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Female war veteran living in her car spurs Hastings village plan



A FEMALE Victorian war veteran living out of her car in Frankston is one of the stories that has spurred a radical plan to house homeless veterans at campground village in Hastings.

Welfare agencies want more support for returned services people, saying some are living in tents in the bush, garages and on mates' couches.

Mornington Peninsula-based welfare officer with Carry on Victoria Karl Williams said the woman was one of half a dozen veterans he had helped.

He will today join a protest on the steps of State Parliament in Spring St to call for a royal commission into the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr Williams said a proposed village at Hastings using campground-style cabins on government-owned land could help with homelessness.

The government is considering the proposal and has asked Carry On Victoria for more details.

Mr Williams saw the woman needed help after noticing her car full of rubbish.

"She served in Afghanistan as a drone operator and was affected by post traumatic stress disorder," he said.

She had run out of money and was sleeping in her car.

He helped get her into an apartment. She and other veterans had gone from being "top of the mountain" to thinking nobody cared, he said. There were former soldiers sleeping under one-man "hoochie" tarps in the bush.

Most of the homeless were unemployed suffering PTSD and some had tried suicide, Mr Williams said.

In March, a Senate committee inquiry found veterans were "being discharged from psychiatric wards into homelessness". It considered this a "significant dereliction of duty" by DVA and the hospitals concerned.

One young vet, 27-year-old Victorian Rowhan Weatherell [was discharged from an Adelaide Hospital several weeks ago](#) with nowhere to go.

Were it not for Adelaide's Homes for Heroes, he said: "I'd be homeless."

Mr Weatherell broke his back on a training exercise in 2013 and spent six months in hospital in a spinal brace and another six learning to walk.

He was declared medically unfit and had to leave the army.

"As soon as you're not part of the army they don't want to know you. And it was all I'd known since I was 17," he said.

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