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## **Better support needed to address family violence and homelessness.**

In responding to the report into family violence and homelessness by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare today, Chief Executive of Launch Housing, Tony Keenan said this adds to the growing base of existing research about the correlation between family violence and homelessness that urgently needs to be addressed.

"We've known for some time now that family violence is a major driver of homelessness and this research supports what we're seeing in our services on a daily basis."

"Our experience is that up 60% of Launch Housing clients, many of them families with young children, are seeking help as a consequence of family violence."

Mr Keenan said that unfortunately, homelessness services become a first point of contact for many of the most vulnerable people experiencing family violence. The current system is failing to reach these families before they are in crisis and either fleeing or have already lost their housing.

"On top of the trauma of escaping a violent situation, women and children are often forced to move out of their homes into homelessness, then from one transitional housing situation to another. This significantly increases the complexity and stress of their situation."

"The Government needs to address the issue of family violence and homelessness by supporting victims of family violence to stay in their own homes through preventative engagement with police, legal advice and family violence services."

"Where these families do become homeless, or remaining safely at home is not an option, they need to be rapidly rehoused in long term, affordable housing. This gives them a firm base on which to access services, attend school and rebuild the rest of their lives."

Mr Keenan said that increasing the availability of affordable housing supported by private rental brokerage programs for families fleeing violence can provide long term sustainability.

"But rehousing needs to happen quickly – the longer a family is homeless, the harder it is to end their homelessness. Financial assistance in meeting bond payments and subsidising rents for a period of time increases the stability of a family's housing situation, particularly when in partnership between family violence services and housing services." He said.

### **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](http://www.launchhousing.org.au)

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