

MEDIA RELEASE

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Homelessness Week 2023 Sparks National Conversation on Housing Crisis: CSSV Calls for Holistic Solutions

The recently concluded Homelessness Week 2023, observed from August 7th to 13th, brought critical attention to the Australia's housing crisis and its far-reaching implications. The Victorian Homelessness Network made a powerful statement by organising the placement of 6,000 origami 'homes' on the steps of the Victorian Parliament House. This artistic display symbolised the annual build requirement for new social housing homes to combat the escalating crisis in Victoria. The week's activities also highlighted the crucial role that organisations play in offering diverse housing options and comprehensive support for the Victorian community.

Catholic Social Services Victoria's (CSSV) member organisations, along with numerous Catholic congregations, parishes, and dioceses, have been instrumental in providing affordable and social housing solutions to address the diverse needs of people across Victoria. These initiatives, coupled with specialised services and support, contribute to creating an environment in which individuals and families can thrive.

As the national conversation rightly intensifies around housing supply, CSSV has released [a discussion paper](#) 'Housing as Homes' encouraging creative solutions for utilising existing housing stock effectively, while emphasising the importance of robust social and community support systems to meet the holistic needs of individuals.

Josh Lourensz, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Victoria, speaks to the gravity of the situation: "The housing crisis impacts a wide spectrum of our community. When even those with jobs struggle to find affordable housing, individuals on fixed incomes, some below the poverty line, face insurmountable challenges. Secure and affordable accommodation options should be accessible to everyone, but special attention must be given to those facing additional complexities and disadvantages."

Lourensz further highlighted the shortcomings of the current housing landscape: "The private rental market is failing Victorians, and property prices are beyond the reach of many essential workers. Crisis, transitional, and permanent social or affordable housing options are insufficient for those who are unable to work or live on a fixed income. Our paper highlights that many existing domestic buildings are not being used as homes. Our policy framework should prioritise the use of existing housing stock for secure and affordable homes, rather than as assets for wealth accumulation."

The responsibility lies with all stakeholders, including governments, community groups, and social service organisations, to collaboratively address the pressing needs of our communities. While Homelessness Week has concluded, the imperative for action remains. CSSV calls for sustained efforts to ensure that every individual and family in Victoria has access to secure and dignified housing.

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