

Monday August 7, 2023

MEDIA RELEASE



Client numbers show shape of homelessness in western NSW

A CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes team has worked with 256 clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness in two western NSW shires in the past year.

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes provides Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in the Bourke and Cobar local government areas (LGAs).

The program supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including those experiencing domestic or family violence.

Under Specialist Homelessness Services, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes operates a safe house at Bourke for women and children escaping violence, providing intensive support.

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes has released key Specialist Homelessness Services statistics for the most recent financial year ahead of Homelessness Week, August 7-13, to bring awareness to the struggle to find safe and sustainable accommodation in the regional communities it serves.

Through the program, the organisation provided 322 nights of short-term accommodation or emergency accommodation.

Of its 256 clients who were homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Bourke and Cobar LGAs, almost two-thirds – 65 per cent – were female.

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes Safe Homes portfolio manager Kimeaka Bermingham said in metropolitan areas, homelessness often took the form of rough sleeping and was therefore visible to the community, but in regional and remote areas it was often more hidden.

“Forty per cent of our clients in the Bourke and Cobar LGAs were living with relatives rent-free, or couch-surfing when presenting to our service,” she said.

The goal of the Specialist Homelessness Services program, which is funded by the NSW government, is for people to have safe, secure, sustainable and long-term housing, with resources that supports and enables and maintain independent living.

This is achieved through case management and case coordination, for example, assistance in completing rental diaries, helping clients understand processes and understand some of the jargon and requirements from housing providers, educational sessions, for example, how to manage or maintain a tenancy or safety sessions, and advocacy and awareness.

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes will team up with other service providers at Bourke to host a Homelessness Week event, and encourages the community to attend.

Homelessness Week event

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes and other service providers are teaming up to host a community social lunch to mark Homelessness Week.

It will be held on Friday August 11, 2023 from 11am to 2pm at the Bourke PCYC and for more information, people can contact CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes on 1800 067 067.

Ends.....

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes provides social services, caring for the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging



- **Mental Health**
- **Parent Child Services**
- **Family Relationship Services**
- **Financial Counselling & Capability**
- **Accommodation & Housing Support**

Supporting individuals, families and communities in western NSW