

# A Roof Over Your Head...Not So Easy Anymore!

benchmark for meeting this requirement and it is at the discretion of Housing NSW staff as to whether they think you are putting in a suitable effort.

I can only imagine how terrible it feels to be viewing and applying for properties that you know you don't have a hope of getting and how damaging it is on the children who quietly witness this. People with mental illness struggle even harder to maintain the search for rental. Often heavily medicated and lacking any energy to perform and compete, they are the most likely to alienate housing staff, fall by the wayside and end up on the streets or in psychiatric hospitals. By then they require

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much more complex and expensive assistance from our already overloaded mental health services.

As I mentioned, there are many services assisting people in housing crisis but it is often impossible for many people to know what help is available and how to access it and therefore it is not a system that is fair to all.

We will continue to do what we can for as long as we can, and will work together with other service providers to help highlight the problems because it is not good enough to sit by and do nothing while our governments fail to provide suitable and affordable housing for the most vulnerable in our community.

*We welcome any feedback on this article.  
Please email [info@jnc.org.au](mailto:info@jnc.org.au).*

**Kim Meddows**

## Resources To Help With Housing

***The Junction Neighbourhood Centre is currently compiling an extensive housing information resource which will provide much needed assistance to clients confronted with housing crisis and service providers assisting those in crisis. This resource will be available early 2010 from our website, by email or hard copy. In the meantime here is just a brief overview of some main services:***

**Housing NSW, Renstart** - provides up to 4 weeks bond & 2 weeks rent in advance for those who have sourced affordable rental on the private rental market but cannot afford the start up costs. Affordable weekly rental means no greater than 50% of your weekly income, including the anticipated Centrelink rental assistance.

**Housing NSW, Rent Arrears Assistance** - if you are in affordable private rental and at risk of eviction due to being behind in rent some assistance with arrears can be provided to help sustain the tenancy.

**Housing NSW, Priority Housing** - if approved this will make you eligible for allocation of appropriate public housing in the area you are approved for. Current demand is quite high and housing is allocated in order of priority. The eastern suburbs is deemed a high demand area and therefore you would need to establish a significant need to remain in the area. It is recommended that you seek all available assistance to ensure you represent your situation adequately and obtain support letters. Failure to be approved for Priority

housing can be appealed once internally. If still unsuccessful you may appeal to the external Housing Appeals Committee.

When applying for priority housing you need to prove that you are not able to meet your needs on the private rental market and this is the area where most people fail to prove eligibility. Records of rental applications need to be kept. If for any reason you are unable to look for rental you will need to prove why.

### **Eastern Area Tenancy Service 9386 9147**

Tenancy services can help you to legally sustain a tenancy (private or public) when you may be being treated unfairly. They can also assist with Priority Housing appeals and a wide range of tenancy issues.

### **City of Sydney, Homeless Person's Information**

**Line** - this phone service is for those who have no immediate housing alternatives. They will record your circumstances and search for availability of refuges or other short or medium term accommodation. There is a diverse range of alternative emergency accommodation some providing support workers to help you through the crisis and this service does a great job of matching your needs with what is out there. Unfortunately vacancies are often not available and the caller is then referred to Housing NSW for Temporary accommodation (TA).  
**1800 234 566**

### **Housing NSW, After Hours Temporary Accommodation Line 1800 152 152**

**Housing NSW, Temporary Emergency Accommodation** - Administered by Housing NSW & granted to those who can prove they have no other alternative accommodation, on provision of necessary documentation ie. ID, Centrelink & bank statements. Hotel/motel/backpacker type accommodation is provided for up to 4 weeks. This can be extended in certain circumstances.