

HOMELESSNESS

Terms & Definitions



WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

In Australia, a 'cultural' definition of homelessness has been widely used over a long period of time. The cultural definition defines homelessness as residing in non-shelter, or in an accommodation setting that falls below minimum acceptable community standards for the society in question. The cultural definitions of homelessness differ to the ABS definition.

CULTURAL DEFINITIONS

Primary homelessness

Being without conventional accommodation; living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings, living in improvised dwellings (i.e., sheds, garages or cabins), and using cars for temporary shelter.

Secondary homelessness

Moving frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another, such as emergency or transitional accommodation or supported accommodation. This also includes people residing temporarily with other households because they have no accommodation of their own, and people staying in boarding houses on a short-term basis (operationally defined as 12 weeks or less).

Tertiary homelessness

Living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis (13 weeks or longer). Residents of private boarding houses are 'homeless' because their accommodation does not meet the minimum community standard: they do not have a separate bedroom and living room; they do not have kitchen and bathroom facilities of their own; their accommodation is not self-contained; and they do not have security of tenure provided by a lease.

Chronic Homelessness

Having experienced homelessness for at least a year, or repeatedly. Chronic homelessness also regularly involves struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance



use disorder, or physical disability.

ABS DEFINITION

When a person does not have a home or suitable accommodation alternatives.

People are considered homeless if their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendible; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations

Advance to zero

The Advance to Zero Campaign is a ground breaking national initiative of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) that supports local collaborative efforts to end rough sleeping homelessness - one community at a time. Using a range of proven approaches from around the world communities are supported not just to address or even reduce homelessness but to end it. Communities around the world are ending homelessness, we recognise that this is possible and it starts with a shared goal, shared data, and a shared commitment

Affordable housing

Housing is generally considered to be 'affordable' if the household members are not in housing stress after they have paid for their housing, irrespective of whether they are renting or buying. There are a number of measures of affordability. One of the most widely used is that a low-income or moderate-income household should not pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing. See also 'Affordable rental housing', 'Housing stress' and 'Low-income household'.

Affordable rental housing

In the broadest use of the term this is simply affordable housing which is rented to the household as opposed to being available for purchase. In this sense it can include any rental housing where the rent is at or below a normal market rent to avoid housing stress. However, the term is often used in a narrower sense to refer to a form of housing for low-moderate income households where the rent is set at a proportion (e.g. 75% or 80%) of the rent that would normally be charged for the property in the private rental market. This distinguishes it from social housing which is targeted to very low-low-income households and where the rent is usually set as a proportion of the tenant's income.

By-Name list

A By-Name list is a comprehensive tool used in the Advance to Zero Campaign. The by-name list is a list of every person in a community experiencing homelessness, updated in real time. Using information collected and shared with their consent, each person on the list has a file that includes their name, homeless history, health, and housing needs.

Case Study

A document, presentation, article or story showcasing a specific piece of work a local government has undertaken as a local response to homelessness. This document can be on any format but should showcase the piece of work and the process taken to complete the work.

City

A district will be designated a City if the district is in a metropolitan area and has more than 30,000 residents more than half of who in in the urban area or if the district is not in a metropolitan area and has more than 20,000 residents, more than half of who live in the urban area.

Community housing

Community housing is affordable housing for people on low to moderate incomes with a housing need. This type of housing is owned by, or under the legal control of, a community housing organisation. These organisations are generally, but not always, not-for-profit. Local governments also provide community housing.

Connections Week

Connections Week, formerly known as Registry Week, is a well-established, place-based process to understand who is experiencing homelessness and the need for support and housing. The aim is to identify the most vulnerable people to drive collaborative work to meet these needs. From a State and local government perspective, Connections Week, as opposed to a simple street count, provides a strong evidence base to end homelessness within a community. During Connections Week teams of volunteers conduct early morning surveys (using the VI-SPDAT tool) of people they find sleeping out in their community. Surveys are also completed at key service. At the end of the week, a launch event is held to invite stakeholders to be part of a collaborate response to address identified needs.

Crisis housing

Short-term accommodation provided for people who experience homelessness.

Council

The council of a local government.

Councillor

A person who holds the office of councillor on a council.

Councillor Mayor or President

A Mayor or President elected by the council from amongst the councillors.

Crown lands

Crown land is known as all land which is “remaining” that is not freehold title and is still held by the Crown. Crown land is regulated by the relevant State government legislation and certain requirements must be met before Crown land can be dealt with by, for example, being leased or sold.

It is vested in the relevant Government, although they may give another person the ability to manage or control that land, including Local Government.

Crown lease

A lease to local government from the Crown of Crown lands, or a licence or concession from the Crown for

taking a profit of Crown lands, but does not include

- an instrument executed or issued pursuant to a contract or arrangement with the Crown by virtue of which land is held or occupied with a right, whether subject to compliance with conditions or otherwise, to acquire the fee simple; and

- a lease under the Housing Act 1980; and
- an instrument by virtue of which lands are held or occupied subject to the payment of a peppercorn or nominal rental.

Crown lessee

A person entitled under a Crown lease to an interest or a right in or over Crown lands

Dwelling

A generic term used for any form of housing, including detached houses, flats or units, caravans or any other structure that can be used as someone's home.

Guidelines

Principles that guides or directs actions. Guidelines use evidence from the existing literature and expert opinion.

Household

Any group of people who live in a particular dwelling. The term can be used to refer to a single person, a family of any sort, a group of unrelated adults, or any other combination of people.

Households by income

The terms 'very low-income household', 'low-income household', 'lower income household' and 'moderate income household' are often used on their own or in combination. These terms may not always be used very precisely.

In general:

- A 'very low-income household' will be one where the sole income is a government pension or benefit.
- A 'low-income household' will be a household in the bottom 20% of the household income range.
- A 'lower-income household' will be one in the bottom 40% of incomes.

- A 'moderate-income household' will be one in the bottom 40% but not in the bottom 20% (or sometimes one in the bottom 60%).

Housing assistance

A generic term used for any program to assist people to meet their housing needs, in the form of housing (such as affordable housing). The term does not usually refer to government assistance with the housing costs of individuals that is delivered through the taxation system (for example, stamp duty concessions) or the income-support system (such as Centrelink rent assistance).

Housing first

Housing First is an international model for housing and supporting people who have experienced long term and reoccurring homelessness and who face a range of complex challenges. It supports strategies to end homelessness and is a methodology for effectively assisting some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Housing stress

A household is considered to be in 'housing stress' if its income is in the bottom 40% of incomes and it is paying more than 30% of its income on housing. This may also be referred to as 'housing unaffordability'. See also 'Affordable housing'.

Income-based rent

A formula for charging rents in social housing where the maximum rent is capped at a percentage of gross household income or the market rent, whichever is the lower.

Intermediate housing

Affordable housing that is targeted to moderate-income households, e.g. rental housing let at below-market rents, shared equity schemes, rent-to-buy schemes, or owner-occupied housing sold at below market rates.

Key worker housing

'Key worker' is a term used for workers in essential public services such as police, health and education. Some low-paid private sector workers (such as cleaners and hospitality workers) may find it even more difficult to access affordable housing, and the terms 'key worker' and 'essential worker' are sometimes used to refer to them as well. The main providers of key worker housing are Defence Housing Australia, teacher housing authorities and mining companies.

Lived Experience

A representation of the experiences of a given person, and the knowledge that they gain from these experiences.

Local government

A local government established under the Local Government Act

Local government property

Anything, whether land or not, that belongs to, or is vested in, or under the care, control or management of, the local government.

Marginal Housing

Housing that is not adequate for reasons such as no security of tenure, or the dwelling is overcrowded, or it does not have basic facilities.

Metropolitan area has the same definition as metropolitan region in the Planning and Development Act 2005

No Wrong Door

A No Wrong Door approach means that whenever or wherever a person presents with an identified need within the homelessness response system, they will be supported to find the help they need and want, and not be turned away. This shifts our service response to better address individual needs either through direct provision of services or connections into appropriate services, complimented

by case coordination, rather than sending a person from one organisation to another.

Non-conventional accommodation

Defined as living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting, staying in cars or railway carriages, living in improvised dwellings, living in the long grass. This aligns closely with 'primary homelessness' in the cultural definition.

Short-term or emergency accommodation includes refuges, crisis shelters, couch surfing, living temporarily with friends and relatives, insecure accommodation on a short-term basis, or emergency accommodation arranged by a homelessness agency. This aligns closely with elements of 'secondary homelessness'

Owner

Where used in relation to land a person who is in possession as

- the holder of an estate of freehold in possession in the land, including an estate or interest under a contract or an arrangement with the Crown or a person, by virtue of which contract or arrangement the land is held or occupied with a right to acquire by purchase or otherwise the fee simple; or the owner of a lot in a leasehold scheme as defined in the Strata Titles Act 1985 section ; and a Crown lessee or a lessee or tenant under a lease or tenancy agreement of the land which in the hands of the lessor is not rateable land under this Act, but which in the hands of the lessee or tenant is by reason of the lease or tenancy rateable land under this or another Act for the purposes of this Act; or mortgagee of the land; or a trustee, executor, administrator, attorney, or agent of a holder, lessee, tenant, or mortgagee, mentioned in this paragraph; or where there is not a person in possession, means the person who is entitled to possession of the land in any of the capacities mentioned in paragraph (a), except that of mortgagee; or
- where, under a licence or concession there is a right to take profit of Crown land specified in the licence or concession, means the person having that right; or
- where a person is lawfully entitled to occupy land which is vested in the Crown, and which has no other owner according to paragraph (a), (b), or (c), means the person so entitled

Plan/Strategy

For the purposes of this Project these terms are interchangeable. They refer to a document produced by a local government regarding ending homelessness. These documents define expectations,

outline milestones and targets to measure progress and performance.

Policies

Documents which are developed to provide guidance and direction on local government activities. These documents undergo regular reviews to ensure that local government policies remain relevant and applicable. The Council (Elected Members) has direct corporate decision-making and strategic development of policies, whilst the CEO and its administration is responsible for implementation of such policies.

Procedure/Protocol/Management Practice

A written plan that specifies rules and procedures to be followed in defined situations: Protocols are more explicit and specific in their detail than guidelines; in that they specify who does 'what', 'when' and 'how'.

Public housing

Social housing rented out directly to low-income tenants by a state or territory housing department

Regional local government

A regional local government established under section 3.61 of the Local Government Act

Rough-Sleeping

People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'camps').

Specialist Homelessness Services Collection

The Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) Collection (SHSC) (managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)), is a nation-wide data collection about people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness receiving support from specialist homelessness services funded by the Australian Government and State and Territory governments. Under the SHSC, a person is defined

as homeless if they are living in either:

- Non-conventional accommodation or 'sleeping rough'; or
- Short-term or emergency accommodation due to a lack of other options.

Social Housing

Affordable rental housing targeted to low-income households and provided on a 'long-term' basis (generally for as long as the household continues to need it). Social housing includes public housing, some forms of community housing, Aboriginal rental housing, and some seniors housing.

Shared equity

An arrangement where ownership of a dwelling is shared between its occupier (the household that lives in it) and a third party – generally either a government housing department, a community housing association or a private sector company. Shared equity is a way of assisting moderate-income households into homeownership and the arrangement usually includes provision for the occupier to purchase the remaining share at a later date.

Shire

A district will be designated a Shire if it cannot be designated a City or a Town.

Supported accommodation

A form of affordable rental housing where provision of housing is linked with provision of some form of support to the household. Supported housing is typically provided to people who are exiting homelessness (see crisis housing), to people with disabilities or chronic health issues (such as group homes) or to older people with low-level support needs.

The City, The Shire, The Town

Local government will often refer to themselves as the City, Shire or Town in reports and writing rather than their full tittle. For example the City of Fremantle may refer to themselves as 'The City' in publications.

Thoroughfare

A road or other thoroughfare and includes structures or other things appurtenant to the thoroughfare that are within its limits, and nothing is prevented from being a thoroughfare only because it is not open at each end

Town

A district will be designated a town if more than half of its residents live in a an urban area, their population is below 30,000 for a metropolitan and below 20,000 for a non-metropolitan area.

Transitional housing

Affordable rental housing provided on a short to medium term basis, typically to people exiting or 'at risk' of homelessness, while they wait for more permanent housing to become available.

Universal housing design

A design practice which ensures that the dwelling is fully usable by a person with a disability without needing further modification. See also 'Adaptability' and 'Visitability'.

Wrap around support services

Wraparound differs from many service delivery strategies, in that it provides a comprehensive, holistic, and family or community driven way of responding when people experience complex issues (i.e. mental health, substance abuse, trauma etc.)

References

Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities. (2020). Department of Communities . Retrieved from WA.gov.au : <https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2021-06/homelessness-strategy-final.pdf#:~:text=All%20Paths%20Lead%20to%20a%20Home%3A%20Western%20Australia%E2%80%99s,is%20supported%20to%20achieve%20stable%20and%20independent%20lives.>

Lisette Kaleveld, A. S. (2018). Centre for Social Impact, Research, Research Focus Areas, Social Issues, Housing. Retrieved from Centre for Social Impact : https://www.csi.edu.au/media/Homelessness_in_WA_Report_Web.pdf#page=92&zoom=100,0,0

Local Government Act 1995. (2022). Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/>: [https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_44720.pdf/\\$FILE/Local%20Government%20Act%201995%20-%20%5B07-y0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_44720.pdf/$FILE/Local%20Government%20Act%201995%20-%20%5B07-y0-00%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

WA, S. (2022). Shelter WA Knowledge Hub . Retrieved from Shelter WA : <https://www.shelterwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Fact-sheet-2020-Housing-Terms.pdf>

Contact us

1st Floor
Claisebrook Lotteries House
33 Moore Street
East Perth WA, 6004

(08) 9325 6660

shelterwa@shelterwa.org.au

www.shelterwa.org.au

Connect with us

 **[/ShelterWA](#)**

 **[/shelterwa](#)**

 **[/company/shelter-wa/](#)**