



## **Homelessness NSW welcomes hotel accommodation for people sleeping rough in Greater Sydney lockdown area as first step**

Homelessness NSW has welcomed the commitment of the NSW Government to ensure hotel accommodation for all people sleeping rough in the Greater Sydney lockdown area as further evidence that ending homelessness is achievable.

The NSW Government is providing hotel and motel accommodation to people sleeping rough for the duration of the current Greater Sydney lockdown in order to help keep them healthy and well. People sleeping rough are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 and so it is good to see a swift response from the NSW Government.

‘What we saw last year during the previous COVID-19 lockdown is that we can end homelessness for people when we want to’, said Ms Katherine McKernan, CEO of Homelessness NSW.

‘Since last year’s lockdown the Government has committed funding to provide housing and support to over 1,000 people sleeping rough through the Together Home program, so we know that with political will and investment we can end homelessness.’

‘We would urge the Government to use this as an opportunity to provide housing and support for all people experiencing homelessness in NSW.’

‘Unfortunately in NSW we have over 50,000 applicants awaiting social housing, with most people having to wait years to be housed. We are also experiencing the highest increases in homelessness and the highest turnaway from homelessness services across Australia. Last week’s budget was a lost opportunity to commit to the social housing build necessary to ensure everyone in NSW has a home.’

The NSW Government is the beneficiary of an unexpected additional \$1 billion in stamp duty from an out of control housing market but has failed to use this windfall to adequately invest in the social housing needed to end homelessness. It is estimated that NSW needs to commit to an additional 5,000 homes every year for the next 10 years to just meet current demand.

If we understand the risks of being homeless associated with COVID-19 then why can’t we also help keep people safe, healthy and well by providing housing when not in a pandemic.

‘If we can end some people’s homelessness why not end it for all?’

**Contact:** Katherine McKernan, CEO Homelessness NSW, 0425 288 446