



Brad Hazzard

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Minister for Social Housing

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MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 9 June 2016

NSW BUDGET: HELP FOR VULNERABLE VETERANS

Vulnerable war veterans will be better protected from the risk of homelessness with the NSW Government's Budget commitment to a new \$1 million rental subsidy to assist them in the private rental market.

Minister for Family and Community Services Brad Hazzard said veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can access the subsidy and also access health and employment services via DefenceCare and Homes for Heroes.

"These diggers have fallen on hard times, and sometimes they struggle to return to civilian life," Mr Hazzard said.

"The Australian Defence Force does a lot of good but we need a uniform approach across the country to house our diggers and get them the support they need.

"Our community rightly expects that diggers, who have given so much for their country, should not be on the streets and should have every assistance for secure and stable housing."

A survey in Sydney found about eight per cent of rough sleepers identified as veterans. Half of them had long term needs due to physical and mental health issues.

General Manager of DefenceCare, Robyn Collins, said defence was a high risk occupation and some veterans suffered physical and mental ill-health as a result of their service.

"Veterans are trained to carry on in the most difficult of circumstances and often don't reach out for help when they need a hand. Sadly, the result can be homelessness," Ms Collins said.

"NSW has been leading the way in finding a sustainable solution for veteran homelessness and this initiative will make a difference to those who have sacrificed their health for our country."

Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian said while care for veterans is generally a Commonwealth responsibility, the NSW Government was committed to taking action wherever possible to care for the most vulnerable in the community.

“We are determined to ensure everyone in the State experiences the benefits of a strong Budget,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“The NSW Government is working closely with the dedicated people at RSL NSW, DefenceCare and RSL LifeCare which runs Homes for Heroes, to help these veterans get the support they need.”

In the past year, NSW has:

- Provided dedicated housing officers to assist veterans’ welfare groups with fast access to homeless services and housing.
- Identified veterans in social housing to ensure they receive all the services and support to which they are entitled.
- Made changes to Family and Community Service (FACS) private rental bond assistance to better help veterans applying for that assistance through DefenceCare.
- Put veterans’ homelessness on the State and Territory housing ministers’ agenda and asked the Commonwealth to conduct work to better understand the extent of homelessness, veterans needs and reforms it can make to prevent homelessness.

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