

## Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Mr Michael McMahon

**Organisation Name:**  
**Your position or role:**

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::**

Housing affordability, Services, Mental health, Rough sleeping, Indigenous people, Public housing, Family violence, Employment

**What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :**

Working in Homelessness services , Working in the health sector

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

### YOUR SUBMISSION

#### **Submission:**

Castlemaine Housing Service, a program of CHIRP Community Health, actively case manage approximately 140 families and individuals a year. We also respond to upwards of 297 contacts related to housing stress and homelessness each year. Our youth team provides comprehensive case management to approximately 20 young people annually (under the age of 25).

Causes of homelessness in our region include Unemployment or Under Employment; Family Violence; ever increasing Cost of Rent coupled with a shortage of housing on the private rental market in the region.

Frequently the people we work with have additional, often complex needs that they may need referrals for or support with such as disability, mental health issues, or drug or alcohol issues. However there is a rapidly increasing demand on the service from people for whom the sole issue is the severe lack of affordable housing. It is so important to have a local housing service to respond to the needs of our community - not least of all as many of the local real estate agents work collaboratively with us and our clients and it is vital that we continue to strengthen those connections and connections to other local businesses and organisations so we can respond in an individualised and holistically way to the issue of homelessness in Castlemaine and the Mount Alexander Shire.

ABS data shows that 11.3% of Castlemaine households are paying more than the suggested maximum 30% of income on rent. Victoria's median weekly income is \$1200 where Castlemaine's is \$640, almost 50% less.

Last financial year the service assisted over 40 families into Emergency Accommodation who may otherwise have slept rough that night. For each family member this accounts for 842 individual nights off the street. Some of these clients were case managed at the time, many were not.

CHIRP Community Health regret that we can no longer provide an emergency accommodation response to people who are not currently case managed in the Housing Team. Ceasing this unfunded part of our program will certainly increase the level of rough sleepers in our shire, especially if people are unable for various reasons to travel to areas where they can be assisted. This in turn will put further pressure on other community services and businesses, the police, council services, GPs and the hospital.

CHIRP will continue to provide a quality homelessness service to the Mt. Alexander Community, and look forward to a day when there is no such thing as homelessness and housing stress.

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

**FILE ATTACHMENTS**

**File1:**

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

Michael McMahan