



Minister for Housing and Public Works
Minister for Digital Technology
Minister for Sport

Our Ref: HS 01548-2020
Your Ref: A568608

15 JUL 2020

1 William Street
Brisbane Queensland
GPO Box 2457 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +617 3719 7270
E: hpwdts@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil

I refer to E-Petition number 3332-20 titled 'Urgent request for action on homelessness in Southport' which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 16 June 2020.

I note the views of the petitioners and appreciate their interest in ensuring Queenslanders, particularly those in Southport, have access to a safe, secure and sustainable place to call home.

Southport has been identified as one of the primary areas for rough sleeping on the Gold Coast, which is partly due to the number of government and non-government services available within walking distance. Many of the men and women regularly located in public places are highly resistant to receiving support and interim motel accommodation has been declined by some individuals.

In 2019–20, the Department of Housing and Public Works allocated \$8,477,687 (GST exclusive) in Homelessness Program funding to six non-government-organisations to deliver seven Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in the Gold Coast Local Government Area. These SHS deliver temporary supported accommodation and other support services to people who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness.

The Gold Coast has an active and committed network of service providers, known as the Gold Coast Homeless Network, that works collaboratively to identify and address local needs. The Network has been funded by my department for a Care Coordination Facilitator position to strengthen integration and collaboration of multi-agency responses for people with complex needs.

The Network has worked closely with the department to implement the Place Based Response Team (PBRT) to take an immediate and coordinated responses to the increasing reports of visible homelessness on the Gold Coast. The PBRT works with funded housing and homelessness providers and service delivery partners including Queensland Police Service (QPS), City of Gold Coast Council, Health Homelessness Outreach Team and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

As part of the local response, my department funded the Uniting Care Community to undertake assertive outreach to engage with people who are sleeping rough and provide support to accessing longer-term housing pathways. The assertive outreach team visits rough sleeping hotspots six days a week to engage with hard to reach clients and has consistently engaged with people in Southport since the commencement of the PBRT in October 2019. This team has implemented joint outreach with QPS and the Health Homelessness Outreach Team.

The joint outreach with QPS, implemented twice a week, has proven to be a more successful strategy to enable safe engagement. Since September 2019, the team has been able to secure housing outcomes for 20 people previously sleeping rough.

As part of the Queensland Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department is working to rapidly assist and house people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to protect them and the broader community against the impacts of the pandemic.

Significant additional funding has been made available to the Gold Coast through the \$24.7 million Housing and Homelessness COVID-19 Immediate Response Fund. Immediate access to short term accommodation and support has been offered to those sleeping rough on the Gold Coast and who are at a high risk of contracting the COVID-19 disease. As at 29 May 2020, 83 households including individuals and families, have been provided with short term accommodation and support through this process. Similarly, service providers have been provided with over \$1,000,000 in additional funding to provide temporary accommodation and other supports to those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The department is also building new social housing homes on the Gold Coast through the *Housing Construction Jobs Program* with an investment of \$110 million to deliver 392 new homes over the first five years. To date, contracts have been awarded for the commencement of 189 new homes with 66 already completed. A further 69 new homes are targeted for commencement by the end of 2021.

The department will continue to work actively with clients and local services to assist people to access long term housing pathways and identify effective approaches to assist people with complex needs.

I hope this information answers your enquiry. If I can help with other matters within my portfolio, please contact my office on (07) 3719 7270.

Yours sincerely



Mick de Brenni MP
Minister for Housing and Public Works
Minister for Digital Technology
Minister for Sport