

Homelessness Week **2026**



Supporter action kit

#HW2026

Homelessness Week 2026



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This pack contains information and resources to support your Homelessness Week activities. If you have any questions or comments, please contact kate@homelessnessaustralia.org.au.

Homelessness Week 2026



About Homelessness Week

What is Homelessness Week?

Homelessness Week aims to build community support and government commitment to end homelessness.

That involves raising awareness about the causes and impacts of homelessness, and educating the community on how they can use their power as citizens to make a difference.

It's an important opportunity to put pressure on government to make change.

If homelessness organisations and advocates across Australia take action then we can send every federal and state member of Parliament a message that change is needed now.

In 2026, Homelessness Week will be held from Monday 3 August to Sunday 9 August.

What is the Homelessness Week theme in 2026

Homelessness in Australia is getting worse every day. We can't keep waiting for change to happen. That's why the 2026 theme is:



Homelessness Week 2026



Homelessness Week Supporter Actions

Homelessness Week is an important opportunity to put the issue of homelessness on the agendas of federal and state governments.

In the lead-up to and during Homelessness Week, you can take action as an organisation or an individual advocate.

Use the action ideas below, or develop your own ideas to influence change

Invite to your MP to visit your service

The most impactful thing you can do in Homelessness Week is to speak to your MP about what is needed to end homelessness.

Inviting an MP or Senator to your service to learn about the important work you do, to meet clients and staff, and to share knowledge about what needs to change to end homelessness is a great way to get homelessness onto their agenda.

You can use the text of the letter on the next page to help write your invitation letter.

Use the messages guide to link problems to the change we need Government to enact to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

Take photos of the visit to use on social media and post using #HW2026.

Visit your MP or write them a letter

If you can't get your MP to your service, request a meeting with them in their electorate office. Or write them a letter asking them to make change.

You could also invite your clients or other supporters to write MPs or the Homelessness Minister a letter sharing their story and what needs to change for them to gain or sustain a home.

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Draft invitation letter to your local member of Parliament

Your Organisation's Letterhead or Logo
(Today's Date)
(Name of MP)
Member for (Electorate Name)
(Parliamentary Office Address)

Dear (Title and Last Name of MP),

Invitation to Attend Local Homelessness Week 2026 Event – “Homelessness Action Now”.

On behalf of (Your Organisation's Name), I would like to warmly invite you to join us during Homelessness Week 2026 to see firsthand the work we're doing to support those experiencing homelessness in our community.

Event Details: Date: (Insert date) Time: (Insert time) Location: (Insert address or venue name)
Theme: Homelessness Action Now.

This event will provide an opportunity for you to:

- Meet and hear from people with lived experience of homelessness
- Tour our services and learn about our impact locally
- Engage with our staff, volunteers, and sector partners
- Hear directly about the challenges facing our community and the urgent need for action

Your presence and support would mean a great deal—not only to our organisation, but to the many individuals and families whose lives are touched by homelessness every day.

Please RSVP by (Insert RSVP date) to (Insert contact person's name and contact details).

We hope you'll join us in shining a spotlight on this critical issue and affirming our shared commitment to solutions that are dignified, sustainable, and community-led.

Warm regards,
(Your Full Name)
(Your Title)
(Organisation Name)

(Email address) | (Phone number) (Website or social media handles, if applicable)

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Create a Homelessness Week event

Homelessness Week events that connect with people experiencing homelessness, engage the community in activities that raise awareness of homelessness, or highlight how to end homelessness are another important way to take action.

Your event could be launching a new initiative/project, hosting a film screening, releasing a report or video featuring people with lived experience, inviting a guest speaker to speak to your stakeholders and supporters, or promoting the successes you have achieved over the last year.

Use our 'Fact sheet on homelessness' to draw attention to the scale of the national homelessness emergency as well as your own local data or stories about the impact of not enough affordable housing, inadequate safety nets and overwhelmed homelessness services.

You could host your event during Homelessness Week, or in the week before or after.

Register your event with Homelessness Australia

Include your event in the Homelessness Week events listings at <https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/submit/>.

Join the conversation on social media

Help amplify the messages of Homelessness Week and share your stories, thoughts and concerns about homelessness on social media using the hashtag #HW2026. Tag in your Federal or State members of Parliament as well.

You can find messaging and resources in this pack to support your communications.

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Generate media about ending homelessness

The national housing and homelessness crisis is a hot topic in the mainstream media – your local media (print, radio or TV) would likely be interested in covering a story on how this is impacting your local community.

To create a hook for your story you can use data from your service, and/or write a report on homelessness or the impact of the work you do.

Your media work will be more impactful if you can also share stories from a real person.

You could also write an opinion piece or letter to the editor calling for change

Post your stories or new information on social media using #HW2026.

Promote campaign petitions to build support for change



The national housing and homelessness campaign, Everybody's Home, has a new petition for HW2026

<https://everybodyshome.com.au/end-homelessness/#petition>

Homelessness Week



"I never imagined I'd be worrying about losing my home in my seventies."

[Sign the petition](#)

Julianne once owned her own home. But after losing it, she's spent more than a decade renting, believing she'd still be able to retire with the security of knowing she'd always have a place to call home.

A PLACE TO CALL
HOME AND
THE SUPPORT
TO KEEP IT

or support state-based homelessness campaigns like A Place to Call Home in NSW
<https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/aplacetocallhome/get-involved/sign-the-petition/>

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Homelessness Week Fact Sheet

During Homelessness Week, you are encouraged to share your stories and insights on ending homelessness. You might find the following facts and messages useful in your communications.

ABS Census 2021

- 122,494 people were experiencing homelessness in Australia, up 5.2% from 2016.
- Almost one in four (37%) were children and young people between 12 and 24.
- One in seven were children under 12 years old.
- One in five identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The housing crisis is driving increased homelessness

The housing system is failing people on low incomes and increasing the risk of homelessness.

- Sharp increase in numbers of people at risk of homelessness. In 2022, 3 million people were at risk of homelessness, where one setback like job loss or illness could mean losing their home — up 63% since 2016. (IA)
 - Rental stress is getting worse and lasting longer. In 2023, 54% of low-income renters were in rental stress, with 21% paying more than half their income in rent — the highest rate in a decade. The proportion stuck in stress for two or more years rose sharply from 48% in 2022 to 60% in 2023. (NHSAC)
 - The private rental market is out of reach to low-income households. Nationally, only 0.7% of rental properties are affordable for a single full-time minimum wage worker, while affordability is effectively zero for people receiving JobSeeker or Youth Allowance. ([Anglicare 2025, Rental Affordability Snapshot](#))
 - Rental stress drives homelessness. The proportion of homelessness service clients seeking help because they couldn't afford housing has almost doubled over the past decade, making it the fastest growing reason for seeking assistance. More than half (53%) were already homeless when they approached a service in 2024-25, compared with one-third (32%) ten years earlier. ([AIHW 2024-25](#))
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High demand for homelessness help, with significant unmet demand

Homelessness services are stretched beyond their limits. In 2024-25, more than 370,000 requests for assistance either went unanswered, were turned away without support, or could not be met with the housing or specialist services people needed.

Historically high levels of SHS assistance provided. In 2024-25, almost 289,000 people were assisted by specialist homelessness services ([AIHW 2024-25](#)), reflecting sustained demand at historically high levels. Providers have reported a 12% increase in monthly caseloads since 2019-20 ([AHM 2024](#)). Key clients

- Six in ten SHS clients are female. Nearly one in ten (9.3%) of female clients are 55+
- Over one third (34% or 92,300) are single parents with one or more children
- Almost one third (29%) are First Nations
- Children account for more than one in four (27%) SHS clients: 15% are aged under 10 years, 12% 10-17 years.
- 15% of SHS clients are unaccompanied children and young people

Family and domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness. People who have experienced FDV account for 40% of SHS clients. The number of people in this group have increased by annual average of 3% from 2012-12 to 2024-25. ([AIHW 2024-25, family and domestic violence](#))

Large and growing numbers are turned away without any assistance. In 2024-25, homelessness services recorded around 129,000 requests for help that they could not respond to, an average of 353 requests every day were turned away because services lacked capacity. This is a 17% increase on the year before. Two thirds of unassisted requests were made by females. ([AIHW 2024-25 Unassisted requests for service](#))

Many seeking help are missing from the official data. A further 123,000 requests each year are estimated to be missing from AIHWs official data because people are turned away without being recorded or their calls go unanswered by overwhelmed homelessness services. Analysis in the [Call Unanswered report \(Impact Economics 2024\)](#), revealed homelessness services regularly go 'on bypass' to manage overwhelming demand:

- 83% of services are unable to answer phone calls at times.
 - Near 40% have shut their doors during operating hours to cope with demand.
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For those who receive SHS assistance, their needs frequently cannot be met.

Because there is not enough housing to go around, SHS services frequently cannot meet client need. Of the 169,000 (or three in five) SHS clients needing accommodation assistance in 2024–25 ([AIHW 2024-25, Services provided and unmet need](#)):

Client needs are becoming more complex

More people are already homeless when they first seek help. The number of new clients already homeless before they accessed support rose 9% to more than 10,000 people each month (AHM 2024).

Rough sleeping continues to grow. The number of people sleeping rough at the start of homelessness support increased by 39% between 2019–20 and 2024–25. ([AIHW 2024-25 Clients by housing situation at beginning of support](#))

People are needing support for longer. The median duration of homelessness service support increased by 44% over the five years to 2022–23, reflecting growing difficulty securing housing and exiting homelessness. ([AHM 2024](#), using AIHW data).

Persistent homelessness has increased sharply. Persistent homelessness (being without a home for more than seven months over a 24-month period) has increased 39% over the last six years. 2024-25 data ([AIHW 2024-25, Persistent homelessness](#)) reveals.

- 1 in 7 SHS clients (around 41,000 people) experience persistent homelessness.
- Half (50%) have a current mental health issue.
- Almost half (47%) are children and young people.
- 42% are women and children affected by family or domestic violence.

High rate of return for homelessness services: One in 5 (21% or 60,900 clients) returned to SHS support after not receiving it in the previous 12 months. ([AIHW 2024-25, Patterns of service use](#))

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First Nations people are dramatically overrepresented

The ongoing impacts of colonisation, discrimination and intergenerational disadvantage are reflected in the stark overrepresentation of First Nations people across all homelessness measures.

First Nations homelessness is rising. On Census night in 2021, around 25,000 First Nations people were without a home — up 6.4% since 2016. Around 60% were living in severely overcrowded conditions. First Nations people are 8.8 times more likely to be experiencing homelessness than non-Indigenous Australians. ([ABS Census 2021](#))

Homelessness is a common experience for First Nations people. Nearly one in three (29%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 and over have experienced homelessness in their lifetime. ([ABS, based on 2014-15 NATSISS](#))

Almost one third of homelessness service clients are First Nations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up just 3.8% of the population but almost one in three (29%) of homelessness service clients ([AIHW 2024-2025](#)).

Persistent homelessness has risen sharply for First Nations. A 75% increase from 2018–19 to 2024–25, compared with a 39% rise across all clients. ([AIHW 2024-25](#))

Housing disadvantage for First Nations is severe across key metrics.

- Approximately one in eight First Nations households had unmet core housing needs: mostly due to unaffordable rentals or severe overcrowding. This is around double the rate for all Australian households ([AHURI 2025](#), using 2021 Census data)
 - First Nations people are nearly three times as likely to be living in overcrowded conditions than non-Indigenous people (18.6% compared with 6.5%). ([AIHW 2025](#), using 2021 Census data)
 - First Nations households are around 5.6 times more likely to live in social housing than non-Indigenous households ([ABS Census 2021](#))
 - 42% of First Nations households own or are purchasing their home, compared with around 68% of non-Indigenous households. ([AIHW 2026](#))
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Homelessness is costing lives

People experiencing homelessness are dying decades earlier than other Australians. ([AIHW 2025, People with a history of SHS support who have died](#))

Premature deaths. People with a history of specialist homelessness services have a death rate 1.8 times higher than the general population and a median age at death of just 55 years. Those with a history of rough sleeping die around a decade younger again.

One in 20 suicides and **one in six accidental poisonings** in Australia involve people who have been recently homeless. Deaths of despair from suicide or overdose are the leading cause of death among people without homes.

Nine potentially avoidable deaths every day among people with a history of SHS support and almost 100 years (94 years) of potential life lost each day to people who received SHS support in the last year of life.

Timely, effective support prevents and reduces homelessness

Strong case to prevent child homelessness. Experiencing homelessness before age 16 is a strong predictor of adult homelessness. 27% of SHS clients are 17 years or younger.

Homelessness costs taxpayers. The most acute homelessness currently costs taxpayers around \$140,000 per person each year, largely through avoidable health and justice expenditure. ([Taylor Fry 2021](#) for NSW Gov).

Homelessness services make a difference

- Early intervention works. 81% of people who accessed specialist homelessness services while at risk of homelessness avoided becoming homeless. ([PC 2026](#)).
- Each avoided eviction saves over \$12,000 in downstream costs (IA)

Housing First supportive housing breaks the crisis cycle. For those experiencing persistent homelessness and complex needs, supportive housing using Housing First principles is the most effective interventions available. It improves housing stability, reduces hospital and mental health service use, and delivers strong economic returns.

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Australians overwhelmingly support action on homelessness

Australians are seeing the homelessness crisis grow and want governments to act.

- In polling across 24 electorates, 60% of people under financial stress noticed rising homelessness in their community.
- Even among those not under stress, 40% reported an increase.

There is strong bipartisan support for targeted investment: Redbridge 2025

- 89% back increased investment for women and children escaping domestic violence
- 88% back increased investment for homeless children and young people
- 80% back increased investment for people sleeping rough
- 74% agree homelessness will never be eliminated without more social housing
- 73% back increased investment for those at risk of losing their home

Main sources:

- AIHW annual homelessness data 2024-25 (AIHW) and AIHW state and territory factsheets
 - State of Housing System Report 2026 (NHSAC 2026) and State of Housing System Report 2025 (NHSAC 2025)
 - Impact Economics, Call Unanswered (IA 2025)
 - Australian Homelessness Monitor 2024 (AHM 2024)
 - Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2026: Housing & Homelessness (PC 2026)
 - Anglicare 2025, Rental Affordability Snapshot
 - 2018–19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)
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Messaging for Homelessness Week

The housing crisis is fuelling a growing homelessness emergency

- Homelessness isn't inevitable — it's the result of decades of underinvestment in social and affordable housing, and a housing market that fails people on low incomes.
- Australia has a shortfall of over 600,000 affordable rental homes, leaving more and more people without a viable path to secure housing.
- But housing alone isn't enough. Gaps in support systems — like mental health care, disability support, and family violence services — also leave people without the help they need to stay housed or recover from crisis.
- If people can find a home they can afford and get the right support, far fewer will become homeless — and those who do will have a faster path back to stability.

We know what works — we just need to scale it

Homelessness can be ended — but only if we invest in the solutions that work.

- Building more social and affordable housing would ease pressure in the rental market and give people a real chance at stability. Currently, social housing comprises about 4% of total housing stock. The National Housing Supply and Affordability Council is calling for targets of 10% of housing stock to be social and affordable housing.
 - Lifting income support ensures people can afford rent and cover basic living costs
 - Early intervention prevents homelessness — by supporting people to keep their homes, escape violence, or connect with help in time.
 - Access to the support people need matters — too many people return to homelessness because their needs aren't met after being housed. With the right help, people can stay housed and rebuild their lives.
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Digital assets

Homelessness Australia has developed a range of assets to support your communications during Homelessness Week. You can add these in to your own branding to create Homelessness Week materials.



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