PRESENTATION TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, LEGAL AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Structural and economic hurdles that must be addressed

- Poverty and income
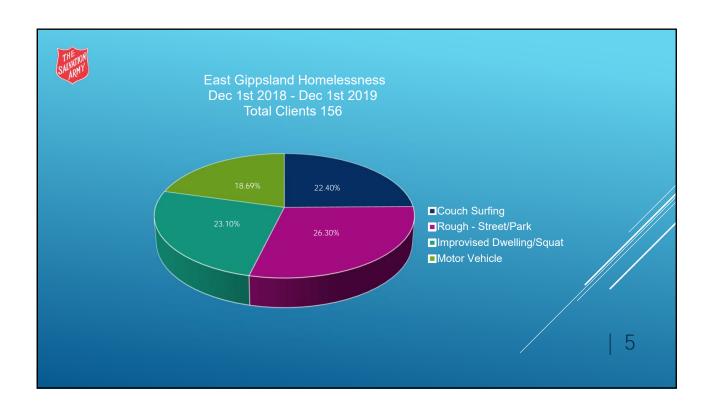- Lack of safe, appropriate and affordable housing options

If we look at the five top primary presenting reasons at The Salvation Army Homelessness Services, we can see the areas that both drive people toward homelessness, and where we need to put our focus, resources and solutions.

- Housing Crisis (imminent eviction) **26.5%**
- Domestic or family violence **13.7%**
- Financial difficulties **12.2%**
- Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling **11.1%**
- Transition from custodial arrangements **5.5%**

It is clear that income support, safety net, and wage growth/stagnation (Newstart and beyond), combined with an increase in social housing (public and community housing) are foundational components to any change in the incidence of homelessness in our community.

| 2

Top five presenting issues in Bairnsdale

- Domestic Violence

- Lack of Employment

- Relationship Breakdown

- Imminent Eviction

- Shortage of Affordable Housing

| 4

East Gippsland Homelessness
Dec 1st 2018 - Dec 1st 2019
Total Clients 156

18.69%

22.40%

23.10%

26.30%

☐ Couch Surfing
☐ Rough - Street/Park
☐ Improvised Dwelling/Squat
☐ Motor Vehicle

| 5

The Salvation Army in Victoria:
The homelessness service picture

- We have 108 Housing & Housing specific services
- We have 19 Entry points (intake and assessment for service provision)
- We have 31 Family and Domestic violence services

In addition, we provide the State-wide crisis (phone) contact centre for homelessness services in Victoria (based out of St Kilda)

Of our clients we know the following:
In total, men and women are equally represented in presenting for support.
Age grouping receiving service and support (in descending order)
- Under 10 **13%**
- 35-39   **12%**
- 30-34   **11%**
- 25-29   **11%**

Those we are not serving: the reason we cannot offer support
- We have no accommodation option
- We have insufficient staff to assist at time of presentation

| 5

Other drivers and consequences impacting both the experience of homelessness, and ending homelessness, the Committee could consider a focal point:

- Regional and rural towns and the infrastructure constraints which affect the ability to access services and support (e.g. transport, specialist medical, other community supports, connectivity – both digital and physical).

| 6

How do we end homelessness for good?

Recognise that the problem of homelessness is everybody's business.

- o Ending homelessness for good requires engagement of private, public and community sectors;
- o It also requires the universal service systems (health and education); and specialist health and human services to recognise that they are responsible. Housing and homeless support services can address particular areas of support, including case management and housing management;
- o Those who have a lived experience of homelessness must have a voice front and centre.

Divert people away from the homelessness system: we know that if we keep people in their housing, then the outcome is significantly better than if we must address a loss of housing, and have them enter the homelessness system;

If someone does enter the homelessness service system, it is imperative to **re-house ASAP, and provide the support that an individual or family needs**. Importantly the duration of need, that is, how long we must support someone, and that support intensity and mix needs to be the maxim;

So we need to move from *a fixed term support model* to **duration of need model of support;**

We need a focus on **outcomes not outputs**; churn and throughput of a service does not equal ending homelessness.