

MEDIA RELEASE

A Bold Plan to Address Rough Sleeping in Perth

UnitingCare West (UCW) is taking action in partnership with the City of Perth - on a bold new approach to tackle the rough sleeping crisis in and around the Perth CBD.

Safe Nights is a medium-term proposition to create safe resting spaces for some of the 600 people who sleep rough in and around the Perth CBD each night. It's one component of a whole-of-system, long term approach that is needed to end homelessness in Perth.

UCW believes that this approach is an opportunity to break Perth's rough sleeping crisis in just five years – through reducing the mental and physical trauma experienced by people sleeping rough.

Safe Nights needs community and volunteer groups to work together, so we can provide wrap-around supports that help people rebuild their lives and engage positively with their community.

The model involves refitting unused commercial properties to create respectful and safe areas for people to rest throughout the night. Safe night spaces are not crisis beds or permanent accommodation – they are comfortable and secure facilities to help reduce the stress and hyper-vigilance people experience when sleeping on the street.

UCW Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Hunt says an action-based approach is needed now to tackle homelessness, which must complement and strengthen the whole-of-system efforts led by the WA Alliance to End Homelessness through the 10 Year [WA Strategy to End Homelessness](#).

“As a foundation member of the WA Alliance to End Homelessness, UCW is committed to ending homelessness through a collaborative approach.

“We know that providing affordable and secure housing with a system of supports – a ‘housing first approach’ – can be complemented by models such as *Safe Nights* which support people to overcome barriers, helping people to get back on their feet sooner”, Ms Hunt said.

Ms Hunt says it's time to be bold and to take action.

“Safe and stable housing is a human right and it lies at the heart of the solution to ending homelessness. But homelessness doesn't sleep, we need to be compassionate and act immediately.

“We must be bold. We must be inventive and courageous. We must be willing to try new approaches to help improve wellbeing for the people who are doing it tough”, says Ms Hunt.

The *Safe Nights* model is designed alongside an expansion of outreach services and extended day-time engagement services, creating a 24/7 system of support for people experiencing crisis.

UCW challenges the perception that homelessness cannot be solved. We believe it can.



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The [Salvation Army Melbourne's Project 614 Night Café](#) is an example of a safe night space in action.

For more information on *Safe Nights* visit: www.unitingcarewest.org.au

