

## Monthly data

The AIHW receives and aggregates data from around 1,600 specialist homelessness services agencies across Australia on a monthly basis. This site presents monthly data on the number of clients supported throughout each month since July 2017, by state, age and sex. Additional breakdowns by specific target groups, the reasons clients sought assistance, homelessness status, clients receiving financial support for short-term accommodation and nights in short-term accommodation are also included.

The data visualisation shows an interactive display with charts of monthly counts of clients by state and sex, separate charts for certain client groups, a population pyramid showing age and sex distributions for a selected time period and also counts of clients who sought services by their reason for seeking services. Data are available in the file available for download on this webpage.

### Specialist Homelessness Services: Monthly data

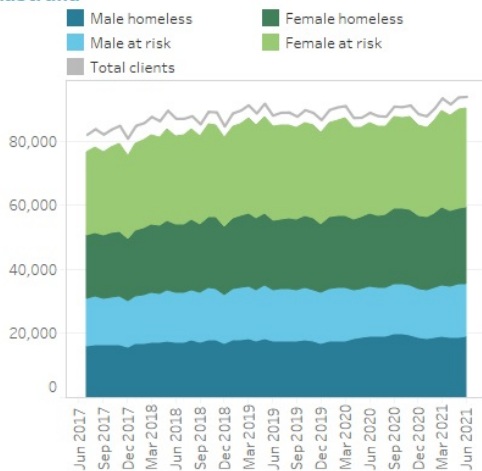
Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) agencies receive government funding to deliver SHS services to clients. A client is any person who receives a direct service from SHS agencies; they may be homeless or at risk of homelessness. A direct service aims to respond to the needs of the particular client. A client can be of any age, and children who present with a parent or guardian and receive a direct service are also considered to be SHS clients.

Note: SHS client counts change from one month to the next for many reasons. These changes are not necessarily due to changes in the demand for homelessness services. Monthly clients counts should not be summed to derive annual client counts because clients can access services in multiple months.

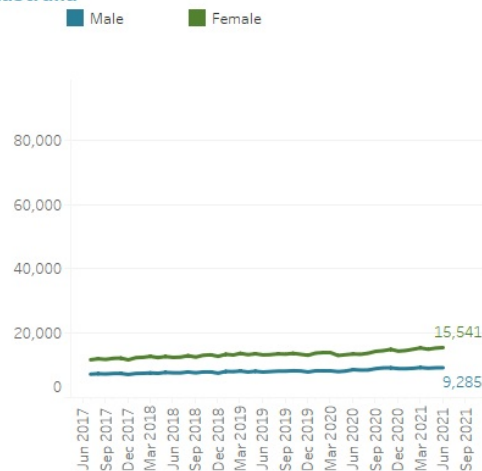
Select a state/territory: **Australia** | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT

#### SHS clients by sex and client groups, July 2017 to June 2021

##### SHS clients by sex and housing situation, Australia



##### Indigenous SHS clients by sex, Australia



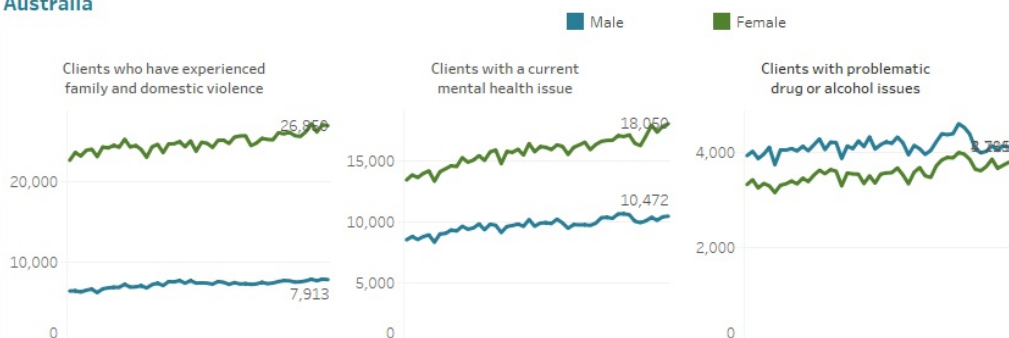
Note: Housing situation *Homeless* or *At risk of homelessness* is the last known housing situation for a client in the month. Unknown housing situation is included in the Total clients line (grey line) above.

The number of clients who received support from Specialist Homelessness Services in Australia fluctuated between 81,977 clients in July 2017 to 93,783 in June 2021.

Of the 93,783 clients in June 2021; 57,514 were female; 36,269 were male; 24,826 were Indigenous.

#### SHS clients by client groups, July 2017 to June 2021

##### Australia



Note: The client groups are not mutually exclusive. A client can be in multiple client groups.

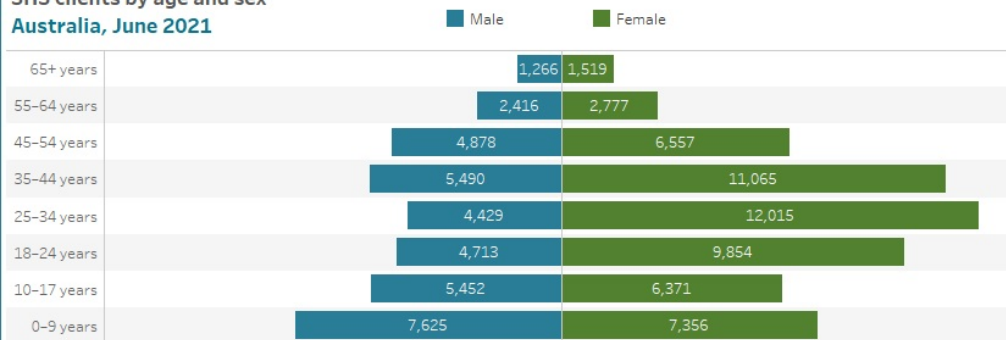
In June 2021, Specialist Homelessness Services in Australia assisted:

- 34,763 clients who had experienced family and domestic violence,
- 28,522 clients with a current mental health issue, and
- 7,906 clients with problematic drug or alcohol issues.

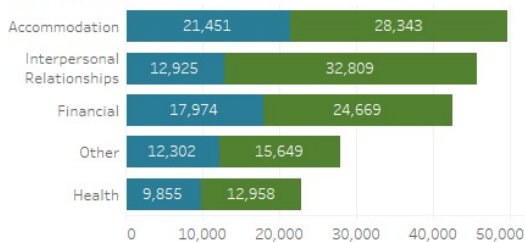
## SHS clients by age, sex, reasons for seeking assistance and broad assistance provided, by month

Select a month:  
June 2021

### SHS clients by age and sex Australia, June 2021



### SHS clients by reasons for seeking assistance (main categories) Australia, June 2021




Note: Clients may have more than one reason for seeking assistance. Further information on sub-categories are available in the data tables.

### Accommodation and financial assistance Australia, June 2021

**261,297 nights**  
of short term/emergency  
accommodation  
were provided to  
**14,833 SHS clients**  
in June 2021

**3,999 SHS clients**  
received financial  
assistance for  
short term/emergency  
accommodation.

Source: AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection  
<<https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-our-data/our-data-collections/specialist-homelessness-services-collection>>

Source data:  [Specialist homelessness services monthly data file \(0.4MB XLS\)](#).

 Download

Please use the 'Download' button within the dashboard to generate image or PDF versions of the data.

## Notes about interpreting the data

### Sum of state and territory totals versus national total

Clients may access services in more than one state or territory. Therefore, the national total may be less than the sum of jurisdictions. State/territory level monthly client data are based on information from support periods active during the month within each respective state/territory.

### Client count

The monthly count of clients should not be added together to determine an annual count as a client may receive assistance in more than one month. The Specialist homelessness services annual report series provides information about services provided to clients over an entire financial year (see the 'Further information' links).

### Age

A client's monthly age is calculated as at the start of their first support period in the month in that jurisdiction, or at the start of the month (if the support period began in a previous month).

## Sex

Cases where Sex has been recorded as 'other' have been combined with the category for 'female' for confidentiality/data quality reasons; sex = other is only applicable for support periods that started from 1 July 2019.

## Family and domestic violence (FDV) clients - before July 2019

For each collection month, a client is counted if, in any support period active during the month:

- 'domestic and family violence' was reported as a reason for seeking assistance (only reported at the beginning of the support period), or
- they required family/domestic violence services during that month.

## Family and domestic violence (FDV) clients - from July 2019

For each collection month, a client is counted if, in any support period active during the month:

- 'domestic and family violence' was reported as a reason for seeking assistance (only reported at the beginning of the support period), or
- they were formally referred from a non-SHS family and domestic violence service provider (only reported at the beginning of the support period), or
- they required family/domestic violence services during that month.

## Clients with mental health issues

For each collection month, a client is counted if they were 10 years or older at the start of the month and, in any support period active during the month, the client had any of the following:

- reported 'mental health issues' as a reason for seeking assistance at the beginning of the support period;
- was formally referred to the specialist homelessness agency by a mental health service;
- reported at the beginning of the support period that they had been in a psychiatric hospital or unit in the last 12 months;
- reported at the beginning of the support period that they were receiving services or assistance for their mental health issues or had in the last 12 months;
- had psychiatric hospital or unit as their dwelling type either a week before presenting to an agency or when presenting to an agency;
- reported psychiatric hospital or unit as their dwelling type during that month; or
- required psychological services, psychiatric services or mental health services during that month.

## Clients with problematic drug or alcohol issues

For each collection month, a client is counted if they were 10 years or older at the start of the month and, in any support period active during the month, the client had any of the following:

- reported 'problematic drug or substance use' or 'problematic alcohol use' as a reason for seeking assistance at the beginning of the support period;
- was formally referred to the specialist homelessness agency from a drug and alcohol service;
- reported at the beginning of the support period that they had been in a rehabilitation facility in the last 12 months;
- had rehabilitation facility as their dwelling type either a week before presenting to an agency or when presenting to an agency;
- reported rehabilitation facility as their dwelling type during that month; or
- required drug or alcohol counselling services during that month.

## Reason for seeking assistance

The count of reasons for seeking assistance should not be added together to determine a monthly total as a client may nominate multiple reasons for seeking assistance.

## Clients with COVID-19 as a reason for seeking assistance

From 26 March 2020, 'COVID-19' became an 'other' reason for seeking assistance. It could mean that the client and/or the agency were affected directly or indirectly by the crisis. Caution should be applied when interpreting these data because it may not mean that the client was directly impacted by COVID-19.

## Homeless status

All clients of specialist homelessness services are considered to be either homeless or at risk of homelessness. Homelessness and at-risk status is determined by the specific criteria described below using three aspects of a client's housing situation: dwelling type, housing tenure and their conditions of occupancy.

Clients are considered to be homeless if they are living in any of the following circumstances:

- No shelter or improvised dwelling: includes where dwelling type is no dwelling/street/park/in the open, motor vehicle, improvised building/dwelling, caravan, cabin, boat or tent. Or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in a caravan park.
- Short-term temporary accommodation: dwelling type is boarding/rooming house, emergency accommodation, hotel/motel/bed and breakfast. Or tenure type is renting or living rent-free in boarding/rooming house, renting or living rent-free in emergency accommodation, or renting or living rent-free in transitional housing.
- House, townhouse or flat (couch surfing or with no tenure): dwelling type is House/townhouse/flat, and tenure type is no tenure or conditions of occupancy is couch surfing.

Clients are considered to be at risk if they are living in any of the following circumstances:

- Public or community housing (renter or rent free): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter or rent-free in public housing, or renter or rent-free in community housing.
- Private or other housing (renter, rent-free or owner): dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and tenure type is renter or rent free in private housing, life tenure scheme, owner-shared equity or rent/buy scheme, owner-being purchased/with mortgage, owner-fully owned, or other renter or rent free.
- Institutional settings: dwelling type is hospital, psychiatric hospital/unit, disability support, rehabilitation, boarding school/residential college, adult correctional facility, youth/juvenile justice correctional centre, aged care facility or immigration detention centre.

Clients who did not provide any information regarding the three aspects of their housing situation are classified as 'not stated'.

Homeless status (Homeless or At risk of homelessness) is based on the last known housing situation for a client in the month, derived either at the end of the month for clients still receiving a service or at the end of the last support period in the month. Clients with unknown homeless status are excluded from the 'Homeless/At risk of homelessness' counts.

### **Clients receiving financial assistance for short term/emergency accommodation**

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Clients who received financial assistance for accommodation not owned by an SHS agency, such as hotels, motels and caravan parks. It excludes assistance given alongside accommodation owned or directly managed by an SHS agency (for example, refuge or crisis centres) and does not include assistance for rent or other housing costs.

### **SHS clients accommodated in short-term/emergency accommodation**

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Clients who received accommodation owned or directly managed by an SHS agency, such as a refuge or crisis shelter. This includes emergency accommodation arranged and paid for by an SHS agency in places such as hotels, motels and caravan parks. However, this type of accommodation may not be accurately recorded by an SHS agency. Therefore, there may be an undercount of SHS clients accommodated in short-term/emergency accommodation (as well as their associated nights in short-term/emergency accommodation).

## **COVID-19 responses**

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### **New South Wales**

The NSW Government initiated a number of strategies in response to COVID-19 to ensure essential services continued, and supported people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness during the pandemic. One of the priorities of the NSW Government is to reduce street homelessness across NSW by 50 per cent by 2025. In this initiative, key areas of focus include:

- Preventing people from sleeping rough
- Supporting those people receiving SHS, and Temporary Accommodation (TA) into long term accommodation
- Increasing the supply of social housing through programs such as Communities Plus and increasing maintenance funding for the existing social housing stock.

These priorities, already in train, assisted in addressing disadvantage within the housing and homelessness sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, in late March 2020, the NSW Government announced additional funding and supports for social housing and homelessness prevention. As part of the second stage of the NSW Government's \$1 billion health and economic stimulus package, \$34.4m in funding was made available to prevent people from experiencing homelessness. This includes people experiencing, and at risk of, homelessness, such as people in casual employment living in the private rental market. The package included provisions for emergency accommodation, as well as keeping people in stable, affordable housing:

- \$14.32 million for temporary accommodation for clients to support self-isolation, including supporting people sleeping rough into accommodation, or deconcentrating a congregate living facility
- \$20.02m for rental subsidies to enable people to access or sustain private rental accommodation

Enhanced temporary accommodation was introduced from 1 April 2020, increasing temporary accommodation capacity and revising temporary accommodation policy to extend eligibility and duration of temporary accommodation support. The changes were as follows:

- Usual limit of 28 days of temporary accommodation in a year was waived for people sleeping rough and other people who are homeless.
- The initial period of temporary accommodation provided for new homeless clients was extended from 2 nights to 5 nights, to help better identify what medium and longer term options a homeless client may have.
- Clients who are sleeping rough were provided a minimum of 30 nights in temporary accommodation assistance, but initially they were booked for 5 nights in suitable accommodation.
- A Sydney Rough Sleeper COVID-19 taskforce with the City of Sydney, local health districts and homelessness services to support local decision-making, coordination and communication was established.

Since 1 April, more than 2,000 people sleeping rough have been provided with temporary accommodation and are being supported to transition to long term permanent accommodation and post-crisis support. Most of these initiatives are outside the scope of the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection and may have had an impact on the SHS client numbers in NSW.

## Victoria

Victoria's provision of short term or emergency accommodation steadily increased from April to September 2020, and then decreased sharply from November 2020 however remained higher than pre-COVID. Provision of short term or emergency accommodation has been rising again since April 2021. Significant resources continued to be allocated throughout 2020-21 to meet demand and to provide safe housing exits for homeless clients. At the end of 2021, 4,000 clients are still being assisted who stated COVID-19 as a reason for presenting.

- Since March 2020, the Victorian Government has invested nearly \$25.8 million in emergency housing, additional Housing Establishment Fund, COVID-19 Isolation and Recovery Facilities to help keep people experiencing homelessness safe whilst also reducing the potential for community transmission of COVID-19. This has included:
  - \$3.3 million for the Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) and \$2.3 million for Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) for homelessness services to provide temporary housing and private rental brokerage in response to the COVID-19 emergency
  - \$8.8 million to provide safe and supported accommodation for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to isolate or recover from COVID-19
  - \$11 million to continue to support people in emergency accommodation, including additional HEF to keep people in safe accommodation and additional specialist support workers, including drug and alcohol support.
- On 28 July 2020 the Victorian Government announced the new \$150 million From Homelessness to Home Package with an additional \$16 million recently added. The Homelessness to a Home (H@H) program established during the pandemic is assisting 1,845 vulnerable Victorians to leave emergency accommodation and move into their own social housing home with a support package to help maintain their new tenancies. People experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping were provided emergency hotel accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure they remained safe and could comply with public health directions. Additional support provided under this package includes:
  - More than \$53 million additional HEF to continue to provide emergency accommodation support until June 2021 for people experiencing homelessness housed in hotels and to transition these people into stable housing.
  - \$44 million is being provided for homelessness and transitional housing through headleasing
  - more than \$56 million to deliver additional flexible support packages for households with more complex needs to ensure they can be supported to remain safely in emergency accommodation and sustain their housing tenancy upon transition to other accommodation.

## Queensland

In Queensland, the Government delivered several responses to COVID-19 including:

- The Housing and Homelessness COVID-19 Immediate Response Fund (IRF), to enhance existing service offerings across the housing and homelessness continuum, including delivery of additional brokerage, emergency accommodation, and outreach services to ensure vulnerable Queenslanders had enhanced access to homelessness and housing responses during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Emergency Housing Assistance Response, initiated to provide short-term accommodation to individuals and families requiring an immediate accommodation solution.
- A rapid response domestic and family violence COVID-19 initiative, that moves women and their children in inappropriate accommodation in Brisbane to safer short-term accommodation with coordinated specialist supports and services, including safety planning.
- Relocated up to 300 vulnerable Queenslanders who were residing in homelessness shelters or rough sleeping in inner Brisbane into safe, secure, self-contained accommodation to reduce the chances of COVID-19 infection or spread.

It is anticipated that an overall increase in the number of clients seeking and provided support as a result of COVID-19 will be reflected through the SHSC.

## Western Australia

During the COVID-19 period, the Department of Communities, in line with Department of Finance (Western Australia) instructions, reduced non-essential contract compliance requirements for services to assist organisations responding to the changing COVID-19 environment. These reductions in reporting requirements are not considered likely to have impacted on Specialist Homelessness Services Collection. In WA, relief fund grants have been available through [Lotterywest](#) and other one-off initiatives have taken place which fall outside the scope of SHSC but may influence the numbers reported. The WA Recovery Plan [inthisgogether](#) outlines other current and upcoming initiatives which may provide further contextual information.

## South Australia

In response to the COVID-19 lockdown in South Australia, the SA Housing Authority enacted a process for supporting people experiencing homelessness or domestic and family violence to stay in hotel / motel accommodation for the duration of the lockdown in order to comply with SA Health directions. Eligibility for hotel / motel accommodation required an individual or family to have no safe alternative access to accommodation for the duration of the lockdown, and included people sleeping rough and remote visitors. Accommodation was provided for the duration of the lockdown, at no cost to clients and outside the Authority's standard Emergency Assistance Program eligibility criteria.

To facilitate exits for people accommodated during the lockdown, the Authority is supporting a coordinated approach with local homelessness service providers to identify a priority housing list of clients requiring longer term housing and support, with extended hotel/motel support provided to those clients who are on the priority housing list and awaiting a housing allocation. Prioritised housing includes short-term public housing, crisis and transitional accommodation, and supportive housing.

### **Tasmania**

In Tasmania, the Government introduced a Housing and Homelessness Support Package to assist people in housing stress and at risk of homelessness in response to COVID-19. This included uncapped brokerage funding to assist people to access emergency accommodation if required. Additionally, funding for Safe Spaces was introduced to deliver 24/7 models of care in three regions to assist people who are homeless to access day and night services. Complementing the Safe Spaces program has been the introduction of new clinical mental health services and telephone health screening for homeless Tasmanians during the COVID 19 emergency period. This has enhanced the availability of services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with the aim of improving long term housing outcomes.

### **Australian Capital Territory**


In response to COVID, the ACT has provided funding for (a) accommodation support for both emergency and long-term accommodation for clients dealing with physical distancing in shelters, self-isolation or quarantine, (b) support services to clients in short- to medium-term accommodation to promote stability, (c) an increase in demand for family and domestic violence and sexual assault services, (d) brokered accommodation in motels and hotels, via the central intake system, for clients who cannot be accommodated through SHS, (e) new accommodation programs including temporary shelters for rough sleepers, men and for women with children. Additionally, the ACT's Housing First program (Axial Housing) has been expanded to provide assistance to more rough sleepers.

### **Northern Territory**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Northern Territory Government implemented a Return to Country program in collaboration with a range of non-government organisations to facilitate Aboriginal people returning to their home communities from urban regional centres. In addition, the Australian Government imposed biosecurity zones between March 26 and June 5 around remote communities in the NT. Visitors were required to quarantine for 14 days prior to entering these zones. Together, these policies restricted the movement of people between remote communities and the urban regional centres where SHS agencies are based. This would have resulted in a reduction in the number of prospective clients for SHS agencies.

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## Data

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[Data tables: Specialist Homelessness Services monthly data](#)

Monthly data on the number of clients supported throughout each month since July 2017.

[Download Data tables: Specialist Homelessness Services monthly data. Format: XLSX 655Kb](#) XLSX 655Kb


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Last updated 18/03/2021 v3.0

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## Related material

### Further information

For further information on how SHSC data are collected, see the  [SHS collection manual](#) (PDF 2.7MB).

For data quality information, see the data quality statement for each reference year, available from METeOR—the [AIHW metadata repository](#).

See [Homelessness services](#) for more on this topic.

### Resources

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#### [Specialist Homelessness Services annual report](#)

In 2019-20, 290,500 people received support from SHS agencies. The annual report describes detailed analysis of the support provided.

[View](#)

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#### [Specialist Homelessness Services Collection data cubes](#)

The SHSC data cubes contain data for 2011-12 to 2019-20, where available. A data cube is a multidimensional representation of a data set that allows you to select, filter and arrange aggregated data.

[View](#)

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### Where to find help and support?

If you need support, [Ask Izzy](#) is a free and anonymous services that can connect you with over 360,000 services for housing, family violence, meals, healthcare, counselling legal advice, addiction treatment and more.

Visit Ask Izzy at: <https://askizzy.org.au>.

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