



Homelessness and Housing Affordability

On any given night across the country there are 105,000 Australians who are homeless. Homelessness includes people who lack adequate access to safe and secure housing. In other words, the place they would call home threatens their health and safety, has inadequate hygienic and nutritional resources and doesn't offer the economic and social supports a home normally provides.

Homeless people may live on the street, or in crisis or refuge accommodation. They may live for brief periods with friends or relatives.

People end up homeless for many reasons, including child abuse, poor mental health, low incomes, extraordinary expenses or personal crises. Other causes include:

- unemployment and under-employment
- family violence and abuse issues (sexual, physical, financial, psychological, and spiritual)
- a shortage of affordable housing
- intergenerational disadvantage and a lack of education, training and employment opportunities.

As Australia continues to experience a housing crisis that affects lower and middle class citizens, over one million lower-income households are spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs, exceeding an accepted 'affordability benchmark' of 25%. Crisis accommodation services turn away more than half of all people seeking new accommodation, mostly due to a lack of accommodation, as public housing stock has declined.

The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory*:

- makes more than 17,000 contacts with young people through street outreach and drop-in centres each year. Often young people may not be homeless but at acute risk of being homeless, hence the need for early intervention.
- provides approximately 600 crisis beds per night, and more than 4,000 non-crisis beds per night, which are made available to young people, families and single adults.

There is significant unmet need; many Australians need appropriate, safe housing to ensure that young people (the most vulnerable Australians) have access to appropriate accommodation.

Australian statistics are taken from Homelessness Australia, ACOSS, and *Australia's Welfare 2009* Biennial Report. Salvation Army statistics are from The Salvation Army's service and mission information system (SAMIS).

For more information visit salvationarmy.org.au

