



Media release – 2 February 2018

## Land sitting idle does nothing in fight against rising homelessness

Victoria's peak body for homelessness has welcomed the Victorian Government's plans to revitalise the Markham public housing estate in Ashburton, turning vacant land into 200 units, two-thirds of which would be social and affordable housing.

"It's time to get that land working to reduce homelessness and ease the pressures on hard-working families trying to find affordable rentals," said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

The most recent DHHS rent report showed that just 6% of all private rentals in metro Melbourne are affordable to someone on a low income.

"Skyrocketing rents are driving thousands more people to homelessness services, but our services can't house people on vacant land," said Ms Smith.

Last year Victorian homelessness services turned away 92 people every day due to a lack of accommodation options and resources (AIHW, 2016-17)

"We desperately need more housing that is affordable to people on the lowest income brackets, and importantly we need to make sure that housing is peppered throughout our city, to ensure we have healthy, productive communities."

"With 35,000 Victorians currently waiting for social housing, we cannot afford to pass up any opportunity to create more homes for those on the lowest incomes.

"The State Government is congratulated for working towards a Victoria where everyone - rich and poor - can have a safe, affordable place to call home," said Ms Smith.

**Available for interview:** Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons

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