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STATEMENT

Wednesday, 14 March 2018

2016 CENSUS HOMELESSNESS ESTIMATES

Today's release of the latest estimates of homelessness from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows there are some emerging issues, which will require investigation and demonstrates why homelessness is a key priority for the NSW Government.

I am pleased to see more people are accessing supported accommodation. The data shows a 19 per cent increase in the number of people at risk of homelessness in supported accommodation but there is always more work to do.

The census data has shown an emerging issue of overcrowding, which was the main contributor to the increase in the homelessness population, particularly in the inner-city [with the number of people living in severely crowded dwellings rising by 328 per cent from 2011- 2016].

The NSW Government will investigate this issue and what needs to be done to address it. The data states that 45 per cent of all homeless people in NSW are living in overcrowded dwellings that exceed occupancy standards. More than half of the people in NSW living in severely overcrowded dwellings in 2016 were born in Asia, and one in five people in severely overcrowded dwellings in NSW was a tertiary student.

Reducing homelessness is a priority for the NSW Government. Our current investment in homelessness services and programs, which is a record investment, has increased by 43 per cent over four years.

The 2017/18 Budget included a record \$1.1 billion to support people experiencing homelessness and improve services for social housing tenants.

This included \$198 million for Specialist Homelessness Services, homelessness programs and critical referral services such as Link2home and \$22 million over four years to provide an additional support packages and accommodation for rough sleepers in locations across NSW.

In the past twelve months, the NSW Government introduced more proactive outreach programs that take services directly to people sleeping rough – resulting in 200 people from the inner city accessing permanent and stable social housing.

A recent summer street count identified 329 people sleeping rough in the inner city - 104 less than the 433 people counted in February 2017.

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