



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

MEDIA RELEASE

T 02 6247 7744 F 02 6247 1649 E media@homelessnessaustralia.org.au

For immediate release 22/02/2011

NRAS restored

Homelessness Australia congratulates the Federal Government on overturning their earlier decision to cut the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) as part of funding reparations post-Queensland flooding and other natural disasters.

The role of the Government, The Greens, and community sector agencies in discussing and changing the original decision is to be acknowledged.

“NRAS is an important part of the Government’s housing strategy, and its commitment to reduce homelessness. Addressing the housing crisis in Australia requires a long term effort and we are pleased the cuts to NRAS have been avoided. Continuing to deliver on affordable housing is even more important following the floods and cyclone,” Narelle Clay, Chairperson of Homelessness Australia said following the government’s decision not to go ahead with NRAS cuts.

There was an outcry in the housing and homelessness sectors following an earlier decision to cut NRAS. Homelessness Australia was one of many organisations that voiced their views against the NRAS cuts to the government.

The restoration of NRAS to its original levels will provide a confidence boost to housing groups and the industry for an important program, which is designed to increase private investment in low-rent housing. “This is especially important at this time of growing affordable housing stress for many Australians,” Ms Clay said.

Media release ends.

Contacts:

Narelle Clay AM, Chairperson, Homelessness Australia, (02) 4229 9739 or 0412 999 960

Nicole Lawder, Homelessness Australia Chief Executive Officer mobile 0404 037 177 or (02) 6247 7744



Notes for editors:

Our organisation

Homelessness Australia is the national peak body representing more than 1500 providers of direct services for people experiencing homelessness and working to achieve our aim of creating a framework to end homelessness.

For more information, please visit www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au

The numbers

- On any given night approximately 105,000 Australians have no safe and secure place to call home.
- 56% of those were male, 44% female.
- Of those, 44,000 (43%) are under 25 and 12,000 are children aged 0-12.
- Evidence indicates that homelessness is increasing among children and families and older Australians.
- Just under 205,000 people received support from specialist homelessness services in 2008/09. Of those, just over 79,000 were children.
- 1 in 39 Australian children aged 0-4 spent time in a homelessness service in 2008/09.
- As at January 2010, 233,171 Australians were on social housing waiting lists.
- The National Housing Supply Council estimates that the shortage of affordable housing dwellings in Australia has reached 493,000.

The causes

- Escaping domestic and family violence is the most often cited reason given by women for seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services in 2008/09.
- Family breakdown was the most often cited reason given by young people.
- Financial crisis and being unable to meet housing costs were the most often cited reasons given by men.
- People leaving institutions such as child protection, foster care, mental health settings and prisons are at a much higher risk of becoming homeless than other Australians.
- The shortage of affordable housing is a cause of homelessness as well as being a major factor preventing people from being re-housed quickly.

The solutions

- Provide funding for an additional 220,000 affordable houses by 2020.
- Extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for a further five years from 2013 with a minimum of \$849 million.
- Increase non-pension income support payments by \$45 per week (which needs to be indexed).
- Increase funding for early intervention programs that have been proven to work.
- Support the homelessness sector workforce to ensure clients achieve their best outcomes.