



28th January 2008

Letter to the Editor

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's commitment to addressing the growing problem of homelessness across the country will not only be positively welcomed by people with no stable place to live, but also the sector which supports them.

As Chair of the former Victorian Relief Committee's 71st annual Winter Blanket Appeal in 2005 we received a record 10,000 new blankets for distribution across the state. Then 20,000 people were estimated to be homeless and 'sleeping rough' at night somewhere in Victoria. Despite the massive increase in donations from 200 blankets in 2003 to 10,000 in 2005 the sad fact was we could have given away 100,000 blankets to the homeless, cold and disadvantaged and it still wouldn't have been enough.

Having moved from Melbourne to Sydney last year I'm shocked at the number of homeless people of all ages, male and female, sleeping in doorways, at suburban railway stations and in parks. Kevin Rudd's quest to find them a permanent home to stay warm and dry is a great start.

Addressing the issues that lead to homelessness will take greater understanding by all Australians. It could easily happen to any one of us, at any time.

Andrew Heslop
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