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Supreme Court decision on human rights highlights persistent homelessness and lack of housing

The following statements are attributable to Q Shelter CEO Fiona Caniglia.

Housing and homelessness peak body Q Shelter notes the Supreme Court decision regarding the City of Moreton Bay and the matter prosecuted by eight people experiencing homelessness.

‘The pre-eminent human right in a situation like this, is the right to a home. Our system is failing to provide one of the most fundamental human needs, leaving more people forced into improvised living arrangements.

‘There are simply not enough homes for everyone who needs one, and the presence of people in parks is the most visible indicator of this.

‘The focus needs to be on solutions that work both in the short term and longer term. We acknowledge the current investment in social homes, as part of a target of 53,500 set by the Queensland Government. We know that right now and in the foreseeable future, we must also invest in an immediate response that provides as many people as possible with appropriate accommodation and support, if they need it.’

Q Shelter urges continued focus on solutions such as:

- Sustained investment by the State in immediate housing responses, providing people with temporary accommodation while a longer-term housing supply is achieved. This needs expansion to assist people who are not eligible for social housing but still face substantial unmet housing needs, forcing them into improvised living arrangements.
- Partnerships between councils, the State Government, community services and philanthropists to find an alternative site or sites in key LGAs where people sleeping rough in tents and other improvised dwellings can be appropriately accommodated with practical supports and coordinated assistance to find permanent housing.
- In addition to the social housing target of 53,500, investment in 5,600 supportive housing places, accelerated in locations such as Moreton Bay, so highly vulnerable people experiencing homelessness have genuine housing choices.
- Expanded resources for coordinated outreach involving councils, the State Government (including police, Queensland Health and the Department of Housing), and community services, to ensure an integrated response to people without a home living in public spaces.
- A housing and support guarantee for families experiencing homelessness, whether they are eligible for social housing or not.

- Improved links and access to rehabilitation services and support for people who want to address challenges with addiction.

‘The most effective solutions involve genuine partnerships between the State, councils and community services to offer the best possible pathways from visible homelessness to secure, affordable housing.’

‘Community services understand from firsthand experience that some people decline assistance, however, this is a relatively small proportion of all people who need a home. The reasons can include addiction, trauma and highly complex needs, making engagement challenging. Current outreach services persist even when people decline assistance.

‘Our focus should be on delivering a response that doesn’t give up, and that deploys the right multi-agency teams where safety is paramount, and where the right skills and resources are in the mix, to house as many people as possible.

‘While rough sleeping has persisted over time (including well before COVID-19), the volume of people unable to find, get and keep a home has surged due to a range of complex structural factors. This includes a slowdown in overall housing supply, persistent construction industry workforce shortages, the rising costs of construction, lack of long-term investment in social and affordable housing, and other demographic trends such as reducing household size.

‘The current crisis needs new levels of collaboration, coordination and integration where every tier of government is fully engaged and deployed in playing an optimal role in proven solutions.

‘We envision a future where every Queenslanders has a home. The volume of people sleeping rough in public space is unprecedented in our history and we will only address these needs through a genuinely integrated response.’

For further comment, interviews or more information:

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About Q Shelter

[Q Shelter](#) (Queensland Shelter) is the peak body for housing and homelessness in Queensland. For more than 35 years, Q Shelter has worked to improve housing outcomes for Queenslanders. Over this time, we have remained an unwavering voice for solutions through advocacy, strategic engagement and capacity building.

In addition to 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 needs is strengthened.