

# Diverse Needs: People experiencing or at risk of homelessness

About 270,000 Australians are homeless or at risk of it. They live in poor or unsafe housing, with no tenure or control. Their home may be very crowded, a temporary refuge or crisis housing. 1 in 7 people who are homeless are aged over 55 years.

## Experience of disadvantage

Homelessness makes people feel unsafe and isolated. This may worsen mental and physical health. The main causes include financial problems, lack of cheap housing and long-term unemployment. Some face additional trauma, family violence and abuse. Mental illness and addiction make stable housing even harder to maintain.

## Complex overlaps

Homelessness affects many people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders often lack adequate housing. Safe housing is hard to find for people in family breakdown and for women escaping violence. Older people may have long-term housing problems and struggle with poor health, low income and support.

## The impact on end-of-life care

Poverty and isolation make it hard for homeless people to access health and aged care. Many avoid and delay seeking help due to fear that services may not accept them. Trusted services can help aged care to tailor care better. This can reduce barriers to aged care and ensure support for palliative and end-of-life care.



Visit the [Homeless Palliative Care](#) website for more information.

Watch the [webinar](#) on Navigating Services with older people at risk of homelessness.

