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MEDIA RELEASE

Rental Affordability Index cause for urgent action

Claire Victory, National President of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia today acknowledged the release of the 2020 Rental Affordability Index by National Shelter, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Bendigo Bank and SGS Economics & Planning.

Commenting on the report, Ms Victory said that even with the COVID supplement, JobSeeker recipients face unaffordable rents in most Australian capital cities.

‘These results are a further indication of the urgent need for a significant injection of funding into social and affordable housing across all jurisdictions, including from the Commonwealth,’ Ms Victory said.

‘I have acknowledged the generous injection by the Victorian Government of \$5 billion and the more modest commitment from NSW.

‘Where there is political will, this urgent issue can be addressed.

‘But I repeat the call for the Federal Government to establish a social housing fund of at least \$10 billion to augment the efforts of the states and territories to address the chronic shortage of safe, affordable housing in Australia.

‘Governments know there is a shortfall of over 400,000 dwellings nationally. This emergency requires a strategic, consistent plan which provides a solution for the next 25 to 30 years.

‘We know that access to safe, secure, affordable housing is widely recognised as a vital determinant of wellbeing – it is associated with better outcomes in health, education and employment, as well as economic and social participation.

'Without stable, secure housing, particularly vulnerable people are unlikely to get access to the support they need to participate more fully in their community.

'We have available vacant land and shovel-ready projects ready to build urgently needed accommodation, but struggle to secure funding from the relevant jurisdiction.

'The Commonwealth must demonstrate leadership in this space if the terrible state of housing affordability in this country is to be addressed.

'The longer we see obfuscation on long-term, united planning the longer we condemn existing and future generations of home renters to poverty.

'Today I am writing to the Prime Minister, seeking a meeting to discuss the supply of housing as a matter of urgency. This problem should not only sit with Commonwealth and state housing ministers. It requires significant political leadership from the Prime Minister down,' Ms Victory said.

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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