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MEDIA RELEASE

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More people at risk of homelessness on the Central Coast

The announcement by the Premier of an overhaul of public housing is likely to create more housing stress for Central Coast residents in need of accommodation, Executive Officer Laurie Maher said.

The tightening of eligibility criteria for public housing will increase the number of homeless. In a crazy way this will then give them priority for public housing, Maher said. It might sound good but in real terms it means putting our needy households on the merry-go-round.

While it is great to see the homeless being given priority for public housing, it is also likely that with the tenured leases more people would again end up homeless.

Under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, Coast Shelter assists those who are homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness so it's likely that the number of people coming to us for assistance will increase. What a pity the Federal Government did not increase funding under the SAAP program to cope with this.

This review is a bit like giving with one hand and taking away with the other, Maher said. Once again, the disadvantaged are the victims of State versus Federal politics.

The number of people on the Central Coast living in "housing stress" (where people pay more than 30% of their income for accommodation) increases all the time, he said.

The gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" is an ever increasing problem and homelessness, once again, is a disastrous outcome of Government policy.

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