



MEDIA RELEASE

11 June 2019

Homelessness Forum

The Huon Valley Council will be represented at the Homelessness Forum on Thursday 20 June 2019.

Mayor Bec Enders contacted Cr Holly Ewin of the Hobart City Council shortly after the announcement was made that the Hobart City Council at its meeting on 3 June resolved that:

1. The City of Hobart acknowledge the reality of the housing and homelessness crisis, and convene and coordinate an urgent meeting to be facilitated by the Council officers within the next seven days.
2. Invitees to the meeting include the Minister of Housing and Human Services Roger Jaensch, social housing, shelter and homelessness service providers, church groups, greater Hobart Councils, Council's Housing and Dignity Reference Group, federal government representatives, relevant businesses and other stakeholders who can assist in immediate solutions to the crisis.

Cr Enders said, "Your Councillors know that there are people sleeping rough and couch surfing in our municipal area. It is also acknowledged to tackle this challenge a whole of government approach is needed. It was on this basis that I called Cr Ewin to make sure that the Huon Valley has a seat at this forum.

What we do know is that our local police spend half of their time attending domestic violence callouts and have stated that there is a higher representation of domestic violence in the Huon Valley. We also know that domestic violence is one of the leading causes for women and children leaving their homes and becoming homeless."

According to *'SII and supporting vulnerable households' report; Heaney, Flatau et al. 2017*, people experiencing domestic and family violence in Australia, account for 38 per cent of people using Specialist Homelessness Services, with many women (63%) and children (29%) included (AIHW 2017b). Young people, including those leaving home due to family and domestic violence (15%) and housing crisis (29%) (AIHW 2017b), and young indigenous Australians who account for one in four young people presenting (AIHW 2017b).

Communications & Media Officer

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The Tasmanian State Government has made a commitment to reducing domestic violence and to work with all levels of government to target domestic violence. *Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan.*

The Hobart City Council is a member of the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors. They have called on the Federal Government to increase the funding for homelessness services and social (public) housing. Funding in this space has been static since 2011.

The Huon Valley Council is currently working with the State Government to obtain the latest health information about our community, which also covers domestic violence statistics and health services that are delivered from the Huon Valley.

Cr Enders said "Getting this localised information is critical as it identifies what services are needed in the Huon Valley. Once we have this information we can use it to lobby government.

We acknowledge that domestic violence is not the only reason for homelessness but it seems timely to highlight this very real problem in our Valley."

Broadly, there is a large group of people experiencing financial stress and/or housing stress but who are otherwise capable of maintaining accommodation in a more affordable setting. There are also groups of people, however, who require affordable housing and additional supports to mitigate the risks of homelessness, maintain successful tenancies and achieve life goals.

The forum is aimed at identifying immediate crisis options, short term opportunities and medium to long term proposals. This forum has an action based format where working groups will be formed and led by agencies for specific initiatives and actions.

Cr Enders said, "The Huon Valley Council looks forward to being an active member on this group and to informing our community about what actions will be taken."

For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300

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