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SUPPORT NEEDED AFTER STORM WRECKS FAMILY HOMELESS SERVICE

Overnight storms caused significant damage to Launch Housing's Crisis Accommodation service in South Melbourne affecting seven families. All families have been relocated to temporary accommodation, but Launch Housing is calling on the public for their support to ensure homeless children can still attend the annual end of year party.

Tony Keenan, Launch Housing CEO said that due to the storm damage all of the gifts that had been donated and were being stored in South Melbourne can no longer be provided these families.

Mr Keenan is calling on the public to help the team out. "This Friday we were due to hold the annual end of year kid's party – for children who have experienced homelessness from across our services. With donations from hundreds of generous donors, we'd sought gifts for each of the children coming along to meet Santa. Sadly, we'll no longer be able to give these out due to the damage caused by the storm."

"We are determined to still hold a party for children and that's where we need help. The MFB crew who attended last night's evacuation have promised to send Santa along to the party in a fire truck – and we'd love to be able to ensure that all the kids attending get gifts and have a great time. Donations can be made via our website or by calling 1800 720 660," said Mr Keenan.

"The damage caused by the storm has meant families living there have become homeless again. We've been working through the night and today to get them temporary housing. We're also helping them buy new essential items they need, having left everything behind in the night."

"No one was hurt during the incident, and I am pleased to say all the families who have been living in the units have been safely accommodated elsewhere. I'm very proud of the team of staff who worked through the night to ensure these families are safe."

"We are working with the Department of Health and Human Services, the City of Port Phillip and emergency services to ensure the safety of the building and ongoing support for the families who were living there at the time. Damage to the site included a collapsed roof. One of the crisis accommodation units as well as some staff areas suffered severe damage. The building is currently uninhabitable and will be assessed by experts today," Mr Keenan said.

Financial donations are preferred, as the gifts for children were purchased with different family needs in mind. Donations can be made via the Launch Housing website www.launchhousing.org.au or by calling 1800 720 660.

About Launch Housing

Launch Housing is a Melbourne based, secular and independent community agency formed in July 2015 by a merger between Hanover Welfare Services and HomeGround Services. Launch Housing's mission is to end homelessness. It provides high quality housing, support, education and employment services to thousands of people across 14 sites in metropolitan Melbourne. www.launchhousing.org.au