

Queensland

Good jobs  
Better services  
Great lifestyle

# our place

A First Nations Housing and  
Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027

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.





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# A shared commitment

Kinship, interconnectedness and community pride are central to family and community life, but First Nations cultures, practices and Country that once provided everything needed to have a ‘home’ have been eroded. First Nations peoples of Queensland now experience a ‘housing gap’.

Currently many Queenslanders are doing it tough, especially when it comes to securing a home that meets their needs. The Queensland Government is taking urgent steps to respond, with the launch of *Homes for Queenslanders* plan, a whole of system plan to fast-track one million new homes by 2046.

We know First Nations peoples experience more challenges in finding a stable and suitable home. In Queensland, we want everyone to have a safe and secure place to call home, so more needs to be done.

First Nations communities are strong and capable and know what solutions are needed. That is why *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024–2027* (Our Place Action Plan) was co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, the state’s peak body for First Nations housing. More than 300 people and organisations have had a say on this action plan, which will deliver 27 evidence-based actions over the next four years.

The Our Place Action Plan is the first step of the *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Roadmap to 2031* (Our Place Roadmap), which 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 in First Nations housing and homelessness, delivered through two consecutive four-year action plans.

Backed by a \$61.3 million investment over four years from 2024 to 2027, the Our Place Action Plan brings together a suite of actions that address systemic challenges and respond to the unique cultural strengths, values and priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

These actions will be delivered in partnership with local communities, to accelerate change and deliver immediate housing solutions. We can have a fairer and better future when First Nations peoples have a seat at the table and a greater say about housing solutions.

We are making a shared commitment to reduce the impact of social inequality on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and close the gap in housing outcomes. Together, we can make sure everyone in our community has a home as the foundation to thrive.



**The Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP**

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



**Neil Willmetts**

Chief Executive Officer  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Housing Queensland



## Our Place Roadmap to 2031

The Our Place Roadmap will guide collaborative and collective efforts across the entire housing system to embed the Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, shape a fairer housing system and close the housing gap in Queensland by 2031.

The Our Place Roadmap sets out how our shared vision will be achieved through the implementation of two successive four-year First Nations housing and homelessness action plans (2024–2027 and 2028–2031).

The Our Place Roadmap is building on the foundations of a new way of working from the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023* (the first action plan).

It looks ahead to optimise outcomes for First Nations peoples in *Homes for Queenslanders*, which envisions a fair and sustainable housing system with a goal to deliver one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social homes.

Together with *Homes for Queenslanders*, the Our Place Roadmap and Our Place Action Plan will work together to overcome inequity in the housing system for First Nations peoples living in Queensland and accelerate progress towards closing the housing gap in Queensland.

### 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.**



# Partnership and shared decision-making

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know what is best for their communities. Our Place was co-designed with the peak body, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, 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 process empowered First Nations peoples in Queensland to decide what the Action Plan and Roadmap should focus on. The consultation also explored how 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.



## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland

Established in 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak body that works, together with members and partners, to eliminate the disparities in housing experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland. The Queensland Government continues to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland to support the First Nations housing sector.

# Our Place Action Plan 2024–2027

Our Place Action Plan delivers 27 actions across five outcome areas. These outcome areas were decided through the Our Place consultation and are based on the evidence of what works to drive progress towards closing the housing gap.







### Partnerships and shared responsibility

Drive whole-of-system responsibility and accountability for First Nations housing outcomes, guided by First Nations leadership and shared decision making.

### Strong sector

Grow the size, viability and sustainability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to deliver housing and homelessness outcomes.

### Private market pathways

Increase access for First Nations peoples living in Queensland to private market rental and home ownership opportunities.

### A reliable and culturally safe service and support system

Shape fairer and more reliable, accessible, integrated and culturally safe housing and homelessness supports and services.

### Culturally responsive supply solutions

Deliver more culturally responsive affordable supply solutions that meet the needs of First Nations peoples living in Queensland and their wellbeing needs and life circumstances.

The **Closing the Gap Priority Reforms** are woven through all Our Place actions and the plan is underpinned by strong **governance and accountability**.

These elements are interdependent, and they strengthen each other. Collectively, they are more impactful than if delivered in isolation.

# Our Place Action Plan 2024–2027 at a glance



## Closing the Gap priority reforms



## Partnerships and shared responsibility

- 1.1 First Nations Housing and Homelessness Practice Standards
- 1.2 First Nations Housing Partnership Agreement
- 1.3 Expand Local Housing Plans
- 1.4 First Nations housing and homelessness evidence base
- 1.5 First Nations demographic and population projections map



## Strong sector

- 2.1 Queensland Indigenous Community Housing Maintenance and Upgrades program
- 2.2 First Nations ICHO sector mapping for growth and optimisation
- 2.3 Expand capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland
- 2.4 Reduce NRSCH barriers and red tape for Indigenous community housing organisations (ICHOs)
- 2.5 Support community to explore a Torres Strait regional housing authority



## A reliable and culturally safe service and support system

- 3.1 First Nations early intervention housing program for families who are at risk of homelessness
- 3.2 First Nations Prisoner Reintegration Program in Townsville
- 3.3 Frontline First Nations Practice and Community Engagement officers
- 3.4 Increase First Nations community-controlled specialist homelessness services (SHS)
- 3.5 First Nations tenant participation program
- 3.6 Enhanced housing and homelessness service delivery through Local Housing Plans in Cairns and Mount Isa
- 3.7 Continue to deliver the DHLGPPW First Nations Traineeships program



## Culturally responsive supply solutions

- 4.1 Indigenous building and construction industry and employment pathways
- 4.2 Healthy Housing program in Doomadgee and Mornington Island
- 4.3 Self-service solution for responsive maintenance reporting in remote communities
- 4.4 First Nations Housing Design Guidelines
- 4.5 Increase First Nations social housing in urban and regional locations



## Private market pathways

- 5.1 Subsidised modular homes in regional and rural locations
- 5.2 Enhanced First Nations sales to tenants program
- 5.3 First Nations home ownership education
- 5.4 First Nations First-Time Renters Support program
- 5.5 Advocacy for private market tenants and real estate sector education



## Governance and accountability

Queensland First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership  
Our Place Governance Framework

# How we will deliver

The next steps on the journey towards a fairer housing future for First Nations peoples in Queensland must build on the important work already done, benefit from evidence of what works and be co-designed with First Nations communities, First Nations peoples, local government authorities and non-government organisations, supported by industry and sector partners.



## Principles into action

Partnership principles will steer how government, industry and the sector will work together, guided by First Nations knowledge, with self-determination at the core. The outcome area Partnerships and shared responsibility delivers a ‘toolkit for change’, a suite of practical tools to realise the partnership principles:

- **Core principle:**  
**Enable self-determination**
- Deliver place-based and person-centred responses
- 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.

## Community-led design and delivery of actions

Co-design is central to every Our Place action and each action will articulate a deliverable, with a clearly defined intention to ensure clarity of purpose. Each action will be linked to a measurable outcome from the Our Place Roadmap.

This provides accountability while also creating space for flexibility, shared ownership and innovation, and allows the specific detail of each action to be co-designed with First Nations partners, under the governance of the Queensland First Nations Housing and Homelessness Partnership (QFNHH Partnership). See page 26 for more information.

We will co-design solutions with First Nations communities and engage with First Nations innovations and ways of working. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this land we share and acknowledge that valuing cultural wisdoms and knowledges will help inform better services for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

## Deliver place-based and person-centred responses

Place-based responses recognise there are unique and different needs in urban, regional and remote communities. It is essential that partnerships with community and place-based decision-making are central to the delivery of all actions.

Person-centred responses must be tailored to meet the unique and specific needs and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Some First Nations peoples in Queensland face the intersecting and growing effects of different types of racism, discrimination and exclusion. Factors such as exiting state care, experiencing domestic and family violence, and leaving prison can compound housing inequity.<sup>1,2</sup>



## A focus on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms

Each action is aligned to the four Priority Reform areas under the National Agreement:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision making.
2. Building the community-controlled sector.
3. Transforming government organisations.
4. Providing shared access to data and information at a regional level.

All actions contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in appropriately sized dwellings (not overcrowded).

### Activate First Nations outcomes in all housing and homelessness responses

First Nations peoples are disproportionately represented across the housing and homelessness spectrum. To redress this disparity, First Nations outcomes will 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 *Homes for Queenslanders* plan.

The dedicated actions in the Our Place Action Plan complement existing initiatives, address gaps and identify opportunities to enhance First Nations outcomes.

### Change is happening

It is important to highlight and amplify examples of positive outcomes achieved through new ways of working together. Sharing case studies and stories helps the mainstream sector to learn what works. These stories also inspire and motivate action by demonstrating how everyone has a role and can make a difference.

‘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.*





## OUTCOME AREA 1:

# Partnerships and shared responsibility

Drive whole-of-system responsibility and accountability for First Nations housing outcomes, guided by First Nations leadership and shared decision-making.

The housing challenges facing all Queenslanders, but especially impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cannot be solved by government alone. It will take a whole-of-system, collective effort, that acknowledges First Nations communities have the answers.

Genuine and respectful partnerships embrace self-determination and acknowledge the leading role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to support their communities to thrive.

Building cultural safety and engaging in effective partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations are key to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access, engagement, choice and control when seeking housing and homelessness supports.

The Queensland Government is building a reframed relationship with First Nations peoples and enabling self-determination. Meaningful change must be based on representation, leadership and shared decision-making with First Nations peoples. Rebalancing power and resources will create a housing system free from racism and discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

Collectively, these actions provide a 'toolkit for change' that can be used by the housing and homelessness sector to actively implement the Our Place partnership principles.



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING | A partnership approach, guided by First Nations services

Morris\*, an Aboriginal man from the Fraser Coast region, left his home with his young daughter to escape family violence. He could not afford rental and lacked rental history.

First Nations organisation, Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID), in partnership with Centacare, supported the family into short-term accommodation, along with wrap around supports. Morris completed the Queensland Government's online course Skillsets for Successful Tenancies through the Tenancy Skills Institute.

Morris has now moved into a two-bedroom unit, gained a rental history and accessed holistic health supports. After two months, Morris started a new job and his daughter returned to school.

*\* Pseudonym used at community member's request.*



# Actions

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Action	How will this action drive change?
<b>1.1 Develop First Nations Housing and Homelessness Practice Standards to guide culturally safe service delivery.</b>	The practice standards, co-designed with First Nations communities and supported by tools and resources, will elevate the quality and effectiveness of culturally safe and trauma-informed service delivery across the housing and homelessness sector.
<b>1.2 Negotiate and establish a First Nations Housing Partnership Agreement between the Queensland Government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland and sector partners.</b>	A formal agreement that defines roles, objectives, scope of shared decision-making and agreed ways of working will create strong, accountable partnerships to support the long-term implementation of the Our Place Roadmap to 2031.
<b>1.3 Enhance and expand Local Housing Plans and address systemic barriers limiting place-based decision-making.</b>	Continue to implement Local Housing Plans in remote and discrete communities and develop new plans in more urban and regional locations. Reviewing investment practices and delivery approaches will identify solutions to strengthen local decision-making and First Nations leadership in housing design and delivery.
<b>1.4 Build the First Nations housing and homelessness evidence base, driving innovation and best practice responses in Queensland.</b>	A First Nations Housing and Homelessness research agenda will confirm First Nations priorities. Culturally informed research and evaluation projects, that integrate Indigenous knowledge systems will shape housing and homelessness solutions that work for First Nations communities in Queensland and build First Nations research capacity and thought leadership.
<b>1.5 Commission a First Nations demographic and population map to guide data informed investment planning and enable monitoring of progress towards closing the housing gap.</b>	<i>Homes for Queenslanders</i> plan responds to an evidence-based assessment of Queensland’s growing population. This action expands on this assessment, recognising the unique population growth and demographic profile of First Nations communities. This action will provide community-led and endorsed data to identify the most impactful housing investments and enable progress to be monitored.

‘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.*



## OUTCOME AREA 2: **Strong Sector**

Grow the size, viability and sustainability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector to deliver housing and homelessness outcomes.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations are preferred by and achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because they are more likely to be culturally safe, with an emphasis on flexible, holistic and client-directed practice.

These organisations also employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) deliver culturally safe housing for First Nations peoples. The ICHO sector in Queensland has more than 60 independent community housing providers who are accountable to their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

There is evidence to support the range of benefits for First Nations peoples accessing long-term First Nations community-controlled housing, including increased tenancy sustainment that directly reduces the cycle of being in and out of homelessness.<sup>4</sup>

A strong First Nations housing and homelessness sector also requires the growth of the small, but impactful group of First Nations organisations providing culturally responsive homelessness supports.

### **National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH)**

NRSCH is a system that aims to ensure a well governed well managed and viable Indigenous community housing sector that meets the housing needs of tenants. NRSCH registration enables ICHOs to have a strong funding relationship with the government to deliver enhanced housing services for First Nations peoples living in Queensland.

During the Our Place consultation a range of views were shared, and some barriers identified, that impact on sustainable participation in the

NRSCH system, including the complexity of the registration process, compliance requirements, and a view that non-registration can be an expression of self-determination.

There is an opportunity to work with ICHOs and sector partners to improve the system, to integrate cultural considerations into processes, and advocate for policy, procedural, and legislative changes to reduce barriers and red tape.

# Actions



Action	How will this action drive change?
<p><b>2.1 Establish a Queensland Indigenous Community Housing Maintenance and Upgrades Grant program to be delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland.</b></p>	<p>The program will build the capacity of the ICHO sector and deliver more community housing supply through maintenance and upgrades grants, supported by peak-led sector education and quality assurance.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Map the First Nations housing sector’s portfolio and services to identify opportunities for growth and optimisation of assets.</b></p>	<p>Delivered in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, this map will increase the visibility of the sector and reveal opportunities for more First Nations community housing and support services.</p>
<p><b>2.3 Expand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland’s capacity to deliver partnership and sector strengthening outcomes.</b></p>	<p>Build the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland to deliver the Queensland Indigenous Community Housing Maintenance and Upgrades Grant program and augment current workforce development activities, aligned to the Commonwealth <i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Sector Strengthening Plan</i> to develop a stronger, more skilled ICHO workforce.</p>
<p><b>2.4 Reduce barriers and red tape for Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHOs) aspiring to sustainable participation in the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) scheme.</b></p>	<p>With a specific focus on integrating cultural considerations into processes, this action will advocate for policy, procedural, and legislative changes to facilitate system reform, and offer training and guidance to ICHOs.</p>
<p><b>2.5 Support communities in the Torres Strait region to explore the establishment of a regional housing authority.</b></p>	<p>Responding to the unique geographic, community and housing needs of the Torres Strait region, this action will support the community to explore a dedicated regional housing authority. This will be supported by government’s open sharing of place-based data, exploration of opportunities to devolve decision-making and consideration of future funding models.</p>

‘The Action Plan should aim to increase the supply of high-quality social and affordable housing; increase the capacity of community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Housing Providers and increase investment in these organisations to respond to local housing challenges.’

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland submission.*



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

## Strong sector delivers benefits to community

In 1990, on the back of a \$100 donation, Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation was founded by volunteer First Nations leaders. It has grown from one home to 46 homes in 2024, has over \$33 million in assets and continues its work as a community, not-for-profit holistic service provider that provides accessible and culturally safe housing and aged-care services in the Wynnum and Bayside areas on Quandamooka Country.

Cheryl Currie, struggled to find a home for herself and her husband, who has ongoing health issues. They lived in a caravan for three years while trying to find a house through mainstream services.

After many rejections, including being asked to identify if she was Aboriginal, the stress was impacting both Cheryl and her husband's health and wellbeing.

A community member told Cheryl about Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation. Cheryl put in an application and was offered a two-bedroom unit, where she and her husband have been happily settled for over two years.

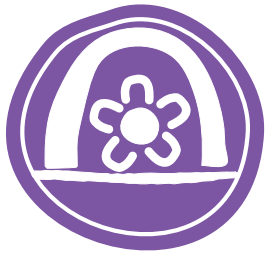
**“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were being knocked back from housing because they were black.”**

*Aunty Becky Thomson, Founding member and current Chairperson.*

**“Connection to Country and working with mob is most important. We provide a service for family to stay on Country and people feel comfortable to come in if they need any help.”**

*Shellee Wilkinson, General Manager.*





## OUTCOME AREA 3:

# A reliable and culturally safe service and support system

Shape fair, more reliable, accessible, integrated and culturally safe housing and homelessness supports and services.

Too many First Nations peoples in Queensland experience housing stress and homelessness and, in times of need, require access to a reliable, culturally safe and accessible service and support system.

In 2023, First Nations peoples in Queensland made up around 35 per cent of applications on the social housing register and in 2023, accounted for close to 37 percent of all specialist homelessness services clients.<sup>5</sup>

The underlying causes of First Nations Housing inequity 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.<sup>6,7,8</sup>

To understand the current situation, it is important to acknowledge the continuing legacy of colonisation and the impacts of past government practices on the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.<sup>9</sup>

Having the right supports and service environments can help First Nations peoples find and keep a home, when times are tough. These services work best when they respond to the unique cultural needs of First Nations peoples and recognise First Nations views of holistic health and wellbeing.

**‘When communicating with young people we always try to be fair, embrace other perspectives and ensure we take into consideration their past experiences and history.’**

*Alvin Hava, General Manager, Mithangkaya Nguli, Young People Ahead Youth and Community Services Indigenous Corporation.*



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

### Culturally-safe and trauma-informed care delivers positive outcome

Sam\*, a 20-year-old Kalkadoon man, was referred to the Young People Ahead Youth and Community Services (YPA) due to a family breakdown. Sam did not have any safe family supports in Mount Isa.

Young People Ahead deliver culturally aware, safe, and trauma-informed care for young people, informed by an Elders Advisory Group and Board members with ties to the Northern Territory, Mount Isa, Camooweal and the Gulf. Elders regularly visit the shelter to yarn to young people who want to learn more about their culture.

YPA helped Sam update his resume and supported him to apply for jobs. They also gave him information about university and vocational study options. As a direct result of this care, Sam obtained a full-time apprenticeship. While at the shelter, he worked on building the relationship with his grandparents and transitioned out of the shelter.

Sam has maintained his employment and is enjoying learning new skills. His relationship with his grandparents is strong and he now helps to support them when he is not working.

*\* Pseudonym used at community member’s request.*

# Actions

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Action	How will this action drive change?
<p><b>3.1 Deliver a housing program to support First Nations peoples and families who are at risk of homelessness (preventative) or chronically homeless in a regional location over four years.</b></p>	<p>Coordinated support and supply solutions for larger First Nations families to prevent entry into the care system or homelessness.</p> <p>Evaluation of the initiative will ensure learnings can be incorporated into future evidence-based responses for First Nations peoples and communities.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Deliver, evaluate and strengthen the First Nations Prisoner Reintegration Program in Townsville.</b></p>	<p>Working in partnership with Queensland Corrective Services and delivered by First Nations community-controlled organisations, this program will seek to reduce homelessness by providing essential housing plus support for vulnerable First Nations peoples transitioning out of the criminal justice system.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Establish First Nations Practice and Community Engagement officers to drive culturally safe, trauma informed service delivery and stronger community engagement.</b></p>	<p>The needs and circumstances of people accessing housing services are becoming more complex. For First Nations peoples this is compounded when services are not culturally safe and accessible. First Nations Practice and Community Engagement officers will provide advice and support to embed the Housing and Homelessness practice standards, support stronger community engagement and improve the experience and access for First Nations clients to essential housing services.</p>
<p><b>3.4 Increase the number of First Nations community-controlled organisations delivering specialist homelessness services.</b></p>	<p>Enhance accessibility and effectiveness of SHS services for First Nations peoples by increasing the number of services targeted for, and delivered by, First Nations community-controlled organisations. This strategy will include long-term partnerships to support service capability and capacity development and sector partnerships to shift and rebalance investment based on community need.</p>
<p><b>3.5 Co-design and deliver a First Nations tenant participation program.</b></p>	<p>First Nations tenants will have the opportunity to influence the housing products, services and decisions that directly impact their lives, building relationships between Housing Service Centres and local First Nations communities to enhance service outcomes.</p>
<p><b>3.6 Enhance coordination of housing and homelessness services in Cairns and Mount Isa through Local Housing Plans.</b></p>	<p>This continues the delivery of Action 12 from the first action plan. The Queensland Government is committed to meeting this commitment to community.</p>
<p><b>3.7 Continue to deliver the DHLGPPW First Nations Traineeships program.</b></p>	<p>Support a further 40 First Nations trainees to gain nationally accredited qualifications and on the job training.</p>



‘Housing supports for First Nations people must be delivered in a culturally safe manner, acknowledging the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma.

*Queensland Mental Health Commission submission.*



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

## Culturally safe services help prevent homelessness

A First Nations family of six from the Torres Strait Islands were evicted from a private rental when the house was deemed unsafe. Due to complex barriers, including low vacancy rates, affordability and size of available private rentals, the family were at risk of becoming homeless. It was important the family’s home was close to local disability supports to meet their needs.

The department’s Remote Team at the Thursday Island HUB provided the family with immediate crisis accommodation for three months and worked with them for five months to source a long-term solution.

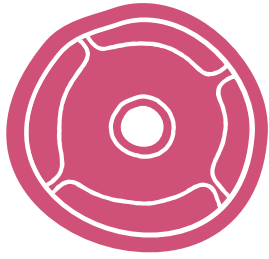
The family were successfully placed in a four-bedroom home through social housing and ongoing culturally safe, wrap around services and supports were put in place to help the family keep their home.

The consistent, culturally safe and caring service was key to keeping this family safe, housed and together.

‘Culturally safe services recognise, respect, and nurture the unique cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to safely meets the needs, expectations, and rights of First Nations families.’

*Nancy Mola, Customer Service Manager, Remote Team, Thursday Island HUB*





## OUTCOME AREA 4:

# Culturally responsive supply solutions

Deliver more culturally responsive affordable supply solutions that meet the wellbeing needs and life circumstances of First Nations peoples living in Queensland locations.

Queensland's population is growing, and this is placing record demand on housing and support services. The First Nations population in Queensland will grow to almost five per cent of the total population by 2032.<sup>10</sup> The number of First Nations households are expected to grow along with this increase. The supply of housing is key to addressing homelessness, tenancy sustainment stress and overcrowding.

For First Nations peoples, a home is more than a 'dwelling.' A home is where kin and family can

connect, be safe and healthy, and where the tenancy is sustained, because it is the right house.

Our Place actions in this outcome area complement the *Homes for Queenslanders* plan, to ensure new home constructions and maintenance on existing social homes supports the health, wellbeing needs and life circumstances of First Nations peoples living in Queensland.

Solutions must be decided, designed and delivered in a way that is tailored to specific needs and aspirations in each place, and informed by the voices of those who live there and their individual lived experiences. There are unique and diverse households across the state, including larger households, younger families, and households living in locations with challenging climates.

Maintenance of houses is integral to support healthy living environments and extend the life of the homes we build.<sup>11</sup>



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

## Elders shape cultural redevelopment design

Joyce Wilding Hostel opened in 1970 in Eight Mile Plains, Brisbane. Originally a refuge for Aboriginal widows, deserted mothers, and children, the hostel provided short-term accommodation during its time. The hostel was demolished in 2021 with the new development, renamed Kaggarabah, due to open in March 2024. The Queensland Government partnered with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) to deliver the project.

Redevelopment designs were developed in consultation with onsite Elders and will include 33 studios, one bedroom and two-bedroom units, and a community hub integrating support spaces. Public consultation gave onsite residents, neighbours and the public an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed development.

Kaggarabah (place of the porcupine or echidna) will continue to provide spaces for First Nations women and children.



## Homes for Queenslanders ‘big build’

*Homes for Queenslanders* is the Queensland Government’s plan to fast track the delivery of one million new homes over the next 20 years, including 53,000 new social homes, across Queensland.

*Homes for Queenslanders* outlines a target of 1,200 new social homes in remote communities, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils. We know the ‘housing gap’ widens (as measured by overcrowding) as remoteness increases, so these new homes will play a significant role in closing the housing gap in remote communities.

At least half of all new social homes delivered or supported by the state will follow special design standards to suit older Queenslanders and people with disability.

There will also be supported accommodation for young people and those experiencing domestic and family violence.

**‘Space acceptable to First Nations people, not a white design that does not meet cultural needs.’**

*Survey participant, Townsville.*



# Actions

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Action	How will this action drive change?
<p><b>4.1 Maximise opportunities for the Indigenous building and construction industry and deliver apprenticeships and training.</b></p>	<p>This will maximise the economic benefit arising from <i>Homes for Queenslanders</i> ‘Big Build’ for First Nations peoples, communities and businesses through the delivery of apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and training. It will also amplify the impact of policies such as the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy and Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy for First Nations businesses. More participation by First Nations businesses in the building and construction industry will support more culturally responsive housing delivery.</p>
<p><b>4.2 Implement the Healthy Housing program in Doomadgee and Mornington Island and transfer learnings to enhance ongoing maintenance processes for remote and discrete communities.</b></p>	<p>Building on the success of the first action plan, this initiative seeks to expand the Healthy Housing pilot program in partnership with Queensland Health, to address health-related aspects of housing in remote and discrete communities to prevent chronic infectious diseases, such as acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.</p>
<p><b>4.3 Design and implement a self-service solution to improve tenants’ experiences and engagement in responsive maintenance reporting in remote communities.</b></p>	<p>This will build on the Welcoming Voices project from the first action plan, to deliver a technology solution that is real time, user-friendly, with accurate information on maintenance requests and work orders; and enables culturally responsive service solutions, including local language support. This will enhance tenant responsibility and the customer experience and the tenancy sustainment because it is the right home.</p>
<p><b>4.4 First Nations Housing Design Guidelines.</b></p>	<p>Complimenting the <i>Social Housing Design Guideline</i> (2021), these guidelines will support the specific housing needs of First Nations peoples in Queensland and the Government’s target to deliver 1,200 new social homes, under <i>Homes for Queenslanders</i>, in remote Queensland communities.</p>
<p><b>4.5 Increase the proportion of dedicated First Nations social homes in urban and regional locations.</b></p>	<p>Many tenants in First Nations social housing report strong health and wellbeing benefits. The increased proportion of social homes for First Nations individuals and families responds to the housing pressures being experienced and population growth. The identification of specific properties will be informed by data and will respond to place-based needs and community circumstances.</p>



## OUTCOME AREA 5: Private market pathways

Increase access for First Nations peoples living in Queensland to private market rental and home ownership opportunities.

Home ownership has long been an aspiration for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples expressed through countless reports, research and commentary.<sup>12</sup> However, First Nations peoples are only half as likely to own their own home.<sup>13</sup>

Supporting home ownership addresses not only the issue of housing, but also builds the financial security, social and family engagement and connection, and individual and community wellbeing.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, it has positive implications for intergenerational stability, health, and financial independence. Many First Nations peoples see home ownership as an expression of self-determination.<sup>15</sup>

For First Nations peoples, exclusion from the home ownership market, when it was far more affordable and accessible, multiplies current challenges to home ownership, such as financial literacy, saving for a deposit, accessing loan products, maintaining a home and intergenerational wealth transfer.<sup>16</sup>

Despite these barriers, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership is increasing, reflecting community aspirations (from 27.8 per cent in 2011 to 34.2 per cent in 2021).<sup>17</sup>

It is equally important to address barriers to renting in the private market as more than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland rent their residence.<sup>17</sup> Access to the private rental market is vital for diversity and choice, flexibility and to provide more housing options and solutions.



### CHANGE IS HAPPENING | First Nations Home Ownership

In April 2022, the Department of Housing team were in Doomadgee to finalise the transfer into home ownership for Fred and Anne, who waited 33 years since lodging their initial Land Holding Act (Katter) lease application on 19 January 1989.

The signing of the Agreement for Transfer was the final step in binding ownership of the house and land together.

This is the result of many hard years of work for the team as they worked towards resolving 345 outstanding entitlements to home ownership under the \$75m Remote Home Ownership Program.





# Actions

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Action	How will this action drive change?
<p><b>5.1 Deliver subsidised modular homes for First Nations peoples in regional and rural locations.</b></p>	<p>This will reduce the cost of each modular home through bulk ordering/economies of scale. Regional land prices are more affordable, reducing serviceability costs.</p> <p>Engage First Nations modular building company/First Nations apprenticeship outcomes.</p>
<p><b>5.2 Sales to Tenants program to be more responsive to First Nations communities.</b></p>	<p>Meet the needs and aspirations of eligible First Nations social housing tenants by tailoring program settings, engaging clients and upgrading properties in readiness for transfer. This enhanced approach will also acknowledge the importance of long-term family connection to a home.</p>
<p><b>5.3 Establish and deliver First Nations home ownership education and support to improve financial literacy and pre-purchase readiness and post purchase sustainability program.</b></p>	<p>Tailored home ownership support materials, educational resources and guidance, including referrals, will grow financial literacy and equip potential First Nations homeowners with the essential skills and knowledge needed to successfully navigate the home-buying process.</p>
<p><b>5.4 Deliver First Nations First-time renters support to provide education and guidance to access and sustain rental tenancies.</b></p>	<p>Culturally responsive assistance will be provided to navigate the system and support provided on the expectations and responsibilities of renting a home, tenant rights and obligations, as well as providing resources and advice to support sustainable home ownership outcomes.</p>
<p><b>5.5 Support more successful private rental market tenancies and experience for First Nations peoples, through advocacy for tenants and real estate education.</b></p>	<p>Progress the delivery of the Successful Tenancies project from the first action plan to support tenancy sustainment and proactively reduce contact with the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Develop a co-designed First Nations property management and sales training program that will elevate the standard of practice in the real-estate sector, equipping property managers and salespersons with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively serve and support First Nations peoples.</p>

‘A home where I feel safe and secure, I believe this comes from home ownership. However, I am not sure I will ever have that because of how expensive rent is and general cost of living. There is very little left over at the end of each fortnight to be able to save for a house deposit.

*Survey response by Gumbayngirr woman, Burpengary.*

‘People feel trapped in social housing because of racism in the rental market.’

*First Nations yarning circle participant, Caboolture.*



## Governance and accountability

The 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 strategic direction to and guide 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 incorporate 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 will be connected to local shared decision-making structures including Local Housing Plans, tenant participation programs and peak body regional engagement activities.

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 to 2031.

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

**'We believe that a strong community housing provider sector and long-term committed partnerships between government, private industry and our Members can significantly impact positive outcomes.'**

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland submission*

## How will success be measured?

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

First Nations-led monitoring and evaluation are essential elements to support shared accountability for outcomes, identify opportunities for improvement, learn and adapt, and drive more effective investment.

The evaluation approach must centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives, and knowledges and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' 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 plan progress.



## CHANGE IS HAPPENING

## Growing the First Nations workforce through training and education

In November 2020, Shayna was at the end of her final year of school and working casually at a local retail store.

'It was good, but I didn't feel like I was doing anything with my life.'

Shayna joined the Department of Housing in Cairns as a trainee. Her role included coordinating administration and travel bookings and she travelled to remote communities to support tenant visits. Shayna also completed her Certificate III Business Administration Traineeship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing.

Initiatives like the First Nations Building and Construction Industry and Employment Strategy support First Nations people through training and education to grow a skilled workforce, putting the Our Place principles into action.





# 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 what the Our Place Action Plan should focus on.

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 and peak, 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 and shared their housing priorities and ideas for a better housing future for First Nations peoples in Queensland.

## Key themes

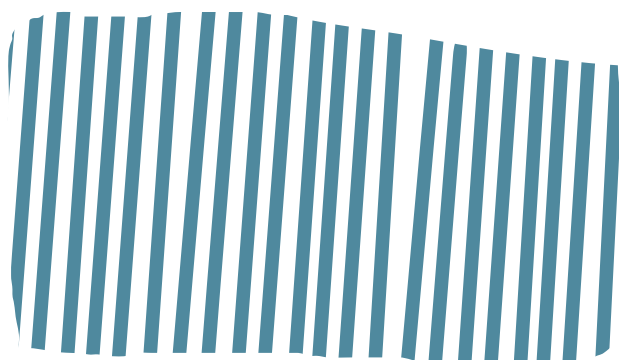
- Overcrowding
- Culturally safe services
- Racism
- Cost-of-living
- Home ownership
- Rental availability and affordability
- Land availability and tenure
- Self-determination and community control
- Housing supply
- Employment
- Quality, sustainability and utilisation of housing
- Shared accountability 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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 goal of the knowledge circle was to bring 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 plan.





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## About the artwork



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





Queensland  
Government