

SEYMOUR HOMELESS MOSTLY YOUNG AND SINGLE

Nearly 75% of the 520 people who came to the Rural Housing Network's Seymour branch last year for assistance were not receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance, 52% were young (18 – 35 years) and 63% were single, with or without children.

Just over 10% of people were 'sleeping rough' with another 20% staying with friends or family when they first approached the Rural Housing Network (RHN) for assistance.

RHN CEO, Celia Adams said the data for the last financial year shows that homelessness is affecting people in all walks of life.

"This shows you that high numbers of people who are not dependent on welfare are seeking assistance. We know this is mostly due to two things; that they experience some trauma incident in their lives which reduces their ability to work and they don't have the resources to meet all their financial commitments, and the second is the high cost of private rental," Ms Adams said.

"When an individual or family is paying more than 30% of their income in rent, this is called housing stress and many people know someone in this situation," Ms Adams said.

"In Seymour we are seeing an increase in rough sleeping which is another indicator that people are pushed to extremes by not being able to access affordable housing."

Ms Adams said in this, national Homelessness Week, data for Seymour serves to highlight how widespread homelessness is and how it affects people.

"The story of Ken Arthur is one we can all relate to. We all know someone who is in his early 60s and has lost a close family member due to a terminal illness. Ken clearly explains what having safe and secure housing means for his life and his future," she said.

The Seymour data is consistent with the findings of the *2016 Housing Affordability and Homelessness in the Hume Region* report which looked at data for the last three years.

"Across the region we are seeing predominantly women and mostly young people aged between 18 and 35."

As part of Homelessness Week, RHN's offices in Wodonga, Shepparton, Wangaratta and Seymour will hold awareness raising events. Listen in to the Homelessness Week broadcast on Seymour FM from 2 – 4pm on Wednesday 3 August and join the RHN team for a BBQ from 11am – 2pm at the Seymour Woolworths store on Thursday 4 August. All welcome.
ENDS
