



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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HOMELESSNESS: TOGETHER WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson today outlined the Government's response to homelessness to a forum in Singleton.

Ms Grierson was invited by the Newcastle & Hunter Homelessness Interagency Network to officially open its forum and to speak on the Government's consultation and policy responses.

Ms Grierson told the forum her visits to homeless shelters in Newcastle in the last six months had given her an insight into the enormous challenges faced by service providers and clients.

"There is simply not enough emergency accommodation in existence, and a lack of longer term accommodation contributes to "exit block" where we don't have anything to offer those people who are ready to move out of emergency or short-term accommodation."

She said the Government had already announced a number of immediate policy responses, and would release a White Paper in September which would include a comprehensive national action plan to reduce homelessness by 2020.

"Since coming to office last year the Rudd Government has already made several significant announcements in the area of homelessness, including \$150 million over five years to build 600 homes across Australia for families and individuals who are homeless and \$100 million for long term supported accommodation for people with disabilities."

"With nearly 50 percent of people coming into homelessness services being private renters in financial difficulty, the Government is also offering incentives to build 50,000 new rental properties, which will be rented out at 20 per cent below market rate."

Ms Grierson committed to continued consultation with service providers in Newcastle as the Government developed its long term approach to homelessness through its White Paper.

"I can't stress enough that cooperation and dialogue between service providers will help to ensure that we can leverage the benefits of national reform for the benefit of homeless people in Newcastle."

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