

CHP state election platform 2014

Investing to end homelessness in Polwarth

There are over 22,000 people in Victoria experiencing homelessness on any given night, and between 2006 and 2011, the number of people who were homeless in Victoria increased 31 per cent (ABS, 2011).

In the electorate of Polwarth there were 95 people experiencing homelessness on Census night, up -29 per cent from 2006.

This number is headed in the wrong direction but international evidence shows that it is possible to turn this trend around.

This election CHP is calling on both major parties to make the investments in housing and support services that will help end homelessness in Victoria for good.

Key investments include:

- **Leaving care housing guarantee** to prevent homelessness for young people leaving out of home care. **\$16.6m** over four years
- **Rapid rehousing program** to help 5,287 people a year in crisis accommodation, staying temporarily with other households and other temporary accommodation to get back in to housing fast and build the supports they need to remain housed. **\$118m** over 4 years
- **Permanent supportive housing program** to secure long term affordable housing for 100 people a year who have experienced long term homelessness. This proposal would build 50 new dwellings and convert 50 dwellings from the current Transitional Housing Management program each year for four years. **\$54m** over four years.
- An **affordable housing strategy** to increase the supply of low cost, subsidised rental homes for people on very low incomes. **\$800m** over 4 years

Homelessness in Victoria

- Over 22,000 Victorians are homeless on any given night
- Victorian homelessness services work with around 92,000 men, women and children every year.
- Forty percent of women accessing homelessness services are victims of family violence
- Indigenous Victorians are five times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous Victorians.

Women and children fleeing family violence are the majority of clients in the homelessness

Family violence is the leading cause of homelessness in Victoria with nearly one in three people seeking help from homelessness services due to family violence. It is the overwhelming reason women seek assistance from homelessness services. These women have become homeless because it is no longer safe to remain in their home.

Without safe and affordable housing, it is harder for women and children to leave a violent home, or even to keep their housing after the person who uses violence is removed.

As reports of family violence incidents continue to rise, ongoing investments that make sure women and children can secure safe and affordable housing and support is critical.

When there are no jobs, homelessness increases

Unemployment in Victoria is rising. The loss of a job can be a financial disruption for households and financial difficulties were cited as a factor in 47 per cent of people seeking help from homelessness services in 2012-13.

With unemployment rising and the downturn in manufacturing affecting regions such as Geelong and Melbourne's West, services that can both prevent homelessness, and get people back on their feet quickly will be vital to make sure losing a job doesn't mean losing your home.

Building more affordable houses is good for the economy.

Housing construction is a well-known contributor to the Victorian economy. The construction of social housing not only boosts the economy, but pays a social dividend as well. Increasing the supply of well located, affordable housing, combined with the right supports can help reduce the pressure on the hospital system, emergency services such as police and ambulance and the justice system. Social housing is essential infrastructure

The Nation Building Stimulus Package built over 20,000 homes nationwide, generating 14,000 additional jobs and adding \$1.3 in the broader economy for every \$1 spent (KPMG 2011). Investing in social housing makes economic and social sense.