

Referral (02) 4324 7239

Office (02) 4325 3540

Fax (02) 4324 7876

ABN 46 095 999 287



Address Rear, 97 Donnison Street

(PO Box 1234) Gosford NSW 2250

Email admin@coastshelter.org.au

Website www.coastshelter.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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National Homeless Persons' Week

“Regardless of all promises made by Politicians over recent years, the number of homeless persons in Australia remains a damning indictment of our Australian community,” Laurie Maher Executive Officer of Coast Shelter said.

Of the 105,000 people who sleep on the street each night throughout Australia, 46,200 (44%) are female, 12,133 (12%) are children under 12, nearly 50% are young people under 25 and 18,000 are over 55.

“It’s disappointing that so much media coverage during this election is about trivia, such as leaks etc, but no candidate for the Federal Election seems to be prepared to give an unequivocal commitment to meeting former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s promise to halve homelessness by 50% by 2020,” he added.

“With the increase in the numbers of people seeking assistance seeming to be always on an upward curve, surely it is reasonable for our local candidates to tell us where they stand,” Maher stated.

At the annual Homeless Memorial Service held at 97 Donnison Street on Thursday 5th August, Maher said that over 4,000 homeless men, women and children had been turned away from Central Coast services in 2009-10, because there was just not enough room.

In a moving ceremony lead by Fr Rod Bower, homeless men and women together with representatives of the many services trying to make a difference to those who had died lonely on the street, were remembered and candles were lit in their memory.

“Each year Coast Shelter has hosted the Memorial Service, which this year attracted record numbers. It’s only a small recognition of our fellow citizens, but at least it gives us time to reflect on those who do it tough in our community and to turn our thoughts to those who are no longer with us,” Maher concluded.

Media Enquiries contact Laurie Maher on mobile: 0408 439 179