



- new social and affordable housing dwellings each year in perpetuity.
- The Australian Government should consider the introduction of affordable housing supply bonds.
 - The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness must be re-funded with a minimum of \$953 million of new investment.
 - Specialist Homelessness Services funded via the NAHA need to be supported through adequate and planned indexation.
 - Non-pension allowance payments must be increased by a minimum of \$50 per week to give people most in need a fighting chance of meeting the costs of living.
 - Guarantee funding for the expansion of proven early intervention programs
 - Commonwealth Rent Assistance should be increased by 30% pending a Productivity Commission review of its efficacy and efficiency as a housing subsidy.
 - All levels of Government should sign up to the target of halving homelessness by 2020.

But homelessness is not just for the Government to solve. Homelessness is everyone's responsibility.

References

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- Australian Government, 2008, The Road Home: A National Approach to Homelessness,
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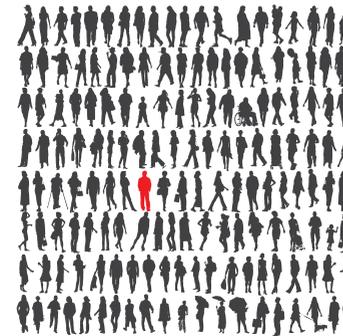
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Homelessness Australia

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Homelessness in Australia



On any given night in Australia 1 in 200 people are homeless

The Facts



There are **105,237** people homeless in Australia



56% are male; **44%** female



There are **17,845** children under 10, with **402** children sleeping out.

The NT has a rate of **730 per 10,000** people homeless



In 2011-2012 229,247 people received support from specialist homelessness services with an average of 19,128 people accommodated each night.

What is homelessness?

Homelessness Australia uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistical definition of homelessness.

The ABS statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

People who are experiencing homelessness are usually staying in the following areas:

- Improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
- Supported accommodation for the homeless



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness





- Temporarily with other households
- Boarding houses
- Other temporary lodging
- “Severely” overcrowded dwellings

Why are people homeless?

Homelessness is often a result of a number of complex issues which can include:

- The chronic shortage of affordable and available rental housing
- Domestic and family violence
- Intergenerational poverty
- Financial crisis
- Long term unemployment
- Economic and social exclusion
- Severe and persistent mental illness and psychological distress
- Exiting state care
- Exiting prison
- Severe overcrowding/housing crisis

Impact of homelessness

Homelessness results in significant social and economic costs not just to individuals and families, but also communities and

the nation as a whole.

On an individual level homelessness makes it difficult to maintain school or further study and leaves people vulnerable to long-term unemployment and chronic ill-health. Some health problems are a consequence of homelessness including depression, poor nutrition, poor dental health, substance abuse and mental health problemsⁱ. Australians experiencing homelessness are often excluded from participating in social, recreational, cultural and economic opportunities in their community.

On a national level people who are experiencing homelessness are more likely to interact with a number of government agencies, such as police, Department of Community Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrective Services, Courts, Legal Aid, Department of Ageing, Department of Health, Housing, and Centrelinkⁱⁱ. Research has found that the cost of rough sleeping to the community is in excess of \$27,000 per year,ⁱⁱⁱ with the cost increasing the longer a person is homeless.

The cost of homelessness to our community, economy and individuals is enormous, particularly if homelessness is not resolved quickly. The current shortage of affordable and available rental homes is continuing to make getting out of homelessness more difficult for people.

Why are they homeless?

From polling of people seeking support from specialist homeless services:



25%	Domestic and family violence
15%	Financial difficulties
13%	Housing crisis
10%	Inadequate or inappropriate dwellings
-6%	Relationship or family breakdown
-5%	Housing affordability stress
26%	Other reasons



The prevalence of mental illness, particularly severe and persistent axis 1 disorders such as bi-polar and schizoid type disorders and axis 2 personality disorders is higher amongst people experiencing homelessness than it is in the general population^{iv}.

The homelessness service system in Australia

In Australia services to support people experiencing homelessness began in the early twentieth century. They began with accommodation for itinerant workers or families who were homeless because of mass unemployment during the great depression.

In the 1970's new social movements such as the women's liberation and the growing voices of young people saw new service models emerge and by 1985 the Hawke Government funded the establishment of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP). The SAAP drew together a wide range of services that provided accommodation and support to single men and women, families, young people, and women escaping domestic and family violence. The program was backed by national legislation that included a rights-based preamble and a definition of homelessness that was broad enough to cover groups whose homelessness is hidden and those at risk of becoming homeless because of safety concerns.

In 2008, the Australian Government released its first ever White Paper on homelessness entitled The Road Home which outlined a new approach to reducing homelessness in Australia based on three pillars: turning off the tap (stopping the flow of homelessness), improving and expanding services and breaking the cycle of homelessness^v.

The White Paper included a commitment to provide \$798 million of new money for programs and services funded through a time-limited National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH). In 2011–12 more than 1500 specialist homelessness services were to provide accommodation and support to people experiencing homelessness across Australia^{vi}.

These services provided support to almost 230,000 people who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness including more than 85,000 children^{vii}.

What needs to be done?

Ending and preventing homelessness is not as simple as getting people jobs or building houses. There are a number of investments and commitments required. These start with the Australian government and include:

1. State and Territory housing authorities must maintain their current public housing stock.
2. The Australian Government should establish an affordable housing growth fund deliver at least 20,000

