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Homelessness services to lose staff during housing crisis

At a time when homelessness services have never been under more pressure, they could face an even tougher battle in the future ahead of May's Federal Budget.

Unless the Federal Government agrees to continue the Social and Community Services Employment Remuneration (ERO) supplementation payment, homelessness services in Queensland will see a shortfall of \$68 million over five years, equivalent to the loss of more than 80 frontline workers.

Q Shelter's Executive Director, Fiona Caniglia, said:

"Funding cuts to homelessness services will hurt our most vulnerable.

"The demand for homelessness services is far greater than it has ever been. The targeted COVID measures to house people have ceased, rental costs have surged, and net migration to Queensland is higher than in any other state.

"This is not the time to reduce the number of people at the front line."

The ERO supplementation was designed to help the industry meet costs associated with the Equal Remuneration Order decision by the Fair Work Commission in 2011.

Q Shelter fears that without urgent action in the coming months, service providers will have no choice but to reduce the number of workers they employ.

"This could set the industry back decades and significantly erode the gains made by the sector, industry partners, and the state government over the last 12 months, particularly the progress emerging from the Queensland Housing Summit last October," Ms Caniglia said.

"The housing and homelessness agreement must cover the higher wages mandated by the Fair Work Commission, or hundreds of workers will lose their jobs and these critical services will be cut at a time of surge demand on homelessness services, amid a housing crisis in Queensland".

Q Shelter and National Shelter are actively making representations to the Federal Government on this issue.

ENDS

Media opportunities for comment by Q Shelter Executive Director, Fiona Caniglia, or Policy & Strategic Engagement Manager, Jackson Hills.

Q Shelter Media Contacts:

Helen Gearing and David Hill

Phone **07 3831 5900** or email comms@qshelter.asn.au

About Q Shelter

For over 35 years, Q Shelter has worked as a peak body to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders.

Over this time, we have remained an unwavering voice for solutions through advocacy, strategic engagement and capacity building.

Besides influencing solutions and policy, Q Shelter provides professional development and shares resources to assist other organisations to be effective, so that our combined capacity to respond to housing need is strengthened.