



4 August 2014

National Homeless Persons Week

Today marks the beginning of National Homeless Persons Week aimed at raising awareness about the issue of homelessness which affects over 100,000 Australians every night.

In NSW alone over 28,000 people experience homelessness and contrary to the stereotype, 60% of these people are under the age of 35.

There are many factors which can contribute to homelessness including domestic and family violence, job loss, financial difficulties, relationship or family breakdown and a lack of affordable housing.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is one of the largest providers of homeless services in NSW. In line with the NSW Government's Going Home Staying Home reforms, the Society has a focus on early intervention and prevention; assisting people back into housing as quickly as possible; and importantly providing wrap-around services to ensure people can maintain their tenancy.

This year the Society has been advocating for action on the housing affordability crisis, a leading cause of disadvantage in Australia.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW President, Ray Reynolds explains that across the State, in 420 communities, Society members visit almost 600 people in crisis every day. This he says, places the Society in a unique position to understand the real impacts of the housing affordability crisis.

"As we visit people in their homes to assist them financially and with emotional support, the story they are telling us is that unaffordable housing and rents are putting enormous pressure on their ability to keep their heads above water."

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO, Michael Perusco says that ensuring more affordable housing is vital if people are to avoid becoming homeless or break out of the cycle quickly.

"Improving access to safe, secure, affordable and well-located housing means better outcomes in areas such as health, education, employment and community inclusion," he says.

Media: Yolanda Saiz | Yolanda.saiz@vinnies.org.au | 0417 446 430