Registry Week
Toolkit

Registry Week Toolkit

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1 Overview

This toolkit has been prepared to assist organisations interested in implementing a 'Registry Week' within their community. Registry Weeks use a specific methodology and an evidence-based tool (the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool, or VI-SPDAT) to understand who is homeless and what their health and housing needs are. Registry Weeks are collaborative efforts in a community to end street and episodic homelessness. Communities are encouraged to run a broader campaign to help increase the supply of permanent housing and support options and are invited to join the national campaign – Advance to Zero (see Section 5 on Advance to Zero).

This toolkit sets out background information about Registry Weeks, the overarching strategies and principles for ending homelessness applied in a local Registry Week campaign, as well as information, methodology and practical tips and tools for planning a *Registry Week* – a key task that can help your community to implement a local campaign to end homelessness.

Information in this toolkit has been prepared by **Micah Projects** and the **Mercy Foundation** and is available as a free community resource by the Mercy Foundation, Micah Projects and the **Australian Alliance to End Homelessness** (AAEH). Micah Projects is a Brisbane-based community organisation that works to house and support people and break down barriers that exclude people from housing, healthcare, employment, meaningful connections, and to give people a voice. The Mercy Foundation does not provide direct housing or support services but works with organisations and provides funding for small social justice projects as well as larger projects through its Grants to End Homelessness program. The Foundation advocates for and supports initiatives, services, projects and research that contribute to the goal of ending homelessness. Both Micah Projects and Mercy Foundation have been advising on the use of Registry Weeks and providing support with planning, coordination, training and data management for communities across Australia since 2010.

2 Guiding Principles

Homelessness can occur across the life course – affecting people young and old, families with children and people experiencing discrimination often associated with disability, mental illness or with identifying as Indigenous Australians (refer to Appendix I for the current definition of homelessness as applied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics). People experiencing homelessness are living in poverty and need access to housing. Some will need access to housing as well as to support. For local campaigns using a collective approach and resourced with the right housing, health care and community support, homelessness is solvable.

Registry Weeks are guided by the following principles:

1. **Housing First**

    The Housing First approach recognises that a safe home is a human right and a basic need that must be met before attending to personal issues. The approach is based on evidence that people, even with long histories of homelessness, mental illness or addictions, can achieve housing stability if long-term housing is provided with the right supports. Registry weeks help communities to prioritise immediate access to permanent housing for people as they are proactively identified. Services necessary to maintain housing and improve health are available as and when individuals and families choose them and not imposed as a mandatory condition for housing.

2. **Support matched to individual and family need**

    Just as having a home means different things to different people, homelessness is also experienced differently. Its causes and impacts and the support needed to access permanent housing are unique to each individual and family. The nature, duration and intensity of support must therefore be matched to the needs of each person and family, whether those needs are associated with disability, mental health, unemployment, domestic violence, Indigenous disadvantage, aged care, substance use, or a chronic health or other issue. Registry Week campaigns assist and help communities to understand where support efforts can be prioritised to best match the needs of each individual or family. Not all individuals or families that have experienced homelessness will require support to sustain housing; some people will, but it is also important to recognise the many people who do not require expensive ongoing support, but just need suitable housing that is safe and sustainable.

3. **Collective impact**

    Non-government and government agencies can no longer afford to work alone. Homelessness comes at an enormous economic and human cost to the entire community and a whole-of-community response is needed to solve it. Combining our efforts requires individuals and organisations to commit to the shared conviction that homelessness is unacceptable in a nation as prosperous as Australia and that with the collective intention to align our efforts and resources, we as a nation can create a lasting solution to homelessness – a future where incidents of homelessness are prevented or rapidly resolved and people who need it are supported to sustain their tenancies. If each community commits to solving homelessness in their own area, our national problem will be solved.

3 Local Campaign Methodology

While every individual, family and community's story is different, the universal solution to homelessness is permanent housing and, where required, access to healthcare and community support to help people stay safely and sustainably housed. There is no one correct way to achieve this, but by building on experiences overseas and in Australia, we now have a methodology that has successfully ended (and not just temporarily relieved) the cycle of homelessness for many people of different ages, with different needs, from different backgrounds, towns, cities and countries. This methodology has proven successful in permanently housing 105,580 vulnerable Americans between 2010 and 2014, and over 4000 people to date through Canada's *20K Homes Campaign*. The components of the campaign methodology are as follows:

1. **Knowing who's there and what they need**

    It is only by identifying and understanding the housing and healthcare needs of the most vulnerable residents, that a community is able to prioritise permanent housing and care that is best suited to the needs of an individual or family. Local campaigns that begin with a ***Registry Week*** establish for their community a baseline level of demand, accurately quantify both the breadth (how many) and depth (how acute) of the demand for permanent housing and supporting services. Following Registry Week, organisations continue to respond to people as they present, providing a rapid and coordinated response centred on the needs of each person or family.

2. **Implementing a coordinated access system to match people to housing and support**

    No matter where or how people present we, as a cohesive system, must commit to coordinating our response as effectively as possible to prioritise and match individuals and families to the most appropriate housing, healthcare and community support. Campaign efforts need to be designed to respond rapidly and appropriately to what individuals and families need to prevent or reduce their duration of homelessness and minimise re-entry into the homelessness system.

3. **Lining up supply**

    Across Australia and across the world, demand far exceeds the supply of permanent housing. An end to homelessness requires that we understand not just the demand, but also the supply side of the equation. While organisations prepare for their community's Registry Week, efforts must also be directed to actively creating housing opportunities that match what is needed and to engage the whole community in innovative solutions to the supply problem. It's important to be innovative and not rely solely on the usual routes back into affordable housing.

    Once again, it is important to pursue supply options that are as diverse as the presenting needs of each individual and family. Some people may be suitable for some affordable private rental housing in some regional locations. However, it is also essential for some people to access public or community housing, with support workers available to assist with applications and ongoing follow-up where needed. For example, local organisations with a mandate to support veterans may have access to the resources needed to rehouse former defence force personnel. For older people experiencing homelessness, additional options may be available specifically for over 55's. In addition, the age, gender or life circumstances of individuals or their family members may present further housing solutions to explore. Local trusts or foundations may have a vested interest in and capacity to support specific cohorts of people needing permanent housing.

4. **Keeping people housed**

   Breaking the cycle of homelessness for individuals and families requiring assistance will involve investing in support that is of a duration and intensity appropriate for each individual and family to live with stability, autonomy and dignity. This involves the insight to prevent over-servicing as well as the agility, creativity and tenacity required to ensure the appropriate level and type of resources and support are available to population groups that would otherwise be under-supported. For some communities in Australia this may simply require a targeting of efforts to better coordinate tenancy support services that are already available while, for other communities, this will involve a fundamental shift in the configuration of funding for tenancy sustainment services across and beyond the housing and homelessness sector.

5. **Integrating health care**

   The best outcomes for individuals, community and government is to support people to access health care that is linked with community outreach services and housing. All too often, alcohol or drug and mental health programs are disjointed and also not connected with homelessness, housing and community support services. People with multiple, co-existing health issues who need to access all of these supports struggle with the complexity of the service systems and are excluded from the services they need. A key strategy of local campaigns is for communities to address these barriers by integrating healthcare into community and housing services.

It is essential to the success of each campaign that the methodology be implemented in the way it is outlined. We know that when applied with fidelity, the above methodology effectively delivers high quality outcomes, sustainably ending homelessness for individuals and families. Vice versa, when applied selectively the quality of the campaign's housing outcomes have also been compromised.

Any community interested in conducting a Registry Week in Australia are welcome to contact Micah Projects or the Mercy Foundation for advice and assistance in planning and training for a local Registry Week campaign. The database manager at Micah Projects will also be able to set up your Registry Week in the national database and provide further training to assist you in establishing and maintaining a secure, accurate and reliable registry of needs specific to and owned by your community.

In summary, the campaign methodology begins with a Registry Week to help each community understand 'demand' for housing and support. This forms the foundation upon which other components of the campaign methodology will later benefit. Other parts of the campaign focus on increasing service accessibility and 'supply', assisting people in housing, keeping people housed and enabling access to healthcare. The rest of this document explains how to conduct a major component of the community campaign – the Registry Week.

4 What is a Registry Week?

A Registry Week harnesses resources from the community to identify by name every individual and family requiring safe, permanent and sustainable housing. It is through knowing everyone by name that the work of permanently housing and appropriately supporting each person can truly begin. Understanding the real-time demand for housing and support services in each community also assists local organisations and agencies to understand the level of housing and support supply that their community requires to end street and episodic homelessness. It also focusses communities on ending homelessness rather than simply managing or servicing homelessness (food vans, showers etc). Once each community sees that the problem is a solvable number, resources can be directed into actions that can assist people into permanent housing.

Australian experience to date has shown that applying the Registry Week process shifts an often inflated 'guesstimate' of homelessness numbers formed from anecdotal impressions to an objective and actionable assessment of the problem as directly informed by people requiring housing. People who are housed and living on income support will sometimes attend local soup kitchens and food vans to help stretch their food budget and for companionship. Attendance at these services can sometimes be mistaken for homelessness. Understanding exactly who is homeless and what they need to move into permanent and sustainable housing is a primary value-add that sets a Registry Week apart from a generic and anonymous street count.

What a Registry Week is not

Registry weeks are not research projects or census collection exercises. Whilst understanding the demographic profile as well as health, housing and other needs of people experiencing homelessness allows each community to better understand the quantum of people requiring housing and support, first and foremost in gathering this information is to prioritise people into housing. De-identified data is reported back to the community and can be a very useful tool for advocacy and for building community momentum and political will – but this is for the ultimate purpose of rallying a community of people and services to move people into housing and not simply for a group of people to know another statistic about their town or city

4.1   Registry methodology

Each Registry Week consists of four major activities conducted in immediate succession: **training**, **surveying**, **analysis** and a **community briefing.** These activities are deliberately condensed into a concise timeframe to maximise campaign success and community momentum.

Delivering training immediately before it needs to be applied makes it more relevant for volunteers, reduces the risk of knowledge loss, and also ensures that potential survey respondents engage with volunteers that are confident and well prepared. Likewise, briefing the community with their findings the day after surveying is complete serves as a powerful way to give back to campaign volunteers, grow community ownership and momentum and create a greater impact – past Registry Week campaigns have shown that the more time that elapses before closing the feedback loop, the greater the risk of diluting the campaign momentum. The immediate report-back of information can then be supplemented with further, more targeted analysis. Releasing added analysis in the

weeks and months following the Registry also becomes an organic way to sustain campaign momentum into the future.

1. **Training**

   At the beginning of each Registry Week, workers and volunteers are trained in the Registry Week proceedings and introduced to a survey tool, known as the VI-SPDAT (see section 5). This is also the first opportunity for campaign volunteers, workers, team leaders and organisers to meet each other as a combined group whether there be less than 50 people or as many as 200. By bringing together everyone who has been involved to date (or who will begin their involvement during week), the training session also serves to consolidate the community and allows each person a greater sense of how much bigger the campaign is beyond their own organisations, teams and lives.

2. **Surveying**

   Following training, survey teams then meet across three early mornings in a row, beginning before dawn to allow time to outreach to their assigned public space locations and complete VI-SPDAT surveys with people sleeping rough. Early morning starts are required because it is important to be able to identify who is homeless and sleeping in the streets and parks of the community. Homeless families and individuals in temporary or crisis accommodation or in cars are also invited to participate. You may need to roster some day and evening survey teams to attend service hubs, motels, soup kitchens or other service locations to ensure you access as many people in your community as possible who may be in need of housing assistance.

   Each day, as surveying is complete, surveys are entered into a secure database. After the third day of surveying, findings from the week are collated into a quantifiable baseline of real-time housing demand in the community, with indicative levels of follow up support that may be required once a person or family is housed.

3. **Analysis**

   Information collected from the surveys is entered daily after each team returns from surveying and the quality of information collected is monitored progressively for accuracy and completeness. On the third day of surveying when the final surveys are entered, final quality assurance processes are completed and analysis can begin. The analysis includes key findings relating to the size, demographic composition and acuity of need of the population group(s) surveyed, as well as information around health, homeless history, and psycho-social indicators.

4. **Community briefing**

   Non-identifiable data on the results are presented back to the community and to local and state policy makers to help better understand the extent and nature of homelessness in that particular community. These findings are presented during a Community Briefing held on the last day of Registry Week. All members of the community – volunteers, workers from across all sectors, local leaders, media personnel – are encouraged to attend.

A typical Registry Week schedule can look similar to this:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Training day	**Surveying Day 1**	**Surveying Day 2**	**Surveying Day 3;** **Data Analysis**	**Community Briefing**
4:30am		Surveys	Surveys	Surveys	
5:30am		completed	completed	completed	
6:30am		in public space	in public space	in public space	
7:30am					Present registry
8:30am				Final surveys	week findings
9:30am	Registry Week Training			completed at services	Distribute media release of findings and call to action
10:30am		Surveys	Surveys		
11:30am		completed	completed		
12:30pm		at services	at services	Analysis of	
1:30pm		throughout	throughout	Registry	
2:30pm		the day	the day	Week	
3:30pm				findings	
4:30pm					
5:30pm					

Findings from Registry Week are used to inform follow-up work for services to respond in the fastest and most appropriate way possible to young people, families and individuals requiring permanent housing.

The most important aspect of Registry Week is the work that continues after each community has established their register. With the information collected by the community, partner organisations work together to ensure that those with high needs are matched with housing and support as soon as possible. Those with lower or no support needs can also be assisted into housing. Once people are prioritised for follow-up

and move into appropriate housing they are removed from the register. Services also continue to add to the register by completing VI-SPDAT surveys with people as they come across them, building an evidence base of inflow trends for their community. This helps each community to understand:

→ By name, who is homeless in their community
→ What each person's health, support and housing needs are
→ Who and how many people and families have been permanently housed (and supported, if also required).

Once a community creates their own register and keeps it up-to-date by removing people who have been housed and adding any newly presenting people that may be found by services – they do not need to conduct street counts or any similarly out-of-date methodology to understand the extent of homelessness in their community. A register is a far more effective and timely tool to assist those on the register into housing as well as to understand homelessness.

Since 2010, Australian Registry Weeks have been conducted in Brisbane, Melbourne, Inner Sydney, Perth, Hobart, Townsville, Sutherland (Sydney), Waverley (Sydney), Newcastle as well as the Nepean/Blue Mountains/Hawkesbury region of NSW. For further information on the history or Registry Weeks that have been conducted across Australia, refer to Appendix I.

5 The VI-SPDAT

5.1   The VI-SPDAT

The Vulnerability Index –Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) is the prescreen tool used across all communities undertaking a Registry Week to enable workers and their organisations to:

→ Objectively assess the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness
→ Identify which individuals and families are of highest priority for housing and support (acuity)
→ Determine demand for housing and support (it is only when both demand and supply can be quantified that the gap can be determined to assist in advocacy and policy pushes to change affordable housing and support)
→ Form the foundation of a unified movement locally, nationally and globally (see section 7 for more information on the Advance to Zero campaign in Australia).

The VI-SPDAT is a merger of two tools, the Vulnerability Index and the Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool. The Vulnerability Index was developed by Common Ground USA based on medical research by Dr Jim O'Connell and Dr Stephen Hwang out of Boston's Health Care for the Homeless. The tool established an index for vulnerability of people sleeping rough based on the self-disclosure of a number of indicators associated with an elevated risk of mortality if a person remains homeless on the streets.

The SPDAT is an evidence-informed tool developed by OrgCode (Canada) that assists with decisions in relation to prioritising services for people requiring housing, both at an individual and a systemic level. It does this by identifying people with the most acute needs based on an acuity score which is determined upon completing the SPDAT presented in four domains: History of Housing, Risks, Socialisation and Daily Functioning, and Wellness. For families, a fifth domain, the Family Unit, is also completed.

When merged together, the VI-SPDAT has been used as a triage tool to assist communities to understand exactly which people identified through Registry Week will require:

→ Housing and permanent support to end their homelessness (high acuity);
→ Housing and short-term support to end their homelessness (medium acuity); or
→ Just housing that is safe and affordable (low acuity).

As the VI-SPDAT undergoes continuous refinement, OrgCode have applied a number of customisations to the tool to benefit different population groups. VI-SPDAT customisations currently in use across Australia is the VI-SPDAT for:

→ Individuals (people aged 25 and over presenting without dependent children)
→ Young people (people aged 24 and under presenting without dependent children)
→ Families (people presenting with dependent children)

The impact of using a triage tool, such as the VI-SPDAT cannot be under-estimated. Whilst it should always be viewed as a screening tool and other tools should be used once people are being properly assessed in housing for their ongoing support needs and requirements, a triage tool helps us to direct our scarce resources appropriately. Over-servicing someone with quite low needs who simply requires housing wastes support resources and often comes at the risk of under-servicing someone with very high needs.

This could mean that a housing placement fails – a result that, far from simply wasting scarce resources, also has a personal and devastating impact on the individual, children and families.

5.2   Conditions for using the VI-SPDAT in Australia

The VI-SPDAT is available for use free of charge to anyone who has been trained to administer the survey. Currently in Australia, the Mercy Foundation and Micah Projects can deliver this training.

Community Solutions and OrgCode own the intellectual property for the VI-SPDAT and have intentionally kept this tool free of licensing and other similar requirements to maximise the accessibility of the tool to individuals and organisations intent on using it to end homelessness in their communities. While no financial/licensing requirements apply, communities can maintain the integrity, reliability and validity of the tool and the collective ethos of the campaign by observing the below conditions of use:

1. **Training**

   The VI-SPDAT is used only by people who have been trained to administer the survey – using the survey without prior training not only compromises the efficacy of the tool, but can also put the safety and dignity of an already marignalised population at greater risk.

2. **Acknowledgment**

   The VI-SPDAT is a product of Community Solutions and OrgCode. Their logos cannot be removed from the tool and it is illegal to alter the tool without approval.

3. **Community-owned evidence base**

   In using the tool as part of a Registry Week Campaign, the information collected through the VI-SPDAT will be stored in a secure database. The database currently housing all VI-SPDAT records is a product owned by Quickbase Inc, who apply a monthly charge for each user account attached to the database. For the purposes of your local campaign, Micah Projects has undertaken to hold the license for the database, but does request that communities contribute to the cost of adding additional users to this license.

Additional information about the VI-SPAT is available in Appendix I.

6 Planning a Registry Week

6.1   Timing

Like any other community project, a successful Registry Week requires strong planning and coordination. Community collaborations and groups of services that are working on a Registry Week should allow a minimum of 3 -6 months lead time to prepare for a Registry Week. The exact time required depends on the level of cohesiveness already present within a community, the political environment and a host of other factors internal and external to the sector that can impact on the time and effort required to create a community-owned campaign (refer to Appendix II for an early campaign timeline working document used during the 100k Homes campaign and checklist of key steps in planning a Registry Week).

Where possible, to ensure greatest opportunities for community participation, select a week of the year with fewest competing demands. Check school holiday and public holiday calendars, parliament sitting weeks, sector calendars and events (eg Homeless Persons week, Anti-Poverty Week or other significant community events). Key dates during a Registry Week include the Monday and Friday of the Registry week. The Monday is the day where all participants need to be available for training and the Friday morning is an important occasion for attendance by media, government, local leaders, services and other agencies with an interest in hearing and taking action on campaign outcomes. If the Registry Week will mark the start of a broader campaign such as an Advance to Zero campaign, select an appropriate day to hold your launch event, which may coincide with the training or the community briefing (see Appendix V for a sample invite to the launch event).

6.2   Create a stakeholder map

Registry Weeks work best as a local and collaborative effort. Organisations leading a Registry Week are encouraged to involve as many members of the community as possible – workers from all sectors of the community and beyond; local members, government agencies; political, business and community leaders; engaged citizens interested in volunteering, and so on. Key stakeholder groups to consider engaging with early include:
→   Public, community and for-profit housing providers
→   Community support providers
→   Specialist Homelessness Services
→   Other community service organisations
→   Local council, especially the area of local council that works in public space or community liaison officers
→   State ministers with portfolios covering housing, health, communities, families, justice, disability
→   Local Members of Parliament
→   Stakeholders from outside the homelessness sector (health, justice, families, communities) that can bring additional solutions and fresh perspectives to the campaign
→   Peak bodies that can bring added financial or influential support to the campaign

Other groups to consider include faith communities, RSLs, real estate agencies, as well as corporate stakeholders (see Appendix III for a sample stakeholder map).

It's important to note that partner agencies will be involved beyond Registry Week, where we understand the *demand* for housing and support in the community. Partners will also play a role in bringing to the table new solutions on the *supply* side. It is in everyone's best interest to solve homelessness in their community – not just the interest of the community services.

6.3   Build a strong local team with critical partners

A strong local team is essential to mobilising the community around housing outcomes. This team should be oriented around actions and outcomes and be committed to driving systems improvements to achieve tangible housing outcomes and sustainable change. The campaign team can benefit from the experiences and input of people from diverse sectors, so engage with partners that are critical to the housing process as well as all partners committed to achieving housing and health outcomes, regardless of the role they do or do not have within a housing and homelessness context (see Appendix III for examples from the 100k Homes campaign of people you might recruit for your team and how the San Diego Committee adapted this to their needs; a sample 100k Homes job description for your campaign project manager; and a sample partner form).

Insider tip! Securing buy-in from and then working collaboratively with a large and diverse group comes with its own challenges. Potential partners will find reasons both to join and to take no action and maintain the status quo. It is important to focus initial energies on building a small, dedicated group of partners before diverting efforts to the wider group of stakeholders who may be more hesitant to commit without first seeing the leadership demonstrated by a small but strong group of partners.

Early in the planning phase, it is useful to identify a lead organisation from the community sector to coordinate the logistics of the Registry Week. It is important that this agency sits within the community sector as it is intrinsic to the ethos of Registry Week that the campaign is community-driven and community-owned. At the same time, the community organisation must recognise the indispensable role of government as a campaign enabler as well as the valuable contributions that can come from the business sector, civic institutions, faith groups and individuals within the community.

With such diverse stakeholders, groups collaborating on a Registry Week should consider having a partnership agreement (see Appendix III) which outlines the roles and contributions each key agency will contribute to the project. For example, close liaison with the local police service will be vital for intelligence gathering in the planning stages, with more direct public space involvement alongside outreach workers beginning only after the Registry Week has concluded. Likewise, the state housing department is a critical partner to engage as early as possible, even though involvement will increase only post-registry when the focus shifts from understanding the demand to lining up the supply.

Together with partnering organisations, set up regular planning group meetings which will become the mechanism for:

1. **Establishing the terms on which the group will operate.**

   Early milestones for the planning group will involve establishing the community's collectively owned goals, agreeing processes for sharing information, solutions, resources and also recognition. Working through the strengths that each organisation brings will help inform decisions about the areas where a particular organisation will lead and where it will follow, and at which stages of the campaign. Develop a partnership agreement (Appendix III) that articulates the shared vision and reflects the terms of the partnership.

2. **Meeting to supporting each other as the project is implemented.**

   The frequency and agenda for the planning group meetings will need to shift over time to remain responsive to the needs of the campaign and whatever is required to meet the goals set by the community. The planning group can expect to meet less frequently in the early stages of planning, more regularly (eg weekly) as the Registry Week approaches, and again establish a new rhythm in the weeks and months following the Registry, based on the level of support required at each stage of the project. A sample agenda used during the Registry Week planning stages is available in Appendix III

3. **Keeping focus and accountability as the campaign progresses.**

   As the project progresses, interests and agendas can disperse or even dissipate. More barriers and complexities are often uncovered as well as opportunities to innovate, advocate and develop more streamlined pathways for accessing housing and support. Decisions will need to be made about how the group will prioritise these projects while ensuring that key objectives are not sidelined. The planning group will need to be vigilant in identifying instances where resources and efforts that directly end homelessness through a Housing First framework are being compromised for other projects, even if those projects are complementary to the cause.

6.4   Involve the broader community

Community participation can take place at a range of levels – from showing online / social media support to volunteering, providing advice and resources, or even joining the organising committee. For Brisbane's 50 Lives 50 Homes and 500 Lives 500 Homes campaigns, the purpose and scope of the broader community engagement process was to:

1. Recruit a strong volunteer base for hands-on assistance during the Registry Week
2. Grow awareness and support through online and traditional media channels
3. Further develop relationships with stakeholders that can support the work of the campaign in accessing permanent housing, healthcare and support.

Volunteer engagement

A well-managed process for recruiting, supporting and recognising the value of community volunteers is critical to building the public momentum and strengthening the level of community ownership that bolsters the campaign. For the Brisbane's 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign, a flyer was created to recruit volunteers for Registry Week and commitment cards were also provided to allow volunteers to continue their support beyond the initial Registry (see Appendix IV for samples of these documents).

Volunteer positions are not limited to surveying only. In addition to recruiting surveyors, people and organisations can get involved in other aspects of the Registry Week such as

organising the volunteer breakfasts, or joining the data team that processes the surveys. In 2014, the 500 Lives 500 Homes Campaign, advertised volunteer job descriptions and a volunteer management manual was also developed for campaign organisers. Volunteer handbooks are also provided to everyone participating in the Registry Week. Thank you letters and certificates of participation are also important to formally recognise the value of volunteers' contributions. Samples of these documents are available in Appendix IV.

Media engagement

When managed thoughtfully, the media can play a powerful role in the success of campaign messaging for the wider public. To maximise the benefits of traditional media channels (news, radio, print media) it is worth considering for the campaign:

→ The purpose of engaging with each particular media channel – what are the key messages that need to be delivered? How will we keep clear the messages that need to be communicated about permanent housing and is the particular media channel, program or publication likely to reach the audience that needs to hear this message?

→ The critical success factors for good media coverage – are we maximising choices for people who want to be advocates? What training opportunities can be created for peer advocates to engage with the media in a safe, informed and appropriate way? How contemplative is a potential peer advocate about needing housing?

→ The strength of the existing relationship(s) with local journalist(s) – how well have we worked with the journalist in the past and how informed is the journalist on frameworks for ending homelessness?

Self-produced media releases and externally produced media articles (see Appendix V) as well as campaign web pages and a social media presence can also be effective in raising campaign awareness. Campaign web pages can be used for storing background and reference information as well as housing campaign tools, information and resources such as Registry Week flyers, donation forms and volunteer opportunities. Social media sites and/or conversation threads can also be used for campaign communications that connect to a broader audience and invite them to the campaign website to get involved (see Appendix V for social media guidelines used during the 100k Homes campaign). Prior to committing to these online channels, however, it is important to consider how well-resourced the campaign team is to manage these platforms – an inactive conversation thread or a sparsely developed webpage can not only miss its intended audience but, worse, create negative first-impressions for people who click onto it.

Stories are very important and when people are properly supported to tell their story, they can be vital to changing minds and attitudes about homelessness. However, care and thought needs to be given to how this is approached during a Registry Week. It is essential that the dignity of each person experiencing homelessness is upheld. Their right to dignity and their ability to move on after a period of homelessness is more important than the media's need to 'tell a story'. If you have interest from the media and they want a 'personal story', care should be taken in how this is done.

People who are surveyed during Registry Week must always be made aware that any personal information they share with the media will be widely read. They must know that housing assistance is not reliant on them agreeing to speak to the media.

If you have interest from local TV media, work with them to help them understand the need for privacy and for anyone willing to tell their story to give informed consent. This could be arranged after someone has been surveyed if they agree to be interviewed, but it is not something that they should be put on the spot about. It is not recommended that

TV crews accompany surveyors during Registry Weeks to interview people cold, or without first working closely with the media agency and the potential interview participant.

Some communities have worked with formerly homeless people who are well supported, to tell their story about how they moved from homelessness to home. Canada's 20K Homes campaign has produced a Public Relations Toolkit providing useful guidelines for organisers to raise the profile of the campaign by increasing public awareness and volunteer participation in campaign activities. A copy of this toolkit is included in Appendix V.

Insider tip! Once campaign news begins to reach the broader public, stories and campaign messages (whether promoted through social media or traditional media) can take on lives of their own. While the risk of adverse public messages emerging from the campaign cannot be completely eliminated, risks can be minimised by making considered choices about how the campaign will approach the media and developing clear campaign messages about what homelessness is and what it is not, what ending homelessness will involve, and how the campaign is working to achieve this. Unless volunteers have been trained in the appropriate use of social media, it is recommended that volunteer surveyors refrain from social media comment during a Registry Week as they may inadvertently supply information about people's personal circumstances and locations that should not be disclosed.

Relationship development

After the Registry Week, other strategies of the campaign shift into greater focus ie lining up supply of housing and support; creating a coordinated access system for prioritisation and matching; supporting people to stay housed; and integrating healthcare. When the groundwork to establish relationships with the broader stakeholder group can happen concurrently with Registry Week planning, communities can benefit from having stronger relationships in place immediately after the Registry and workers following up with the most vulnerable have greater access to organisations and services that may be able to assist with housing and support. It is useful in the early stages of preparation to consider the quality of the relationships across the individuals, organisations and sectors that have a stake in the campaign's strategies. What sort of assistance will be needed and which individuals and agencies can help to resource or influence the success of these strategies? Which government and non-government agencies, peak bodies, small businesses or large corporations stand to benefit from the campaign outcomes and how will they be impacted if nothing is done? Who in the campaign team is best placed to engage with each stakeholder identified? What can the campaign offer and what will be the 'ask'?

6.5 Determine project scope

Each community will need to determine the geographic and the population scope most suited to their local campaign. Available resources, lead time, the breadth and depth of stakeholder commitment, the likely demand from different homeless population cohorts (eg. rough sleepers, young people, families, veterans) specific to each area within a community are all factors that can inform a community's decision about project scope.

Across Australia and around the world, the scope of each campaign has varied with each community and across time. In Perth, an initial 2014 campaign targeted only individuals experiencing homelessness, with the view to expanding this to include families at a later

date. In 2016, community organisers in Perth launched their 50 Lives 50 homes campaign which included both individuals and families. In the USA, the *100,000 Homes* campaign began with a broad scope (all communities, all homeless cohorts). This was followed by *Zero: 2016* which focusses specifically on veteran homelessness.

In 2010, Brisbane's 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign successfully targeted only the inner Brisbane areas and only individuals who were sleeping rough. By 2014, with a more robust stakeholder base (for example stronger relationships with the youth sector and with families support services beyond the inner Brisbane area) and building on the experiences of the 2010 campaign, partners in the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign agreed to canvass the entire Brisbane Local Government area and survey anyone requiring permanent housing, regardless of whether they were young or old, presenting on their own or with their families; nor whether they were sleeping rough, in a boarding house, emergency accommodation, or any other temporary place.

Once you have determined the geographic reach of the campaign, work can progress to gather intelligence about precise locations that people sleep so that an appropriate number of teams and experienced team leaders can be allocated accordingly. This intelligence gathering continues right through to the final day of Registry Week surveying as it is often in the process of meeting people during the initial surveying that further information emerges about other possible survey locations.

In 2016 in Newcastle, the entire LGA was selected as the survey area. This meant (as it has in other locations) that a lot of advance intelligence had to be gathered. Many suburban streets do not have rough sleepers, but it is important that the entire area be canvassed. Small selected teams or partners can be selected to drive streets where fewer people are expected to be found, while larger teams can be tasked to go to areas that are known homelessness 'hotspots'.

Organisations providing services in each precinct of the campaign community – local libraries, schools, church communities, council services, housing organisations and so on – will be a vital source of information. These services often hold existing relationships with people experiencing homelessness and can even engage with people in the lead-up to Registry Week so people can be aware of what is happening. It may even be possible to negotiate with understanding housing providers who can connect surveyors with couchsurfers staying in properties under their management.

Some local services and hubs can be encouraged to host breakfasts or lunches during the Registry Week. People who are couchsurfing or experiencing homelessness in ways other than rough sleeping can be encouraged to attend and be surveyed. It is important to remember that women often experience homelessness differently to men. They may be more likely to sleep in cars or seek shelter in places that may feel safer. Be creative about trying to locate and find people who you need to include in your register.

6.6   Consider funding opportunities

Although it is possible to run a Registry Week with an active committee that shares the workload and with a clear lead agency, the best approach is to find and fund a dedicated project worker to prepare for and co-ordinate a Registry Week. They may need to be employed for 3-4 months (see Appendix III for sample job description). Perhaps each partner organisation can make a small funding contribution for this position. Sometimes that position has been funded by a government agency, for example in Newcastle. The Heading Home Campaign in the Nepean region received a grant from the Mercy

Foundation to conduct a larger campaign and contribute to costs associated with Registry Week. Seek out foundation grant opportunities, ask local businesses or discuss a small amount of funding with a relevant government agency.

In addition to a project worker, other campaign costs need to be considered. Funds are required for payments to people who agree to be surveyed (usually $15 or $20 – for their time). So for 50-70 people, this is about $1200 that you will need to need to budget for or to otherwise source through philanthropic or other means. Costs for printing (eg. flyers, surveys; volunteer documents) and training (eg. venue hire, catering, travel and accommodation for trainers) can often be sourced in-kind from partners or at discount elsewhere in the community.

If you do have additional funds, some communities have organized purpose-printed t-shirts or hoodies and lanyards for volunteers, with the name of the campaign or Registry Week clearly shown on them.

6.7   Plan Registry Week logistics

Registry Week Headquarters and Regional Hubs

The Registry HQ is where volunteers convene each morning to check in with their team leaders and collect the supplies they need before heading out together to their designated survey locations. It is also the place where teams return at the end of the morning surveying (usually around 7am) for debriefing, a shared breakfast and signing out (Refer to Appendix VI for a sample sign-in sheet). Given the morning surveying session takes place from approximately 4:30am – 7:30am, it is often feasible to source a Registry Week HQ in-kind through a local service provider or a church or scout hall that has the following:

→ Capacity to accommodate all teams, including any additional tables or chairs as required
→ Adequate parking facilities as public transport will be unavailable at the early start time
→ Kitchen and tea/coffee facilities and/or an outdoor BBQ space
→ WiFi, AV and other technology if needed.

Supplies

An additional reason for checking in at headquarters each morning rather than simply meeting at the first designated survey location is to allow the organising team to ensure all teams have the supplies they need for the morning. Team surveying kits can be prepared in advance and can include items such as a torch, thermos of fresh coffee, cups, napkins, bottles of water, a simple breakfast pack, cash gratuities for respondents completing a survey, maps, list of contact details for the team and HQ contact number for troubleshooting/hourly check-in calls, surveyor lanyards, sunscreen, hand sanitiser, simple first aid supplies for every vehicle and, of course, a sufficient supply of each type of VI-SPDAT (families, individuals and/or young people), based on intelligence previously gathered about the designated survey location.

Transport

Travel to and from the Registry HQ should be planned in advance to ensure all teams are resourced with a vehicle that is adequately insured and ideally includes a driver that is familiar with the local area. For insurance purposes, it is essential that all vehicles are:

→ Work-registered vehicles and fully insured; or

- → Private cars with current comprehensive insurance cover which is sighted by a member of the Registry Week coordinating team; or
- → A community transport vehicle with appropriately licensed professional driver to drop off and pick up surveyors (for example, Mission Beat in inner Sydney performed this role in 2010 and 2015).

All vehicles must be driven by a licensed driver who is covered by the comprehensive car insurance policy. The Registry Week co-ordinator needs to see and have a copy of all licences.

Appendix VI includes a template that can be used to record private car usage details.

Survey respondents

With a genuine, assertive and sensitive approach, Registry Week volunteers have found that most people are willing participate in the survey. However, a small number of people may still decline. Different processes will need to be put in place for people who complete the survey and for those who decline.

For people who decline, it is useful to take down some observations such as the date, time and location so that the team can return later during the week and also so that this information can be passed onto a local homelessness outreach team who can offer follow-up assistance. A template for recording this information is included in Appendix VI.

For people who complete a survey, providing a copy of the consent form for respondents to keep (see Appendix VI) and a gratuity (eg. $15 cash). This is an immediate and tangible way to acknowledge appreciation for the generosity shown by respondents who are freely sharing their information by agreeing to complete a VI-SPDAT. While this is a hard cash outlay for the project, it is possible to acquire this at no direct cost if the groundwork can be done to source this from the right donor.

Where cash gratuities are involved, it is important for all volunteers to be clearly briefed on processes for cash handling that the organising team has agreed upon. For a sample money control procedure and register for tracking cash distributed across teams, refer to Appendix VI.

While gratuities are not provided to people who decline to complete a survey, survey teams can provide a breakfast pack or something similar to anyone they come across, irrespective of whether they complete a survey.

Some surveyors may feel uncomfortable about waking people early in the morning to ask them to do a survey. This is well understood and consideration can be given to going elsewhere for a short period and returning. As part of the training for every Registry Week, all surveyors will receive training on how to wake people with sensitivity and care. The bottom line is that the intention of the project is to triage people experiencing homelessness and assist them back into housing. One small inconvenience for a much better outcome should always be in the mind of people volunteering with registry week.

6.8   Workplace health and safety

While all participants will receive safety training at the beginning of the Registry Week, accidents, injuries or other incidents can still happen. Local ambulance services, hospital / street doctor / other medical professionals, the St John's Ambulance Service, police service and experienced support workers as well as all volunteers play an important part

in creating a Registry Week that is as safe and incident-free as possible. Safety and first-response processes need to be developed and key roles assigned to experienced staff who are also supported in their role. Past Registry Weeks have included an onsite GP based at the Registry Week HQ. Police services should be well-informed of the week's activities and can provide advice on how their service can assist, and other safety processes agreed, including:

→ Hourly phone check-ins
→ Policies around entering squats or bushland
→ Personal safety measures such as enclosed footwear, wearing comfortable, recognisable attire (eg. safety vests, white shirts, badges, or lanyards)
→ Use of insured, work-registered vehicles
→ Processes for safeguarding the confidentiality of information collected from survey respondents.

Included in Appendix VII is a sample OH&S policy and an incident form that has been used during previous Registry Weeks.

The Mercy Foundation has high-visibility vests that have the wording 'Registry Week Volunteer' printed on the back. Each community can choose whether to borrow these during a Registry Week. For some communities, the vests can help alleviate safety concerns when negotiating busy streets during the very dark mornings. For other communities where the vests may create negative perceptions of looking 'too official', organisers have chosen to adopt alternative measures for enhancing safety and visibility during the early hours. It is important to be clear about the decision and include it in the OH&S plan (see Appendix VII) for Registry Week.

6.9   Training

Training occurs on the first day of the Registry Week (see section 3 above) and is provided by trainers who have completed OrgCode's Train the Trainer on the VI-SPDAT. The Registry Week training session will take approximately four hours and includes information about Registry Week logistics and work, health and safety advice. As previously noted, contact Micah Projects or the Mercy Foundation about training.

Ideally, the training date should be scheduled as a single event on the Monday of Registry Week. All volunteers should be advised upfront that attendance at training is compulsory and the date and venue communicated as early as possible, especially if the training venue will be different from the Registry Week HQ (see Appendix IV for how this can be communicated in a sample volunteer flyer). The training session is an important opportunity to set the tone and energy for the week and for all volunteers and teams to meet each other. It is also an ideal opportunity for ensuring all legal, administrative and other documentation has been completed by participants. Included in Appendix VIII is a sample checklist of training documents, as well as volunteer forms and worksheets and a sample training runsheet and presentation. Volunteers who sign up for Registry Week but who do not attend the training are unable to participate in Registry Week. It is essential that all volunteers understand what they are doing, the tool they are using and the safety protocols in place.

6.10   Analysis

A unique feature of Registry Weeks which set them apart from many other campaigns and surveying projects is the rapid turn-around time from data collection to results. Set-

up for this should begin at least one month before Registry Week to allow sufficient time for decisions to be made around the database set-up, new region(s) and user account(s) that need to be created and any local customisations to be made as required.

During Registry Week, a data team is trained and progressively enters and checks information each day so that by the final day of surveying, information is ready to be extracted and analysed. Depending on the number of surveys completed, an approximate midday cut-off on the last day of surveying will allow enough time for thorough quality assurance checks and preparing a comprehensive analysis and brief-back. Salient findings can also be communicated to media agencies in advance of the Community Briefing.

6.11   Community briefing

Besides the training session and launch event, the community briefing is the other Registry Week event where the entire collective of volunteers, workers, as well as supporting government and non-government agencies who may have been less involved in the Registry are able to come together and serves as another tangible opportunity to highlight the momentum that the campaign is building.

As with the launch and training events, early engagement with local leaders, CEOs, and government ministers, is critical to getting into busy diaries (see Appendix V for a sample launch invite). The community briefing will also provide opportunities for local leaders and campaign volunteers alike to show their support as a guest speaker, provide an opening address or otherwise share their experiences of how the Registry Week has inspired them to contribute to a wider movement to address homelessness in their community.

The key aim of the briefing is to present back to the community the information that they have helped gather during the week. Where possible, a local campaign coordinator is encouraged to present the findings, however, a member of AAEH or support staff from Micah Projects or Mercy Foundation can also assist in presenting the findings if requested by the campaign team (see Appendix IX for a sample community briefing).

Following the campaign briefing, findings from Registry Week are used to inform follow-up work for services to respond in the fastest and most appropriate way possible to young people, families and individuals requiring permanent housing. The register that has been created continues as a real-time resource owned and managed by the community for prioritising people into housing and can also be used for more in-depth analysis for advocacy to address the gaps, trends and needs specific to each community.

6.12   Consider an Advance to Zero campaign

The *Advance to Zero* campaign is a national movement to end homelessness in Australia, one community at a time. Advance to Zero adopts an evidence-based methodology that has proven successful in Australia and across the globe. This methodology was pioneered in USA as part of the highly successful *100,000 Homes Campaign*, and has since been adopted by Canada's *20k Homes campaign* and the *End Homelessness Campaign* in Europe. With close ties to the movements in USA, Canada and Europe and with key thinkers such as Rosanne Haggerty, Nan Roman, Iain de Jong and Tim Richter, AAEH is excited to bring this movement to Australia.

Advance to Zero is led by AAEH, a national alliance committed to ending homelessness in Australia by working in partnership with local communities to develop effective local

responses to homelessness built on robust and well-informed research. AAEH invites all individuals and organisations interested in ending homelessness to contact Micah Projects or the Mercy Foundation to discuss registering as a campaign community. Campaign communities commit to the guiding principles and methodology of Advance to Zero and will receive assistance from AAEH to lead their local campaign.

Registry Week Toolkit: Appendices

Appendix I   Background information

Appendix II   Campaign timelines and Registry Week checklist

Appendix III   Partners and collaborators

Appendix IV   Volunteers

Appendix V   Media

Appendix VI   Logistics

Appendix VII   Safety

Appendix VIII   Training

Appendix IX   Community briefing