

# Homelessness and domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children.

**116,200**

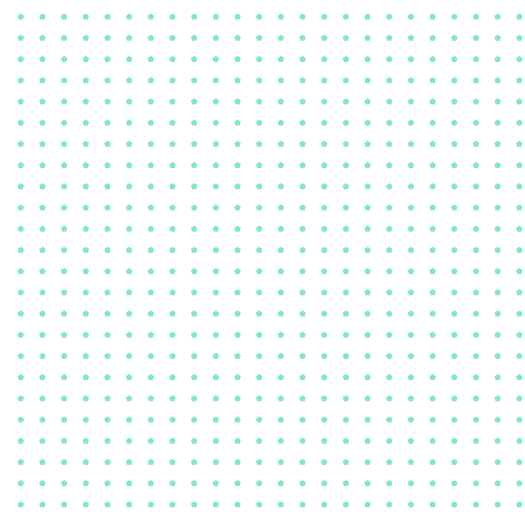
people using homelessness services nationally in 2020-21 had experienced domestic and family violence.

**93%**

of clients who had experienced domestic violence were women or children.

**84%**

of clients who had experienced violence were seeking accommodation or help to sustain housing.



Housing is critical for victim survivors of violence to build a life free from violence. While ideally victim survivors would be able to stay in their homes, and perpetrators would be removed, the reality is that many survivors need to leave their home to find safety.

## About family violence

Family violence is violent or threatening behaviour or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member that causes a family member to be fearful.

Women are overwhelmingly the victims of family violence. In Australia, one in four women experienced family violence by an intimate partner, compared to one in 13 men.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Statistics<sup>2</sup>

**42%** Of all SHS clients had experienced FDV.

**40%** Presented with their children

**39%** Did not have a home when support began.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 35 more times more likely to experience family violence than other Australian women.<sup>3</sup> Family violence includes but isn't limited to:

- physical violence, sexual assault and other sexually abusive behaviour
- economic abuse
- emotional and psychological abuse
- stalking
- kidnapping or deprivation of liberty
- damage to property or a pet
- behaviour by the person using violence that causes a child to be exposed to the effects of any of the above<sup>4</sup>

## Income adequacy and homelessness

Not all women who experience family violence will become homeless. Women without enough income to sustain housing are more likely to need help from

homelessness services, demonstrating how much homelessness caused by family violence is also underpinned by other issues, such as gendered income inequalities and poverty.

## Need for accommodation

Women that have experienced family and domestic violence are the biggest client group seeking assistance from specialist homelessness services. In 2020-21, 116,180 clients, or 42% of all specialist homelessness service clients, sought assistance while experiencing domestic and family violence, with more than half (57.1%) requiring accommodation. Of these, more than one in three (36.6%) were not able to be provided with accommodation.

Research by Equity Economics in 2021 identified that lack of access to housing results in approximately :

- 7,690 women a year returning to perpetrators due to having no-where to live
- approximately 9,120 women becoming homeless after leaving their homes due to domestic and family violence and being unable to secure long term housing

## In Victoria

In Victoria, almost half of the women who seek support from homelessness services identify family and domestic violence as the main reason they need help.

## References

1. ABS, 2016, Personal Safety, Australia, [www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safetyaustralia/latest-release](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safetyaustralia/latest-release)
2. AIHW, SHS Annual Report, 2020-21
3. Spinney, 2012, Home and Safe? Policy and Practice Innovations to Prevent Women and Children who have experienced Domestic & Family Violence from becoming Homeless.
4. ABS(a), 2009, Conceptual framework for family and domestic violence