



Queensland

Good **jobs**
Better **services**
Great **lifestyle**

ourplace

A First Nations Housing and Homelessness
Action Plan 2024–2027

Consultation Summary

Understand the past, prepare for the future, act now.

*‘Listen to what we really say, not just listen
with your ears but with your heart.’*

Yarning circle participant, Cherbourg.



Queensland
Government

Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027. Consultation Summary

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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.



Acknowledgement

The Department of Housing 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.

With thanks

We thank every individual and organisation who contributed their experience and knowledge to this consultation process. First Nations peoples' lived experiences are central to this conversation, and the willingness of participants to share stories and contribute ideas is an essential first step in designing solutions to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples housing inequity.

For some First Nations peoples, interactions with government departments may have resulted in negative outcomes and feelings of racism, fear, exclusion or mistrust. The Our Place consultation acknowledges this and embraces truth telling. We respect the frankness and courage of all participants.

Thank you for advocating for others that may be more vulnerable and unable to share their voice and stories. We honour all contributions and respect the diverse perspectives shared in the spirit of driving meaningful change for First Nations housing outcomes in Queensland.



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Background

Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024–2027

In partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, the peak body for First Nations housing, the Queensland Government is co-designing *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024–2027* (Our Place Action Plan).

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023* outlined a new way of working, enabling community-led delivery of culturally safe housing solutions.

The Our Place Action Plan will build on the solid foundation established by the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019–2023* and will set out the vision and direction to improve housing outcomes for First Nations peoples living in Queensland over the next four years.

Consultation

The consultation for the Our Place Action Plan provided the opportunity to explore how can stakeholders all work together to address First Nations housing inequity, guided by First Nations knowledge and lived experience.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were invited to have their say through yarning circles and a survey. The consultation was designed to identify key issues and priorities, and to understand how these issues were important in different locations and to different people. Organisations also had the opportunity to provide written submissions.

Building on this feedback, the Queensland Government is continuing to work with a broad range of stakeholders, communities and partners to finalise the co-design of the Our Place Action Plan.

Purpose of this summary

This summary shares the key themes about the housing challenges being experienced, community's ideas for solutions, and what the new Action Plan should focus on.

This summary includes an overview of proposed solutions from individuals and communities, through surveys and at yarning circles, and recommendations received in organisational submissions.

It is important to acknowledge that this summary is a record of what was heard. Every effort has been made to reflect and honour what was shared.



The case for change

For First Nations peoples, there was no concept of ‘homelessness’ before colonisation. Everyone had a place to call home. Home was with kin, on Country and practising culture.

But today, First Nations peoples are homeless or experiencing housing stress at far higher rates than other Queenslanders.

Having a home is a fundamental human right. Having a roof over your head, and a safe place to call home is fundamental to social and emotional wellbeing and economic prosperity.

Housing by itself does not break the cycle of disadvantage, however with the foundation of a home, better outcomes in education, health, domestic and family violence, justice, youth justice, child protection and economic development are more likely.

For First Nations peoples, the underlying causes of housing insecurity include racism and historical exclusion from education and employment, and the underpayment, withholding and misappropriation of wages of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

That is why the Queensland Government is working towards a future where First Nations peoples in Queensland have a fairer housing system.

First Nations peoples currently experience a housing and homelessness gap

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland are:

Six times more likely to experience homelessness than other Queenslanders.^A

More than 10 times more likely to live in social housing than other Queenslanders.^B

Twice as likely to live in severely crowded homes than other Queenslanders.^C

Only half as likely to own their own homes as other Queenslanders.^D

Five times more likely to experience financial stress than other Australians.^E

A AIHW, 2017, *Australia's welfare 2017*, in brief. Cat. no. AUS 215, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

B AIHW, 2020, *Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report*, Cat. No. HOU 322, AIHW, Canberra.

C AIHW, 2017.

D Sanders, W, 2011, *Indigenous Australians and home ownership*, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

E Centre for Social Impact, 2019, *Money stories: Financial resilience among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, First Nations Foundation and NAB.

The current context

The Our Place consultation occurred in June and July 2023. This was a complex time for First Nations peoples in Queensland, in the lead up to the Voice to Parliament referendum and with Path to Treaty underway.

Queenslanders are experiencing unprecedented financial pressures, combined with the longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. History shows that racist views and discriminatory behaviour can increase in times of social and economic hardship and societal change.

During this consultation, a heightened level of racism was demonstrated in social media posts, and some survey responses, at a level not experienced in previous departmental consultations. This resulted in promotion being reduced, potentially reducing responses and attendance at yarning circles.

Additionally, many consultations by state and federal governments were taking place. These consultations often ask First Nations peoples to re-tell their stories and can result in consultation fatigue.

We acknowledge and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to continue to maintain their culture, community and connection to land.

Queensland's Path to Treaty

During this consultation the Queensland Government was taking steps to prepare Queenslanders for treaty-making between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Queensland Government and non-Indigenous people.

The *Path to Treaty Act 2023* establishes the legislative framework to set up the Truth Telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute.

This presents an opportunity to tell the truth about our past and accept our shared history. These truths may help many people understand how modern Queensland came to be, and understand how past laws, policies and practices continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.¹

The Voice to Parliament referendum

During this consultation, in June 2023, the Australian Parliament passed a law to enable a referendum on an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament, to help inform policy and legal decisions that impact their lives. The public debate on the Voice was emotive and divisive.

'Since the referendum was announced, there has been a substantial rise in threats, abuse, vilification, and hate speech against Indigenous peoples, both in person and online. The Australian e-Safety Commission reported in late May 2023, that there had been more than a 10 percent rise in the proportion of complaints made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about online cyber abuse, threats, and harassment.'

Racism and the 2023 Australian constitutional referendum, Ian Anderson, Yin Paradies, Marcia Langton, Ray Lovet and Tom Calma.²

The Voice to Parliament referendum was held on 14 October 2023. The Voice to Parliament referendum was not supported by the required majority, with Queensland returning the highest percentage of No votes in the country (68.9% as at 17 October 2023).

About the consultation

How we consulted

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and industry, peak and sector partners were invited to have their say to inform the Our Place Action Plan.

An open invitation to participate in the consultation was distributed through social media, partners, email and broader networks.

Consultation opened on 9 June 2023 and closed on 25 July 2023; however, three additional yarning circles were scheduled after that date, due to community request.

Three different approaches were used during consultation:

- Yarning circles
- Surveys
- Organisational submissions.

This mix of consultation methods provided options for a range of individuals and organisations to share insights in different ways.

Focus on First Nations lived experience

First Nations peoples' lived experiences were central to this consultation. The journey to closing the housing gap can only begin by listening to and building on existing community strengths and the cultural knowledge carried by First Nations peoples. In line with this, we have prioritised First Nations peoples, organisations and lived experience in the analysis of responses.

Consultation Guide

To support the engagement process, the **Our Place Consultation Guide** (consultation guide) shared background information to enable participants to engage in a comprehensive exploration of complex topics, on equal footing.

The consultation guide included questions to help shape input across all consultation methods. The questions were designed to be used flexibly and to encourage a focus on what is needed for each community and place.

Refer to Appendix 1: Consultation questions.

Partnership and shared decision-making

This consultation summary recognises and is underpinned by the Department of Housing's (DoH) ongoing engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities through the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023 and Local Housing Plans.

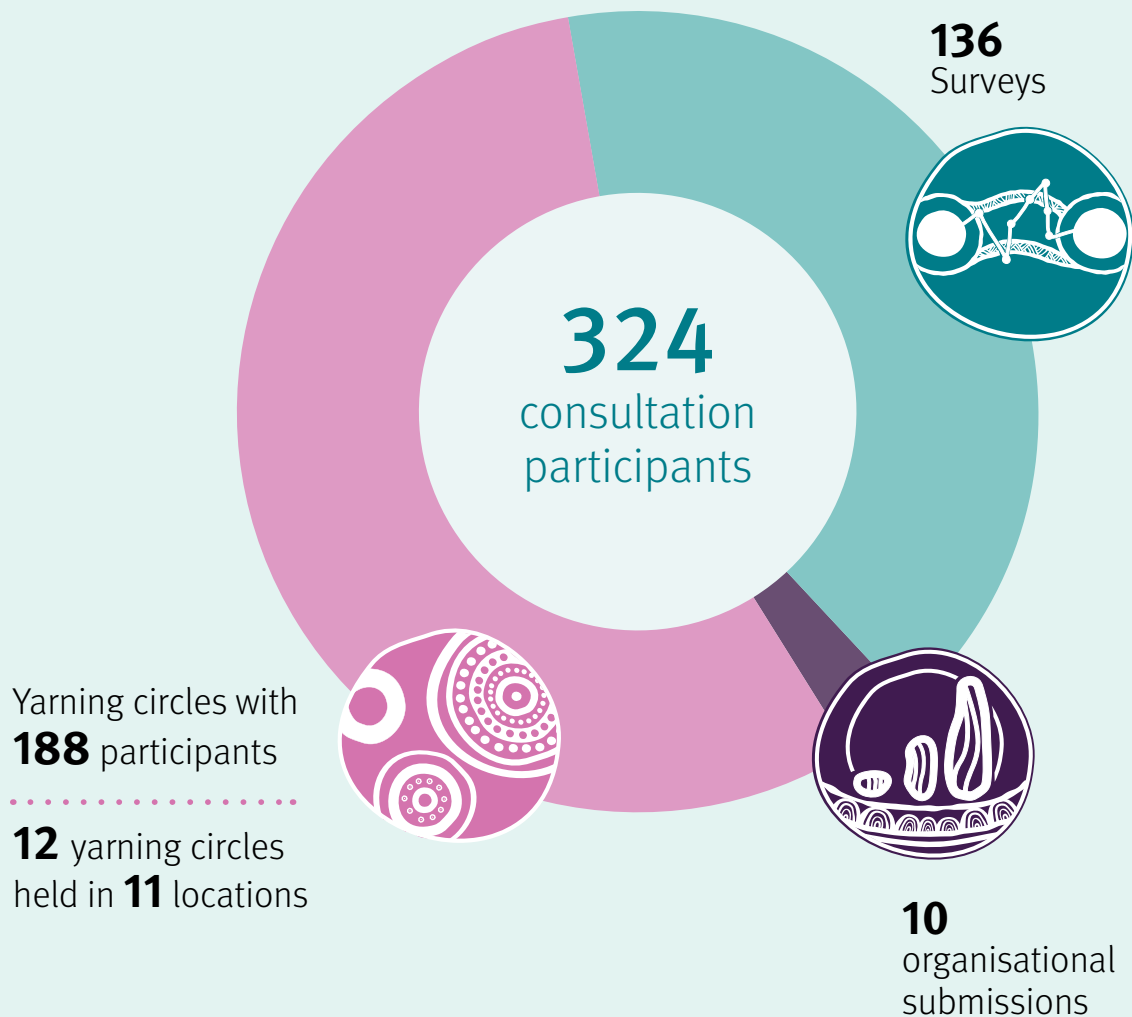
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland and DoH are co-design partners in the development of the Our Place Action Plan. We are committed to an ongoing shared decision-making approach with First Nations organisations, peoples and communities as critical to enable self-determination and to negotiate solutions to complex issues.

These ongoing relationships and place-based understandings are key to how the results of this consultation will inform the Action Plan and will determine the success of both the design and implementation of the Action Plan.



Who we heard from

In total, 324 people from 40 locations across Queensland had their say and shared their housing priorities and ideas for a better housing future for First Nations peoples in Queensland.



Yarning circles

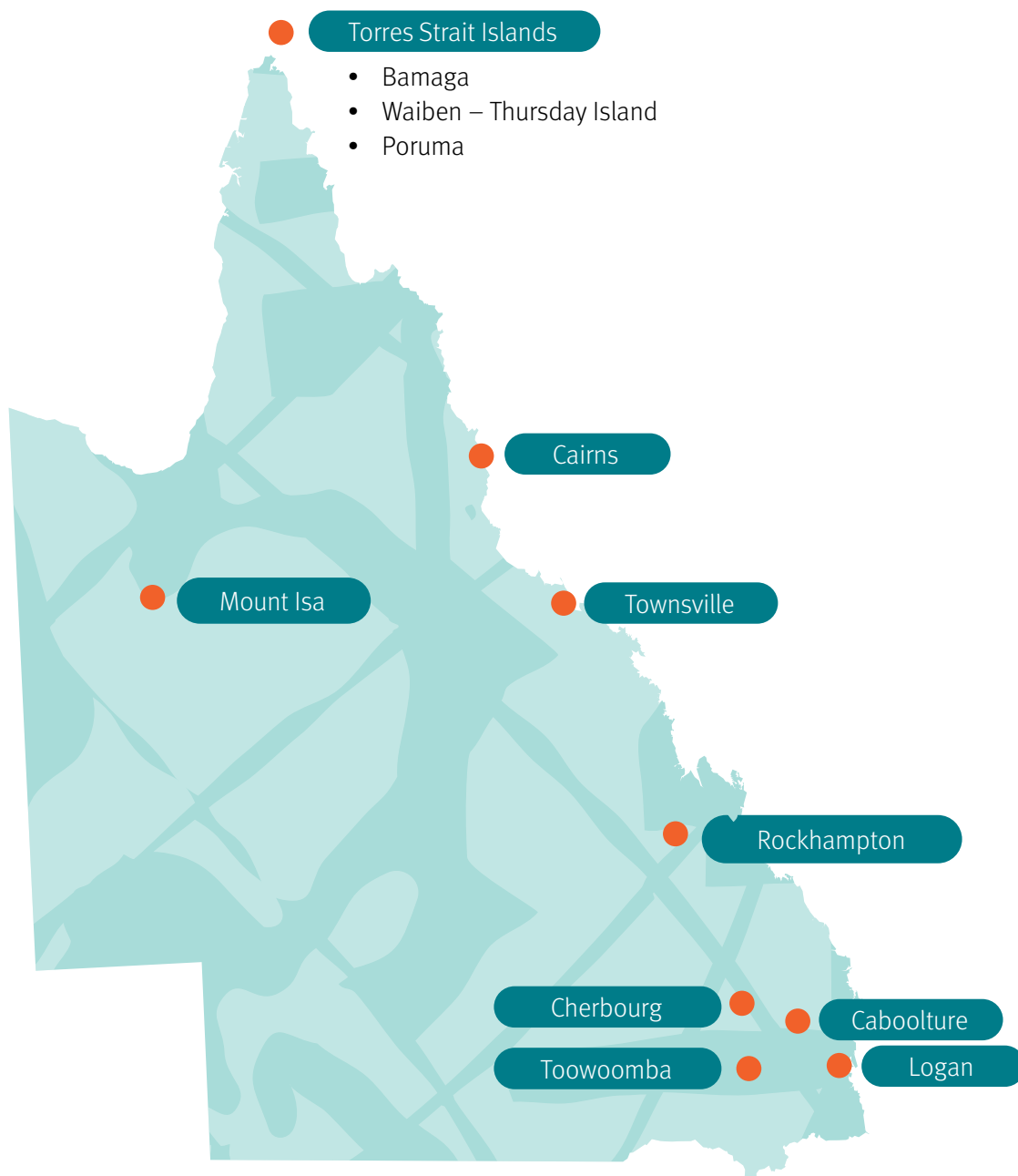
To hear views from different perspectives, a diverse range of people were invited to attend yarning circles in urban, regional and remote locations across Queensland, including the Torres Strait.

Of the 12 yarning circles held, 10 were independently facilitated by ETM Perspectives, a First Nations owned and led consultancy, who provided two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators, a male and a female, and a scribe for each session to accurately capture what was said. MuraConnect facilitated the last two yarning circles. MuraConnect is an Aboriginal owned, controlled and operated business.

The yarning circles were attended by stakeholders, including community members, Elders, Traditional Owners, and a wide range of community service providers. 58 organisations were represented.

Participants were generous in sharing their knowledge, experiences, challenges and solutions.

Refer to Appendix 2: Further detail – yarning circles.



Surveys

We also invited people to complete a survey. The survey included a mix of question types, from open ended questions seeking a deeper understanding of peoples' housing challenges and aspirations, to multiple choice and Likert scale questions which ranked levels of experiences with key statements. Not all respondents answered all questions, with all finishing the survey but opting out of some questions.

136 people submitted a response, either online or in hard copy, with over 60 percent being submitted by First Nations peoples.

One in five respondents identified as a person with disability and 3 percent identified as LGBTIQ+.

Snapshot of demographics of survey respondents

Identity	Number of people
Aboriginal	67
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	9
Torres Strait Islander	11
Non-Indigenous	48

Location	Number of people
Urban	67
Regional	47
Outback	4
Discrete community	15

Age	Number of people
Seniors (over 54 years of age)	62
Adults (24 - 54 years old)	68
Young people (under 24 years of age)	6

Refer to Appendix 3: Further detail – survey.

Mobs or cultural and community connections of survey respondents

- Angkamuthi Tribe Cape York top western north of Weipa
- Anaiwan and Kamilaroi Arrente
- Atherton Tableland Yidinji (Wadjanburra)
- Badu Island and Besi Island culture island dancing and cooking island foods
- Barada Barna Bwolgoman
- Barada Barna, Wakka Wakka, Ewamian grew up in Cherbourg
- Bidjara - Augathella Charleville, I've lived in the Inala community 28 years
- Bidjara - Cunnamulla /Charleville
- Bidjara and Arrernte
- Bidjara Nation
- Bigambul Gomeroi Gamilaraay
- Bigambul Nation
- Birri-Gubba
- Boigu Island
- Born in Innisfail but spent most of my life in Cairns
- Bundjalung
- Bungulang and Java people, I am connected to the Moreton Bay area
- Bwgcolman, Birrigubba, Ngaro, Gia, Kalkadoon
- Byellee
- Cherbourg
- Connections to Gungurri, Djidabul, Barbarum, Kalkadoon & Waanyi
- Darnley Island
- Dheoybaw Mob from Northern Peninsula Area
- Djabuguy/KukuDjungan – Stolen generation
- Erub (Darnley Island) living in Brisbane
- Ghungalu
- Gubbi Gubbi
- Gudang/Yadykenu
- Gudjala
- Gugu Badun – Mitakoodi
- Gumbaynggirr
- I am a Komumerri woman of the Gold Coast and its surrounds and also a Ngugi Native Title Traditional Owner of Quandamooka, Moreton Bay and Redlands
- I am a Yuin/Gadigal/Bidjigal woman. I lived on Ngunnawal country in Canberra for 30 years and relocated to Deception Bay in August 2022
- Iman and Bindal
- Ingham/Innisfail, part of the Stolen Generation
- Jangga
- Kabi Kabi
- Kabi Kabi & Iman
- Kamilaroi
- Koa
- Koa mob
- Koa, Mardigan, Kukuyalanji
- Kodak and Samu clans from Saibai Island and Bamaga
- Kooma mob, community connections to Meeanjin, Inala and Ipswich mobs
- Kuku Yalanji - Kubirriwarra, Julaywarra and Buruwarra
- Kuku Yalanji; Gugu Yimithir; Yidinji; Waanyi
- Kulkalgal
- Kunja
- Mapoon - Kaantju
- Meriam, Kuku Yalanji
- Mob is Darug, raised on Quandamooka and Kombumerri country
- Monaro and Yuin-Koorie
- Mualgal St Paul Moa Island
- Mununjali Beaudesert
- My kin and other First Nation people
- My maternal Grandfather is from Erub Island and Grandmother is from Thursday Island
- Nunukul/Quandamooka, Kunggari
- Palawa lutruwita
- Pitta Pitta people and I live on Jagera country
- Quandamooka
- Saibai Islander origin, currently live in Northern Peninsula Area, descendant of the movement from Saibai to mainland
- Samu clan, Kulkalgal people Central Island, Torres Strait, Poruma Island
- Seisia Island community - Seisia Koedal
- Taribelang Bunda
- Wadurgulli
- Wakaya, Pertame Southern Arrernte
- Wakka Wakka
- Wakka Wakka and Gooreng Gooreng
- Wiradjuri
- Woorabinda Man
- Yidinji
- Yorta Yorta, Wirradjerri and Wurrundjeri
- Yuin Nation



Organisational submissions

An invitation to provide an organisational submission was extended to community and non-government organisations, peak bodies, service delivery providers and those who provide services and/or advocacy to First Nations peoples. This method enabled in-depth and detailed responses to be provided.

Submissions were received from 10 organisations, including three First Nations organisations:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland.
- Gunya Meta Inc.
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service.

The non-Indigenous organisations which made submissions also represent mainstream services and state-wide advocacy on issues that include First Nations peoples:

- National Affordable Housing.
- Queensland Council of Social Services.
- Queensland Mental Health Commission.
- Queensland Youth Housing Coalition.
- Real Estate Institute of Queensland.
- Tenants Queensland.
- The Local Government Association of Queensland.



What we heard

To share what we heard, we analysed responses across all methods and developed an overall summary of key themes, noting that:

- Yarning circle attendees included community members and people from a wide range of organisations with discussions reflecting community dynamics.
- Individuals were able to complete a survey with anonymity, open text options, time to consider, and without needing to compete to be heard.
- The organisational submissions show the benefit of insight into more strategic and systemic solutions and resources at their disposal, including data.

Refer to Appendix 4: Summary of themes by consultation method.

Key themes

- Overcrowding
- Culturally safe services
- Racism
- Cost-of-living
- Home ownership
- Rental availability and affordability
- Land availability and tenure
- Self-determination and community control
- Housing supply
- Employment
- Quality, sustainability and utilisation of housing
- Shared accountability and data
- Supporting person-centred responses when they are most needed



‘There is overcrowding in homes due to unaffordability of renting and buying homes.’

Survey response by Bundjalung woman, Bracken Ridge.

Overcrowding

- Overcrowding was a recurring theme, with one in five survey respondents across urban, regional and remote locations saying there is not enough room for everybody who lives in their house.
- The impact of overcrowding on families is a prevalent concern, and was linked to child protection, domestic and family violence, and to major health related issues including increased numbers of rheumatic heart disease and negative work or school attendance outcomes.
- People are concerned about a shortage of crisis accommodation for victims of domestic and family violence, and for First Nations LGBTIQ+ peoples.

‘We need culturally appropriate support and advocacy for mob.’

Survey response by Bidjara man, Woodridge.

Culturally safe services

- Some respondents were concerned about a range of impacts on seniors, family structures and equity that can be caused by a lack of cultural awareness from service providers.
- Many examples were provided, but one that highlights a key issue was that services often provide inappropriate responses due to a lack of understanding around cultural protocols such as men’s business or women’s business.
- Many respondents raised the importance of recognising the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma and the need for healing informed practice.

‘Real estate agents putting a ‘symbol’ on applications that denote if someone is Bama (First Nations).’

First Nations Yarning Circle participant, Cairns.

Racism

- Racism and discrimination were consistently raised in yarning circles and in individual surveys as a barrier to obtaining housing.
- Discrimination in the rental market was mentioned in several individual surveys as a particular issue of concern, which was also acknowledged in organisational submissions.

‘People feel trapped in social housing because of racism in the rental market.’

First Nations Yarning Circle participant, Caboolture.

‘Real estate agents [need to] shift that mentality they have toward mob re: finances, cleanliness and not raising the rent to unbelievable levels so we cannot even consider or afford the rent, assuming we are only good enough to rent their worst houses.’

Survey response by Barada Barna Bwolgoman woman, Zillmere.

‘Income doesn’t meet the needs of family housing, and the cost-of-living impacts on families can lead to social issues such as anxiety, depression and domestic violence.’

Yarning circle participant, Poruma.

Cost-of-living

- This was raised at every yarning circle in urban, regional and urban locations and also mentioned in many survey responses.
- People reported that incomes are not keeping pace with the cost of electricity, rent, rates and insurance.
- Costs in some locations are substantially higher than average, which was raised most prominently in the Torres Strait, where people noted unsustainably high costs of transport, food and building materials, citing examples of people having to choose whether to pay rent or buy food.
- Some people reported having to leave their community to find a place to live.

‘A home where I feel safe and secure, I believe this comes from home ownership. However, I am not sure I will ever have that because of how expensive rent is and general cost of living. There is very little left over at the end of each fortnight to be able to save for a house deposit.’

Survey response by Gumbayngirr woman, Burpengary.

Home ownership

- With fewer than one in seven survey respondents feeling confident they will be able to buy their own home one day, many First Nations peoples believe home ownership is not achievable.
- At yarning circles and in surveys, many suggested that initiatives to build pathways to home ownership should be a priority under the next Action Plan.
- This was supported in organisational submissions.

‘Housing affordability is now a real concern. The lack of willingness to rent to someone who has been homeless for any length of time. Mob I am working with often discuss taking their lives due to no appropriate housing.’

Survey response, Kabi Kabi Elder, Kallangur.

Rental availability and affordability

- Many people raised concerns about rental availability and affordability, with almost half of people completing surveys saying they are worried about being able to afford their rent. This issue was also talked about in yarning circles and supported by organisational submissions.
- This theme was interwoven with overcrowding racism, and cost-of-living issues.
- Organisational submissions noted the need for options for large and extended families and single people.

‘We have no rights on our land.’

Yarning circle participant,
Poruma.

Land availability and tenure

- The availability of land for housing and land tenure were raised by many people in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- The lack of availability of affordable land was raised by several people in urban and regional locations. In these cases, people suggested subsidised land and opening new subdivisions.
- Participants at some yarning circles noted that the complex types of land tenure arrangements in remote and discrete communities directly impact housing solutions.

‘Hear the cry, feel the cry. We live it every day, we feel the cry not just hear it, that’s the difference.’

Yarning circle participant, Waiben.

Self-determination and community control

- Many said self-determination and community control of supports and services is important to address the current housing challenges facing First Nations peoples.
- This theme featured in individual submissions and yarning circles and was supported by organisational submissions, with several people noting that the Indigenous Community Housing sector is a strong expression of self-determination.
- We heard that ICHOs provide employment opportunities, the workforce skill set is broad and hard to define, and developing workforce capability is a challenge. This is exacerbated by a lack of operational funding and financial constraints.

‘Government making capital infrastructure funding more accessible to smaller Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled housing providers.’

Survey response by Gudjala woman,
Charters Towers.

Housing supply

- The need for more housing featured in many survey responses and yarning circles and was supported by organisational submissions.
- We heard that increased ICHO housing supply is critical to build the financial viability and sustainability of the sector and to deliver culturally responsive housing.
- Organisational responses also proposed the establishment of dedicated funds and targets for First Nations housing.

‘A job leads to housing and helps all the way through.’

Yarning circle participant, Rockhampton

‘Some people’s house is tied to their job – no flexibility.’

Yarning circle participant, Waiben.

Employment

- Many people talked about the importance of employment, noting that a job brings financial stability and independence for First Nations peoples.
- Another common comment was that the right training can equip communities to solve housing building and maintenance challenges.
- The need for affordable childcare to enable families to work, was also mentioned.

‘Space acceptable to First Nations people not a white design that does not meet cultural needs.’

Survey participant, Townsville.

Quality, sustainability and utilisation of housing

- Many people talked about the need to improve the quality and sustainability of social housing, particularly in regional and remote areas - houses should suit the location (coastal, rainforest, desert, and urban).
- Several people mentioned that maintenance and repair of houses needs to improve and that better quality materials and building methods should be used to ensure long-term use of properties and mitigate against climate change and natural disasters.
- There were contrasting responses around long-term tenancies, with some believing that social housing homes should be considered intergenerational, and others saying seniors in larger homes should be helped to downsize to free up housing stock.

‘We firmly believe that leaning into the [Closing the Gap] priority reforms provides a roadmap for governance and accountability, enabling shared decision-making and highlighting a path for self-determination in the governance of the Our Place Action Plan.’

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service, organisational submission.

Shared accountability and data

- We heard that a lack of appropriate data limits the ability to form a complete picture of the ‘housing gap’ and that planning for sector investment, construction and development opportunities must be underpinned by strong forecasting.
- Organisational submissions identified the need for culturally appropriate integrated services, that includes working collaboratively with ICHOs, community-controlled organisations, Elders, and across government, with targeted responses and funding underpinned by data.
- Several organisational submissions and yarning circle participants highlighted the importance of strong governance, transparent reporting and accountability for effective outcomes.

‘A house equals a safe space and security.’

Yarning circle participant, Caboolture.

‘Make it so people do not feel they are judged because of what they are going through.’

Survey response by Gugu Badun – Mitakoodi person, Townsville.

Supporting person-centred responses when it's most needed

We heard about the challenges and struggles to find suitable housing from First Nations peoples who are experiencing domestic and family violence, or exiting state institutions such as prison and hospitals, for young people without a rental history, for First Nations LGBTIQ+ people, and people with disability.

- This issue was mentioned frequently across yarning circles and in individual surveys. More than one in six survey respondents said they do not feel safe in their home, with the majority being women.
- Organisational submissions and survey responses suggested a range of measures to improve safety and accommodation stability for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.
- During yarning circles, different locations spoke about different person-centred needs and responses, for example, First Nations peoples with disability was a focus in Townsville and the needs of women and girls were a key focus in Mount Isa.
- People talked about the benefits of designing and building housing to meet individual needs.
- Many people mentioned that providing individualised supports and services is essential for those who are experiencing greater disadvantage.
- Affordable options to enable Elders/seniors to age in place was mentioned at several yarning circles and in organisational submissions.
- A recurring theme throughout the consultation was the need for better crisis housing solutions.



Ideas for solutions

Community's ideas for solutions from the survey and yarning circles included a focus on culturally safe services, self-determination and a strong housing and homelessness sector.

From community

Culturally safe services

- Reform the service offer for First Nations peoples to ensure services and practices are flexible and can be adapted to local requirements, and to meet the specific needs of individuals and families.
- Improve cultural capability of service providers and real estate agents.
- Implement targeted support and person-centred responses for First Nations peoples when its needed including people experiencing domestic and family violence, people exiting the criminal justice system, LGBTIQ+ community, and youth.

First Nations supply solutions

- Provide tenancy protections to victims of domestic and family violence.
- Increase the number and type of crisis accommodation options, including for First Nations LGBTIQ+ people who are currently turned away from shelters 'for their own safety.'
- Understand the impact of historical dispossession and barriers to growing intergenerational wealth for First Nations peoples, and:
 - improve accessibility to rent-to-buy opportunities
 - provide pathways to home ownership, including shared equity models
 - invest in accessible housing products.
- Consider ways to tailor housing to enable Elders/ seniors to age in place.
- Increase supply particularly in remote areas.
- Think about sustainability and climate suitability for all builds and repairs.

Self-determination and strong sector

- Invest in Indigenous Community Housing Organisations.
- Implement tenancy education and advocacy programs.
- Engage with communities and people with lived experience to match housing and supports to people's needs, including better connections between Elders and community leaders with government.
- Embed Closing the Gap priority reforms to enable shared decision-making and self-determination to meet the needs of communities.
- Improve government funding and services and reduce 'red tape' and advocate for and support community-control and self-determination.



From organisational submissions

The insights, input and community knowledge of stakeholder organisations are important to shape the future of the Our Place Action Plan. The 10 organisations who made submissions represent a reach across community organisations and councils in urban, regional and remote locations across Queensland, as well as state-wide service providers.

This is a snapshot of what we heard from organisations across the following common themes and recommendations.

Targeted supply and affordable housing

‘First Nations peoples are not getting housed as a priority, resulting in a lack of housing security within the community. Overcrowding remains a significant issue but is not being responded to with dedicated stock and services for First Nations peoples. Community in the past knew which houses were specific for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander peoples, and they were seen as safe places.’

Gunya Meta Inc.



Racism

‘Discrimination contributes to overcrowding and a high proportion of First Nations peoples in social housing. A concerted effort to change the accepted practices of lessors and real estate agents is required.’

Tenants Queensland.

‘The REIQ is well placed to collaborate with ATSIHQ to develop training for property managers working in both the private rental housing sector and the community housing and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing sectors, that will improve the experiences of First Nations peoples renting in Queensland.’

Real Estate Institute of Queensland.



First Nations home ownership

‘We need a platform for First Nations Elders to advocate for their community, a government policy that demonstrates understanding of the cause and addresses overcrowding in First Nations households; and to broaden the access to home ownership, so more mob can get into home ownership.’

Gunya Meta Inc.

Strengthen First Nations housing sector

‘The Action Plan should aim to increase the supply of high-quality social and affordable housing; increase the capacity of community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Housing Providers and increase investment in these organisations to respond to local housing challenges.’

Queensland Council of Social Services.



‘Grow the community-controlled housing sector as the primary mechanism for delivering culturally safe services’

Queensland Mental Health Commission.



Self-determination

‘The emphasis on transforming mainstream institutions, empowering the community-controlled sector and shared decision making, and partnerships provides an opportunity for the Action Plan to champion community led decision making.’

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service.



‘Person-centred and place-based responses and approaches require local knowledge, input and engagement and a focus on the delivery of local solutions. Consultation with Queensland councils, especially remote and discrete First Nations communities is critical.’

The Local Government Association of Queensland.



‘Positive intent, adequate resourcing, and working in community with community is key.’

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition.

Culturally safe, person-centred supports

‘Social housing providers must act promptly and with priority to transfers for First Nations families and individuals experiencing domestic and family violence.’

Tenants Queensland.

‘Our recommendations include designing builds in remote communities to meet the needs of the community, including large families, older people, people with disability, young people and children.’

Tenants Queensland.

‘Given the over-representation of First Nations peoples in institutional settings the Commission suggests inclusion of an action in the Our Place Action Plan to prevent people exiting government services into homelessness...’

Queensland Mental Health Commission.

‘Housing supports for First Nations people must be delivered in a culturally safe manner, acknowledging the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma.’

Queensland Mental Health Commission.

First Nations Training and employment

‘We recommend the Queensland Government consider a range of actions to incentivise and support improved social and affordable rental housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, including investing in targeted education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in housing and construction related industries.’

National Affordable Housing.



Governance, accountability and data

‘We firmly believe that leaning into the priority reforms [of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap] provides a roadmap for governance and accountability enabling shared decision-making and highlighting a path for self-determination in the governance of the Our Place Action Plan.’

Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service.

‘There is a requirement for ‘regular and public state government reporting and tracking of implementation progress of key actions, activities and housing delivered.’

The Local Government Association of Queensland.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland organisational submission

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland submission includes 14 recommendations that they have identified to accelerate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing outcomes in Queensland, through three goals:

- A more responsive, effective and efficient Queensland housing system.
- Improved housing outcomes for First Nations people in Queensland.
- Active participation of First Nations people in society.

‘Housing Queensland believes that if we miss this moment to implement First Nations housing reforms, we may never get it again. First Nations Action Plans are rare—this will be only the second Action Plan since the Queensland Housing Commission was established in 1945 (78 years) to house Queenslanders and this is our moment to create meaningful change.’

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland’s submission can be found at:
www.housingqueensland.com.au

Conclusion and next steps

Through the Our Place consultation, we have been honoured with the insights, truths, and lived wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across Queensland about their housing experiences, needs and aspirations.

This helps us to understand how government can be a better partner and deliver housing outcomes that work for First Nations people for the next four years and beyond.

The First Nations peoples of Queensland have been generous and gracious in their sharing, and in providing this deep well of information and insight to help us develop *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027*.

Consultation and co-design

The Our Place Action Plan and the journey to closing the housing gap will only succeed by being grounded in and building on the strengths and community and cultural knowledges of First Nations peoples, organisations and families.

The two-phased consultation approach was designed to both centre First Nations and enable self-determination and engage and activate the broader sector and industry.

In Phase 1, we undertook broad public consultation to understand the lived experience and ideas of community. Phase 2 will include targeted consultation, shared decision-making and implementation planning with key stakeholders, including:

- Stakeholder focus groups
- Presentations to key stakeholder and governance groups
- Knowledge Circle.

Knowledge Circle

Consultation will conclude with the Our Place Knowledge Circle (Knowledge Circle) to confirm the actions and commence implementation planning. The Knowledge Circle will bring together key stakeholders in the housing and homelessness sector, including from community housing, industry and the community, peak bodies, and service providers – guided by First Nations self-determination.

Developed and refined by The Healing Foundation, knowledge circles are a First Nations framework for knowledge sharing, exchange and decision-making. Knowledge circles are a strengths-based and healing informed process to enable a collaborative way of cultural co-design. They draw from both First Nations and non-First Nations knowledge holders and systems to enable an equal and collaborative way of working. They enable an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world view to be enacted by supporting the strengths of cultural wisdom and systems to be reinstated and this strengthens participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

To support the development of the Our Place Action Plan, the following questions were developed to guide conversations and to prompt thinking and insights.

The case for change

- What do you want *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027* to achieve?
- What does 'closing the housing gap' mean to you?
- How should First Nations housing outcomes be measured?

The journey so far

- What lessons can we learn from the first Action Plan?
- Which specific initiatives from the first Action Plan have worked well?
- What could be the impacts on housing from reforms such as Closing the Gap, Path to Treaty and others?

Person-centred and place-based responses

- From your perspective, what is needed to provide person-centred responses to housing need?
- Thinking about your community, what place-based responses are required to address local housing need?

The challenges and opportunities ahead

- Are there other opportunities and challenges that need to be considered?
- What should we do now to prepare for these opportunities and challenges?

A role for everyone

- Who needs to be involved?
- What are their roles?

Governance and accountability

- What is needed to better enable shared decision making?
- How can First Nations self-determination be strengthened in the governance of the Our Place Action Plan?

Your ideas for solutions

- What housing services and supports currently work well for First Nations people in Queensland?
- What changes or new initiatives are needed to achieve First Nations housing equity in Queensland, in order of priority?

Appendix 2: Further detail - Yarning circles

Key themes from each location

Cherbourg – 23 June, 13 attendees

- overcrowding
- need housing for people with disability and Elders/seniors
- lack of knowledge and understanding about tenancy requirements
- need pathways to support home ownership
- cost-of-living.

Rockhampton – 27 June, 7 attendees

- overcrowding
- cost-of-living
- renting issues
- improvements needed for service delivery to community
- supply issues – need more land and affordable housing.

Townsville – 28 June, 37 attendees

- lack of cultural understanding in service delivery
- not enough support for community-controlled housing organisations
- need better accessibility for people with disability
- overcrowding
- racism (neighbours, real estates)
- unsuitable housing design and builds
- lack of houses and land - homelessness.

Caboolture – 29 June, 20 attendees

- overcrowding
- not enough support for community-controlled housing organisations
- racism and lack of cultural awareness by services
- housing supply
- cost-of-living
- child protection and domestic and family violence issues.

Toowoomba – 3 July, 4 attendees

- lack of cultural capability and safety practices in service delivery
- racism and discrimination in real estate
- housing supply and homelessness
- need crisis accommodation
- overcrowding.

Waiben (Thursday Island) – 11 July and 13 September, 19 attendees (total)

- inappropriate housing design and poor-quality materials
- not enough services and poor service delivery
- lack of education about home ownership, contracts etc.)
- cost-of-living in low socio-economic area
- overcrowding
- need more houses and land.

Poruma – 12 July, 10 attendees

- cost-of-living
- overcrowding
- more community-led design and decision making for housing
- maintenance is not good
- supply - need home ownership opportunities, and more houses and land.

Cairns – 24 July, 28 attendees

- design and build of houses doesn't suit location (rainforest, coastal, desert, rural)
- racism and lack of culturally safe services
- overcrowding
- voices of Traditional Owners and Elders not heard
- need pathways for youth.

Mount Isa – 25 July, 16 attendees

- rental affordability and cost-of-living
- racism and lack of culturally safe services
- housing design, build and maintenance improvement needed
- housing supply, overcrowding and not enough crisis accommodation.

Logan and surrounds – 9 August, 22 attendees

- housing shortage and unaffordability
- shortage of emergency and short-term accommodation
- lack of cultural considerations in housing design and services
- community control and self-determination.

Bamaga – 12 September, 12 attendees

- cost-of-living (childcare, rent, food, freight)
- housing supply; and houses tied to employment (which reduces flexibility)
- overcrowding
- housing maintenance
- lack of education about housing.

Organisations engaged with at yarnning circles

- Aboriginal and Islander Development Recreational Women's Association
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service
- Anglicare
- Australian Training Works Group
- Bama Connect Consultants
- Cape York Partnerships
- Carers Queensland
- Cherbourg Health Service
- Child and Youth Mental Health Service
- Community Gro
- Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc
- ETC Ltd (Enterprise and training Company)
- Family Emergency Accommodation Townsville (FEAT)
- Feros Care
- Gidgee Healing
- Gimuy Walubara Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation
- Gunya Meta Inc
- Halcyon Greens Retirement Village
- HART4000 Homelessness Assessment and Referral Team
- IndiOzz Music
- Injilini Youth Support Service
- Inspire youth and family services (IYS)
- Jupiter Mosman Housing Company
- Kalkadoon Traditional Owner Group
- Kurbingui Youth and Family Development
- Life Without Barriers
- Marrabaa Walaay Pty Ltd
- Mercy Community Services
- Mission Australia
- Mithangkaya Nguli YPA Indigenous Corporation
- Mount Isa Neighbourhood Centre
- Mulungu Aboriginal Corp Primary Health Service
- Mura Kosker Sorority
- Murricon National Affordable Housing (NAH)
- Ngoonbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation
- Pumicestone Indigenous Education and Employment Council Inc
- Pyne Discretionary Trust
- QShelter
- Queensland Council of Social Services
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
- Queensland Youth Housing Coalition
- Queensland Youth Services
- Real Estate Institute of Queensland
- Relationships Australia, Queensland
- Selectability Ltd
- Shelter Housing Action Cairns (SHAC)
- St Vincent de Paul Society - Homelessness Service; Hostel, and House Stay
- Tenancy Skills Institute
- Tenants Queensland
- The Salvation Army
- The Smith Family
- Torres Strait Islander Housing Co-operative
- Torres Strait Regional Authority
- TRAWQ Indigenous Corporation
- Umpi Korumba Corporation for Housing
- UnitingCare
- Wesley Mission Queensland
- Youth Advocacy Centre
- Yumba-Meta Limited

Local Government Organisations

- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
- Logan City Council
- Moreton Bay Regional Council
- Northern Peninsula Regional Area Council
- Torres Shire Council
- Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Government agencies

- Department of Education
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts
- Metro South Mental Health and Addictions Services
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Mental Health Commission
- Queensland Police Services
- RoadTek
- Services Australia



Appendix 3: Further detail - Survey

The survey explored individuals current living arrangements and quality of life, barriers such as affordability, housing aspirations, individual support needed and their ideas for solutions. There was one mandatory question: 'Are you a First Nations person?' to ensure that First Nations peoples' lived experiences were central to this consultation.

The survey included a mix of question types, from open ended questions seeking a deeper understanding of peoples housing challenges and aspirations, to multiple choice and Likert scale questions which ranked levels of experiences with key statements. Not all respondents answered all questions, with all finishing the survey but opting out of some questions.

The percentages are calculated on the total number of valid responses for each question. The analysis below provides a general overview of the distribution of responses for each question, noting that some responses are not specific or clear, which may affect the accuracy of the analysis.

Questions and responses

Overall, the data highlights the significant impact of racism, affordability, housing availability, and personal circumstances on individuals' ability to secure suitable accommodation.

Current housing situation

Respondents were asked to think about their current housing, and to choose their level of agreement with the following statements on a scale from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree.

- 63% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that they feel comfortable inviting people to visit their home.
- 67% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that they feel safe in their home.
- 57% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that they are satisfied with where they are staying.
- 67% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that they are confident about managing their finances.
- 68% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that there is enough room for everybody who lives there.

'The rental market is too expensive; people aren't able to get a place to rent.'

Yarning circle participant,
Rockhampton.

Build affordable housing to give First Nations people a suitable way to buy their own home for security and stability which then betters communities and makes us proud to have that opportunity.'

Survey response, Torres Strait Islander woman, Mount Gravatt

Housing affordability

- In many cases, the cost of rent and housing exceeds household budgets, especially those on low incomes or government support payments.
- 49% of respondents rent privately, with 87% reporting they worry about being able to pay afford their rent.
- Only 22% of respondents reported feeling confident they will be able to buy their own home one day.
- Of those on the home ownership path, 55% worry about being able to afford their mortgage repayment.
- 49% of respondents indicated they have had to move away from their community to afford a place to live.
- A number of people expressed concern about becoming homeless.

Housing support services

- 39% of respondents indicated they have accessed some type of housing support service, although several reported relying on informal support networks.

What does a good home look like?

- According to the responses, a good home is one that provides safety, security, affordability, and space for family and community connections, while also being culturally appropriate and adaptable to individual needs. It should be well-maintained, accessible to essential services, and promote a sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Barriers and challenges to obtaining secure housing

- A significant number of people reported experiencing biased, racist, or discriminatory behaviours from real estate agents, landlords, and housing officers.
- Lack of available housing in their community, or near to employment opportunities and schools, was mentioned by several respondents
- For First Nations peoples trying to escape domestic and family violence situations, the need for safe housing and crisis accommodation is critical
- Some individuals noted particular shortage of appropriate housing for people with disability or physical restrictions.

What changes are needed to help you access good housing?

- An analysis of responses revealed the following areas flagged two key areas as critical inclusions in the Our Place Action Plan:
 - Policies that address the specific challenges by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - Strengthening community control over housing solutions will help meet the needs of communities to help improve housing access and affordability.

What do you want the Our Place Action Plan to achieve?

**Better supports
for vulnerable First
Nations peoples**

**Greater access to
affordable culturally
responsive housing**

**Home ownership
opportunities
through inclusive
housing initiatives**

**Address existing
disparities for First
Nations peoples**

Appendix 4: Summary of themes by consultation method

Yarning Circles

- Overcrowding
- Racism
- Culturally safe services
- Cost-of-living
- Supply
- Rental affordability and availability
- Self-determination and shared decision-making
- Supporting those most in need
- Sustainability.

Surveys

- Racism
- Culturally safe services
- Cost-of-living
- Supply
- Home ownership pathways
- Self-determination and shared decision-making
- Supporting those most in need.

Organisational submissions

- Culturally safe services
- Supply
- Home ownership pathways
- Self-determination and shared decision-making
- Structural reforms and governance.
- Sustainability.

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About the Artwork

Embodied design (artwork) by Iscariot Media, a Brisbane-based 100% Aboriginal owned creative and training agency (iscariotmedia.com).

Building on the foundations laid down by the first *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023*, this design moves to an aerial view bringing more depth and perspective to the next phase of action.

This design maps the landscape both physically and conceptually demonstrating the paths forward for communities in Queensland. Through various symbols this design is inspired by the diverse physical environments of our communities, from densely populated urban environments to smaller remote settings where communities gather. From the Torres Strait Islands to the North, the Eastern Coastal regions, the western communities and the built-up areas of southeast Queensland, themes of connection, strength, movement and communication thread across the whole design and become the link between all communities mirroring the themes present within *Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027*.

When we come together to create a stronger and more vibrant environment for our communities, we not only improve the wellbeing of all Queenslanders, but we also inspire positive change that can have far-reaching implications for generations to come.

