

# 'Nice homes' hide strong need

Belinda Richmond

BEHIND Manningham's veneer of affluence hides a pocket of the community too ashamed to ask for help, welfare agencies say.

Real estate prices in the area might be booming, but so too is the list of clients needing emergency relief, says Doncare's Angela O'Brien.

Further exacerbating the problem was the shortage of welfare agencies situated within Manningham's borders, she said.

Ms O'Brien said the number of people seeking assistance at Doncare had risen by more than 60 per cent, peaking at almost 2000 appointments last financial year.

She said Doncare was one of just three welfare organisations in Manningham, yet the need was just as high as in neighbouring municipalities.

"The difference between Manningham and different areas is that residents are surrounded by people with great wealth and are ashamed of asking for help," Ms O'Brien said.

"That's the perception. But it's getting harder and harder for families.

"All our services are inundated at Christmas." She said most emergency relief clients lived in Doncaster (35 per cent), Doncaster East (24 per cent) and Bulleen (12 per cent).

Ms O'Brien said Doncare received a lot of referrals from Manningham schools, with teachers concerned for students' welfare.

Warrandyte Housing Support Services manager Margory Lapworth said the shortage of local material aid meant "more work" for the service. "We're the only (emergency relief) agency left (in Manningham) other than Doncare," Ms Lapworth said.

She said 10 volunteers struggled to deal with "six filing cabinets" full of clients, and the number of struggling people had "easily" risen by 50 per cent.

Salvation Army spokesman Major Brad Halse said "resources for emergency relief are always relatively limited".

He said residents in Manningham might be seemingly well off, but "there's often a very strong need behind the doors of very nice homes".



Angela O'Brien says Doncare needs donations of food and toys.

## There's a bear in there but much more is required

WELFARE agencies in Manningham use cash donations to help residents with bills, fares for public transport and petrol, food vouchers, taxi vouchers, Telstra cards, baby bundles, prescription medicine and back-to-school costs.

Cash donations can be made in person to Doncare, 7th floor, The Tower, Westfield Shoppingtown, Doncaster, or phone 9648 4433. Non-perishable food items, clothes and toys can be dropped at Doncare shops at Shop 28, Jackson Court,

Doncaster East; Shop 11, corner Manningham and High streets, Lower Templestowe; 23A, Anderson St, Templestowe; Warrandyte Housing Support Services, 96 Yarra St, Warrandyte; Salvation Army, 916 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster East.