



MEDIA RELEASE

200 organisations sign on for action on funding black hole for homelessness support

More than 200 of the nation's leading charities and homelessness services have [signed an open letter](#) imploring the Federal Government to plug a \$65 million funding black hole that will see more than 650 homelessness support workers cut while demand for homelessness assistance is soaring.

This \$65 million relates to federal funding for the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation for homelessness services, funded since 2012 to cover wage costs. Current funding to cover these costs expires in June 2023.

Without this funding services will have to cut approximately 650 workers, resulting in more people turned away from homelessness services when they seek help.

In 2020-21 services were already unable to assist 288 people per day, of whom two thirds were women and children, many fleeing domestic and family violence.

The joint letter from Homelessness Australia, National Shelter, the Community Housing Industry Association and ACOSS has been signed by 230 organisations concerned at the devastating impact on vulnerable people. The letter and full list of signatories is available at [this link](#).

Record rent increases over the past couple of years and record low vacancy rates mean homelessness services are already under immense pressure.

Over the past two years rents have risen 28 per cent while incomes have increased by only 5 per cent.

“Demand for homelessness services is surging,” said Kate Colvin, CEO of Homelessness Australia. “Families with full time breadwinners can't find a rental and are living in tents. Homelessness services are turning away women and children fleeing violence who desperately need help because they simply don't have enough workers to respond.

“We are likely to see another rate rise today that will push even more families over the financial cliff, and into homelessness.

“It is untenable that in the midst of our worst ever housing crisis the Government is planning to cut funding, and reduce help to people without a home.

ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie said:

"Homelessness services already raise charitable donations from the public to supplement Government funding to help people without homes.

If the Government doesn't fund the cost of Award wage increases, essential services will have to cut jobs.

“The funding for these 650 jobs runs out in three months and vital community services are now preparing to deliver bad news, both to their women-dominated workforce and also the people they support.

“Of course all of this can still be fixed.

"The Federal Government must urgently lock in this funding to give workers and the people they support certainty about the future.

National Shelter CEO Emma Greenhalgh said:

"It is a perfect storm of high inflation, low wage growth and rising interest rates and people in desperate need of housing and support can't afford cuts to services.

"The last lines of defence for people in housing stress are already under enormous pressure. The Government has the chance to show it is serious about the housing crisis by guaranteeing the jobs of 650 people on the frontline of supporting our most vulnerable."

Community Housing Industry Association CEO Wendy Hayhurst said:

“Recent research shows that 640,000 low income households in Australia were in rental stress or homeless. There is simply not enough social and affordable rental housing to meet people's needs.

"When we can't help, it means more and more people turn to already overstretched homelessness services. It's not too late to make sure we don't lose any of these vitally important workers”.

Ends

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