



Victoria can solve homelessness: Report

The Victorian Government needs to pay immediate and ongoing attention to the state's urgent homelessness crisis, according to a new parliamentary committee report.

The Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into homelessness in Victoria received more than 450 formal submissions and held 18 hearings in Melbourne and across regional Victoria.

"We really took the time to understand this complex issue and spoke with a range of people and organisations across Victoria, including people experiencing homelessness," Committee Chair Fiona Patten said.

"Homelessness is getting worse. Now is the time we really need to turn our attention to the problem before it gets entirely out of hand," Ms Patten said.

In response the Committee has made 51 recommendations which include that the Victorian Government should:

- Increase the provision of affordable, stable, long-term housing
- Embed flexibility into its approach to the funding of homelessness programs
- Prioritise and strengthen early intervention measures such as tenancy support programs and assistance for those fleeing family violence
- Support innovative accommodation options
- Provide social housing that meets the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

"The recent report from the Royal Commission into Mental Health has also recognised the importance of addressing homelessness," Ms Patten said.

The Committee heard that in 2018-19, one in 57 Victorians accessed a government-funded homelessness service, a figure that is likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.

"As a Committee we were especially concerned that demand for homelessness services significantly exceeds the availability of support," Ms Patten said.

"Because the homelessness system is so overwhelmed, it only has the resources to provide short-term accommodation for the very needy."

Most people seeking help are looking for accommodation, but a lack of long-term housing options has meant that only short-term crisis accommodation is available. 76% of people could not get long-term housing and 62% could not get medium-term transitional accommodation.

“We need to be smarter about where we direct our efforts. The two best things we can do are strengthen early intervention services and provide more secure, long-term housing for the homeless,” Ms Patten said.

Victoria has the lowest social housing stock in Australia and is significantly below the national average. The Victorian Government announced it will build more than 12,000 new dwellings across Victoria but, despite the unprecedented size of the building program, this will still not ensure that Victoria will meet the national average of social housing as a percentage of total dwellings.

“Homelessness is a solvable problem, we know what needs to be done, we just need the will to carry it out,” Ms Patten said.

The report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

Media queries

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