

To: Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of Australia

Cc: Hon Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services

ERO Supplementation Funding

Dear Treasurer Frydenberg,

We are writing to you asking for equity in treatment of Commonwealth funded community services.

We congratulate the Federal Government for agreeing to pay ERO supplementation for all Commonwealth funded community services. As Australia moves out of the Covid recession this support will better enable federally funded community services to support those most in need.

At this stage homelessness services have not been guaranteed this security in funding. Minister Ruston has indicated this is because homelessness services are funded jointly by the Commonwealth and states and territories via the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, and not directly funded by the Commonwealth.

We note that the 2020-21 Budget included ongoing supplementation funding for services funded via the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, a jointly funded program of the Commonwealth and states, in addition to services directly funded by the Federal Department of Social Services. We seek this equivalent funding arrangement for homelessness services.

We are sure you will agree that the important work done by homelessness services across Australia have never been more vital to the wellbeing of our nation.

The loss of this funding, \$56.7 million in 2019-20, will have a devastating impact on the capacity of homelessness services to support those most at need. They provide critical services supporting those experiencing homelessness and preventing others from becoming homeless.

In 2019-20, services had to turn away 260 people needing assistance each day. Of those who missed out on support, two-thirds were women and girls, many fleeing domestic and family violence.

It is estimated that a funding cut of \$56.7 million would mean a loss of 567 workers in homelessness services and increase turn away rates to approximately 269 per day or an additional 3,458 people missing out on homelessness services each year.

In order to at least maintain existing homelessness service capacity in the face of increased demand, the undersigned organisations urge the Federal Government to recommit to Federal funding of ERO supplementation over the forward estimates.