



## Advocacy for Women's Housing Security

### SECURE HOUSING A FOCUS AT THE AREA 1 MEETING

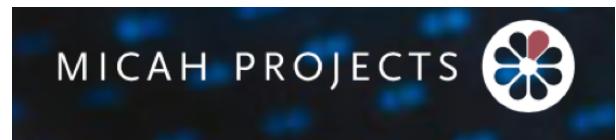
The Zonta Area 1 Meeting on April 24 at the Broncos Club featured housing security and homelessness among women as a key focus area.

The Keynote Speaker was Karyn Walsh from Micah Projects, a not for profit organisation providing services to over 6000 people in Brisbane and some regional areas. Through their *Home for Good* initiative they work together to find sustainable solutions for people who are homeless or for individuals and families who might become homeless without support.

Karyn gave some worrying, up to date, data on the extent of housing insecurity and homelessness in our community. She explained that during the COVID lockdown provision was made to accommodate the homeless but since the relaxation of the COVID response homelessness and insecurity is again on the rise and this is compounded by the growing lack of affordable housing in Queensland. Her message was that,

***Advocacy is not just recognising the problem but advocating for solutions to the problem.***

Read more: <https://micahprojects.org.au>



Susan Davies, explains Sharing with Friends

Other presentations on the program included an introduction to the **Sharing with Friends Foundation**, launched by 4 Zontians from the Brisbane Club, which is planning to enable groups of 5 older women to buy into a co-housing complex.

Pam Hall from the Caloundra Club explained their involvement with the **Better Together Housing Initiative** that is hosting morning teas to bring together women over 55 who are currently facing housing insecurity and could benefit from co-housing.

# Campaigns for Zonta Clubs to support

## THE TOWN OF NOWHERE

• 22,000 Queenslanders sleep rough every night. But homelessness doesn't necessarily mean sleeping on the streets. It could be crashing on couches night after night, living in a car or tent, or staying in severely crowded housing.

• 80 per cent of Queensland is experiencing extremely low rental vacancy rates, contributing to many people facing homelessness for the first time in their lives.

• 26,397 families – or 47,036 people – are on Queensland's social housing register. This represents a 68.5 per cent increase since 2017.

• The leading cause of homelessness for women is family and domestic violence. For these women and their children, access to secure, affordable housing is critical – their safety depends on it.

• 42 per cent of Australians who are assisted by specialist homelessness services have experienced family and domestic violence. This includes young people who are escaping perpetrators alone.

• Children aged 0 to 17 represent one third of Queenslanders assisted by specialist homelessness services. Almost half (49 per cent) of Queenslanders assisted are aged between 0 and 24.

• Queenslanders who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are seven times more likely to be homeless than non-Indigenous people. One in three Queenslanders assisted by specialist homelessness services are Indigenous.

• One in four Queenslanders assisted by specialist homelessness services (10 and over) have been identified as having a mental health issue.

• A \$4.1 billion investment in social housing would build 14,700 homes for those most in need.

Information sourced from Queensland Council of Social Service, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019-20 data) and Queensland Family and Child Commission (2018).

**Your two cents can become four billion dollars in funding.**

## QUEENSLAND IS IN HOUSING CRISIS

Billboards have gone live with the **Town of Nowhere campaign** in the regional centres of Townsville, Rockhampton, Cairns and Gladstone, and in the Brisbane suburbs of Mt Gravatt and Moorooka.

Advertising has also gone live in 18 Greater Brisbane shopping centres.

The **Town of Nowhere campaign** is calling on both the Commonwealth and Queensland governments to make landmark investments into social housing to deal with Queensland's housing crisis. There are 47,036 people on the state's social housing register – a population greater than that of Gladstone, Maryborough, or Gympie's. This is a 68.5% increase since 2017.

The campaign is funded by QCOSS and Anglicare Central Queensland and 11 other leading community organisations from across Queensland, to urge government to act on this crisis and build social housing.

QCOSS CEO Aimee McVeigh said all levels of government must act on the housing crisis.

"Both the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government have a responsibility to do something urgently about the housing crisis. Supply is simply not keeping up with demand."

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to use debt for good and create a lasting legacy. We saw similar levels of investment after World War Two and after the GFC," McVeigh said.

Following the end of World War Two, there were approximately 1,500 social homes built in Queensland each year to keep up with demand. If a similar per capita investment were made today, we'd be building 5,400 homes each year. Just 500 social homes are built each year.

People are struggling to keep a roof over their heads. The COVID crisis has shown us how important housing is for people's health and for the health of all Queenslanders, but the pandemic has worsened the housing crisis," said Ms McVeigh.

**80 per cent of Queensland is experiencing extremely low vacancy rates – in some regions like Central Queensland, it is 0.2 per cent.** The number of people in need of housing support has also skyrocketed, with a 70 per cent increase in the number of applications on the social housing register."



Billboard in a prominent location at the intersection of Fitzroy and Bolsover Streets Rockhampton.



The Everybody's Home report released to coincide with Homelessness Week in August 2020 revealed that in Capricornia 600 people were homeless and 3,100 people needed social housing. Recent anecdotal reports from local service providers indicate that numbers have increased substantially since then, with some clients reportedly living in tents, some with young children.

Local reporting in April 2021 in the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin indicates that **vacancy rates in Rockhampton are at 1.4% and 1.2% in Livingstone Shire**. The rental surge is attributed to an increase in people moving to the region for work.

Recent media reports indicate that in Queensland, the biggest rent value rises were in the resource's region of Central Queensland (+15.3%) and on the Sunshine Coast (+15%).

It is just as tight in other regional areas, with rent values up 6.7 per cent in Townsville, 6.4 per cent in Cairns, 8.9 per cent in Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday, 8.3% in Toowoomba and 9 % in Wide Bay.

The Sunshine State has been the biggest beneficiary of internal migration during the COVID-19 crisis, but that has led to significant pressure on the housing market, with cashed-up home seekers from Sydney and Melbourne pricing many locals out of the market.

**District 22 Governor Bridget Mather said "We are seeing record homelessness figures for older women in Australia. And sadly, there is also nothing new in this Federal Budget to increase support or create long-term funding certainty for specialist housing services for women, despite the increased demand for services as a result of increased gender-based violence and female economic insecurity. ZONTA calls on the Queensland Government to step up with funding in their upcoming budget".**

**For more information and to support for the Town of Nowhere campaign - head over to the website at**

**<https://townofnowhere.com> -**

**Scroll down and choose to tell your local MP to act on the Housing Crisis.**

**Zonta District 22 is a member of the HOW Movement (Housing for Older Women) - Part of Q Shelter , Qld's Industry Body for the Housing and Homelessness Sector. This is their response to the 2020/ 2021 Federal Budget**

**Missed opportunities to invest in social and affordable housing pipeline**

**The homelessness and housing sector has eagerly awaited the 2021-22 Federal Budget in a context of unprecedented demand pressure and reducing housing affordability. While the Federal Budget includes measures to assist people into home ownership it falls short of sector calls for significant investment in social and affordable housing supply.**

**Read the full statement: <https://www.qshelter.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/20210512-QShelter-responds-to-Federal-Budget.pdf>**

#### **Links**

**<http://everybodyshome.com.au/>**

**<https://townofnowhere.com>**