

HOMELESSNESS IN TASMANIA : THE FACTS

About homelessness in Tasmania

Homelessness is a serious problem in Tasmania that affects people across all age groups.

Homelessness has many causes including: the lack of affordable housing; loss of employment; family breakdown and domestic violence; transition from care or custody; mental health issues; and substance abuse.

For many people homelessness is temporary, until they are able to recover and stabilise their situation. For others, homelessness can be longer term and difficult to break out of.

Only 10% of people who are homeless sleep rough. Most are hidden from view in supported accommodation and boarding houses; staying temporarily with others (couch surfing); or in overcrowded dwellings, cars and tents.

More than 74,000 Tasmanians live below the poverty line¹. As housing costs rise, low income Tasmanians find it increasingly difficult to access affordable housing. Lack of affordability is a major cause of homelessness and a barrier to pathways out of homelessness.

For more facts on homelessness in Tasmania:

<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/index.php/about-homelessness/fact-sheets>

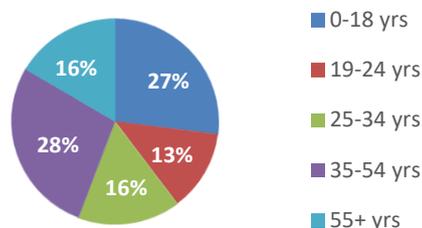
¹ Based on Census 2011 and NATSEM (2013) *Poverty, Social Exclusion and Disadvantage in Australia*, prepared for UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families. Canberra.

² Homelessness data from Census 2016 is expected to be released in March, 2018

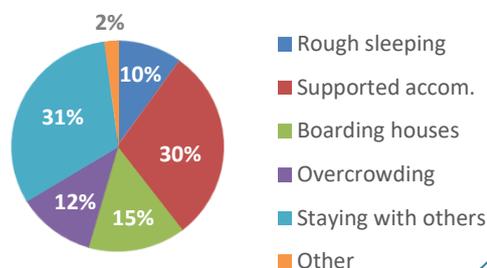
What Census 2011² tells us about homelessness in Tasmania

- In any night 1,579 or 1 in 300 Tasmanians are homeless
- More males than females experience homelessness (58% compared with 42%)
- The lack of affordable housing and domestic violence are the main causes of homelessness (32% and 26%)
- Most homelessness is hidden – only 10% of people who are homeless sleep rough

HOW OLD ARE THEY?



WHERE DO THEY STAY?



Homelessness support in Tasmania

Social housing and crisis accommodation play a critical role in housing people experiencing homelessness. Support services are also essential to help address issues that can lead to homelessness.

A network of specialist homelessness services across Tasmania provide support to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

Support includes: help to find emergency and long term housing; helping with issues like domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness; counselling and legal advice; life skills development and education; finding employment pathways; and help with stabilising and maintaining existing tenancies. Many organisations aim to provide these as comprehensive wrap around services to their clients.

Housing and homelessness support services can be accessed through Tasmania's *Housing Connect* service which provides a 'one stop shop' for anyone in need.

For assistance call: 1800 800 588

Demand for homelessness services in Tasmania³

- Homelessness services assisted 7,859 Tasmanians in 2015-16 (an increase of 19% over the previous two years)
- Services do an excellent job but are unable to meet growing demand. There was a 20% increase in unassisted requests recorded in 2015-16.
- In any one day in Tasmania:
 - 21 requests for help go unassisted,
 - 18 requests can't be assisted because of the lack of available accommodation
 - 11 unassisted requests involve children
- Children who experience homelessness have an increased risk of becoming homeless in later life. Young people and children are the fastest growing cohort of homeless people:
 - 33% of all people seeking support from homelessness services are under 24 years
 - 20% of all people seeking support are children under 9 years

³ AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection Data 2013/14-2015/16 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/shsc/>

What is needed to end homelessness in Tasmania?

Homelessness can be ended by providing access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing, along with the support needed to help people stay housed. Shelter Tas calls for national and state level approaches, including:

- Strengthening our response to our growing housing crisis in the Affordable Housing Strategy
- A fair deal for Tasmania in negotiations for the new National Housing and Homelessness Agreement to start in 2018
- Adopting a National Housing Affordability Plan to increase the supply of targeted affordable housing and social housing
- Increased investment in Tasmanian homelessness and crisis accommodation support
- Increased resources to ensure housing and support for Tasmania's young people at risk
- Raising the rates of government income support for low income households
- Integrating affordable housing into current reforms being made to Tasmania's planning system.