

7 August 2023

WAKE UP CALL ON HOMELESSNESS

BeyondHousing supported more than 3000 people who were either experiencing homeless or at risk of becoming homeless across Ovens Murray and Goulburn regions in the past financial year.

The majority were singles (46%), a quarter were families, and 20% were over the age of 50. The three leading reasons for people seeking support were family violence, a shortage of affordable housing, and mental health issues.

BeyondHousing CEO Celia Adams said the continued high demand for homelessness services should be a wake-up call for urgent action and continued investment in proven programs that support people without a home.

"This is the most severe housing crisis in living memory, and it's not merely about figures, but real people in critical need," Celia said.

"People are being pushed to the brink as rental vacancies hit record lows, and prices soar."

This week, during Homelessness Week (7-13 August), BeyondHousing will join a growing chorus of advocates across the country to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness, and the solutions needed to end homelessness.

"We need investment in programs based on Housing First principles, as well as a sustainable pipeline of social housing is vital if we're serious about ending homelessness," she said.

According to the 2021 Census data released in March, the highest number of people experiencing homelessness were in Greater Shepparton (418), followed by Wodonga (215), and Wangaratta (125) people.

Despite the data showing a 13.2% increase in people experiencing homeless, the number seeking support declined slightly.

"This is a worrying trend that can be attributed to people choosing to stay in unsafe, overcrowded, or unaffordable accommodation just to keep a roof over their head," Celia said.

"There's just nowhere for people to go. We need both emergency accommodation and long-term rental solutions."

There are more than 2500 people currently on the Victorian Housing Register waitlist from the Ovens Murray and Goulburn region and half of these are considered priority applicants.

"This nation has the means to end homelessness. What we need now is the collective will to make it happen."

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MEDIA RELEASE



About: BeyondHousing is the largest community housing organisation within the Goulburn and Ovens Murray regions of Victoria. BeyondHousing is the main entry point for the homelessness system and provides a range of supports for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. If you or anyone you know is experiencing or at risk of homelessness, call 1800 825 955.

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