



Gareth Ward

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday, 17 May 2020

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS

More than 1,200 people who were sleeping rough in NSW have been helped into temporary accommodation through the rapid expansion of assertive outreach to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward said this presents an opportunity to help some of the community's most vulnerable people break the cycle of disadvantage by assisting them into longer-term accommodation.

"Our intense work since the beginning of April has resulted in many people sleeping rough accepting the offer of temporary accommodation for the first time in their lives," Mr Ward said.

"While this is a positive outcome, now that these people have a roof over their head and a safe place to stay, we want to work with them to plan for the future and, where we can, assist them to secure a safe and stable home."

As part of the Government's \$10 million investment in charities, Neami National will receive an additional \$3 million to extend support services for people in the Greater Sydney area living in temporary accommodation as part of the effort to find permanent housing solutions.

Neami National CEO Tom Dalton said the collective response during the pandemic builds on the existing networks within the community.

"These connections are critical in supporting people to move into longer-term housing. This commitment provides us with the opportunity to work with each person to understand their needs and help identify the right support for them," Mr Dalton said.

"We can assist people to find longer term housing and the right services that provide support to improve health, wellbeing and independence."

In addition, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is working intensively with Specialist Homelessness Services in regional and rural NSW to assist people in temporary accommodation into longer-term housing.

These initiatives align with the NSW Government's commitment to halve street sleeping by 2025 as part of its Premier's Priorities.