

MEDIA RELEASE



Tanya Plibersek
Federal Minister for Housing



David Borger
NSW Minister for Housing

\$284 million to target homelessness in NSW

August 2, 2009

The Australian and New South Wales Governments are providing an additional \$284 million over four years to reduce homelessness in NSW, through the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Homelessness.

On Census night in 2006, over 27,000 people in NSW were homeless.

Federal Minister for Housing Tanya Plibersek and NSW Minister for Housing David Borger today outlined new initiatives to help the homeless, rough sleepers as well as individuals and families struggling during the global recession to keep a roof over their heads.

Ms Plibersek said the new initiatives are aimed at assisting people to break the cycle of homelessness and to help them obtain and maintain safe and secure housing.

"In particular, there is a high focus on improved access to services for hard to reach clients," Ms Plibersek said.

"These include rough sleepers and those experiencing significant mental health issues, tailored programs for the young and the old, and a new centralised intake service to streamline access across all NSW homelessness services and social housing providers.

"The National Partnership Agreement initiatives include the 'Street to home' for chronically homeless people, the Nepean Youth Homelessness Project and support for the Homelessness Intervention Team to deliver 20 social housing places.

"Through the NPA, we are working to make significant progress to reform public and community housing, provide additional support for people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

"There needs to be significant change and additional resources if we are to meet the targets set out in the White Paper on Homelessness: The Road Home 'A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness'.

"The Australian Government has made substantial investments to tackling homelessness totalling more than \$7 billion across Australia."

Mr Borger said the NSW Government is radically changing how homeless people are helped and released a Homeless Action plan.

“Our aim with this groundbreaking plan is to help prevent people from ever becoming homeless but if they do then we will get them out of homelessness as soon as possible and once they have a home we will help them keep that housing so they need never experience homelessness again,” Mr Borger said.

“It’s a designed around peoples’ needs rather than expecting people to find their own support from a number of different services. We have designed specific solutions for different groups and different locations.

“This will go a long way to stopping people lurching from crisis to crisis and short term solutions.”

Mr Borger said key actions in the first year of the Plan include:

- **Providing 175 new properties for homeless people in key locations around the State including western Sydney, inner Sydney, Albury/Wagga and New England;**
- **Helping over 4000 homeless people or people at risk of homelessness to access or maintain long term accommodation;**
- **Establishing outreach services to assist around 400 rough sleepers and chronically homeless people in inner Sydney and Newcastle. These services include long-term accommodation and access to general health and mental health and drug and alcohol support;**
- **More help for women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to domestic and family violence through the Safe Start Rental Subsidy Scheme, which will help more than 200 families, as well as long term accommodation and support in the Western Sydney, Illawarra and Hunter areas for almost 100 families;**
- **A new approach for people leaving out of home care, correctional and health facilities which means they leave straight to accommodation and support; and**
- **New tenancy support projects in the Richmond/Tweed and Mid-North Coast areas that will help around 700 families to maintain their tenancies.**

“Both State and Federal Governments have set ambitious targets because we are determined to break the cycle of homelessness, through a mix of initiatives, and this investment will further build on the work we have achieved to date,” Mr Borger said.

“We look forward to working with the Australian Government to make our contribution to the national goal of halving homelessness by 2020.”

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