

6 August 2010

San Miguel increases help for the homeless

BoysTown will increase accommodation opportunities for homeless families when it opens San Miguel Family Centre's new family accommodation facilities today.

BoysTown's Chief Executive Officer Tracy Adams said the new accommodation will offer much needed help to Australia's more than 100,000 men, women and children who are homeless.

"This week being National Homeless Persons' Week, it's only fitting that we choose today to officially open this facility," she said.

"San Miguel Family Centre provides short-term accommodation for families who are homeless and in need of a supportive environment to help them return to stable accommodation.

"Last year we received requests to accommodate 150 families and were able to accommodate 12 at any one time.

"These new facilities mean that at any given time San Miguel can now offer up to 15 families and one individual a place to call home.

"This is so important when you consider that the San Miguel Family Centre is one of the few places able to support large families and families where an adult male is present."

Temporary accommodation available in refuges and shelters is usually limited and is particularly difficult for large families and those that include fathers or adult males.

"When you have a family that is experiencing the trauma of being homeless it is incredibly hard for them to also face the prospect of being split up," Ms Adams said.

"We have seen families of 10 who have been sleeping in their car for months because services cannot accommodate them and dads who can't find somewhere to take their kids simply because many refuges and shelters don't accept males."

The renovations cost more than \$400,000 and were financed by BoysTown through its supporters including Lottery ticket buyers and donors.

"Today we celebrate much more than the opening of a new residential facility," Ms Adams said.

"The new accommodation is representative of the true generosity of the many individuals and organisations, who continue to empower San Miguel and make a difference in the lives of so many."

The San Miguel Family Centre is a service of BoysTown. It is located in North Richmond, New South Wales.