



## Appendix 2: Homelessness in Victoria

The stereotypical image of homelessness is often those sleeping rough. However, this only represents 7% of those experiencing homelessness; in Victoria it is 5%. Other experiences of homelessness includes people using supported accommodation such as crisis accommodation provided by agencies like Launch Housing; people staying temporarily with other households; people living in boarding houses and other temporary lodgings; and people living in 'severely crowded' dwellings.

The 2016 ABS Census estimated that more than 116,000 people, including children and young people, experience homelessness on any given night across Australia. In Victoria, that figure is close to 25,000 people. As highlighted in Launch Housing's inaugural [Australian Homelessness Monitor](#), homelessness has outpaced population growth, rough sleeping has increased, as has demand for specialist homelessness services. This is largely driven by housing crisis and, domestic and family violence.

### Homelessness in Australia is outpacing population growth

Homelessness in Australia has recently been rising well ahead of population growth. Between 2011 and 2016, homelessness increased by 14% nationally whereas the population has grown by 9%. There have been marked contrasts in recent homelessness trends across Australia. Sydney saw an increase of 48% over this period – more than three times the national increase.

**Figure 1: Change in number of homeless people by capital city, 2011-2016**

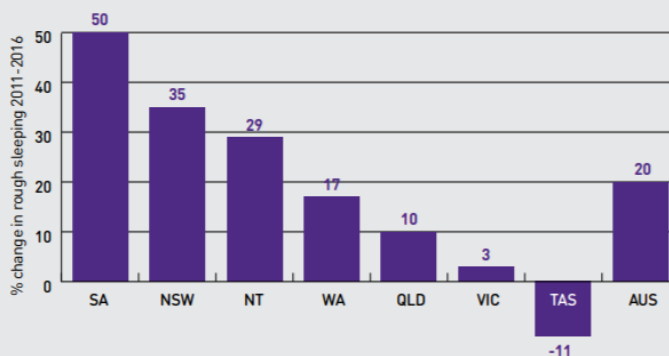


Source: Research team calculations based on ABS Census 2016 data

### Rough sleeping levels are increasing

Across Australia 8,200 people are sleeping rough, living in improvised dwellings such as tents, on a given night, as shown in the graph right. This, the starkest form of homelessness, saw a 20% increase over the 2011 figure nationally. With the exception of Tasmania, increases were recorded in all states and territories.

**Figure 2: Change in enumerated rough sleepers, 2011-2016**



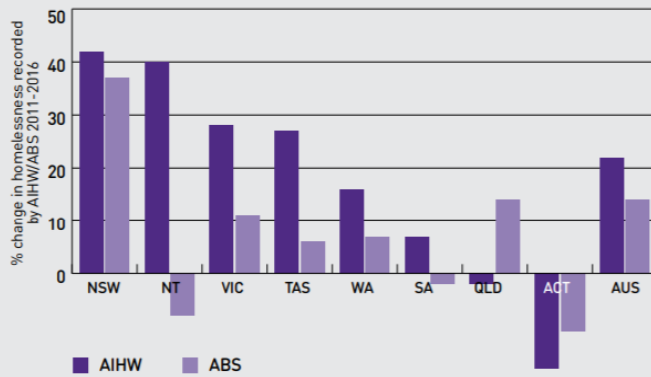
Source: 2016 ABS Census. Notes: 1. ABS category: 'Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out' treated as proxy for 'rough sleepers'. 2. ACT excluded on account of small absolute numbers – albeit a large percentage increase over the period: from 28 to 54 people.

The demand for homelessness services in Victoria increased by 28% from 2011 to 2016. The co-occurrence of mental health is ever-present for people either at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

### Increased demand for homelessness specialist services

Homelessness specialist services like Launch Housing provide a valuable service for many people at immediate risk of homelessness. During 2011-16, demand for homelessness services grew by 22% nationally, representing a higher growth rate than the 14% increase in homelessness. There are two sets of data important to understanding homelessness: one is a static picture of homelessness (ABS) and one is a dynamic picture of homelessness (AIHW). Comparing the two helps paint a holistic picture of what is happening.

**Figure 6: Change in scale of homelessness by jurisdiction, 2011-2016: triangulating independently collated estimates**



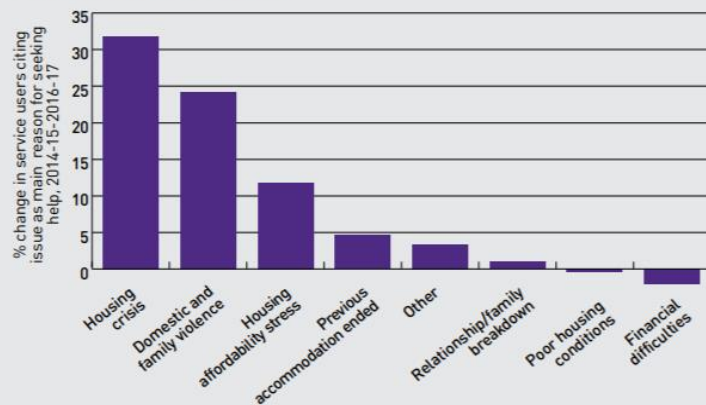
Sources: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) Specialist Homelessness Services statistics and ABS Census

### Main reasons for seeking assistance

Housing crisis, which includes things such as evictions as well as foreclosure and rental arrears, as an immediate cause of homelessness has been rising rapidly, increasing by 32% over the two years to 2016-17.

In particular, the number of homelessness service users subject to domestic violence has been rising faster than the general increase in the rate of service users. Of the 288,000 service users presenting to homelessness agencies in 2016-17, 115,000 (40%) reported that domestic violence was a factor in their case.

**Figure 7: Assisted service users – main reason for seeking assistance: % change 2014-15 – 2016-17**



Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services statistics