

Memo to the Movement

To: The Australian Advance to Zero Homelessness Movement
From: The AAEH
Date: 29 July 2022
Subject: Update on the process for replacing the VI-SPDAT

Dear Advance to Zero Colleague,

Welcome to the second of our Memos to the Movement series, where we provide updates on the efforts to end homelessness and the development of the tools and methodology being used in Australia. We encourage you to share these with your colleagues and to urge them to sign up for direct updates from the AAEH [here](#).

Future of the VI-SPDAT in Australia

Consistent data collection is an essential part of [ending homelessness](#), and the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool, or VI-SPDAT, has been an essential part of the [Advance to Zero](#) Movement in Australia. The VI-SPDAT is a tool that is used to better understand the housing and support needs of individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness. Further information about it can be found in the fact sheets available on our website [here](#).

The value that this consistent data collection provides across the country was demonstrated in the [Ending Homelessness in Australia: An Evidence and Policy Deep Dive](#) report prepared by the [Centre for Social Impact](#) and released early in 2022.

As set out in the [first of these Memos to the Movement](#), OrgCode, the creators of the VI-SPDAT, have [indicated](#) they will cease their ongoing support for the use of the tool in the USA. As a result, OrgCode and the AAEH have decided to develop a new and updated version of the tool for use in Australia. To that end, earlier this year we conducted a VI-SPDAT survey that identified some changes for us to consider, including some updates to some of the questions and suggestions regarding renaming the tool.

Introducing the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool

As a result, and after a series of additional consultations, we have decided to **cease support for the use of the VI-SPDAT in Australia by no later than 30 June 2023**. By this date we intend to have a new, revised version of the tool developed. Based on consultations to date, we've decided to call the tool the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool or AHVTT (pronounced ahh-vit, slightly less of a mouthful).

We are working with OrgCode to develop a testing version of the tool which will be used to conduct focus groups across Australia with:

- Service delivery and front-line staff
- Participants with lived experience

- First Nations peoples as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

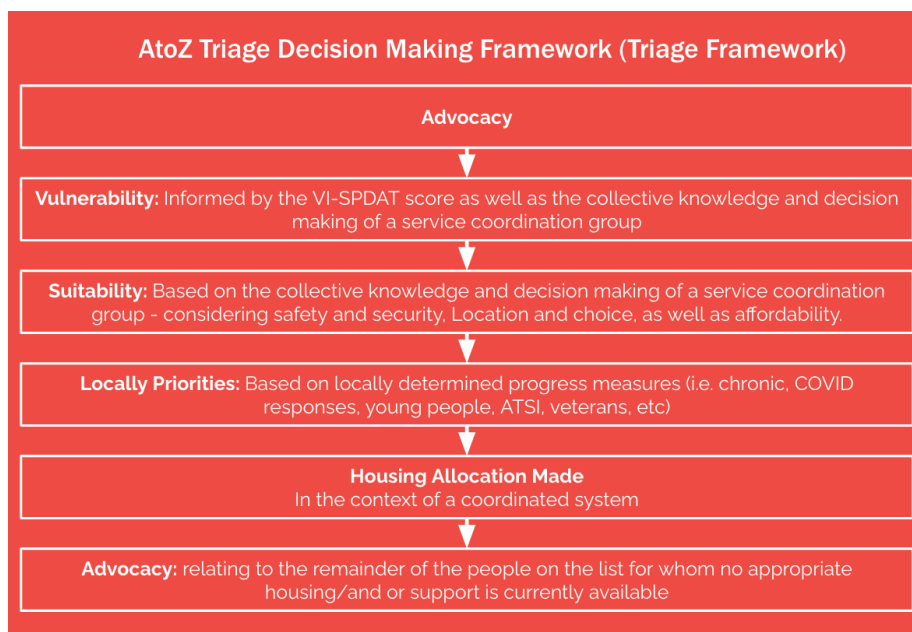
This will then inform how the new tool will be amended and tested for use in our Australian communities.

New support resources

This will also inform the development of new training resources and supporting material for the use of the tool with specific population groups, and in particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We know there is more that needs to be done to improve the cultural appropriateness of [homelessness response systems](#) and we are working on an Advance to Zero Campaign Statement of Intent regarding this. If you are keen to be involved in this, please get in touch [here](#).

Triage Framework

One supporting resource that we have developed to assist with the use of the VI-SPDAT and eventually the AHVTT in Australia is the following “Advance to Zero Triage Decision Making Framework”. This Triage Framework is to help facilitate people’s access to housing, healthcare and support through service coordination. We’ve developed this because the housing systems in Australia and the USA are very different. In Australia, the AAEH has never advised the use of the tool to decide who gets access to housing. It is and should be used to assist in decision-making regarding vulnerability, housing and supports required. We encourage communities to consider this framework and adapt it for use in their local efforts to end homelessness.



Our Zero Homelessness Summit

With our inaugural [Zero Homelessness Summit](#) coming up in October this year – with the CEO of OrgCode Iain de Jong attending in person – we intend to use this opportunity to have some in-person workshops regarding the new tool. More information on the focus groups will be circulated as these are developed. If you wish to get involved in any of these focus groups, please get in touch [here](#). We hope to see you there!

We will continue to provide updates via our newsletter and future memos. We welcome any questions, feedback or offers of assistance to support the ongoing development of the AHVTT, training resources, and other tools associated with ending homelessness.

Sincerely,

David Pearson - CEO, AAEH