



MEDIA RELEASE



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HOMELESSNESS WEEK 2017

WE MUST *ACT AND INNOVATE* TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS

The Queensland peak body for homelessness, the Council to Homelessness Persons Queensland, is joining forces with Brisbane-based homelessness service provider, the 139 Club, to launch Homelessness Week for 2017.

Homelessness Week events will be occurring across the state, from 7 – 13 August, to raise awareness and engage communities about issues related to homelessness. The national theme for Homelessness Week is “Action & Innovation”, recognising the need for flexible, creative and adequately resourced responses to break the cycle of homelessness and to engage in early intervention and prevention of this devastating social issue.

Additionally, we must address the housing affordability crisis, as Queensland communities are experiencing rising house prices and rents, and frontline services are witnessing increasing levels of poverty and financial hardship.

“It is important to remember that there are many types of homelessness and much of it is invisible. On any given night in Australia, 1 in 200 people are homeless. It is imperative that as a community, we are inclusive and provide a safety net for all,” said Deb Blakeney, Council to Homeless Persons Queensland President.

“The reality for many Queenslanders is a brutal housing crisis that is pushing people into toilet blocks, caravan parks, crisis accommodation, couch surfing, overcrowding and rough sleeping. The CHPQ is concerned about the significant number of young people and children who are affected by the issue, and the disproportionate experience of homelessness of the state’s most vulnerable populations, including older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The highest cause of homelessness in Australia is domestic and family violence.”

“It is simply unacceptable that adults, young people and children do not have pathways to accessible, affordable and sustainable housing options, and the necessary supports available to address complex issues. Significant resources need to be aimed at the prevention and early intervention of homelessness, as well as addressing the systemic barriers that people who are homeless experience.”

Ms Blakeney said that homelessness was simply an unacceptable part of our society.

“The stigma and discrimination experienced by people who are homeless is also reflective of a need to educate the community about the causes and consequences of homelessness, and that homelessness can happen to anyone.

We need to put the reality of homelessness at the forefront during this week, and raise awareness of the impact of increasing levels of disadvantage and high levels of isolation experienced by people in communities across the state. The CHPQ calls for a planned, collaborative and co-ordinated approach to achieve the changes required.”

The 139 Club has been supporting Brisbane City’s homeless since 1975, offering services and facilities that enable its visitors to feel comfortable and safe. The club provides food, day beds, showers and laundry facilities, as well as crisis support, medical services, professional advice (housing, legal and welfare), and social activities.

Chief Executive Officer Sara Harrup said the 139 Club’s mission was to ensure that anyone involved with the club understood that ‘**dignity matters.**’

“The 139 Club is all about providing a safe space to be, as well as having respect for everyone who comes here, from our funders and supporters to our staff, volunteers and most importantly, our visitors,” she said.

“We are excited to be part of CHPQ’s Queensland launch of Homelessness Week 2017. We are passionate about what we do and the people we support, and we are committed breaking the cycle of homelessness.”

How can Queenslanders participate in Homelessness Week?

1. Share their awareness about homelessness by using **#homelessnessweek2017qld** on social media
2. Read about and discuss homelessness with family and friends to change social perceptions
3. Donate to a specialist homelessness service in your area (such as the 139 Club!)
4. Participate in a Homelessness Week event, including the State Launch at the 139 Club, 505 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, 10am on Monday 7 August 2017. Further enquiries about this event can be directed to admin@chpq.org.au.
5. Register your Homelessness Week event at <http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/index.php/hw2017-events/hw2017-qld>.

Ends.

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The Council to Homeless Persons Queensland is a collaboration of funded homelessness throughout Queensland. We actively participate in the Council to Homeless Persons Australia (CHPA) and we are represented on the board of Homelessness Australia, the federal peak body and organizer of National Homelessness Week. We aim to provide a collective voice for homelessness services and service users and to advocate for positive social change in relation to homelessness.

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