



Australian Local Government Responses to Public Homelessness

Rochelle Jupp
Supervised by Associate
Professors Emma Henderson
and Julia Dehm

To what extent do state-based human rights regimes give effect to local government laws and policy frameworks relating to public homelessness?

Introduction

What is public homelessness?

A primary form of homelessness where people sleep rough in public spaces.¹

Why is this a problem?

Raises human rights concerns for the:

- right to privacy;²
- right to adequate housing;³
- freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.⁴

Increases in public homelessness often leads to greater police regulation and fines, reinforcing cycles of homelessness.⁵

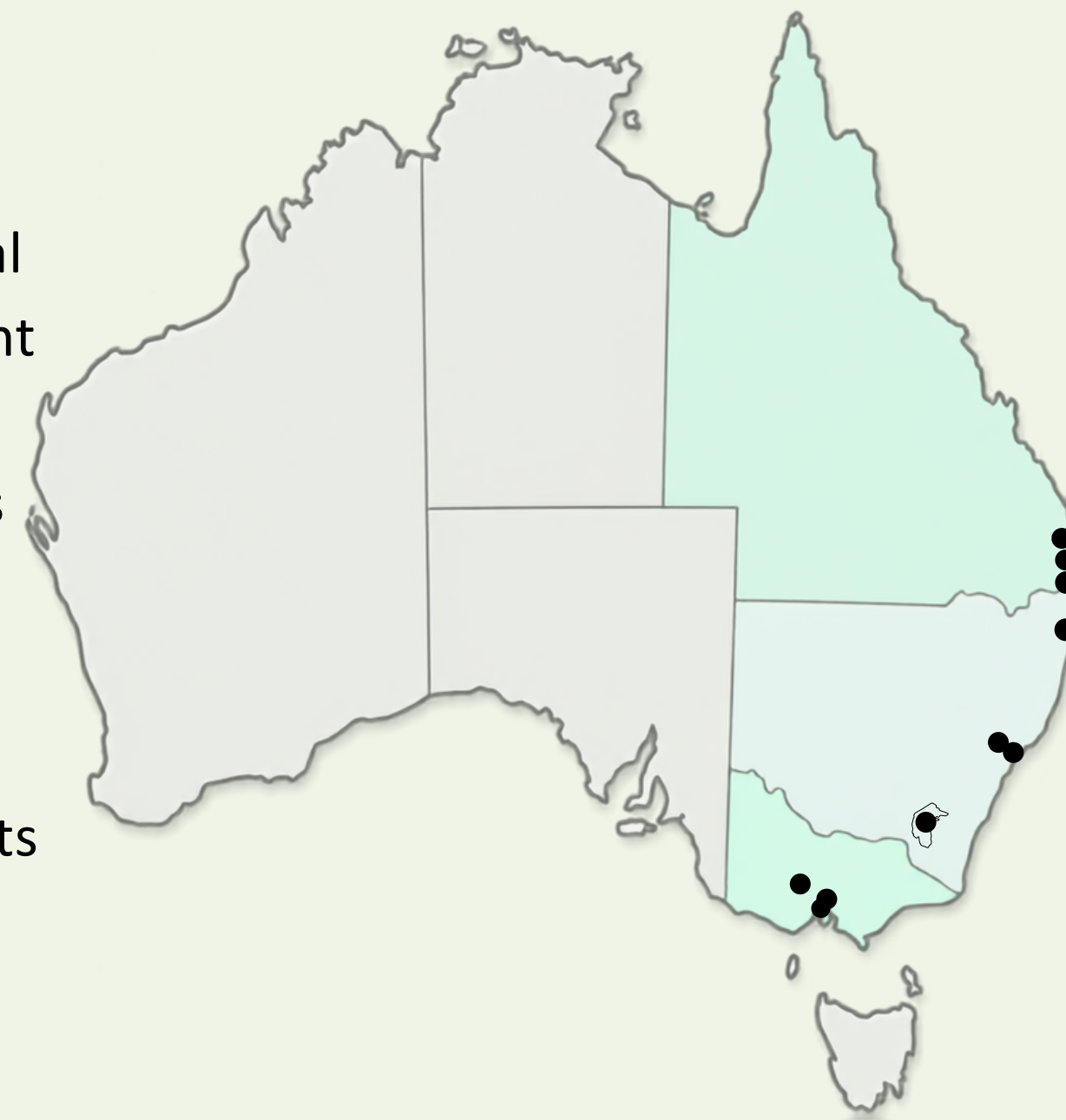
Sub-questions:

1. What approaches have local governments taken to address homelessness?
2. What are the best practices for the development and implementation of local government laws and frameworks?
3. How can local government approaches to public form of homelessness be improved to better meet human rights law standards?

Purpose

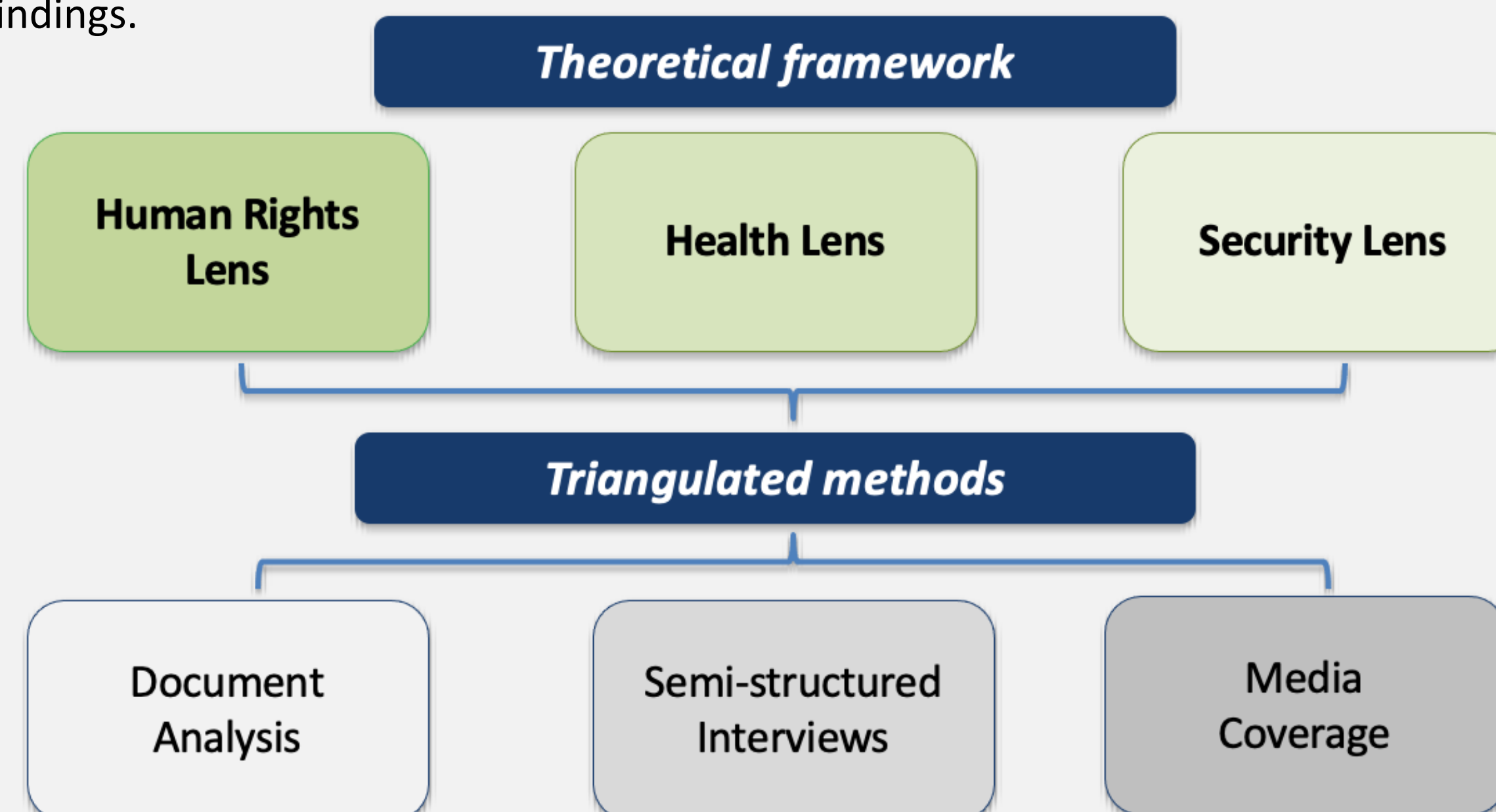
To examine ten local governments, located in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, with the highest engagement with homelessness initiatives and prevalence of homelessness concerns within media coverage.

This research supports knowledge on the relationship between human rights and local governments.



Methods

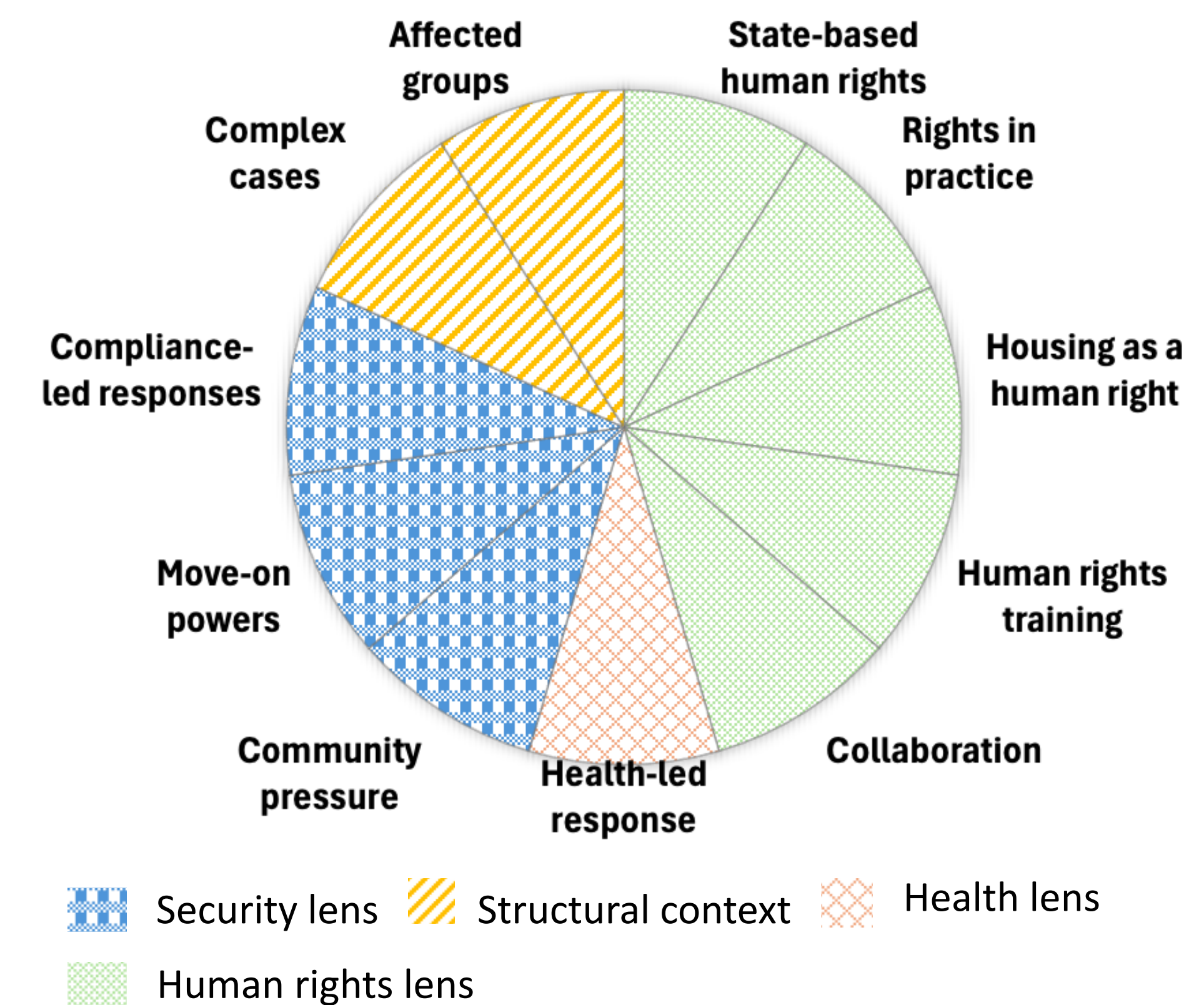
A mixed-methods approach investigates the relationship between local government and human rights using three theoretical lenses to organise the findings.



Key insight

- Public homelessness is increasing since COVID-19.
- Local rights-based approaches are interpreted differently.
- Human rights language is stronger in policy than in practice.
- Local laws prioritise health, safety and amenity concerns.

Interview themes



Significance

- Identifies how human rights frameworks operate in local government practice.
- Provides evidence to inform future homelessness policy.
- Supports more rights-respecting approaches to local governance.