



22 January 2019

Media release

200 fewer Victorian social housing units since 2014, despite homelessness state of emergency: new figures

Victoria's peak body for homelessness has called for an emergency commitment to social housing in the May state budget. The call comes in light of a new Productivity Commission report, which shows that the number of Victorian social housing units has declined by 200 since 2014, and one-in-three homelessness clients are being turned away from assistance.

Council to Homeless Persons' (CHP) analysis of the Productivity Commission's [Report on Government Services](#) released on Tuesday reveals that in 2014, when the Victorian Labor party came to office, there were 80,705 public and community housing units, and in 2018, that number had dropped to 80,501.

The Report also shows that more than one-third of Victorians approached homelessness services needing accommodation could not be helped, and that Victoria spends the least of the Australian states on social housing.

'The report is a damning insight into many years of neglect of our social housing safety net from both the state and federal governments. It's patently obvious that homelessness will continue to increase without an ambitious plan to grow public and community housing in Victoria,' said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons (CHP).

'Our services have more people coming to them for help, and fewer social housing units for them to access. It's not rocket science – we just need more housing that is affordable to people on the lowest incomes. That is a job for government.'

'Historically low levels of social housing in Victoria mean our services are forced to churn families, single women and young people through motels, rooming houses and refuges instead of just being able to get them into the safe, permanent home that they need,' said Ms Smith.

With three months until the State Budget is handed down, CHP is calling for an emergency housing commitment of at least 3,000 new homes per year for the next 10 years, a figure which is in keeping with previous targets identified by the University of Melbourne and Infrastructure Victoria.

In November, Labor announced it would build 1,000 new public housing units over the next three years, the equivalent of 330 per year.

'With 38,000 applicants on the social housing wait list, it's going to take far more than 330 homes per year to get that wait lists down to zero. We need action which reflects this state of emergency.'

CHP warned that states worked within the context of federal funding agreements, pointing out that the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement between the Commonwealth and State Government, does not provide additional federal funding to Victoria beyond inflation, despite a booming population.

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