ABOUT HOMELESSNESS WEEK 2020

Homelessness Week is held in August each year and is coordinated nationally by Homelessness Australia. Activities are held throughout the week to raise awareness of people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face, and the action needed to achieve enduring solutions. This Homelessness Week, ask your local political member and candidates in the upcoming NT Election what their plan is to end homelessness in the Northern Territory. We're asking candidates for #afairerhousingdeal.

Follow us on social media for the latest news and activities across the Northern Territory. **Facebook:** @ntshelter.org.au **Twitter:** @NTShelterInc. Suggested hashtags for use this Homelessness Week and in the lead-up to the 2020 NT Election: **#VoteHomeNT #HousingNT #ntpol #HW2020 #BuildSocialHousing**

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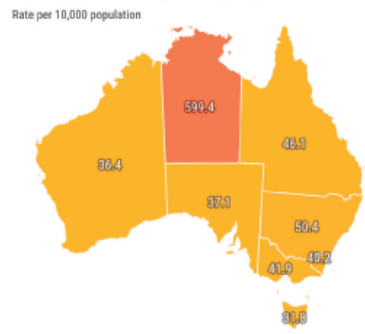
HOMELESSNESS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

HIGHEST RATES IN THE NATION

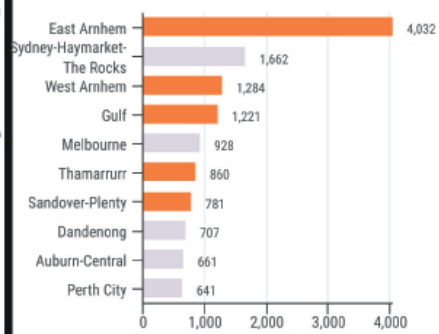


WHERE THEY STAY

- 81% in severely crowded homes
- 5% in supported accommodation
- 3% couch surfing
- 4% in boarding houses
- 8% sleeping rough

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

Of the top ten regions with the highest homeless populations in the country, FIVE are in the Northern Territory.



3,796 PEOPLE IN THE EAST ARNHEM AREA LIVE IN SEVERE OVERCROWDING

Its:
No quiet, no routine.
No visitors, no privacy,
nowhere to study, nowhere to play.
It's no sleep and no control.
It's illnesses, accidents, arguments, depression, stress and fighting.
It's losing your things, giving things away to make space.
It's not a home.
Severe overcrowding is homelessness.

NT HOMELESS SERVICES SECTOR PUNCHING ABOVE THEIR WEIGHT

- Approximately 3.84% (1 in 26) of the NT community seeking assistance, compared to 1.2% Australia wide
- 87% of those at risk of homelessness supported to maintain their housing

Sources:
- 2016 Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, Australian Bureau of Statistics, published 14 March 2018
- 2018-19 Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, published 18 December 2019

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BEING HOMELESS, OUR JOURNEY…

"I've been trying for years, going back and forwards to Top End Housing to ask "when's my name going up the list", every time they tell me you still have 8 years to go. It's hard to keep a mobile phone when I'm homeless. Top End Housing are now saying *"we called you! But your phone wasn't connected so we put you back at the bottom of the list"* Now I have to wait another 10 years"

– Leigh 37yo, local artist.

"When I'm homeless, I am very frightened when it's night time because I have to sleep but I can't hear when strangers are around. I'm frightened because I could get hurt by men or women that are drunk. I only sleep during the daytime now, when I can"

"In the dry season it gets real cold on the streets, and even when it rains, I'm always getting sick"

- Genevieve 33yo, Deaf communicates with sign language.

Leigh and Genevieve's experiences are not unique. The normal wait times for people wanting public housing can be up 8 years as indicated by the DLGHCD. However, when people are homeless, they often are very mobile, they regularly have their belongings confiscated or stolen. Cheap mobile phones don't last long exposed to the elements, having credit is often out of a person's budget and it's hard to keep the battery charged up, being uncontactable often means that appointments are cancelled, and small issues get out of control

FIX THE ECONOMY BY FIXING HOUSING

With residential home builds expected to fall by 21 per cent, builders and tradies will be doing it very tough and the economic impacts for the NT will be felt through reduced wages, increased unemployment, and less income in the economy.

An estimated 11,000 Territorians have already lost their jobs due to COVID-19 restrictions and business closures, with many more expected to follow.

Now is the time for a conversation on what we can do to emerge from this health and economic crisis in a way that minimises the carnage to business and helps keep Territorians at work and rebuilding our economy.

The provision of social housing is increasingly accepted across Australia as key social and economic enabling infrastructure. With very significant shortfalls in social housing across the NT, now is the time to supporting a struggling building and construction sector and stimulate the economy generally in a manner that represents good public value for money as well fulfilling pressing social objectives.

Now, more than ever, is the time to get cracking on housing.

NEW COLLABORATIVE LIVING PROJECT LAUNCHED IN ALICE SPRINGS

The Mental Health Association of Central Australia (MHACA) has announced the launch of a pilot project called 'Collaborative Living on Arrernte Country' in response to an identified urgent need for an intensive supported housing program for people with severe and enduring mental illness. MHACA estimates there to be at least 30 people with significant mental illness who are homeless or insecurely housed in Alice Springs. These individuals face significant barriers to securing long term accommodation options including lack of appropriate housing options, exclusion from the market and unclear and inconsistent referral pathways.

The new intensive support and housing program is an exciting development for people experiencing homelessness in Alice Springs. It will be delivered in collaboration with clinical mental health services, the Department of Housing, Anglicare NT and the Central Australian Affordable Housing Company, with the support of the NT Department of Health.

The program will support people who require an intensive supported living arrangement but are not suited to an NDIS Supported Independent Living style of service. The trial will begin in September 2020 and will run for two years with the aim of supporting approximately ten participants during that time.

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