



Media release

## Local councils bear the burden of political inaction on homelessness

Wednesday 4 July:

Victoria's peak body has said it is not surprised by Streetcount figures showing 392 rough sleepers were counted across five local government areas in inner city Melbourne.

"Homelessness is not unique to the city. There is not a single municipality where homelessness does not exist," said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

"Rough sleeping is the most visible symptom of a broken housing system. It is the tip of the homelessness iceberg, but beyond the rough sleeping figures are thousands of people sleeping in their cars, living in motel rooms and cycling through rooming houses."

Last year, 105,000 Victorians sought assistance from homelessness services, and 1-in-3 people were turned away due to a lack of resources, according to AIHW data.

CHP says the Rough Sleeping Action Plan announced by the Andrews' Government earlier this year is the sort of leadership required, but with 82,000 Victorians waiting for social housing, both State and Federal Governments need to commit to major investment in housing for very low income earners.

"As we get closer to the State election in November, we'll be looking to the major parties to reveal their long-term plans for tackling the growing homelessness problem in Victoria," said Ms Smith.

CHP reserved judgement about the 15% decrease in the number of rough sleepers counted in the City of Melbourne, noting that small declines may be due to a range of variables including the weather.

Victoria is in the midst of an economic boom, and the Council to Homeless persons has [previously called on the State Government to use the \\$6.57 billion in stamp duty](#) collected last financial year to build more social housing.

"We'll continue to see people sleeping on the streets until there is significantly more social housing," said Ms Smith.

CHP also underlined that the Commonwealth Government must not continue to abrogate its responsibility for rough sleeping, homelessness and housing affordability.

This year's Federal budget showed that federal homelessness and housing funding will drop to \$1.54 billion next financial year, the lowest level in a decade. Analysis of the Budget papers shows that there has been a 16 per cent decline in federal spending on housing and homelessness over the five years to 2018-19.

[Ends]

Media Enquiries: [lanie@chp.org.au](mailto:lanie@chp.org.au) or 0418 552 377