



Homelessness Australia

Creating a framework for ending homelessness

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Federal Government needs a plan to respond to the massive increase in homeless families

Homelessness data for 2015-16 released today by the Australian Health and Welfare Institute (AIHW) reveals that the number of families with children presenting to homeless services increased by 50.3% (from 80,198 to 120,522) between 2014-15 and 2015-16.

“This massive increase is being driven by the crisis of affordable housing, with families on low incomes increasingly unable to find rental housing they can afford”, says Jenny Smith, Chair of Homelessness Australia.

“Many families are seeking new affordable housing opportunities because they are fleeing domestic and family violence.”

More than a third of all people seeking support from homelessness services (38% - 106,000 people) did so due to domestic and family violence; with those seeking support for this reason increasing by 14% since 2014–15, and 33% since 2011–12.

“It is untenable that homelessness for families with children is increasing”, said Ms Smith. “We know that homelessness has a devastating impact on young lives, often resulting in disruption to schooling and to the development of health problems, including mental illness, that can have lifelong impact on wellbeing.

“Family violence and the lack of availability of affordable rental housing are at crisis levels, but the Federal Government does not have a plan to resolve these issues. They recently announced a one-year extension of the current inadequate level of federal homelessness funding, which while welcome, only kicks the problem down the road.

“Unless the Government urgently develops a national plan to fix the rental housing crisis and to end homelessness, we can only expect the number of homeless families to continue to increase.”

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