Southern Homelessness Services Network

Research Report on

The Functional Zero Approach to Ending Rough Sleeping in the Southern Region of Melbourne -
learnings for the Southern Homelessness Services Network
2023

SHSN

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1.   Background

1.1 About the Southern Homelessness Services Network

The Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) comprises funded Specialist Homelessness Services in Melbourne's Southern region, covering the following Local Government Areas:

Bayside	**Greater Dandenong**
Cardinia	Kingston
Casey	Mornington Peninsula
Frankston	Port Phillip
Glen Eira	Stonnington

SHSN members include specialist homelessness services (SHS) providing crisis, transitional, long term, family violence and youth support and accommodation. The SHSN also supports related services working in homelessness. The SHSN is also known as the Southern LASN (Local Area Service Network). The work of the SHSN is framed by three objectives:

1. **Working together to end homelessness.**
2. **Acting as a conduit between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and the regional services sector on issues and trends to inform policy.**
3. **Strengthening the coordinated homelessness service system in the best interests of clients.**[1]

1.2 Project Aim

The SHSN 2022-23 Strategic Plan includes an objective to:

2.4.3. Prepare a regional meta-analysis report of the Functional Zero projects to showcase Southern Zero projects, provide learnings back to the SHSN and to assist in preparation for place-based reform using a collective impact approach.

This research project was undertaken to fulfil this strategic objective, with the following key research question:

How can the Functional Zero collective impact approach inform the work of the Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) and future Victorian homelessness service system reform?

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[1] Southern Homelessness Services Network (2023) "About the SHSN" accessed via https://www.shsnetwork.online/

1.3 Project Methodology

The methodology for this report involved a background literature review, analysis of Functional Zero data and stakeholder interviews. The relevant literature and Functional Zero data analysis is included in this report. The stakeholder interviews provided the primary data that supports the thematic analyses and recommendations of this report.

Stakeholders were selected for interview on several criteria:

- to represent the experience of the four Functional Zero projects of the southern region, ensuring coverage across the diverse LGA of the southern region
- to include stakeholders working in various roles across Functional Zero
- to represent a mix of SHSN members and non-members.

The interviews were conducted in a structured manner for up to 60 minutes. The majority of interviews were conducted individually. Two were joint interviews involving stakeholders from the same organisation with complementary roles. The interview questions focused on the following themes:

- How are Functional Zero projects achieving their goals?
- How does involvement with Functional Zero impact SHSN members?
- What challenges are emerging from the projects and how do they differ across projects?
- What do the successes and challenges of Functional Zero mean for the SHSN's work?
- How can the SHSN and Functional Zero projects support each other? (with advocacy as a central focus)

The list of interviewees and the interview questions and can be found at Appendix 1 and 2.

1.4 What is Homelessness in Australia?

The most commonly used homelessness definition in Australia was developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2012.

> *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.[2]*

The ABS definition centres the idea of 'homelessness' rather than 'rooflessness', a concept rooted in a person's access to security, stability and privacy. The ABS then uses a number of homelessness operational groups to further categorise homelessness. The ABS operational group of rough sleeping includes "people living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out". [3]

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[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) "Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, 2012" accessed via
https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4922.0Main%20Features22012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4922.0&issue=2012&num=&view=
[3] Ibid.

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1.5 Homelessness Policy in Australia

Homelessness policy is influenced by state and federal governments, this section will briefly describe some salient developments. This starts with *The Road Home*, a 2008 Federal Government White Paper, that set ambitious targets – halving homelessness by 2020 and drastically increasing sector funding. This included a commitment to 'turning off the tap' by addressing the underlying drivers of homelessness.[4] Unfortunately, homelessness continued to rise federally throughout this period, demonstrating the long-term growth in homelessness despite recognition of its severity by government.[5] Key developments in homelessness policy at the federal and state level over the past 20 years include:

2008	The Federal Government's White Paper *The Road Home*
2018	The Victorian State Government launched it's *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan*, primarily concerned with addressing rough sleeping
2020	The Victorian Government announces the Big Housing Build, describing it as the 'the largest social housing building program in the state's history'[6]
2020	The Victorian Government announces the Big Housing Build, describing it as the 'the largest social housing building program in the state's history'[7]
2021	The Victorian Government allocates $150 million to the *From Homelessness to a Home* program, an initiative under the principles of housing first that emerged from COVID-era emergency housing efforts and prioritises direct access to housing with wrap-around supports provided [8]
2021	The Federal Government's *Inquiry into Homelessness* released its final report[9]
2023	The State Government released its final report from the *Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria*
2023	The Victoria Parliamentary Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria 2023 commences, as does the Federal Senate Inquiry into the Worsening Rental Crisis in Australia 2023
2023	Development of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan begins

[4] Commonwealth of Australia (2008) The road home: a national approach to reducing homelessness, White Paper, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs: Canberra, pg. 16, 23.

[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) "Estimating Homelessness – Census" accessed via https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/latest-release

[6] Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (Vic) (2021) Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria: final report, Parliament of Victoria: Melbourne, pg. 287.

[7] Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (Vic) (2021) Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria: final report, Parliament of Victoria: Melbourne, pg. 287.

[8] Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (Vic) (2021) Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria: final report, Parliament of Victoria: Melbourne, pg. 232.

[9] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2021) *Final Report: Inquiry into Homelessness*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra.

The Federal Parliamentary *Inquiry into Homelessness* (2021) describes the vulnerabilities and experiences of people rough sleeping based on a 2019 survey.
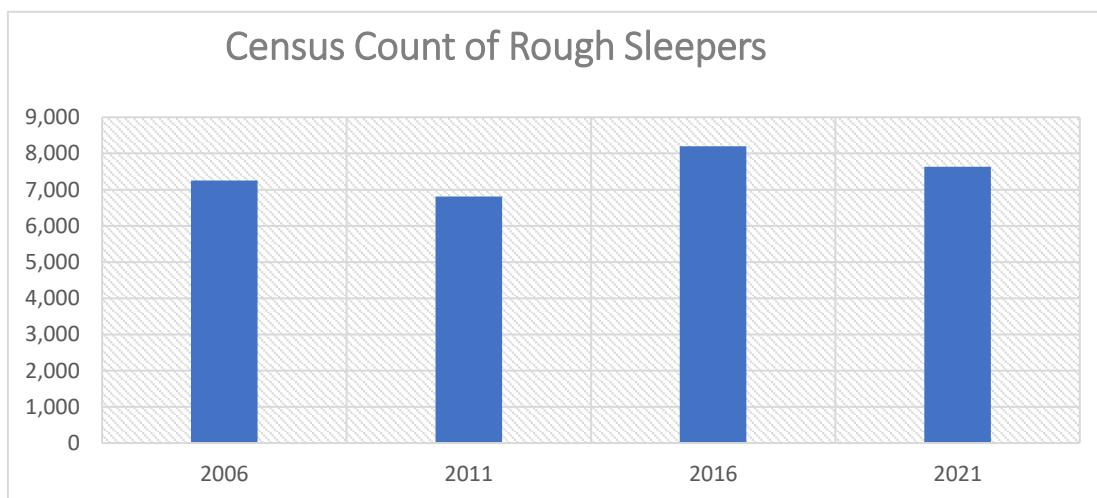
- 48 percent of the cohort reporting past trauma and/or abuse
- 52 percent reported experiences of physical or verbal abuse while homeless
- 23 percent were in out-of-home care as a child
- 28 percent were incarcerated or in a watch house in the prior 6 months
- 27 percent had an acquired brain injury and 22 percent a learning and/or cognitive disability
- 75 percent had a mental health diagnosis, 63 percent problematic substance use, and 52 percent a comorbidity of both mental health and substance use. [10]

The results of this survey emphasizes the interconnectedness of homelessness to other systems and the significant vulnerabilities of rough sleepers as a cohort.[11] The development of the *National Housing and Homelessness Plan* creates new opportunities for addressing homelessness at the national level. The SHSN and Melbourne Zero have both made submissions to inform the development of the Plan.

1.6 Rough Sleeper Data

This section of the report provides information regarding the collection of rough sleeper data, identifying the primary methods and describing some accompanying issues. As stated above, homelessness has continued to rise according to the national Census, shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: ABS Census Count of Rough Sleepers

Significantly, the growth of homelessness represented in the Census is likely to an underestimation. It can be challenging to accurately count the number of people experiencing homelessness because it is such a hidden issue. The Census is not designed to count the number of people experiencing homelessness but

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[10] House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (2021) Final Report: Inquiry into Homelessness, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia: Canberra, pg. 229.
[11] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) "Estimating Homelessness – Census" accessed via https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/latest-release

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has been used to estimate homelessness since 1996.[12] Further, the 2021 Census was conducted during the COVID-era lockdown in Greater Melbourne, when many people sleeping rough were temporarily housed in hotels by the State Government and usual count methods were disrupted. This is likely to have further underestimated the number of people experiencing homelessness, particularly rough sleepers.

Administrative data provided from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) is collated by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), providing details on the number of people assisted by the homelessness sector and their circumstances. In the year 2022 – 2023, 273,600 people received SHS services, around one in three of these people were Victorians.[13] According to AIHW data, one in 67 Victorians sought homelessness assistance in 2022 – 23, the national rate for the same year was one in 95. Of those assisted in Victoria, just over 10 percent were rough sleeping at their first contact with the SHS sector. The SHS data also provides information regarding the experiences and demography of clients receiving support. Figure 2 demonstrates the connection between homelessness, systems such as justice and health.

Figure 2: AIHW Homelessness Data, Victoria and National [14]

	Vic		Australia	
	2021–22	2022–23	2021–22	2022–23
All clients	155.3	148.4	106.2	105.2
Indigenous clients	1,769.0	1,836.9	798.7	812.5
Young people presenting alone (15–24)	18.1	17.0	15.3	14.7
Older people (55 and over)	16.6	16.7	9.9	10.5
Family and domestic violence	70.3	61.7	41.9	40.1
Clients with disability	4.5	4.5	2.8	2.9
Clients with mental health issues	49.0	48.5	33.2	32.8
Exiting custodial arrangements	7.4	7.8	3.5	3.5
Leaving care	3.3	3.2	2.3	2.4
Children on protection orders	5.1	5.0	3.1	3.0
Problematic drug/alcohol use	13.0	13.1	9.1	9.0

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[12] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) "Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, 2012" accessed via
https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4922.0Main%20Features22012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4922.0&issue=2012&num=&view=
[13] Ibid.
[14] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) "Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022–23" accessed via https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/about

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Although the AIHW's collated data has more detail and functionality than Census data, it does not count every person experiencing homelessness. In the year 2013 – 2014, less than half of people experiencing homelessness were estimated to have sought the assistance of an SHS provider. [15] Point in time counts such as the Census are not designed to count rough sleeping and only occur once every five years, affecting the accuracy and frequency of this method. This presents a significant challenge for the homelessness sector in counting rough sleeping.

Some Melbourne Councils have also conducted their own periodical street counts led by the City of Melbourne since 2008, to gain a better picture of rough sleeping in their municipalities. This has been limited due to resources, only allowing counts usually every two years and only in those participating local government areas, not allowing for transience between municipalities. The accuracy of these street counts can also be affected by rough sleepers moving out of area to avoid participating in the count.

The difficulty of accurately estimating homelessness through point in time counts such as the Census, or with service-user data provided by SHS providers, means that rough sleeping is often undercounted. Ending rough sleeping and addressing homelessness is not possible without knowing the full extent and characteristics of the issue. Obtaining reliable and regularly updated data on rough sleeping is crucial.

2.   Literature Review

This literature review explains the Functional Zero approach to ending homelessness, describing its origins and key principles to set the context for the research project.

2.1 What is Functional Zero?

The Functional Zero approach to ending homelessness aims to make the experience of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.[16] Projects share a common measurement system and are all founded in the principles of collective impact and are place-based, making them adaptive. Significantly, the Functional Zero approach to ending homelessness is different from 'absolute zero', but the two ideas are not opposed. Working towards Functional Zero puts communities closer to ending homelessness than others without a similar strategy, while acknowledging the structural challenges of achieving absolute zero. [17]

The Functional Zero projects of the Southern region are based on the work of Community Solutions' 'Built for Zero' strategy from the US and Canada. In North America alone 107 communities operate a Built for Zero project, with 14 achieving Functional Zero for at least one sub-population experiencing homelessness.[18] Functional Zero in Australia is supported by the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) and their 'Advance to Zero' campaign.[19] Functional Zero recognises the persistence of homelessness as a social issue, working in a space confined by the difficulty of reform to influential

[15] O'Donnell, K. (2020) "Estimating annual homelessness" Demographic Research, Vol. 43, pg. 20.

[16] Community Solutions (2023) "Functional Zero: A definition for ending homelessness for a population" Community Solutions, accessed via https://community.solutions/built-for-zero/functional-zero/

[17] Turner, A. Albanese, T. & Pakeman, K. (2017) "Discerning 'Functional and Absolute Zero': Defining and Measuring an End to Homelessness in Canada" University of Calgary, SPP (School of Public Policy) Research Papers, vol. 10, no. 2, pg. 2 – 3.

[18] Community Solutions (2023) "Functional Zero: A definition for ending homelessness for a population" Community Solutions, accessed via https://community.solutions/built-for-zero/functional-zero/

[19] Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (2024) "Advance to Zero" accessed via https://aaeh.org.au/atoz

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systems: housing, the labour market, welfare, justice, and more.[20] The Functional Zero methodology referred to throughout this report was developed in Melbourne and led by Launch Housing.

Functional Zero is achieved when the number of people experiencing rough sleeping is less than the average housing rate of rough sleepers on the list over a six-month period. [21] Functional Zero projects work with people sleeping rough and people only leave the list once a person has permanent housing. Functional Zero projects bring local government, specialist homelessness services (SHSs), essential services and other partners together to work together towards ending homelessness.

The Melbourne Zero approach to ending homelessness has several key components:

1. Projects are place-based, led by local government in partnership with Specialist Homelessness Services and related services.
2. Functional Zero projects share a defined governance model with following distinct levels and responsibilities:

Tier 1/Executive	**Responsible for advocacy, communication strategies, authorisation, and overall project leadership**
Tier 2/Improvement	Conducts data analysis, identifies issues with the Functional Zero model as well as facilitating the escalation of complex individuals. `
Tier 3/Service-Coordination	'Holds' the By Name List, services collaborate to work through each name on the BNL to address needs and find a housing solution. This tier will also identify complex individuals for escalation.
Tier 4/Hotspots	Hotspot meetings involve partnership with frontline workers who identify 'hotspot' areas of rough sleeping, this may include council parks and police staff.[22]

3. The Functional Zero approach uses a data tool to track individuals in real-time, the By-Name List (BNL).

The BNL collects data on every rough sleeper in an area, listing each person by name. The data collection involves persistent outreach, connecting services and workers with people experiencing rough sleeping. Clients remain on the BNL until they move into permanent housing. They may also drop off the BNL after leaving the catchment area, becoming incarcerated, or passing away. Once Functional Zero has been achieved with the rough sleeping target group, the BNL can expand to support people experiencing different forms of homelessness. This may include people in rooming houses or couch surfing, using the

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[20] Evans, J. & Baker, T. (2021) "Breaking through the epistemic impasse: Ending homelessness with the invention of 'functional zero' in the Anglo-American world" Futures, no. 129, pg. 2.

[21] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 12.

[22] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 11.

same methodology. Maintaining a quality BNL is integral to the success of a Functional Zero project. A 'score card' is used to evaluate the quality of the BNL, using the following criteria.

> ***community participation and coverage***, *ensuring that a community is capturing all adults experiencing homelessness, including people living without shelter, people living in shelters, people living in transitional housing, people without homes about to enter hospitals or jails, and people fleeing domestic violence*

> ***policies and procedures***, *ensuring that communities have policies in place to accurately reflect people entering or exiting homelessness and to maintain timely and accurate data*

> ***data infrastructure*** *to track data points related to system-wide inflow and outflow, and ensuring that the by name list has the capacity to track critical population-based statuses in real time, including age, household size, chronic homeless status, and veteran status.* [23]
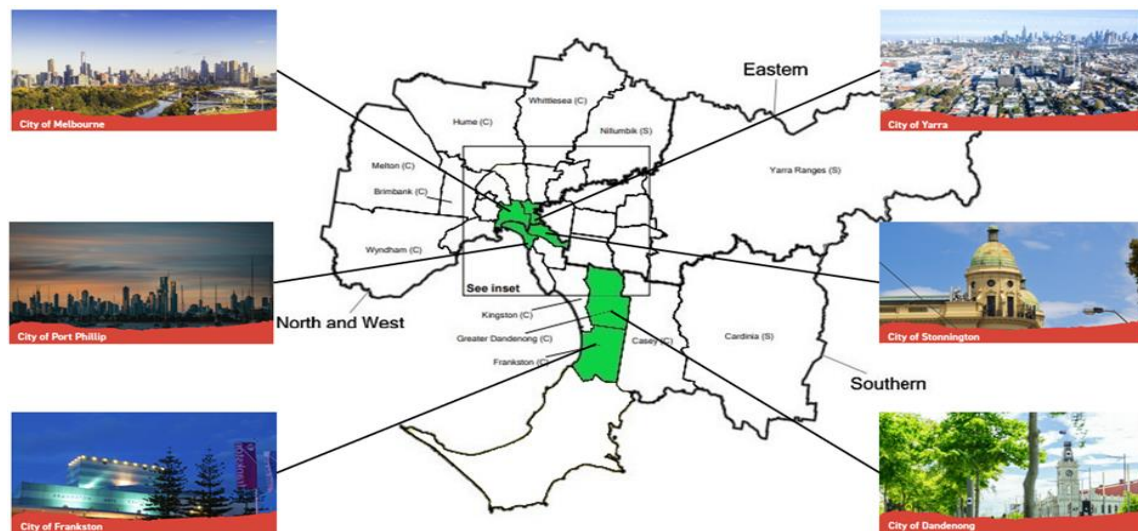
These core practices of Functional Zero (place-based, collective impact, quality data) are integral to the Melbourne Zero model. They create a coordinated and responsive strategy with strong community connections and an emphasis on measurement and evaluation to assess change and movement towards ending rough sleeping.

2.2 Functional Zero Projects in Melbourne's Southern Region – Overview

There are currently six Functional Zero projects in Melbourne (shown in Figure 3), with four operating in the Southern region:

- Port Phillip (Victoria's first)
- Frankston
- Stonnington, and
- Dandenong

Figure 3: Map of Melbourne Zero projects [24]

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[23] Community Solutions (2023) "Functional Zero: A definition for ending homelessness for a population" Community Solutions, accessed via https://community.solutions/built-for-zero/functional-zero/

[24] [24] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 11.

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Other local governments in the Southern region are considering adopting the Functional Zero approach. This section presents a brief overview of these projects using available Functional Zero data with some insights (quotes) from the stakeholders interviewed as part of this research project.

City of Port Phillip

The City of Port Phillip's Functional Zero project was Victoria's first, beginning July 2019 and initiated by the local Council in collaboration with Launch Housing. The City of Port Phillip Functional Zero project is one of the most successful in Australia, demonstrating a significant reduction in rough sleeping. In August 2021, it achieved a milestone accomplishment as the first Australian community to achieve a system shift in homelessness – a twenty percent reduction in rough sleeping.[25] The City of Port Phillip aims to achieve Functional Zero by December 2024, with additional targets for specific demographics.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – a reduction to 10 people or less on the By Name List
- 55 years and older – five or less people on the BNL.[26]

The targets and goal timeline are determined by the partners in each individual Functional Zero projects. These strategies are set by local services who can identify key cohorts that may be overrepresented or require additional support.

> *A lot of people we see in the over 50s homelessness referrals are [homeless for the] first time…I don't think the system is picking up enough of the prevention space,* City of Port Phillip Stakeholder, Port Phillip Functional Zero

> *[there are issues around supporting] particular cohorts – the resources of the system built up around [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people] is inadequate – they need more resources. They're asked to do a lot of heavy lifting without the same resources as the rest of the system, [forcing clients] into the mainstream system,* Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing
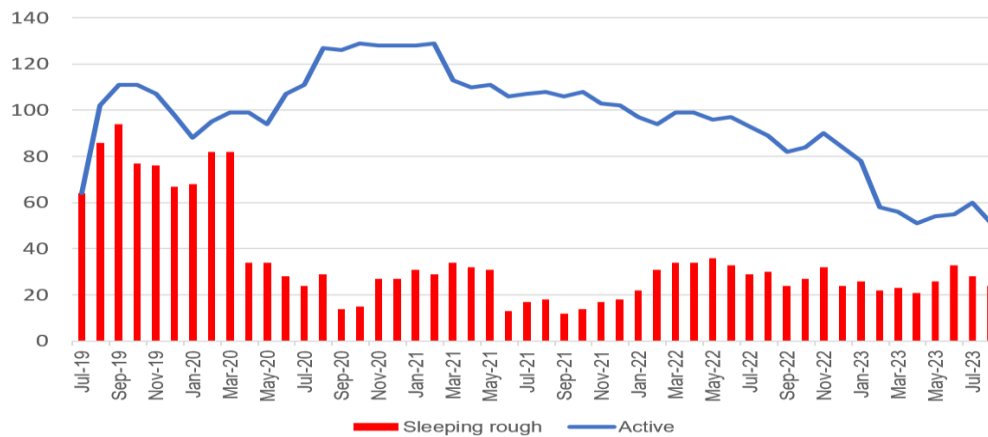
Port Phillip Zero is drawing closer to these goals. In August 2023 there were 14 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders on the BNL and six people over 55.

Figure 4 demonstrates the change in time to the Port Phillip BNL over the three-year period from July 2019 to July 2023. As previously stated, Functional Zero projects maintain support for individuals until they are in permanent housing. The blue line in Figure 4 represents the total number of people on the BNL, with the red bars below representing people sleeping rough at that time. The space in-between represents people in a variety of situations - this could include rooming houses, couch surfing, emergency accommodation. As stated previously, all people on the BNL were previously rough sleeping. This accounts for the transience of people experiencing different types of homelessness through different circumstances and accommodation types.

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[25] Melbourne Zero (2023) "City of Port Phillip Zero" accessed via https://www.melbournezero.org.au/port_phillip_zero

[26] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 16.

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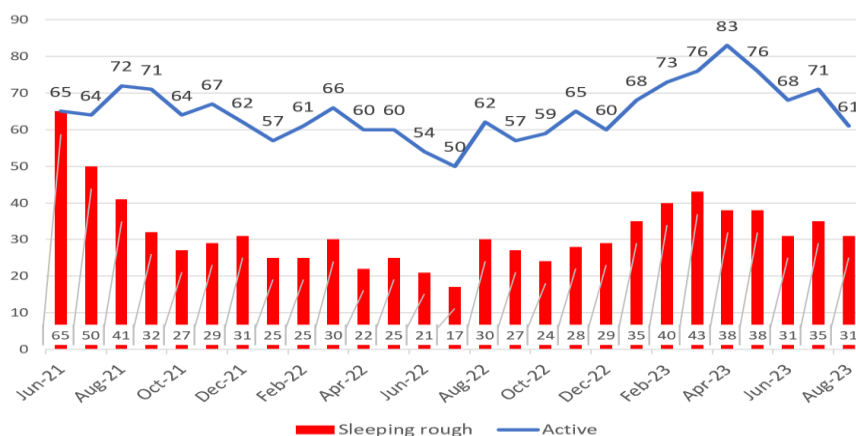**Figure 4 City of Port Phillip By Name List July 2019 – July 2023** [27]

The success of the City of Port Phillip's Functional Zero project in reducing rough sleeper numbers can be attributed to multiple factors. The stakeholders interviewed described greater access to housing through local government, more 'built up' service system infrastructure, and opportunities through Homelessness to a Home (H2H), a program to support and house rough sleepers that emerged from Victoria's COVID lockdowns. The significance of these factors will be explored further in the thematic analysis.

City of Frankston

The City of Frankston's Functional Zero project was initiated by the Frankston City Strategic Housing and Homelessness Alliance in July 2021, led by Council and Launch Housing. The Frankston Functional Zero project is the only project to receive some State Government funding, although the project commenced before this funding was available. Other Functional Zero projects in the Southern region do not receive specific State government funding. Figure 5 demonstrates a significant reduction in rough sleeping from Frankston Zero's commencement. From 65 people sleeping rough on the BNL at the start of the project to a little over 30 sleeping rough, this demonstrates that even when Functional Zero projects are unable to place someone in permanent housing, support and services can still be provided.

Figure 5: City of Frankston By Name List June 21 – August 23. [28]

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[27] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 16.
[28] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 24.

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Figures 6 and 7 below demonstrate the importance of sustaining efforts and time, displaying movement on Frankston's BNL using monthly rough sleeper inflow and outflow data. Inflow and outflow are defined as:

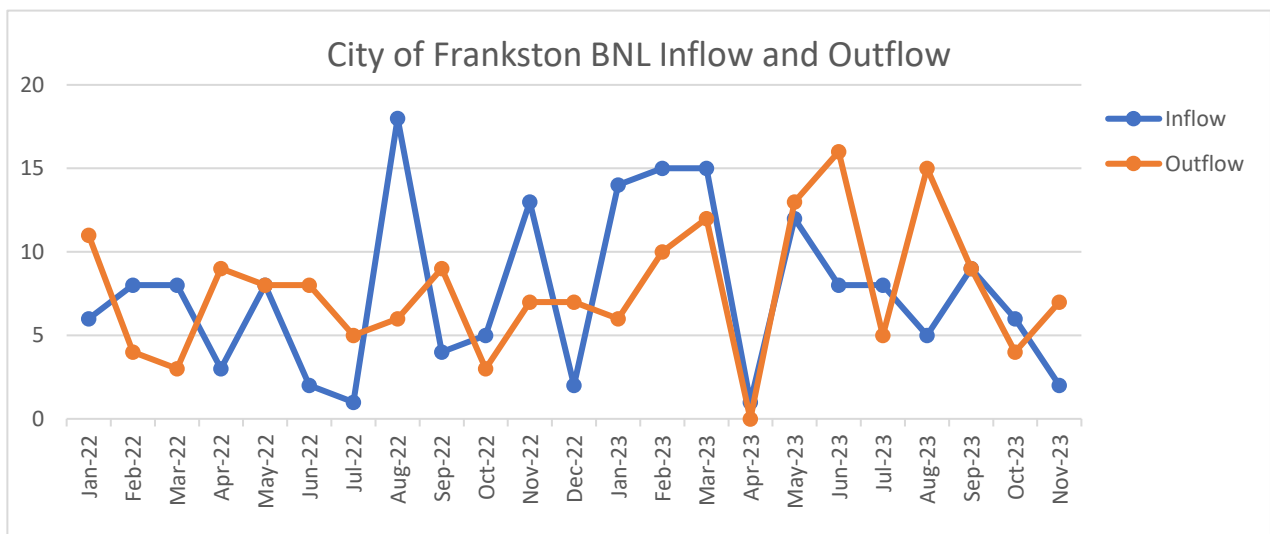Inflow: the number of rough sleepers moving onto the BNL in a particular area.

Outflow: The number of people moving off the BNL into permanent housing, noting that if people move into temporary or transitional housing arrangements, they remain on the list. Other reasons for moving off the BNL include relocation out of the BNL catchment area, incarceration and death.

Figure 6: City of Frankston By Name List Averaged Inflow and Outflows, 2022 -2023.[29]

Year	Average Inflow	Average Outflow
2022	6.5	5.9
2023 (January – November)	8.6	8.8

Figure 7 demonstrates a varying rate of movement on and off the BNL with more consistent peaks in the 2023 period. Figure 6 averages this data, showing that outflow off the BNL is now greater than the inflow onto the BNL. This is significant as a indicator of the project's success, demonstrating the growing momentum of the Frankston Functional Zero project.

Figure 7: City of Frankston By Name List Inflow and Outflow, 2022 - 2023[30]

Frankston Functional Zero stakeholders noted in particular a crucial deficit of appropriate housing. Supporting people into permanent housing, and ensuring it is housing of the right kind, is difficult while experiencing a 'critical shortage' of options. Despite this, Frankston Zero has steadily continued to improve.

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[29] Melbourne Zero (2024) "City of Frankston" accessed via https://www.melbournezero.org.au/frankston_zero
[30] Ibid.

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We have an acute, critical shortage of single-type accommodation other than rooming houses - Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero

People have been placed inappropriately…they might have come from the prison system, they might have come from the health sector, but [have not been placed or case managed by] local services…[external systems are] 'dumping' people without supports…into rooming houses, and if it doesn't work in the rooming house then they're rough sleeping - Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero
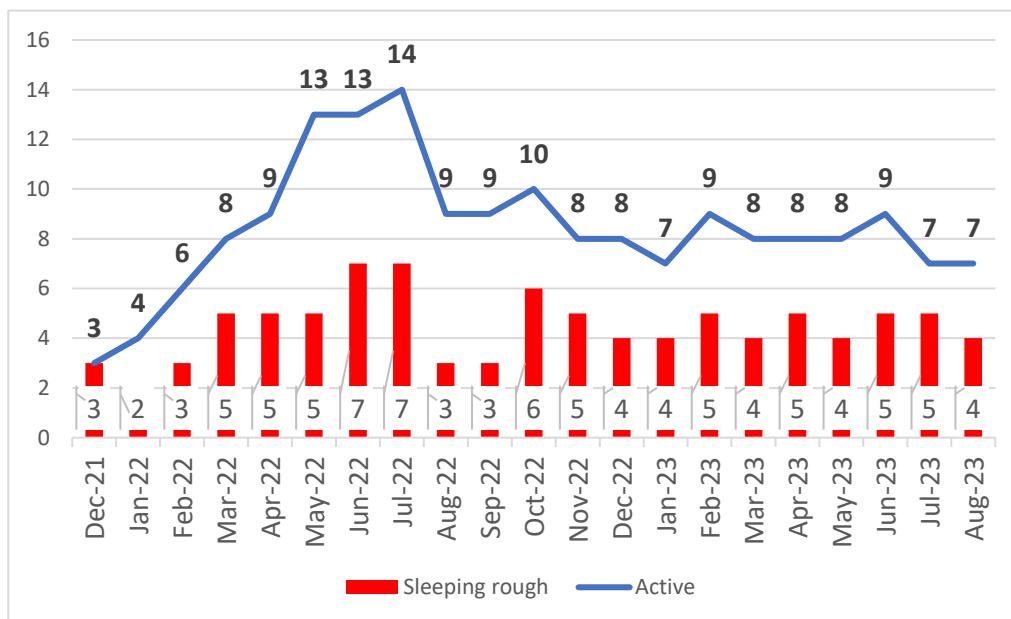
Frankston has homelessness, it's Frankston's responsibility to try to support that…and meet the rough sleepers where they're at, as opposed to [rough sleepers] having to go to a certain entry point at Frankston or Rosebud that might not be accessible…working from consumers to services, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

[Functional Zero coordination is] breaking down the silo effect…in the past NEAMI [may not necessarily discuss the cohort] with the Salvation Army, or Launch, or Whitelion, Wintringham – you name it we've got some great partners…you can pool resources for individuals to get great outcomes…Salvation Army may help with a two week advance or some accommodation from Launch, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

City of Stonnington Functional Zero

The Stonnington Zero (SZ) project began in December 2021 with a relatively small BNL. Although the project has housed a relatively small number of people, this represents the second highest percentage housed of any list in the Southern region, behind only the City of Port Phillip.[31]

Figure 8: City of Stonnington By Name List December 2021 – August 2023 [32]

Stonnington's BNL is small, a fraction of the size of the other Southern Zero projects. This has made a challenge of finding permanent housing visible as the last remaining people on the BNL can be complex

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[31] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 19.
[32] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 18.

and require more intensive supports and work to house. 'Bespoke' and tailored supports developed by collaborating services are critical to support this cohort to permanently exit rough sleeping. [33] This stage is referred to in the Functional Zero methodology as the 'home stretch' or 'last mile'.[34] Communities in the 'home stretch' demonstrate that the goal of ending rough sleeping is not futile. Although Stonnington's small BNL has advantaged it in achieving this stage, Port Phillip is also undertaking 'Home Stretch' work, providing an example of 'home stretch' work on a larger scale as well as competition for Stonnington Zero. [35]

City of Greater Dandenong

Dandenong's Functional Zero project started in June 2022 in a partnership between the City of Greater Dandenong and Launch Housing. The project aims to end rough sleeping in Greater Dandenong by July 2025. The City of Greater Dandenong includes a large and diverse area and partners of the project include organisations servicing immigrants and people of a refugee background such as the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Centre for Multicultural Youth.[36]

Figure 9: City of Greater Dandenong By Name List June 2022 – August 2023

Dandenong Functional Zero is the newest project of the Southern region and is still gaining momentum. Greater Dandenong has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness within metropolitan Melbourne. Feedback from the Dandenong Zero project advised that the demand for services exceeds

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[33] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 19.
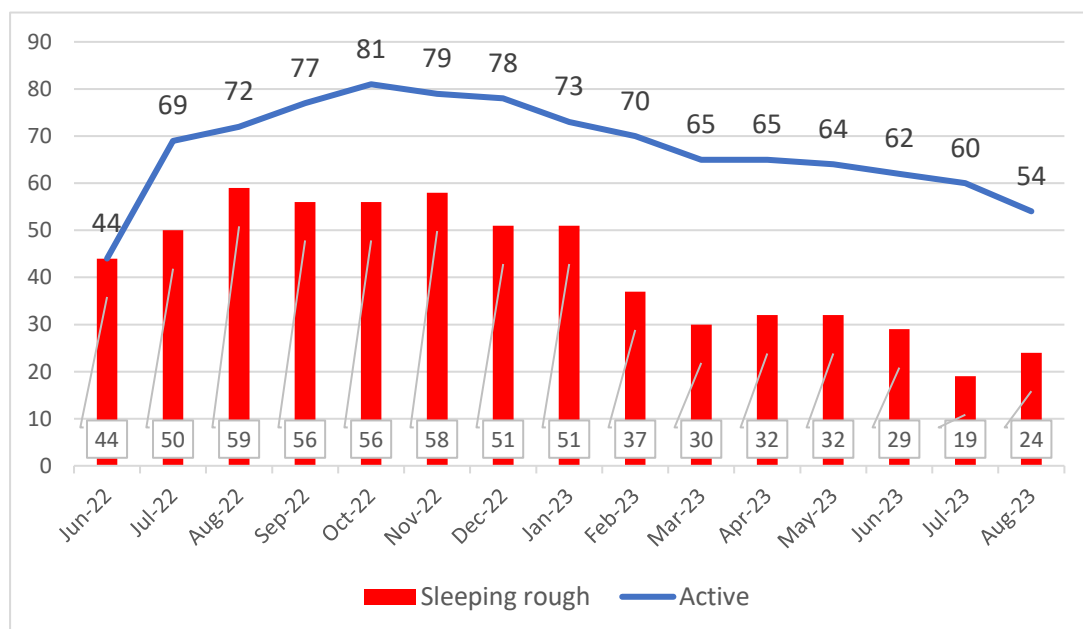[34] Ibid.
[35] 35 Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 36
[36] Melbourne Zero (2024) "City of Dandenong" accessed via https://www.melbournezero.org.au/dandenong_zero

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the resources of the local sector. [37] Dandenong's rough sleeping cohort faces particular challenges, including:

- the lowest average age of people on the BNL (41)
- a significant Culturally and Linguistically Diverse population (36 percent)
- a number of people identified as seeking asylum. This cohort experiences additional vulnerabilities, including in particular challenges with work rights, employment, and income. [38]

Asylum seekers, CALD people, they face additional barriers on top of all the stuff everyone else who experiences homelessness does, whether it's structural barriers to do with work rights or racism, Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing

The path out of homelessness is then more likely to include challenges including securing an income due to an ineligibility for Centrelink payments or obtaining public housing.[39] The involvement of services such as the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and Centre for Multicultural Youth that are better able to address barriers and challenges experienced by this cohort is critical to working with this cohort of rough sleepers.

Dandenong's even become unaffordable just in the last five years…if you're on Jobseeker there's no chance [of a private rental], WAYSS, Dandenong Functional Zero

Benefits of Functional Zero Data

The BNL data used in Figures 4 – 9 illustrates the value of Functional Zero for rough sleeper data in measuring the problem that this approach is trying to end. BNL data is updated monthly by outreach staff who regularly work to 'catch' each person sleeping rough in the local area. People's movements can be followed on a monthly real-time basis. Data obtained from Functional Zero projects captures more depth of information with much greater frequency than the Census and AIHW SHS data discussed previously.

Data and analysis from the Functional Zero projects across the Southern region can also be combined to show the needs of rough sleepers across the FZ projects. This can be very useful for advocating for resourcing and policy changes to end rough sleeping in the region. The Housing Needs Analysis in Figure 10 below is a notable example.

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[37] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 24.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

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Figure 10: Housing Needs Analysis of Southern Region By Name Lists. [40]

Table 17. Housing needs analysis across 3 zero projects

	PR	SH - Little	SH - Some	SH - Lot	PSH	SRS	SIL	SDA	Subsidised	Unknown
Frankston Zero - Aug 2022	16	0	28	7	8	0	2	8	0	0
Port Phillip Zero - Sept 2022	3	9	35	13	16	0	0	0	0	12
Dandenong Zero - Aug 2023	1	6	10	6	18	2	3	3	6	4
	20	**15**	**73**	**26**	**42**	**2**	**5**	**11**	**6**	**16**
	9%	7%	34%	**12%**	**19%**	**1%**	2%	**5%**	3%	7%

Table 18. Definitions: Housing Needs Analysis

Housing defined	Support defined
PR: Private rental housing **SH** = Public Housing + Community Housing **PSH:** Permanent Supportive Housing, that is, support on-site for the rest of their lives, such as Elizabeth Street Common Ground, Viv's Place or many Wintringham properties. **SIL:** Supported Independent Living for people with disabilities requiring NDIS assessment. **SDA:** Supported Disability Accommodation which is supportive housing specifically designed for people with disabilities to a range of supports on-site or inreach from external providers, requiring NDIS assessment. **SRS:** Special Residential Services, form of supported accommodation with varying levels of personal and health support onsite including 24/7 **Subsidized:** People with no income and work rights who need housing secured and rent payments made by an agency	**No support:** can find, establish and manage housing without support. **A little support:** to find and establish housing (Homelessness Entry Points usually provide this) **Some support:** to find, establish and manage transition within the first year: may include RSI or some other Assertive outreach for 3-6 months. **Lot of support:** ongoing support to find, establish and manage the transition and beyond to sustain the tenancy (may end at some time in the future but unclear when): If available, Supportive Housing, Melbourne Street to Home, H2H type support **Lifelong support:** Unlikely to ever be able to find, establish, and manage housing: This is permanent supportive housing like ESCG, disability housing such as SDA (not SIL) or forms of SRS and Aged Care.

The breakdown of housing needs provides strategic and functional for advocacy strategies as well as presenting a clear narrative of housing needs and deficiencies. Permanent supportive housing, which is critically lacking in the Southern region, is the second most required form of housing - almost one in five. Options provided by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) - Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA) and Supported Independent Living (SIL) - also appear on this list. NDIS assessment and packages are needed to appropriately support some rough sleepers. This demonstrates that some housing situations are beyond the capacity of the SHS sector to resolve.

Functional Zero rough sleeper data is more detailed, reliable and frequently updated than other methods used such as the Census count and AIHW SHS administrative data. In addition to this, it presents new opportunities for analysis and use, as demonstrated by the Housing Needs Analysis. In terms of data, the Functional Zero model provides significant opportunities for the sector and the SHSN.

[40] Launch Housing (2023) Zero in Melbourne: Submission to issues paper, National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Launch Housing: Melbourne, pg. 29.

3. Thematic analysis of stakeholder interviews

The following thematic analyses examines the results of the stakeholder interviews, focusing on common themes that emerged from the interviews and includes a number of relevant quotes from the interviews. The list of questions used in this research project can be found in Appendix 2.

3.1 Organisational impact of the Southern Homelessness Services Network

The Southern Homelessness Services Network was described positively by stakeholders across projects, LGAs, and from non-SHS organisations. Reflections on the impact of the SHSN can be categorised as:

Soft power – This relates to the interview participants described the SHSN as a 'nexus' and 'connecter', describing its role of strengthening regional networks and promoting collegiality and unity as vital. This soft power translates into real world outcomes. By underpinning the principle of an 'our client' philosophy and strengthening inter-service relationships, the SHSN contributes to coordination and client outcomes in the region. The role of SHSN as a connecter was highlighted by every stakeholder interviewed.

Real world' influence – the SHSN's position as an interface between the services, as well as to the DFFH, was consistently described as enhancing the sector. The work of the SHSN demonstrates its tangible rather than relational work, including the regular SHSN newsletter, SHSN forum, regular meetings and advocacy work. The SHSN also supports research and has specific focus on elevating the value and role of lived experience in the homelessness sector. The Network is responsible through these avenues for improving regional information sharing, directly connecting services, offering learning opportunities, and advocating on behalf of the SHSN manager's group. In the context of Functional Zero, the SHSN networker is directly involved with Functional Zero projects at the improvement and executive tier meetings, bringing an overarching perspective to the project and identifying trends and challenges that emerge.

Working in this sector can be really hopeless, you can feel deflated when an outcome is giving someone a swag, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

[events like the SHSN forum allow workers] to mix and greet and share stress as well as outcomes… a sense of being part of a group of allies is really important as workers…some programs are resourced so there's often a few workers in each program…being part of a bigger group tends to keep you feeling you're not the only person who finds it an uphill battle some days… City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

[The Networker] brings it all together from a Southern homelessness perspective…as well as writing reports [including] the latest one for Federal homelessness policy, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

[The SHSN should be] continuing to be involved, continuing to advocate, continuing to talk to people, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing

3.2 Organisational impact of Functional Zero

Functional Zero's formalisation of inter-service coordination and collective impact principles was consistently described positively by interviewees. The tiered approach to coordination in Functional Zero approaches rough sleeping from multiple perspectives, from client outcomes to operational needs and advocacy strategies.

For Port Phillip Council, Functional Zero has reoriented how the council approaches homelessness. This has included the creation of a backbone support position, changed the role of local laws officers, and even involved the creation of a monthly 'report card '. The City of Port Phillip's commitment to Functional Zero has been a significant factor in the success of the project. Councils are a key stakeholder in homelessness, often being the first line of response to people rough sleeping in public spaces.

> *Someone is homeless somewhere …inevitably it is the local council that is the interface between that person sleeping rough and the community around them, whether it's positive or not,* Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing

The Functional Zero project in Port Phillip capitalised on the proximity of council to homelessness, with stakeholders describing the project as 'reorienting work' in the council. This includes:

- Greater valuing of Local Laws officers as workers in close proximity to rough sleepers, linking them to the rough sleeper initiative team and enhancing outreach,
- Nomination of people from the BNL into housing options enabled by the City of Port Phillip,
- Committing positions, time and funds to the Functional Zero project,

> *We'd be a bit stuck if we didn't have the resourcing for the admin, facilitation and the community lead commitments…in the past workers had to do it the best they could, but it wasn't recognised that this structure is needed,* City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

The adjustments made by Port Phillip in responding to homelessness and integrating the Functional Zero program into council operations demonstrates a significant impact on council operations. This has had beneficial effects on the project as the stakeholders noted, including integration across council operations across multiple levels and leveraging council funds and resources to support the project. The level of this impact is salient in the Port Phillip Functional Zero project due to the degree of the council's investment, highlighting the importance of council leadership on this issue. Other projects have not experienced the same commitment of resources and operational reorientation as in this LGA.

This is contrasted by the impacts of Functional Zero participation by non-SHS organisation, Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

> *While it's not our core work, as a human rights organisation we value the opportunity to participate, to share our knowledge and skills with Zero,* Peninsula Community Legal Centre, City of Frankston Functional Zero

Participating in Functional Zero has had direct and indirect effects on the organisation and their capacity to deliver client outcomes. Internally, staff have greater confidence when working with clients involved with Functional Zero. The involvement of the PCLC with the Frankston Zero project also improves the ability of SHS staff to refer clients for legal assistance. The importance of strong linkages between services in Functional Zero is a shared characteristic with the Southern Homelessness Services Network.

Beyond improved relationships and client outcomes, stakeholders across agencies and LGAs described participating in Functional Zero as energising. This was a key theme across stakeholder reflections, participation in Function Zero invigorated members and brought services even closer together. Across projects, the Functional Zero methodology has changed operational structures, improved inter-service linkages and raised organisational morale.

In our [Launch Housing's] current strategic plan, one of our objectives is to build Functional Zero into business as usual – so its connected to assertive outreach, entry points, post support, Homeground real estate, crisis accommodation – integrate it across the board…It's part of our impact measures, it's part of our strategic plan, but it's taken five years, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing

3.3 Service Coordination

Coordination between services and client service coordination under the Functional Zero model was described positively, but not without challenges. The structured tiers of meetings, use of the BNL data and collective impact framing were specifically highlighted as beneficial. The four tiers of coordination meetings as in Functional Zero are integral to its methodology.

- Tier 1/Executive
- Tier 2/Improvement
- Tier 3/Service Coordination
- Tier 4/Hotspots

The tiers of Functional Zero coordination aim to work with a flow of information between the different levels. The structured model of escalation and information sharing is designed to prevent any one tier from getting 'stuck'. Issues should move between tiers to the appropriate level for solutions.

…if we've gotten a point where multiple agencies don't know what the next best steps are…or if there's systemic barriers which can often be the case we will escalate that to the operations [Improvement] group, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

Prior to Functional Zero inter-service coordination did occur. The value of the Functional Zero approach has been in formalizing coordination meetings and methods, delivering an enhanced version of previous arrangements. It has also brought the Executive level into play, providing an authority for practitioner led service coordination.

[Functional Zero has the] ability to sustain the approach beyond just, perhaps, relationships, which previous collaboration and networks was often relying on, City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

The high demand for services means that sometimes we can work in silos – it's not that we don't want to collaborate, it's just that we can work in silos as we're all so busy, Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero

In instituting a formalised model, Functional Zero projects provide a sustained approach to inter-service coordination which seeks to engage agency-level commitments. This commitment is reinforced in multiple ways. Upon joining a Functional Zero project, the agency committing itself to the project signs a statement of commitment. The statement of commitment provides a substantive representation of the agency's commitment of resources and time to Functional Zero, as well as accountability in achieving the project's aims. The regular service coordination meetings help agencies to be accountable to each other for their work with clients on the BNL.

[Functional Zero is] not one person saying to another 'we should get together and do something about this', it's a commitment on the agency…each agency is signed up to that statement of commitment so there's an expectation that they maintain their participation until the goal is reached and until the collective decides that the goal is no longer relevant, or needs to be modified in some way, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing

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The BNL is an essential tool in the Functional Zero model. The BNL allows services to collaborate for individuals experiencing rough sleeping, integral to the service coordination meetings is the process of working the list. The BY Name List also provides data to be analysed at the improvement group and feed through to advocacy work and strategies for the Functional Zero project.

> *Without it [the By Name List], a lot of people would be off the grid…it's gold at the end of the day*, WAYSS, Dandenong Functional Zero

> *We know them by name, we have a pretty good sense of their demography, their housing and support needs, and we have the right services around the table to ensure they are on a pathway out of homelessness,* Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing

Coordination within Functional Zero is not without challenges however. Managing these tiers, ensuring that progress continues and information flows was identified as a continuous challenge across Functional Zero projects. Further, resources are needed for the roles support service coordination in Functional Zero – a problem for a sector described by stakeholders as under-resourced. Stakeholder participants reflected on the collective impact nature of Functional Zero, iterating the importance that Functional Zero does not become a top-down model – feedback should flow both ways. This was identified as an occasional challenge in a structure where authority is gathered at the Executive and Improvement tiers. Collaborative practitioner engagement was particularly highlighted in reinforcing the collective impact principles underpinning Functional Zero.

> *[service coordination participants need a] space to answer honestly whether they feel the meetings are purposeful and valuable,* Launch Housing Outreach, Port Phillip and Stonnington Functional Zero

Further, this tiered roundtable approach work best with services that are diverse and clustered in the LGA. Geographic variability affects the coverage of services and availability of resources, particularly between inner and outer suburbs. A Launch Housing Functional Zero stakeholder noted this, homelessness services have developed in the inner suburbs due to historic demand and demography. This was also described as an 'organic service network'. The same infrastructure of Specialist Homelessness Services have not developed in the outer suburbs, putting inner projects such as Port Phillip at a comparative advantage when compared to outer-suburb projects. This is exacerbated by the trend in homelessness from the inner to the outer suburbs.

In summary, the tiered system of coordination within the Melbourne Zero model was broadly described in positive terms by stakeholders, with some challenges highlighted. The flow of information and escalation of issues, use of BNL data, and greater focus on commitment and accountability were particularly significant outcomes for stakeholders.

> *I've been working on service coordination for most of my career in homelessness – over 25 years – and this project [Functional Zero] really distils all those roles that need it to work*, SHSN Networker

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3.4 Reflections on moving forward: barriers to ending rough sleeping

There are significant barriers in the way of ending rough sleeping. As previously stated in the literature review, homelessness is affected by a wide range of systems and institutions.[41] Stakeholders cited a variety of issues to address in ending homelessness:

> *Housing – different types of housing. At the moment, one bedroom stock is pretty much what everyone on the BNL needs…but that's what the system doesn't have at the minute…and different kinds of one bedroom stock,* Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing

> *Advocacy from the voice of lived experience is really important,* City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

- Significantly increasing levels of social housing, prioritising public housing,
- Improving the engagement of the NDIS with people experiencing homelessness,
- Addressing additional social barriers affecting different cohorts, e.g. for people experiencing homelessness of a culturally and linguistically diverse background and/or asylum seeker background, work rights and racism present unique barriers,
- Advocating in support of proven programs that centre providing supports; Functional Zero as well as Melbourne's Street to Home and Journey to Social Inclusion,
- Access to the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) to inform the allocation of social housing with the BNL,
- Elevating the position of lived experience to inform models and methodologies of programs such as Functional Zero,
- Independent evaluation and critique of rough sleeper programs in the homelessness sector,

> *We really need to advocate to housing to get the allocations team on board [with Functional Zero and using the BNL]…they can really make an impact when they have a greater understanding of the people they're placing into housing…we may know 'that person is more suited to that Mornington property', 'this person is more suited to the lower density housing in Frankston North',* NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

Specific elements of Functional Zero such as the BNL and structured coordination approach were highlighted as examples of good practice, but stakeholders acknowledged that ending rough sleeping – achieving 'absolute zero' involves significant systemic changes. Functional Zero projects manage this divide by aiming to improve factors within the homelessness system – system solidarity, service coordination and data gathering – while reaching beyond the SHS system to include other agencies.

> *[Functional Zero is] doing it's best to improve…the stuff that's within the control of the [homelessness] system…while trying to harness the collective advocacy potential of the [external] systems coming together,* Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing

Functional Zero was described across interviews as being part of the future of practice in the sector, incorporating improvements to data-driven practice and integrated coordination that improve sector service delivery. The adaptive methodology of Functional Zero is well suited to addressing homelessness in place, and it's data-driven practice provides a valuable resource for use in advocacy and 'storytelling'.

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[41] Evans, J. & Baker, T. (2021) "Breaking through the epistemic impasse: Ending homelessness with the invention of 'functional zero' in the Anglo-American world" Futures, no. 129, pg. 2.

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The SHSN's role was described as supporting Functional Zero while advocating for the necessary changes within and beyond the homelessness sector.

> *[The Specialist Homelessness Services system] isn't to blame for homelessness…but as a system we can still get better,* Functional Zero manager, Launch Housing

> *[Functional Zero] is one of many things that are on the agenda, but it needs to stay on the agenda,* WAYSS, Dandenong Functional Zero

> *[The SHSN should be] a conduit where they feed [Functional Zero] to the other networks…then up to the DFFH,* WAYSS, Dandenong Functional Zero

3.5 Additional Stakeholder Comments

Below are further comments of interest from the stakeholder interviews. These quotes contribute more material and insights relevant to this project.

> *The really obvious thing [to end rough sleeping] is more affordable housing, more social housing, it seems obvious but it's really important to say that…Functional Zero isn't going to achieve anything on its own without structural change,* Launch Housing Outreach, Port Phillip and Stonnington Functional Zero

> *the ideal for me is that…the prison system, big health providers, community organisations aren't 'dumping' people without supports…into rooming houses, [then]if it doesn't work in the rooming house then they're rough sleeping,* Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero

> *[Functional Zero] has capacity to build and build…to a point that there's a lot more intelligence sharing around trying to house people as quick as possible, or look at what their options are…and just recognizing that housing agencies are so snowed…that this intensive work can't always happen in the current environment,* Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero

> *The first thing they [clients] hear is 'have you got me somewhere to live' 'well no, we're going to have to look [at other options]' 'then I'm out of here'*, Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Frankston Functional Zero

> *People stay there [purpose built rooming houses] for a long time…they have input into how the house is run…they can have their issues and it can be complex…[but] there's definitely a market for purpose built rooming houses,* WAYSS, Dandenong Functional Zero

> *[there is a] missed opportunity when people are experiencing extreme imminent risk of homelessness…Mainstream services such as Centrelink and health services need to be part of the movement going forward so that steps can be developed and resources put in to avoid people sleeping rough in the first place…but they're often more hidden for a while until they're chronic because of factors such as shame, numbness and shock…people don't always see homelessness services as the first port of call,* City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

> *More housing is really needed…we do have the Wellington Street Common Ground model being built which will house in permanent support housing…allocations off the By Name List and that's desperately needed…but more social housing over community housing is what's needed,* City of Port Phillip, Port Phillip Functional Zero

> *Working with the department [DFFH] when it comes to allocating people [off the VHR would be ideal]…they're not just a number to us. We know them by name*, NEAMI Frankston, Frankston Functional Zero

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4.   Recommendations

The results of this research leads to a number of recommendations for the SHSN. These recommendations include matters directly related to the SHSN's practice (data, networking, service coordination) as well as recommendations regarding advocacy and supporting Functional Zero.

Recommendation 1: Use the data from Functional Zero in regional advocacy for the SHSN.

Functional Zero data is updated on a real-time basis, place-based and rich with insights beyond individual housing status. Critically, the data is often LGA specific and easily accessible to the SHSN as a participating stakeholder in Functional Zero. Functional Zero data represents a resource that can readily be made use of by the SHSN for strategic or advocacy purposes.

Recommendation 2: Develop a strategy to identify and address rough sleeping data 'blackspots'.

Functional Zero projects build great local data sets, but this data isn't available uniformly across the southern metropolitan region. This recommendation involves considering what is useful in place. 'Organic service networks' and outreach coverage are described as key features advantaging Functional Zero projects, these are not present across the SHSN's regions. The SHSN should consider if there are elements of Functional Zero's structured meetings or By Name List that can be altered and applied to other areas to bridge these gaps. This recommendation can be taken up for consideration by the SHSN Data Working Group.

Recommendation 3: The SHSN should continue to support research and projects in the Southern region.

The SHSN is active in this space, promoting academic research from Monash University regarding health and homelessness as well as lived experience research from RMIT and the University of South Australia. Continuing to promote and support research relevant to the Southern region is a mutually reinforcing activity for the SHSN, contributing to an evidence base that the SHSN can draw upon in advocacy or be used by its members for practice.

Recommendation 4: Establish a regular SHSN practitioner's group meeting (in the 2023-24 strategic plan).

In addition to holding such meetings for strategic purposes and information sharing, this function also goes to the purpose of the SHSN – strengthening connections and relationships. Stakeholder feedback described Functional Zero meetings as energising and connecting – attendees valued them. A mark of their success was how people valued the meetings, attending week in and week out. Similarly, stakeholders valued SHSN events and meetings for a variety of reasons. Meetings also need to be purposeful. An SHSN practitioner's group would enable practitioners in the southern region to consolidate experiences and feedback to raise to the Manager's Group and feed into SHSN policy development and advocacy in a similar way to the Functional Zero structure.

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Recommendation 5: Advocate for the BNL data to inform social housing allocation (VHR) decisions.

The BNL is a source of quality, accessible, and regularly updated information of people sleeping rough – people on the BNL represent some of the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. Access to the BNL's real-time data and details could improve housing outcomes for a vulnerable cohort. There is a role for the SHSN to work with Functional Zero partners to advocate for the BNL data to inform social housing allocations and decision-making processes.

Recommendation 6: The SHSN should commit to continuing to support Functional Zero in the South.

The Functional Zero projects and SHSN share similar networks and there is a significant level of crossover between SHSN members and Functional Zero project stakeholders. The SHSN can continue to support Functional Zero by promoting understanding of Functional Zero and increasing the reach of Functional Zero across the Southern region. This recommendation includes retaining flexibility about collaborating with Functional Zero projects as they grow and as more projects are established in the South.

Recommendation 7: SHSN should act to raise the profile of Functional Zero with the State Government.

Acknowledging the usefulness of the Functional Zero model, the SHSN should support its growth across the South. This recommendation sits within objective one of the SHSN ' Working together to end homelessness'. [42] Functional Zero projects and partners comprise networks of organisations dedicated to ending homelessness with great overlap to the SHSN. Supporting Functional Zero is appropriate for the SHSN due to the shared objectives, common partners and growing momentum of the movement.

Functional Zero projects, with the exception of Frankston, do not receive specific state funding. The SHSN should consider advocacy efforts to raise Functional Zero's profile with the State Government and supporting bids for resources to be allocated to the Functional Zero projects. This can also link to other recommendations such as Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 8: Consider further networks and connections with agencies and services outside of the specialist homelessness services sector.

Ending homelessness involves systems and a demand for resources beyond the sector – requiring a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. The "whatever's involved, you're invited" philosophy of the Functional Zero projects address this and have been key to the outcomes achieved.

The strength of Functional Zero's broad church raises a consideration of the SHSN's networks. It should also be acknowledged that as a network funded for a specific purpose and with limited resources, there are obvious limits on the remit of the SHSN to extend to different sectors. The SHSN acts as a link into the Southern SHS network for intersecting service sectors, sharing information through the regular newsletter and connecting services and agencies as a 'nexus' in the system.

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[42] Southern Homelessness Services Network (2023) "About the SHSN" accessed via https://www.shsnetwork.online/

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Appendix 1: Stakeholder Participants

The stakeholders interviewed and the relevant Functional Zero project they worked on is included below.

Stakeholder	Functional Zero Project
Tanya Cale, City of Port Phillip	City of Port Phillip Functional Zero
Mark Fitzgerald, Launch Housing (formerly)	City of Port Phillip Functional Zero, Stonnington Functional Zero
Jackie Galloway, Peninsula Community Legal Centre	City of Frankston Functional Zero
Ruth Gordon, Southern Homelessness Services Networker	Ruth has been involved across all the projects of the southern region
George Hatvani, Launch Housing	George has been involved across all the projects of the southern region
Kate Incerti, City of Port Phillip	City of Port Phillip Functional Zero
Jack Knight, NEAMI	City of Frankston Functional Zero
Sean Quigley, WAYSS	Greater Dandenong Functional Zero
Amanda Williams, NEAMI	City of Frankston Functional Zero

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Background

1. Can you describe your role and how it relates to Functional Zero and/or the Southern Homelessness Services Network?
2. What do you see as the role of the SHSN in the FZ project?

Service Coordination

3. Can you describe what service coordination looks like with:
   3.1 FZ?
   3.2 SHSN?
4) How is this different to past practices?
5) Can you identify the key strengths and limitations of service coordination with FZ (e.g. collective impact)?
   -How has your FZ project responded to these limitations?
6) Have local factors affected service coordination and the FZ project?

-e.g. housing availability, community dynamics, geography, local services.

Outcomes

7) How has participating in FZ affected your organisation?
8) How has participating in SHSN affected your organisation (if applicable)?
9) How has FZ helped your organisation achieve client outcomes?

Reflections for the SHSN

10) What else is needed to end rough sleeping in your area?
11) What additional resources and/or advocacy are needed to support the Zero project? What role do you see for the SHSN in this?

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Learnings for the Southern Homelessness Services Network
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