

5 facts you didn't know about homelessness

Homelessness affects people of all ages, men, women, children, and all circumstances.

When Amy* and her three young children, Lily* (9), Aiden* (7) and Emma* (3), became homeless they joined thousands of other Australian women and children escaping domestic or family violence with nowhere safe to go. Unable to afford accommodation and turned away from shelters, Amy and her children were forced to live in a borrowed car.

For as long as she could remember, 17-year-old Zoe* was sexually abused by her stepdad. But it was becoming homeless, with no hope of a positive future that eventually led her to attempting suicide.

Sophie* and James never imagined they could lose their business and their home, but they did. Every day thousands of Australian families, just like Sophie and James, are living one pay slip away from homelessness. A failed business venture, job loss, sickness, or the death of a loved one can leave families unable to pay the rent and other bills and at risk of losing their home.

Sadly, stories like these are not uncommon among the thousands of people Mission Australia supports. They are the reason our goal is to halve homelessness by 2025.

1 **FACT 1: There are 116,427 people homeless in Australia on any given night.**¹

This includes 43,552 young Australians under the age of 25, and 18,625 aged 55 and over.¹ Each year more than 123,000 Australian parents and their children don't have a safe place to call home.²

2 **FACT 2: Only 7% of people who are homeless are sleeping on the streets.**¹

The rest are hidden away. The reality is that the majority of homeless people in Australia are families and children living without a permanent home. These people 'couch surf' with friends and relatives, stay in overcrowded rooms or cheap motels, move between emergency shelters and hostels, and sleep in cars and make-shift dwellings. From one night to the next, they don't know where they will sleep.

3 **FACT 3: 15,872 Australian children under 12 years old are homeless.**¹

Of this, an estimated 460 are sleeping rough, spending the night in parks, bus shelters or shopfronts. Without a

safe place to sleep and stability in their lives, they face an uncertain future.

4 **FACT 4: Of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness, 70% live in severely overcrowded dwellings.**¹

Although the indigenous population of Australia is quite urban, most of the severely overcrowded dwellings are based in remote areas.³ Severe overcrowding results in poor health, barriers to education and poorer employment outcomes.

5 **FACT 5: Domestic and family violence is one of the top reasons people seek support from specialist homelessness services.**¹

Every week one woman is killed as a result of domestic violence. This threat to their safety means many women and their children are forced to leave their homes, often with nowhere to go.

In 2018, Mission Australia assisted 20,264 people across 67 homelessness and housing services. Through our services we are able to give mothers like Amy, who escaped domestic violence a safe place to call home.