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Australian initiative to end homelessness receives international recognition from UN-backed World Habitat Awards

The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) is proud to announce that the Advance to Zero (AtoZ) initiative has been awarded a prestigious [World Habitat Award](#), presented annually in partnership with [UN-Habitat](#). This international recognition highlights the transformative work being done across Australian communities to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping.

This recognition comes at a critical time when homelessness in Australia risks escalating from a crisis to a fully-fledged disaster. Over the holiday period, we saw more councils criminalise homelessness and shift the issue out of sight rather than address its root causes. While there have been some positive investments in housing from the Australian Government, there remains little to no new funding or reforms specifically aimed at ending homelessness. Meanwhile, state governments have continued to make inadequate investments in the solutions needed.

Amidst this crisis, local communities have stepped up, and this award is a significant vote of confidence in their efforts.

The World Habitat Awards celebrate innovative, sustainable solutions that improve lives globally. The AtoZ initiative was selected as one of nine winners out of 111 applicants across 55 countries, showcasing its impact and potential.

AAEH CEO David Pearson expressed gratitude for the award, saying: “Winning a World Habitat Award is an incredible honour for the Advance to Zero movement. It shines a global spotlight on our efforts to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping. This recognition will inspire hope, encourage the local communities to continue doing this hard work and reinforce that homelessness can be ended in Australia.

“We hope this award also leads to greater investment from all levels of government to support the collaborate Housing First approach that Advance to Zero represents and to fund the permanent supportive housing that we know is essential to ending homelessness.



“It is critical that the Albanese Labor Government’s soon-to-be-released National Housing and Homelessness Plan has the ambition to end homelessness – not just manage it better.”

Spokespeople from key AtoZ partners and participating communities also shared their reflections on the award:

George Hatvani, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing (VIC):

“Homelessness is a complex and deeply personal issue, but the Advance to Zero model shows that change is possible. This award highlights how data-driven and community-led approaches can deliver hope and results. We’re proud to be part of this movement to ensure everyone has access to a safe, secure home.”

Mark Phillips, CEO, End Street Sleeping Collaboration (NSW): “The World Habitat Award reflects the strength of partnerships and the commitment of communities across Australia to ending homelessness. Through the AtoZ framework, we are not just addressing rough sleeping – we are building a future where homelessness is rare, brief and once-off.”

Michala McMahon, Director of Practice and Improvement, Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (WA): “The World Habitat Award is evidence of the amazing efforts of Western Australian communities in their commitment to making homelessness rare, brief and once-off. Through the Advance to Zero framework, five WA communities have demonstrated the power of collaboration, data-driven solutions and an unwavering focus on housing justice. This award celebrates the dedication of everyone involved, from local leaders to those with lived experience, who have worked tirelessly to create change and inspire hope for the future.”

Paulina Tapia, Brisbane Zero Coordinator (QLD): “This award acknowledges the dedication and impact of Zero initiatives across Australia in their commitment to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in our communities. In Brisbane, where over 700 individuals and 300 families with children are experiencing homelessness, this collaboration enables us to know each person by name and work to provide the right housing and support. This award also recognises the collective commitment of Australian communities to addressing and solving homelessness.”

Jackie Galloway OAM, Chairperson of Frankston Mornington Peninsula Zero (VIC): “As a proud member of the Advance to Zero movement, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Zero welcomes the World Habitat Award in recognition of our collaborative response to end homelessness.”

David Ireland, Director of World Habitat, said: “AtoZ shows it’s possible to adapt a great methodology for eradicating homelessness to a new context. It proves that communities are best placed to drive local, incremental solutions to end homelessness, they just need the tools to build effective data-driven approaches and the right support from government.”



Australia is in the depths of a homelessness crisis, with over 122,000 people lacking a permanent home. This crisis disproportionately affects First Nations people, who represent 20% of those experiencing homelessness. AtoZ is addressing these challenges by helping local communities implement evidence-based solutions.

The AtoZ initiative works closely with local organisations to create actionable plans, track individuals experiencing homelessness and use data to drive change. Since its inception, AtoZ has housed over 4,000 people and expanded its reach to 29 partner communities.

Collecting and using better data is central to Advance to Zero, and public data dashboards have been created for a number of the communities participating. Links can be found here:

<https://aaeh.org.au/local-communities>

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About the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH):

The Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) is an independent champion and catalyst for ending homelessness in Australia.

We support and amplify community efforts through driving the Advance to Zero movement, developing solutions towards systems change, building a series of allied networks and working in partnership with people with lived experience, to demonstrate that it is possible to make homelessness rare, brief and once-off.

Ultimately, we exist to prevent, reduce and end homelessness in Australia. We bring together individuals, community, business and governments to take action for an end to all homelessness in Australia.

About Advance to Zero (AtoZ):

Advance to Zero (AtoZ) is a groundbreaking national initiative of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) that supports local collaborative efforts to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping – one community at a time.

Using a range of proven approaches from around the world, communities involved with AtoZ are supported not just to address individual instances of homelessness, or even reduce overall homelessness, but to end it altogether. We define an end to homelessness as being rare, brief and once-off.