ALMOST TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE HELPED BY NEW SERVICE TO TACKLE HOMELESSNESS

Link2home - the new, single, state-wide telephone information and referral service for enquiries about homelessness – has found accommodation for nearly 2,000 people in its first month of operation.

“This is an incredible success,” Family and Community Services Minister Gabrielle Upton said.

According to figures released today, Link2home fielded more than 7,400 calls and its 40 staff made more than 12,000 calls to homelessness services and accommodation providers on their behalf and accommodated 1,900 people.

“The government’s $4.5 million investment in the new Link2home provides a single ‘one-stop shop’ for vulnerable people making it easier for them to access the services they need when they need them,” Ms Upton said.

It is one part of the government's Going Home Staying Home reforms.

A total of $515 million will be spent over the next three years to tackle homelessness across the state.

Vicki (not her real name), an 18 year-old, is an example of the people Link2home has been helping.

A social worker called on Vicki’s behalf after she was admitted to hospital for self harm and was 12 weeks pregnant. Vicki was homeless.

Link2home connected her to a youth refuge on the Central Coast and its counsellors are now helping her make plans for the future.

Andrew McAnulty, CEO of Link Housing Ltd, one of the oldest not-for-profit community housing providers in NSW, said the new service would make a huge difference for those facing homelessness.

“To have a 24-hour state wide phone line is a great step forward. It’s positive to see that Link2home welcome callers who are either homeless or facing homelessness – thereby providing opportunities to salvage tenancies and prevent families and individuals from entering homelessness.”

Minister Upton said Link2home would support a holistic approach to specialist homelessness services for the whole community including at risk groups such as women, young people, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
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“The initiative is part of the Government’s broader strategy of providing linked-in early intervention services to avert homelessness before it becomes a crisis for individuals or families.

“We are wrapping integrated services around those at risk of homelessness, before they are at crisis level, before they are sleeping rough on our streets.

“During Homeless Persons Week, it is timely to reflect upon the reality that homelessness is a complex problem.

“Many people require more than one type of assistance to help them get their lives back on track.

“These reforms will make it easier for someone to access the entire system – whether that be an urgent placement in crisis accommodation, rental assistance, counselling or help finding a job – or, as is often the case, a combination of supports like these.

“An additional $71 million in complementary programs, like the phone referral service, are included as part of this most sweeping reform in a generation to reduce the levels of people in our State who are homeless or are faced with the risk of homelessness,” Ms Upton said

“People who are homeless or who may be at risk of homelessness can get help from the Link2home telephone service by calling 1800 152 152.”

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