

Gambling Media Watch: Agencies Unable to Meet Demands

AGENCIES UNABLE TO MEET DEMANDS

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AGENCIES have been turning people away because of increased demand for welfare services in Tasmania, a new survey has revealed.

Tasmanian Council of Social Service Acting Executive Director Ann Hughes said organisations that took part in the survey reported helping an average 10 per cent more people last year than in 2002.

"Not surprisingly, there's also been a big jump in the numbers of people being turned away," she said.

"The survey showed that nearly 5000 people could not be assisted by the organisations approached, up seven per cent on 2002."

Ms Hughes said a lack of resources and money was mostly to blame for agencies being unable to meet the demand.

She said it was hard to pinpoint one cause for the increase in demand but identified ongoing issues of unemployment, substance abuse, mental health problems and gambling.

The results came from the annual Australians Living on the Edge survey by councils of social service in each state and territory.

Ms Hughes said she wanted the State Government to take a more active role in helping the vulnerable and disadvantaged with good policy and programs.

Its Affordable Housing Strategy was a good opportunity to address the shortfall, she said.