



Media release

CHP calls for a bipartisan approach to homelessness

Victorian homelessness peak body Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) is calling for a bipartisan approach to block Federal Budget measures that will push more Australians into homelessness, and to introduce the reforms needed to reduce existing homelessness.

CHP CEO Jenny Smith says: "Budget measures intended as savings will throw vulnerable households into devastating circumstances, without the income they need to keep a roof over their head."

"The [Launch Housing Australian Homelessness Monitor](#) released today shows that Australia's increasing level of homelessness has been caused by inadequate social security incomes, Centrelink breaching, not enough social housing, and family violence. The 2018 Budget does nothing to address any of these causes, and introduces new measures to reduce Centrelink incomes and increase the rate of payment breaches.

Smith says the Federal Budget measures that will increase homelessness include:

1. **"Failing to #RaisetheRate of Newstart:** which at just \$278 per week (plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance if eligible) has not increased in real terms in 24 years; and is so low only 0.3% of one bedroom rentals in Melbourne is affordable,
2. **"Ignoring the need for more social housing that people on low incomes can afford:** including by dropping social housing investment to \$1.54 billion in 2018-19; a 16 per cent reduction from 2013-14,
3. **"Homelessness services funding not increased to meet demand:** despite a 14% increase in the five years to 2016 and the fact that nationally at least 250 people are being turned away from homelessness agencies every day due to impossible-to-meet demand,
4. **"New migrants not being allowed to access Newstart and other welfare benefits until they have lived in Australia for four years:** which means if a migrant loses their job, becomes sick, or needs to escape family violence with nothing, they must pay the rent using air,
5. **"Deducting money from unemployment payments to [pay back unpaid court fines](#):** which will skim already meagre social security payments so that people simply can't pay their rent and is not only ruthless but will increase homelessness,
6. **"Expanding robodebt: [which was slammed last year](#)** for sending out incorrect debt notices, exacerbating mental health issues, and putting already vulnerable welfare recipients in debt to avoid homelessness,
7. **"Subjecting Community Development Program (CDP) participants to the new Jobseeker 'demerit points' Compliance Framework:** which is expected to

increase the number of participants subject to payment reductions and cancellations, and increase hardship in Aboriginal communities and homelessness,” Smith adds.

Smith adds: “Australians want to see action on homelessness, but our leaders don’t seem to be listening. We’re encouraging every Australian to call on the Government to take action directly by signing the Everybody’s Home petition to end homelessness <http://everybodyshome.com.au/petition/>

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