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More help for the homeless

Christian Tatman

Government funds two teams to address 'emerging homelessness hotspot'

NEW outreach teams will help homeless people in Frankston as the number of rough sleepers soars.

The State Government will set up outreach and supported housing teams in Frankston, which will be delivered by the Launch Housing and Neami National organisations.

The teams, which are due to be operational shortly, will provide street-based outreach to homeless people and connect them with

services and support them into long-term housing.

Neami National service manager Amanda Williams said the of the service would help people experiencing homelessness or sleeping rough to find and maintain housing, improve physical and mental health and develop connections in the local community.

Frankston Homeless Support Services president Mark Whitby praised the

initiative. But Mr Whitby said homelessness would continue to be a serious issue in Frankston unless more affordable housing was provided.

"The amount of people are that homeless or rough sleeping is increasing in Frankston City," he said.

Mr Whitby said men released from custody and others who simply couldn't find affordable housing were adding to the swelling

numbers of homeless people.

Australian Bureau of Statistics released last year showed the number of homeless people in Frankston had jumped from 465 to 546 between 2011-16.

Mayor Michael O'Reilly said the council had set up the Strategic Homelessness Alliance, which included a range of groups to push for action.

"With the pressures of homelessness continuing in

Frankston, council persists with its ongoing commitment to homelessness advocacy to the state and federal governments," Cr O'Reilly said.

Cr Kris Bolam said it was essential that the council carried out an audit to establish how many people were homeless in the municipality.

"No person in a society as civilised as ours should be

unwillingly sleeping rough nowadays," he said.

Council recently a report stating that Frankston was an "emerging homelessness hotspot", but had no crisis accommodation.

"Forty-one registered rooming houses are operating near capacity and are often considered a last resort," the report stated.

Frankston state Labor MP Paul Edbrooke said the new teams highlighted the government's commitment to assist the vulnerable "more than ever before".