



Brotherhood of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

MEDIA RELEASE

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Brotherhood of St Laurence welcomes COAG \$800m for homelessness

The Brotherhood of St Laurence welcomed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's announcement that the Council of Australian Governments has agreed to spend an additional \$800 million over the next four years to improve the nation's response to homelessness.

"This is an increase in real terms of more than 50%. Only the extremely churlish will fail to acknowledge that this is by far the most substantial commitment ever made to tackling homelessness in this nation," said Tony Nicholson, Executive Director of the national welfare agency.

"It represents a massive turnaround from recent years when the Commonwealth Government's contribution to tackling homelessness has declined in real terms," Mr Nicholson said.

"When combined with the Commonwealth's commitment to an additional \$400 million for social housing, it holds out the very real prospect that we can make a major assault over the next four years on Australia's scandalously high number of homeless people.

"Because our indigenous people are grossly over-represented amongst the homeless, the unprecedented allocation to indigenous housing will make one of the biggest contributions to reducing our overall levels of homelessness.

"The great challenge is to now ensure that these funds are allocated to best effect. This will require a bold reforming strategy. It will require a much greater emphasis on prevention, and on strengthening existing homeless services so that they are more effective in ensuring that those they help are able to take their place in the mainstream economic and social life of the nation."

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