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MEDIA RELEASE

Anti-Poverty Week: The best solution: Enough to live on and a place to call home

St Vincent de Paul Society National President, Claire Victory repeated calls for the Federal Government to take urgent steps to address the chronic shortage of affordable, secure housing in Australia for low income earners.

Speaking at the beginning of Anti-Poverty Week 2020, Ms Victory called again for the Federal Government to establish a Social Housing Fund of \$10 billion.

She also repeated the call for a National Housing Strategy to address the shortfall of over 400,000 dwellings nationally.

‘In the face of unprecedented unemployment, all governments must work to urgently address chronic housing shortage, rental stress and homelessness which have been on the rise for the past two decades and have escalated in the face of COVID-19.

‘Currently in Australia 190,000 households are on waiting lists for social housing.

‘Two-thirds of vulnerable private renters are currently in rental stress, and 170,000 households have less than \$250 to survive on each week after paying rent.

‘The specialist homelessness service system is turning away 254 people each day.

‘Half of households experiencing rental stress are still experiencing rental stress four years later.

‘The Federal Budget which was brought down last week delivered billions for roads, dams and transport, but no direct funding to support increased social housing.

‘People have nowhere to sleep right now. This is only going to get worse as JobSeeker is reduced and the moratorium on evictions begins to be lifted.

‘Increasing bonds issued by the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation to attract investment to increase the supply of affordable housing does little to address the chronic shortage that exists right now. The amount is too small, and the approach relies, unfairly, on other agencies being able to undertake this work and carry the risk, during a recession.

‘This week we add our voice to the many other sensible people calling for this urgent investment which will stimulate the economy and provide sorely needed housing stock.

St Vincent de Paul is a proud partner and sponsor of Anti-Poverty Week and this year Barnie Van Wyk, CEO St Vincent de Paul Canberra Goulburn and Louise Miller-Frost CEO of St Vincent de Paul in South Australia are co-chairs in their respective states.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 60,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 groups located in local communities across the country.

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