



Terms of Reference

**Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA)
Melbourne's Inner and Outer East Homelessness Services
2026**



The EHSSA acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. We are committed to honouring First Nations Australians unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society. We acknowledge that this land was never ceded and the vast over representation of First Nations people amongst those experiencing homelessness, is a direct and ongoing consequence of colonisation.

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The Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance

The Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance (EHSSA) is a partnership of comprising members committed to achieving better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and/or family violence.

The EHSSA brings together the combined knowledge and resources of its members in the spirit of cooperation and shared commitment.

The EHSSA acknowledges the:

- important working partnership between the member agencies in responding to homelessness and family violence.
- importance of the strength of this relationship in ensuring effective responses and best service outcomes for the eastern metropolitan community; and
- respective strengths of all member agencies.

Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference provide a framework to guide the partnership, its relationships and operation.

Vision

All people have a home, that is safe, affordable and are meaningfully connected with their community.

Purpose

To provide strategic leadership for homelessness, housing and family violence services in the Inner and Outer Eastern Melbourne area

Values



Client focus -providing a holistic response that meets the needs of the client



Collaborative relationships -working together in a respectful manner to provide enhanced responses to clients



Quality -continual improvement towards providing high standard response to clients



Innovation -commitment to working towards 'a better way' of doing things and encouraging new ideas from clients, those with lived experience and staff at every level

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives

01. Strong Partnerships and Strategic leadership

By fostering strategic leadership, strong partnerships and incorporating lived experience expertise, we collaborate to bridge system and service gaps, develop impactful projects, and respond to evolving trends.

Priority 1.1: Strengthening Collaboration and Sector Capacity

Priority 1.2: Embedding Lived Experience Expertise

Priority 1.3: System Reform Engagement

Priority 1.4: Community Awareness and Evidence-Based Advocacy

02. Data Driven Advocacy and Practice

Building a strong evidence base to evaluate impact, data analysis, and collaboration to identify gaps and inform EHSSA initiatives.

Priority 2.1: Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis

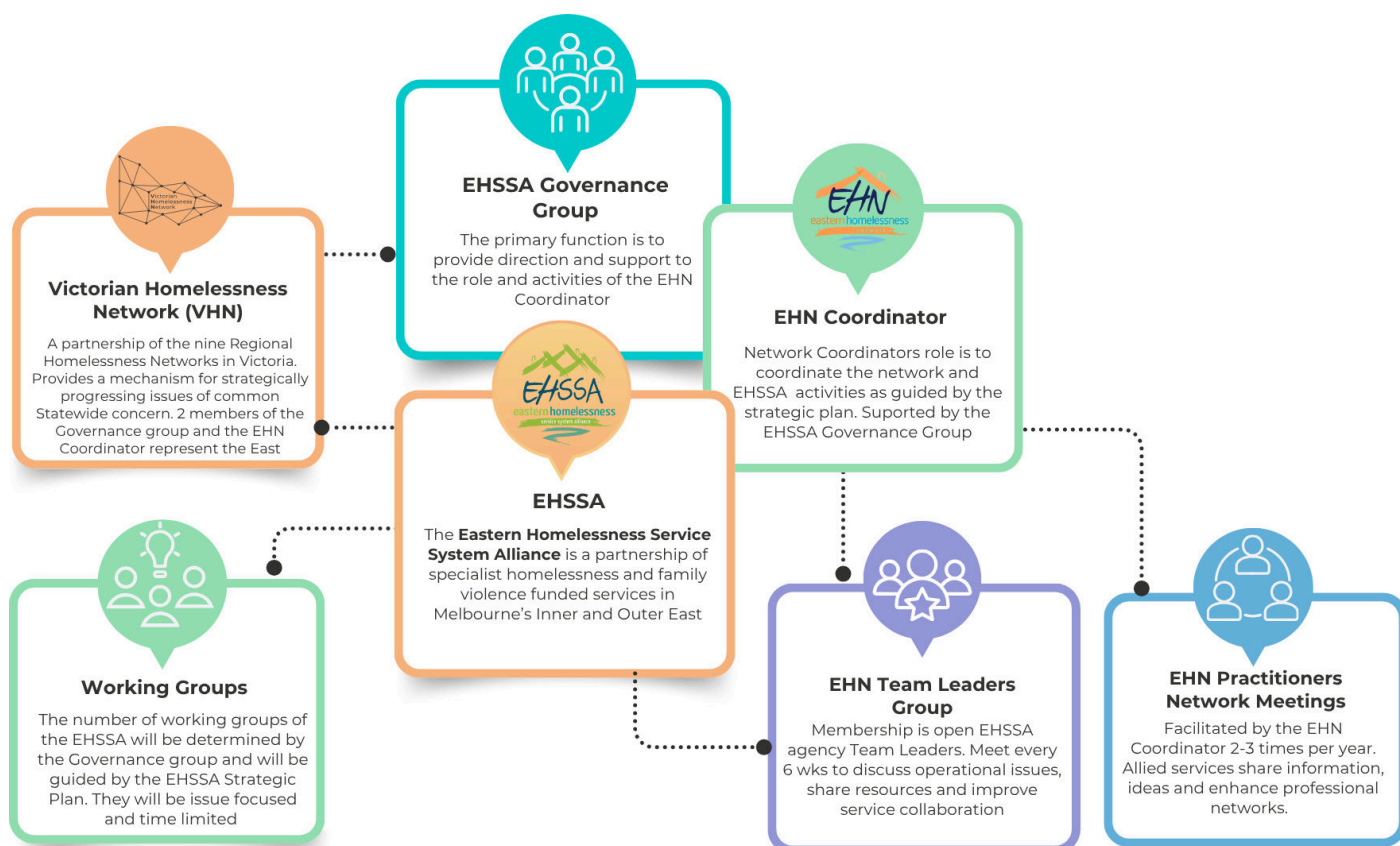
03. Maintain and grow an inclusive, skilled, interconnected and sustainable workforce

Building deeper and broader workforce competence, capacity building, retention, wellbeing, and training.

Priority 3.1: Workforce Training, Development, and Retention

Priority 3.2: Workforce System Improvement

Governance Structure



Working Groups

Where required, member agencies will be invited to participate in working groups to inform and progress the strategic direction of the EHSSA. The number of working groups of the EHSSA will be determined by the Governance group. These groups will be issue focused, time limited and may develop their own ToR as appropriate. The membership of these working groups will be derived from the EHSSA core membership unless otherwise approved by the Governance Group.

Practice

The values and priority of the EHSSA are reflected in how members interact with each other to achieve the outcomes determined by the membership. This is demonstrated by the following agreed practices:

- i. Consensus Decision Making. (see appendix one)
- ii. Management of Differences. (see appendix two)
- iii. Grievance Resolution (see appendix three)

Membership

1. Membership is open to all specialist homelessness funded agencies in Melbourne's Inner and Outer East
2. The most senior person from each agency attends the EHSSA meetings as the primary member and holds the voting rights for that agency.
3. Proxy members are nominated and may attend along with the primary member but do not hold voting rights for their agency if the primary person is also in attendance.
4. Membership encompasses Core members and Advisory members.
 - a. Core members are those that are funded to provide a homelessness response in Melbourne's Inner and Outer East.
 - b. Advisory members include allied services, State-wide or Regional coordinators and representatives of Department of Family Fairness and Housing
5. Member agencies must advise Network Coordinator of any changes to their Membership – primary or proxy.

Current Voting Members

February 2026

- Anchor Inc.
- Anglicare Eastern
- Boorndawan Willam
- Community Housing (Victoria) Limited
- EACH
- FVREE
- Family Access Network (FAN)
- Kara Family Violence Services
- MIND Australia
- Ngwala Willumbong Co-operative
- Refuge Victoria
- Sacred Heart Mission

- The Salvation Army Homelessness Eastern
- Uniting Vic Tas
- Wellways Australia
- Women's Housing Ltd

Current Advisory Members

February 2026

- The Salvation Army Housing
- Community Housing (Victoria) Limited – Transitional Housing Team
- Eastern Homelessness Network Coordinator
- Statewide Children's Resource Program Coordinator
- Regional Family Violence Principal Strategic Advisor
- Department of Families Fairness and Housing

Meetings

Purpose

- provide strategic leadership for homelessness, housing and family violence in the inner and outer Eastern Melbourne areas.
- bring together relevant agencies to achieve an agreed vision and mission
- Build on consistency and quality for service delivery practice amongst member agencies
- Make evidence-based recommendations to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) about responses to service gaps.
- Monitor service provision (via data collection and/or client engagement) through the establishment and feedback of EHSSA working groups for the purposes of identifying gaps and opportunities for enhancement in service provision.

Standing agenda items

1. Confirmation of previous minutes
2. Review of action items
3. Agenda items
4. Standing Items
 - a. Strategic Plan
 - b. EHSSA working group reports
5. Other Network reports
 - a. Victorian Homelessness Network (VHN)

- b. Homelessness Network Coordinator
 - c. Children's Resource Program Coordinator
 - d. Regional FV Partnership / PSA
 - e. Regional Coordinators Reference Group
6. Other business and Program updates

Frequency

The EHSSA will meet on a monthly basis, generally the first Thursday morning of every month except January. Annual meeting schedules will be distributed to optimise member availability in November each year.

Attendance / Quorum

1. All member agencies must nominate a member and a proxy.
2. In the event the member is unable to attend the EHSSA meeting, the nominated proxy will attend. However, both can attend any given meeting with the primary member holding the voting rights.
3. In recognition of the importance of consistent representation at the EHSSA, agencies are only able to nominate one proxy. Member agencies must ensure the proxy is kept informed of matters discussed at the EHSSA. Member and proxy members will both be forwarded any communications relating to EHSSA.
4. Member agencies must provide timely confirmation or apology of their intention to attend the upcoming EHSSA meeting.
5. Member agencies must advise if the proxy will be attending in place of the member.
6. Member agencies are encouraged to have a representative at all EHSSA meetings.
7. Non-attendance by a member organisation will be followed up.
8. The EHSSA quorum is 50% of the voting membership plus one.
9. Where possible, if it is known the meeting quorum will not be met, members will be advised accordingly via email at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. The meeting may be cancelled.

Voting rights

EHSSA will operate primarily by seeking consensus from the member agencies. Voting rights have been established in the event consensus cannot be reached.

1. Each organisation will hold one vote.
2. Memberships that are region-wide resources, such as the Homelessness Network Coordinator; the Children's Resource Program Coordinator; and the Family Violence Principal Strategic Advisor will be advisory only (i.e. not hold voting rights). These memberships will inform and provide expert advice to the EHSSA.

3. If proxy members are present at meetings where voting is required, the proxy will be required to vote on behalf of their representation. Voting will not be deferred for primary members to be present.
4. If a member agency is not represented for 3 or more consecutive meetings, the agency will be advised that they are now a non-voting member. The agency may reapply for voting membership through the EHSSA.

Chair and Minute taker

The Chair is the Governance group Chair and minutes will be taken by Homelessness Networker Coordinator

Guest speakers

A guest speaker may be invited to address an issue of relevance to the EHSSA.

Communication

Meeting Agenda

The agenda will be set by the Network Coordinator and sent out 1 week prior to the meeting.

Any items which the membership would like to add to the agenda must reach the Chair and/or Homelessness Networker Coordinator 7 days prior to the meeting. Any items received after that time will be added to the next meeting's agenda.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting will be distributed no later than 10 working days after the meeting.

Appendix One

Consensus Decision Making.

Policy:

Consensus Decision Making (CDM) process is selected as a useful decision-making process to build partnerships and goodwill and is utilised for the following reasons:

- Consensus is for people who are genuinely trying to work together, typically based on some shared interest, purpose or calling; OK if some interests are divergent, as long as sufficient joint interests are present
- Search together for the best solution for the group: it's "us against the problem" we are trying to solve rather than "us against each other"
- Recognize that no decision-making system gets everyone their first choice all the time
- What's the creative way to address all the needs present, rather than lowest common denominator
- Skills necessary for consensus are also necessary for good relationships
- Share, question, and learn from each other's experience and thinking

By definition, CDM is a cooperative process in which group members develop and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole.

The benefits in using CDM are:

- High quality decisions
- Builds connection among members
- More effective implementation
- Share common ground
- Us against the problem

Procedure:

1 Presentation of an issue or proposal at the meeting

The member presenting the issue/proposal is responsible for describing its history, the goal of the discussion, and why it matters to the work of the EHSSA. All members have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and gather further input.

2 Test of Consensus

The Chair will manage the test of consensus by checking - does the proposal work for the group? Have all concerns been resolved? Are particular sector representatives in agreement?

A statement is proposed by the Chair in the form of a motion to which the member may decide whether or not they agree.

For example, the statement may sound something like this – *“The EHSSA endorse the proposal to hold an annual membership forum”*

3 Making the Decision

The options for members when making a decision about the issue/proposal are:

- a. Yes = Agreement – no remaining unresolved concerns, not the same as 100% unanimous but can be anywhere between ‘it’s fabulous’ – ‘can live with it now’
- b. Yes with reservations
 - Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")
 - Reservations ('I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")
 - Standing aside with support, let the group proceed ("I personally can't do this, but I will not stop others from doing it. ")
- c. No with Workable Concerns – send to committee for modification or hold over for next meeting (time to think, research, refine)

4 Recording the CDM decision

All CDM decisions are to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and distributed to members.

If someone has selected option C (No with workable concerns), then their name and the reasons for their decision must be recorded in the minutes.

Appendix Two.

Management of Differences and Grievances Policy

1.6 Purpose

This policy outlines how differences and grievances will be managed in a fair, respectful, transparent and timely manner. It aims to support strong partnerships, goodwill and collaborative problem-solving.

1.7 Scope

This policy applies to members of the Governance Group and EHSSA representatives.

It distinguishes between:

- **Differences** relating to systemic or service issues
- **Grievances** relating to the actions or decisions of an individual or group

2 Managing Differences (Systemic or Service Issues)

Differences relating to systemic or service matters will be addressed informally through discussion at Governance Group meetings.

2.6 Process

- The Chair will facilitate discussion in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Members will work collaboratively to clarify the issue and seek agreement on actions.
- If agreement cannot be reached, the Chair may recommend next steps.
- Decisions and agreed actions will be recorded in the meeting minutes for transparency and accountability.

3 Grievance Resolution

Where the matter relates to an individual or group, the following grievance resolution process applies.

3.6 Principles

All grievances will be managed in accordance with the principles of:

- Equity and fairness
- Natural justice
- Confidentiality (unless there are safety or legal implications)
- Respectful communication

Any person or agency against whom a grievance is raised is entitled to hear and respond to the substance of the grievance.

4 Informal Grievance Procedure

The informal process is the preferred first step where appropriate.

- A member raises their concern verbally with the Chair.

- The Chair facilitates a discussion between relevant parties to seek mutual understanding and resolution.
- Discussions remain confidential unless there are safety or legal implications.
- If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or is of a serious nature, the formal procedure will apply.

5 Formal Grievance Procedure

5.6 Lodging a Formal Grievance

A formal grievance must be submitted in writing to the Chair within 15 days of the issue arising. The written grievance must include:

1. The decision or action being disputed.
2. The reasons it is considered wrong or unfair.
3. The resolution being sought.

5.7 Process

- The Chair will convene a meeting as soon as practicable, and within two weeks where possible.
- Mediation may be sought by agreement of both parties.
- Two or three additional EHSSA members may be appointed to form an advisory group if required.
- The process will be conducted in an open, transparent and equitable manner.
- The outcome and any agreed actions will be documented.

6 Grievance Involving the Chair

If a grievance involves the Chair:

- The grievance must be submitted in writing to the Governance Group.
- The Governance Group, together with two or three additional EHSSA members, will form an advisory committee.
- The advisory committee will manage the process and make a final determination.

7 Learning and Improvement

Where all parties agree, outcomes of resolved matters may be shared (without breaching confidentiality) to inform future practice and strengthen partnerships.