



MEDIA RELEASE

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CEOs from 50 homelessness agencies appeal to Scott Morrison to end funding uncertainty in open letter

In an unprecedented move, CEOs of more than 50 homelessness agencies and social welfare bodies have united to warn the Federal Government that thousands of vulnerable people could be thrown into homelessness if national homelessness funding is allowed to expire.

A jointly signed open letter to Federal Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison from the CEOs of more than 50 services including Homelessness Australia, The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society, Mission Australia and ACOSS appeals to the Federal Government to end the uncertainty surrounding the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), which expires on 30 June 2015.

The \$115 annual Federal NPAH investment funds hundreds of homelessness services nationally to provide programs to women and children affected by family violence, rough sleepers, young people leaving state care and those at risk of homelessness.

The NPAH was previously funded as a four-year agreement, but over the last two years the funding has been extended 12 months at a time.

“It’s like groundhog day for these services – as with the past three years, this short-term funding cycle makes it impossible for services to forward plan, and results in services having to turn away clients from programs with long-term delivery. The Street-to-Home programs in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane are a perfect example of an NPAH funded program that uses long-term support to help rough sleepers get into housing and provide extended support to address their problems,” said Glenda Stevens CEO of the national peak body, Homelessness Australia.

“We’d like to see the funding return to a four-year cycle,” said Ms Stevens. “As well as the tens of thousands of clients affected, thousands of homelessness workers are in limbo whilst they await the outcome of the NPAH funding,” said Ms Stevens.

“Services aren’t able to negotiate new contracts with staff until the funding is confirmed, and are required to give three months notice of termination,” she said.

Nationally, specialist homelessness services agencies provided support to an estimated 254,000 people in 2013-14¹, with approximately 80,000 of these through NPAH funded programs.²

Interview opportunities: Catherine Adcock ph 0423 770 294

- Glenda Stevens, CEO, Homelessness Australia ph 0405 900 360
- Clients from homelessness programs funded by the NPAH
- CEOs from homelessness agencies that will be forced to rollback services if the NPAH is cut

¹ 2014, AIHW, Specialist Homelessness Services 2013-14

² Calculated by Mission Australia, 2014

The Hon Scott Morrison, MP
Minister for Social Services

PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

CC: The Hon Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister

9 February 2015

Dear Minister Morrison,

Re: You do your budget planning on a four-yearly cycle; please let us do the same.

We know that the Federal Government cares about ending homelessness; the \$115 million investment in the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) is evidence of that.

The annual suspense as we await confirmation that the NPAH funding will be extended for a further 12 months leaves our clients and workforce anxious, and our homelessness services hamstrung. This year is the third year in a row that homelessness services have been on tenterhooks as to whether we can continue our work.

We cannot negotiate with our staff whose contracts soon expire. We cannot tell clients that the programs they have relied on will continue. We must carefully deliberate whether to accept new clients into those programs which have a long-term delivery model.

Women and children fleeing domestic violence, young people who can't stay with their families and long-term rough sleepers looking for a bed for the night are all affected by the lack of certainty that a one-year funding cycle creates.

You do your budget planning on a four-yearly cycle; please let us do the same. Please commit to a four-year National Homelessness Partnership Agreement and give homelessness services the certainty we need to deliver housing and support to vulnerable people.

Yours sincerely

