

**For immediate release****11 March 2021****Social Futures joins calls to stop cut to homelessness services**

Social Futures is joining more than 180 community organisations calling on the Federal Government to maintain funding to Specialist Homelessness Services.

Social Futures CEO, Tony Davies, says the loss of the Commonwealth Equal Remuneration Order Supplementation (ERO), equating to \$56.7 million nationally in 2019-20, and due to end in July this year, would have a catastrophic effect.

“Specialist Homelessness Services are already impossibly stretched. This loss of funding will have a devastating impact on the ability of homelessness services to provide critical support that is desperately needed now,” Mr Davies said.

The Northern Rivers Region is experiencing extraordinary growth in property prices, rental prices and increased demand for housing, in part thought to be due to immigration to the region from metropolitan areas.

“We have overwhelming demand for support and a dearth of housing. There is a waitlist for social housing of between 10-15 years with almost 3,000 on a housing waitlist as at June last year.”

“People are presenting with ever more complex needs requiring more intensive support and assistance.

“We have also seen a new cohort of homelessness arise. People who are employed, with rental or home ownership history, yet they have been pushed out of the current rental market purely due to high demand and very limited supply.”

With the rolling back of assistance packages, Jobseeker and Jobkeeper as well as the end of the COVID-19 rental eviction moratorium at the end of March, Specialist Homelessness Service Providers anticipate a worsening situation ahead.

“We predict that the housing balloon will burst. We expect to see people who have traditionally managed by themselves coming into us for help. Mums and dads who have coped to date, but now, due to these cumulative factors, their situation has become untenable.

“What we need right now is significant investment in social and affordable housing and reinstatement of the ERO Supplement.

“Specialist Homelessness Service Provers require security of funding to carry on delivering the important work they do. We simply cannot provide the existing level of service capacity with less money” Mr Davies said.

**ENDS**

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**Note to editors:**

1. Social Futures is a community service organisation based in Northern NSW. We have more than 40 years' experience as a regional leader, advocating with the communities we work in; working in partnership with others; and providing services that promote inclusion, fairness and social justice. Our work encompasses homelessness and housing supports, youth and family services, programs that promote genuine participation for people with disability, community sector support, professional development, and systemic advocacy.

**2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ERO SUPPLEMENTATION FROM HOMELESSNESS NSW**

**Cuts to the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement**

In July 2021, the Federal Government is due to cut \$56.7 million per year from Australian specialist homelessness services. This will have a huge impact on the sector's ability to provide vital support for Australian communities.

**Why is the cut happening?**

In 2012, the Fair Work Commission made an equal remuneration order (ERO) for the social and community services industry, to address the gender based inequality in wages paid to workers in the sector. Federal funding for ERO supplementation is due to end on 30 June 2021, and the Federal Government is planning to return to the funding levels seen in 2012, before the ERO was made.

[Learn more about the ERO supplementation](#)

**What will the impact be for services and communities?**

This loss of funding equates to around 567 workers, who provide vital services to prevent homelessness, secure access to emergency accommodation, and forge pathways to long-term housing for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Demand is already extremely high for homelessness services in Australia where, per day, an average of 260 people seeking support cannot be assisted due to capacity issues. Cuts to already stretched homelessness services will mean more people will be unable to access the support they need, and will inevitably result in a surge in homelessness across the nation.



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