



MEDIA RELEASE

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More older women bear the brunt of homelessness

Telephone: (02) 9568 0262
Facsimile: (02) 9550 9383

Email: vinnies@vinnies.org.au
Website: www.vinnies.org.au
Donation Hotline: 13 18 12

Women in Australia are seeking homelessness services at rates more than double those of women in the UK, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW President Denis Walsh announced as he launched the 2016 Winter Appeal.

Mr Walsh said the statistics were shocking and that Vinnies was working hard to meet the demand from women and children for support and services.

“It is devastating that 59 per cent of Australians seeking help from homelessness services are women. That’s a significantly higher rate than the UK’s 26 per cent and the USA’s 38 per cent,” said Mr Walsh.

“What is even more chilling is the fact that the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness is women over 55. This totally dispels the myth that homelessness only affects younger men.”

Members of the Society regularly provide a hand-up to women experiencing disadvantage and homelessness.

“We are hearing more and more stories from women over 50 who, after many years of loyal service, are made redundant and can no longer afford to pay high private rentals. These women are suddenly plunged into circumstances they thought were unimaginable – unable to find work or a home, they are forced to live off their life savings until they run dry. Then, in these desperate circumstances, they approach us for help.”

Women and girls make up 59 per cent of homelessness services clients. 36 per cent of these women have been affected by domestic and family violence and give this as the number one reason why they are seeking support from Vinnies and other specialist homelessness services.

Dianne Lucas, Acting CEO, said that in the 2014-15 financial year the Society provided \$21 million worth of financial assistance.

“We assisted over 400,000 people, provided over 820,000 meals and close to 258,000 bed nights,” she said.

“It is heart-breaking that the numbers we serve are increasing every year. We rely on the generosity of the community. Without their compassion and financial contribution during our Winter Appeal we would not be able to help men, women and children remain warm and fed and in a safe place.”

Please donate to the Vinnies 2016 Winter Appeal and help us continue to change lives every day.

To make a generous donation visit vinnies.org.au or call 13 18 12.

News grabs and interviews available.

Media contact: Phyllis Sakinofsky | Phyllis.sakinofsky@vinnies.org.au | 0417 446 430