



Media release – 15 April 2018

Census reveals 10,813 homeless Uni and TAFE students

As Youth Homelessness Matters Day approaches, ABS data reveals that there has been a 40% increase in homelessness among tertiary students in the last five years, with 10,871 University and TAFE students counted as homeless on Census night 2016. The total number of Australians counted as homeless in the 2016 Census was 116,427.

Homelessness Australia says the true number is likely to be much higher, due to young people not recognising that they are living in a homeless situation, or not wanting to admit it due to the stigma.

Living in severely overcrowded dwellings, couch surfing and crisis accommodation are the three most common forms of homelessness experienced by tertiary students, the data shows.

The national homelessness peak warns that the housing crisis is affecting the education of thousands of University and TAFE students, and is backing the Everybody's Home campaign calling for Federal action to address the chronic shortage of affordable accommodation for people on low incomes.

“Homelessness isn’t just the rough sleeping we see on the street. Hopping from couch to couch or living in severely overcrowded apartments without any privacy or space to study and socialise is harmful, and it makes it impossible to achieve your full potential,” said Jenny Smith, Chair, Homelessness Australia.

“Homelessness happens when low incomes collide with skyrocketing rents, and students are among those vulnerable to being left without a safe place to live. Their homelessness is so often hidden from view, but is every bit as damaging,” said Ms Smith.

“We presume that everyone has a stable, supportive family that they can turn to for help but tens of thousands of young people are unable to live at home due to family conflict and violence,” said Ms Smith. “Not everyone can turn to Mum and Dad when things get tough.”

Homelessness service data indicates an increasing number of students seeking help, with reports of students sleeping in student lounges and using university and TAFE shower facilities in the absence of stable housing, as well as accessing food vouchers and other material aid from services.

Youth Homelessness Matters Day #YHMD18 is on Wednesday 18 April. It is a national day of action that aims to highlight youth homelessness issues, and encourage action from politicians and policy makers.

Table: Number of University, TAFE and other tertiary students experiencing homelessness (Census, 2016)

Form of homelessness	Rough sleeping	Supported accommodation for the homeless	Couch surfing	Rooming houses	Other temporary dwellings	'Severely' crowded dwellings	TOTAL
Number of students	81	1,117	1,073	1,765	9	6,771	10,813

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