

**Submission
No 31**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND DRIVING
WELLBEING OUTCOMES IN NSW**

Organisation: Homelessness NSW

Date Received: 30 August 2024

Public Accounts Committee inquiry into a framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW

August 2024

Homelessness NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the NSW Public Accounts Committee inquiry into a framework for performance reporting and driving wellbeing outcomes in NSW.

Homelessness NSW is a not-for-profit peak agency that exists to build the capability of people and the capacity of systems to end homelessness. We are committed to a future where everyone has a safe home, and the support needed to maintain it. Our 200+ members include specialist homelessness services, people with lived experience, allied organizations, and services working to end homelessness. We work with our members, people with lived experience, and a broad network of partners to understand the drivers of homelessness, advocate for solutions, build skills and knowledge, and scale innovation.

Amid a homelessness and housing crisis in NSW, an outcomes framework for measuring wellbeing outcomes in NSW is welcomed. Homelessness NSW specifically provides comments in relation to the *NSW Budget 2024-25 Performance and Wellbeing Consultation Paper*, and the outcome measures it includes.

Housing Theme

Outcome: Quality housing solutions are sufficient and affordable

Indicator Three- Social Housing dwelling standards

Homelessness NSW welcomes the inclusion of 'social housing dwelling standards' as an Indicator under the '*Quality housing solutions are sufficient and affordable*' outcome measure.

We note that the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* (the framework) does not provide specific details about the 'social housing dwelling standards' which this Indicator is based on. We recommend providing additional information to clarify these standards.

We also believe the following additional information should be incorporated into this Indicator.

- a) People with a disability

Homelessness NSW also believes Indicator Three should consider the accessibility of social housing for people with a disability.

People with disabilities face a heightened risk of poverty, low income, employment exclusion, and reliance on disability support, leading to an increased need for affordable social housing.¹ Additionally, they are at a higher risk of homelessness compared to individuals without

¹ O'Donovan, MA., Whittle, E.L. Housing, Homelessness and Disability: the Commodification of a Core Human Right and Breach of This Right for People with Disability. *Adv Neurodev Disord* 8, 141–150 (2024).

disabilities.² Recent data shows that nationally, 9.5% of clients accessing specialist homelessness services—equivalent to 25,900 individuals—have a disability.³

The *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* includes an outcomes framework designed to monitor whether people with disabilities can fully participate in their communities and live in homes that meet their needs. Key outcomes in this framework focus on ensuring that "social housing is accessible" and that "newly constructed housing is accessible." To track these outcomes the Disability Strategy includes the following 'key measures':

- The percentage of social housing dwellings that meet the Liveable Housing Design Silver accessibility standards.
- The number and percentage of newly constructed homes that comply with the National Construction Code (NCC) and the Liveable Housing Design, Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) Standard

Homelessness NSW believes these key measures under the *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* should be incorporated within the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* to ensure the housing needs of people with disabilities are adequately assessed.

Recommendation One: That Indicator Three of the outcome 'Quality housing solutions are sufficient and affordable' under the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* incorporate key housing measures under the *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*.

b) Additional detail in metrics

Homelessness NSW believes additional metrics are required under Indicator Three to ensure that social housing dwellings are constructed and renovated in a manner that guarantees tenants have access to homes meeting acceptable standards. These include metrics with measure:

- *Percentage of new social housing dwellings constructed to acceptable standards:* This metric would measure the proportion of newly built social housing units that adhere to predefined quality and accessibility standards.
- *Frequency of inspections for social housing units:* This measure would track how often social housing units are inspected to ensure they meet established quality standards.
- *Tenant satisfaction with dwelling conditions:* this measure would use survey data (currently collected from social housing tenants) to indicate their level of satisfaction with conditions in their property.
- *Response time for maintenance issues:* This would measure how quickly maintenance requests are addressed to ensure ongoing adherence to housing standards.

² Beer, A., Daniel, L., Baker, E., & Lester, L. (2020). The shifting risk of homelessness among persons with a disability: Insights from a national policy intervention. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(18), 6512. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17186512>

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). *Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022–23*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report>

Including these metrics will provide a clearer picture of housing quality and tenant satisfaction and whether additional budget spending is required to ensure that social housing meets the necessary standards.

Recommendation Two: That Indicator Three of the "Quality housing solutions are sufficient and affordable" outcome measure in the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* be expanded to include additional metrics. These should cover the construction of new social housing dwellings, the frequency of inspections, tenant satisfaction, and response times for maintenance issues.

Outcome: Vulnerable people have access to suitable housing

a) Social Housing wait list

Homelessness NSW supports the outcomes under the housing theme that measure how well vulnerable people have access to suitable housing. We particularly endorse Indicator One, which focuses on social housing wait times on the NSW Housing Register. However, we believe this indicator should be expanded to include all individuals on the NSW Housing Register, not just those on the priority list. While understanding the impact of budgetary commitments on the most urgent cases is essential, a broader measure would provide a more comprehensive view of wait times and housing accessibility for all applicants.

Recommendation Three: That Indicator One of the "Vulnerable people have access to suitable housing" outcome measure in the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* be expanded to include all people on the NSW Housing Register.

b) Specialist homelessness services

Homelessness NSW supports the inclusion of measures that assess the impact of NSW Government budgetary processes on specialist homelessness services.

Homelessness NSW suggests that Indicator Four be revised to read, "Proportion of people experiencing homelessness who are assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services into stable, long-term housing." This revision ensures that the indicator accurately measures the proportion of people experiencing homelessness who successfully transition to stable, long-term housing with the support of specialist homelessness services.

Additionally, Homelessness NSW recommends adding a new indicator to acknowledge the work of specialist homelessness services in helping people at risk of homelessness to maintain their housing.

Homelessness NSW is also concerned that the description accompanying Indicator Four refers to it as an "effectiveness measure for homelessness services." While we agree that Indicator Four is important, we believe it measures the adequacy of social housing supply rather than the effectiveness of homelessness services.

Recommendation Four: That Indicator Four of the "Vulnerable people have access to suitable housing" outcome measure in the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* be amended to

read 'Proportion of people experiencing homelessness who are assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services into stable, long-term housing'.

Recommendation Five: An additional Indicator under the the "Vulnerable people have access to suitable housing" outcome measure in the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* which measures the work of the specialist homelessness sector in assisting people at risk of homelessness to retain their housing.

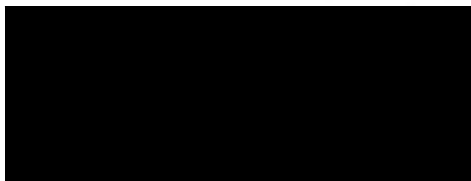
Recommendation Six: The description of why Indicator 4 is important be amended to remove references to it being an effective measure for homelessness services.

Conclusion

Homelessness NSW looks forward to ongoing collaboration and discussions to ensure that the *NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework* fosters long-term improvements in housing solutions and wellbeing outcomes for all NSW residents.

Please contact Chris Hartley, Senior Policy Officer at [REDACTED] should you wish to discuss any element of our submission further.

Yours sincerely,



Dominique Rowe

Chief Executive Officer, Homelessness NSW