



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

MEDIA RELEASE

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New data shows need for renewed commitment

Data released today shows that more than half of those seeking accommodation in homelessness services were turned away, illustrating that governments need to renew their commitment to fully resourcing specialist homelessness services if we are to halve homelessness by 2020.

Today's figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare show that almost 60% of people who presented to specialist support services over the course of 2010/11 seeking assistance were turned away.

"These figures show that halving homelessness by 2020 will be an enormous challenge. We are on the right track by prioritising homelessness and providing extra resources through the White Paper Implementation, and the inclusion of homelessness and housing at Cabinet level means it remains at the forefront of the political agenda," Homelessness Australia's Chairperson Narelle Clay said.

The report showed that 74% of couples with children who presented seeking accommodation were turned away. The data also showed that the most common reason given by service providers for not being able to provide accommodation was because there were not enough beds.

"These figures show that the number of families turned away is again far too many. At this time of year many of us think about the importance of family, but for families in crisis there are simply not enough beds to meet demand, many will have nowhere to go this Christmas," Ms Clay said.

Homelessness Australia is calling on all political parties to commit to halving homelessness by 2020 and provide long term funding for supported accommodation and new service models for people experiencing homelessness.

"The inability to secure timely access to specialist homelessness services, coupled with the critical shortage of affordable housing contributes to a continuing cycle of homelessness. We need to see a bi-partisan commitment to halving homelessness by 2020 and to fund emerging homelessness services models beyond the life of the national partnership agreement which ends in 2013," Homelessness Australia's CEO Nicole Lawder said.

The data also showed that young people were more likely to be turned away than other groups. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are over-represented among people experiencing homelessness.

"Almost 60% of people turned away were under 20 years of age, this is unacceptable and demonstrates that urgent action is needed to address youth homelessness," Narelle Clay said.

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