



**9<sup>th</sup> May 2007**

## **Budget funding welcome but more needs to be done**

The Australian Federation of Homelessness Organisations (AFHO) welcomes the funding to address homelessness in yesterday's Budget but this is only the tip of the iceberg.

For example, the Federal Government has decided to continue funding the Reconnect program for a further four years. This program is targeted at young people at risk of homelessness.

Around 35,000 young people aged 12-25 are homeless every night. The Reconnect program only reaches about 6,000 people each year.

"While funding in last night's Budget will ensure Reconnect services can continue, it will not enable new communities to join the Reconnect program meaning many young people will not be able to gain access to the service", AFHO Executive Officer, Gordon Melsom said.

Every night around 100,000 people are without adequate shelter. The largest factor contributing to homelessness in Australia is domestic and family violence. Many of these people are forced to stay with family and friends because they cannot access the available services.

AFHO believes a three-pronged approach, together with adequate funding, would provide a comprehensive solution to homelessness. The first is to ensure adequate mechanisms are in place to prevent homelessness. This would include repealing the 8 week non-payment period under the Government's welfare to work legislation, which leads to as many as one-in-three people losing their accommodation.

The second approach is to properly fund crisis intervention. Current services are unable to cope with the demand. "More than 450 people who try to access services tonight will be turned away", said Mr Melsom.

The third approach is to find pathways out of homelessness. This includes more places in public housing and mechanisms to support access to private rental markets in areas where public housing is inadequate.

### **For further information:**

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