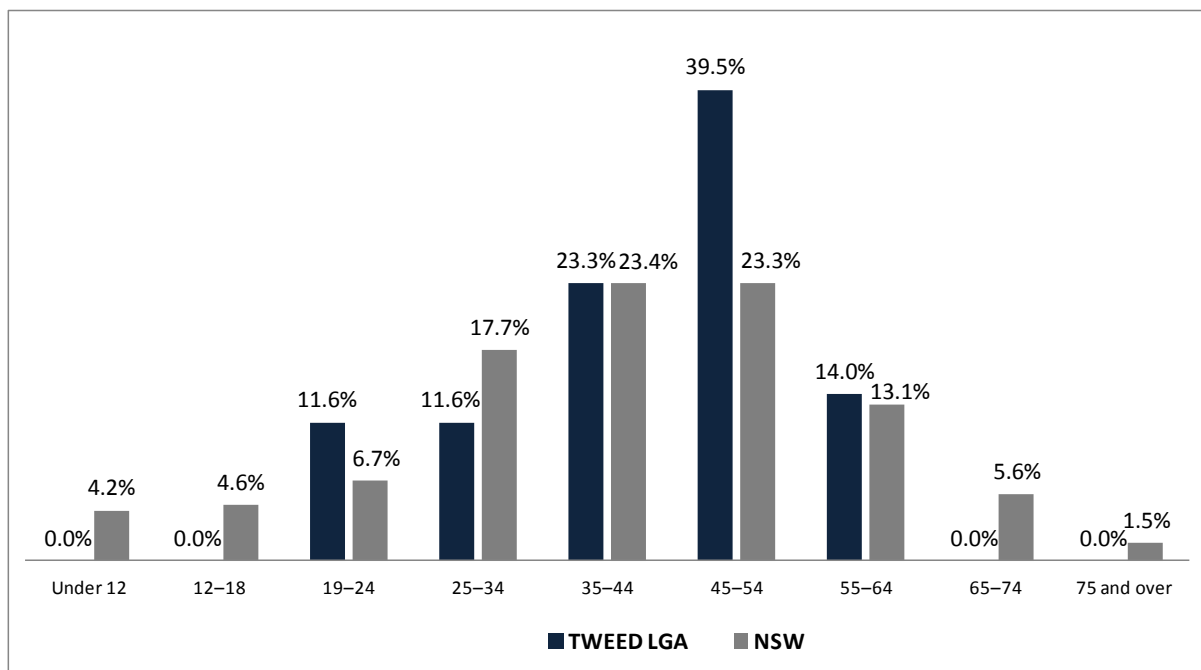
Further interrogation of the primary homeless data revealed the following:

- » 8.7% of primary homeless in Tweed are Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders, compared to 14.5% in NSW
- » 78.3% of primary homeless in Tweed are male and 21.7% are female

Information was sought from service providers and the homeless to supplement ABS Census data with detailed local information. Service providers interviewed commented that the number of homeless people has grown significantly over the last few years. Estimates of the number of primary homeless in the Tweed area from service providers consistently report around 200 people sleeping rough. Lunch with Friends, a meal service provider operating in the Tweed/Coolangatta region keeps records of the number of homeless people who access their services. Data received from Lunch with Friends indicated that anywhere between 65 to 100 people attend lunch at Goodwin Park (2013). Other anecdotal data gathered through the consultation on primary homeless include:

- » 55 visits from rough sleepers coming to Nullum House per day (repeat).
- » 10,500 visits from rough sleepers each year to Nullum House (repeat).
- » Ronnie, a homeless person suggested that there were around 200 people sleeping rough in Tweed.
- » 2 years ago it was estimated that around 150 homeless people were receiving meals now the numbers are around 300-350 homeless people receiving meals.

**Figure 11.** Primary Homeless, Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011



Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

Stakeholders identified the following hot spots where rough sleepers can often be found:

- » In cars/car parks (Stotts Island, Kingscliff and Coolangatta at the beach)
- » Knox Park
- » Lookout at Murwillumbah
- » Sleeping under ALDI
- » Razorback Park
- » Cemetery at night
- » Fire escapes
- » In containers at railway yard
- » Empty buildings in Murwillumbah

### 3.1.2 Secondary Homeless

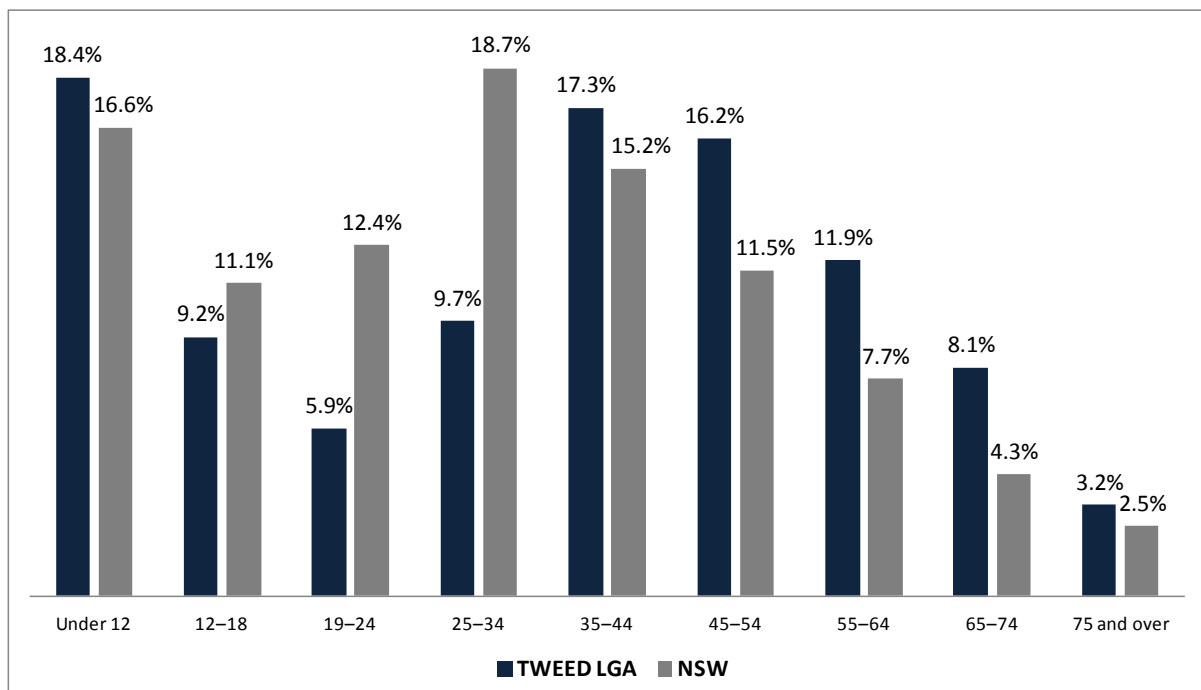
The secondary homeless comprise those in the SHS Program and SAAP and those staying with other households (couch surfing). Secondary homeless is the biggest homeless sub-group in the Tweed LGA accounting for 60% of the overall homeless population in 2011.

Figure 12 shows the breakdown of secondary homeless by age group for Tweed LGA and NSW. In Tweed, homeless children under the age of 12 made up the largest proportion of secondary homeless, accounting for 18.4% followed by homeless people between the age of 35 and 44, this group accounted for 17.3%.

Further interrogation of the secondary homeless data revealed the following:

- » 12.7% of secondary homeless in Tweed are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, compared to 11.8% in NSW
- » 55.9% of secondary homeless in Tweed are male and 44.1% are female

**Figure 12.** Secondary Homeless, Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011



Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

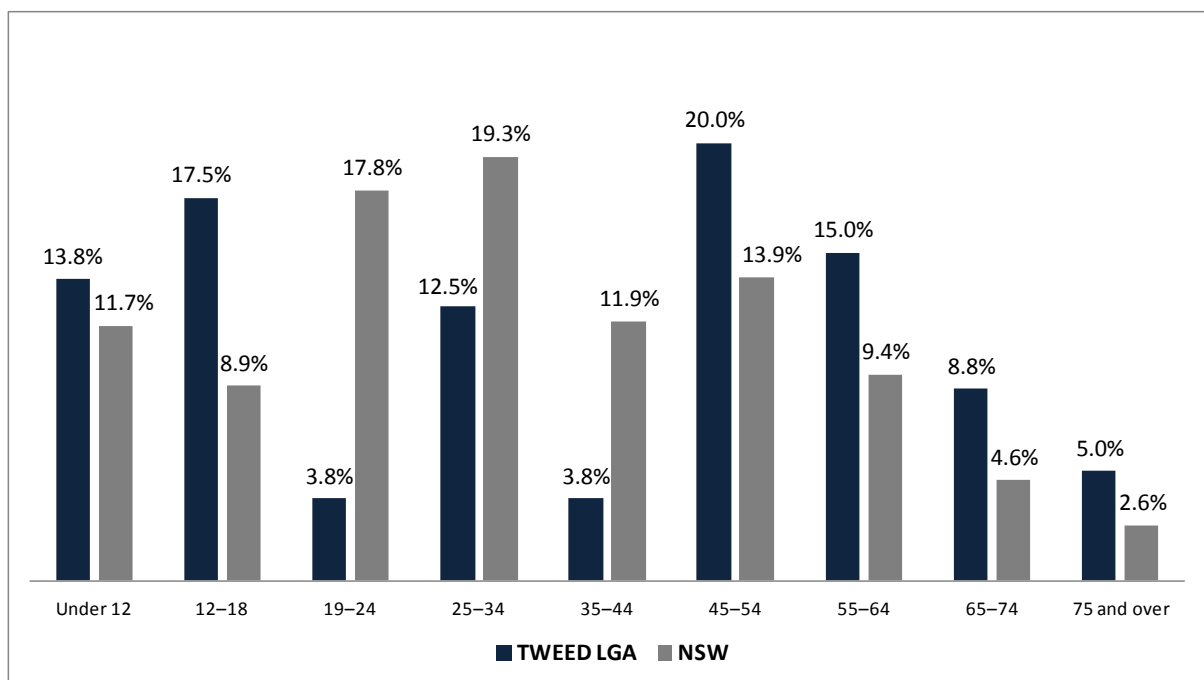
### 3.1.3 Tertiary Homeless

In this study the tertiary homeless population comprises people living in boarding houses, temporary lodgings and in severely crowded dwellings operationally defined as 13 weeks or longer. These people are homeless because they have no security of tenure and the accommodation does not have the characteristics identified in the minimum community standard<sup>6</sup>. As noted in Section 4.2, in 2011, 26% of the homeless population in Tweed were considered tertiary homeless. The two largest age groups within the tertiary homeless sub group in Tweed are homeless people aged between 45 and 54 (20.0%) and homeless youth aged 12 to 18 (17.5%) (Refer to Figure 13).

Further interrogation of the tertiary homeless data revealed the following:

- » 25.9% of tertiary homeless in Tweed are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, compared to 4.7% in NSW
- » 49.4% of tertiary homeless in Tweed are male and 50.6% are female

**Figure 13.** Tertiary Homeless by Age Group, Tweed LGA Compared to NSW, 2011



Source: ABS Customised Data for Tweed LGA, 2013 and ABS Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2011 NSW

<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain C, MacKenzie D (2009) Counting the homeless 2006: Western Australia. Cat. no. HOU 209. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## 3.2 Identifying Subgroups within the Homeless Population

Using ABS Census data as well as information collected through interviews with service providers and homeless people, different subgroups have been identified within the homeless population.

### Single Men

It was suggested by many stakeholders that single men are the largest sub-group within the homelessness population in Tweed Shire and make up a large number of rough sleepers. The following were reported on single men:

- » Mental health issues are the most significant issue with this group
- » Mostly single men 30-60 years of age with drug and/or alcohol addictions and/or mental health problems

### Single Women

Single homeless women were reported to be increasing in the Tweed Shire. The following comments were made in relation to single women:

- » Homeless single women have very complex needs and require a lot of support. This is a trend that is consistent nationwide not just in Tweed
- » There are a high percentage of women escaping domestic violence coming through this area
- » In 2012/2013 there was an estimated 788 women (walk-in) coming through the Murwillumbah Women's Shelter

### Families/Elderly

It was reported that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of families and elderly people in Tweed Shire at risk of being homeless due to:

- » Loss of employment
- » Escaping domestic violence
- » Single parents under a lot more pressure (in particular, mums and pregnant women)
- » Unaffordable rents in the private market (this was reported for all target groups)
- » Mothers and single fathers an emerging group since the parenting to New Start payments change

### Young People

It was reported that there is an estimated 170 young people homeless each night in Tweed Shire aged between 15 to 17 years of age. For young people who are homeless, the causes include family breakdown, generational trauma, drug and alcohol abuse (parents) and stress due to decreasing affordability. The following comments were made in relation to young people:

- » Young people are more inclined to couch surfing rather than access services which disconnects the young person from school/work and consequently becoming long term unemployed and potentially resulting in homelessness
- » Young people are also less likely to 'sleep rough' although one service provider reported seeing some 13-14 year olds sleeping in the cane fields in Murwillumbah
- » The Department of Communities do not have the capacity to look after this group and they are often referred to St Joseph's
- » Young people won't use adult homelessness services such as Nullum House (MCC service) and are more likely to commit offences (stealing to eat and for money) than access homeless services
- » Young people might be particularly vulnerable if they are leaving foster care or if they are in State care and have moved onto the streets.



### People from New Zealand

Stakeholders reported that an emerging group in the Tweed Shire is people from New Zealand. The issue with people from New Zealand who have come to Australia via the Trans-Tasman agreement is that they are not eligible for entitlements such as Centrelink, HECS support or social housing. Without income support, a crisis such as unemployment renders some households completely unable to pay rent. This can drive overcrowding with two or more families living together in one dwelling, further placing at risk the tenancy in that household. Many people from a Pacific Islander background are registered in the Census as being from New Zealand and there is recognition of high unemployment, significant housing stress and extreme financial disadvantage among this group.

### Aboriginal People

Aboriginal people have been reported by a number of stakeholders as one of the larger groups of homeless people in the Tweed Shire and it was noted that this group is increasing. It was commented by two stakeholders that Aboriginal people often face discrimination in the Tweed Shire private rental market. Use of public space can be influenced by culture and by lack of housing. There are benefits to a model of expert specialised public space liaison as a way of engaging with people, referring to services and understanding better the true drivers for homelessness.

## 3.3 Issues Affecting Homelessness in The Tweed

For many people the ‚cause’ of homelessness is an underlying collection of vulnerabilities produced by a combination of individual and structural circumstances. Individual circumstances include family breakdown, histories of institutionalisation, drug or alcohol addictions and poor mental or physical health. Service providers suggest that repeated episodes of homelessness and the length of time spent on the streets has a cumulative, traumatising effect, further compounding existing issues and further compromising an individual’s ability to maintain stable accommodation. This concept has been recognised at a national level: *“Trauma affects the choices homeless people make, affects their resilience, health, coping strategies and so on, all of which in turn affect their capacity to maintain stable accommodation.”*<sup>7</sup>

While recognising the impact that individual considerations have on homelessness, the impact of structural considerations should be viewed as central to discussions about homelessness. Structural considerations include factors such as poverty, access to employment and, critically, the affordability and availability of housing. *“People can’t house themselves, or be housed if for whatever reason, they are incapable of doing it for themselves, if there is no affordable housing... and whatever other reasons there are for homelessness, being unable to pay for accommodation is common to them all.”*<sup>8</sup>

The following have been identified through literature and consultation as key factors that can contribute to people becoming homeless in the Tweed Shire:

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, Dr. Catherine, *“Persistent Homelessness/Persistent Trauma”*, School of Social Inquiry, University of Technology, Sydney, accessed 30 September 2011, < [http://www.chp.org.au/party/articulos/results.html?filename\\_num=00221](http://www.chp.org.au/party/articulos/results.html?filename_num=00221) >

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, Denise, (2007) *“What Do the Published Figures Tell Us about Homelessness in Australia?”* Australian Journal of Social Issues, Sydney, Vol. 42 Iss. 3

## Social Exclusion

Social exclusion exacerbates a person's vulnerability to homelessness and takes many forms. Examples of social exclusion as a contributing factor to homelessness are evidenced by the over-representation of Indigenous people among the homeless population and the growing numbers of homeless from a CaLD background. These people may have limited knowledge of the help available or limited ability to access existing services. Even among socially marginalised groups, some may be more vulnerable to homelessness than others. For example, among CaLD communities, four groups have recently been identified as being at particular risk of homelessness, namely: those with a mental illness, female victims of family violence, refugees and asylum seekers and young people.<sup>9</sup> The most recent census also found that migrants were one of the fastest growing groups among homeless people overall and that people from certain countries were over-represented including India, China, Afghanistan and New Zealand. This growth was particularly in homelessness that involved overcrowding and the growth had clearly accelerated between 2006 and 2011 (ABS, 2012).

## Drug or Alcohol Addiction and Abuse

Drug or alcohol addiction and abuse increase a person's vulnerability to homelessness but may not be a sole determinant, with a recent paper by Shelter WA arguing that people without drug and alcohol problems are equally at risk of becoming homeless for long periods.<sup>10</sup> It seems likely, though, that drug or alcohol addictions and abuse contribute to an individual's inability to sustain tenancies or extricate themselves from homelessness. According to one service provider, people with drug and alcohol addiction seem to be over represented in Tweed.

## Mental Illness

Mental health problems are common among the homeless community and can provide the catalyst for homelessness. Like drug and alcohol addiction, it contributes to a person's degree of vulnerability and their capacity to maintain stable accommodation in the absence of tenancy support services. A recent RMIT University study of a sample of 4291 homeless people from two high volume services in Melbourne demonstrated that mental health was both a contributing factor to homelessness and a consequence of homelessness, with 15% of the sample having had mental health issues before becoming homeless and 16% of the sample developing mental health problems after becoming homeless.<sup>11</sup> Various studies illustrate that mental illness is often a factor even though the proportion of study samples proven to have a mental illness vary. Mental illness as a driver of homelessness is often because the nature of mental illness can leave people struggling to compete for scarce housing compared to other people. The functional consequences of mental illness are such that it can be difficult to sustain housing. The broader context is that there are no longer institutions catering to the needs of mentally ill people and deinstitutionalisation has been further consolidated by the provision of fewer hospital beds when people are acutely ill. The overall lack of housing, means that people with mental health problems struggle to find, attain and secure housing and they also struggle to maintain it.

Homelessness also contributes to mental ill-health in the form of conditions such as anxiety and depression which is a further complication. Whether mental illness is a cause or effect of homelessness (or a combination of both), the overall impact of mental illness and lack of access to services and support are significant in the capacity to reduce homelessness. Models such as supportive housing and Housing First assume that the

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9 Multicultural Mental Health Australia, (June 2011) "Homelessness among culturally and linguistically diverse people with a mental illness."

10 Shelter WA (2011) Background Paper for the Perth Metropolitan Homeless Response Workshop: accessed 9 November 2011 <http://www.shelterwa.org.au/documents/HomelessResponseWorkshopFinalReport.pdf>

11 RMIT News, (June 2011) "Research sheds light on homelessness and mental illness", 8 June 2011, accessed 22 July 2011, <<http://www.rmit.net.au/browse;ID=yg7kliywj94z>> It should be noted that this study involved examining client records based on data collection by workers in the services. Some clients did not consent to their participation and workers were relying on the client's own history of whether or not they had a mental illness. Sometimes people may not know their diagnosis or may have observable symptoms of mental illness without having ever been diagnosed.

provision of long term housing combined with intensive, ongoing support to deal with any issue (including mental illness) is the most effective approach. The fact that for some, mental illness emerges as a consequence of homelessness adds impetus to the urgency of preventative and early intervention models versus crisis responses. Taking into account all homeless people, having access to expert, intensive, holistic support which includes addressing mental health issues, will be key to the attainment and sustainment of housing.

According to service providers in the Tweed, homeless men with mental health illness are commonly undiagnosed and not medicated. It was commented that this presents challenges for the individual trying to access currently available assistance/services (targeted at mental health clients who are homeless) which requires a client to be diagnosed. It was also suggested by stakeholders that the closure of psychiatric institutions and the transfer of the management of mental health problems into the community has resulted in increased levels of homelessness and incarceration of people with mental health problems. The difficulties with eligibility of individuals without a formal diagnosis could be examined - some programs define eligibility as either a formal diagnosis or observable mental health issue even without a diagnosis.

It was reported that emergency services including the ambulance and police, work well with hospitals and mental health services including through referral protocols.

### **Family and Relationship Breakdown/Domestic Violence**

Service providers noted that untenable home environments are often the catalyst for episodes of homelessness among young people, variously exposing young people to long-term distressing behaviours, such as sexual, physical or verbal abuse or drug and alcohol abuse. Home environments may be unstable or overcrowded; relationships within the home may have irrevocably broken down. As noted above, homelessness in Murwillumbah is often a result of family breakdown and/or domestic violence. There were some reports that young people in foster care or leaving State Care are very vulnerable and that emergency services such as police can struggle with lack of support especially out of usual business hours when they locate a young person on the streets or in an improvised dwelling.

### **A Background of Institutionalisation**

Released prisoners are highly vulnerable to episodes of homelessness and often have pre-existing mental or physical health issues, including drug and alcohol problems, that leave them significantly more at risk of both homelessness and death than the general population if they are not supported once released from prison.<sup>12</sup> Ex-prisoners face the same social and economic conditions that lead to homelessness among the general population but their vulnerability to homelessness is exacerbated by the increased difficulty in accessing housing because of their involvement with the criminal justice system.<sup>13</sup> There can also be a lack of pre-prison release planning and coordination of services to prevent an exit to homelessness.

Stakeholders commented that people who come out of jail struggle with the basics of life and with integrating back into the community which often results in homelessness or re-offending to go back to prison.

The consultation also highlighted that some people are highly vulnerable when they leave hospital. Their accommodation might have ended during hospitalisation or their living situation may have deteriorated and no longer be available or appropriate.

<sup>12</sup>Hobbs, M, Krazlan, K, S Ridout, Mai, Q, Knuiman, M, Chapman, R (2006) "Mortality and morbidity in prisoners after release from prison in Western Australia 1995–2003", Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice No, 320 Australian Institute of Criminology

<sup>13</sup> FaHSCSIA, 'Prisoner re-integration, recidivism and homelessness' in "Ex-Prisoners, SAAP, Housing and Homelessness in Australia" accessed 24 August 2011

<[http://www.facs.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/saap\\_er\\_publications/exprisoners/Documents/sec\\_4.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/saap_er_publications/exprisoners/Documents/sec_4.htm)>

### **Cost of Living Pressures**

As discussed previously, the capacity to afford accommodation is strongly related to risk of homelessness. The housing market data from Housing NSW shows the high cost of housing in the Tweed is not affordable to households on low and moderate incomes and this was further supported by services providers and stakeholders consulted as part of this study. It was commented by service providers that current rent assistance is not enough to secure private rentals (the amount is currently \$120 a fortnight and this goes down to \$80 for shared accommodation) consequently people on Centrelink benefits do not have enough income to pay rent and/or maintain a tenancy in the private market and sufficiently cover the other costs of living. This is particularly true for people on Newstart allowance and for women who are transitioning to lower payments because children have left home or reached an age where payments reduce. One service provider indicated that the recent changes to parenting payments have resulted in some families becoming at risk of homelessness. One woman consulted during the project who was living in her car stated that her situation began when her children left home and she could no longer afford rent on her own.

### **Access to Social Support Services**

For many, the ability to access social support is an important factor impacting on their overall ability to maintain stable accommodation. Service providers suggest that many formerly homeless people rely heavily on existing social support networks to help them through the transition period and need to continue to access homeless services once housed to help them sustain tenancies. Many service providers agreed that the current three month support period for a homeless person who has been housed is not long enough and often results in eviction and transition back into homelessness. It was commented by service providers that ongoing support has to be provided (as long as it takes) to help a client stabilise and sustain tenancies.

There was a sense that whilst the Regional Homelessness Action Plan had delivered improved services to the Tweed Shire, most services achieved through this plan were located in other centres.

## 3.4 Existing Services and Programs for Homeless People in the Tweed Shire

An audit of existing services available to homeless people in the Tweed Shire was undertaken as part of this study. In addition to identifying existing service providers, the audit also captured key stakeholders such as council staff, rangers and other government organisations as well as community organisations and networks both within and outside of Tweed Shire, refer to Appendix B for complete list of services and stakeholders. Table 4 provides a summary of homeless services providers in the Tweed Shire. Overall the audit showed that the Tweed Shire has a broad range of homeless services including general support through services at Murwillumbah Community Centre, Fred's Place (St Vincent De Paul) and Red Cross. There are also a number of specific services targeted at women (Tweed Shires Women Services), mental health (Youth & Family Service Tweed Community Mental Health, Mental Health Services, New Horizons), youth (St Josephs Youth Service, Reconnect) and housing support (North Coast Community Housing, New Horizons, On Track). It was noted that there is an extensive number of individual food services operating in the Tweed region and across the border into the Gold Coast. Section 3.5 provides further analysis around the capacity/demand and barriers associated with existing services in the Tweed Shire.

**Table 4.** Summary of Service Providers

Service Provider	Description
<b>Murwillumbah Community Centre</b>	<p>Nullum House (old Murwillumbah Community Centre) is located next door to the new Murwillumbah Community Centre in Knox Park and offers crisis support (case management) for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Nullum House offers showers, hot meals, drop-in, blankets, swags, food to take-away, bingo, board games and weekly BBQ on a Thursday. The Centre is opened between 9.30am to 2.00pm Monday to Thursday.</p> <p>There is a case manager on site who advocates for homeless people and assists with many other support issues such as health, finances, emergency relief etc. Nullum House is an outreach location for visiting services for homeless people including legal aid (fortnightly), Centrelink (weekly) and others.</p>
<b>Tweed Shire Women's Services</b>	<p>The Tweed Shire Women's Services has recently opened an office at Tweed (December 2012) and is still building up a client base. Funding for this service is through Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Program - the service is focused on homelessness as well as domestic violence. Other services offered by the Tweed Shire Women's Services include, Keeping Them Safe Program, specialist Aboriginal worker (group that runs on a Wednesday), Communities for Children program and services to help with transitional housing.</p> <p>The Tweed Shire Women's Services operates 2 resource centres and 1 refuge including 6 transitional houses (3 located in Murwillumbah and 3 located in Tweed) where people can stay up to 6 months.</p> <p>There are five staff operating at the refuge and five across the two resource centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Referral intake</li> </ul>

Service Provider	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Managing transitional housing</li> <li>» Crisis intervention when the housing is full</li> <li>» Work with Queensland and New South Wales Housing departments if houses are full to get clients into something</li> <li>» Keeping them Safe</li> <li>» Domestic Violence Integration Service</li> <li>» Involved in Staying Home, Going Home (Murwillumbah)</li> </ul>
<b>Youth &amp; Family Service Tweed Community Mental Health</b>	<p>Youth and Family Mental Health Workers are part of Community Mental Health Services from Grafton to Tweed Heads and they provide mental health services to adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years, who are experiencing mental health problems. Youth and Family Mental Health Workers offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» mental health assessment</li> <li>» counselling and</li> <li>» individual intervention</li> </ul> <p>These services are provided to children and/or young people, their parents/ carers and families, in relation to a range of social, emotional, behavioural and mental health issues. Where appropriate, they liaise with the young person's GP, School Counsellor and other service providers to ensure positive outcomes from mental health intervention.</p>
<b>The Salvation Army Tweed Centre</b>	<p>The Salvation Army operates in the Tweed Shire and provides assistance to homeless people through food, clothing, electricity help and showers. The Centre has two paid workers who do interviews (space for about 12-15 interviews each day in Tweed and 15-20 in Murwillumbah).</p>
<b>Reconnect</b>	<p>Reconnect provides family support services (family therapy model) for young people at risk of homelessness through family breakdown. The main target group is young people aged between 12-24 who are at risk of homelessness. Clients are referred through Police, Centrelink, Education (schools), Health providers and others. Reconnect provides outreach from Murwillumbah Community Centre.</p>
<b>St Josephs Youth Service (Homeless young people)</b>	<p>St Josephs Youth Service provides the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Supported accommodation for 16-21 year olds (12 beds in 5 properties at Tweed Heads and 4 beds in 1 property in Murwillumbah - these are NSW Housing properties, leased to St Josephs);</li> <li>» Outreach services for 12-25 year olds (will visit homes);</li> <li>» Brokerage service for families ( to support young people))</li> <li>» Emergency relief;</li> <li>» Programs and workshops (work closely with schools to tailor programs for students such as drug and alcohol and others, depending on school priorities);</li> <li>» Youth centre (Murwillumbah);</li> <li>» CoolHeads Street outreach (Tweed Heads, Tweed Coast and Murwillumbah Friday and Saturday nights. Friday night activities such as fire twirling and others in Murwillumbah from 4.00pm-8.00pm.</li> <li>» 4 FTE youth workers plus 1 youth worker 4 days, 1 youth worker 3 days. Target of 450 clients, generally 150 of those at risk/ homeless</li> <li>» Clients are young homeless people and other young people. Average time in supported accommodation is 9-12 months. Houses are share</li> </ul>

Service Provider	Description
	houses with no 24/7 worker presence, however day time visits from workers and workers are on-call 24 hours.
<b>North Coast NSW Medicare Local Tweed Valley Branch</b>	<p>No direct services but Link Program and AAPS program (funding is available for direct service delivery) both work to improve services for homeless people.</p> <p>Medicare Local can be the „glue’ to bring things together, for example will fund psychologists, GP, nurses (health providers) to locate in other organisations/services (such as Fred’s Place) that provide direct services to homeless people and other disadvantaged persons.</p>
<b>Mental Health Service</b>	<p>Support network for Tweed Valley Clinic which has an intake and acute care service. The service has a triage system with an 1800 number and is the main mental health line number for assessment and triage. Further provides support for people after they come out of the clinic. The service also receives direct GP referrals.</p> <p>The service operates through the Tweed Byron Mental Health Service at the Tweed Heads Hospital and also has extended care service in Murwillumbah, Byron, and Mullumbimby..</p>
<b>Fred’s Place St Vincent De Pauls</b>	<p>Fred’s Place opened on the 6 June 2013 and is a drop in centre for homeless people. The centre is fully funded by St Vincent de Paul. Services provided through the centre includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Service manager (full time), case worker (3 days per week) and support worker (1/2 day per week)</li> <li>» Case management both structured and unstructured to link people into appropriate agencies</li> <li>» Food, dryers, washing machines, computers, free phone, showers</li> <li>» Services that outreach from Fred’s Place include Centrelink, doctor and psychologist as well as On Track.</li> </ul>
<b>New Horizons</b>	<p>New Horizons operates four main programs which include the Housing and Accommodation Support Services (HASI), Persons Helpers and Mentors Scheme (PHAMS), Indigenous Community Links (ICL) and Disability Employment Services (DES). The HASI program is targeted at people diagnosed with a mental illness and homeless or at risk of homelessness. Under the HASI program, New Horizons has placements for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 8 high care packages - criteria for this are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diagnosed with mental illness</li> <li>- Homelessness or at risk of homelessness</li> <li>- 16 – 65 years</li> <li>- Willing participant</li> <li>- CMH Case Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>» 3 medium care packages, 11 low care packages – criteria for this are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diagnosed with mental illness</li> <li>- Accommodated</li> <li>- 16-65 years</li> <li>- Willing participant</li> <li>- CMH Case Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Referrals from Community Mental Health (CMH) Case Managers, Clinicians and Public Housing</li> </ul>

Service Provider	Description
<p><b>North Coast Community Housing Company</b></p>	<p>The NCCH has 3 key programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Social housing</b> for people on the NSW social housing waiting list, While they must be on the wait list, the NCCH prefers to target households for social housing that would likely fail in the private rental market due to discrimination or other issues such as Aboriginal households and people with disabilities. The social housing tenants pay 25% of their household income in rent and the tenancy is reviewed twice a year to ensure continued eligibility.</li> <li>» <b>Affordable housing</b> is provided to low income (generally working) households. This tenancy is income-based and eligibility is reviewed annually. Tenants pay 75% of the average private rental market cost for their housing. These NCCH tenants are recruited through a number of mechanisms though not generally the NSW social housing wait list as these tend to be lower income working households who are not eligible for social housing.</li> <li>» <b>Partner organisations</b> (such as homelessness services and others) have access to about 10% of the NCCH housing stock to sustain the tenancies of high need households.</li> </ul> <p>The NCCH also partners with DoCs in the „A Place to Call Home’ program. In addition, the NCCH lease private rental properties (currently 30 properties) and act as a tenant management service for those NCCH eligible households that rent this stock.</p> <p>The NCCH provide 800 units of accommodation between Clarence Valley and the Queensland border. There are between 170-180 units of accommodation provided in the Tweed Shire Council area. This stock is mixed one, two and three bedroom and group accommodation in configurations including medium density. The stock varies in age and while the NCCH will modify housing to ensure disability access, some stock is difficult to convert due to age and design (for example units on upper levels where no lift exists).</p> <p>The NCCH identify single older women as a key housing client. They also prefer to move away from their current limited provision of transitional (crisis/short term) accommodation to longer term, sustainable housing solutions. The NCCH identify their affordable housing program as a growing program. They partner with real estate agents to access some of their housing stock and to ensure sustained and supported private rental tenancies.</p>
<p><b>On Track Community Programs</b></p> <p><b>On Track Far North Coast Family Referral Service</b></p> <p><b>On Track Community Programs - homeless service, tenancy support, case management</b></p>	<p>On Track Homelessness Services has 3 program areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» SHS - funded by the Department of Human Services, Community Services Division,</li> <li>» TSP - funded by the Department of Human Services, Community Services Division</li> <li>» NCAP - which is funded by the Housing Division.</li> </ul> <p>Support is provided to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The support offered may include: budgeting, advocacy and referrals to other services such as mental health services, gambling or counselling services. There is also a focus on connecting people to their community by supporting clients to engage</p>



Service Provider	Description
	<p>with other service providers.</p> <p>On Track owns and manages 230 properties, 100 of these properties are in Tweed and most are standalone units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 7 bed Hostel for mental illness</li> <li>» 5 bed hostel for men</li> <li>» Family units</li> </ul> <p>Under the Nation Building Scheme On Track received 138 transfers from Housing NSW.</p>
<b>Vibe Care Church</b>	<p>Vibe Care Church provides low cost staple foods like frozen meals, health products and personal care products. Most of the food comes from food bank and local outlets like Coles and Woolworths. Local farmers also provide fruit and vegetables. In addition to low cost food Vibe also provides free vegetables, bread, fruit and cakes.</p> <p>Vibe Care Church is setting up a medical clinic in the church which will be 100% bulk billing.</p>
<b>Food and Meals Distributors</b>	<p>There are a number of meal and food service providers/food pantries operating in the Tweed and across the border. The following food and meal providers identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <u>Agape Outreach</u> - Provide meals served from Coolangatta beachfront for homeless people. Provides groceries, clothing, blankets and toiletries. Transport provided to appointments, sourcing legal help and with housing applications. Runs some classes. Meals are served on Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 6pm.</li> <li>» <u>Ark'd House (Dream Centre Church)</u> - Operates Thursday from 1-5pm and offers staple foods - 5 items for \$5. People can pre-order \$25 of fruit and vegetables by 5pm Tuesday.</li> <li>» <u>Beachside Communicare Inc</u> - Wednesday 10am-12noon at Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre. This is a community pantry providing low cost food and personal care items for families. Free meals are provided at the Railway Park on Tuesdays at 12.30.</li> <li>» <u>C3 Church Currumbin Community Services</u> - Pre-loved fashion and food bank. Tuesday - Friday 8.30am-4.30pm. Saturday 9-1pm.</li> <li>» <u>Lunch with Friends</u> - Outreach meal service in Goodwin Park Coolangatta every Tuesday and Thursday 12 noon. Other services attend including Centrelink, allied health services, Homeless Health Outreach Team, RSL</li> <li>» <u>Powerhouse Christian Centre</u> - Red Cross Building, Knox Park, outreach meal service, Sunday from 4.30pm-6.30pm.</li> <li>» <u>You Have A Friend</u> - Free Breakfast on Sunday at 8.30am at Budd Park.</li> <li>» <u>Vibe Community Care Pantry/Vibe Care Church</u> - Pantry from Monday-Wednesday 1pm-5pm and Thursday 9-1pm. Grocery distribution centre Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9am-11am, Thursday 9am-12noon.</li> </ul>

## 3.5 Identified Service Gaps, Barriers & Opportunities

Through the consultation the following have been reported by service providers and stakeholders as gaps, barriers and opportunities for homeless people in Tweed.

### 3.5.1 Crisis and Short Term Accommodation

#### **Service Gaps and Barriers**

It was identified through this study that there is limited short term or crisis accommodation available in the Tweed Shire. Service providers consistently reported that due to the lack of crisis accommodation in Tweed, homeless people are often referred across the border to Queensland (Blair Athol) or to Byron Bay. There has been a policy shift away from crisis responses however the consultation revealed very significant barriers to permanent, secure housing including lack of supply options which can perpetuate the demand for a crisis response.

In the absence of short term/crisis accommodation in Tweed Shire, service providers are resorting to the use of Tourist Parks and caravan parks for homeless people. There are seven Tourist Parks (Boyd's Bay, Fingal, Kingscliff North, Kingscliff Beach, Hastings Point, Pottsville North and Pottsville South) on Crown land in the Tweed Shire and Council is the Trustee. Currently, Council's Tourist Parks policy dictates there is a 2 day stay period only. Further discussions with Council representatives revealed that the use of Council's Tourist Parks for short term/crisis accommodation is ultimately a decision for the Trustees (the Shire Councillors) but it is not recommended due to the liability issues for Council associated with mixing sites marketed as a holiday destination for families with unsupervised temporary accommodation for homeless people in crisis. It was further commented that many of the Tourist Parks are not in ideal locations for people trying access services who may have limited transport options. In addition to this, Council are not in position to dictate to the Tourist Park operators who are essentially profit driven and marketed to short term holidaying families. It is preferred that any caravan parks providing short term/crisis accommodation are at a different site to the parks that serve holiday makers.

#### **Opportunities**

In the absence of sufficient long term housing, the need for crisis and short term accommodation was identified. This resulted in services and homeless people suggesting a range of options that are at best 'harm reduction'. These included:

- » Designating land for vans with some minimum services such as showers, toilets and storage. This was sometimes referred to as special 'zones'.
- » Designated zones where people can camp with basic services.
- » Storage areas were requested by homeless people: *"we lose our stuff all the time and it can take us ages to build it up again"*. 24 hour access to lockers was viewed as very important. Homeless people felt that to identify the best locations required more thoughtful consideration and indicated that any decision about the location and form of storage should further involve homeless people.
- » Less expensive camping groups.
- » Modified shipping containers.

Another function of harm reduction measures such as providing tents and camping areas, can be to raise the profile of the issues. Sometimes the insufficiency of these measures can galvanise the community's concerns and increase the representation of these issues to decision makers. This raises the question of how homelessness as a 'crisis' issue can receive a higher profile and who could be the champions of this issue? This could link to the advocacy function of the TSHH Network and a greater role for local champions and leaders drawn from across the community including churches and businesses.

A key opportunity identified by stakeholders is to advocate for a purpose built facility for short term/crisis accommodation. One service provider commented that there is a property at 7 Faulkner Street in Tweed Heads South that would be a perfect site for crisis accommodation. St Joseph currently has tenancy however their lease is due to expire and it is understood that they are not looking at renewing.

The following opportunities were discussed with Councils Executive Management Team (EMT) in relation to the potential use of Tourist Parks for short term/crisis accommodation:

- » Council could consider a trial of short term/crisis accommodation in a designated Tourist Park. This short term/crisis accommodation use would need to be managed in conjunction with service providers. However, further discussions at a Councillor Workshop on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 indicated that this opportunity would not be supported by Council due to negative experiences at Banora Point Tourist Park in the past that have left Tourist Park operators reluctant to consider the use of the Parks for short term/crisis Accommodation.
- » There may be a possibility to negotiate an agreement with privately provided caravan/tourist parks in the Shire for short term/crisis accommodation sites within the park.
- » Council could consider encouraging the provision of a secured, supervised and controlled overnight parking site for cars and caravans for homeless and at risk people somewhere in the Shire.

## 3.5.2 Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation

### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

The lack of affordable and appropriate housing was identified through the consultation as a service gap that is making it difficult for services to house homeless people looking for accommodation. The following comments were made by service providers in relation to appropriate and affordable accommodation:

- » People are living together with diverse needs, and experience a number of challenging, intersecting issues.
- » Some people who are homeless do not necessarily have mental health issues/drug and alcohol issues and just need a safe place to live.
- » If a client turns down a place (accommodation) for whatever reason, they are penalised, making it difficult to secure accommodation into the future.
- » In New South Wales, you must be a family to get crisis (temporary) accommodation. Single men and women cannot access temporary accommodation.
- » There is a shortage of supply of social housing stock.
- » Housing availability and housing affordability are both issues that impact long term housing solutions.

Some people have insecure tenure such as where there is no lease and short notice of eviction is a risk. Overall there is a significant lack of affordable, appropriate social housing with homeless people and service providers describing that people will wait for years within this system. Access to private rental accommodation is severely limited for people on low, fixed incomes. The challenges of competing in a housing market with increasing

median rents and low vacancy rates is significant and people struggle to compete with people who have regular employment and a tenancy history. Services describe that many homeless clients are actually listed on the TICA database making it very difficult to secure a private tenancy. It is also usually the case that public housing waiting lists do not always include all homeless people. They sometimes do not apply and may not be working with support agencies to make an application. Without support, their application may have also lapsed.

### **Opportunities**

The lack of affordable and appropriate housing was identified through the consultation as a serious service gap. It was viewed by stakeholders that it was one thing to secure accommodation and another to sustain tenancies. Section 3.5.3 further discusses the gaps, barriers and opportunities for people to sustain tenancies.

While the combination of housing and support is essential to ending homelessness, most substantial homelessness strategies include a housing supply component. A review of housing supply options evaluated against actual housing demand, including rental stress data combined with waiting lists and numbers of homeless people, could be a starting point for quantifying an affordable housing strategy. An affordable housing strategy would need to involve key stakeholders from all levels of Government, the community sector, community and private sector.

Increasing supply of affordable rental housing may involve expansion of the current affordable housing programs where private investment in rental housing delivers an increase in stock and a tenancy management agent sustains long term tenancies for lower income households.

An opportunity also exists for Council to enable affordable housing development through initiatives such as dual occupancy relaxations (secondary dwellings) and reference to the State's Affordable Rental Housing SEPP. While Council has yet to develop an affordable housing strategy, such a strategy could increase the supply of affordable housing through a range of initiatives such as making Council land available for affordable housing development and relaxing development conditions for affordable housing outcomes.

## 3.5.3 Support for People to Sustain Tenancies

### **Service Gaps and Barriers**

The shift in some jurisdictions towards Housing First approaches and supportive housing recognise that the pathway out of homelessness can be shorter if permanent, long-term housing is secured as a matter of priority. The focus of support agencies is then to assist people with sustaining their housing options. This is still part of 'Housing First' which some describe as a set of practices informed by a 'mindset' and framework among practitioners and agencies that always puts housing first - in the search process, the establishment phase and once people are housed. The consultation clearly identified a need for more support options with the scope to assist people with wrap around assistance over the long-term. This is consistent with emergent practice world-wide where homelessness has measurably reduced. Examples of programs and services include Common Ground in New York (refer to Section 4.1) which combines housing supply and intensive support provided by agencies such as Urban Community Services. In the United Kingdom, the Supporting People Program is a contemporary example of an intensive support program linked to housing provision. This notion of ongoing, permanent support is demonstrated in a review of case management approaches by Gronda (2009). Gronda concluded that arbitrary time periods of support for homeless people were ineffective, particularly if there was an inherent focus on 'crisis'.

Overall the consultation found that the following is needed in Tweed Shire:

- » More support for clients to access and stay in private rental accommodation.
- » More support for clients to remain in social housing tenancies.
- » Support to assist engaging real estate agents and landlords with the goal of establishing and maintaining tenancies.
- » The provision of integrated housing and support to ensure the sustainment of tenancies. This could involve specialist support and housing organisations working together in very integrated ways to ensure the sustainment of tenancies.

### **Opportunities**

The following opportunities have been identified through the North Coast Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 - 2014:

- » North Coast Accommodation Project (National Partnership on Homelessness project). Multidisciplinary case management support including access to legal support to enable homeless people (prioritising families, Aboriginal families, women escaping domestic violence and people exiting correctional institutions) to establish and sustain a tenancy in service clusters on the Mid North Coast and Richmond/Tweed. Estimated client numbers: 200 per annum.
- » Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness (National Partnership on Homelessness project). The project will focus primarily on social housing tenants and will identify at risk tenancies at an early stage and put in place time limited case management to minimise CTTT action and eviction. Estimated client numbers: 350 people in Richmond/Tweed and 350 in Mid North Coast.

## 3.5.4 Services for Families/Young People

### **Service Gaps and Barriers**

St Josephs Youth Service is the main provider for homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness. As noted in Section 3.4, St Josephs provides a range of services spanning from supported accommodation, outreach services, brokerage services to emergency relief. Whilst St Josephs provides a much needed and valuable service, it was noted through the consultation that there are not enough services for young people and their families in times of crisis.

It was reported by service providers that young people are often confined by lower incomes and may not have a rental history. The combination of low income and no rental history makes it very difficult for young people to access the private rental market and consequently they become vulnerable to living in over-crowded circumstances or to couch surfing.

It was reported that after-hours access to intensive support for vulnerable young people on the streets or in squats was very difficult to access. There is a particular need for better arrangements to support and assist young people who have left foster care or State Care or who have come of age.

### **Opportunities**

The following opportunities have been identified through the North Coast Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010 - 2014:

- » Young People Leaving Care Support Service (National Partnership on Homelessness project). This project will provide housing and support to young people, including Aboriginal young people, on the North Coast who are exiting, or have exited out of home care, including generalist support, appropriate accommodation and access to health services, where required. Estimated client numbers: 45 per annum.
- » Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody (National Partnership on Homelessness project). This project will provide intensive support and accommodation to young people with complex needs exiting Juvenile Justice custody or at risk of entering custody while on community based orders due to homelessness. Priority will be given to Aboriginal young people. Estimated client numbers: 18-24 young people over 3 years and 4-6 families over same period.

Other opportunities identified from homeless young people included:

- » Working regularly with Tweed Shire schools to ensure that young people are aware of the service system that is available to support them and their peers should they encounter homelessness.
- » Providing tenancy support services that balance housing availability with personal growth initiatives to encourage young people to take responsibility and nurture opportunities.
- » Providing share house tenancies that have clear behavioural expectations and mechanisms to prioritise the safety of share house tenants at all times.
- » Head Space is proposed for Tweed Heads however lead agency is yet to be decided.
- » More linkages supporting young people on the streets who leave foster care.

### 3.5.5 Support for People with Mental Illness

#### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

It was consistently reported through the consultation that a major gap in the Tweed Shire is a lack of support for people with a mental illness. One of the barriers identified in this regard, is the eligibility for mental health services which often requires a formal diagnosis and clients without a formal diagnosis may not be able to access all services. People with a recurring mental illness may require ongoing intensive support to find and sustain housing

#### ***Opportunities***

The following opportunities have been identified through this study:

- » There is a need for mobile, active outreach for people with acute mental health issues. The only option for someone acutely ill or in a crisis is to present at a hospital.
- » There is a need for a protocol with mental health services with a clear point of contact to trigger an effective response, particularly in the context of a crisis.
- » Several other coordination structures and collaborative efforts are underway such as the Medicare Local's work to address improvements in the mental health system. These concurrent mechanisms need to be understood so that they avoid duplication and ensure participation by key stakeholders. It is important that the results and progress of this type of work is fed to the TSHH Network for ongoing monitoring and coordination.
  - Mental health forum being facilitated by Medicare Local to address improvements in the mental health system in the Tweed area.

- Medicare Local placing psychologists into Fred's Place (and places where homeless people are accessing existing services).
- » The Partners in Recovery Program (Federal funding) will be a good opportunity to meet the needs of homeless people with very complex needs.
- » Rough Sleepers Program operating in Lismore is a good program run by North Coast Community Housing funded by Housing NSW that is needed in Tweed, though the NCCH has indicated that its preferred future direction is to grow long term tenancies, rather than extend their small stock (4 units at Lismore) of transitional housing for rough sleepers.

### 3.5.6 Food Services

#### **Service Gaps and Barriers**

It was identified through this study that there are substantial food services operating in the Tweed Shire and into the Gold Coast region. This reflects the needs of residents for material assistance and is considered by the homeless people interviewed as enormously beneficial. Food services highlighted that they consider their role directly related to the sustainment of housing and prevention of homelessness: when people can access low cost or free food, they can prioritise their incomes for housing.

Homeless people mentioned that there are no breakfast services in the region during the week and that when you wake up at dawn or before, it is a long wait until Fred's Place is open at 10.00am which was a condition of the approval to operate the service by Council. Otherwise, homeless people often mentioned how important existing food opportunities were for social contact and for material assistance helping to reduce cost of living expenses.

#### **Opportunities**

The following opportunities have been identified through this study:

- » Regular reviews of food services, their location and focus may assist to ensure that the locations, target groups and focus are geared to actual and emerging needs.
- » There is scope for more coordination of food services which could be a function of the TSHH Network or a sub-group of the TSHH Network.
- » Regular analysis at the TSHH Network level about the broader systemic issues driving this intense demand for food services should be ongoing.
- » Shared database, a website for example, to alert others of free food available (hot meals, discounted food items).

### 3.5.7 Services for Public Space Liaison and Assertive Outreach

#### **Service Gaps and Barriers**

A number of core roles such as Parks Staff, Rangers and Police operate in public space and therefore engage with homeless people. It was identified through this study that there are no specialist public space liaison officers within Council or based in other agencies. This is a significant unmet need for active, assertive outreach into key locations where an assessment and referral is possible. There is a Homelessness Health Outreach Team in the Gold Coast Region and while the Tweed Community Mental Health Service has some outreach capacity for

clients being provided support and case management, there appears to be no specialist homelessness outreach services enabling contact and assessment in public space

Council staff such as Rangers report doing the best they can to offer people alternatives and indicated that if they have to exercise their regulatory role then the exchange always goes better if they can offer an alternative and some options to people about what they can do. This highlights the need for some training/capacity building opportunities to better support the role. It was suggested by Council staff that a publication listing all referral points with contact details would be very helpful.

### ***Opportunities***

Homeless people consulted considered homelessness liaison roles essential. This was not suggested to them by services but is a view that emerged from their own experiences of moving between various areas of public space. They were also supportive of the idea of leaders among homeless people having a liaison role too - to services and back to their peers. There could be scope to consider a more structured approach to developing this leadership through mentoring and training for example. Some models involve homeless people in providing information to their peers about where they can go for services, meals and support.

The following opportunities were identified through this study:

- » There are Australian examples of local governments that employ specialist public space liaison officers who engage with homeless people and actively refer them to services.
- » Other service systems and jurisdictions also have substantial outreach programs such as Street to Home which provides much needed capacity to work with people to assess their needs in public space and to move them as quickly as possible into a better accommodation situation.
- » It helps to have a good understanding and overview of homelessness 'hot spots' in public space. Several stakeholders listed various locations. These would benefit from mapping and monitoring as much as possible.
- » There is an opportunity to actively work with mainstream roles within Council and Police to develop a shared model for addressing public homelessness. Some joint discussion and training opportunities may assist an agreed approach to emerge. Some stakeholders suggested a protocol or Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and police on this issue.

## 3.5.8 Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation

### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

Many homeless people experience drug and alcohol addiction and abuse and sometimes these are combined with other factors such as mental illness and chronic diseases. One stakeholder suggested that people using drugs and alcohol are very vulnerable and seem to be over represented with a lot of referrals coming through the emergency department at the hospital. It was reported by service providers that the opportunities for drug and alcohol rehabilitation are very limited in the region.

### ***Opportunities***

The services and supports to address alcohol and drug addiction and abuse issues from a harm reduction perspective are important to the wellbeing of homeless people. The consultation highlighted the critical importance of these services being integrated with specialist homelessness services and mainstream services that are in contact with homeless people. The identification of these opportunities is important and the involvement and inclusion of these organisations in the TSHH Network would be very beneficial.



'Housing First' models and supportive housing approaches view housing as the first step from which point it becomes more possible to coordinate and provide various types of assistance including assistance with alcohol and drug addiction. The review of leading practice (refer to Section 4.1) conducted as part of this project highlights that support and housing models requiring clients to first address issues such as substance use are not as effective. Stable and secure housing has been demonstrated to be the best context for a range of other interventions designed to improve health and wellbeing.

Other opportunities identified included:

- » Explore better integration of drug and alcohol services with homelessness services.
- » Identify specific gaps and develop a proposal for the region to ensure drug and alcohol services are available.

### 3.5.9 Better Co-ordination and Collaboration

#### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

A principle existing structure supporting better coordination is the TSHH Network. The consultation process also highlighted that On Track is involved in a multi-agency case coordination group very focused on coordinated integrated service delivery to clients in the region. Although there is evidence of collaboration, the consultation identified some tension and differences of opinion based on underlying ideology and practice frameworks.

It was generally agreed amongst stakeholders that Tweed service providers operating in the homelessness space are well connected with each other and on a day to day basis there is a lot of collaboration between service providers. One stakeholder commented that this has become more evident in the last four months and it was suggested that this shift has come from Government policy which encourages services to work together. Whilst it was agreed that there is collaboration amongst service providers various stakeholders highlighted the need for improved coordination with the goal of better service integration.

Several stakeholders highlighted that true partnerships and collaboration are difficult to achieve because of the competitive nature of the funding environment. "We don't work so closely with regard to funding – it is each organisation for themselves – there are some instances where we do form consortiums i.e. Partners in Recovery Funding as part of a consortium with Mission Australia".

#### ***Opportunities***

The following opportunities have been identified through the course of this project:

- » There is a need to develop positive relationships with important stakeholders such as the Police – It was commented that the relationship with Police could be improved. There are issues for example concerning some 'hot-spots' such as Nullum House which is located in Knox Park in Murwillumbah. The Police currently do not attend the TSHH Network meeting and their future attendance and involvement may be one step towards improving communication and the capacity for partnerships.
- » Some Council staff highlighted the importance of the relationship with Police in managing some of the challenging exchanges with homeless people sleeping rough and in vans. It was suggested that in addition to the State Government Protocol about public space, a specific protocol or MOU could be developed between Council and Police to guide responses, communications and problem solving. This could be supported by some regular (but not necessarily frequent) meetings and even some joint training to build relationships and joint capacity.

- » There is acknowledgement that there could be better coordination between some service providers and improved partnerships with hospitals, GPs, community mental health and other key players and stakeholders not necessarily part of the SHS Program.
- » Police, emergency services, mental health services and the emergency department of the hospital have a protocol and work well together. There may be opportunities for extending this to the participation of other key homelessness and housing services.
- » While partnerships and collaboration were generally seen as occurring, there were some reports of meal services not necessarily referring people into established, specialist services. This could be an area of capacity building given that so many people are presenting for meals. The engagement of people at meals is clearly an opportunity for contact and assessment. Some models elsewhere involve specialist services (when they are available) doing outreach to vans and meal events. This provides opportunities for people to connect with services and for meal services to see specialist agencies in their roles which may improve understanding and the future capacity for referrals. In either case, there is an opportunity to develop referral protocols and pathways between meal services and the wider system and this may require some capacity building including training and supportive information materials.

### 3.5.10 Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council

#### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

Real Estate Agencies play an essential role because so many people rely on the private real estate market for a housing option. At the same time, the consultation highlights that many homeless people are TICA listed preventing them in many cases from being offered private tenancies. Stakeholders considered engagement with the Real Estate Industry as important to building the capacity of that sector to understand the issues and consider working more closely with support agencies and agencies with the capacity to head lease private sector tenancies. Some private tenancies fail because agents perhaps are unaware of the available support services that can assist people. Opportunities for engagement with the real estate industry were viewed as important in the consultation and as both an issue and opportunity. North Coast Community Housing identified good working relationships with real estate agents as critical to their housing model. They head lease 30 private properties and indicated that real estate agents have an incentive to partner with them as they deliver generally secure and long term tenancy periods with no unpaid vacant occupation and guaranteed tenancy support and property maintenance.

Core Council roles in the maintenance of parks and the management of protected areas means that Council officers regularly interface with homeless people. The consultation with these Council officers highlighted that these internal stakeholders are very concerned about the issues and have a significant role to play at the point of contact and even as a source of information and referral. There was a clear analysis that if Council staff „move people on’ that the problem only appears somewhere else. There was definitely the view that „moving on’ is no solution to the issues. Homeless people even report that the risk of being moved on or actually being moved on keeps them looking for new places to stay which may in fact make outreach, contact and assessment more difficult. There was a genuine interest among Council staff in being clear about organisational policy and about how to conduct their relationship with homeless people. This was seen as needing a clear direction and framework to guide roles, activities and the direct relationship with both homeless people and other local constituents using parks and protected areas.

Council staff also thought there was a lack of internal coordination mechanisms to support community development, parks staff and rangers to engage with each other to continue to identify issues and solutions to

problems as they continue or emerge. There was a genuine willingness to do this and to even do some training together so that while the roles remain diverse, the direction and approach are similar.

It was reported by Council staff that they are reluctant to move belongings and are concerned about the impact of that activity. There was a clear understanding that if you engage positively and offer people solutions instead of just telling them what they cannot do, the interaction is much more constructive. There are some instances where the threat of violence is perceived and staff withdraw quickly, putting their personal safety first. Staff observe significant mental health issues and some homeless individuals seem completely isolated from any assistance or support that could help. Staff suggested a resource book with contacts would help them to refer people to homelessness services and other options.

Overall, internal coordination, the need for training and more support for staff directly engaged with homeless people and the need for more information about referral pathways is a priority.

The current New South Wales Protocol on public space guides the role of Police. Council staff perceived there were some instances where Police support and backup was essential. There was a view that this engagement of Police by Council staff could be more seamless if there was a protocol or memorandum of understanding between their agencies. Police grapple with the implementation of the protocol balanced with the expectations of the broader community. They operate within the protocol unless someone is a danger to themselves or others. They report receiving complaints from community members. Police have observed families, homeless and living in vehicles and a range of factors driving homelessness such as domestic violence and mental illness. While there are protocols between the police, mental health services and the hospital, there are some service gaps which make it difficult offer people alternatives in terms of crisis accommodation. Police are in contact with young people who have run away from foster care or who are leaving foster care and are homeless and living in vulnerable situations. It is difficult to achieve referral pathways into support especially after hours. Police have observed people on the streets who need medication but don't have it.

### ***Opportunities***

The following opportunities have been identified through the course of this project:

- » Council considers the development of a homelessness policy, protocol and strategy with a focus on core roles and leading practice.
- » Council consider assisting the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network develops stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination). This should include a purpose/vision, objectives, roles, responsibilities, a prioritised action plan and decision making provisions.
- » Undertake a specific project to engage real estate agents more directly in identifying private housing options (this could be a project for the TSHH Network).
- » Engagement with real estate agents also focuses on providing referral information to the support sector with the goal of sustaining tenancies.
- » Police and Council officers meet together and develop a protocol for engaging and responding to homeless people.
- » Shared training involving police, Council officers and the real estate industry is explored.
- » Explore the opportunity for police to participate in the TSHH Network.

## 3.5.11 Transport to Support Services

### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

The Tweed Region faces some serious constraints in terms of transport access. The location of key services provides good access for some communities but is an access barrier for others. There is a sense that people are struggling sometimes to deal with distance and access with the availability of public transport a definite issue. There is a sub-set of homeless people with cars and vans who use parks and other public land to park and sleep at night. This is not legal and people also report moving around a lot to avoid attention. Some services report being asked for emergency funds for petrol so that people can move their vans and avoid attention or respond to an order to move on. Homeless people reported that camping grounds can cost \$270 per week for a site.

Overall transport accessibility and costs were viewed as a definite barrier to accessing services and to the housing search process. People reported that this was especially the case between key locations such as Murwillumbah and Tweed where cost and availability may both be the issues. People described spending a lot of time daily looking for a place to sleep because of the challenges involved in staying in the same place. If they don't have a car, this search is done on foot.

### ***Opportunities***

The following opportunities have been identified through the course of this project:

- » Consider a specific project to identify community transport options to augment the public transport system and improve the access of homeless people to services.
- » Establish HACC service eligibility of homeless people to identify whether they are eligible for transport HACC assistance.

## 3.5.12 Education and Community Awareness

### ***Service Gaps and Barriers***

One of the challenges identified through the consultation is the lack of awareness of homelessness in the community. It was commented by several stakeholders that homelessness needs a whole of community response – “it is not just homelessness services, we need Council on board, due to use of public spaces, hospitals, and the general community”. It was strongly agreed amongst service providers consulted as part of this project that there is a misconception about who is homeless, the example was given that when people think of homeless people they immediately think of rough sleeping males with alcohol and drug problems which is not the case.

In addition to community perceptions of homelessness, there were suggestions amongst service providers that there is a lack of awareness of what other services are available to support homeless people.

Homeless people also reported there was a stigma to being homeless and sometimes community attitudes were expressed to them. Some stakeholders identified community complaints about homeless people and there was also evidence of some community concerns expressed about the presence and location of new services responding to homelessness.

**Opportunities**

The following opportunities have been identified through the course of this project:

- » The TSHH Network can be a leader in educating people in homelessness – help to shape and change policy.
- » Provide training for some of the key stakeholders such as Police and Council rangers and parks officers.
- » Strengthening community, strengthening the extent that people have a voice – through the promotions of case stories of homeless people, similar to the „three steps’ short film.
- » Good advertising at bus stops, some simple messages about what services are available.
- » Consider a specific project around education and community awareness for example projects such as the one Fred’s Place is looking to undertake around demystifying homelessness.
- » The project’s engagement with homeless people highlighted the capacity for leadership among homeless people who could be engaged and play a role in community education activities through a peer leader program.

## 4.0 Responding to Homelessness – Good Practice Responses

As part of this project it was seen as critical to identify good practice responses to addressing and ending homelessness. This section includes a brief summary of leading practice case studies of initiatives that have been implemented in other jurisdictions with applicability in Tweed. It was also seen as important to explore the role of Council and in this regard, a review of how other Councils have responded to the issue of homelessness and what are some of the opportunities for Tweed Shire was undertaken.

Through this study it was identified that the TSHH Network is a key group that can be a strong leader in co-ordinating and advocating for better outcomes in the sector. On this basis, opportunities have also been identified for the TSHH Network.

### 4.1 Case Studies

Table 5 provides a review of leading practice case studies that exemplifies initiatives that have been implemented in other jurisdictions to respond to homelessness. A description of each initiative is provided including an analysis of the application of the initiative in the Tweed Shire. It should be noted that these initiatives may already be implemented to some degree through various services in the region.

**Table 5.** Leading Practice Case Studies

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
<b>Assertive Outreach</b>	Assertive outreach is often used when working with hard to engage clients and refers to the activity of actively seeking out and engaging with clients in their own environment, rather than waiting for the person to request a service or waiting for another agency to make a referral. Assertive outreach involves repeated, intensive, highly co-ordinated and flexible support for clients with longer term needs, with a focus on engagement and rapport, building up, often over the long term, strong	<a href="http://apo.org.au/node/23617">http://apo.org.au/node/23617</a>	Depending on the scale of the issues in public space, this could be an important model. Agencies might already do assertive outreach.  A model such as Street to Home and also public space outreach/liaison workers could be beneficial. Utilisation of the

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
	<p>relationships. It can be used in the contact and assessment phase and also as part of ongoing support.</p> <p>Assertive outreach is often used within Street to Home models which are also used within Common Ground New York and Micah Projects in Brisbane.</p>		<p>TSHH Network to discuss and map existing outreach capacity could assist in determining any possible efficiencies and opportunities to review models or build workforce capacity for assertive outreach at the contact/assessment phase as well as during ongoing support to sustain tenancies.</p> <p>Some regions have also worked to provide/generate training options to support workforce development in emergent areas of practice such as these.</p>
<p><b>Housing First</b></p>	<p>This is an underpinning principle or assumption that drives supportive housing. Again it is based on the notion that the most important thing to do is to provide housing first as a base from which all other issues are addressed. This approach does not require people to address other issues such as alcohol or drug related issues or behaviours.</p> <p>Housing first also applies to sustaining existing tenancies where a person is at risk of homelessness. When a tenancy is at risk of breaking down, housing first principles and practices guide practitioners to work with people on any issue that is driving that breakdown and focussing in a very clear way on sustaining the tenancy above all. This approach underpins programs such as Tenancy Sustainment Teams in the United Kingdom and the Supporting People Program also in the United Kingdom. This approach takes a holistic view of what can drive a tenancy to breakdown including hoarding and squalor, rent arrears, deteriorating mental health, alcohol related behaviours, domestic violence.</p>	<p><a href="http://desc.org/housingfirst.html">http://desc.org/housingfirst.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.beyondshelter.org/aaa_initiatives/ending_homelessness.shtml">http://www.beyondshelter.org/aaa_initiatives/ending_homelessness.shtml</a></p>	<p>This is the principle and framework that drives supportive housing. Supportive housing is a practical manifestation of housing first.</p> <p>Supportive housing can occur in purpose built premises or across scattered sites. It is likely that existing housing providers are already working with some support providers to achieve permanent housing solutions with wrap-around support. The existing multiagency case coordination group is also a model for tenancy sustainment where housing has been achieved. Again this model and its prevalence and relevance could be explored for Tweed through mechanisms such as the TSHH Network and case coordination group.</p> <p>Again, this way of working, sometimes described as a 'mindset' focussed strongly and clearly on getting and sustaining housing, could be the subject of workforce development opportunities that help the sector grow together towards this approach.</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
<b>Integrated Case Management</b>	<p>Integrated case management occurs across a multi-agency context where there is a range of resources and services that people need which need to be able to stitch together robust support plans which are implemented well to reflect the range of needs a client has. This approach usually relies on various agencies having agreements with each other about how they will work together to integrate their service delivery.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/icm/pdfs/participants.pdf">http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/icm/pdfs/participants.pdf</a></p>	<p>Service integration is acknowledged as important in the current policy context. To achieve this requires some 'structuring up' from general Network meetings to a more robust framework around how agencies will actually work with specific clients. This might be achievable through the existing case coordination group and may also become an action of the TSHH Network. Integrated case management can only be achieved through practical mechanisms that actually engage agencies in developing a support and housing plan that is agreed to. There are various ways to do this including case coordination meetings. Some jurisdictions also support this way of working through training across agencies in multi-agency work.</p>
<b>Rough Sleepers Initiative</b>	<p>In 1999, the Federal government in the United Kingdom set up the Rough Sleepers Unit and set a target to reduce the number of rough sleepers by two thirds by 2002. This work was comprehensively evaluated by Randall and Brown (2002) who highlighted the following elements contributing to success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The target was achieved by November 2001 and an assessment of remaining rough sleepers showed that people have very high support needs including mental illness and hard drug use</li> <li>» The initiative put in place 'Contact and Assessment Teams' with a focus on intensive street work undertaken through a persistent approach including contact every day with rough sleepers (often called assertive outreach)</li> <li>» The methodology included ways of enumerating rough sleepers as a baseline against which to measure progress</li> <li>» An interventionist approach with the goal of moving people</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155817">http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155817</a></p>	<p>Similar elements to supportive housing but a broader policy driven strategy that included some important elements including targets, enumeration strategies, assertive outreach and persistent support to sustain tenancies. It also achieved some reforms of building based outreach such as drop in centres.</p> <p>Australia has a national policy, the status of which is unclear with the recent Federal election. While this policy has been influenced by elements of the Rough Sleepers' Initiative it appears that not all funded projects have sufficient capacity in the Tweed Shire. This might be an area needing more advocacy. Part of the New South Wales Homelessness Policy includes an overarching governance group, with senior government participation. Representation of Tweed Shire's issues to this body may be a starting point.</p>



INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
	<p>into accommodation from where more detailed assessment could take place and where support is provided proved effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Some reforms of day centres and hostels to focus on assessment towards long term housing and support</li> <li>» The funding of housing stock providing permanent options</li> <li>» Support provided to prepare for a permanent tenancy and through Tenancy Sustainment Teams with a focus on ensuring that sufficient help is provided and that tenancies are maintained.</li> </ul>		
<b>Supportive Housing</b>	<p>This is an approach with a substantial history in America and Canada where long term housing is provided with strong partnerships involving support providers to ensure wrap around, holistic support. The focus is on sustaining tenancies and permanently ending homelessness. This approach challenges a 'transitions' or stairway approach which assumes people have to graduate from rough sleeping to crisis accommodation to transitional accommodation to permanent housing. This stairway approach often refers to people as 'not housing ready'. Supportive housing makes the move into permanency with the assumption that people can work on a host of other issues underpinned by permanent housing.</p> <p>Some supportive housing models custom build medium and high density dwellings which are often essential in urban areas because of limited land options, and the need to achieve sufficient yield to meet needs and create economies of scale. Some regional areas also custom build larger dwellings as well and one example in Australia is in South Australia where a supportive housing model has been constructed within a mining community context.</p>	<p><a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510">http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-KIT/SMA10-4510</a></p>	<p>There are some urban and regional examples of supportive housing in Australia and many in the United States and Canada. The basic ingredients of permanent housing with robust support are the key elements that seem widely relevant to all solutions to homelessness. The integrated collaborative aspects are the extent that housing and support agencies work together guided by formal agreements. See also Housing First.</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
	<p>Leading examples in Australia are driven by Common Ground - a national alliance of Common Ground projects where a high density building project results in a mix of units for rough sleepers and for people on lower working wages as a way of achieving a social mix.</p> <p>Common Ground Brisbane is based in South Brisbane, has 140 units and a support contract was awarded to Micah Projects to provide very intensive support to prevent evictions. These buildings often include a mix of retail, commercial and community spaces to improve the relationship with the wider community it is based in.</p> <p>Custom built projects attract a lot of attention and often dominate thinking about supportive housing but one of the key providers of supportive housing in New York (Common Ground) also deliver housing in what they call scattered sites. The stock is more decentralised and the support arrangements are just as robust. This can suit a range of demographic groups such as families although custom built higher density family accommodation can also work well with well designed buildings, located well in relation to schools, parks and transport.</p>		
<b>The Foyer</b>	<p>The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute examined models of good practice in meeting the needs of homeless young people in rural areas (Beer et al, 2005). This report highlighted some of the particular issues impacting on young people in rural areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Difficulties finding employment</li> <li>» Tight rental markets</li> <li>» Intergenerational discrimination (where young people in rural</li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://www.homelesshub.ca/Resources/Documents/FoyerToolkit1.pdf">http://www.homelesshub.ca/Resources/Documents/FoyerToolkit1.pdf</a></p>	<p>Could be a possible model depending on the demographics of homeless people in the region.</p> <p>Young people have been identified as one target group with unmet needs. This would require further consideration about this model by key stakeholders as a basis for further action.</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
	<p>areas experience negative consequences from the reputations of their families)</p> <p>» Few available support services.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Beer et al, 2005:1</i></p> <p>These researchers concluded that a housing and support model developed in Europe (the Foyer Model) has considerable potential as a way of responding to homelessness among young people outside of capital cities. This approach integrates housing, education, employment and counselling thus providing a holistic response (Beer et al, 2005:2). There is some diversity in how Foyer Models have been implemented. Some modify existing hostels while others have been purpose built.</p> <p>There are examples of Foyer projects in urban and peri-urban areas as well.</p>		
<b>Under 1 Roof</b>	<p>Under 1 Roof is a Brisbane based consortium of 10 agencies working to integrate front-line service delivery. It was originally brokered by the Rotary Club of Fortitude Valley and in 2006, and then through Brisbane City Council was able to develop a multi-agency model of case coordination. This involves fortnightly case coordination meetings where clients with multiple and complex needs are referred (subject to informed consent). The practitioners at the table include support and housing providers who then develop a housing and support response. A key agency is identified to lead and coordinate implementation.</p> <p>Under 1 Roof includes a learning and development program in recognition that better service integration requires workforce development and capacity building. It is also based on evidence that</p>	Documents attached	<p>Depending again on the consultation and the extent that front line service integration about clients is needed or an issue, this could be a model to consider.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive resource manual and report outlining the methodology and outcomes over an 18 month period to refer to. The existing interagency and case coordination group in Tweed are consistent with this model and could be the basis for further discussion about its relevance. It does include a substantial learning and development component to increase the extent that agencies develop shared frameworks and have the capacity to work in a more integrated and less competitive way.</p>

INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION/RELEVANT ASPECTS	LINK/SOURCES	APPLICATION IN TWEED
	<p>workers who are trained together build shared frameworks for practice.</p> <p>Under 1 Roof is an inner urban initiative. Face to face meeting on a fortnightly basis may be less feasible for regional areas however technology may be able to assist. The consortium has a formal agreement between the agencies.</p>		
<b>Vulnerability Index</b>	<p>The vulnerability index was developed by a Doctor called Jim O'Connell to assess the vulnerability of rough sleepers as a basis for prioritising the allocation of housing and support. This was based on some assumptions that vulnerability was usually driven by more than one complex factor such as chronic disease, mental illness and/or drug addiction. This approach to assessing vulnerability and prioritising services and housing is also partially informed by evidence that rough sleepers and other very vulnerable people can miss out on available resources because they require more intensive outreach and support.</p> <p>The VI has been used around Australia including New South Wales and Brisbane to register rough sleepers and assess their vulnerability. The register is a centralised database which is used to input data collected as part of the registry process and which also tracks when people are housed. It can help to facilitate collaborative work between agencies and is also a source of data and evidence to demonstrate outcomes (successful or otherwise).</p>	<p><a href="http://www.jedc.org/forms/Vulnerability%20Index.pdf">http://www.jedc.org/forms/Vulnerability%20Index.pdf</a></p>	<p>Depending on what the consultation yields, this could be a possible opportunity for the region. It is a trade-marked product which has to be used under strict conditions but there is momentum for its use in various hot spots in Australia.</p> <p>There are also other triage tools if more uniform assessment of people is a goal of the interagency. The main reason to do this is to start to better understand the client group and to assess their relative need including where there is a higher risk of adverse outcomes.</p>

## 4.2 Tweed Shire Council

In 2012, a study was undertaken by the University of South Australia<sup>14</sup> to conduct research into the role of local government in addressing homelessness. The study was funded by FaHCSIA as part of its work in meeting the Australian Government's targets with respect to homelessness, as set out in the White Paper on Homelessness, The Road Home. Findings from this study indicate that to date, local governments in Australia have not played a major part in addressing homelessness although there are some stand-out examples of where Councils have either historically or currently play a multi-faceted role in addressing homelessness. Importantly, the recent decisions of COAG have committed all tiers of government – including local government – to reducing homelessness.

The report concludes that local governments have important impacts on homelessness and that there is scope for them to more actively engage with the homeless agenda. While accepting the considerable diversity between local governments, some of the critical ways that local governments interact with homelessness include:

- » Some local governments take a direct role in addressing homelessness and assisting with accommodation, services and support;
- » Local governments may play an important part in the regulation of boarding houses and other accommodation used by homeless persons;
- » Local governments may lack the resources to make a significant impact on the direct provision of homelessness services but they can assist in other ways – through information provision, via pro-active planning policies and through engagement with the community sector;
- » The planning policies of local governments can assist or impede the provision of affordable housing that constitutes exit points from homelessness; and,
- » Local governments may enact by-laws that exclude homeless persons from their territory

The report suggested there are some critical ways in which Councils could increase their efforts in the area of homelessness including:

- » 'Planning for affordable housing, including setting targets for the provision of affordable housing;
- » Advocating for the most vulnerable within society, including the homeless;
- » Liaising with welfare services in their region, and acting as a point of referral when necessary, while supporting the individual services through information provision, networking, etc;
- » Reviewing by-laws to remove the capacity for negative impacts on homeless persons;
- » Seeking to liaise with other local governments in their region, and other public sector bodies, to share best practice and discuss concerns around homeless and its manifestation;
- » Developing formal and informal policies on homelessness, to ensure that every staff member and every member of council is able to have the most positive interaction possible with homeless persons;
- » Educating staff and council members on the nature, impacts and challenges of homelessness; and,
- » Assisting social housing providers through land grants or other forms of assistance in the development of affordable housing.'

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<sup>14</sup> Andrew Beer and Felicity France, 2013, The Role of Local Government in Addressing Homelessness, University of Adelaide Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning.

The following table includes examples from other Councils involved in housing and homelessness.

**Table 6.** Examples of Council Responses to Housing and Homelessness

COUNCIL	COUNCIL INITIATIVE	POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TWEED COUNCIL
<b>The Council of Capital City Lord Mayors</b>	» Active support for Homeless Connect Australia	» Provide assistance for a Homeless Connect event in Tweed Shire
<b>Brisbane City Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Employ Public Space Liaison Officers</li> <li>» Community development staff work on homelessness projects including regular e-news clearing house, facilitation and participation in Homelessness Community Action Plans</li> <li>» Community Housing Partnerships Program releasing Council owned housing to be managed by community housing providers</li> <li>» Facilitate Homelessness Connect</li> <li>» Contribute to Homeless Hot Spots in Brisbane Project.</li> <li>» Community grants programs which support homelessness responses (among other initiatives)</li> <li>» Supported the emergence of Brisbane Housing Company including land and cash contributions</li> <li>» Some planning provisions through City Plan and specific Local Plans supporting affordability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Support for Homeless Connect.</li> <li>» Retain community development capacity to support coordination</li> <li>» Maintain role in TSHH Network</li> <li>» Advocacy to other levels of government and particularly to ensure housing resources and support resources through the Regional Homelessness Action Plan</li> <li>» Consider a strategic approach to land banking and land identification for housing and homelessness responses</li> </ul>
<b>City of Sydney</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Run Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) [phone information and referral service]</li> <li>» Homeless brokerage program</li> <li>» Street Count</li> <li>» Public space liaison officers</li> <li>» Street drinking strategy</li> <li>» Mobile free food services policy and voluntary accord to help with coordination</li> <li>» Homelessness Unit within Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Engage with HPIC to determine if call(s) come from the Tweed area and what capacity they have to respond (consider a protocol)</li> <li>» Work through the TSHH Network to consider a street count</li> <li>» Consider public space liaison officer role</li> <li>» Assist with coordination of food services</li> <li>» Create a specialist role as part of the community development area</li> </ul>
<b>Parramatta City</b>	» Homelessness policy and Homelessness implementation plan including targets	» Develop a homelessness policy, protocol and strategy for Tweed Shire

COUNCIL	COUNCIL INITIATIVE	POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TWEED COUNCIL
<b>Woolloomooloo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Woolloomooloo Integrated Services Hubs</li> <li>» 90 Lives, 90 Homes Partnership</li> <li>» Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>» Complex needs coordination project</li> <li>» Coordination of Homelessness Interagency Meeting</li> <li>» Works with partners to address shortage of affordable housing</li> <li>» Volunteer and goods donation directory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Support for a complex needs coordination project</li> <li>» Continue practical support for TSHH Network</li> <li>» Consider strategic partnerships to advance supply options</li> </ul>
<b>City of Darebin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» MOU with developers to achieve more affordable housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify opportunities to work with developers on high yield sites and in high population centres</li> </ul>
<b>City of Wanneroo</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recognition of Council role in affordable housing and that Council affects housing affordability</li> <li>» Looks at measures to positively affect supply across the market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recognition at the policy level that Council policies and core roles affect housing affordability and affect homeless people</li> </ul>
<b>Cairns Regional Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Participation in homelessness community action plan</li> <li>» Agreement on rough sleepers</li> <li>» Participate in a range of networks</li> <li>» Support Homeless Connect - Co-funded a project on homelessness in Douglas (2012)</li> <li>» Work towards opportunities and advocacy for affordable housing</li> <li>» Community grants programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Support Homeless Connect</li> <li>» Rough Sleepers agreement/protocol</li> <li>» Advocate to other levels of Government using this study</li> </ul>
<b>City of Port Phillip</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recognition of homelessness as an issue</li> <li>» Affordable housing viewed as an important element</li> <li>» Helped to start a housing association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Policy recognition</li> <li>» Contribution to infrastructure development</li> </ul>
<b>Gold Coast City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Original assistance to GCHC (Now Horizon) - funding</li> <li>» Support to facilitate GCHC's emergence</li> <li>» Gold Coast Housing Strategy - Housing for all</li> <li>» Information on food services</li> <li>» Community directory on internet of homelessness services</li> <li>» Captures donations</li> <li>» Homeless Connect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Homeless connect</li> <li>» Information directory</li> <li>» Land strategy</li> <li>» Housing strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Clarence Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Proactive approach to homelessness</li> <li>» 2010 Award for Housing Strategy</li> <li>» Accessed capital from Housing Affordability Fund to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Develop housing strategy</li> <li>» Examine possible planning reforms</li> <li>» Look at strategic land</li> </ul>

COUNCIL	COUNCIL INITIATIVE	POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TWEED COUNCIL
	release 35 lots. » Planning reforms » Partnered with local community housing providers on three sites » Established Clarence Valley Housing Interagency » Training for front line workers » Supports the regional homelessness action plan	options with other key partners (government, churches, private sector)
<b>City of Perth</b>	» Involved in the City of Perth Homelessness Study » Council funded the development of key worker apartments for low income earners (subsidised through NRAS) » Homeless Connect » Financial support and involvement in Perth Homeless Response Workshop (encourage collaboration towards delivering appropriate support and accommodation for homeless people)	» Homeless connect » Direct involvement in developing affordable housing
<b>Northern Territory</b>	» Developed whole of government and whole of community homelessness framework for the Northern Territory	» Whole of government policy direction

Overall, the evidence from the study suggests that the role of local government in addressing homelessness is growing, but that local governments should look to become the facilitators of the solutions to homelessness, not the providers. There is also evidence to suggest that local governments need to review how their policies and management practices may impact negatively on the wellbeing of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. One positive action is to adopt a Charter of Rights for the Homeless, or a protocol for dealing with homeless people. Implementation capacity would be greatly assisted by a policy and protocol building on existing work such as support for the TSHH Network, funding of this study, leasing of premises to homelessness services and zoning support for emerging services such as Fred's Place.

As part of the consultation, stakeholders were asked about their views in regards to Council's role in addressing homelessness and what opportunities exist for Council. Several stakeholders commented that local governments are in a unique position through the wide range of services they provide. Local government maintains and administers many city parks, protected areas and other public places where there are services such as public amenities, free barbecues and hot water that rough sleepers sometimes use. Also local government are responsible for local laws, environmental health, building compliance, pest management and animal control and can come in contact with homeless people. Local governments designate land for various uses. Libraries and other free services are also utilised by homeless people. Local government is sometimes also a first contact point for people who are under financial strain or are facing other problems and are seeking information.



**Support for continuation of existing measures:**

- » Tweed Shire Council is currently involved in the Housing and Homelessness Network which is valued by the sector.
- » Tweed Shire Council facilitates planning levers for affordable housing (Council has assisted a developer to access Commonwealth funding for affordable housing development) and to increase private rental housing supply such as through granny flat provisions and further encouragement for multiple dwellings.
- » Council has collection bins for food and other goods for homeless people in Council offices.
- » Tweed Shire Council provides buildings for homelessness services (such as MCC, Nullum House).
- » Council has a responsibility to maintain Knox Park and has recently undertaken a crime prevention audit in the Park.

**New and emerging roles:**

- » Training/raise awareness in homelessness for Council staff that may not have knowledge of service providers for referral.
- » Develop internal structures bringing together all Council staff with a direct or indirect role engaging with or addressing homelessness with the purpose of building capacity for coordination, communication and collaborative work.
- » Strong leadership from Council in addressing homelessness.
- » Develop a list of contacts to assist Council staff that engage with homeless people to provide a level of information and referral.
- » Higher visibility of rangers in public parks to deter anti-social behaviour (particularly Knox Park).
- » Council can play an advocacy role.
- » More reporting internally and sharing of information and data around homeless people.
- » Role of Council Tourist Parks in providing short and medium term shelter (conflicts with 2 day stay policy).
- » Develop improved protocols with Police for public space responses.
- » Tweed Shire Council needs a whole of Council position on homelessness which could include a policy and protocol. If there is a protocol in place with the aim to have a persistent and consistent approach, then training will be required in that approach as a whole of council.

## 4.2.1 Opportunities for Tweed Shire Council

The following summarises the opportunities for Tweed Shire Council as a result of this study which could potentially become the Homelessness Policy implementation plan:

**Crisis and Short Term Accommodation:**

- » Advocate to other Governments for short term/crisis accommodation in the Tweed Shire local government area.
- » Consider encouraging the provision of a secured, supervised and controlled overnight parking site for cars and caravans for homeless and at risk people somewhere in the Shire.

**Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation:**

- » Consider developing an affordable housing strategy to increase the delivery of affordable housing.
- » Make residents aware of the opportunities for secondary dwelling development in the Shire.

- » Advocate for changes to income tax that may inhibit the effective use of secondary dwellings and the rental of rooms in dwellings (for example, for boarders).

**Food Services:**

- » Consider providing seed funding for the establishment of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network website.

**Services that do Public Space Liaison and Assertive Outreach:**

- » Consider developing an internal training, coordination and communication mechanism for all staff involved in directly engaging with homeless people e.g. referring them onto services and providing local law officers with the necessary information to be able to respond appropriately.
- » Consider developing a protocol or MOU with Police to improve public space responses.

**Better Co-ordination of Services:**

- » Maintain an active role within the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network.
- » Assisting the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network develop stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination). This should include a purpose/vision, objectives, roles, responsibilities, a prioritised action plan and decision making provisions.

**Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council:**

- » Consider developing a comprehensive housing and homelessness policy and protocol with a significant emphasis on Council's core roles and on strategic partnerships. This should include strategies and partnerships for monitoring data and emergent trends on an annual basis or as data is available.
- » Shared training involving police, Council officers and the real estate industry is explored.
- » Consider producing a services referral and information directory to assist internal staff in their direct engagement with homeless people.

**Education & Community Awareness:**

- » Consider providing seed funding for education and community awareness project.
- » Considers providing support for a Homeless Connect event one to two times each year.

## 4.3 Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network

All stakeholders commented on the importance of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network as a mechanism for collaboration that can advance homelessness solutions in the Tweed. At the same time, a number of stakeholders expressed frustration around the need for the Network to be more active and focussed in addressing homelessness issues.

The following comments were made in relation to **opportunities** with regards to the TSHH Network:

- » There are partnerships happening and the Network has the ability to bring services all together and is a comfortable place for partnering. It is well established and meets regularly.
- » The more services work together, the less fear and competition will be an issue. A good example of this is the combined effort of the Network for homelessness week activity.
- » Promotion of Tweed Head's Fred's Place service as a positive outcome of the TSHH Network.

- » There is an opportunity for the Network to create working groups to address specific issues and to implement specific actions.
- » The Network provides the opportunity to collectively advocate for better outcomes.
- » The Network can become a real voice of advocacy to engage others, as well as the whole community including politicians, the Mayor, real estate agents, camping grounds, etc.
- » It's important for the TSHH to come to forums such as the Northern Rivers Housing Forum or at least be in communication as it is a good opportunity to link to decision makers.
- » The Network is keen to see MATES (2 days / week paid position) and Street wise up and running.

The following comments were made in relation to **challenges** facing the TSHH Network:

- » The Network currently lacks a strong leader/driver.
- » Certain key roles need to be bedded down such as convenor and secretariat roles. There was a suggestion this could be rotated every six months.
- » There is a need for representation from people in senior roles to support the network
- » The Network needs more real projects.
- » The Network needs a strategic plan - what are we about? What is our purpose? What priority actions will we implement together?
- » There seems to be a lack of commitment from some services providers which has resulted in different representation within the same organisation attending meetings.
- » There is a need to develop the Network's brand and promote the joint work of all members.
- » There is a need to find more ways to be effective and efficient under the one roof.

During this project the TSHH Network decided on some structural arrangements to support chairing and secretariat roles. The TSHH Network has also decided to develop a focused action plan following the release of this Issues Paper. There was a strong view that structures that are only for 'talking' about the issues are insufficient and that they needed an acute focus and purpose to ensure tangible benefits to homeless people. Shifting the focus to real and tangible work as close as possible to the needs of clients was supported by stakeholders and was viewed as critical to continued participation in those structures. Meetings could then become a mechanism for monitoring implementation, trouble shooting barriers to progress and deciding on the next priorities once actions had been achieved.

The TSHH Network is an example of 'structuring' to improve the capacity of people and agencies to work together, take action on common concerns and continuously review emerging factors and the extent that goals have been achieved thus making way for new priorities to be decided and responded to. An important part of the future of the TSHH Network will be to combine an effective, achievable action plan with the level of structuring that will be strong enough to support the work to be done. Structuring will determine roles, responsibilities, actions, resources and how decisions get made and monitored.

## 4.3.1 Opportunities for TSHH Network

The following summarises the opportunities for TSHH Network as a result of this study:

### ***Crisis and Short Term Accommodation:***

- » Undertake a specific project and working group to advocate and address lack of crisis and short term accommodation.

### ***Appropriate and Affordable Long Term Accommodation:***

- » Pursue program level funding options for ongoing support programs and housing supply strategies and develop an integrated supportive housing approach to all housing in the region.

### ***Support for People to Sustain Tenancies:***

- » Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation (*particularly the North Coast Accommodation Project and Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness*)

### ***Services for families/young people:***

- » Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation (*particularly the Young People Leaving Care Support Service and Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody*)

### ***Support for People with Mental Illness:***

- » Continue to work with mental health service providers and encourage ongoing involvement in the TSHH Network.

### ***Food Services:***

- » There is scope for more coordination of food services which could be a function of the TSHH Network or a sub-group of the TSHH Network.
- » Regular analysis at the TSHH Network level about the broader systemic issues driving this intense demand for food services should be ongoing.

### ***Services that do Public Space Liaison & Assertive Outreach:***

- » Look at securing funding for a specialist public space liaison officer/s.
- » Actively work with mainstream roles within Council and Police to develop a shared model for addressing public homelessness.
- » Mapping and monitoring of hot spots as much as possible.

### ***Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation:***

- » Identify drug and alcohol services and encourage their involvement and inclusion in the TSHH Network.

### ***Better Co-ordination of Services:***

- » Consolidate membership of the Network and actively engage stakeholders who may not be direct homeless services but are important to the success of homelessness responses (such as Police and others) to attend Network meetings.
- » Stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination).

- » Adopt some work projects that will engage the agencies in actual collaboration on specific client needs and projects.
- » Present this study to the New South Wales Homelessness Governance Group to influence the extent that the Regional Homelessness Action Plan produces tangible results for the Tweed Shire area.
- » Develop a protocol about collaborative work to pursue funding with the aim of reducing competition between agencies.
- » Multi-agency learning and development activities are developed and offered in the region to increase the capacity for emergent practice and collaboration.
- » Access shared learning and development to enable shared frameworks for practice to develop and be consolidated.

***Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council:***

- » Undertake a specific project and establish working group to engage real estate agents more directly in identifying private housing options.

***Transport to support services:***

- » Consider a specific project to identify community transport options to augment the public transport system and improve the access of homeless people to services.

***Education & Community Awareness:***

- » Consider a specific project relating to education and community awareness for example projects such as the one Fred's Place is looking to undertake to demystify homelessness.
- » Regular contact with schools to inform young people of homelessness and homelessness services.

## 5.0 Summary

The following Table provides a summary of the services gaps and challenges including barriers identified through this project. It further summarises the opportunities that were identified through consultation, leading practice and literature review undertaken as part of this study. Specific opportunities have further been explored where they relate directly to the TSHH Network and Tweed Shire Council.

**Table 7.** Summary Service Gaps, Challenges, Barriers and Opportunities

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
<b>Crisis and Short Term Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited short term or crisis accommodation available in the Tweed Shire</li> <li>Sub-standard temporary accommodation (tents, caravans with insecure tenure and others)</li> <li>You must be a family to get crisis (temporary) accommodation. Single men cannot access temporary accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designating land for vans with some minimum services such as showers, toilets and storage</li> <li>Storage areas were requested by homeless people</li> <li>Less expensive camping groups</li> <li>Modified shipping containers</li> <li>Property at 7 Faulkner Street in Tweed Heads a potential site for crisis accommodation</li> <li>There may be a possibility to negotiate an agreement with privately provided caravan/tourist parks in the Shire for short term/crisis accommodation sites within the park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good practice is shifting away from crisis accommodation and using it more strategically to develop support plans and link more positively to permanent housing solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a specific project and working group to advocate and address lack of crisis and short term accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate to other Governments for short term/crisis accommodation in the Tweed Shire LGA</li> <li>Consider encouraging the provision of a secured, supervised and controlled overnight parking site for cars and caravans for homeless and at risk people somewhere in the Tweed Shire LGA</li> </ul>
<b>Appropriate and</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of affordable housing –</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An affordable housing strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue program level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
<b>Affordable Long Term Accommodation</b>	<p>insecure tenures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of appropriate long term housing options affordability and availability issues</li> <li>Pet friendly accommodation is scarce</li> <li>Significant lack of affordable, appropriate social housing with homeless people and service providers describing that you will wait for years within this system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An affordable housing strategy would need to involve key stakeholders from all levels of Government, the community sector, community and private sector</li> <li>National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)</li> <li>The role of secondary dwellings</li> <li>Working with real-estate agents to secure long term private rentals</li> </ul>	<p>e.g. Common Ground (refer pg 47)</p>	<p>funding options for ongoing support programs and housing supply strategies and develop an integrated supportive housing approach to all housing in the region.</p>	<p>an affordable housing strategy to increase the delivery of affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make residents aware of the opportunities for secondary dwelling development in the Tweed Shire LGA</li> <li>Advocate for changes to income tax that may inhibit the effective use of secondary dwellings and the rental of rooms in dwellings (for example, for boarders)</li> </ul>
<b>Support for People to Sustain Tenancies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More support options with the scope to assist people with wrap around assistance over the long-term</li> <li>More support for clients to stay in private rentals</li> <li>Support for real estate agents and landlords to maintain tenancies</li> <li>Support for people in social housing tenancies to sustain those tenancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Coast Accommodation project - linked to a coordination group that ensures that supports are provided</li> <li>Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness - focus on social housing tenants and at risk tenancies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing First (refer pg 47)</li> <li>Tenancy Sustainment Teams (refer pg 47-48)</li> <li>Supporting People Program (refer pg 47)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation <i>(particularly the North Coast Accommodation Project and Tenancy support for people at risk of homelessness)</i></li> </ul>	

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
<b>Services for families/young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are not enough services for young people and their families in times of crisis</li> <li>• Combination of low income and no rental history makes it very difficult for young people to access the private rental market</li> <li>• Young people are vulnerable to living in over-crowded circumstances or to couch surfing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young People Leaving Care Support Service - provide housing and support to young people</li> <li>• Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody - intensive support and accommodation to young people with complex needs</li> <li>• Proposed Head Space for Tweed Heads</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify where the Regional Homelessness Action Plan is up to in its cycle of development and work to ensure the Tweed area is considered for direct service delivery and funding allocation (<i>particularly the Young People Leaving Care Support Service and Young People exiting Juvenile Justice Centres at risk of entering/re-entering custody</i>)</li> </ul>	
<b>Support for People with Mental Illness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a protocol with mental health services with a clear contact person in mental health to assist clients</li> <li>• Eligibility is a barrier to clients accessing existing homelessness services (such as a diagnosed mental illness as many people are not diagnosed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile, active outreach for people with acute mental health issues</li> <li>• Mental health forum being facilitated by Medicare Local to address improvements in the mental health system in the Tweed area</li> <li>• Medicare Local placing psychologists into Fred's Place (and places where homeless people are accessing existing services)</li> <li>• The Partners in Recovery</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with mental health service providers and encourage ongoing involvement in the TSHH Network</li> </ul>	



Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
		Program (Federal funding) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rough Sleepers Program operating in Lismore run by North Coast Community Housing potential to operate in Tweed</li> </ul>			
<b>Food Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordination of a range of food services</li> <li>Opportunity to ensure good spread of locations and populations through some coordination</li> <li>No breakfast services in the region during the week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared database, a website for example to alert others of free food available (hot meals, discounted food items)</li> <li>Regular reviews of food services and their location to ensure service area , target groups and focus are geared to actual and emerging needs.</li> <li>There is scope for more coordination of food services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OzHarvest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is scope for more coordination of food services which could be a function of the TSHH Network or a sub-group of the TSHH Network</li> <li>Regular analysis at the TSHH Network level about the broader systemic issues driving this intense demand for food services should be ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider providing seed funding for the establishment of the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network website</li> </ul>
<b>Services that do Public Space Liaison &amp; Assertive Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assertive outreach in situ is an essential feature of any holistic, integrated homelessness response</li> <li>There are no specialist public space liaison officers within Council or based in other agencies</li> <li>Significant unmet need for active, assertive outreach into key locations where an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assertive outreach through Lunch with Friends</li> <li>Other local governments employ specialist public space liaison officers who engage with homeless people and actively refer them to services</li> <li>Other service systems and jurisdictions also have substantial outreach programs such as Street to Home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assertive outreach (refer pg 46 and 47)</li> <li>Rough Sleepers Initiative: contact and assessment teams (refer pg 48)</li> <li>Street to Home (refer to pg 49)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at securing funding for a specialist public space liaison officer/s</li> <li>Actively work with mainstream roles within Council and Police to develop a shared model for addressing public homelessness</li> <li>Mapping and monitoring of hot spots as much as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing internal training, coordination and communication mechanism for all staff involved in directly engaging with homeless people E.g. referring them onto services and providing local law officers with</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
	<p>assessment and referral is possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for training/capacity building opportunities to better support the role of council staff and rangers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some joint discussion and training opportunities may assist an agreed approach to emerge</li> <li>• Some stakeholders suggested a protocol or Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and police on this issue</li> </ul>		possible	<p>the necessary information to be able to respond appropriately</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developing a protocol or MOU with Police to improve public space responses</li> </ul>
<b>Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless people experience drug and alcohol issues and sometimes these are combined with other factors such as mental illness and chronic diseases</li> <li>• Opportunities for drug and alcohol rehabilitation are very limited in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of drug and alcohol services being integrated with SHS and more mainstream services in contact with homeless people</li> <li>• Explore better integration of drug and alcohol services with homelessness services</li> <li>• Identify specific gaps and develop a proposal for the region to ensure drug and alcohol services are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing First (refer to pg 47)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify drug and alcohol services and encourage their involvement and inclusion in the TSHH Network</li> </ul>	
<b>Better Co-ordination of Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better partnerships with Real-estate agents, Police, Council, Education, Health (i.e. Hospital)</li> <li>• Better co-ordination of services</li> <li>• True partnerships and collaboration are difficult to achieve because of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop positive relationships with important stakeholders such as Real-estate agents, Police, Council, Education, Health</li> <li>• Link homelessness services with health, education, training</li> <li>• Northern Rivers Housing Forum/ Housing NSW Regional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated Case Management (refer pg 47 and 48)</li> <li>• Case coordination meetings (refer pg 47 and 48)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate membership of the Network and actively engage stakeholders who may not be direct homeless services but are important to the success of homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain an active role within the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network</li> <li>• Assisting the Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network develop</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
	<p>competitive nature of the funding environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's important for the TSHHN to actively participate in forums such as the Northern Rivers Housing Forum as it is a good opportunity to link into decision makers</li> <li>The THHN can play a big role in advocacy and partnership building with peripheral stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Homelessness Action Plan Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for joint funding arrangements</li> <li>Murwillumbah will be a hub when Nullum House activities move to Red Cross building in Knox Park (subject to successful funding application and partnership with Red Cross)</li> <li>Capacity building</li> <li>Strengthen multi-agency case coordination work</li> </ul>		<p>responses (such as Police and others) to attend Network meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination)</li> <li>Adopt some work projects that will engage the agencies in actual collaboration on specific client needs and projects</li> <li>Present this study to the New South Wales Homelessness Governance Group to influence the extent that the Regional Homelessness Action Plan produces tangible results for the Tweed Shire area.</li> <li>Develop a protocol about collaborative work</li> </ul>	<p>stronger structural arrangements supporting some practical projects including direct responses to clients (such as case coordination). This should include a purpose/vision, objectives, roles, responsibilities, a prioritised action plan and decision making provisions</p>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
				<p>to pursue funding with the aim of reducing competition between agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-agency learning and development activities are developed and offered in the region to increase the capacity for emergent practice and collaboration</li> <li>Access shared learning and development to enable shared frameworks for practice to develop and be consolidated</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Role of Real-Estate Agents, Police, Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real Estate Agencies play an essential role because so many people rely on the private real estate market for a housing option</li> <li>Engagement with the Real Estate Industry is important to building the capacity of that sector and increasing the supply of affordable rental stock</li> <li>There is a lack of internal coordination mechanisms to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with real estate agents also focuses on providing referral information to the support sector with the goal of sustaining tenancies.</li> <li>Referral of prospective tenants from real estate agents to the North Coast Community Housing affordable housing program</li> <li>Head leases to affordable housing providers can provide the private rental market (and</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a specific project and establish working group to engage real estate agents more directly in identifying private housing options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a comprehensive housing and homelessness policy and protocol with a significant emphasis on Council's core roles and on strategic partnerships. This should include strategies and partnerships for monitoring data and</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
	<p>support community development, parks staff and rangers engaging with each other</p>	<p>real estate agents) with secure, long term and managed tenancies with no vacancy period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine interest among Council staff in being clear about organisational policy and about how to conduct their relationship with homeless people</li> </ul>			<p>emergent trends on an annual basis or as data is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared training involving police, Council officers and the real estate industry is explored</li> <li>Consider producing a services referral and information directory to assist internal staff in their direct engagement with homeless people</li> </ul>
<b>Transport to support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location of key services provides good access for some communities but is a barrier for others</li> <li>Transport in the search for housing and for accessing services and then for moving around once housing is secured (a lot of affordable housing is in more remote locations of the Shire)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish HACC service eligibility of homeless people to identify whether they are eligible for HACC transport assistance</li> <li>Intensive wrap around support can provide some transport</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a specific project to identify community transport options to augment the public transport system and improve the access of homeless people to services</li> </ul>	
<b>Education &amp; Community Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness needs a whole of community response – it is not just homelessness services; the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The THHN can be a leader in educating people in homelessness – help to shape and change policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Coalition for the Homeless</li> <li>Peer leader models where homeless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider a specific project relating to education and community awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider providing seed funding for education and community awareness</li> </ul>

Service Gap & Challenges	Barriers	Opportunities	Good Practice Response	TSHH Network Opportunity	Tweed Shire Council's Opportunity
	<p>sector need Council on board, particularly around the use of public spaces, and also hospitals, and the general community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misconception about who is homeless</li> <li>• Awareness of what is available to homeless and at risk people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training for some of the key stakeholders including Police and others</li> <li>• Strengthening community, strengthening the extent that people have a voice – Promote case stories of homeless people</li> <li>• Good advertising at bus stops, some simple messages about what services are available</li> </ul>	<p>people are trained to provide peers with access to this information</p>	<p>for example projects such as the one Fred's Place is looking to undertake to demystify homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular contact with schools to inform young people of homelessness and homelessness services</li> </ul>	<p>project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council considers providing support for a Homeless Connect event one to two times each year</li> </ul>

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# Appendix A – Stakeholders Consulted

No.	Organisation
1	Tweed Shire Council Community Development Officer - Youth
2	Tweed Shire Council Community Development Coordinator
3	Tweed Shire Council Community Development Officer - Social Planning
4	Regulatory Services Section - Rangers
5	Recreation Services Unit - Parks
6	Housing NSW
7	Gold Coast City Council
8	Murwillumbah Community Centre
9	Tweed/Byron Local Area Command NSW Police
10	Tweed Shire Women's Services
11	Youth & Family Service Tweed Community Mental Health
12	The Salvation Army Tweed Centre
13	Australian Red Cross
14	Reconnect
15	St Josephs Youth Service (Homeless young people)
16	North Coast NSW Medicare Local Tweed Valley Branch
17	Fred's Place (St Vincent de Paul)
18	Agape Outreach
19	Ark'd House (Dream Centre Church)
20	Beachside Communicare Inc
21	C3 Church Currumbin Community Services
22	Lunch with Friends
23	Powerhouse Christian Centre
24	You Have A Friend
25	Vibe Community Care Pantry
26	Vibe Care Church
27	Christian Outreach Centre
28	Blair Athol Accommodation & Support Services
29	New Horizons
30	North Coast Community Housing Company
31	On Track Community Programs
32	Clarence Valley Housing & Support Interagency (Clarence Valley Council)
33	Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network
34	Northern Rivers Social Development Council
35	Homeless People (Fred's Place, Murwillumbah Community Centre, St Josephs Youth Service)
36	Tweed Aboriginal Co-Op Housing Society (Unable to be contacted)
37	Aboriginal Land Council (Unable to be contacted)

# Appendix B – Existing Services & Stakeholders

Organisation	Name & position	Address	Catchment
<b>Tweed Shire Council/Other government</b>			
Community Development Officer - Youth	Sylvia Roylance	Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Community Development Officer - Capacity Building	Jenni Funari	Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Regulatory Services Section - Rangers		Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Recreation Services Unit - Parks		Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Community Police Liaison Officers - Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers	Bec Couch and Sue Wheatly	Recreation Street South Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Tweed/Byron LAC Police	Sgt Paul Theirjung	81 Murwillumbah Street Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Department of Family and Community Services – Housing NSW	Annie McCabe	6/69 Wharf St	Tweed LGA
	A/Housing Manager Lismore	98 Blundell Boulevard Tweed Heads South	Tweed LGA
	Maria Vainio Senior Client Service Officer (Tweed Heads)	98 Blundell Boulevard Tweed Heads South	Tweed LGA
	Debbie Sherrard Senior Client Service Officer (Lismore)	4 Zadoc St Lismore	Tweed LGA
<b>Service providers</b>			
Murwillumbah Community Centre	Wendy Constantine Manager Amanda Lindh (Tenancy Support)	Nullum Street Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Tweed Aboriginal Co-op Housing Society		Minjungbal Museum Kirkwood Road South Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Tweed Shire Women's Services	Trudy O'Dwyer External Support Refugee Worker	Cnr Price and Nullum Street Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Youth & Family Service Tweed Community Mental Health	Anne Pudney Clinical Nurse Specialist	Florence Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
The Salvation Army Tweed Centre	Ministers Darren & Leanne Elsley	Cnr of Woodlands Drive & Leisure Drive Banora Point 2486	Tweed LGA
Australian Red Cross	Marie Ivos Red Cross Zone Rep	Banora Community Centre  Tweed Heads QLD 2485	Tweed LGA

Organisation	Name & position	Address	Catchment
Reconnect	Ayla Garlick - Youth Worker Jane Henderson - Case Manager	15-17 Rivendell South Tweed	Tweed LGA
St Josephs Youth Service (Homeless young people)	Gerina Appo - Coordinator John Storey - Manager	15 Frances Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
North Coast NSW Medicare Local Tweed Valley Branch	Wendy Pannach Acting General Manager  Ian O'Reilly A/Program Manager	Suites 4-6, 8 Corporation Circuit Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Fred's Place St Vincent De Pauls Lismore Diocesan Central Council	Jason McDonald - Service Manager Billie - Case Worker	9 Boyd Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Vibe Care Church	Pastor David Nahi	3 Beryl Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Homeless Outreach Support Team (HOST)	Deborah Maccan Team Leader	93 Golden Four Drive Bilinga Qld 4225	Gold Coast LGA
On Track Far North Coast Family Referral Service	Nikki Lee Anita Mansfield- Manager	Tweed Heads 1300 338 774	Regional
On Track Community Programs - homeless service, tenancy support, case management	Nicky Michinton- Manager Tweed Heads	141 Minjungbal Drive Tweed Heads	Regional
<b>Meal &amp; Food Distribution Services</b>			
Agape Outreach	Rev. Theresa Kellas		
Ark'd House (Dream Centre Church)	Pastor Corey Pryor	87 Griffith Street - 3rd level Coolangatta	Gold Coast LGA
Beachside Communicare Inc	Vanie Pillay Pastor	Beachside Church Pottsville PO Box 234,Pottsville Beach ,NSW 2489	Tweed LGA
Byron Bay Community Centre	Community Services Co-ordinator	69 Johnson Street Byron Bay	Byron Shire Council
C3 Church Currumbin Community Services		10 Villiers Drive Currumbin Waters	Gold Coast LGA
Lunch with Friends	Dennis Pommer	Goodwin Park Coolangatta	Gold Coast LGA
Powerhouse Christian Centre	Pastor Brian and Susan Hills	Red Cross Centre Knox Park	
Vibe Community Care Pantry	Pastor David Nahi Louise Nahi	Shop 10. Eighth Avenue Palm Beach	Gold Coast LGA

Organisation	Name & position	Address	Catchment
Vibe Care Church	Pastor David Nahi Louise Nahi	3 Beryl Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Fred's Place	Jason McDonald - Service Manager	9 Boyd Street Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Legal Aid Homeless Project (operates every second Thursday at MCC)	Elizabeth Brown	Murwillumbah Community Centre	Tweed LGA
<b>Accommodation Providers</b>			
Blair Athol Accommodation & Support Services	Liz Fritz Manager	93 Golden Four Drive Bilinga Qld 4225	Gold Coast LGA
Byron Bay Emergency Accommodation Project INC.	Simone Verdon- Manager	1 Scott St Byron Bay	Byron Shire Council
New Horizons	Clayton Dunn Coordinator Housing & Accommodation Support Initiative (Tweed/Byron)	2/14 Amber Road Tweed Heads South	Tweed LGA
North Coast Community Housing Company	Julie Dukes Colin Jones	Suite 8A/28 Corporation Circuit, Tweed Office Park, South Tweed Heads NSW	Tweed LGA
On Track Community Programs	Maz James Tenancy Coordinator Lelania Taylor NCAP Case Worker	141 Minjungbal Drive South Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Tweed Aboriginal Co- op Housing Society	TBC	Minjungbal Museum Kirkwood Road South Tweed Heads	Tweed LGA
Horizon Housing Company	Jason Cubit CEO	Australia Fair Office Tower 42 Marine Parade Southport 4215	Gold Coast LGA
<b>Community Organisations/Networks/Committees</b>			
Tweed Shire Housing and Homelessness Network	Jason McDonald/Sylvia Roylance	Tumbulgum Road Murwillumbah	Tweed LGA
Northern Rivers Social Development Council	Trish Evans Manager Development & Innovation	16 Keen Street, Lismore, 2480	Northern Rivers Region Clarence to Tweed
Connect: Northern Rivers Community Partnership for Young People	Gaye Breen		Tweed LGA
Northern Rivers Housing Forum	Trish Evans	NRSDC 16 Keen Street Lismore	Northern Rivers Region Clarence to Tweed
Clarence Valley Housing & Support Interagency	Naydene Beaver Manager	2 Prince Street Grafton	Clarence Valley