

# ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Homelessness in Western Australia in 2022

In 2018, the Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (WAAEH) released a 10-year strategy to end homelessness through a community-based response. The Western Australian Ten-year Strategy to End Homelessness was developed by a group of organisations that came together for ending homelessness. The WAAEH developed a measurement, evaluation, and reporting framework to measure, understand and assess how Western Australia is progressing towards ending homelessness against the Strategy.

## Ending Homelessness in Western Australia by 2028



### Responding to Homelessness Targets:

**TARGET 1** Western Australia will have ended all forms of chronic homelessness including chronic rough sleeping.

**TARGET 5** The current very large gap between the rate of Aboriginal homelessness and non-Aboriginal homelessness in Western Australia will be eliminated so that the rate of Aboriginal homelessness is no higher than the rate of non-Aboriginal homelessness.

**TARGET 2** No individual or family in Western Australia will sleep rough or stay in supported accommodation for longer than five nights before moving into an affordable, safe, decent, permanent home with the support required to sustain it.

**TARGET 6** Those experiencing homelessness and those exiting homelessness with physical health, mental health, and alcohol and other drug use dependence needs will have their needs addressed. This will result in a halving of mortality rates among those who have experienced homelessness and a halving in public hospital costs one year on for those exiting homelessness.

**TARGET 3** The Western Australian rate of homelessness (including couch surfing and insecure tenure) will have been halved from its 2016 level.

**TARGET 7** Those experiencing homelessness and those exiting homelessness will be supported to strengthen their economic, social, family and community connections leading to stronger well-being and quality of life outcomes. Employment among those experiencing homelessness will be significantly increased. Over half of those exiting homelessness will be employed within three years of moving into housing. Well-being and quality of life will equal those of the general population in the same timeframe.

### Preventing Homelessness Targets:

**TARGET 4** The underlying causes that result in people becoming homeless have been met head-on, resulting in a reduction by more than half in the inflow of people and families into homelessness in any one year.

**TARGET 8** A strong, collaborative and adaptive network of services and responses across the community services, health, mental health, justice, and education sectors will exist working collectively to address the underlying causes of homelessness and meeting the needs of those who become homeless.

**TARGET 9** Measurement, accountability and governance mechanisms that are robust, transparent and open to external review will be operating, providing an on-going means for assessing progress in meeting the goals of Ending Homelessness in Western Australia in 10 years.

Report link: <https://apo.org.au/node/318820>

Flatau P., Lester L., Kyron M., Lai, C., and Li, M. (2022). *Ending Homelessness in Western Australian 2022*, Perth: The University of Western Australia.

Dashboard link: <https://endhomelessnesswa.github.io/home/>

The Ending Homelessness in Western Australia 2022 Report, WAAEH Dashboard, Homelessness in Western Australia in 2022 infographic, and A Decade of Advance to Zero Data in Western Australia 2012-2022 infographic have been funded by the Sisters of St John of God Ministries through the WAAEH.



#EndHomelessnessWA



# Ending Homelessness in Western Australia

## The Western Australian Alliance to End Homelessness

The WAAEH's key role has been to bring together cross-sector stakeholders, build goodwill and collaborative action and establish innovative platforms such as the WAAEH Evaluation Framework and the Youth Homelessness Action Plan that support the end homelessness agenda.

The WAAEH supports a strategy is based on five fundamental pillars:



Ensure adequate and affordable housing



Prevention



A strong and coordinated response



Data, research and targets



Building community capacity

## Trends in Homelessness in Western Australian

The information in the infographics is drawn from the Ending Homelessness in Western Australia 2022 report. The data originated from three main sources: The Census of Population and Housing; Specialist Homelessness Services data; and the Advance to Zero WA database. Additional statistics regarding the trends in homelessness in WA can be found in the WAAEH Dashboard.



### CENSUS

- More than **116,000** people were experiencing homelessness in Australia on Census night in 2016 with about **9,000** people in Western Australia.
- The overall rate of homelessness in Western Australia has **decreased** from 53.6 per 10,000 people in 2001 to 36.4 per 10,000 people in 2016 (the 2020 census result will be released in 2023).
- Between 2011 and 2016, the proportion of the homeless population who **were rough sleeping in Western Australia** increased from 9% to 12%.



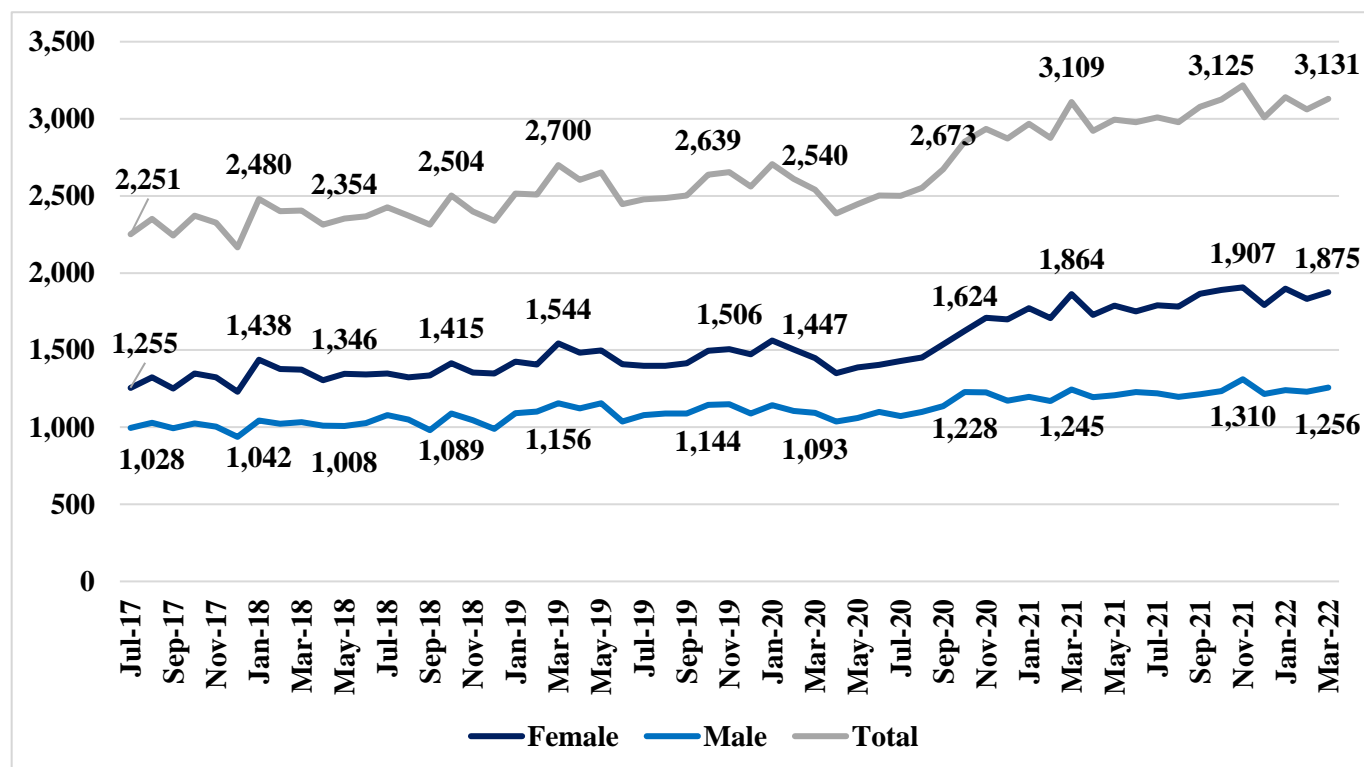
### SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES (SHSs)

- In 2020-2021, approximately **24,500** Western Australians accessed Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs).
- The number of people accessing SHS **dipped** in March 2020, the beginning of COVID-19. However, monthly client numbers have now **exceeded** pre-pandemic levels (see Figure 1).
- Western Australians who use SHSs record substantially **shorter support period durations** (22 days versus 51 days) and fewer nights in accommodation (8 nights versus 31 nights) compared with Australian averages (see Table 1).
- SHSs are accessed by 91.9 per 10,000 Western Australians each year. This is **lower** than **the national rate** of 108.3 per 10,000 Australia, but it has been **steadily increasing** since 2011/12.
- The majority of people who access SHSs while homeless end their support periods still experience homelessness at the end. For the majority of those who begin their support period at risk of homelessness remain housed (see Figure 2, Figure 3).
- There are positive transitions from homelessness to **both social housing (15 %)** and **private rental housing (13%)** and very few people who present to SHSs at risk of homelessness are homeless at the end of their support periods, suggesting that SHSs are effective at helping people to retain their housing.

# Trends in Homelessness in Western Australia

## SHSs Trends in Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness in Western Australia

Figure 1 Number of clients accessing Specialist Homelessness Services in Western Australia who were homeless on entry to support



Source: AIHW 2021 Specialist Homelessness Services: monthly data, Cat. No. HOU 321.

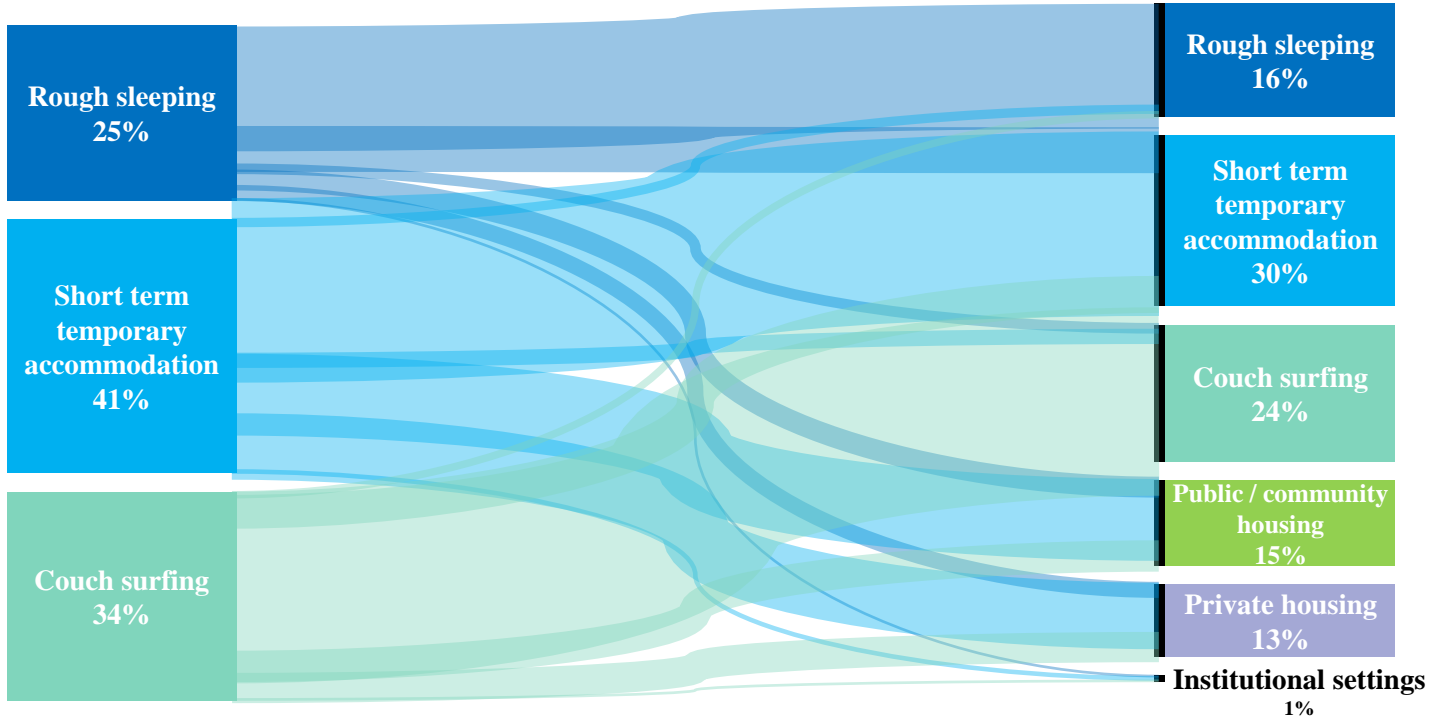
Table 1 Median length of support, days in support periods and nights accommodated, 2019-20, and 2020-21, Western Australia and Australia

Support	2019-20		2020-21	
	Western Australia	Australia	Western Australia	Australia
Median length of support (days)	16	43	22	51
Median length of accommodation (nights)	8	28	8	31

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (AIHW, 2022). Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report (cat no. HOU 322). <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/summary>

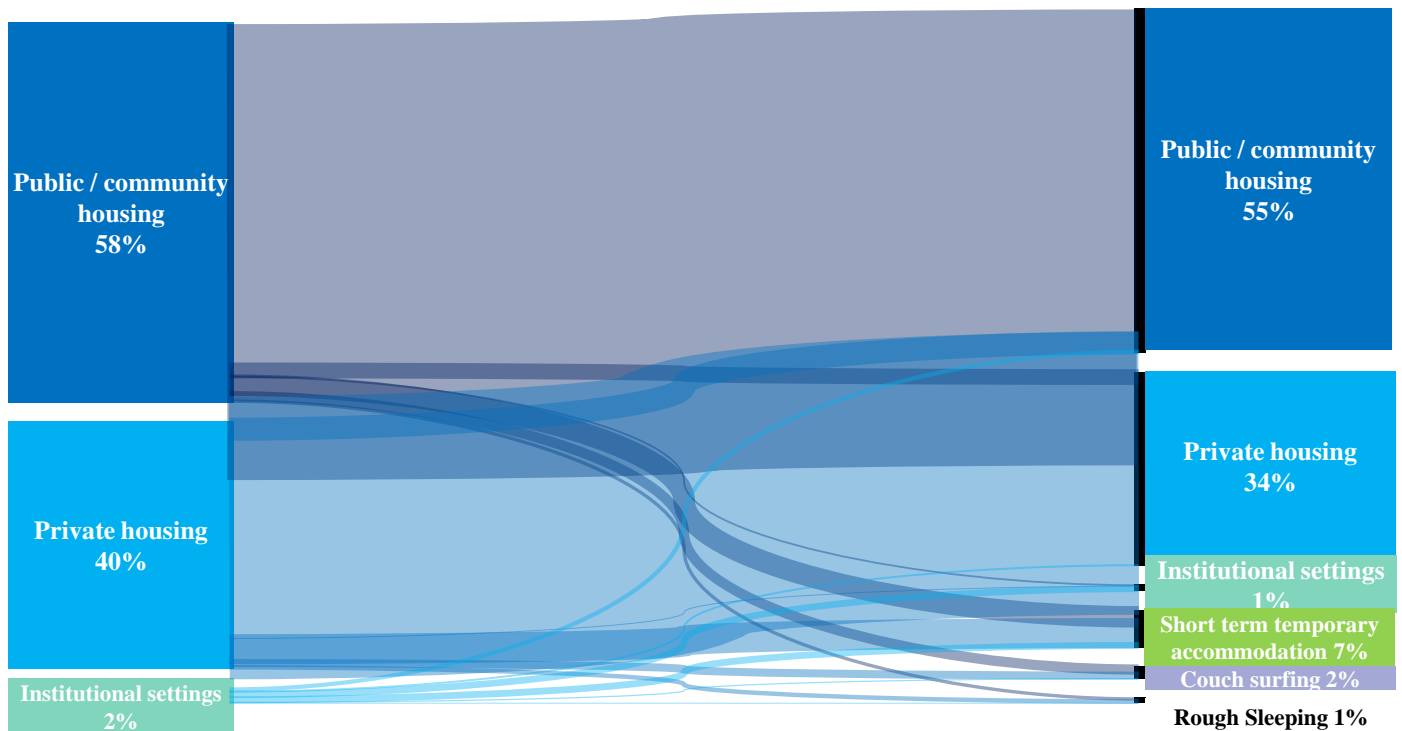
# Trends in Homelessness in Western Australia

Figure 2 Housing tenure outcome for clients with closed support periods who were experiencing homelessness at the start of support in Western Australia, 2020-21 (SHS)



Source: AIHW 2020 Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2019-20.

Figure 3 Housing tenure outcome for clients with closed support periods who were at risk of homelessness at the start of support in Western Australia, 2020-21 (SHS)



Source: AIHW 2020 Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2019-20.

# Trends in Homelessness in Western Australia

## Trends in Homelessness in Western Australian

Table 2 Number of people experiencing homelessness and the homelessness rate (per 10,000 estimated resident population) in Western Australia by region (SA4), 2016 Census

	Number	Rate per 10,000 population
Perth	9,404	51.7
Bunbury	946	55.1
Mandurah	476	51.2
Western Australia – Wheat Belt	917	68.2
Western Australia – Outback (North)	3,205	244.1
Western Australia – Outback (South)	1,667	124.6
<b>Total Western Australia</b>	<b>16,615</b>	<b>66.9</b>

Source: ABS Census TableBuilder 1 For the purposes of metropolitan versus regional comparison, the five Perth SA4 regions are aggregated.

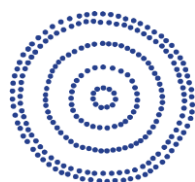
With the exception of Mandurah, the rate of homelessness in regional Western Australia greatly exceeds that in Perth. Outback (North), and Outback (South) all report rates of homelessness that are above the overall Western Australian average.

**Outback (North) records the highest homelessness rate in Western Australia and is almost five times higher than in Perth.**

x5

## Homelessness Among Selected Cohorts In Western Australia

Table 3 displays the rate per 10,000 of Western Australians accessing SHS, by cohort, in each year between 2015-16 and 2020-21. Increases in SHS service usage were recorded between 2015-16 and 2020-21 among the following five cohorts in Western Australia:



Aboriginal People



People With Mental Health Issues



People With Drug And Alcohol Issues



Older people (55 years and over)



People Exiting Custodial Arrangements

# Trends in Homelessness in Western Australia

**Table 3 Specialist Homelessness Services client rate (per 10,000 estimated resident population) by priority group in Western Australia, Specialist Homelessness Services, 2015-16 to 2020-21**

Client group	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Direction Change
All clients	93.4	96.2	92	95.9	95.1	91.9	↓
Aboriginal people	935.3	922.8	913.5	977.1	1099.3	1110.7	↑
People with experience of domestic/ family violence	42.0	42.5	41.5	41.5	39.8	38.0	↓
People with mental health issues	19.5	21.2	21.5	23.2	23.4	23.1	↑
People with drug and alcohol issues	10.1	10.9	10.2	11.4	11.7	11.4	↑
Young people presenting alone (15-24)	10.9	11.1	11.8	11.7	11.0	10.8	-
Older people (55 and over)	7.0	7.6	7.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	↑
Children on protection orders	2.4	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.9	2.4	-
People leaving care	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	1.8	↓
People exiting custodial arrangements	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	↑
People with disabilities	4.6	4.8	2.7	2.1	1.6	1.3	↓

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018b, 2019)

Western Australia has a dramatic **over-representation** of Aboriginal clients with 51% of SHS clients identifying as Aboriginal in 2020-21

The rate of clients with mental health issues has **steadily increased** in Western Australia from 19.5 to 23.1 per 10,000 between 2015-17 and 2020- 21.

Between 2017-18 and 2020-21, the rate of Western Australia SHS clients with problematic drug and alcohol use **increased** from 10.1 to 11.4 per 10.000. The rate is higher than the national rate.

There has been an **increase** in the proportion of Western Australian SHS clients who report homelessness upon leaving custodial arrangements (prison).

There are additional cohorts within the homeless population who have particular needs that warrant mention: **young people, veterans** and **people experiencing family and domestic violence**.



# Trends in Homelessness in Western Australia

Table 4 Drivers of homelessness in Western Australia

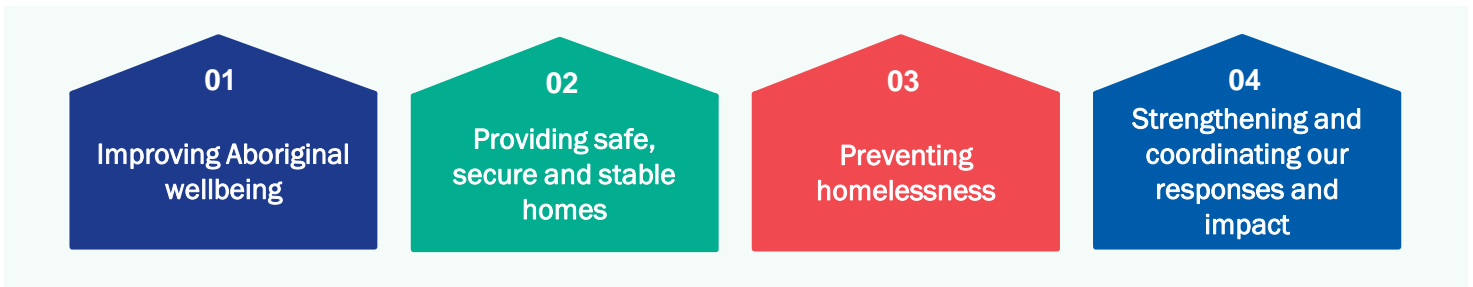
 <p>Housing affordability</p>	<p>After a period where WA rents had become more affordable, the last year has seen a significant rise in private market rents by 6.7% creating greater risks of an increase in inflow into homelessness. One in ten households re experiencing household stress, with over one-third of low-income rental households spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs. The rental affordability index classifies both Perth City and regional Western Australia as <b>extremely unaffordable</b>.</p>
 <p>Housing supply</p>	<p>Accessible public housing is a vital measure in preventing low-income households from entering homelessness. With the number of social housing dwellings declining, public housing is not keeping pace with population demand increasing the risk of inflow into homelessness. The average <b>waiting time to secure public housing is 94 weeks</b>.</p>
 <p>Poverty and unemployment</p>	<p>The rate of poverty in Western Australia has <b>remained relatively high</b> for some time. There has also been a consistent increase in the Western Australian youth (15-24 year olds) unemployment (6.3%), a social group who are already disproportionately impacted by economic downturns and homelessness.</p>
 <p>Young people in custody and out-of-home care</p>	<p>There is an established link between young people with experience in the justice system or who have experienced out-of-home care and lifetime risk of <b>repeat episodes of homelessness</b>. The steady trend in the rate of children in out-of-home care among the Aboriginal population is concerning. Currently 64.7 per 1000 children in out-of-home care are Aboriginal compared to 3.4 per 1000 non-Aboriginal.</p>
 <p>Physical and mental health</p>	<p>The homeless population is disproportionately affected by poor physical and mental health, and substance misuse. Given the significant role of poor mental health as a <b>driver of homelessness</b>, the high rates of mental illness must be addressed. Approximately 12% of people report poor health and high psychological distress.</p>
 <p>Alcohol and drug use</p>	<p>Substance misuse can be both a <b>contributing factor</b> (i.e. leading to homelessness through impaired economic participation or loss of social support networks) and also a consequence of homelessness. A positive shift in Western Australian drinking culture is taking place; the proportion of daily drinkers (5%) is decreasing, and abstainers increasing (27%). However, the rate of those that have used (43%) or continue to use (16%) an illicit drug in Western Australia has remained relatively constant.</p>
 <p>Domestic Violence</p>	<p>Domestic and family violence is <b>the leading cause</b> of homelessness for women and their children. There were over 8,000 breaches of restraining orders, 18,300 assaults, and 2,800 family violence offences in the last year.</p>

# Policy Settings and Progress in Ending Homelessness

The report examines policy and practice settings in Western Australia. Analysis of the Western Australian Government's Homelessness Strategy 2020-2030 and related strategies is undertaken, along with an environmental scan of selected programs and initiatives to address homelessness that are underway.

## All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030

Outcome areas identified in the strategy:



Priorities which guide the implementation of the strategy:



Western Australian Government initiatives under the strategy:





# Policy Settings and Progress in Ending Homelessness

## Government Funding of Homelessness Services

- **\$171.7 million** was provided In 2020-21 by the Australian Government through the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) for housing (\$125.6 million) and homelessness (\$46.1 million) services to Western Australia.
- **\$94.7 million** was committed by Western Australian Government in 2021-2022 on homelessness (including the \$46.1 million Commonwealth contribution) and **\$590 million** for social housing (including \$125.6 million Commonwealth contribution).

Figure 4 Western Australian government expenditure on homelessness services, 2016-2017 to 2020-21

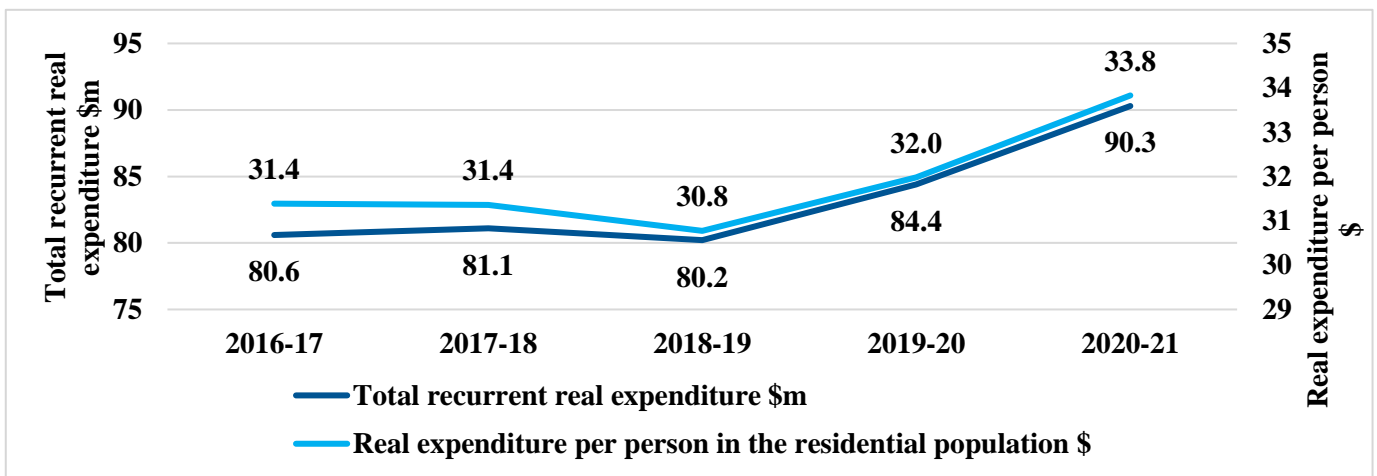
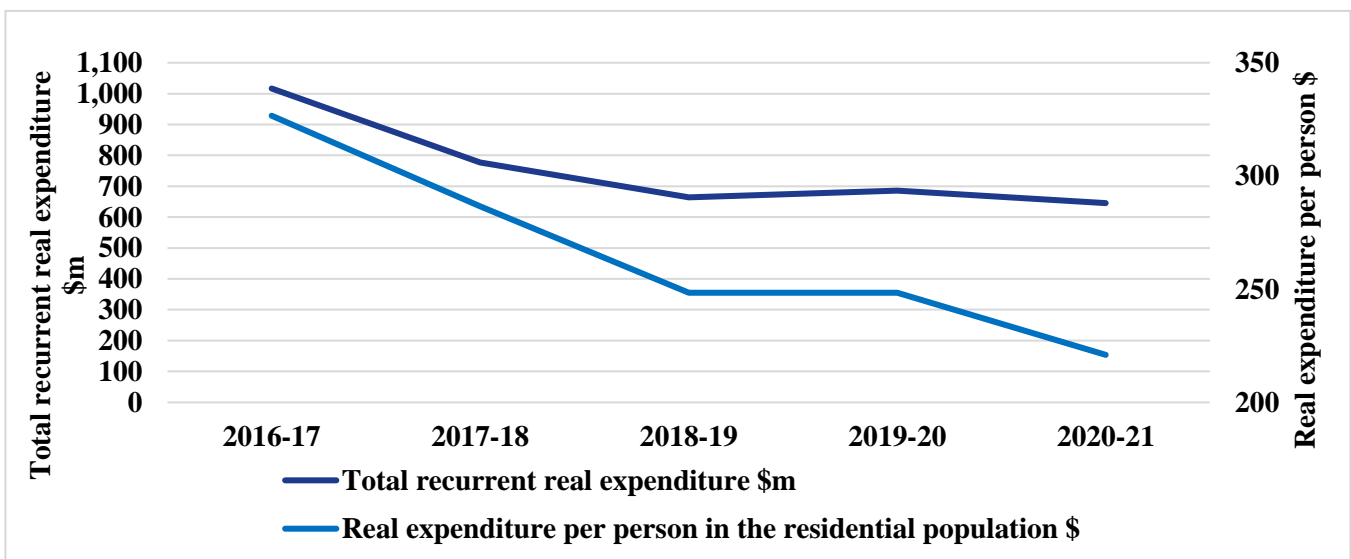


Figure 5 Western Australian government expenditure on social housing, 2020-21



Source: Report on Government Services, 2022. [www.https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/housing-and-homelessness](https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/housing-and-homelessness). Financial data are adjusted to 2020-21 dollars using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator

# Policy Settings and Progress in Ending Homelessness



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Figure 6 Real government expenditure on social housing index, 2020-21 baseline comparison 2016-17

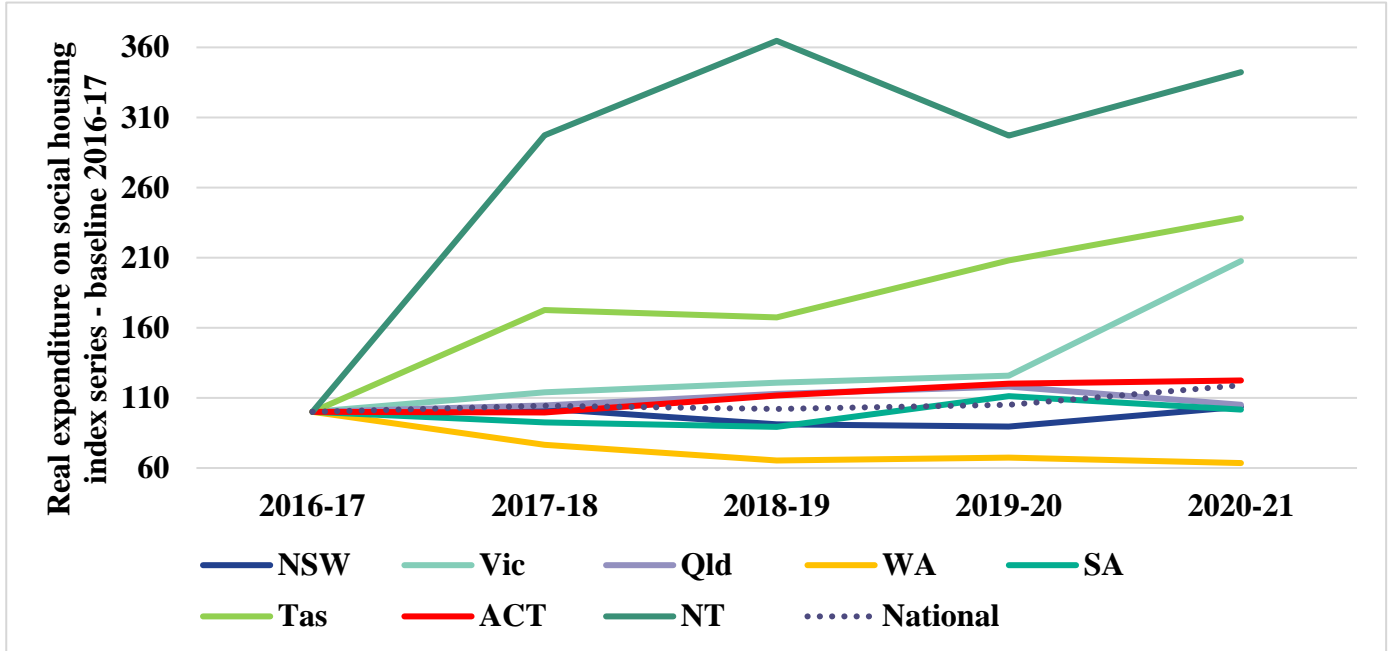
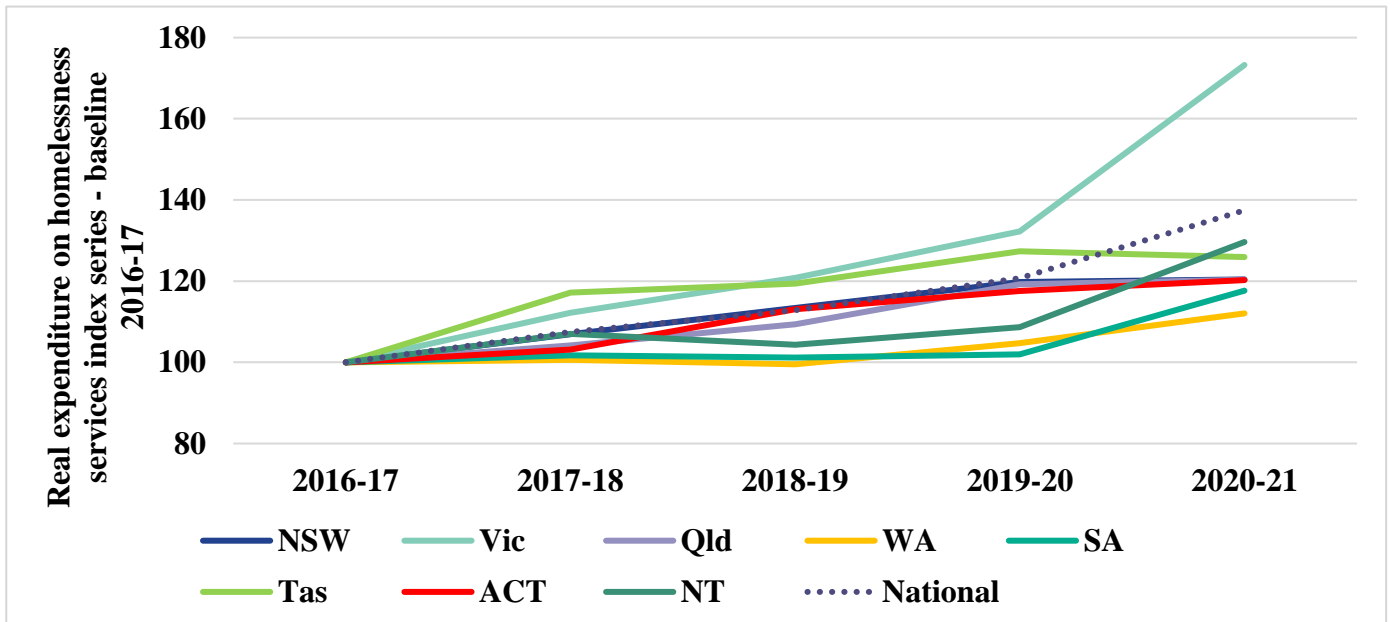


Figure 7 Real government expenditure on homelessness services index, 2020-21 baseline comparison 2016-17



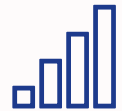
Source: Report on Government Services, 2022. [www.https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/housing-and-homelessness](https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/housing-and-homelessness). Time series financial data are adjusted to 2020-21 dollars (i.e. 2020-21=100) using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator. Government expenditure includes Australian Government NHA, and state government expenditure on social housing and homelessness. Baseline comparison year 2016-17.

# Policy Settings and Progress in Ending Homelessness

## Funding of Homelessness Services in Western Australia

The Funding of Western Australian Homelessness Services 2022 report provides comprehensive evidence of the funding of specialist homelessness services, mainstream services and Aboriginal services according to 73 services that operate across WA and completed the Funding and Delivery Survey by Centre for Social Impact.

- **\$68.8 million** (\$65.1 million for SHSs) was received in 2020-21 for services completing the Western Australian Homelessness Funding and Delivery Survey.
- NHA funding making up **34.5%** of all service funding.



- **90.8%** of respondent homelessness services received funding from external sources with NHA, **26.2%** of services received in-kind support.
- **15.4%** received funding reallocated to the service from the managing agency.



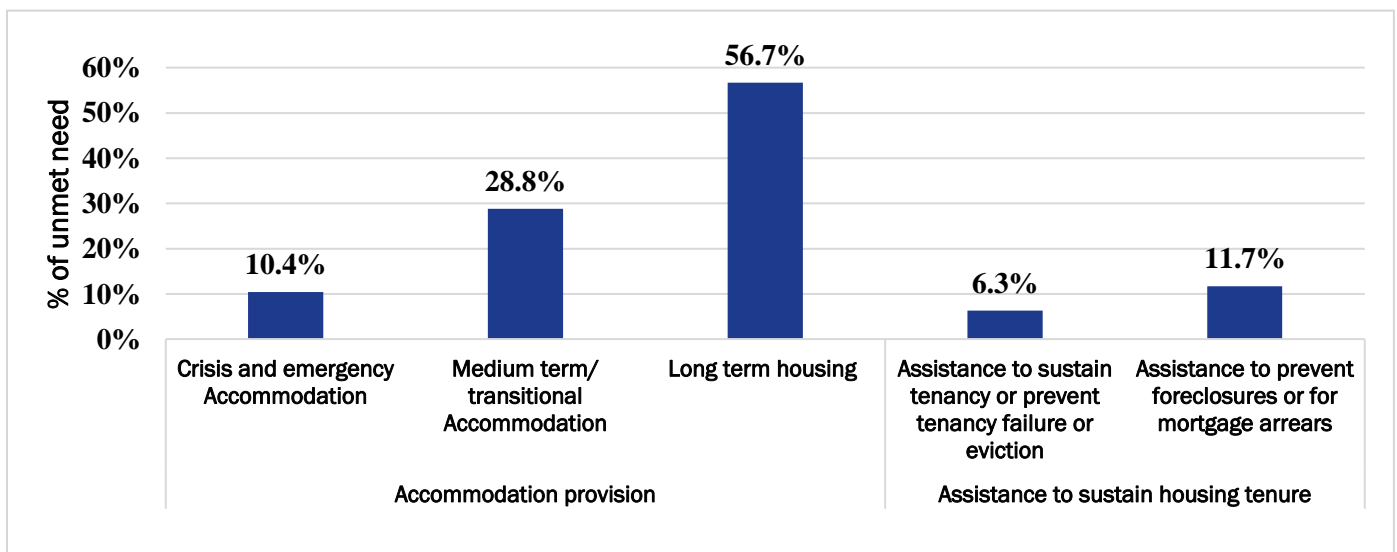
- **5.1% increase** was found in the National Wage Case and CPI Perth in March 2022 of 7.6% but dropping down to 5% over the 2022-23 financial year.
- **12.2% increase** in service costs were estimated compared to the indexed WA Government contract over the 2014-15 to 2022-23 period.



- In 2020-21, almost **25,000** Western Australians accessed Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs), **66%** of whom received accommodation support.
- **27.4%** of services indicated that they were able to meet 90% or more of client demand.
- **56.7%** of SHS clients had unmet long-term housing needs In 2020-21 ( See Figure 8).



Figure 8 SHS Clients and proportion of unmet need for those who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness



Source: Specialist Homelessness Services published data

# Spotlight On Selected WA Homelessness Initiatives

See the *Ending Homelessness in WA 2022 Report* for details of Initiatives

## Systems-based Housing First Initiatives

### 50 Lives 50 Homes

Commenced in late 2015, 50 Lives facilitated rapid access to housing and provided wraparound after hours support to chronic rough sleepers in Western Australia.



**1<sup>st</sup>**  
Systems-based Housing First Initiative in Western Australia



**30+**  
Participating organisations



**284**  
People housed  
As of March 2022



**427**  
People supported  
As of March 2022



**73%**  
Permanent housing retention  
At the end of 2021



**207 days**  
Median time to be housed

### 20 Lives 20 Homes (Fremantle)

20 Lives was a local place based response to ending homelessness in Fremantle and South Metropolitan Perth, initiated by St Patrick's in November 2019.



**29**  
People supported  
As of June 2022



**16**  
Still housed  
As of June 2022



**3.7 years**  
Average time spent experiencing homelessness



In October 2020, 50 Lives transitioned into the Zero Project, which is based on the Advance to Zero methodology.



Achieve a quality by-name list



Line up affordable housing



Provide ongoing support



Connect people to the community



Perth metropolitan area, Geraldton, Mandurah, Bunbury, and Rockingham

### Moorditj Mia

Western Australia's first Aboriginal Housing First Support Service



**54**  
Aboriginal people supported



**19**  
Aboriginal people housed



**2**  
Family reunifications

# Spotlight On Selected WA Homelessness Initiatives

See the *Ending Homelessness in WA 2022 Report* for details of Initiatives

## Homelessness Support Programs

- Horizon House
- Living Independently for the First Time (LIFT) Program
- Tuart House
- Tom Fisher House
- Homelessness Accommodation Support Worker – South East & North West Metropolitan
- The Bunbury Supportive Landlord Pilot (BSLP)
- Koort Boodja
- Reconnecting Lives Program (RLP)
- St Bart’s Women’s Service
- My Home – St Patrick’s Partnership, North Fremantle
- Foyer Oxford
- Armadale Youth Accommodation Service (AYAS)
- The Salvation Army’s Emergency Accommodation & Referral Support Services



## Families and Children Programs

- Centrecare Family Accommodation Service (CFAS)
- Sky
- Barn Doyintj Doyintj
- Young Women’s Program (YWP)
- The Salvation Army’s Family Accommodation Program



Entrypoint Outreach case workers. Photo by Centrecare.

## Homeless Health Initiatives

- The Royal Perth Hospital Homeless Team
- After Hours Support Service
- Medical Respite Centre
- Homeless Discharge Facilitation Fund Project
- Choices Post Discharge Program
- PILLAR
- Housing Support Worker: Drug and Alcohol Initiative (South West Region)
- St Patrick’s Health and Dental Clinic and Community Centre/Engagement Hub





# Spotlight On Selected WA Homelessness Initiatives

See the *Ending Homelessness in WA 2022 Report* for details of Initiatives

## Supporting Individuals and Families to Maintain Rental accommodation

- Private Rental Advocacy and Support Service (PRASS)
- The Western Australia Government's Residential Rent Relief Grant Scheme
- Boola Moort Tenancy Support Program

## Innovative Assessment and Referral Programs

- Entrypoint Perth
- Entrypoint Outreach
- Passages Youth Engagement Hubs
- Tranby engagement hub
- Library Connect Fremantle
- HEART



Noongar Mia Mia staff and board members with the Telethon NGNK Elder Co-Researchers at the Moorditj Mia launch. Photo by Noongar Mia Mia.



Library Connect Fremantle. Photo by St Patrick's.

## Preventative Initiatives

- Home Stretch
- 12 Buckets
- Wungening Moort
- Target 120
- Financial Counselling Network
- Housing Stability Project

## Other Cycle-Breaking Initiatives

- Zonta House Refuge Association
- Ground and Co
- Ebenezer Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC)
- Safe Night Space
- Housing Support Worker – Corrective Services (men)

To access the **Report** use the following citation: Flatau P., Lester L, Kyron M., Lai, C., and Li, M. (2022). *Ending Homelessness in Western Australia 2022*, Perth: The University of Western Australia. <https://doi.org/10.25916/ns0d-0q24>

The online **Dashboard** displays the latest statistics on the state of homelessness in WA, the drivers of homelessness and trends in the funding of homelessness services.: <https://endhomelessnesswa.github.io/home/>

Other **infographics** of the report: () A Decade of Advance of Zero Data in Western Australia 2012-2022