



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

MEDIA RELEASE

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WINNERS AND LOSERS IN DEFICIT BUDGET

The peak body for homelessness welcomes commitments to social and affordable housing and significant new investment in mental health that will benefit many Australians vulnerable to homelessness.

Homelessness Australia welcomes the significant funding boost of an additional \$2.2 billion for mental health programs and services, including \$1.5 billion for new initiatives.

“The link between homelessness and mental health issues is well established. We hope that a significant number of Australians who are experiencing homelessness or who are in insecure housing will benefit from this welcomed new investment in mental health programs and services. The balance between money for early intervention and money for people with chronic mental illnesses is welcome. We hope that much of this investment goes to the community services sector.” Homelessness Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, Nicole Lawder said.

Homelessness Australia is pleased with increased funding for new apprenticeships and traineeships and the boost to funding for literacy and numeracy programs.

“Homelessness Australia welcomes new funding announcements for apprenticeships and traineeships and the boost in funding for literacy and numeracy programs. Both of these have the potential to benefit people experiencing homelessness, particularly young people” Homelessness Australia’s Chairperson Narelle Clay said.

We are at the same time, disappointed that our calls to increase income support payments have not been heeded.

“In our election platform we called for an increase of \$45 per week in income support payments such as Newstart and Youth Allowance and an increase of \$15 per week to the maximum rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance to help vulnerable Australians manage cost of living pressures. It is disappointing that these measures have not been taken on board and in fact some may face reduced payments. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Australians on income support to meet the cost of weekly rents particularly in our major cities. Young people are some of the most disadvantaged in this community and the large number who are unemployed and who become homeless will continue if they remain on low incomes.” Homelessness Australia’s Chairperson Narelle Clay said.

Homelessness Australia also welcomes the on-going investment in homelessness services and the \$162 million allocated to the construction of new social housing properties in 2011/12.



“Coupled with the significant allocation of \$131.5 million in funding for new homelessness programs and services, the allocation of \$162 million in funding for the construction of new social housing that will add significantly to the housing options available to people who are experiencing homelessness but we need to see new funding for both beyond 2013 if we are to meet the homelessness reduction targets” Nicole Lawder said.

Homelessness Australia is pleased that promised funding for housing and homelessness initiatives will be delivered given the strong focus on ensuring that the budget is returned to surplus by 2013.

For further information and comment, please contact:

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**Narelle Clay AM, Chairperson, Homelessness Australia, 02 –42965019 till 12.30pm on 11/5 or
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