



MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 6 August 2019

‘A Car is Not a Home’ event to raise awareness of the ‘hidden homelessness’ in our community for Homelessness Week 2019

Local organisations working together to prevent homelessness in our community are hosting an awareness raising event in Hargreaves Mall on Thursday 8th August from 11am-2pm.

Federal MP for Bendigo Lisa Chesters will be in attendance from 11:30am-12:15, and the Bendigo mayor Margaret O’Rourke has received an invitation to attend. Representatives from local services working with homeless people will also be available for comment.

Many people experiencing homelessness are forced to move repeatedly through temporary accommodation, without any form of stability. This includes couches, hostels, rooming houses and even cars. To raise awareness of the hidden homelessness in our community, this event will feature a car parked in Hargreaves Mall filled with some of the things that separate a car from being a home, like a toilet, sink and shower. Access to these basic household items is something most people take for granted, but this is one of the many daily struggles for people living without a place to call home.

There is currently a desperate need for crisis accommodation in Bendigo, with the Haven Home Safe “Hey Van” identifying that on an average night up to 10 people are homeless on the streets accessing their service.

Stalls from local community organisations will be in place on the day to provide information and giveaways to people who are in need. Representatives of Housing Justice, Haven Home Safe and other local organisations will also be available for media comment. These organisations work together to prevent people from becoming homelessness, and to provide supports to help people get back into stable accommodation.

This event is part of Homelessness Week, which is held annually to raise awareness of the causes of homelessness and the solutions. This year’s theme is “Housing ends Homelessness”. Lack of access to affordable homes is a key driver of homelessness. Right now, more than 116,000 Australians are experiencing homelessness and 195,000 are on social housing waiting lists. However, social housing as a share of all housing fell from 5.3% of all housing in 2005-06 to 4.6% in 2017-18¹ Victoria has the lowest percentage of social housing spending per capita in Australia, less than half of NSW ²

Homelessness in Australia increased by 13.7% in 5 years³, yet with only 5% of homeless people in Victoria being ‘rough sleepers,’⁴ this rising problem is often hidden within our community.

With inadequate public housing available in Victoria, and no dedicated crisis accommodation available in Bendigo, it is time for a national strategy to end homelessness, including delivery of social housing and affordable rental homes.

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¹ AIHW [Housing Assistance in Australia](#) 2019 report

² Productivity Commission Report on Government Services 2019



³ ABS Census 2019

⁴ ABS, Census, 2016