

Queensland

Good jobs  
Better services  
Great lifestyle



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

Final report



Queensland  
Government

A series of stylized sun icons in yellow and orange, scattered across the top of the page.

# Acknowledgement

The Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (DHLGPPW) 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. 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 terminology

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. Use of 'peoples' recognises individual and collective dimensions as affirmed by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and also the diverse cultural identities within these collective terms.

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 an organisation, document or policy with a lower case or when referring to non-Indigenous people. We acknowledge the use of these terms can inadvertently homogenise and diminish the recognition of diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.





# Final report

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


*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023* was the first action plan to address the unique and intersecting barriers faced by First Nations peoples in relation to housing and homelessness in partnership with First Nations communities.

Backed by a commitment of \$67.1 million to improve housing outcomes for First Nations peoples, it focussed on sector strengthening, person-centred and place-based responses in urban, regional and remote and discrete communities.

Challenges were experienced during delivery, including the COVID-19 pandemic, public health and biosecurity measures that restricted travel to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for two years between 2020 and 2022. Severe weather events across Queensland, critical shortages in building materials and skills, especially in remote locations, also impacted on the implementation and delivery of several actions.

Despite the challenges, ten of the 15 actions are complete or in ongoing delivery. The remaining five will continue to be delivered in *Our Place: A Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027* (Our Place Action Plan).

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023* created the foundations for a transformational new way of working, enabling community-led delivery of culturally appropriate housing solutions. This has paved the way for the Our Place Action Plan to comprehensively accelerate Queensland's progress towards closing the housing gap in Queensland over the next four years.

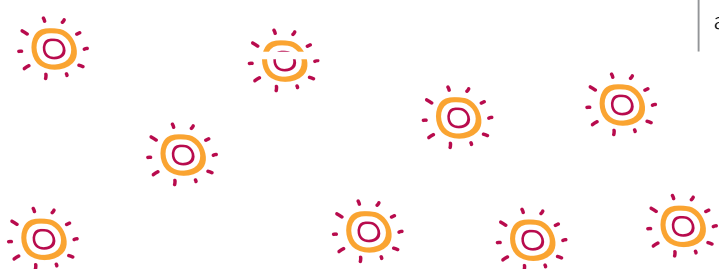


# Outcomes snapshot

Action	Outcome	Status
<p>1. Develop place-based, community-led, local housing plans with communities to identify and respond to local housing challenges and priorities.</p>	<p>Co-designed, place-based, and community-led Local Housing Plans with all 17 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local government areas, and two urban and regional communities through more than 200 engagement sessions with First Nations Queenslanders and communities.</p> <p>Local Housing Plans will be expanded and enhanced in Our Place Action Plan (refer to Action 1.3).</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p>2. Deliver new housing, as jointly agreed with communities, under local housing plans.</p>	<p>Delivered 38 new homes and 14 one, two or three-bedroom extensions and studios, supporting 52 households, and 29 new land lots developed to build new housing in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government authorities.</p> <p>Program delivery continues with 12 new houses, nine extensions and nine new land lots to be delivered by December 2024.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b> – ongoing delivery</p>
<p>3. Work with remote and discrete communities, to reinvest repairs and maintenance savings, into locally identified housing priorities. Using an incentive-based approach, we will shift attitudes and behaviours to encourage better care for homes.</p>	<p>Partnered with Smart Services Queensland to deliver the Welcoming Voices initiative to identify improvements to the responsive repairs and maintenance service with community members.</p> <p>Completed visits to 12 communities to better understand tenant experiences in remote and discrete communities completed.</p> <p>Initiative will be expanded and enhanced in Our Place Action Plan (refer to Action 4.3).</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p>4. Help homeowners and tenants to undertake their own repairs and maintenance, by establishing community toolboxes for people to borrow tools and equipment and access instructions (discrete communities).</p>	<p>Funded local organisations to deliver tailored, co-designed community toolboxes and educational resources in Lockhart River, Kowanyama and Poruma to support new homeowners to maintain properties.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>

Action	Outcome	Status
<p>5. Work in partnership with Queensland Health to develop housing solutions to support improved health outcomes, including responding to chronic illness with an initial focus in discrete communities. This action recognises the importance of housing as a key determinant of health.</p>	<p>Delivered the Healthy Housing program in partnership with Queensland Health, to support healthier home environments and reduce the risk of infectious disease through focused health promotion and advice on healthy living practices, connected to timely housing repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>Completed inspections for 149 households with more than 880 people in two remote communities, Yarrabah and on Badu Island, to identify and deliver health education and maintenance improvements.</p> <p>Program will be expanded in two additional communities in Our Place Action Plan (refer to Action 4.2).</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p>6. Extend our service offer to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders seeking housing assistance. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) improve the cultural competency of our frontline Housing Service Centre and Delivery staff</li> <li>b) differentiate our service offer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders</li> <li>c) implement culturally responsive pathway planning and case coordination, to connect people to the support they need to improve their wellbeing and housing outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Delivered Elders in Residence program in Logan with planned expansion to Townsville. Eight Elders supported with ongoing paid employment over the life of the Logan program.</p> <p>Delivered more Culturally Safe and Welcoming Spaces project to improve cultural capability of frontline staff and create culturally safe spaces in Housing Service Centres. This outcome will be further enhanced in Our Place Action Plan.</p> <p>Developed the Pathway Planning Framework as an overarching process to support culturally responsive pathway planning and holistic and person-centred conversations with tenants.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p>7. Build independence and resilience through information, education and support to help people access and sustain housing. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) strengthen the service and support responses of Housing and Homelessness Hubs in urban and regional areas</li> <li>b) provide information and extra support for new social housing tenants, to build capability and sustain tenancies across the state</li> <li>c) fund a pilot of 'Yes, I Can!' Aboriginal Adult Literacy Program, through Literacy for Life Foundation, in one discrete Aboriginal community for three years</li> <li>d) improve system responses for tenants who come into contact with Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).</li> </ul>	<p>Delivered the 'Yes I Can' program in 2021/2022 which 60 Yarrabah residents undertook to build independence through improved literacy skills. Graduates have gained educational, employment and mentoring opportunities. The successful pilot program was continued in 2023 with funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency.</p> <p>Successful Tenancies Project will be delivered in Our Place Action Plan to support First Nations households to sustain tenancies and prevent contact with QCAT (refer to Action 5.5).</p>	<p><b>Commenced</b></p> <p>– continued delivery through Our Place Action Plan</p>

Action	Outcome	Status
<p>8. Expand opportunities for people to access education, training and employment, including construction apprenticeships, in regional and urban locations.</p>	<p>This action will continue to be delivered and enhanced in Our Place Action Plan as part of a broader strategy to drive employment, education and training outcomes for First Nations peoples and business in the housing sector and construction industry (refer to Action 4.1).</p>	<p><b>Commenced</b> – continued delivery through Our Place Action Plan</p>
<p>9. Explore the potential for new home ownership products, services and arrangements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a 'Good Renter's Discount'</li> <li>b) affordable sale of social housing properties in the Torres Shire</li> <li>c) Home Ownership Roadshows</li> <li>d) other partnerships and mechanisms to improve access to home ownership pathways.</li> </ul>	<p>Deliver \$75 million Remote Home Ownership program with partner agencies, trustees, councils and communities has supported 212 First Nations households on communal lands, across 17 communities, to own their home.</p> <p>Developed new pathways to home ownership through 99-year home ownership leases, with sales prices agreed with nine trustee groups, including for all Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council communities and 11 communities in the Torres Strait.</p> <p>Held home ownership roadshows in Kowanyama and Lockhart River to support tenants to consider and prepare for home ownership.</p> <p>Our Place Action Plan will continue to build on the foundations of this action in the private market pathways priority area.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b> – ongoing delivery</p>
<p>10. Provide housing and support for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men exiting the criminal justice system, including multi-disciplinary support and long-term housing, to prevent homelessness and future reoffending.</p>	<p>This action will continue to be delivered and enhanced in Our Place Action Plan, as part of a broader approach to deliver and evaluate a First Nations Prisoner Reintegration Program in Townsville, expand the program into one additional location, and systemically improve homelessness responses for First Nations peoples exiting custodial settings (refer to Action 3.2).</p>	<p><b>Commenced</b> – continued delivery through Our Place Action Plan</p>
<p>11. Work with the community to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, by redeveloping the Joyce Wilding Hostel (re-named Kaggarabah).</p>	<p>Completed redesign and redevelopment of Kaggarabah through co-design with community to provide culturally safe spaces, delivering four studio apartments, 10 one-bedroom units and 18 two-bedroom units for vulnerable First Nations women and children who are homeless or escaping crisis. Housing supports will be available to clients in 2024.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>



Action	Outcome	Status
<p><b>12.</b> Review and redesign homelessness service delivery responses in Cairns and Mount Isa, drawing on evidence and expertise to improve responses to health, safety and criminal justice issues.</p>	<p>This action will continue to be delivered in Our Place Action Plan (refer to Action 3.6).</p>	<p><b>Commenced</b> – continued delivery through Our Place Action Plan</p>
<p><b>13.</b> Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing body that will work with Indigenous Community Housing Organisations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils, to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.</p>	<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland was established in 2021 as the First Nations housing peak body. Through annual workplans, the department is working in partnership with the peak and the sector until 2025 to better support housing outcomes for First Nations peoples.</p> <p>The department will continue to build on the foundations of this action in the ‘Strong Sector’ priority area of Our Place Action Plan.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p><b>14.</b> Partner with the real estate sector, peak agencies and key groups to facilitate more inclusive housing responses and actions, to support vulnerable tenants, including those living with a disability, older people and people affected by domestic and family violence, to secure and sustain tenancies.</p>	<p>This action is delivered through the Successful Tenancies project, which will continue to be delivered and enhanced in Our Place Action Plan (refer to Action 5.5).</p>	<p><b>Commenced</b> – continued delivery through Our Place Action Plan</p>
<p><b>15.</b> Expand the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traineeship program to support 64 trainees (32 full-time and 32 part-time, school-based trainees) over four years. Trainees will gain experience in a range of policy, programs and service delivery areas across the department.</p>	<p>Sixty-four First Nations peoples gained nationally accredited qualifications and on the job training, with 32 completed and 34 transitioned into employment. A further eight trainees are on track to complete their qualification.</p> <p>Training was provided by the only 100 per cent Indigenous owned and managed group training organisation registered in Queensland.</p> <p>This action will be expanded on in Our Place Action Plan (Refer to Action 3.7)</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>

## Transparency, accountability and continuous improvement

Transparency, accountability and continuous improvement are the cornerstones of partnership. This report provides a snapshot of the outcomes arising from the commitment of government and community partners to ongoing and respectful negotiation and managing the complexities of moving to community-led delivery of housing outcomes.

Your feedback on the progress of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023 is welcomed and will help us to improve how we implement *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027*.

Please send your comments and feedback to [ourplace@housing.qld.gov.au](mailto:ourplace@housing.qld.gov.au)

We honour all contributions and respect the diverse perspectives shared in the spirit of driving meaningful change for First Nations housing outcomes in Queensland.

