



Homelessness Australia

*Creating a framework for ending homelessness*

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Bi-partisan Commitment Needed**

**Data released today shows that more than half of those seeking accommodation in homelessness services were turned away, illustrating why we need a bi-partisan commitment to halving homelessness by 2020.**

Today's figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows over 60% of people who presented to specialist support services over the course of the 2008/09 seeking assistance were turned away.

"These figures show that halving homelessness by 2020 will be an enormous challenge but we are on the track by prioritising homelessness and providing extra resources through the White Paper Implementation, these are welcome" Homelessness Australia's Chairperson Narelle Clay said.

The report showed that 80% 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. This was particularly the case for families with children.

"These figures show that the number of families turned away is again far too many. We know that families are the most difficult to accommodate because there are simply not enough beds" Homelessness Australia's Policy and Research Officer, Travis Gilbert 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. We know we can end homelessness and our message to both parties is, don't stop now" Mr Gilbert said.

"The data also showed that while turn away rates were very high, the small number of people not accommodated relative to the total expressed demand showed a small increase in total places available each day could have a big impact in terms of reducing unmet demand" Narelle Clay said.

For further information and comment, please contact:

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