

MCISC NEWS No. 7

Homelessness on the Peninsula

The 4th – 10th August is Homelessness Week across Australia and this year's theme is "Housing Ends Homelessness".

It is quite concerning that at the Centre we are seeing more and more people experiencing homelessness and in particular, people who are sleeping rough, as a result. On average, in the first half of this year, we have seen 14 people experiencing homelessness each month. Last year for the same period, on average we saw 9 people.

We recently started meeting with our volunteers on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the Centre and they continue to raise their frustration at our limited ability to assist rough sleepers.

You may be aware that there is no emergency accommodation on the Peninsula, to refer people to.

We did recently receive a number of backpack beds and a couple of 3-person tents, which are often our only option in trying to provide accommodation for these people.

However, recognition of the issue of homelessness is growing on the Peninsula and we are actively involved in seeking solutions.

I currently chair the Mornington Peninsula Housing Network which focusses on homelessness and I also sit on the Shire's Triple A Housing Committee.

You will hopefully have heard that the Shire has approved funding to upgrade our toilets to include a hot shower, especially for this target group.

We are also actively exploring the establishment of a "Stable One" model of providing shelter for people experiencing homelessness on the Peninsula. Stable One offers a safe and supportive environment for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Yarra Ranges in the winter months. It partners with local churches and congregations, equipping and empowering them to work together, utilising their buildings as venues and engaging their members as volunteers. Watch this space for developments.

I encourage you all to make yourselves familiar with the national "Everybody's Home" campaign and support it where possible.

I also encourage you to support Fusion by attending their "Sleep in Your Car" event at Mornington Park on Saturday 3rd August from 5.30pm.

Stuart Davis-Meehan, Manager, July 2019