

SOUTHERN HOMELESSNESS SERVICES NETWORK



Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029



HOMELESSNESS IN THE SOUTHERN REGION

18,173 clients

Clients supported by Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS)

(AIHW 2024-25)

HOMELESSNESS IS ON THE RISE: OUR WORK IS CRITICAL

The gap between funded SHS capacity and actual need is widening in Melbourne's South:

- Crisis accommodation consistently receives 5-10 referrals for every vacancy
- Intake and assessment services reach capacity early in the day
- Extended crisis and transitional accommodation stays caused by no housing exit pathways, creating system bottlenecks
- More people are sleeping rough
- More older people and younger people and employed people are becoming homeless
- Homelessness services are under-resourced, limiting sector capacity to respond

IT SHOULDN'T BE THIS WAY

OUR ROLE IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS

The SHSN works to end homelessness in Melbourne's Southern Region by:

- ✓ Informing and supporting Specialist Homelessness Services and stakeholders to collaborate and improve outcomes for people at risk/experiencing homelessness
- ✓ Strengthening the sector through shared expertise and improving responses
- ✓ Integrating lived and living expertise across all we do
- ✓ Raising emerging issues to inform policy
- ✓ Championing and leading collective advocacy



ABOUT THE SHSN

The Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) comprises all funded Specialist Homelessness Services in the Southern Region including services providing crisis, transitional, long term, family violence and youth support and accommodation.

SHSN MEMBER AGENCIES

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Better Health Network | • Melbourne City Mission | • The Salvation Army |
| • Emerge | • Moira | • Thorne Harbour Health |
| • Ermha 365 | • NEAMI National | • VincentCare |
| • Fusion | • Ngwala Willumbong | • wayss |
| • Good Shepherd | • Sacred Heart Mission | • Windermere |
| • Kids First Australia | • South East Community Links | • Wintringham |
| • Launch Housing | • South Port Community Housing | • YWCA |

SHSN Strategic Objective 1: Working together to end homelessness

Priority	We will
1.1 Develop strong partnerships with cross sectors to prevent and respond to homelessness	Build relationships with the South East Melbourne Primary Health Network and Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals to improve mental health responses for SHS clients
1.2 Develop and embed evidence-informed responses that uphold Housing First principles across the Southern Region	Provide information that builds a shared understanding of Housing First principles and advocate for an increase in Housing First programs
1.3 Advocate for a pipeline of low-income housing supply in the Southern Region with a focus on increasing public housing	Work with all levels of government to elevate the Southern Region's housing needs, especially for people on the lowest incomes

SHSN Strategic Objective 2: Act as a conduit between DFFH and regional services sector to inform policy

Priority	We will
2.1 Drive shared understanding and informed decision-making by maintaining a clear communication pathway between the homelessness sector and DFFH	Work collaboratively with DFFH and our members to provide quantitative and qualitative data to communicate regional needs and emerging trends
2.2 Champion the gathering and sharing of consistent, accurate data to build knowledge of homelessness, including unmet demand	Work collaboratively with members, LELG, VHN, Homes Vic, DFFH, local councils, and CHP to progress our priorities using data
2.3 Make visible the reality of entry points' demand, pressure and required improvements	Promote the findings and recommendations of the VHN Entry Points research report

SHSN Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen the coordinated homelessness service system in the best interests of clients

Priority	We will
3.1 Support members to strengthen information-sharing pathways within and across sectors to improve client outcomes	Facilitate opportunities for members to share learnings, best practice and updates
3.2 Continue to lead, showcase and resource sustainable Lived and Living Experience engagement that informs advocacy and decision-making	Resource a sustained the Lived Experience leadership Group (LELG), and implement actions in the <u>Lived/Living Experience Engagement Plan 2026- 2027 - 2028-2029</u>
3.3 Work across the SHSN and with other regional Homelessness Networks to advocate for homelessness service system reform	Amplify the knowledge and experience of member organisations and lived experience to influence homelessness service system reform and improve outcomes for clients
3.4 Contribute to retaining a skilled SHS workforce	Work with members and peaks to support the SHS workforce