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Strengthen supported housing for people with multiple and complex needs: Jesuit Social Services

People at risk of homelessness who have multiple and complex needs, including cognitive impairments, must have better access to supported housing that is tailored to their needs to prevent them falling through service gaps and into homelessness, says Jesuit Social Services during Homelessness Week, which runs to August 13.

“Safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right. Yet many of the people we accompany in our work don’t have these – and many require more than a roof over their heads in order to lead healthy, productive lives,” says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

“People pushed to the margins of society – including those involved with the criminal justice and out-of-home-care systems and people with complex mental health and substance misuse issues – need access to supported accommodation that is tailored to their specific needs, to give them the best possible chance to flourish.”

Jesuit Social Services delivers supported accommodation for marginalised groups, including those who have contact with the criminal justice system. These programs include Dillon House, Perry House, and Link Youth Justice Housing Program – helping participants to build independent living skills and address the issues that contributed to their offending in a stable and supported environment, ultimately reducing the chances of their reoffending.

“We know that people who face barriers to housing also experience challenges in other areas, but with a safe and secure home environment and linked support tailored to their needs, they can begin to address other problems. This ultimately contributes to a more cohesive community for everyone,” says Ms Edwards.

“One-size-fits-all solutions aren’t adequate to address the complex challenges faced by the people we work with. They need supported accommodation with wraparound support. We want to see a greater diversity and availability of options for people with multiple and complex needs and more options for people transitioning from the justice system to give them the best chance to turn their lives around.”

Perry House supports young men with intellectual disabilities to make a successful transition from custody to the community. The program recently received a Victorian Government Youth Housing Capital Grant for a redevelopment of the property that will increase the home’s capacity and open it to participants of all genders by 2024.

Jesuit Social Services also continues to advocate for a 10-year national housing and homelessness strategy and increased funding for homelessness services, as outlined in its 2022 [Federal Election platform](#) and for more public and community housing and equitable access to energy-efficient homes, as outlined in its recent [Victorian Budget submission](#).

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