



Capacity crunch: AIHW stats reveal overwhelmed homelessness services

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The number of people already homeless and sleeping rough when they seek help surged in the last year, as skyrocketing rents and record low vacancy rates pushed more people into homelessness.

Analysis of Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics released today shows:

- The number of people who are already homeless when they seek help increased 5.5% in 2022-23;
- The proportion of individuals sleeping rough when they first approached homeless services increased 17%;
- There was a 16% increase in people exiting homelessness support to rough sleeping, and a 12% increase in exits to institutions like prisons or acute mental health facilities, and;
- Exits to private rental decreased by 2%.

"These figures are a stark and alarming indicator of how the deepening housing crisis is pushing more Australians to sleep in their car, pitch a tent or couch surf," said Colvin. "It's very hard to work or learn when you have no roof over your head or a real prospect of getting a home."

"The data also reveals that homelessness service capacity hardly increased in 2022-23 despite surging demand, with the number of clients supported across the year increasing only 1.3% from 272,694 to 273,648; a fall of 16,814 from those assisted when funding to homelessness services was temporarily increased during Covid."

As the Government crafts its National Housing and Homelessness Plan, Homelessness Australia is pushing for a [realistic blueprint](#) to end homelessness within a decade. "Ending homelessness is entirely doable as we saw during COVID," Colvin said. "We need substantial investment in social housing, sustained focus on the causes of homelessness, and a significant boost in funding for homelessness support services."

The Government must also deal with a \$73 million funding black hole currently looming for homelessness services. This relates to Federal funding for the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) supplementation for homelessness services to cover the wages of the workforce. Funding to cover the cost is in place now but expires in June 2024.

"Australians are facing a housing and cost of living crisis that is pushing more people into homelessness. Without more funding for critical homelessness first responders, we risk seeing these trends worsen, putting more Australians in jeopardy of experiencing the harsh realities of homelessness."



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