

## Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

**Name:** Anne Peters

**Organisation:**

**Organisation position:**

**In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this Inquiry into homelessness to consider:** Rough sleeping,Public housing,Services,Indigenous people,Family violence,Housing affordability,Mental health,Employment

**What best describes your interest in our Inquiry?** Concerned citizen

**Are there any additional themes we should consider?**

**Submission:** I urge the commission to consider practical and inexpensive ways that existing public buildings, such as churches, could be used to offer safe sleeping options for homeless people. The not for profit group Stable One, which runs the Winter Shelter program with eight eastern suburbs churches, has recently been informed that this program cannot continue unless the churches obtain Class 3 permits, akin to a boarding house. Whilst safety is an important issue, it is ironic to suggest that these considerations are so important that it is better for people to be sent back to sleep in the streets and parks. It seems to me that some simple additions or modifications could be made to churches and/or other public buildings which could allow homeless people to sleep safely and legally. If necessary, could another category of short-term/crisis accommodation be added to the legislation which would allow this to happen? Whilst such sleeping arrangements are necessarily just a "band-aid fix", the issue of homelessness is one that needs to be addressed immediately, both in the short and long term. Short term solutions such as this are not ideal and should not be considered an "answer" to homelessness. But in crisis conditions, they can alleviate one of the immediate concerns of people without homes. Thank you for taking into consideration my submission.

**Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?**

**Signature:** Anne Peters