



# FAMILY FIRST



Steve Fielding **Family First** Senator for Victoria

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **HOMELESSNESS IS A BIG ISSUE – YES MINISTER, WE ALREADY KNOW**

YES Minister, homelessness is a big issue that needs big action, not just talk, to resolve Australia's homelessness crisis.

“If the Rudd Government is serious about fixing Australia’s homeless problem it will immediately commit serious money to fix the problem,” Family First leader Steve Fielding said today.

Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek told a homelessness conference in Brisbane this week that she was “overwhelmed” by the enormous challenge of helping the more than 100,000 Australians who are homeless.

“We accept that homelessness is a difficult task to resolve but something’s got to be done. Australians are sleeping on the street and in parks or crashing at a friend’s house before moving on to another friend’s house. That’s no way to live, the government has a duty to ensure these people have somewhere affordable to live,” said Senator Fielding.

"Family First wants the Federal Government to commit \$1.5 billion to get homeless people off the streets, out of parks and off borrowed couches and into their own accommodation.

"It is appalling to think that we have such a high standard of living in Australia, yet we still walk past people sleeping in the street every day and think that's normal. Homeless people have become invisible and we must change that and put into place serious dollars to solve this problem.

"The not-for-profit sector has been leading the way in caring for homeless people without much financial help, so it makes sense to invest the \$1.5 billion as follows:

- **Housing Costs = \$1 billion 1st year** Provide 100,000 accommodation units over 5 years at an average capital cost of \$50,000 each;
- **Caring Costs = \$0.5 billion 1st year** Provide support services like counselling, case management and employment assistance to help people get back on their feet.

And with experts such as the ANZ’s senior economist Paul Braddick, amongst others, warning that Australia faces a critical shortage of housing in the future with renters likely to be the most effected, Senator Fielding said now was the time for the government to act before the homelessness crisis spiralled even further out of control.

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