



Media Release

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G21 rallies for homeless project

Demand for homelessness support in parts of G21 region has increased in the wake of Melbourne's heightened focus on central business district rough sleepers, according to frontline advocates.

Barwon South-West Region Homelessness Network Co-ordinator Andrew Edgar said ongoing impact of Geelong's Ford and Alcoa plant closures might also be being felt as agencies report 'significant' rises in demand.

Latest figures show about 1000 people experiencing homelessness in Barwon region, with about 120 of them sleeping rough.

G21-Geelong Region Alliance is highlighting the issue in support of The Road Home project co-ordinated by the Lions Club of Corio Norlane appealing for donations of goods for people experiencing homelessness.

Addressing disadvantage is a G21 priority project, incorporating the G21 Region Opportunities for Work (GROW) plan.

A Road Home appeal from May 1-5 focuses on donations of hygiene items to help people maintain cleanliness and dignity.

A Road Home winter appeal from April to September seeks donations of blankets, towels, jackets, hats, socks and underwear.

G21 chief executive officer Elaine Carbines urged people to leave donations in any of 15 collection bins located across Geelong and region.

"It is easy for many of us to take our essentials and comforts for granted," Ms Carbines said.

"While the homelessness of others might not be visible to us day-to-day, the need is very real and it is of serious concern that it appears to be multiplying in our region.

“We need to care, and small, functional donations – perhaps a toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, new socks or a blanket – to The Road Home can make a significant difference for someone else.”

Mr Edgar said collating complete numbers on homelessness in any region was always difficult.

He said findings from the 2016 census were still being processed, but a combination of 2011 census and 2014 Homelessness Entry Point data led to the following estimates for Barwon region:

- 120-150 people experiencing primary homelessness, without conventional accommodation, sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings;
- More than 600 people experiencing secondary homelessness, moving frequently from one temporary shelter to another; and,
- Almost 500 people experiencing tertiary homelessness, living in accommodation which falls below minimum community standards, which might include overcrowded dwellings, boarding houses and caravan parks. Debate exists over use of the term homeless for people in these conditions.

Mr Edgar said anecdotal reports from frontline agencies suggested some people who had been sleeping rough in central Melbourne had shifted to Geelong due to personal safety concerns as Melbourne City Council prepares to tighten regulations on the practice.

He said other factors in Geelong region homelessness included manufacturing shutdowns, increased awareness of family violence and women leaving violent relationships, and housing and rental affordability.

Barwon South West Homelessness Networks is a partner of The Road Home project.

The Road Home co-ordinator Richard Walter said homelessness had many causes.

“Although a person may be homeless they still have value to offer so please show them you care,” Mr Walter said.

The Road Home hygiene appeal collection points, from May 1-5, are:

- City Learning and Care, 9 Sparks Rd, Norlane
- Buckingham Early Learning Centre, 42 Buckingham St, Lara
- Head Start Early Learning Centre, 57 Church St, Geelong West
- Drysdale Primary School, 58 Clifton Springs Rd, Drysdale
- Ocean Grove Community Centre, 1 John Dory Drive, Ocean Grove

Winter appeal collection points, from April-September, are:

- G21-Geelong Region Alliance, 131 Myers St, Geelong
- Saddle On Riding School, 550 Elcho Rd, Lovely Banks
- Corio Library, 2 Cox Rd, Norlane
- Rosewall Community Centre, 34 Sharland Rd, Corio
- Happy Feet Early Learning Centre, 6 Plantation Rd, Corio
- North Shore Football and Netball Club, Rose Ave, Norlane
- Bank of Melbourne, Corio Shopping Centre
- Harcourts Real Estate, 127 Separation St, Bell Park
- St George Workers Club, 212 Pakington St, Geelong West
- Hamlan Homes, 359 Moorabool St, Geelong
- Torquay Rd Early Learning Centre, 189 Torquay Rd, Grovedale
- Springdale Community Centre, 17 High St, Drysdale
- Wyndham Resort, 100 The Esplanade, Torquay
- Queenscliff Neighbourhood House, 3 Tobin Drive, Queenscliff
- Ocean Grove Community Centre, 1 John Dory Drive, Ocean Grove (Hygiene Only)

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For details on G21's Addressing Disadvantage priority project visit www.g21.com.au

For details on The Road Home visit www.theroadhome.net.au