

## **Homelessness NSW calls for sensible action on Martin Place**

**4 August 2017**

Homelessness NSW calls on the NSW Government and the City of Sydney to today discuss the development of a planned approach to assisting people sleeping rough both in Martin Place and across inner city Sydney.

Communities such as Martin Place are not a satisfactory answer to homelessness however no action should be taken to evict people until a suitable alternative is in place.

This alternative must be the provision of long term housing and support to assist people to settle into and maintain their housing. People who have experienced homelessness often feel a sense of isolation and loneliness when finally housed and so it is crucial that support is provided to assist in this transition and to help prevent people returning to homelessness.

People sleeping rough are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community, many of whom have disability, mental health and other support needs. They may also be isolated from family and community and need support to reconnect beyond the community of rough sleepers that has been providing this support whilst on the street.

The community in Martin Place represents a small proportion of the number of people sleeping rough in the inner city. There are also communities in Belmore Park, Wentworth Park and other areas around the Sydney CBD. There has been no long-term planning by the NSW Government of the City of Sydney to actively address the issue and appropriately support communities to access long term housing with support.

Due to the lack of social housing and affordable private rental Sydney will continue to see a rise in inner city homelessness and we need the NSW Government and the City of Sydney to work together to develop a long term plan to provide housing and support to some of Sydney's most disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

Across NSW there are over 28,000 people experiencing homelessness. The 50 people sleeping rough in Martin Place are less than 0.2% of the number of people homeless in NSW. Homelessness NSW hopes the NSW Government shows the same level of concern to fixing homelessness for all other people experiencing homelessness. This can only be done by investing in social and affordable housing and working to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

### **Quick Facts**

- Rough sleeping in Sydney has increased by 28% since 2011
- February 2017 City of Sydney StreetCount found that there were 433 people sleeping rough and crisis accommodation services were 90% full.
- As of June 2016 there were 60,000 people on the social housing waiting list in NSW
- Less than 1% of private rentals are affordable for people on low incomes in greater Sydney (Anglicare Private Rental Snapshot April 2017)
- Homelessness NSW surveyed over 500 people sleeping rough in December 2015. Over 60% of those surveyed had health and disability support needs.

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