

### WANGARATTA HOMELESS MOSTLY YOUNG AND SINGLE

Nearly 60% of the 700 people who came to the Rural Housing Network's Wangaratta branch last year for assistance were not receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance, 52% were young (18 – 35 years) and 66% were single, with or without children.

Rural Housing Network (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.

Ms Adams said in this, national Homelessness Week, data for Wangaratta 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 Wangaratta 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. In Wangaratta you can drop in to 74 Murphy Street to learn more about homelessness and how you can help, as well as pick up resources and have a cuppa. RHN staff will be there on Tue and Wed from 10am to 3pm. All welcome.

ENDS

---