

Fact sheet: Advance to Zero (AtoZ) databases

How real-time data helps communities end homelessness

Last updated: Jul 18, 2025

Audience: National – for anyone seeking information about the current Advance to Zero (AtoZ) database setup across Australia. Not specific to the AAEH AtoZ database.


What is an Advance to Zero database?

An **Advance to Zero (AtoZ) database** is a secure, locally managed system that helps communities respond to homelessness in real time. While different versions of these databases exist across Australia, they all share a common goal: to support person-centered, data-driven efforts to end homelessness.

Each database enables the creation of a **by-name list** – a real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in a community, with their consent. But these systems do more than just list names. They provide tools to:

- Match people to housing and support
- Track progress over time
- Improve coordination between services
- Understand what's working and where the gaps are
- Advocate for the resources and systems needed to drive change.

An AtoZ database helps communities see what's happening, act together and measure progress towards ending homelessness – one person and one community at a time.

 A **by-name list (BNL)** is a locally managed, person-specific list that tracks individuals' housing needs and outcomes over time. It enables communities to see and respond to homelessness in real time – the essential first step to ending it.



Ending homelessness in a place-based way

Every AtoZ-aligned database supports the shared goal of ending homelessness, but the systems used vary between states and communities. That's because:

- Each state delivers homelessness services differently
- Local data laws, housing systems and partnerships vary
- Communities need tools that reflect how things work locally.

Each state or territory manages its data separately, in line with local governance, privacy and service delivery arrangements.

Despite these differences, all AtoZ-aligned databases follow common principles:

- Person-centred
- Consent-based
- Collaborative
- Outcome-focused.

What does an AtoZ database do?

An AtoZ database stores two main types of information:

1. **By-name list data:** Personal details, history and support needs of people experiencing homelessness (with informed consent)
2. **Triage tool data:** Collected using the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT), a standardised assessment of need and vulnerability.

This data is collected and entered by trained local service providers in communities who are participating in Advance to Zero. It's used to:

- Triage support
- Track housing outcomes
- Improve service delivery
- Inform advocacy and planning.

💡 The **Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT)** is a standardised survey used by homelessness services to understand a person's needs and level of vulnerability. It helps services triage support and provides data to inform local planning and advocacy.

Database arrangements by state/territory

While the AAEH offers a nationally supported AtoZ database platform, different states and territories use different systems – all aligned with the AtoZ approach.

State/territory	System	Access or coordination
ACT/NT/TAS	AAEH AtoZ database	Available through AAEH on a case-by-case basis – contact AAEH to discuss (info@aaeh.org.au)
NSW	AAEH AtoZ database (also called the BNL 3.0)	Available through End Street Sleeping Collaboration (ESSC) (enquiries@endstreetsleeping.org)
QLD	CSnet database	Available through local AtoZ community backbone organisation (admin.atoz@micahprojects.org.au)
SA	AAEH AtoZ database	Available through AAEH (info@aaeh.org.au)
VIC (metro)	Infoxchange	Available through Launch Housing (info@launchhousing.org.au)
VIC (regional)	AAEH AtoZ database	Available through AAEH (info@aaeh.org.au)
WA	AAEH AtoZ database	Available through AAEH (info@aaeh.org.au)

Privacy and data protection

All AtoZ databases prioritise the dignity, safety and privacy of the people they support by ensuring:

- Information is collected and shared only with informed consent
- Access is restricted to trained users from authorised organisations
- Data is securely stored and backed up in Australia.

Importantly, people experiencing homelessness own their own data. They control what information they share, which organisations can see it and whether they want to be removed at any time. Any data used for public advocacy or reporting is fully de-identified and aggregated so individuals can't be recognised.

Costs

Each state has its own cost and access arrangements depending on the system used. Please refer to the table above for information on access.

Learn more

- Contact us at info@aaeh.org.au.
- Join the **AtoZ Data Community of Practice** for support and updates.
- Talk to your [local lead](#) about your state's approach to the database.