

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3 May, 2024

### **SHARP RISE IN FAMILY VIOLENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Beyond Housing has seen a sharp 9% increase in demand for support services from women facing homelessness due to family violence.

Since July, Beyond Housing has already seen 375 people, or 1 in 10 presentations, seek help, compared with 344 in 2022-2023.

The numbers are particularly stark in Shepparton, with 176 people citing family violence as the reason for seeking either emergency housing or other support.

Wodonga has recorded 96 cases, Wangaratta 73, and 30 in Seymour.

These alarming statistics underscore the broader national conversation on the need for enhanced support and resources for victims of family violence.

Beyond Housing CEO Celia Adams said the organisation faced unprecedented demand for crisis and emergency housing.

"We often hear 'why don't they just leave?', and our response is 'and go where?' Victim survivors should not have to choose between a roof over their heads and safety," Ms Adams said.

"With wait times for social and public housing at critical levels and crisis accommodation virtually non-existent, we need the government to step up now," she said.

Ms Adams said the federal government's \$1 billion package announced this week must also include legal services, specialist FV supports, material aid, and immediate access to crisis accommodation together with a pathway to a permanent home for victim-survivors.

"We have to protect women and children escaping family violence with safe spaces to stay."

This local data highlights the broader challenges identified in a recent Council to Homeless Persons submission to the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan, which revealed that nearly 46,000 Victorians cited family violence as a factor in their homelessness in the previous year. The submission stresses the critical shortage of adequate housing for women and children fleeing family violence, pointing to an alarming trend of increased homelessness following support interventions and exceedingly long waits for social and public housing.

“We need a significant policy shift to address this growing emergency and streamline support for the most vulnerable, ensuring no one is left without safe refuge,” Ms Adams said.

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*For more information or interviews contact:*

*Sue Masters*

*0448 505 517*