



VICTORIA / 2022

Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness

Aboriginal Australians are overrepresented in the homelessness system. Indigenous Australians make up 0.8% of Victorians, but 10.2% of homelessness service users.

Why are Aboriginal Victorians overrepresented in the homeless population?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived in Australia for over 60,000 years, making their cultures among the richest and oldest continuing cultures in the world. Colonisation did not only mean the taking of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands, or their removal to live on designated missions and reserves, but is an ongoing process to this day. Ongoing colonisation is realised through processes that result in increased homelessness, including over-incarceration, child removal, and housing discrimination.

These processes, both past and present, have had a direct impact on a range of wellbeing outcomes. Below we describe how Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are addressing these challenges.

What it means to be 'home' for Aboriginal Australians

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities the concept of 'home' can include connection to country and community.

Future directions in addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Homelessness

Working together to build a shared future means ensuring that Aboriginal Victorians can determine the solutions and programs to meet their own needs. This has been shown to result in more service utilisation and better outcomes.

Achieving this requires strong and well-resourced Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations that are empowered to develop and deliver unique, responsive solutions to Aboriginal homelessness. Ensuring that mainstream services are culturally competent is a complement to this capacity.

References

1. ABS Census 2016
2. AIHW SHS Annual Report, 2020-21
3. Behrendt, L., Jorgensen, M., and Vivian, A., 2016, Self-Determination: Background Concepts, Scoping paper 1 prepared for the State of Victoria, Department of Health & Human Services, Melbourne, pp. 12-15

11.5%

The proportion of people without homes in Victoria who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

1 in 6

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Victorians experience homelessness each year.

13.1x

The increased likelihood that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians will experience homelessness when compared to other Victorians.

