



MEDIA RELEASE

9 August 2019

Homelessness Week in the Huon

National Homelessness Week for 2019 launched on Monday 5 August, with a variety of events happening throughout Australia to raise awareness of people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face and the action needed to achieve enduring solutions.

In Tasmania, more than 1600 people are currently experiencing homelessness. Most of the state's homelessness is 'hidden', with only 8 per cent of people sleeping rough. This means homelessness is often far more common than people think.

On Monday 5 August a national launch event was held in Hobart's Mathers House involving speeches from peak Tasmanian organisations that provide homelessness support, such as Anglicare, the Salvation Army, Shelter Tasmania and Colony 47, as well as an art display exploring homelessness issues in the community, and pop-up stalls which encouraged discussion around the issue of homelessness in Australia.

This year's theme 'Housing Ends Homelessness' draws attention to the need for increased affordable housing solutions in Australia. More than 12,000 Tasmanians live below the poverty line, and increasing numbers of people are struggling to achieve secure accommodation.

A lack of affordable housing solutions in Tasmania means:

- More than 8000 low-income households are experiencing rental stress
- Over 3200 households are still on the social housing waiting list
- 1-in-3 people were turned away from homelessness services last year due to a lack of resources, and
- On average, 28 requests for homelessness assistance are unmet each day in Tasmania.

"Having a good place to live is crucial for leading a healthy and rewarding life, so it's important that we are getting the word out about support services that are available in our community," Huon Valley Council Mayor Bec Enders said.

"Huonville is among a number of Tasmania towns hosting a video and soundscape during Homelessness Week, providing a platform for people who are experiencing homelessness to share their story.

Communications & Media Officer

Huon Valley Council

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“People can drop by Huonville Library at 1 Skinner Drive or Council’s Customer Service Centre at 40 Main Street during this week to experience the installation created by Colony 47, which brings together a collection of stories from people who have a lived experience of homelessness.”

The display will include contact details for Housing Connect, a ‘one-stop shop’ for all your housing and support needs: communities.tas.gov.au/housing/housing-connect2.

“Homelessness can affect any member of our community, and here in the Huon we have a particularly vulnerable female and youth population due to a higher representation of domestic violence,” Cr Enders said.

“Sharing stories of homelessness is important for breaking down stereotypes and raising awareness of the types of support that are available. There are a number of support services available in the Valley to help people who are struggling to achieve a stable living situation.”

Huon Affordable Living (“HAL”) is a local community-owned, not-for-profit group providing access to inclusive and sustainable living opportunities for our community. The group takes an inclusive approach to homelessness issues by providing solutions for people of all ages and backgrounds, including those who are on low-incomes or marginalised. More information is available online at huonaffordableliving.com.

Loui’s Van is a once-weekly mobile service providing food, information and support to people in need. The volunteer-run St Vincent de Paul Society operation encounters an average of forty people on nights that it operates, and can be found each Tuesday in the Huonville Town Hall Carpark at 6pm–6:30pm, and Huonville PCYC from 6:30pm–7pm.

To find out more Homelessness Week events that are happening in your area, visit the Shelter Tasmania website: shelertas.org.au

You can show your support for Homelessness Week by getting involved in events near you and using the hashtags #HW2019 and #HousingEndsHomelessness on social media.

For more information and support, and for emergency accommodation, contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588.

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

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