



Public housing and housing affordability are key for reducing homelessness

An interim report presented to Parliament today by the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee identifies public housing and housing affordability as the key challenges that the community want addressed in order to reduce homelessness in Victoria.

The [interim report](#), presented during Homelessness Week, outlines the findings of a survey of people who made a submission to the Committee’s inquiry into homelessness in Victoria. The inquiry will be continuing until February 2021.

“The purpose of this brief report is to provide a snapshot of the key areas that all of you who provided a response to the survey—individuals and organisations—believe are most important for the Committee to consider,” Committee Chair Fiona Patten said.

“We hear you loud and clear: housing is number one, whether that be public housing or housing affordability.”

Ms Patten noted that other issues, such as employment, mental health and family violence, are also important but need to be looked at in the context of this housing priority.

“People participating in the inquiry have indicated that the key to preventing and ending homelessness is an adequate supply of safe, affordable, long-term housing,” Ms Patten said.

The provision of housing will be discussed in more detail in the Committee’s final report.

The data collected so far by the inquiry is available as an interactive dashboard that shows who the Committee has engaged with and what issues are most important to them.

“The survey we conducted as part of this inquiry allowed us to identify the groups that have been underrepresented during the inquiry process,” Ms Patten said. “We have sought to engage with them in new ways, in order to ensure the evidence received as part of the inquiry represents the full diversity of experiences of homelessness.”

Since late last year the Committee has held 14 public hearings in Melbourne and regional Victoria including a videoconference with representatives of organisations in Finland. During the COVID-19 emergency, the Committee has been conducting its hearings online.

In its interim report the Committee notes that the pandemic and the bushfires during the summer exacerbated the societal and individual factors that lead to homelessness.

“The current emergency has not only increased the risk of homelessness but has also increased the demand for services responding to homelessness,” Ms Patten said.

“But we have also heard how this health crisis has led to the provision of housing to people experiencing homelessness especially those sleeping rough,” she said.

“As we head into the next stage of this inquiry, we know that people are facing significant challenges in communities across our state. We will be working hard as a Committee to ensure that we can present workable recommendations to address the challenges associated with homelessness.”

The interim report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

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