



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 16th November 2023

Mallee Family Care Act on Mallee Region's Housing Emergency

An urgent increase in public housing stock, measures to address rising rates of poverty and support for the unique needs of regional and cross-border communities are the keys to addressing the current housing and homelessness crisis, according to a new submission from Mallee Family Care (MFC).

MFC, a not-for-profit community service organisation serving communities in northwest Victoria and far west New South Wales, has called for action in these areas in its response to the Australian Government's consultation on a new National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

"The Mallee region, like many other rural and regional areas across the nation, is currently grappling with a severe shortage of safe and affordable housing," said MFC CEO, Teresa Jayet.

"Solving this growing crisis requires systemic and structural reforms, rather than isolated and piecemeal strategies. This needs to include action to reduce the unacceptably high rate of poverty in our community and an urgent increase in public housing stock.

"In light of the unique challenges posed by border towns and cross-jurisdictional service provision, MFC is also calling for governments to work together to align policy, funding, and regulatory approaches to housing and homelessness strategies across jurisdictions," Ms Jayet said.

Other recommendations from MFC to improve housing and homelessness outcomes include:

1. Strengthening support for the drivers of homelessness, including family violence, evictions, poverty, and family breakdown, with a focus on person-centred support services.
2. Adopting a Housing First approach, prioritising stable housing for unhoused individuals before addressing underlying issues like addiction and mental health.
3. Including a data-collection program in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) to monitor housing policy against health and well-being parameters.
4. Boosting support for community-based mental health services to ensure timely and preventive mental health care.
5. Making Indigenous housing a national responsibility led by the Commonwealth and developing a separate plan for the specific housing needs of Indigenous communities, in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Housing Organisations.



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6. Addressing the impact of climate change on homelessness and housing insecurity, including through the construction of new social housing units with climate resilience in mind, considering factors such as flood resistance, elevated foundations, and durable building materials.

“Access to housing is a fundamental human right and an essential precondition for participation in all other aspects of society. MFC advocates for a social justice approach to homelessness that recognises housing as a human rights issue.

“We are committed to collaborating with governments, private industries, the not-for-profit sector, and the community to address the pressing housing and homelessness challenges in our region.

“MFC welcomes the development of a new National Housing and Homelessness Plan and looks forward to providing further input to ensure this strategy reflects the specific needs of the Mallee region,” Ms Jayet said.

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