

## Media Release

Thursday, 14 May 2026

### **St Vincent's establishes first-in-Australia healthcare role: National Director of Homelessness**

Australia's largest not-for-profit health and aged care services provider, St Vincent's, has today announced the establishment of a new role – a National Director of Homelessness – a first for any major Australian healthcare group.

The organisation's first appointee in the newly created role is Erin Longbottom, the Nurse Unit Manager of St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's Homeless Outreach Service.

St Vincent's CEO, Chris Blake, said the new role was all about lifting the voice of healthcare in state and national discussions about ending homelessness.

"Since our first days as an organisation almost 170 years ago, addressing the health needs of homeless people has been core to St Vincent's," said Chris.

"We established Australia's first homeless health accommodation respite services: The Cottage, at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne, and Tierney House, at St Vincent's Hospital Sydney.

"St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne's Emergency Department sees more than one quarter of all homeless-related ED presentations in Victoria. St Vincent's Hospital Sydney operates New South Wales' only dedicated homeless health unit.

"The new National Director of Homelessness will advocate for the reforms, policy responses, and funding necessary to end homelessness. We believe that Australia's housing and homelessness debate needs to hear more from the health sector.

"Closer to home, the new National Director will be a facilitator across all our health services for sharing and improving what St Vincent's already does so well in this area. And by consolidating our collective skills and intelligence, strengthening our impact.

"From the St Vincent's perspective, homelessness is often as much a health issue as it is about lack of housing.

"An unmanaged illness is often the factor that tips a person into homelessness or makes it difficult for them to leave it behind. People experiencing homelessness also have more health problems and co-morbidities than the general population. This means more frequent ED visits, inpatient admissions, and longer hospital stays. That's not just bad for the person, it's a bad outcome for the health system as a whole.

"Aside from her outstanding clinical work with people experiencing homelessness and those at risk, Erin has dedicated her career to advocating for people too often missed by the healthcare system and society. She has been a voice for the systemic change needed to create more connected, compassionate models of care for homeless people.

"This is an historic and exciting announcement for St Vincent's, and I can't think of a better first National Director of Homelessness than Erin Longbottom," said Chris.

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