



Media release **Monday 6 August**

## Not just straight white males: Gay, migrant, muslim; homeless

Homelessness affects far more than the stereotype of the white cis male. Today's session at the National Homelessness Conference will examine how the homelessness sector is responding to people from migrant backgrounds and the queer community.

### National Homelessness Conference

Session: Respecting difference

Harrison Room, Melbourne Cricket Ground

Date: **Monday 6 August, 1.30 – 3pm**

### Homelessness among migrant populations

- Migrants are disproportionately affected by homelessness; almost a third of Australians were born overseas but about 45 per cent of people who are homeless are migrants
- The vast majority of migrants counted as homeless on Census night are experiencing homelessness in the form of severe overcrowding (where more than four additional bedrooms would be required to house the occupants)

Although migrants are being recorded as homeless in high numbers through the Census, they are less likely to be engaging with the homelessness system to get help. Of the 289,000 Australians who sought assistance from homelessness services in 2016-17, 85% were born in Australia. The top seven countries of birth of homelessness clients were New Zealand, Sudan, England, Vietnam, Iran, India.

### Why is homelessness higher among migrant populations?

*"Recent migrants are more likely to earn lower incomes and also have limited access to some Government support payments. Even those who are able to secure Newstart while they are jobseeking discover that it is not sufficient to cover the cost of housing in Australia,"* said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

*"Language challenges and race discrimination can be barriers to employment and other economic participation. Migrants trying to find private rentals may face discrimination by landlords and real estates,"* she said

### Homelessness among LGBTIQ populations

In the **last ten years, one in eight heterosexual** Australians experienced homelessness at some point. This compares to the homelessness experienced by **one in five people who are bisexual**, and **one in three** who identify as **gay or lesbian** (2014 ABS General Social Survey)

### Why is homelessness higher among LGBTIQ populations?

[Family rejection](#) is a leading driver of LGBTIQ homelessness: 51% of LGBTIQ young people, and 71% of Gender Diverse young people aged 14 to 21 don't live at home with family (source: LGBTI Health)

*"Anecdotally we know that young LGBTIQ can be reluctant to engage with homelessness services, fearing negative attitudes from staff and other residents, mis-gendering and heterosexist language.*

*"Homelessness agencies need to be well-prepared to respond to the unique needs of the queer community. We have both an opportunity and a challenge ahead of us when it comes to tackling LGBTIQ homelessness. We need to be able to respond to their unique needs,"* said Jenny Smith, CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

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