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## Peak calls for 10,000 homes for 10,000 homeless singles

The Victorian peak body for homelessness will today call for the creation of 10,000 dedicated homes specifically catering for single people on low incomes, a measure it says will help vulnerable people currently struggling in rooming houses and private rental, as well as house the 1,092 people sleeping rough in Victoria.

The announcement coincides with national Rental Affordability Index data released today which shows that Melbourne has experienced the greatest decline in rental affordability of any Australian city. The RAI data, produced by National Shelter and SGS Economics and Planning, shows that low income singles in Melbourne are too-often spending all of their income on rent.

The 10,000 homes proposal is part of the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) Pre-Budget submission, and comes in advance of the Victorian Government's affordable housing strategy which is expected by year's end.

"As we speak, 33,000 Victorians are languishing on public housing waiting lists, and over 1,000 people are sleeping on Victoria's streets, and there is currently no real plan as to how we're going to house those people," said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

"We know that a severe shortage of one-bedroom public housing for single people has led to the rise in rough sleeping, and a boom in rooming houses, and a boost in public housing catering to singles is a key solution" she said.

To achieve the 10,000 target, CHP says that the State Government could make better use of surplus Government land, pointing to publicly-owned buildings and vacant land parcels that are currently being prepared for sale on the private market.

"Hundreds of taxpayer owned houses and land parcels are sold off every year which could be used for social benefit," said Ms Smith.

"We'd like to see public assets being used to get people off the streets and into a home, as well as to help people who are living in poverty just to pay the rent," she said.

"New public housing could be built on land earmarked for sale with the dual benefit of creating jobs for the unemployed, or land could be given to Community housing organisations at below market value," she said.

CHP says that current pool of public housing is not well-matched to the overwhelming demand from single people struggling in rooming houses or on the street.

"Most of the public housing in Victoria was built in the 1950s for workers and their families, and today single people are too-often being turned away from homelessness services because there's no suitable housing for them," said Ms Smith.

CHP proposes 10,000 dedicated units for low-income singles over five years, and an ongoing pipeline of 1,000 additional properties annually beyond this period.

CHP says that the Victorian Government has made a number of positive funding announcements in 2016, and that a systematic boost to social housing is the piece of the puzzle that is missing.

The 10,000 homes for 10,000 singles proposal is a key platform of the Council to Homeless Persons' Pre-Budget Submission 2017-18 which will be launched at its AGM today.

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