



Homelessness Week
2017
Action and Innovation

Media release – Sunday 6 August (EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.01 MONDAY 7 AUGUST)

MORE OLDER WOMEN COUCH SURFING AS PRIVATE RENTAL SQUEEZES THEM OUT

Couchsurfing amongst older women has almost doubled in four years, Homelessness Australia (HA) Chair Jenny Smith will reveal at the launch of Homelessness Week on Monday 7 August.

According to Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data analysed by HA, last year 1,618 women aged 50+ presented at homelessness services who were couchsurfing; an 83% rise in four years.

Older women sleeping in cars has also risen drastically, with 75% more women over 50 found to be sleeping in their cars last year compared to 2012-13.

To mark Homelessness Week, Ms Smith, and Dr Catherine Robinson, co-host, and series consultant on SBS TV's 'Filthy Rich and Homeless' will launch the 100,000 Homes campaign (<http://www.endthehousingcrisis.org.au/>), which urges Government to build 100,000 new public and community housing properties over the next five years.

The face of the 100,000 Homes campaign is a woman called Christine, aged 53, mother and former teacher, who found herself sleeping on the floor of a friend's spare room after a marriage breakdown. Christine was not a priority for public housing, and was unable to find a private rental she could afford on a single income.

Homelessness Australia's data analysis shows startling increases in a variety of forms of hidden homelessness, including sleeping in cars, rooming houses, squats and couchsurfing.

"Our housing system is failing the most vulnerable, and the result is rising homelessness," said Ms Smith.

"Homelessness can be fixed by providing adequate housing. 100,000 new public and community homes would make a real difference, housing the elderly, families and single people on low incomes."

"Homelessness is an indication that broader social supports and service systems are failing," Ms Smith said.

Interviews available with Christine, Jenny and Catherine upon request

Media contacts:

Melbourne: Lanie Harris, Council to Homeless Persons, 0418 552 377

Media opportunities:

Sydney: Jenny Smith, Chair Homelessness Australia, and Catherine Robinson, co-host of SBS Filthy Rich and Homeless, launch Homelessness Week. Senator Doug Cameron also to speak at the launch Monday 7 August, 9am

NSW Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir St, Surry Hills

Melbourne: Jason, who lived in rooming houses, squats, slept rough and in crisis accommodation, will take State and Federal MPs on a Walking tour of his homelessness journey in Collingwood Monday 7 August, 10am: 2 Stanley St Collingwood