Online hearing to focus on homelessness in the Mallee

Homelessness in and around Mildura and Swan Hill will be the focus of an online hearing this Thursday 13 August 2020 when the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee continues its inquiry into homelessness in Victoria.

The hearing from 10:00 am to 12:45 pm will be broadcast live on the Victorian Parliament's website. The schedule is available from the Committee's website.

It will include a panel discussion with representatives of the Mildura Rural City Council, the Mallee Accommodation and Support Service (MASP) and Mallee Haven; Home, Safe.

In its submission to the inquiry, the Mildura Rural City Council notes that Mildura has the fourth highest level of homelessness in regional Victoria.

"Domestic violence is a key driver to homelessness in our community," the Council states in its submission. "Many women have become homeless because it is no longer safe to remain in their home."

Also presenting at the hearing will be the Loddon Mallee Homelessness Network and Mallee Family Care.

The Committee has already held a number of public hearings in regional Victoria as part of the inquiry which commenced last year, including in Bairnsdale, Morwell, Shepparton and Wangaratta. It also held an online hearing in July about homelessness in Geelong and the Barwon South West region.

"Many people see homelessness as a Melbourne issue, but this is not the case," said Committee Chair Fiona Patten. "But homelessness in regional areas is distinct and the solutions are also often different to what is needed in the city."

Thursday's hearing will provide an opportunity to hear about the factors contributing to homelessness in the Mallee region and about the services that are currently being provided to respond to or mitigate the risk of homelessness.

It will also allow the Committee to hear views and suggestions from local organisations operating in the region on the best ways to respond to homelessness going forward.

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