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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Practical response needed to address Homelessness**

“If Commonwealth and State Governments are going to be successful in reducing homelessness in Australia, then getting results has to be an obsession for Governments, Community Agencies and Communities” said David Cappo, South Australian Commissioner for Social Inclusion.

“While we have moved from our head in the sand response, to the plight of the homeless in our communities and Australia as a whole, it is time to come up with practical solutions which can address the housing needs of the 100, 000 plus Australians who sleep rough each night” Laurie Maher, Executive Officer of Coast Shelter said.

“Finally our Federal Government has put “homelessness” on the political agenda and has provided some funds to address the problem however, it is up to every level of Government to face up to the problem and do something about it” Maher said.

Solutions have to be practical.

Overinflated house prices, unavailability of low cost rentals, shortages of Public Housing and low incomes, all contribute towards the creation of a very real National and Community Crisis.

“Social issues, such as poverty, high rents, lack of rental history, mental well- being and family violence are all reflected in the causes of homelessness” Maher said,

Already this year, Coast Shelter has increased the number of overnight beds it had been able to provide by 9.2 % but unfortunately, the number of persons it had to turn away because of lack of vacancies had increased by 17.5 %.

“As a community we have a problem which will just not go away Maher said and it was great to see Gosford City Council offering leadership, by calling a Housing Forum to address the problem.”

Perhaps a co-ordinated approach by all stake holders can come up with a solution, or at least stem the tide of the ever increasing number of our households living in “housing stress” or worse still, ending up on the streets.

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