



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

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Homelessness Week in Australia 7-13 August 2017

Media Release from Most Rev Terence Brady Chairman, Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

On any given night in Australia 1 in 200 people are homeless. While the media storm continues around the tent city in Martin Place in Sydney, Homelessness Australia has revealed startling statistics around the rise in the hidden forms of homelessness, such as sleeping in cars and couch surfing.

The rate of homelessness in Australia has been increasing and extends beyond our major cities to rural and regional Australia. Day-to-day stresses on families and individuals such as insecure and low-paid employment, high costs of housing and general living costs, mental health and domestic violence contribute to homelessness.

Many individuals and families, for a variety of reasons, find themselves homeless and rely on increasingly stretched support services to assist them find a secure place to call home. However, without a secure and affordable place to call home, other stresses in the lives of individuals and families cannot be addressed.

Catholic Social Teaching, based on the dignity of the human being, asserts that everyone deserves respect and protection – everyone has the right to food and shelter.

Homelessness is not just a housing problem, it has many drivers and causes including the shortage of affordable housing, long-term unemployment, mental health issues, substance abuse, and family and relationship breakdown. Among women, domestic and family violence is the main reason.

The Catholic Church in Australia has been involved in helping people who are homeless for many years and will continue to support people to overcome terrible disadvantage.

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