



MEDIA RELEASE

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Homelessness – it's not who you think!

National Homeless Person's Week begins NEXT MONDAY, 4 AUGUST. Events around the country will challenge the stigma that surrounds homelessness, and give ordinary Australians an opportunity to take practical steps toward a future free of homelessness.

FACT: One in every 42 children under the age of five accessed a homelessness service with a parent or guardian in 2006-2007.

FACT: On any given night, 450 people across the country are turned away from refuges because every bed is full.

FACT: The single largest group of people who experience homelessness are women escaping domestic violence.

There is no "typical" homeless person. Children, women, families, young people and the elderly were among the 189,000 Australians – 69,000 of them under 18 - who used homelessness support services in 2006-2007.

Homeless Person's Week, held annually in the first week of August, puts homelessness where it belongs: not swept out of sight but at the front and centre of public attention.

Events this year include BBQs, book launches, forums, photographic exhibitions, morning teas and public consultations. For a full calendar of events across the country visit www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au.

"These events are an opportunity to learn more about homelessness – its causes, consequences, and what can be done to resolve this national crisis", Homelessness Australia Executive Officer Simon Smith said today.

"Homelessness is a national shame, but one that can be resolved with concerted action from government and from local communities. Homeless Person's Week is a chance to learn about and support the work of services for people who are homeless in your community," said Mr Smith.

With the reform of Australia's response to homelessness in train through a White Paper process, Homeless Person's Week 2008 is an ideal opportunity to add your name to the growing number of Australians who believe that the homelessness can be ended in this country.

For further information and comment:

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