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MEDIA RELEASE

FEDERAL BUDGET FORGETS THE HOMELESS

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The Federal Government 2005/06 Budget has failed to even acknowledge the existence of Australia's 105,000 homeless men, women and children.

There is not even a mention of homelessness, Laurie Maher, Executive Officer of Coast Shelter said.

While the Budget might have been good for the "haves", the "have nots" now have less, he said.

By the best objective assessment available, the State/Federal Homelessness Program needed at least a 15% increase to remain viable. Others would suggest it needs a 35-45% increase to meet the needs of those who cannot be accommodated in the present system, but what Mr Costello offers is a big nothing, Maher said.

Homelessness is due, in most cases, to circumstances beyond the control of those involved and certainly the estimated 26,000 homeless children in Australia don't have any say, Maher said.

While many people in our community are willing to assist the homeless back into the community and to restore their dignity and self worth, it is up to the Government to provide them with the resources.

The Commonwealth must take a leadership role by injecting funds to address the growing numbers of "have nots", Maher stated.

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