

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Mrs Merryn Stevenson

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::

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

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

Working with Aboriginal Victorians

Are there any additional themes we should consider?

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

After spending the past 12 months investigating the causes of high rates of incarceration of Aboriginal people in East Gippsland, it is clear that homelessness is a key contributor, especially in relation to recidivism.

Fractured family relationships and Intervention Orders mean that men exiting prison often cannot return to their families. The crisis in public and private housing levels in East Gippsland mean that their applications are usually not successful. Without an address they cannot receive parole and the support that entails. Often they serve their full term, are released, couch surf for a few weeks, re-offend and re-enter prison.

During 2019, Breach Family Violence order and Family Violence charges made up more than 20% of the total offences in Lake Tyers and Lakes Entrance and 25% in Bairnsdale and Orbost. With the closure of 2 of Bairnsdale's 3 caravan parks in recent times, men on orders who can't return to their homes are faced with a choice between homelessness or relying on wider family members for shelter. I interviewed a man recently at Fulham Prison who was rendered homeless in the same type of situation. His homelessness led to a downward spiral, of missing court dates due to not having an address, loss of employment, theft of food, sleeping rough, increased mental distress resulting in drug use and finally, inevitably, incarceration. At around \$100,000 a year per inmate this a costly accommodation option for our state.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

Signature:

Merryn Stevenson