



Questions for the Prime Minister on Homeless service funding

With Prime Minister Tony Abbott arriving in town today, Western Australian community services are keen to hear him answer questions about the uncertain future Federal funding for community services in WA.

The future of services for people who are homeless, women and children leaving violent situations, at risk young people disengaged from training and employment, and people in financial crisis are all up in the air – with concerns that the Commission of Audit will lead to significant cuts to critical social programs supporting the most vulnerable West Australians in the coming budget.

Many successful community programs rely on services and staff making a long-term commitment to support someone in crisis to turn around and stabilise their lives – this becomes increasingly difficult when funding is short-term and uncertain.

Questions for the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott:

- Is the Federal Government committed to ensuring successful programs for our most vulnerable citizens continue?
- When will there be an announcement on the future of funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness?
- Is he aware how many services are having to turn away new clients or are losing staff due to the uncertainty of funding?
- What are the social policy priorities of his Government for this term of office?
- Is the concern about deep cuts to community services likely to hurt the Liberals in the upcoming WA Senate by-election? How likely is it they will lose a Senator given current polling?
- Will the Minister for Social Services Kevin Andrews be visiting WA in coming weeks to address these community concerns?

Quick Stats:

The NPAH has allowed specialist homelessness services to support thousands of people in need. In 2012-2013, homelessness services in WA assisted 21,409 people. 91% of NPAH supported clients placed in social housing had retained their tenancies and were still accommodated 12 months on.

NPAH program funding was \$135m over 4 years. The opportunity cost of homelessness is estimated to be \$3685 per person per year – that is, it cost this much more in other services (such as health and justice) on top of the cost of homeless services if these services are not provided.

Key Reports:

The cost of homelessness and the net benefit of homelessness programs: a national study, AHURI Final Report 218, Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute, December 2013. <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p82014>

Specialist Homelessness Services Online Reporting, AIHW Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129545629> (latest data)

NPAH Evaluation of WA Programs – final report. Department of Child Protection, March 2013. <https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/servicescommunity/Documents/Evaluation%20Report.pdf>

Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Western Australia in to the Implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness in Western Australia, October 24, 2012. http://audit.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/insert2012_13.pdf

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