



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

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MC17-012638

Councillor Bob Turner
Mayor
Melton City Council
P O Box 21
MELTON VIC 3337



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Dear Councillor Turner

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 2017 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, regarding joining advocacy efforts with Frankston City Council in regards to homelessness in Australia. Your letter was referred to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP, as this matter falls within his portfolio responsibilities. The Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

The Australian Government recognises that homelessness is a complex issue that affects many Australians. It requires a long term and systematic effort across governments and communities.

Despite the Commonwealth Government spending more than \$6.5 billion on housing assistance and homelessness services every year, including \$1.4 billion through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and \$117.2 million through the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH), housing and homelessness remain significant issues.

This is why the Government announced a comprehensive housing affordability plan in the 2017-18 Budget that is designed to improve outcomes across the housing spectrum. Part of the Government's housing affordability plan is to establish a new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) from 1 July 2018. The new \$1.5 billion per annum NHHA, will replace the existing NAHA and the current NPAH, which expires on 30 June 2018.

Under the NHHA, the Government has raised the real levels of funding for homelessness by rolling the NPAH funding into the new agreement on an ongoing basis and indexing it to ensure it keeps pace with the costs faced by frontline providers. This funding, which over the three years to 2021, amounts to \$375 million, will continue to be dedicated solely to funding homelessness services across Australia, providing certainty for these critical services. State and territory governments will continue to be required to match this dedicated homelessness funding.

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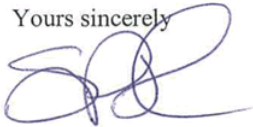
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To enable new funding arrangements under the NHHA, on 25 October 2017, the Government introduced the *Treasury Laws Amendment (National Housing and Homelessness Agreement) Bill 2017*. The Bill proposes that for states and territories to receive funding under the NHHA, they must have a credible housing and homelessness strategy. Homelessness strategies will be required to include reforms and initiatives that contribute to a reduction in the incidence of homelessness and to address priority homelessness cohorts.

Although the Australian Government provides states and territories with a significant amount of funding for housing assistance and homelessness services, the states and territories decide where services are located, which service providers are given funding, and how much funding each service provider receives. Therefore, you may like to contact the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, the Hon Martin Foley MP, at martin.foley@parliament.vic.gov.au, to discuss this matter further.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Thomas
Branch Manager
Housing Programs and Homelessness

20 December 2017