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# No place to call home

By Michaela Meade

More than 600 people living in the City of Whittlesea have no place to call home, prompting calls for more support to address homelessness.

According to Whittlesea council, there are at least 630 people without a home in the area, and a further 10,000 households in housing stress.

The council said its research revealed at least 3800 new affordable homes were "urgently needed" to address the issue.

The data was shared as part of a Homelessness Week campaign last week, and called for more state government support for

organisations like Hope Street.

Hope Street plans to open crisis accommodation for young people in Whittlesea.

Hope Street chief executive Donna Bennet said young people were feeling housing stress the most.

"Young people aged 20 to 24 years are one of the groups least represented in any form of social housing across Australia, including public housing and community housing," Ms Bennet said.

"Without appropriate support and resourcing, the risk extends to long term chronic homelessness, long term unemployment, social isolation and

devastating mental ill-health.

"Social housing is critical to preventing youth homelessness and its progression into long term adult homelessness."

Ms Bennet said she expects Tuesday's census to reveal "more of what we already know".

"More than 116,000 Australians currently experience homelessness on any given night, and more than 28,000 of those are young people aged between 12 and 24 [years]," she said.

"Regrettably, these numbers have been on an upwards trajectory from one census period to the next.

"Whilst census data will help all levels

of government and support services make informed decisions for the future, we must not discount 'hidden' homelessness.

"The vast majority of 'hidden' homelessness includes those in crisis accommodation, rooming houses, insecure housing, overcrowded dwellings and/or couch surfing in particular by young people."

Whittlesea council's chair administrator Lydia Wilson said the council is working on different projects to address homelessness.

"These projects will make a big difference, but there's more to do," Ms Wilson said.

"Alongside our partners, council will continue to work hard to ensure everyone has a place to call home."

Source: [https://issuu.com/starweekly/docs/2021-08-10\\_nsw\\_e\\_737](https://issuu.com/starweekly/docs/2021-08-10_nsw_e_737)