



## People experiencing or at risk of homelessness



### In SESLHD

Of the 37,692 people in NSW identified as homeless on 2016 Census night, close to 20% of this population were living in SESLHD.

The geographical spread of those living within SESLHD was:

| LGA           | Total homelessness |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Botany Bay    | 4%                 |
| Georges River | 9%                 |
| Randwick      | 10%                |
| Rockdale      | 9%                 |
| Sydney (part) | 64%                |
| Sutherland    | 4%                 |
| Waverley      | 5%                 |
| Woollahra     | 2%                 |

### Issues and challenges

The SESLHD Homelessness Health Program uses the following definition of homelessness:

**Primary homelessness:**

people without conventional accommodation (e.g. living on the streets, in deserted buildings, improvised dwellings, under bridges, in parks);

**Secondary homelessness:**

people moving between various forms of temporary shelter including: friends, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, hostels and boarding houses;

**Tertiary homelessness:**

people living in single rooms in private boarding houses – without their own bathroom, kitchen or security of tenure; and

**Marginally housed:**

people in housing situations close to the minimum standard.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the 2016 Census identified that the rate of people experiencing homelessness has risen by 27% in NSW since the 2011 Census. This includes an increase in people experiencing primary homelessness (sleeping rough) and tertiary homelessness (residing in boarding houses).

People living in 'severely' overcrowded dwellings continue to be the largest population of people experiencing homelessness. Whilst closely linked with 'marginal housing', people living in 'severely' overcrowded dwellings are defined as homeless because they do not have control of, or access to space for social relations, are unable to maintain privacy or have personal living space and would require four or more bedrooms to be accommodated adequately. Many of this group are born overseas and are between 19 and 34 years old.



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## Population profile

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' Census of Population and Housing uses six categories to classify homelessness:

- Improvised dwellings (tents or sleeping out);
- Supported accommodation;
- Staying temporarily with other households;
- Boarding houses;
- Other temporary lodgings; and
- "Severe" overcrowding.

The breakdown per category for SESLHD is as follows:

| Category                                     | % of homeless population |
|--|--------------------------|
| Improvised dwellings (tents or sleeping out) | 8%                       |
| Supported accommodation                      | 10%                      |
| Staying temporarily with other households    | 7%                       |
| Boarding houses                              | 31%                      |
| Other temporary lodgings                     | <1%                      |
| Severe overcrowding                          | 43%                      |

## Issues and challenges

People experiencing or at risk of homelessness are generally socio-economically disadvantaged, have increased health risks, and experience inequities in their health status and access to health services.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to this, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness often have complex care needs and require more structured care coordination and support to ensure that their health needs are addressed.<sup>4</sup>

There are a broad range of interacting factors that contribute to homelessness, and therefore a holistic approach to health care is required when working with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

1. ABS, 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing.

2. Adapted from Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 1992; Chamberlain & MacKenzie, 2003.

3. Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs (2014): Bridging our growing divide: inequality in Australia. The extent of income inequality in Australia. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

4. FaHCSIA (2018). The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.