

MY WEEKLY PREVIEW



Tackling housing crisis one tent at a time

A property developer is helping a local charity provide relief for Sunshine Coast residents who are sleeping rough. WORDS: Caitlin Zerafa.

By Brianna Deacon

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As the worsening housing shortage on the Sunshine Coast forces more residents to the brink of homelessness a local charity is hoping to make a small difference.

A property developer is joining forces with Homeless Outreach Sunshine Coast to help drive the change with temporary and permanent solutions.

WOW Property Women director Lorna Willis has been collecting donations from WOW members to purchase tents to give temporary relief for those sleeping rough.

“We approached Homeless Outreach Sunshine Coast and asked what they needed, and the response was that tents make a world of difference all year round,” Ms Willis says.

“In summer it provides shelter from the rain and in winter it helps keep the cold air out.”

Homeless Outreach Sunshine Coast coordinator Wendi Rampton says there are a staggering number of people in the region currently living in their cars, and these tents provide enough space and privacy for those affected by the housing shortage.

“The reality is you can’t live in a two-man tent. These tents ... are tall enough to both stand in and cook in, and there’s room to sleep and store your belongings,” Ms Rampton says.

“I know women who have risked sleeping under awnings in parks out in the open, just so they can stretch their body rather than being cramped in a car.”

This tent initiative is just a small solution, with Ms Willis also working out the logistics of setting up a short-term safe car park, which is something Homeless Outreach Sunshine Coast has been advocating for.

“Someone has offered us a block of land temporarily and we are in the process of seeking approval to use this as a place people can park their vehicles and know they will feel safe,” Ms Willis says.

“We are constantly looking for opportunities where we can create immediate and effective change to assist.

“Even if it’s just one tent, that’s one person or family that won’t have to suffer through the rain.”

Ms Rampton says when many charities close down over the festive season, her outreach service is at its busiest.

“Having a safe car park for a few months gives people a better chance to get back on their feet and is something we are working towards – with longer-term solutions.”

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