

## MEDIA RELEASE

19 June 2013

### Performance Audit Report

#### National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness

Today the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* report was presented to the Speaker for tabling in the ACT Legislative Assembly by the ACT Auditor-General, Dr Maxine Cooper.

The report provides an independent opinion to the Legislative Assembly on whether the ACT Government is meeting its obligations under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, and if this is making a difference to homeless people in the ACT.

#### Audit Conclusion

There is no agreed international definition of homelessness and this impedes monitoring, making comparisons and facilitating community understanding on progress. Furthermore, there have been changes in the definitions of homelessness and therefore the methods for collecting data have changed. This presents the risk that comparisons made between years may result in inaccurate conclusions and the community being misinformed.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' cultural definition of homelessness was adopted by the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*. In 2012 the Australian Bureau of Statistics developed a new definition of homelessness, which has a very broad scope, and which has contributed to an overall increase in persons in the ACT counted as homeless through the census.

The ACT Government is generally meeting its obligations under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*. Several targets have not only been met but exceeded. The Community Services Directorate however, needs to make improvements with respect to its processes for managing National Partnership Agreement funds, identifying and reporting against performance indicators for the A Place to Call Home Program and the Housing and Support Initiative, and managing service providers.

While program targets have been achieved, these are primarily about undertaking specific actions and deliverables, rather than being measures of overall success. Other Auditors-General have reported a lack of such measures which means the achievements of the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness* are not able to be fully demonstrated. Furthermore, homelessness in the ACT is influenced by a range of factors including, for example, housing affordability. People are likely to remain in homelessness programs and initiatives longer if housing affordability is a problem.

#### Recommendations

The audit made four recommendations. The Director-General of the Community Services Directorate agreed with the recommendations.

#### The report

Copies of the report are available from the ACT Auditor-General's Office website; [www.audit.act.gov.au](http://www.audit.act.gov.au) and the Office (please call 6207 0833 or go to 11 Moore Street, Canberra).