

Homelessness Services Victoria

SHS data collection 2013-14:

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: Homelessness Data Collection 2013-14

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) collects data from homelessness services across Australia through the Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection.

This is a brief summary of some of the key findings from 2013-14 and changes from 2012-13.

The numbers

Across Australia 254,000 people accessed homelessness services.

In Victoria, 99,892 people accessed homelessness services in 2013-14 up 8 per cent from 92,462 in 2012-13

Of these 61 per cent were female and 39 per cent were male.

In 2013-14 an additional 3,854 people aged 14 and under accessed homelessness services. In total those accessing services were:

- 36,316 aged under 24
- 54,423 aged 25-55
- 9,153 aged 55 and over

Main reason for seeking assistance

Services record both the main reason people are seeking assistance, and any additional reasons that might have contributed to their homelessness. In 2013-14 the three top *main* reasons people sought assistance were:

- Family violence - 28 per cent
- Financial difficulties - 17 per cent
- Housing crisis - 16 per cent

An additional 4,725 people accessed homelessness services due to family violence in 2013-14, accounting for over half of the increase in people seeking assistance.

Housing situation

When people first came to homelessness services:

- 27 per cent (26,679) were homeless
- 41 per cent (40,989) were at risk of homelessness
- 32 per cent (32,224) did not have their housing situation recorded



Housing situation continued

Table below outlines the housing situation for people seeking assistance when they first came to a homelessness service and after seeking assistance.

	Housing situation - first presentation	Housing situation - end of support period
No shelter or improvised/inadequate dwelling	10%	7%
Short term temporary accommodation	13%	15%
House, townhouse or flat - couch surfer or with no tenure	14%	10%
Public or community housing - renter or rent free	11%	17%
Private or other housing - renter, rent free or owner	48%	49%
Institutional settings	4%	3%

Assistance provided

Often people experiencing or at risk of homelessness will have more than one issue with which they need help. Of the

people seeking assistance the following needs were identified:

- 44 per cent of people seeking services needed accommodation
- 35 per cent need assistance to maintain a tenancy or prevent eviction
- 34 per cent needed material aid
- 30 per cent needed assistance for family violence
- 24 per cent required financial information

Services were able to assist the majority of clients with the needs they identified. However just under half of the people needing help with accommodation (48 per cent) did not have that need met.

Data quality

The Victorian Homelessness Service system has a high volume intake and assessment function, which provides immediate assistance and allocates vacancies for ongoing support.

The data collection system used by homelessness services was not developed for these high volume agencies and this may affect the way in which data is recorded and thus interpreted.

CHP is currently working with DHS, the AIHW and services to improve the quality of the SHS data collection.

If you have feedback about ways in which to improve SHIP data collection please contact Trish Westmore trish@chp.org.au