



**March 19, 2018**

**Increase social housing to help address homelessness issue**

The number of homeless people on the Gold Coast has risen from 1,340 in 2011 to 1,708 in 2016, according to the latest census data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

In response, St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland has called on the government to increase its support for the homeless through social housing and additional services.

The call comes in the wake of recent data showing there's more than 2500 more homeless people in the Sunshine State than there was five years ago.

Recent 2016 census data from the ABS highlighted an increase in the number of South East Queenslanders who are homeless, with significant rises in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Logan and Moreton Bay.

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland Chief Executive Officer Peter Maher said he's troubled by the increase.

"It's appalling that as we are getting wealthier as a nation, we can't provide people with food and shelter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," he said.

"As Australians we should be pretty embarrassed and asking what is the government doing about it?"

The CEO said one strategy is to require new urban development to commit to offering an element of support to the less fortunate through low-cost housing.

"I think regulations need to be put in place that require developers to help provide solutions to the homeless issue," he said.

"We are providing up to \$2 million in supported accommodation across the state but it's still not enough – we need new collaborative solutions between government, corporations and not-for-profits."

Mr Maher said a key focus of the work of the Society is helping people sustain tenancies for the long term, and that additional support networks are needed to address contributing factors to homelessness, such as unemployment, mental health and domestic violence.

"We just can't put people into housing and then forget about them," he said, "We have to work with people to sustain their tenancies and I think more planning and funding needs to go into that."



**St Vincent de Paul Society**

QUEENSLAND

*good works*

Mr Maher said the Society has invested heavily in supported housing to give a ‘hand up’ to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness – one of the key fundraising aims of their annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout.

“We’re putting vital funds raised by this event into housing solutions and are calling on government, corporate and community members to get behind us and help turn around these statistics.”

**ENDS**

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