

**Referral** (02) 4324 7239

**Office** (02) 4325 3540

**Fax** (02) 4324 7876

**ABN** 174 7048 6295



**Address** Rear, 97 Donnison Street

(PO Box 1234) Gosford NSW 2250

**Email** [admin@coastshelter.org.au](mailto:admin@coastshelter.org.au)

**Website** [www.coastshelter.org.au](http://www.coastshelter.org.au)

## MEDIA RELEASE

### COAST SHELTER IN A YEAR

24 Oct 2006

Registered Clubs on the Central Coast have combined with community groups and the corporate sector to assist Coast Shelter to increase its accommodation and services to the homeless and disadvantaged people on the Central Coast.

In announcing Coast Shelter's achievements for the year, President, Gavin Shepherd reported that Coast Shelter had provided in excess of 30,000 overnight beds for homeless men, women and children and with the assistance of local Church and community groups, in excess of 60,000 meals through the Donnison Street Restaurant.

Executive Officer of Coast Shelter, Laurie Maher said "things are certainly not getting any better".

"While Coast Shelter could be justifiably proud of its achievements, a very worrying fact was that it could not assist a further 1,579 homeless people because it did not have sufficient accommodation".

"No wonder the previous Premier Bob Carr referred to the Central Coast as the 'working poor'" Maher said.

"With one third of households earning less than \$400 per week and the average rental of \$250 per week, it is no wonder so many of our citizens suffer 'housing stress'" Maher said.

The problem of poverty and homelessness are not confined to the Central Coast. Recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics measuring financial stress of working people showed that in one year:

59,000 people went without meals

95,000 people were forced to pawn items to raise money

36,000 people were unable to heat their homes in winter

89,000 people sought help from charities

537,000 were unable to pay their electricity, gas or telephone bills

And 810,000 working families experienced cash flow problems

"If you look at the damning statistics in what is the 'Lucky Country', one wonders how the Federal Government can boast of a 16 billion dollar surplus" Maher said.

**For further details contact Laurie Maher**  
**Phone: 02 4325 3540    Mobile: 0418 439 179**