

MEDIA RELEASE

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New video reveals reality of being homeless in a bushfire impacted area

“There’s some days I wake up, and I’m not sure where I am.”

Community Industry Group is proud to release a short video revealing the reality of life for people experiencing homelessness in bushfire impacted areas across South East NSW.

“So much of the focus during and after the bushfires has been on people whose homes were destroyed,” said CEO of Community Industry Group, Nicky Sloan. “But this video raises awareness of those people who were not lucky enough to have a home before the fires, and who are finding it even more difficult to find a safe, secure and appropriate place to live now they are competing with insurance companies for scarce rental properties.”

“The NSW government has done an outstanding job of supporting people who are experiencing homelessness in temporary accommodation,” said Ms Sloan. “And the extension of temporary accommodation beyond the usual 28 days per year has undoubtedly kept many vulnerable people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. But many of these people are being housed in caravan parks and motels, and as tourist season approaches, their occupancy becomes more tenuous.”

“The reality is that this area has a strong reliance on the tourist dollars, and business owners are going to require access to their properties to house the tourists who not only bring much-needed income to the accommodation providers, but who support a range of tourism-dependent businesses. Homeless people will once again be left in the cold.”

Community Industry Group is incredibly grateful to the individuals who shared their stories in the video. Their stories are vivid and powerful. People like Tony who is currently in temporary accommodation in Bermagui who tells us, *“This is the seventh time I’ve moved in two years. There’s some days I wake up, and I’m not sure where I am”*. Or Josh, who was laid off from his apprenticeship and from another job thanks to bushfires and COVID-19 who says services need to move a bit faster, *“Because one night on the streets can change your life forever.”*

“Our recent report **South East NSW Bushfire Crisis – Impact, Response & Recovery** identified a number of recommendations which would significantly improve outcomes for people like Tony and Josh,” said Ms Sloan. “We urgently need the NSW government to invest an additional \$5 million per year for 5 years (\$25m) additional program funding for services which support communities in the bushfire impacted areas in South East NSW, including crisis accommodation and outreach services. This is a small investment for government, but it will increase service availability, provide jobs for community service workers, and change the lives of vulnerable individuals, families and communities.”

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The **Homelessness in South East NSW video** can be accessed [here](#) and an accompanying Fact Sheet [here](#).

The **South East NSW Bushfire Crisis – Impact, Response & Recovery Report** is available [here](#).

Community Industry Group would like to acknowledge the valuable help and support of the organisations and individuals who participated in the production of this video.

- Caroline Long and Kylie Furnell from South East Women and Children Services (SEWACS)
- Donna Davis from Mission Australia - Bega Valley Homelessness Support Service

And most importantly:

- Tony from Bermagui – with his dog, Ruby
- Josh from Pambula

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About the Community Industry Group

Community Industry (formerly known as Illawarra Forum) is the peak body working for community services and organisations in the South East of NSW. It supports community organisations, promotes expertise and innovation in community development, fosters industry development and provides advocacy for social justice.

Community Industry Group represents the non-government community services industry in the South East of NSW, and works closely with numerous organisations which provide support to vulnerable people across the region.