

HOMELESS ENGAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT RESPONSE TEAM

Statement by Minister for Homelessness

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Homelessness) [12.12 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the Cook government's significant funding boost to critical homelessness services across Western Australia.

The homeless engagement and assessment response team, or HEART, is a rapid, agile and intensive outreach service that supports people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in the Perth metropolitan region. Our government recently announced \$47.6 million in new funding to enable the continuation of 15 critical homelessness services across Western Australia and to boost service capacity. This announcement included \$7.8 million for HEART to continue its coordinated outreach response services in Perth CBD, Northbridge, Wanneroo, Joondalup, Midland, Fremantle, Armadale and Mandurah, and \$5.4 million for the Safe Perth City initiative to provide dedicated rapid, flexible and assertive outreach support services in the Perth CBD and surrounds, including return-to-country functions.

HEART was launched in 2021 in collaboration with trusted sector partners—St Patrick's Community Support Centre, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, Uniting WA and Indigo Junction—as an immediate response to the increasing prevalence of people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping in specific locations. As well as providing assertive outreach via HEART, these sector partners provide a suite of services, including crisis support; mental health, drug and alcohol, legal and medical services; outreach access; and access to culturally secure and holistic support for Aboriginal people and communities.

Our government also recognises the value of regular and up-to-date data to track and respond to rough sleeping in our community. That is why our government has invested significantly in the by-name list and the Zero Project, with over \$1 million in recurrent funding per annum invested through the Department of Communities. The by-name list is coordinating a significant contribution to better services and outreach in Western Australia. The Department of Communities homelessness coordinators work closely with outreach teams to deliver coordinating responses to vulnerable people who are sleeping rough, and work to eliminate service duplication, ensuring improved coverage across the Perth metropolitan area. The unique partnership demonstrates the benefits of successful collaboration between government and the sector in responding to homelessness.