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No one believes any more: the challenge of homelessness

Western Australia is the boom State in a country that has recently enjoyed, despite the recent global slowdown, extraordinary economic success. Yet the fruits of this growth are not being properly shared. In particular the growing shadow of homelessness in our State is a disgrace that the newly elected State Government must put now right.

Ian Carter, who works as Chief Executive Officer/director of Anglicare WA, has written a campaigning essay for WAPF outlining what the problem is, what Federal Government intends to do about the problem and how the State Government should act. He explains that some families in WA are now spending 40-50% of their disposable income on shelter, whilst on current form the State will be short of some 30,000 homes for low-income families by the end of the decade. The *Creating Room in the Boom* campaign agenda, which Ian supports, calls for a reversal of the decline in social housing spend, with a bold target of 6% social housing stock by 2020, which would mean building 2,000 affordable housing units each year, achieved by placing a statutory minimum of 10% affordable housing in each new development. This initiative has the potential to bring down the housing burden to a more acceptable 30% of disposable income. Ian also supports the need for an extra 1,500 places of psychiatric supported accommodation and suggests the adoption in WA of a range of specialized strategies that have succeeded overseas.

“Professor The Hon David Malcolm, the former Chief Justice, who is involved with a range of charitable and community organisations said that he is very concerned at the growing extent of homelessness in Western Australia and fully supports the *Creating Room in the Boom* campaign outlined by Ian Carter of Anglicare and Julian Roche of the WA Policy Forum. How we assist those in the lowest levels of our society is an important measure of the extent to which we can claim to be a caring and civilised society.” WAPF Director Julian Roche agreed: “The hallmark of a civilized society is not the consumer spending of the well-off but the way it treats its less fortunate members. Action on homelessness is a cornerstone of the policies that will make WA a civilized place to live in the next decade”.

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