

# MELBOURNE'S HOUSING CRISIS

## REALITY OF HOMELESSNESS

A shortage of housing and a lack of affordable accommodation has led to Melbourne's worst housing crisis to date.

**#Homelessness is not  
'rooflessness'**

A home means security, stability, privacy, safety, and being able to control your space - CHP



# HOMELESSNESS

## WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US

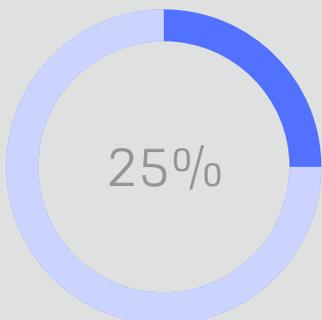
Homelessness affects many people and does not discriminate between ages, genders or cultures. In Australia homelessness is primarily caused by our housing crisis. Family violence, poverty and mental health are major contributing factors to homelessness, however people remain homeless due to a lack of affordable housing.



**24,828 PEOPLE WERE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN VICTORIA ON CENSUS NIGHT 2016,**

**14% INCREASE SINCE 2011**

**"44% were LIVING in overcrowded CONDITIONS"**



**1 IN 4 PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN VICTORIA WERE AGED 12 - 24 YEARS**

**2016 CENSUS DATA REVEALED VICTORIA'S HOMELESSNESS POPULATION REPRESENTS**

**20%**

*of Australian's experiencing homelessness*

The 2016 census count found that Australia had a 14% increase of those experiencing homelessness. Victoria saw an increase to its homelessness population with a total of 24828 people identifying as homeless. In line with National trends, Victoria saw a rise in people living in severe overcrowding conditions with 44% of Victorian's experiencing housing crisis representing this group.



42%

Of Victorians  
are homeless  
due to  
domestic and  
family violence

# affordable housing

demand and no supply

A common misconception assumes that homelessness affects only those who “choose” to be homeless. Little thought is placed on why people find themselves experiencing homelessness or their lack of options to end their experience. The last decade has seen a significant shift to the access of affordable accommodation with 500 new applications for government housing being submitted monthly.

39%

Of Victorians  
are homeless  
due  
to financial  
hardship

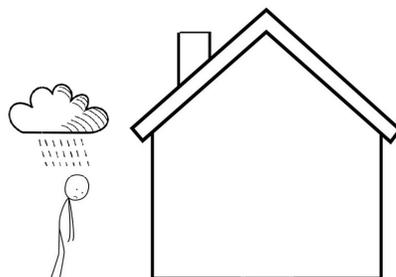


people on the public housing waiting list

What was once an affordable housing option for low income earners, private rental has become unaffordable due to a lack of supply and a highly competitive rental market. Anglicare Australia’s 2018 Rental Affordability Snapshot found that nationally only 6% of rental properties are affordable for low income earners. It concluded that single parents accessing the rental market find themselves in the same situation as those on government income support. The Snapshot also found that just 1% of properties were affordable for single people on the Aged Pension.

39%

Of Victorians  
are homeless  
due  
to housing  
crisis



**94% of rental properties  
are unaffordable for low  
income earners**

## WOULD YOU SPEND \$700 A WEEK FOR THIS?

### COST



Emergency accommodation can cost up to \$700 a week. Families often contribute to these costs, paying more than double what they would in private rental.

"It was the last time he was going to hurt me and the kids.. I left but had not family or friends. I was grateful for the help but the room was small, dirty and small...I would have paid less then that for a three bedroom private rental - Rachael

### HEALTH



Families in emergency accommodation have no cooking facilities and often rely on take away adding to the daily costs of being homeless..

"Everyday I spend 30, 40, 50 dollars on take away, I cant afford this, my children are not getting healthy food because I have no where to cook for them" - Fatma

### SELF-WORTH



Many people who are placed in crisis accommodation report that they have experienced bed bugs and they have had cockroaches in their room.

"I had been sleeping in my car for two weeks, all I wanted was a bed to sleep in and somewhere to shower. I spent one night in crisis accommodation and got bed bugs... I left the next day... I'm homeless but I have self respect - James



**1 IN 3  
PEOPLE**

were turned away from homelessness services in 2017 due to a lack of resources

## COST OF HOMELESSNESS

- 30% of people experiencing homelessness are employed" ●  
(ABS, Census 2016)

Across Melbourne's North and West suburbs, homelessness services spent \$4.5 million dollars on emergency accommodation to assist families' experiencing homelessness. These families are often accommodated away from their supports such as friends, family, and schools due to limited options, with often substandard, highly priced, privatised motel rooms their only option.

Due to high rental costs, many residing in private rental often access support services for emergency relief assistance, many access food support, assistance to pay bills and material aid such as clothing. Many people find themselves paying excessively rent with no options to find something cheaper. The financial burden of renting in a high demand market limits people's capacity for financial independence resulting in increased demand on services.

"The hardest thing about renting is having to decide between food on the table or a roof over our heads" - Sarah



**122%**  
increase for  
those sleeping  
rough

CITY OF  
**WYNDHAM**

What's happening in  
your neighbourhood?



Melbourne's west has seen a dramatic increase of homelessness in the five years between the 2011 census and the 2016 census.

**INCREASE  
IN THE  
NUMBER  
OF PEOPLE  
HOMELESS  
ON CENSUS  
NIGHT  
2016**

**40%**

In Melbourne's West over five and a half thousand households were homeless during the 2016 census night. This figure does not include families and individuals experiencing homelessness who were not counted during the census.

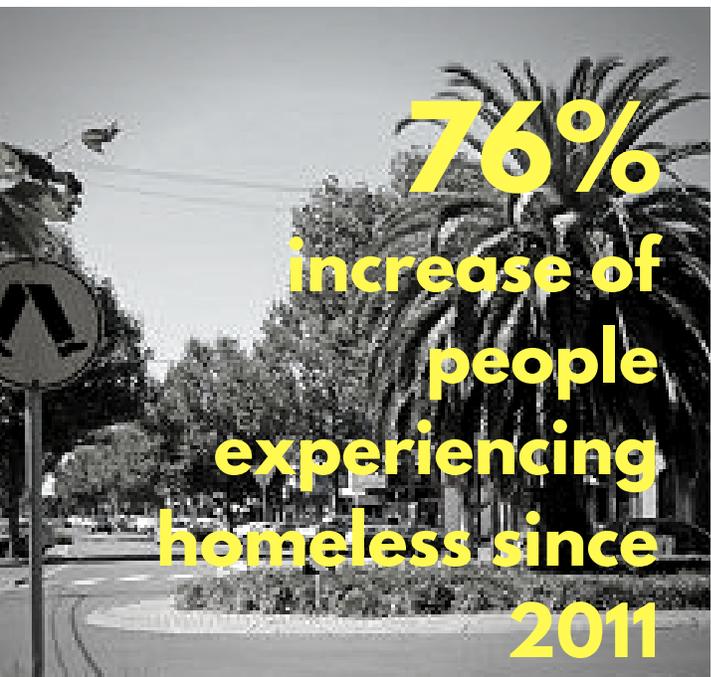
During the month of March 2018, households **832** were awaiting urgent homelessness assistance in Melbourne's west.

Wyndham saw a increase of **76%** community members experiencing homelessness. Of the 730 people who were homeless in Wyndham during the 2016 count, 384 of those were young people aged between 12 and 24 years.

**141** people were aged 55 years and over were either homeless or in housing crisis.

Of those experiencing housing crisis, a further 59% of people residing in Wyndham are living in severely overcrowded conditions.

**"173 children under 12 were experiencing homelessness"**



**76%**  
increase of  
people  
experiencing  
homeless since  
2011

"I'm sleeping in my car with my two children, it's hard to sleep and it's freezing. I just need someone to give me a chance in private rental"

- Julia, Wyndham resident

# PRIORITISE HOUSING

Melbourne's housing crisis can be contributed to a lack of Government support to address housing and homelessness. Investment in housing development has resulted in a reduced amount of government housing development and those hit hardest are on low incomes. While the number of available rental properties is increasing, there is a decline in the number of affordable rental properties in Melbourne, with the median weekly rental amount being \$420 per week.

The federal government invests 1.7 billion dollars annually into public housing, social housing and homelessness support services whereas \$14 billion is lost in tax concessions to support home owners through capital gains tax and negative gearing.



**“Billions of dollars more of public funding goes towards supporting housing investors, rather than ensuring everybody, including people on low incomes, have a home” Anglicare Australia**

“Without sufficient affordable housing, we are fighting an uphill battle to end homelessness, because people are forced to cycle through rooming houses, crisis beds and other temporary accommodation”

- Jenny Smith, CEO,  
Council to Homeless  
Persons

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# WHAT WE CAN DO

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OFFICIAL NOTE

Temporary emergency accommodation is not a housing solution to end homelessness. It is a band-aid to someone being “homeless tonight” but does not provide any permanency. A housing first model needs to be adapted to address key factors of homelessness and our Government must invest in social and public housing.

We need timely innovative solutions that create safe emergency accommodation options as soon as possible, while acknowledging the need for long term housing supply. If we do not address the bigger issues of housing supply and affordability in Melbourne, we will find that more and more people will be forced to sleep in cars and on our streets.

## MORE HOUSES FOR PEOPLE

*We need immediate and comprehensive solutions to increase our housing supply*

- Inclusionary zoning legislation to require that 20% of any new developments be allocated to people awaiting social housing
- Innovative approaches to the development of 'tiny houses' that can be built sustainably, erected quickly and that provide safe, self contained accommodation
- A monumental boost to public and social housing



Show your support online by signing the  
'More Houses for People' petition

<https://chn.ge/2LQuIZm>

# Get involved

Ring, email or write to your local member of parliament

Show support and put pen to paper and sign a petition

Acknowledge that when you pass someone living on the street or in their car, that they are there because we don't have enough affordable housing

## North and West Homelessness Network

This is a Network of 50 Specialist Homelessness and Family Violence Organisations, operating 200 homelessness programs in Melbourne's North and West.

These services that provide the key response to vulnerable individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness in Melbourne's north and west are seeing ever increasing numbers of individuals and families who are unable to find a place to live.

The North and West Homelessness Network would also like to acknowledge the following publications;

Anglicare Australia, Rental Affordability Snapshot 2018  
Council to Homeless Persons, Everybody's Home campaign  
Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 & 2016 census data  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS

## Everybody's Home campaign

- Support for first home-buyers, by setting the tax system to make it fairer for ordinary Australians wanting to buy a home.
- Develop a National Housing strategy to meet Australia's identified shortfall of 500,000 social and affordable rental homes.
- A better deal for renters, by changing the tenancy laws to protect tenants against evictions, unfair rent rises, discrimination and landlords who refuse to maintain properties.
- Immediate relief for Australians in chronic rental stress, by increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
- A plan to end homelessness, to halve homelessness in five years and end it in 10.



Sign the petition at;

<http://everybodyshome.com.au/petition/>