



Media release

9 June 2016

Low-income family asks for community support in calling for more affordable housing options

Today Australian resident and Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) volunteer Christine Thirkell will ask the community to get behind her as she launches a petition calling for more affordable housing opportunities for low-income families.

Ms Thirkell is among the growing number of Australian households struggling to keep up with rising housing costs, and for whom the current private rental market is simply not sustainable.

Ms Thirkell lives with and supports her 13-year old daughter and 73-year old mother who endures a deteriorating heart condition and at times requires full-time care.

Ms Thirkell explained, “An aged pension and Newstart allowance between mum and I gives us enough to make the rent and bills, but that’s before paying for medication, tests and specialists, that aren’t fully covered by Medicare.

“We’re left struggling to make all of our payments each week in order to keep a roof over our heads.

“We’re asking for the community to support us in calling for more affordable housing options, like community housing, for low-income families like ours.” Ms Thirkell added.

CHP CEO Jenny Smith said, “Christine and her family represent one of thousands in Australia that are in need of more affordable housing, but for whom undersupply makes access impossible.

“With a current social housing waiting list of over 200,000 people in Australia, what are the Christines and Katherines to do in the meantime?

“Over 2014-15 more than half (53%) of all Australians needing help from homelessness services did so because of rising rent costs and financial issues. Families are either foregoing necessities like medication and food to pay the rent, or winding up homeless when they can’t,” Ms Smith added.

It is time for Australians to stand together to support all people at risk of homelessness because of inadequate levels of affordable housing.

To add your voice to the call, go to: change.org/rent and change.org/votehome

This petition supports the [Vote Home alliance call for all political parties to commit to ending the housing crisis](#), and making housing affordability and homelessness tier one election issues.

[Ends] (Interview information and contact details on next page)

Media enquiries: contact Eddie Staltari on 0431 638 113 or eddie@chp.org.au

Available for interview:

- Jenny Smith, CEO Council to Homeless Persons and Chair Homelessness Australia
- Christine Thirkell:
 - Sunshine (Victoria) resident and CHP volunteer
 - Cares for her mother full-time when her condition worsens
 - Is unable to maintain employment during this caring period
 - Is one of many in need of community housing; a housing type suitable for low-income or special needs households
 - Has experienced relationship breakdown and homelessness
 - Is fearful her daughter will grow up with no chance of being able to afford rising rental costs