



Media release – 22 February 2018

More Australian wage-earners turning to homelessness services

More and more wage-earning Australians are turning to homelessness services as the cost of housing catapults and wages stagnate.

The Reserve Bank's Wage Price Index released yesterday shows that wages have grown 2.1% over the last 12 months, well behind the 3.4% increase in the cost of housing over the same period.

What's the result? More people are finding themselves unable to keep a roof over their head.

AIHW data analysis shows that there's been a 30% increase in the number of employed people needing homelessness assistance over the last three years.

CHP says that the collision of low wages and high housing costs is causing more homelessness, and that more low-cost housing is needed to keep people from ending up on the street.

Think having a job is a safeguard against homelessness? Think again.

"Women, in particular, are affected because they are more likely to be in low-paid and insecure jobs," said Kate Colvin, Council to Homeless Persons Acting CEO.

Over 20,000 wage earning Australians required homelessness help last financial year, according to AIHW data (Table 1).

"The Federal Government is asleep at the wheel on affordable housing," says Ms Colvin.

"We are calling on the Federal Government to deliver a national affordable housing plan to significantly increase access to low cost rental housing."

Table 1: Employed people approaching homelessness services in Australia year-on-year

National	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	3 year % change
Number of wage-earners seeking homelessness help	15,931	17,516	19,162	20,302	27%

Case study:

Mim, in her 40s, is a single mother of 3 (her kids have all left home now). She and her children fled family violence when the kids were in school and ended up in a series of dodgy rentals, sleeping in car, couchsurfing, and crisis accom. Mim lives in a house in Taggerty (near Eildon) 2 hours from Melbourne. She travels to work as an out-of-home carer in Burwood. Because she's casual, her income fluctuates dramatically. She's studying to try and improve her job prospects

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