

Media release**Embargo: 10am, Wednesday 22 July 2015****Building a better future***Rapid Rehousing Fund makes material difference to homelessness figures*

Launch Housing partnered with realestate.com.au in 2014, which saw the development of a national Rapid Rehousing Fund. This initiative has now been operating for six months, during which time it has helped 233 people across 78 households, including 71 single-parent families, seven single women and 155 children - to escape family violence and find housing that is safe, secure, affordable and permanent.

Dr Heather Holst, Launch Housing's Deputy CEO said she was extremely pleased with the results of the Rapid Rehousing Fund to date.

"Family violence is the number one cause of homelessness among women and children. For our Rapid Rehousing Fund to have prevented this number of women and children from entering the damaging cycle of homelessness in such a short time, is more than wonderful – it's exciting.

"We've developed a program that is making a material impact to the number of people who are homeless each night - we're gaining real momentum and it's something we're feeling very hopeful about," Dr Holst said.

Holst continued: "One of the reasons I believe we've seen results like this is because realestate.com.au has empowered the Launch Housing team to do whatever is needed to help people who are presenting for the first time or who are at risk of homelessness as a result of family violence. It could be used towards paying the bond for a private rental, subsidising the rent or buying a fridge.

"I commend realestate.com.au for initiating contact with us to develop this program in the first place and also for enabling the Launch Housing team to do what needs to be done to start moving the dial on homelessness," Holst said.

The partnership between Launch Housing and realestate.com.au is more than a financial one, with the realestate.com.au team also procuring new furniture for clients of the Rapid Rehousing Fund.

As part of REA Group's on-boarding program, every six weeks the latest recruits to the business build furniture which has been identified as needed by Launch Housing's social workers.

REA Group's CEO, Tracey Fellows said: "Providing our new starters with an opportunity to roll their sleeves up and build furniture for people who desperately need it is a really important part of our induction.

"Not only does it help them to understand our partnership with Launch Housing, but it provides really important context to our purpose of 'making property simple, efficient and stress free'. If we're not helping people who are at risk of homelessness, we're simply not delivering on our purpose," Fellows said.

This initiative has been such a hit with both REA Group's employees and the recipients of the Rapid Rehousing Fund, that the business has decided to scale it at the company-wide conference.

On Wednesday 22 July, 800 of REA Group's people from across Australia, China, Italy and Luxembourg will gather at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) to build more than 300 pieces of furniture for recipients of the Rapid Rehousing Fund. Launch Housing is also one of MCEC's ongoing charity partners and the venue is supporting the activity by sponsoring part of the space hire and providing a group of its employees to volunteer in the furniture building activity as well.

More than 25 clients of the Rapid Rehousing Fund from around Australia will receive the new furniture, helping them to have a fresh start and turn their houses into homes.

Through Launch Housing and realestate.com.au's national partnership, an average of three families a week are diverted from homelessness and into safe, secure and affordable housing. It's an exciting example of what can happen when business and not-for-profit organisations collaborate to create material change for the better.

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About Launch Housing

HomeGround Services and Hanover joined forces on 1 July to form Launch Housing, one of Victoria's largest providers of housing and homelessness support services. Launch Housing will provide flexible specialist services that directly assist and improve the lives of more than 20,000 men, women, young people, children and families experiencing homelessness every year. Our services will cover 13 local government areas from 14 sites across Melbourne.

About realestate.com.au

realestate.com.au is the leading website in Australia for residential property, with an audience of more than 3 million visitors every month. realestate.com.au is owned and operated by ASX listed REA Group Ltd ABN 54 068 349 066. Source: Nielsen Online Ratings, 3 month average for the period March - May 2015.

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