September 6, 2007

Mr Adem Somyurek, MLC
Chair
Electoral Matters Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

Dear Mr Somyurek,

Thank you for the opportunity for Hanover Welfare Services to make a presentation to the Electoral Matters Committee about the issue of homelessness and voter participation in last year’s State Election.

Two matters were raised by Committee members, which we are happy to provide a response.

The first issue noted by the Committee was an estimation of the number of eligible votes experiencing homelessness who did not participate in the State Election 2006. The following table provides such an estimate based on gender and age. While the table needs to be read as providing indicative figures only, nonetheless it suggests that over 7,000 voters were effectively disenfranchised in the last State Election:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age cohorts</th>
<th>19 – 24</th>
<th>25 – 34</th>
<th>35 – 44</th>
<th>45 – 54</th>
<th>55 – 64</th>
<th>65 plus</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>1,286</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>4,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,297</td>
<td>1,979</td>
<td>1,499</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>7,035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table uses results from the 2001 Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to determine the number of people counted as homeless in Victoria who were 19 years of age or older (estimated to be 13,000).
The rate of voter participation (for each specific age group and gender) is based on those determined from the survey conducted by Hanover Welfare Services, namely, that 90 per cent of the total number of homeless were eligible to vote (11,722) and of these, 60 per cent did not vote.

The second matter concerns the provision of mobile polling booths at the three main inner-city crisis centres. At any one time, over 170 clients use these centres and who potentially could make use of mobile polling booths if available. It is the view of Hanover Welfare Services that the provision of mobile booths, while provided at minimal cost to the VEC, would greatly contribute to the participation of these clients. Such a measure is warranted considering the success of the mobile polling facilities piloted at St Mary's in Fitzroy during the 2006 Victorian State Election.

We trust that this information satisfies the questions posed by the Electoral Matters Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Keenan
CEO