15 May 2018

**Australian first: new Homelessness Monitor holds the key to solving Australia’s homelessness crisis**

The first national longitudinal study of homelessness in Australia, *The Australian Homelessness Monitor 2018*, will be launched in Melbourne today. The Monitor tracks key data on rates and types of homelessness in Australia and sets a benchmark for action on Australia’s housing crisis.

Launch Housing has commissioned the Monitor in conjunction with the University of NSW and the University of Queensland.

The *Australian Homelessness Monitor* is the first of its kind in Australia, and will be compiled every two years and will inform state and federal policies to address homelessness.

**Comment attributable to Tony Keenan, CEO of Launch Housing:**

“Australia’s housing market is at breaking point. More people are experiencing homelessness than ever before. People face rising costs of living, high rental costs and harsher income support penalties.

“There has been a 14% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in the past five years – that is a national disgrace.

“Launch Housing has a combined history of more than 75 years serving those experiencing homelessness in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Our mission is to end homelessness and we know first-hand that the increase in homelessness is unacceptable—not just here in Victoria, but nationwide. That’s why we’ve commissioned this research: because homelessness is not unavoidable; this research demonstrates how policies and programs can—and do—make a difference.

“Homelessness is a problem that can be fixed. The first step is having the right data and information. The Monitor brings together multiple data sources and analysis, qualitative survey information from key informants and state by state breakdowns.

“No one in Australia should be without a home, and there are things that everyone can do to help. This is the first time we’ve been able to connect all these dots to inform a fully-fledged picture of why homelessness is such a dire issue in Australia. I encourage everyone to help solve the issue by lending your voice or resource: you can read the full report, join the Everybody’s Home campaign, or donate today.

“The Australian Homelessness Monitor is a national first. It provides a unique look at how policy action and inaction have impacted rising levels of homelessness.

“The Monitor shows the direct relationship between government policies and levels of homelessness. Lack of affordable housing, cuts to social security, lower wages and higher housing prices contribute. People living in poverty are more affected.

“We must see a shared effort from the Australian Government, the states and territories to address housing affordability. The Monitor shows us there has been a period of inaction that has led to increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness.

“Governments and decision-makers have been stuck in a policy echo-chamber. There are tangible things that state and federal governments can do now to fix Australia’s housing crisis.

“We cannot go on shutting our doors. The Australian Homelessness Monitor should inform the development of a national housing plan. We need more social and affordable rental homes, we must stop cutting income support to low income families and increase rent assistance.”

**Key data from the first *Australian Homelessness Monitor*:**

* More older Australians are experiencing homelessness than ever before. There has been a 28% increase in the number of elderly people who have nowhere to live.
* There has been a 20% increase in the number of people who are sleeping rough.
* Increased housing costs have meant 613,000 people have fallen below the poverty line, almost 229,000 of whom are children.
* Housing prices are increasing as wages have been falling. National property prices have increased by 80% in the last 10 years while median household incomes rose by 40%.
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 10 times more likely to experience homelessness.
* There was a 22% increase in demand for homelessness services nationwide between 2011 and 2016.

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| **WHAT** | *Australian Homelessness Monitor* Launch |
| **WHO** | Tony Keenan, Launch Housing CEO  People with a lived experience of homelessness  Professor Hal Pawson, UNSW Sydney  Dr Cameron Parsell, University of Queensland |
| **WHEN/WHERE** | 10 a.m. at Launch Housing Southbank, 52 Haig Street, Southbank |
| **MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES** | * Visit homelessness service * Interview people who have experienced homelessness * Full briefing on key data * Press conference and questions   *Note:* This is being held at a working crisis accommodation facility. To protect the residents living there, we ask that you respect their privacy. Interviews, photos or video will only be conducted when organised in advance.  For questions and to RSVP to Rosina Rayns at 0401 991 792. |

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**About Launch Housing**

Launch Housing is a Melbourne based, secular and independent community agency formed in July 2015 by a merger between Hanover Welfare Services and HomeGround Services. Launch Housing’s mission is to end homelessness. It provides high quality housing, support, education and employment services to thousands of people across 14 sites in metropolitan Melbourne. [www.launchhousing.org.au](http://www.launchhousing.org.au)