

Media Release

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Experts convene to examine solutions to the housing crisis in south-west Sydney

A series of fresh ideas for tackling the issue of housing and homelessness have been canvassed by a group of experts as part of a cross-community collaboration in south-western Sydney.

Some of the most-impacted community organisations took part in a webinar on July 19 to examine impacts and discuss possible solutions to the housing crisis, with more than 100 registered attendees.

The session was hosted by CORE Community Services and featured a panel comprising:

- Charishma Kaliyanda MP, Member for Liverpool
- Juana Reinoso, CEO, CORE Community Services
- Tracy Philips, Executive Officer, Bonnie Support Services
- Vala Ola'aiga, Manager and Co-Ordinator, South West Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service
- Samantha Taylor, School Social Worker, Ashcroft High School
- Shama Pande, Multicultural Communities Manager, CORE Community Services

Ideas to emerge included a broad based housing taskforce, and the use of innovative, low-cost modular housing to provide accommodation.

“Everyone agrees that this is a multi-faceted problem that requires all the parties to work together,” said the Chief Executive Officer of CORE, Juana Reinoso.

“It is a complex problem that has been developing over a number of years and will take time to resolve. In the meantime, we have the chance to bring new ideas to the table and work as broadly as possible across the community to help those most in need.”

The session heard from frontline service providers about the dire impacts on families and individuals from rising house prices, soaring rents and low rental vacancies.

Steep rent increases have seen many people unable to meet basic household needs such as food and heating. This has resulted in an overwhelming call on service providers for assistance.

“Many people in multicultural communities in south-western Sydney are facing a grave situation, where housing stress is impacting work and family life and their mental health and wellbeing,” Ms Reinoso said.

Tracy Philips, Executive Officer of Bonnie Support Services said that for those facing family or domestic violence, there are added difficulties in securing safe accommodation and transitioning out of crisis accommodation into the community.

“It has become increasingly difficult to demonstrate a record of rental history and produce the evidence that is needed, which just compounds the trauma people face as they escape violent situations and try to make a fresh start,” Ms Philips said.

For many people, rental properties can be run down, infected with mould and in urgent need of attention.

“It is distressing to hear of schoolchildren and young people in crowded rooms, sometimes in unsafe environments, hungry and in need of care,” Juana Reinoso said.

“All community service providers are doing their utmost in extremely difficult circumstances.

“One of the positive outcomes from the gathering is the chance to establish a housing taskforce comprising a broad coalition of not-for-profit groups, service providers, government and private sector partners to try new approaches and to work collaboratively,” she said.

As an example, one of the innovative suggestions was a partnership with the building industry to look at low-cost modular homes that could be erected to ease some of the immediate impacts of the housing shortage,” Ms Reinoso said.

“This is a chance to build on the wonderful work that is being done and look at whether there are additional ways of dealing with one of the most challenging issues we have faced.”

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CORE Community Services Ltd is a not-for-profit organisation operating in South West Sydney since 1979. We run a wide range of activities, and programs across our key services; Children’s Services, Youth Services, Multicultural Communities, Aged and Disability Care and Community Hubs with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse communities and vulnerable communities.

Media contact:

Jenny Liem

0427 864 445

media@corecs.org.au