

Queensland

Good jobs

Better services

Great lifestyle

# our place

A First Nations Housing and  
Homelessness Roadmap 2031

Acknowledge the past, prepare for the future, act now.



Queensland  
Government

## Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land. We extend our respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging, and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this country.

We acknowledge the continuation of diverse cultural practices and knowledge systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019* also recognises the particular significance of the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## A note on language

Queensland is home to two unique and distinct First Nations cultures, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are hundreds of Aboriginal nations, languages and groups on the mainland of Australia, each with their own cultures, lores and ways of living. Torres Strait Islander peoples also have unique cultures, languages and lores.

In this document, the collective terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations are used interchangeably. Indigenous (with a capital I) is used to reference First Nations peoples in Australia, only where it appears in a title of a document or policy and indigenous (with a lower case i) signals reference to indigenous peoples globally. We acknowledge the use of these terms can inadvertently homogenise and diminish the recognition of diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Use of 'peoples' recognises individual and collective dimensions as affirmed by the UNDRIP and the diverse cultural identities within these collective terms.





# Contents

<b>A shared commitment</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The way forward: A roadmap for change</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Partnership and shared decision-making</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The case for change</b>	<b>8</b>
The current situation	8
The foundations of a home	9
<b>Diagram: Our Place Roadmap to 2031</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The current landscape</b>	<b>12</b>
Building on the foundations	12
Looking ahead	13
<b>Unique and diverse needs and circumstances</b>	<b>14</b>
Place-based	15
Person-centred	16
<b>Partnership principles</b>	<b>18</b>
Partnership principles toolkit	19
<b>Governance and accountability</b>	<b>22</b>
Queensland First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership	22
How will success be measured?	23
Reporting	23
<b>Activate First Nations outcomes</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>What we will start to see</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix 1 –Our Place co-design</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>About the artwork</b>	<b>31</b>





## Our shared vision:

**Every First Nations person in Queensland has a safe and secure place to call home that meets personal, location and cultural needs.**

**This home provides the foundations to thrive.**





# A shared commitment

We know that a place to call home is the foundation for strong community, educational and economic prosperity and participation. Everyone in Queensland should live in a safe and secure home, regardless of their race or how much money they make, but that's not the case.

First Nations peoples experience higher rates of homelessness and housing stress and are less likely to own a home than other Queenslanders. The underlying causes of housing insecurity includes things like racism and historical exclusion from education and employment and the wages of thousands of First Nations peoples being stolen and controlled by the state.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Queensland, like the rest of Australia, is currently facing unprecedented housing pressures. The Queensland Government is taking urgent steps to respond. *Homes for Queenslanders*, launched on 6 February 2024, is a plan to ensure every Queenslanders has a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. It aims to deliver one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social housing homes.

The housing pressures we are experiencing have a bigger impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. More needs to be done to respond to the needs of First Nations communities to close the housing gap by 2031. Continuing the business-as-usual approach will not get us there. Courageous, sustained and transformational action is needed.

*Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Roadmap to 2031* (Our Place Roadmap) sets out how we can work collectively together over the next eight years, guided by the lived experience of First Nations peoples and organisations across Queensland to deliver solutions that reflect community's concerns, values, needs and aspirations.

We are also acting now, with the launch of *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024–2027* (Our Place Action Plan). The Our Place Action Plan will accelerate First Nations housing outcomes over the next four years to shape a fairer and more inclusive housing system.

The Our Place Roadmap also includes a commitment to an action plan from 2028 to 2031, supporting a sustained commitment to closing the housing gap.

While it's not possible to fully predict what Queensland will be like in 2031, we know there are challenges and opportunities on the horizon that will affect housing outcomes for First Nations peoples in Queensland, including population growth, unique community demographics, climate change and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Now is the time to create the systems, structures and supports for the communities we all want to live in now and into the future.

Together with *Homes for Queenslanders*, Our Place (the Roadmap and Action Plan together) will activate the whole-of-government and sector commitment required to close the housing gap, bolster First Nations economic prosperity and recognise the valuable role of First Nations peoples and communities in Queensland's society.



**The Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP**

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works



**Neil Willmet**

Chief Executive Officer  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Housing Queensland



# The way forward: A roadmap for change

The Our Place Roadmap sets out a shared vision for a fairer housing system in Queensland and calls on governments, the housing and homelessness sector, and industry to work in collaboration to close the housing gap in Queensland by 2031. The Our Place Roadmap is a strategy for change over the next eight years, delivered through two consecutive four-year action plans.

**‘An emphasis on transforming mainstream institutions, empowering the community-controlled sector and shared decision making, and partnerships provides an opportunity for the Action Plan to champion community led decision making.’**

*Queensland Indigenous Family Violence  
Legal Service submission*

Closing the housing gap in Queensland will take a dedicated, sustained and collective effort, and a shared responsibility across the housing and homelessness system. That is why we are committing to a roadmap for change, including a third housing and homelessness action plan, aligned to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, to drive Queensland’s progress through to 2031.

The Our Place Roadmap builds on the foundations of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023*, and *Homes for Queenslanders*. Our Place (the Roadmap and Action Plan together) honours Queensland’s commitment to a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and meaningfully implements the Closing the Gap priority reforms.

First Nations peoples are disproportionately represented across the housing and homelessness spectrum. To redress this disparity, the Our Place Roadmap invites all stakeholders to place First Nations outcomes centrally in all housing and homelessness responses.

**‘Respect the expertise and agency of First Nations peoples. Listen, invest and partner with First Nations peoples.’**

*Queensland Youth Housing  
Coalition submission*

Supported by robust governance and strong accountability to community, Our Place guides how we work together collectively to deliver on the housing priorities identified by First Nations peoples in Queensland.



## Partnership and shared decision-making

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know what is best for their communities. Our Place was co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, the peak body for First Nations housing, and is informed by the voices of more than 300 people and organisations (Refer to Appendix 1: Our Place co-design).

Culture is central for First Nations peoples—it is both a birthright and a human right. Without a cultural approach housing and homelessness solutions will not work. We know this because traditional government-led approaches are not closing the gap in housing outcomes.

Our Place is grounded in partnership and shared decision making. The Our Place consultation empowered First Nations peoples in Queensland to decide what the Action Plan and Roadmap should focus on. The consultation also explored how sector and industry stakeholders can work together to

address First Nations housing inequity, guided by First Nations knowledge and lived experience.

We thank every individual and organisation who shared their stories, experience and ideas for solutions. We honour all contributions and respect the diverse perspectives shared in the spirit of driving meaningful change for First Nations housing outcomes in Queensland.

Our Place is a commitment to take forward the efforts of the many dedicated and passionate individuals and organisations across Queensland who have worked for generations to elevate the voices of First Nations peoples in the housing decisions that affect their families and communities.

Our Place begins with and continues the commitment to shared decision making with First Nations communities in Queensland.

**‘An emphasis on transforming mainstream institutions, empowering the community-controlled sector and shared decision making, and partnerships provides an opportunity for the Action Plan to champion community led decision making.’**

*Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service submission*





# The case for change

## The current situation

For First Nations peoples, there was no concept of ‘homelessness’ before colonisation. Everyone had a place to call home. Home was with kin, on Country, practising culture. But currently, First Nations peoples in Queensland are experiencing a housing gap.

The underlying causes are complex and may include racism and historical exclusion from education and employment, lack of understanding of family and kinship structures, and mainstream housing and service industry responses that lack cultural safety.

First Nations peoples currently experience a housing and homelessness gap. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland are:

Six times more likely to experience homelessness than other Queenslanders.<sup>A</sup>



More than 10 times more likely to live in social housing than other Queenslanders.<sup>B</sup>



Twice as likely to live in severely crowded homes than other Queenslanders.<sup>C</sup>

Only half as likely to own their own homes as other Queenslanders.<sup>D</sup>



Five times more likely to experience financial stress than other Australians.<sup>E</sup>

A AIHW, 2017, Australia’s welfare 2017, in brief. Cat. no. AUS 215, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
B AIHW, 2020, Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report, Cat. No. HOU 322, AIHW, Canberra.  
C AIHW, 2017  
D Sanders, W, 2011, Indigenous Australians and home ownership, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research  
E Centre for Social Impact, 2019, Money stories: Financial resilience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, First Nations Foundation and NAB.





## The foundations of a home

For First Nations peoples, culturally appropriate housing enriches spiritual wellbeing, mental health and engagement in cultural practices. Housing provides the foundation for building family and community resources and intergenerational wealth.

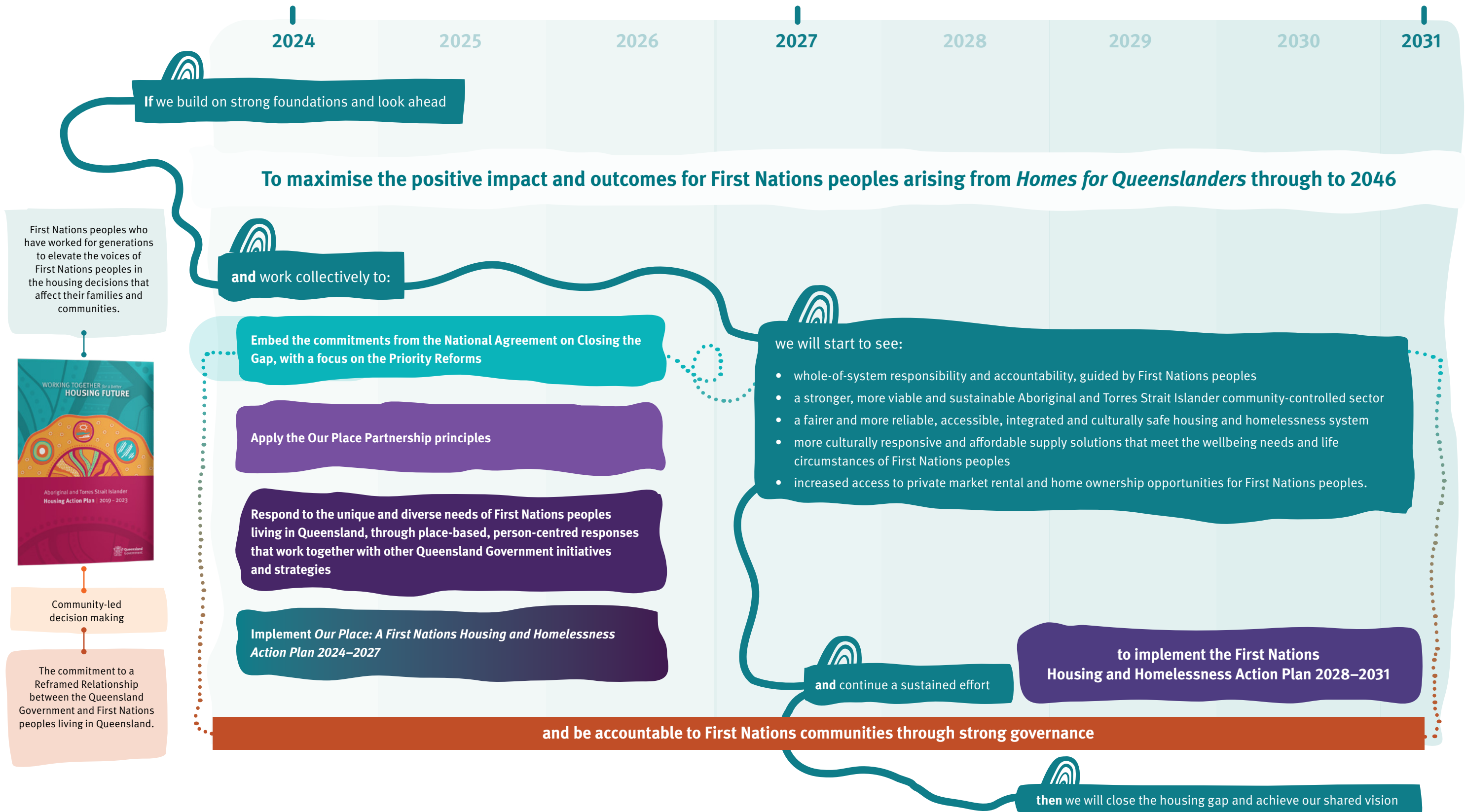
Evidence shows safe, quality housing is fundamental to physical, psychosocial and economic wellbeing.<sup>4</sup> While housing itself does not break the cycle of disadvantage, without it, investments in education, health, family violence, justice, child protection and economic development are unlikely to be successful.

Without the foundation of a home, First Nations peoples are further marginalised and excluded from opportunities for social, cultural and economic participation, compromising the impact of investment and efforts to close the gap.

We want every child and family that lives in our great state to have a fair chance to thrive. That is why the Queensland Government is working towards a future where First Nations peoples in Queensland have a fairer housing system.



# Our Place Roadmap to 2031





# The current landscape

In 2019, Queensland actively committed to reframe its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and launched the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023* (the first action plan), a dedicated response to the housing barriers faced by First Nations peoples.

Since then, several significant national and global events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing cost of living and climate change, have caused us to think about First Nations housing from a new perspective. The extraordinary success of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led response to the COVID-19 pandemic was considered a global role model, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities achieved better outcomes than non-Indigenous people in Australia and Indigenous peoples globally, despite being identified as a high-risk population.<sup>5</sup>

Extreme weather underscored the need for First Nations leadership and practices to be central to land and water management strategies. The Black Lives Matter movement drove a global moment of truth telling.

In 2020, all Australian governments committed to a new way of working together under the refreshed approach to Closing the Gap. In 2024, the *Homes for Queenslanders* plan was delivered by the Queensland Government to create a fairer and more sustainable housing system that ensures better housing outcomes both now and for future generations.

## Building on the foundations

### A reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland

In 2019, the Queensland Government, signed a *Statement of Commitment* to a reframed relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to acknowledge, embrace and celebrate the humanity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to move forward with mutual respect, recognition and a willingness to speak the truth about our shared history.

This commitment is demonstrated through key reforms including Path to Treaty and Local Thriving Communities. It is embedded in the *Public Sector Act 2022*, which acknowledges that public sector organisations have a unique role and obligation to create culturally capable workforces, culturally safe workplaces, and recognition of the right to self-determination for First Nations peoples.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023

The first action plan focused on three pillars—sector strengthening, person-centred responses and place-based responses through Local Housing Plans.

Local Housing Plans supported capital delivery for housing outcomes in remote and discrete communities. This created the foundation for a transformational new way of working, enabling community-led delivery of culturally appropriate housing solutions.

Our Place builds on this foundation by continuing sector strengthening, person-centred and place-based responses and through actions that expand on and enhance the outcomes of the first action plan.



## Looking ahead

### National Agreement on Closing the Gap

The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (the National Agreement) was signed by the Coalition of Peaks and all Australian Governments in 2020, to overcome the entrenched inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Agreement outlines 19 socioeconomic targets and is built around four priority reforms that outline the new way of working required to achieve improvements in life outcomes:

- formal partnerships and shared decision making
- building the community-controlled sector
- transforming government organisations
- providing shared access to data and information at a regional level.

### Homes for Queenslanders

*Homes for Queenslanders* plan is an orchestrated approach to deliver one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social homes. The initiatives in *Homes for Queenslanders* address the full housing system to deliver outcomes across five pillars:

- Build more homes, faster
- Support Queensland renters
- Help first homeowners into the market
- Boost our social housing Big Build
- Work towards ending homelessness.

*Homes for Queenslanders* outlines a target of 1,200 new social homes in First Nations communities in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local government authorities and communities and supports First Nations home ownership aspirations.

## Queensland's Closing the Gap progress



### Target 9a

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

Queensland's baseline measurement was set at 79 per cent (based on 2016 census data). The 2021 census showed that 81 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland live in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) dwellings.

While this shows some progress, further effort is required for Queensland to meet this target.

### Target 9b



By 2031, all First Nations households:

- within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities will receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard
- be in, or near to, a town to receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town.

This target cannot be reported against as there is no data source currently available.





# Unique and diverse needs and circumstances

Evidence demonstrates that services and practices are most effective when they adapt to local requirements and meet the specific needs of individuals. <sup>6</sup> One-size-fits-all approaches do not work. <sup>7</sup> Solutions must be tailored to the individual needs and aspirations of First Nations peoples in each place, informed by the voices of those who live there and their individual lived experiences.

Queensland is home to two unique and distinct First Nations cultures, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are hundreds of Aboriginal nations, languages and groups on the mainland of Australia, each with their own cultures, lores and ways of living, and Torres Strait Islander peoples have unique cultures, languages and lores.

Queensland's population is growing, and this is placing record demand on housing and support services. The First Nations population in Queensland is expected to continue to grow from 239,200 in 2022 (4.6 per cent of the population) to over 308,000 (almost 5 per cent of the population) by 2032. <sup>8</sup>

First Nations communities also have a larger proportion of young people when compared with the non-Indigenous population, with around one third of the First Nations population aged under 15, compared with 18 per cent of non-Indigenous people in the same age group. <sup>9</sup>

There are cultural and social factors that influence the way housing is used by different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. On average, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have larger household sizes and are more likely than others to have multiple families living together. <sup>10</sup> These larger household sizes are likely to be caused by a strong connection to family and a culture of sharing resources, including accommodation. <sup>11</sup> Research has found wellbeing benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live with a supportive network of people. <sup>12</sup>





## Place-based

Place-based responses recognise unique and different needs in urban, regional and remote communities. Partnerships with community and place-based decision making are central to Our Place.

### Urban and regional communities

Southeast Queensland has a large and fast growing First Nations population. More than one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland live in this region.<sup>13</sup> Many First Nations peoples also reside in regional cities including Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, and Toowoomba.<sup>14</sup>

Drivers of homelessness and the entry and exit points to accessing services are different for First Nations peoples in urban settings compared to those in remote areas.<sup>15</sup>

In Queensland's cities, vibrant First Nations communities thrive, sustained by a robust sense of community. These communities exhibit high levels of participation, volunteerism and activism for the benefit of their collective community and all First Nations peoples.<sup>16</sup>

### Remote and discrete communities

Missions, reserves and stations were areas where Aboriginal people were placed in after being forcibly removed from their traditional lands. In these places the government controlled the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This displacement resulted in loss of cultural knowledge, physical spiritual relationship with sites of cultural significance, language and continuing cultural practices, having an enormous impact on emotional and spiritual well-being.

Despite these losses, cultural knowledge has survived and been passed down from one generation to the next. Over time, former missions became discrete communities. In these communities, co-location of diverse Nations gave rise to communities of people sharing experience rather than cultural affiliation.

Around 16 per cent of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population live in remote or discrete communities.<sup>17</sup> Queensland has 34 discrete communities, located within 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government Areas and the Torres Shire, most of which are classified as 'remote' or 'very remote.' Queensland's remote and discrete First Nations communities account for six of the top 10 most economically and socially disadvantaged locations in Australia. The 'housing gap' widens (as measured by overcrowding) as remoteness increases.

There are multiple and, in some locations, complex types of land tenure arrangements in remote\* and discrete communities which directly impact housing solutions.<sup>18</sup>

The strength and commitment to progressing self-determination in these communities are testament to the resilience of First Nations peoples.

\* ARIA (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia).



## Person-centred

Person-centred responses must be tailored to meet the unique and specific housing needs and individual circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Some First Nations peoples in Queensland face the intersecting effects of different types of racism, discrimination and exclusion.

Factors such as exiting state care, experiencing domestic and family violence or child protection concerns, and leaving prison can compound housing stress. Conversely, homelessness and housing insecurity are risk factors for entry into these systems.<sup>19</sup> These intersecting factors are not only the ‘symptoms’ of housing inequity but are also the drivers of homelessness.<sup>20</sup>

A safe, secure and stable home is a powerful lever to arrest this cycle of adversity.

### A unique responsibility to First Nations young people in contact with the child protection system

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are over-represented in the tertiary child protection system at concerning levels. The Queensland Government has a unique responsibility to ensure young people transitioning from care don’t end up homeless.

Our Place acknowledges the Queensland Government’s responsibility and works together with the following strategies to prioritise supports for First Nations young people:

- *Towards ending homelessness for young Queenslanders 2022–2027*
- *Our Way: A generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2017–2037*, which aims to eliminate disproportionate representation in child protection. This comprehensive approach includes enhanced integrated services addressing housing needs to support family preservation, reunification, and transition to independence.

## Domestic and family violence

One in four Specialist Homelessness Services clients report domestic and family violence as the reason for their homelessness.<sup>17</sup>

## People with disability

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were 1.7 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to be living with disability.<sup>18</sup>

## Leaving custody

First Nations peoples leaving custody access homelessness service twice as often as non-Indigenous people –20 times the rate of the wider population.<sup>19</sup>

## Older persons

In 2018-19 older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons accounted for eight per cent of all homeless First Nations persons.<sup>20</sup>

## LGBTQIA+ people

In 2021, 12.7 per cent of LGBTQIA+ First Nations survey participants stated they had experienced homelessness or housing insecurity because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>21</sup>

## Youth

First Nations young people (aged 15-24) represent around 26 per cent of young people who experience homelessness on any given night.<sup>22</sup>



## Working together

Our Place works together with other Queensland Government strategies and initiatives.

Collectively, these reforms seek to reframe the relationship with Queensland First Nations peoples and change the systems, policies and injustices that make it harder for First Nations peoples experiencing multiple life challenges to find a place to call home.

*Partnering for Inclusive Housing with Queenslanders with Disability 2024–2027* was co-designed with people with disability and is a plan for at least half of all new social homes delivered or supported by the government to follow special design standards to suit older Queenslanders and people with disability. It identifies how First Nations people with disability and their families play an active role in decision making and have access to culturally appropriate housing supports and culturally responsive trauma-informed pathway planning.

*Towards ending homelessness for young Queenslanders 2022–2027* is the Queensland Government's commitment to improving housing outcomes for young people. It recognises the importance of housing as central to closing the gap for young people and identifies specific commitments to support young First Nations peoples to obtain and sustain housing.

The Queensland Government's *Reconciliation Action Plan and Addendum 2018–2022* will advance reconciliation over the next two years across the public sector—reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The *Human Rights Act 2019*, acknowledges the importance of the right to self-determination for First Nations peoples in Queensland.

Legal recognition of traditional Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices under the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020*.

First Nations health equity reform agenda, including the co-design and implementation of legislated Health Equity Strategies by the 16 Hospital and Health Services, in partnership with First Nations stakeholders.

*Leading healing our way: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy 2020–2040*, which aims to address the intergenerational impacts of trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because of violence, abuse, grief and loss, dislocation from country, family and Country and loss of culture.

*Queensland's framework for action—Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence*.

*First Nations First Strategy 2032*, delivered as part of HEALTHQ32, places First Nations peoples and their voices at the forefront of healthcare service design and delivery in Queensland.

*Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27: Together, a better Queensland*, which emphasises the importance of accessible housing.

*Paving the Way – the First Nations Training Strategy* is the Queensland Government's plan to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' skills development and respond to local and community employment needs.

*First Nations Economic Strategy* - a new, whole-of-government First Nations strategy to support economic participation outcomes and self-empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and businesses.





# Partnership principles

The Our Place partnership principles guide how we work collectively to implement the Our Place Roadmap and action plans. These principles centre the strengths and leadership of First Nations communities, individuals, organisations and families, and acknowledge the commitment, dedication, resources and innovation of the whole housing and homelessness sector.

## The Our Place Partnership principles are:

- **Core principle: Enable self-determination**
- Assert housing as central to physical, social and community wellbeing
- Embrace truth-telling, build cultural safety and eliminate racism
- Deliver long-term skilling and economic benefit for First Nations communities
- Pursue First Nations-led evidence-based responses and embed data sovereignty.

‘While the new Action Plan should focus on implementation by the Queensland Government, it is important to acknowledge the essential role of the partners—individuals, families, communities and their representatives, Queensland ICHOs, mainstream housing service providers and other levels of government who will be needed to support the implementation the new Action Plan.’

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland submission.*





### Partnership principles toolkit

The Our Place Action Plan delivers ‘a toolkit for change’ in *Outcome Area 1: Partnerships and shared responsibility*. These actions drive whole-of-system responsibility and accountability for First Nations housing outcomes, guided by First Nations leadership and shared decision-making on equal footing and underpinned by evidence.

Combined, these actions are a set of practical tools that can be used by anyone working in the housing and homelessness sector to put Our Place partnership principles into action.

‘Our Place must include a focus on collective and collaborative action, active engagement, and partnership with communities so that all stakeholders see themselves as active participants.’

*Homelessness QLD submission.*

---

## Core principle: Enable self-determination

‘Grow the community-controlled housing sector as the primary mechanism for delivering culturally safe services.’

*Queensland Mental Health Commission submission.*

‘Our Indigenous led research and data analysis is also needed to build better First Nations evidence-based housing practice and policy.’

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland submission.*

Self-determination is the foundation for thriving and empowered First Nations communities and is the most effective way to achieve improved social and economic outcomes.<sup>22</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have practised self-determination and self-government for tens of thousands of years. Restoring self-determination is essential for First Nations peoples to heal from the legacy and impacts of colonisation and dispossession.

Self-determination shifts the power from government to local voices and communities, allowing space for First Nations peoples to determine their own priorities. It results in solutions that are culturally appropriate, that work for local people and local places.

There are many different expressions of self-determination, including:

- a strong community-controlled sector
- place-based and community-led decision making
- agency and sovereign authority over individual and family decisions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led approach to capturing and sharing knowledge, learnings, data and evidence.

We are committed to the meaningful transfer of resources and decision-making to First Nations communities and will actively remove barriers to First Nations communities assuming leadership, governance, and authority.

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration), which affirms the fundamental importance of the right to self-determination. The principle of self-determination has been described as the most fundamental of all human rights for indigenous peoples worldwide.

Embedded within this principle is the commitment to uphold free, prior, and informed consent, based on comprehensive information, provided in a culturally appropriate manner.





---

Assert housing as central to physical, social and community wellbeing

We confirm housing is foundational to First Nations peoples' physical, social and economic wellbeing and we boldly advocate for housing as a central consideration in government and community thinking about the rights and aspirations of First Nations peoples to thrive in Queensland.

---

Embrace truth-telling, build cultural safety and eliminate racism

We embrace truth-telling, acknowledging and recognising the past acts of dispossession, settlement, and discriminatory policies of our shared history that still impact First Nations peoples. By addressing the need for culturally safe practices, calling out racism and respecting First Nations unique cultural beliefs, values, and practices, we will embed respect and trust as the cornerstone of all partnerships.

We recognise having a choice to access services designed and delivered by First Nations peoples and organisations is desirable; alongside access to culturally safe universal and mainstream services.

---

Deliver long-term skilling and economic benefit for First Nations communities

We will actively work to redress the economic inequity for First Nations peoples, and seek out opportunities to increase First Nation employment outcomes, and training and business opportunities to support pathways to economic prosperity and wealth generation.

---

Pursue First Nations-led evidence-based responses and embed data sovereignty

We recognise the right of First Nations peoples to own, control and access information and data that pertains to First Nations peoples, outcomes, communities and cultures. Indigenous Data Sovereignty is more than just numbers and research – it's about owning the stories.

We will work together in partnership with First Nations peoples and communities to enable data sovereignty to ensure First Nations communities have access to the right information to make informed decisions. With Indigenous Data Sovereignty, First Nations peoples can take charge of their narratives and have more say in what affects them and their communities.

First Nations-led research will build a culturally informed evidence base to drive future investment and planning, leading to stronger partnerships and more effective service design.





# Governance and accountability

Our Place Roadmap will be implemented within a robust approach to governance and accountability led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Queensland First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership

In honouring the commitment to shared decision-making, the Queensland First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership (QFNHH Partnership) will be established to provide the necessary structure to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share decision-making authority with the Queensland Government.

### The QFNHH Partnership will:

- provide direction and guidance to the implementation of the Our Place Action Plan, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives
- keep partners accountable to First Nations communities for the delivery of the Our Place Action Plan
- shape policy recommendations and investment decisions relating to First Nations housing and homelessness reforms, with a focus on positive impact and value
- inform Queensland's participation in the Closing the Gap Housing Policy Partnership, connecting State and Commonwealth First Nations housing and homelessness priorities.

Membership will include a majority of First Nations peoples and will include broad representation from across Queensland. Members will be selected through an open and transparent process, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland.

Appointments will be made by the Director-General, Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and the Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland.

The QFNHH Partnership is connected to local shared decision-making structures such as Local Housing Plans, tenant participation programs and peak body regional engagements.

The QFNHH Partnership will facilitate the development of a First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership Agreement between the Queensland Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland and sector partners, guiding strong and accountable partnerships supporting the Our Place Roadmap.

The QFNHH Partnership will initially be established for two years. During this time, the longer-term approach will be co-designed with members.





## How will success be measured?

The QFNHH Partnership will oversee the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework, grounded in the principles of data sovereignty.

First Nations-led monitoring and evaluation are essential elements in supporting shared accountability for outcomes, identifying opportunities for improvement, learning and adaptation and driving effective investment.

The evaluation approach must centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, perspectives, and knowledges and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural beliefs and practices.

The monitoring approach must ensure the QFNHH Partnership has timely access to data to inform decision making and reporting.

Transparency is fundamental to genuine partnerships and accountability and informs shared decision-making and continuous improvement. Accordingly, there is a commitment to publishing evaluations.

## Reporting

The QFNHH Partnership will prepare a publicly available annual report on the Our Place Action Plan implementation progress. The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works will report on progress quarterly to the Queensland Government.

‘There is a requirement for regular and public state government reporting and tracking of implementation progress of key actions, activities and housing delivered.

‘We firmly believe that leaning into the priority reforms [of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap] provides a roadmap for governance and accountability establishing shared decision-making and highlighting a path for self-determination in the governance of the Our Place Action Plan.’

*Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service submission.*

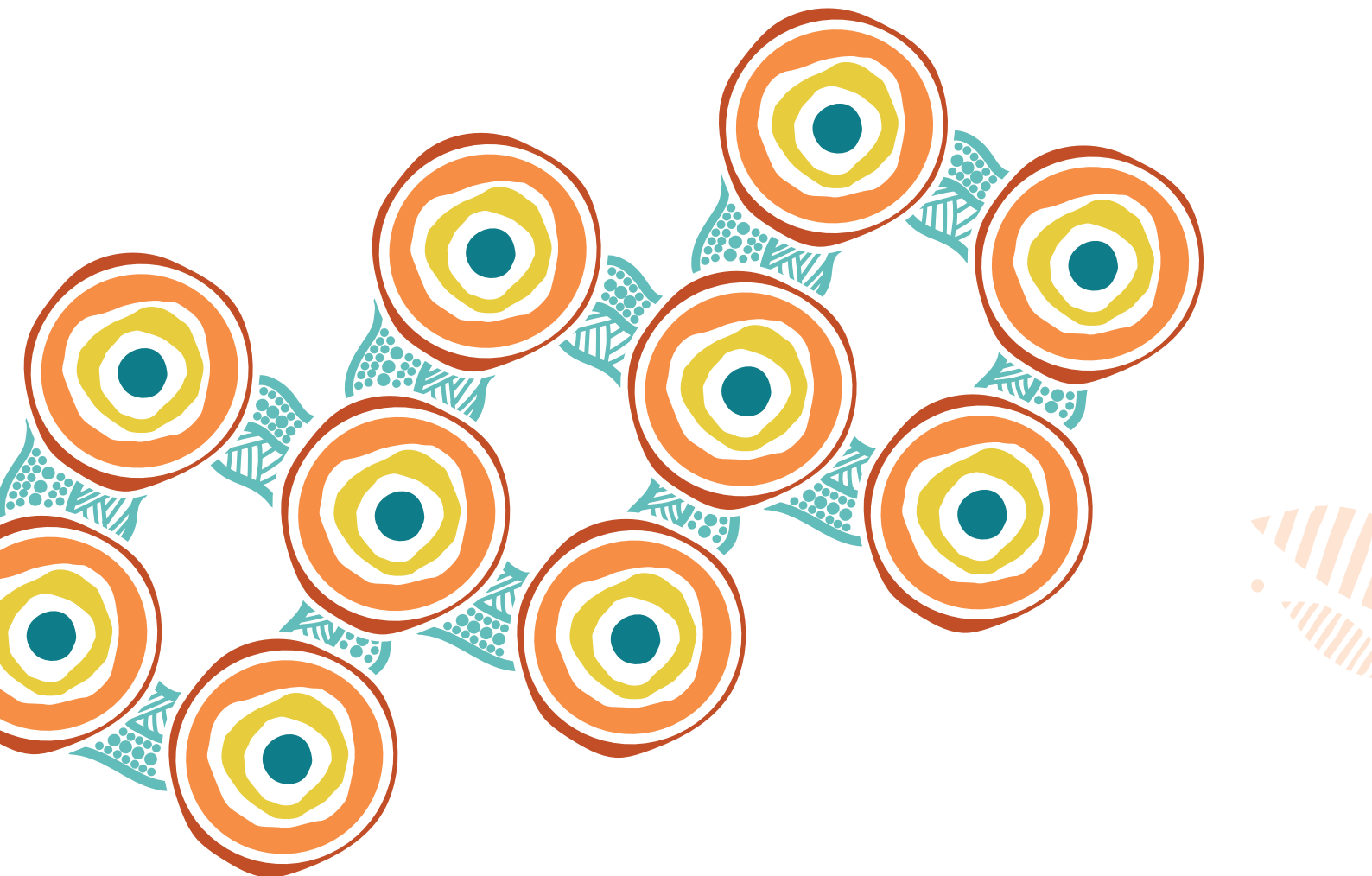




## Activate First Nations outcomes

First Nations peoples are disproportionately represented across the housing and homelessness spectrum. To redress this disparity, First Nations outcomes must be considered centrally in all housing and homelessness responses. This will ensure First Nations communities benefit from the Queensland Government's current significant housing agenda outlined in the *Homes for Queenslanders* plan.

The dedicated actions in the First Nations Housing and Homelessness action plans will complement existing initiatives, address gaps and identify opportunities to enhance First Nations outcomes. Together with *Our Place*, the *Homes for Queenslanders* plan will work to overcome inequality in the housing system and accelerate progress towards closing the housing gap in Queensland.





## What we will start to see

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know what is best for their communities. The extensive Our Place consultation allowed us to listen to those with lived experience. We heard that community wants to see outcomes in the following areas:

- whole-of-system responsibility and accountability for First Nations housing outcomes, guided by First Nations leadership and shared decision making
- a stronger, more viable and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector
- a fairer and more reliable, accessible, integrated and culturally safe housing and homelessness system
- more culturally responsive affordable supply solutions that meet the wellbeing needs and life circumstances of First Nations peoples living in Queensland locations
- increased access for First Nations peoples living in Queensland to private market rental and home ownership opportunities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland and the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works are co-design partners in the development of the Our Place Action Plan. We are committed to an ongoing shared decision-making approach with First Nations organisations, peoples and communities as critical to enable self-determination and negotiate solutions to complex issues.

This shared commitment continues across the Our Place Roadmap to 2031.





## **Everyone has a right to a safe and secure home.**

We have a shared understanding that dispossession and discrimination have taken away First Nations people's ability to have equal housing outcomes, and current housing pressures make this worse.

Evidence shows that First Nations peoples do best when solutions are grounded in culture and led by community.

**Together we can implement housing solutions for all Queenslanders to thrive.**





# Appendix 1 – Our Place co-design

Through the Our Place consultation (April to November 2023), we heard from First Nations peoples across the state. Participants were generous in telling us about the housing challenges being experienced, community's ideas for solutions, and where the Our Place Action Plan should focus attention.

The two-phased consultation approach was designed to both centre First Nations voices and enable self-determination and engage and activate the broader sector and industry.

In Phase 1, three different approaches were used for broad public consultation – yarning circles, surveys and organisational submissions – providing options for people to share insights in different ways. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, industry, peak and sector partners were invited to have their say with an open invitation extended to participate in the consultation sent through social media, partners, email and broader networks.

To support the engagement process, the Our Place Consultation Guide shared background information to enable participants to engage in a comprehensive exploration of complex topics on equal footing.

In total, 324 people from 40 locations across Queensland had their say. They shared their housing priorities and ideas for a better housing future for First Nations peoples in Queensland.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were invited to have their say through yarning circles and a survey. The consultation was designed to identify key issues and priorities, and to understand how these issues were important in different locations and to different people. Organisations also had the opportunity to provide written submissions.

## Key themes

- Overcrowding
- Culturally safe services
- Racism
- Cost-of-living
- Home ownership
- Rental availability and affordability
- Land availability and tenure
- Self-determination and community control
- Housing supply
- Employment
- Quality, sustainability and utilisation of housing
- Shared accountability and data
- Supporting person-centred responses when they are most needed.

The Our Place Consultation Summary shares detailed information about the consultation process and what was heard.

## Our Place Knowledge Circle

On 15 November 2023, the Our Place Knowledge Circle was held in Meanjin (Brisbane). Developed and refined by The Healing Foundation, knowledge circles are a First Nations framework for knowledge sharing, exchange and decision-making. They draw from First Nations and non-First Nations knowledge holders and systems to enable an equal and collaborative way of working.

The knowledge circle brought key stakeholders in the housing and homelessness sectors together, under the leadership of First Nations voices, to jointly confirm the priorities for Our Place, and to consider responsibilities and next steps of implementing the Our Place Action Plan.



# References

- 1 Queensland Government, “Stolen wages reparations taskforce report: Reconciling past injustice,” State of Queensland, Brisbane, 2016.
- 2 AIHW, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stolen Generations aged 50 and over—updated analyses for 2018–2019, Cat no IHW 257,” Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.
- 3 NATSIHA, “Housing and homelessness Agreement Review - Commissioned Study, Submission 55,” National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association.
- 4 AHURI-A Waters, Positioning paper no 2, “Do housing conditions impact on health inequalities between Australia’s rich and poor?” Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Melbourne, 2001.
- 5 PM Coffey, AP Ralph and VL Krause, “The role of social determinants of health in the risk and prevention of group A streptococcal infection, acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease: A systematic review.” *PLoS Negl Trop Dis*, 12(6).
- 6 RS Bailie, EL McDonald, M Stevens, S Guthridge and DR Brewster, “Evaluation of an Australian indigenous housing programme: community level impact on crowding, infrastructure function and hygiene.” *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 65(5), 432–437, 2011.
- 7,9 A Chakraborty, M Daniel, NJ Howard, A Chong, N Slavin, A Brown and M Cargo, “Identifying environmental determinants relevant to health and wellbeing in remote Australian Indigenous communities: A Scoping Review of Grey Literature.” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(8), 4167, 2021.
- 8 NL Hall, P Memmott, S Barnes, A Redmond, A, C Go-Sam, D Nash, TN Frank and P Simpson, “Pilyii Papulu Purrukaj-ji (Good housing to prevent sickness): a study of housing, crowding and hygiene-related infectious diseases in the Barkly Region, Northern Territory,” 2020.
- 10 RS Bailie, M Stevens, and EL McDonald, “Impact of housing improvement and the socio-physical environment on the mental health of children’s carers: A cohort study in Australian Aboriginal communities.” *BMC Public Health*, 14(1), 472–472, 2014.
- 11,12 N Brackertz, J Davison and A Wilkinson, “How can Aboriginal housing in NSW and the Aboriginal Housing Office provide the best opportunity for Aboriginal people?” 2017.
- 13,14 Deloitte, “Indigenous home ownership impact analysis,” 2017.
- 15 F F Stanley, M Langton, J Ward, D McAullay and S Eades, “Australian First Nations response to the pandemic: A dramatic reversal of the ‘gap’,” 2021. [Online]. [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- 16 L Behrendt, M Jorgensen and A Vivian, “Self-determination: Background concepts, Scoping paper 1,” Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and University of Technology, Jubunna Indigenous House of Learning, Sydney, 2017.
- 17 QGSO, “Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, population estimates and projections,” 24 August 2021. [Online]. [Accessed 8 March 2024].
- 18 ABS, “2021 Census QuickStats, Indigenous status,” 2021. [Online]. Australian Bureau of Statistics [Accessed 8 March 2024].





- 19 AIHW, "Profile of First Nations people," 7 September 2023. [Online]. [Accessed 15 February 2024].
- 20 AIHW, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A Focus Report on Housing and Homelessness, 29 March, Cat no HOU 301," Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, 2019.
- 21 The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and NACCHO, "National Guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Evidence Base, 3rd edn." 2018.
- 22 M Aird, "Brisbane Blacks," Southport: Keeaira Press, 2001.
- 23,26 ABS, Census data, Regional summary Queensland, Area code: 3, key statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021.
- 24 AHURI, T Lea, L Grealy, M Moskos, A Brambilla, S King, D Habibis, R Benedict, P Phibbs, C Sun and P Torzillo, "Sustainable Indigenous housing in regional and remote Australia," Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Melbourne, 2022.
- 25 AHURI-K Cripps and D Habibis D, "Final Report No. 320, Improving housing and services responses to domestic and family violence of Indigenous individuals and families," Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, 2019.
- 27 L Days, "Family violence and homelessness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities," [Rightnow.org.au](http://Rightnow.org.au), 2011.
- 28 AIHW, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021-2022, "Clients exiting custodial arrangements," Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, 2022.
- 29 ABS, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability," Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012.
- 30,31 AIHW, "Specialist homelessness services annual report, Cat no HOU 322," Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, 2020.
- 32 LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, "Snapshot of mental health and suicide prevention statistics for LGBTIQ+ people," LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, 2021.
- 33 ABS, Census data-homelessness in 2021-youth experiencing homelessness, ABS, 2021.

In addition to the references above, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning and Public Works acknowledges *Passing the Message Stick*. This multi-year research project was developed by a Steering Committee, led by Dr Jackie Huggins AM and Larissa Baldwin-Roberts. *Passing the Message Stick* is a framework for transforming conversations about First Nations justice and self-determination and has helped shape the Our Place narrative.

[passingthemessagestick.org](http://passingthemessagestick.org)





## About the artwork



Embodied design (artwork) by Iscariot Media, a Brisbane-based 100% Aboriginal owned creative and training agency (IscariotMedia.com).

Building on the foundations laid down by the first *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023*, this design moves to an aerial view bringing more depth and perspective to the next phase of action.

This design maps the landscape both physically and conceptually demonstrating the paths forward for communities in Queensland. Through various symbols this design is inspired by the diverse physical environments of our communities, from densely populated urban environments to smaller

remote settings where communities gather. From the Torres Strait Islands to the North, the Eastern Coastal regions, the Western communities and the built-up areas of Southeast Queensland, themes of connection, strength, movement and communication thread across the whole design and become the link between all communities mirroring the themes present within *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027*.

When we come together to create a stronger and more vibrant environment for our communities, we not only improve the wellbeing of all Queenslanders, but we also inspire positive change that can have far-reaching implications for generations to come.

# ourplace

A First Nations Housing and  
Homelessness Roadmap 2031

Acknowledge the past, prepare for the future, act now.



**Queensland**  
Government