



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

**National Partnership
Agreement on Homelessness**

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Wednesday, 19 March 2014
Page 2539
Questioner
Speaker Rishworth, Amanda, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (09:53): I rise today to speak about a very important issue in my local community, and that is the Abbott government's failure to recommit funding to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, which is due to expire shortly. Many fantastic organisations in the southern suburbs of Adelaide rely on the funding through this initiative to continue their important work to support some of our most vulnerable Australians, and they are understandably feeling very anxious and concerned about whether they will be able to continue to employ their staff and whether they will be able to continue to deliver the important services that they provide.

I just want to quote a number of people who have raised concerns with me. First, Megan Hughes is the Executive Officer of the Southern Domestic Violence Service. She has contacted me because her organisation is feeling extremely nervous. Megan has said:

We're talking about some of the most vulnerable people in our community here. At Southern Domestic Violence Service we support people who have been subjected to domestic violence to escape and begin new lives free from abuse. We can't do this work without ongoing funding. Not extending funding under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness could mean that we would be forced to cut up to 30% of our services and reduce our workforce through redundancies. We have been left in the dark, and we really need to know what is going to happen now so that we can plan for our future.

Another comment that has been received by my office is from the Junction Australia CEO, Graham Brown, who runs Junction Australia services. He is similarly concerned. Graham has said:

Our service helps people who are at risk of falling through the cracks to find a home of their own. We provide social and affordable housing options to vulnerable Australians in Southern Adelaide and around the State so that they are able to have a safe place to call home, and so that we have strong healthy communities. As a quality employer we are committed to providing stability of employment to our staff and therefore we like to be able to provide staff with at least three month's notice of changes to employment contracts- staff who work in the area of homelessness are extraordinarily gracious and committed and it is important that the significance of their work in the community is honoured and upheld with stability of employment. There's a lot of uncertainty in the sector at the moment- we need to know what's going to happen come the 30th of June.

I call on the Minister for Social Services to please extend this vital funding, to please give these organisations some certainty. I have also written to the Minister for Social Services, expressing my concerns and the concerns of those in my electorate, and I eagerly await a reply. The clock is ticking, and we simply cannot afford to take our foot off the pedal when it comes to homelessness. I will continue to stand up for my community and to fight for this funding.