



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BUDGET OFFERS SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

The peak body for homelessness welcomes the 2009-2010 Federal Budget's commitment to social and affordable housing, and to the welfare of many Australians vulnerable to homelessness, among them women and children escaping domestic violence, pensioners and young people.

The Budget fulfils the Government's commitment to the single largest investment in public housing in recent history. It also confirms the commitment of Federal, state and territory governments to halving homelessness by 2020 through the Homelessness National Partnership and the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

"If these measures are developed and implemented as ongoing partnerships with the homelessness sector, and other social services, then they will make significant inroads toward reducing the personal and social costs of homelessness, even as homeless numbers rise with the economic downturn", Executive Officer Simon Smith said.

Homelessness Australia welcomes additional funding for Emergency Relief services provided by charities. "Many Australians made jobless and homeless by recession will not have access to basic necessities as a result. As economic downturn worsens, ongoing need for this service must be continually assessed", Mr Smith said.

Homelessness Australia also welcomes the increase in pension payments. The increase will alleviate the chronic poverty experienced by many older Australians at risk of homelessness, however Mr Smith expressed concern that "single parents appear to miss out on the increase".

Homelessness Australia welcomes confirmation of significant new investments in Indigenous health, employment, community governance and support to members of the Stolen Generations.

The National Partnership to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children will provide support to women and children made homeless by domestic violence, for example through access to a specialist national telephone crisis service.

Investment in the National Child Protection Framework will fund pilot projects in best practice services for children, among them many who will be at increased risk of homelessness as a result of abuse, neglect and involvement with the state care system.

The Jobs and Training Compact, and Compact with Young Australians, have the potential to support positive outcomes for Australians experiencing homelessness, but must include specific measures to respond to this diverse group of people.

"Through these varied reforms, the Government affirms a commitment to work toward reducing homelessness as outlined in the White Paper", Mr Smith said.

"On Budget Night, 105,000 Australians are homeless. There are positive commitments in this Budget to suggest this group of marginalised Australians have not been left out in the cold once again. However there is much work yet ahead to reduce this number."

For further information and comment: Simon Smith, Executive Officer, 0418 452 830