



Media Release

Has SA lost its way on the Road Home?

The future of South Australian homelessness services is hanging in the balance. SA reformed its homeless sector four years ago aligned to Kevin Rudd's long term vision to significantly reduce homelessness by 2020 contained in "The Road Home" policy funded by the Commonwealth and the States. The SA State Government is waiting for the Federal Government to share their policy and funding intentions in housing and homelessness beyond June 2015. Shelter SA is calling upon Minister Zoe Bettison and State Government to reinforce SA's commitment to a long term approach to homelessness recognising it is a pervasive social issue that cannot be fixed overnight.

Dr. Alice Clark, Executive Director of Shelter SA said today, "it's to Minister Bettison's credit that a thorough consultation with workers from the sector has been undertaken" and "the strong message coming from the field is that our Premier, Jay Weatherill must take the lead role in homelessness with the portfolio **elevated to Premier and Cabinet.**" The reasons for this are clear Dr. Clark said, "only the Premier has the authority and directive to ensure that all statutory and government services are adequately resourced to meet their responsibilities to clients across each relevant portfolio and ministry, especially child protection". If this doesn't happen people will continue to fall through the gaps and homelessness services will represent a State-wide emergency response to every crisis situation - Dr. Clark is particularly concerned for the welfare of our children.

Service providers insist that State Government must **avoid a competitive tendering process** at all costs – they regularly report huge amounts of information and data to State Government and it is well known which agencies are performing adequately. Based on this fact, Shelter SA has provided advice to the Minister that these contracts should be rolled over to avoid the wastage of resources by State Government in procurement without a trade off in accountability.

Lastly, Dr. Clark said, "It is imperative that State Government **reveal their financial commitment** to homelessness services regardless of Federal decisions - the urgency of an announcement is critical to ensure services can continue, are sustainable and have some level of certainty with adequate notice prior to June next year". Such an announcement would also serve to reassure the Commonwealth that the State is ready and willing to match their funding.

In the meantime, homelessness service providers and workers languish - living with huge uncertainty about their future - still going above and beyond the call of duty and consistently achieving more with less for our most vulnerable citizens.

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Shelter SA is the peak body for housing in South Australia