

MEDIA RELEASE

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National Homelessness Week 4-10 August 2019

Housing ends homelessness

Only a long-term national strategy and a deep, non-partisan commitment from federal, state and territory governments will begin to address the chronic shortage of secure, affordable housing for low income Australians, including a significant number of older Australians.

Speaking ahead of the launch of National Homelessness Week in Hobart this morning, St Vincent de Paul National Council CEO Toby O'Connor repeated the Society's call for a 30-year National Strategy, developed through consultation with federal, state and territory governments, developers, financiers and not-for-profit and for-profit providers. This, he said, would be a significant step towards increasing the stock of social and affordable housing in Australia.

'The Society has earmarked land for short-term crisis accommodation and medium- to long-term dwellings in a number of states but we just don't have funding to progress this important work,' Mr O'Connor said.

'The Society already provides a broad range of accommodation options across Australia that have developed over the years in response to local needs.

'Last year the Society's National Council established Amelie Housing Ltd, a national initiative that offers secure and safe social and affordable housing to a range of people, including people moving from homelessness towards independent living, and individuals and families on low incomes. In addition, a number of significant projects are underway in some of the states.

'Federal funding has been committed to trialing social impact investments to help vulnerable groups, and social impact investment trials are currently underway. We look forward to news of these developments.

'Only once medium and long-term safe, secure and affordable housing for low income Australians is achieved, can the barriers to employment and broader participation for vulnerable Australians be addressed. This can be done when all the parties come to the table,' Mr O'Connor said.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through Conferences located in individual parishes right across Australia. It has been working with homeless people for almost half a century.

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