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### **New alliance to help address homelessness in Eastern Murrumbidgee in 2015**

The issue of homelessness in the Eastern Murrumbidgee region will receive a boost in support services with the formation of a new Alliance which includes the St Vincent de Paul Society as the lead agent and other valued partners including Mission Australia, Sister's Housing Enterprises, Tumut Regional Family Services, Argyle Community Housing and Intereach Ltd.

The Alliance will operate across the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Wagga Wagga and Tumut including a mobile service to the Coolamon, Junee, Lockhart, Gundagai and Tumbarumba LGA's.

St Vincent de Paul Society Support Services Manager, Pat Fogarty explains that the Alliance partners are committed to working co-operatively to deliver integrated responses for people of the region who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

"Working in partnership with mainstream health and community services, real estate agents and housing providers, the Alliance will deliver locally based services that take a holistic approach in building sustainable outcomes for clients," she said

The new Alliance is a result of the *Going Home Staying Home* reforms, which have also resulted in an additional \$127,000 of funding for the Eastern Murrumbidgee area in the 2014/15 financial year.

Alliance members will provide a 'no-wrong-door approach' for clients, meaning that regardless which agency a client makes initial contact with, their needs will be assessed and a process initiated. People who are at risk of homelessness will be supported to remain safely housed, while those in a crisis situation will be provided with safe accommodation to meet their needs and supported to move into sustainable long term housing.

In addition to this, a significant pool of Brokerage Funding has been incorporated by government into the funding package. Brokerage Funding acts to assist clients to address any problems or barriers that prevent them from accessing or maintaining housing.

The Eastern Murrumbidgee Alliance will meet on a monthly basis with the first meeting taking place today.

If you are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness please contact the Alliance on 02 5942 3555 or 0418 681 108.

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