



Media release – 1 December 2017

High alert for rough sleepers: Homelessness services brace for huge demand as wild weather hits

As Victoria prepares for flash flooding and extreme weather today and Saturday, the State's homelessness services are bracing for huge demand, and on high alert for rough sleepers.

Very heavy rainfall is predicted today and Saturday in both regional and metro areas, which may cause flash flooding and could impact on water levels in creeks and rivers, places where rough sleepers are increasingly being found.

Homelessness services are doing bridge sweeps and **providing** extra outreach to people sleeping rough. People sleeping in cars, squats and other forms of marginal accommodation in both metro and regional areas are also at risk due to the extreme weather.

“Demand for homelessness support is already at an all-time high, **and so** extreme events place our workforce under even greater pressure,” said Jenny Smith, CEO of Council to Homelessness persons.

“The coming days will be trying times for all Victorians, but even more so for those experiencing homelessness, and the people who support them. The tireless efforts of our workers are appreciated more than ever in these difficult times,” said Ms Smith.

“We’re appealing to the public to look after themselves, and also to keep an extra eye out for those who aren’t fortunate enough to have a safe roof over their head.”

St Mary’s House of Welcome, which provides outreach support to rough sleepers, and a drop-in meals service in Fitzroy, said that the impacts of the extreme weather were already being felt, with a 30% increase in the number of people attending their breakfast service this morning.

CBD specific

The Salvation Army Night Café will continue operating as normal at 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne. CBD Service providers are doing bridge sweeps and extra outreach and all CBD rough sleepers are being offered respite accommodation motel for the weekend.

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