

MEDIA RELEASE – JUNE 15, 2020

New funding a step towards goal of every Victorian having access to safe and secure housing

The Victorian Government's \$9.8 million funding to extend the emergency accommodation of people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic, and plan pathways into long-term housing, is a positive step towards the goal of every Victorian having access to safe and secure housing, says Jesuit Social Services.

"Safe and secure housing helps provide a solid foundation for personal health, wellbeing and agency, and helps build more productive, cohesive and safer communities. Without it, we can't expect people to reach their potential or have the opportunities many take for granted," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

The funding will allow agencies to continue placing clients in temporary hotel accommodation and also support improved data collection – to provide a greater understanding of the driving factors behind a person's homelessness.

"This data collection is important because it will allow for tailored support depending on a person's individual circumstances, and allow future funding to be targeted towards programs and services to provide support before a person reaches the point of homelessness.

"Across Jesuit Social Services' programs, we work with a range of different people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, including people with mental health and substance abuse problems, newly arrived refugees and migrants and people exiting prison.

"Our internal data collection shows us that almost one third [28 per cent] of all participants in our justice and crime prevention and housing and complex needs programs were homeless as of June 30, 2019. Participants with access to housing also report improvements in education and employment participation and improved view of self, compared to those who don't have housing access. This puts the importance of housing in allowing someone to turn their life around for the better in sharp focus," says Ms Edwards.

The Victorian Government's funding follows the recent announcement of more than 780 new social housing dwellings, to be delivered across 25 locations in Melbourne and regional Victoria through the Social Housing Growth Fund.

"We have long advocated for the need to increase the public and community housing stock in Victoria, including for the diversity of housing options for people with complex and multiple needs, including young people, women, people with experience of trauma, people with mental ill-health, and people exiting the justice system," says Ms Edwards.

"Everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home and recent announcements by the Victorian Government are crucial steps towards achieving this aim."

Read Jesuit Social Services' recent submission to the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria [here](#).

Media enquiries – Kathryn Kernohan, 0409 901 248 or kathryn.kernohan@jss.org.au