



Gareth Ward
Minister for Families and Communities
Minister for Disability Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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STREET COUNT TO SHED LIGHT ON REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS

For the first time in NSW, the Government and non-Government sector will combine to conduct large-scale street counts in regional and rural areas, to help inform the state's homelessness investment.

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward said the initiative would complement the \$10.7 million expansion of assertive outreach services to Newcastle and Tweed Heads.

"This week is National Homelessness Week and I'm proud to be part of a Government that is leading the charge on this important issue," Mr Ward said.

"We are committed to halving rough sleeping by 2025 and these street counts will assist with planning and investment around this ambitious target.

"We are supporting people at risk of homelessness by putting more boots on the ground in the form of assertive outreach teams, which engage directly with rough sleepers and help them into stable homes."

Assertive outreach already operates in Sydney's CBD, Parramatta and on trains at night. They work in partnership with health services, general practitioners and NGOs to provide a targeted response and case management approach.

Recent figures reveal that more than 455 people previously sleeping rough on Sydney streets have been housed since 2017, with 92 per cent sustaining their tenancies.

"The NSW Government's assertive outreach program is achieving great outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our State," Mr Ward said.

"However, we recognise that homelessness can also be hidden. Our \$1 billion investment includes initiatives to address all forms of homelessness, including programs to increase the supply of social and affordable housing."

In 2019, Sydney became the tenth city, and NSW the first state, to join the Institute for Global Homelessness Vanguard City program. The first trial street counts will take place in Newcastle, Tweed Heads and Western NSW in coming months with a statewide count planned for February 2020.

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