



SENATOR THE HON MARK ARBIB

Minister for Indigenous Employment and
Economic Development
Minister for Sport
Minister for Social Housing and
Homelessness

THE HON JENNIFER RANKINE

Minister for Families and Communities
Minister for Housing
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability

MEDIA RELEASE

3 February 2011

AFL INDUSTRY AND LADDER HELPING HOMELESS YOUTH OFF THE STREET

The Australian and South Australian Governments today launched the Ladder St Vincent project in Port Adelaide to provide vulnerable young people with a roof over their head coupled with pathways to education and employment.

Federal Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness Mark Arbib and South Australian Minister for Housing Jennifer Rankine said their Governments had joined forces with the AFL Players Association and the AFL Foundation-backed Ladder to create the new youth housing project.

The young people will have the chance to work with past and present AFL and SANFL players and elite female athletes who will conduct group and individual mentoring sessions.

It will provide housing and 24-hour specialised support for 23 young South Australians aged between 16 and 21.

Senator Arbib said the Ladder St Vincent Street project, a joint initiative of the AFL Players Association and the AFL Foundation, would provide housing and life skills to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

“Employment, education and vocational training outcomes must be at the centre of addressing youth homelessness and disadvantage,” Senator Arbib said.

“The AFL is to be congratulated for its significant investment, working with the governments and the community sector and importantly ensuring that these young people who will have a bright future ahead of them have the valuable experience of having a mentor.

“Sports stars have an incredible capacity to influence young people in a positive way and I commend those players, teams and sports associations who invest in the future of our young Australians.

“The Australian Government has made tackling homelessness a national priority – investing almost \$5 billion in new funding on this important issue,” Senator Arbib said.

Ms Rankine said the project was much more than providing accommodation to young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

“Ladder St Vincent Street is an all inclusive project providing integrated housing, one-on-one support and mentoring,” Ms Rankine said.

“It will also provide a range of opportunities to develop independent living, work, recreational and social skills.

“This is a great way to help young people to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness in a supportive and secure environment.

“It will also help strengthen their self esteem and confidence to pursue their lives as contributing members of our community.”

Former Essendon footballer and Ladder General Manager, Mark Bolton, said young residents would also have access to an innovative mentoring and life skills development program.

“Engaging AFL players and other elite athletes is central to the program of support at Ladder St Vincent Street,” Mr Bolton said.

The Ladder St Vincent Street project was funded as part of A Place to Call Home through the Australian and State Governments’ National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness and the AFL Foundation and AFL Players Association.