

# Protecting human rights during and after COVID-19

A submission to the Special Rapporteur on the right to  
adequate housing, United Nations, Office of the High  
Commissioner

by



**Save Public Housing Collective**

**Melbourne, Australia**

**June 2020**

We acknowledge that First Peoples in settler-colonial countries such as Australia have a particular experience of injustice concerning the right to dwell. The question of housing rights and Indigenous land justice are therefore tied together. We acknowledge the sovereignty of the First Peoples on whose lands our Collective meets and operates.

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## 1. Preamble

### About us

The Save Public Housing Collective is a grassroots group made up of local public housing estate residents and resident groups, neighbourhood friends of public housing, advocacy groups, religious organisations, legal professionals, academics, and researchers.

We believe in the universal human right to safe and secure housing and object to the state's move away from the provision of public housing and the forced displacement of public housing residents through so-called renewal programs that privatise housing.

We are based in Melbourne, Victoria. Our advocacy focus and knowledge base is predominantly in Victoria, though we monitor national trends and events.

### Executive summary

Our submission is focussed on the failure of governments to provide timely and proportionate investment in public housing leading to a rising in homelessness in Australia, and the lack of adequate funding for support services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The COVID19 pandemic has merely exposed existing housing inequality and insecurity in Australia. We submit that there are multiple entwined crises occurring: a system-wide failure in relation to adequate, safe housing for all; a health crisis that has exposed the risks for particular marginalised groups in Australian society; and an economic crisis as a result of the pandemic that is set to deepen housing insecurity and homelessness.

We submit that these failings have relevance in terms of the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness now and into the future:

1. The situation in Australia reveals a tiny and inadequate social housing sector; declining amount of social housing in the system; growing rates of homelessness; rapidly growing social housing waiting lists; and burgeoning housing insecurity and wider need.
2. Government responses to COVID19 have focussed on temporary protective measures aimed at limiting the immediate spread of infection. Very little attention has been given to long-term solutions that would lead to a permanent reduction and elimination of homelessness;
3. When temporary supportive measures are withdrawn in September 2020, and the full economic impact of COVID-19 becomes apparent, the backlog of unresolved homelessness, together with new COVID-19-caused housing insecurity will become an overwhelming emergency;
4. The current number of households living in public housing, as a proportion of total households, would need to be at least 14% to satisfy current needs – it is currently just over 4%. Unless this disparity is addressed by an urgent and realistic program of federal and state funding, the situation will further deteriorate to a level unacceptable in a modern developed nation.
5. The moral obligation arising from being a signatory to this UDOHR with regard to homelessness, has been miserably disregarded by all levels of Australian governments.

## 2. COVID-19 responses in Victoria and Australia

The direct provision of housing, and the regulation of housing, is primarily a function of the States in Australia's federal system. Governments at both Federal and State levels have enacted a range of legislative and other policy measures that impact on housing rights in response to the twin health and economic crises that COVID-19 has brought. The Federal and State Governments formed an emergency National Cabinet to respond to the pandemic. This section sets out a summary of responses by the National Cabinet, and those enacted at the Federal level and for the State of Victoria. Similar measures are in place in other States and Territories.

### Public housing and community housing

Australia has a complex multi-category system of non-market, or social, housing. The two primary categories are public housing and community housing (see below for definitions and further detail). The pandemic reveals that public housing tenants are well protected in terms of housing security by the existing system. Tenures in public housing are for life, and rent is capped at 25% of income.

There were no specific measures introduced in response to COVID19 by governments in relation to existing public housing tenancy rights. In relation to income support, the Victorian Government excluded any increase in income that public housing tenants received as a result of the new JobKeeper and JobSeeker schemes (see below) from the income calculated for rent. This was a positive move to ensure public housing residents did not experience rent increases. In relation to cleaning and maintenance, the Victorian Government pledged to increase cleaning of communal areas and essential maintenance measures. Maintenance and investment of public housing assets is extremely poor in Victoria and has come under sustained criticism, especially by the Victorian Auditor General, in the past 5 years.

Of greater concern is the intersection of the pandemic with a wider systemic crisis in housing in Australia and Victoria. The pandemic exposes in much sharper terms the contours of this crisis, and the extreme precarity and fragility that is structurally endemic to the system and policy choices of successive Australian governments. The failure of governments in relation to providing adequately maintained, high-quality and proportionate public housing has directly led to an increase in rates of homelessness and housing insecurity. These failings have direct relevance in terms of the impact of COVID19.

Two examples indicate this systemic failure and its intersection with COVID19:

1. The continued pursuit by the Victorian government of a mass privatisation of public housing across the State, with a particular focus in Melbourne where there are high levels of housing need, homelessness and insecurity. The Victorian Government is continuing with its controversial Public Housing Renewal Program, which will privatise and demolish 11 significant public housing estates across Melbourne. The displacement of residents from these estates has continued throughout the pandemic. Some estates, such as one at Ascot Vale, in Melbourne's west, is being demolished with no firm plan announced for its replacement.
2. The lack of proportionate investment in public housing announced or considered as part of COVID19 response packages. The Victorian Government has pledged to build approximately 2000 new social (likely community, rather than public) housing units in the next 5 years and has pledged direct investment of \$500m to Aboriginal Housing including 12 new Aboriginal social housing units. The Victorian Government has committed nothing to delivering new

public housing at the scale needed (see below) to address housing insecurity and homelessness in Victoria.

### Private rental measures

The National Cabinet announced on 29 March 2020 an agreement to a moratorium on evictions for six months for residential tenants in financial distress and unable to meet their rental commitments due to the impact of the pandemic. A series of in-principle agreements between the Commonwealth and the States was outlined, requiring tenants impacted by COVID19 to negotiate with their landlords on rental arrangements (Prime Minister of Australia 2020, 'National Cabinet Statement', viewed 22 April 2020, <<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-cabinet-statement>>.)

In Victoria, the Government was much slower than other States to respond to this announcement. By mid-April, changes were made to the Residential Tenancies Act to introduce a temporary ban on evictions and a pause in rent increases. In practice, the moratorium means that a Notice to Vacate (the required legal instrument to terminate a tenancy) issued on or after 29 March 2020, or one issued prior to that date but seeks to evict after that date, has no effect. Instead, the landlord must seek a specific order from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to terminate the tenancy. Considerable onus was placed on tenants to understand and navigate their rights in highly uneven relations of power between tenants and landlords. While this moratorium does appear to offer some safeguard, in reality many tenants have reported increased levels of punitive behaviour from both landlords and real estate agents including receiving letters demanding that rental payments continue in full.

In addition, a \$AUD500m rental emergency package was established. This was predominantly focused on landlords with more than \$AUD420m of that package to cover the cost of a 25% temporary cut to land tax payments for landlords. The purpose of this was to "encourage" landlords to forward that relief on to tenants. There was no provision in the regulations for requiring landlords to do this, and the onus is largely on tenants to enter into negotiations with landlords and real estate agents to secure rent relief. The measures require tenants to demonstrate hardship, introducing new forms of punitive oversight into an already unequal relationship between tenants and landlords. The remaining \$AUD80m of the package is for tenants in significant financial distress to help them pay their rent, with payments capped at \$AUD2,000. The median weekly rent in Melbourne is \$455 in May 2020 (<https://reiv.com.au/property-data/residential-rental>), meaning that the rental relief addresses only a very small portion, approximately 1 month relief, of the rental stress induced by COVID19.

It is widely assumed in the sector that tenants who have managed to negotiate pauses in rental payments or reductions in rent will be held liable for those rental payments in future. In the next few months, the burden of debt that tenants will have amassed will start to become a significant housing stress for tenants. It is likely that once the moratorium on evictions is lifted (on 26 September 2020), at the same time as special income assistance payments (see below) and the calling in of amassed rental debt over the six month period, many tenants will experience extreme hardship and become vulnerable to homelessness in the coming months.

### Income measures

The Australian Government, responsible for income welfare payments, established two significant income support schemes in response to the COVID19 crisis. These are important to understand in the context of housing rights, as they have provided temporary income relief that has potentially reduced housing precarity and insecurity. The measures are only in place until September 2020.

One is JobSeeker, for people who lost their job or income. The scheme provided a doubling of payment to people who had already been on unemployment support (called Newstart) prior to the pandemic. It is worth noting that Newstart rates of payment had been the subject of significant campaigns for a long time, as they are extremely low. The other scheme is JobKeeper, which was designed to keep people connected to their place of employment by making a payment to the employer to keep employees on the books. The employer receives payment from the government per employee, only if they continue to pay the employee at least \$1500 (before tax) per fortnight.

### Homelessness measures

The rates of people experiencing homelessness in Australia has been increasing significantly in recent years (see below). This includes both people sleeping rough, those in temporary or shelter accommodation, and those experiencing unsafe or insecure housing conditions.

In Victoria, the State Government provided an initial \$AUD15m in March 2020 to organisations in the homelessness services sector (which is largely one run by not for profits) to temporarily accommodate people sleeping rough on the streets in hotels. A further \$AUD9.8m was announced in June 2020 to continue to provide that temporary hotel accommodation. Recent media reports indicate that around 4,500 people have been provided temporary hotel accommodation around Victoria, with around 1,000 of those in central Melbourne.

However, the chronic underinvestment, residualisation, and privatisation of public housing in Victoria (see below), means that when this temporary measure comes to an end, people will find themselves back on the street.

### Refugees and people on temporary visas

The precarious position of people coming to Australia as refugees has been a global and local concern, including that of the UN, for decades. Australia continues an illegal and inhuman policy approach of imprisoning people seeking asylum in offshore camps and onshore detention centres.

Around 2.17million people in Australia hold temporary visas of different kinds, this includes temporary migrant workers, refugees, international students and visitors. None of the special income measures were extended to temporary visa holders. As many of those people already worked in precarious employment, or in sectors that were effectively closed as a consequence of COVID19, many thousands of people in Australia have been left with no income at all, with very significant housing rights consequences.

Of this group, just over 17,000 people hold temporary protection visas – the visa status granted people seeking asylum whose refugee status is being verified. This process is extremely lengthy, often many years, and has been long-criticised by human rights organisations and the UN.

A further smaller group of refugees, are currently in Australia as a consequence of the “Medevac” laws introduced in early 2019 and then repealed in December 2019. The law enabled critically sick refugees held in offshore detention to be transferred to Australia for medical attention on the recommendation of independent Australian doctors. It was repealed in December 2019, however around 180 people had already been transferred for medical assistance under the law and were in Australia when the pandemic closed the national borders. As a consequence of the shut-down, these refugees were locked into hotel accommodation in cities across Australia. For example, there are 65 people being held at the Mantra hotel in Melbourne’s northern suburbs and around 120 people being held in a hotel in Brisbane. Reports and advocacy groups indicate that people are being held in isolation and under guard within these facilities.

### 3. The wider structure of Australia's housing crisis

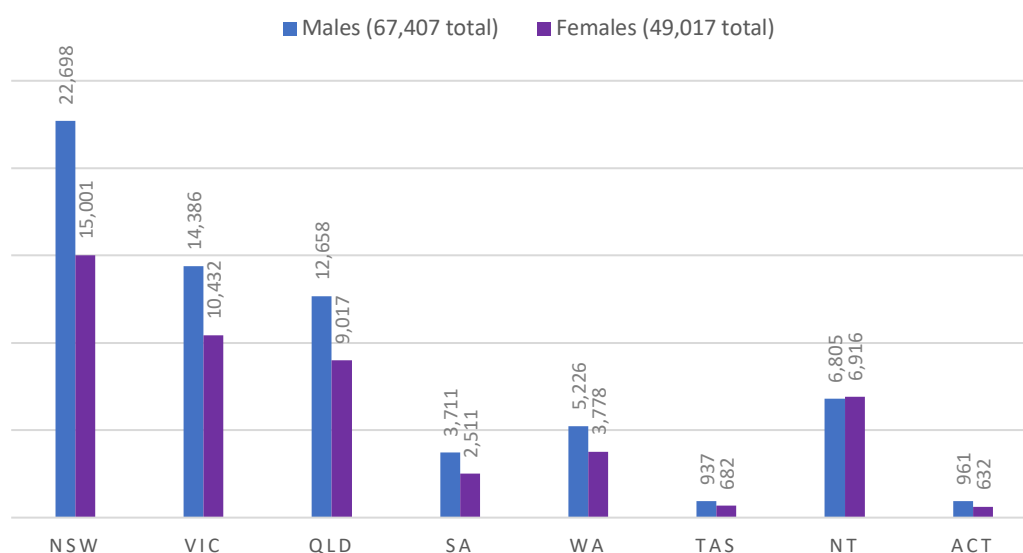
#### Homelessness and housing need

The rates of homelessness in Australia have been increasing significantly in the past decade. In the 5-year period between the 2011 and 2016 Census, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Australia increased by 4.6%. Systemic and social issues, including domestic and family violence, casual and part-time work, and lower earnings, among others, mean that women are at higher risk of homelessness than men. Homelessness in Australia is measured to include people sleeping rough; those in supported or temporary accommodation; and people living in severely overcrowded dwellings.<sup>1</sup>

Indigenous people are significantly over-represented among the cohort of people who experience homelessness – while being only 3.3% of the total population, Indigenous people constitute 22% of the people experiencing homelessness (as measured on Census night 2016).<sup>2</sup> The situation of homelessness in the Northern Territory, which has a very high proportion of Indigenous people, is particularly dire (see Appendix 4).

Figure 1 illustrates homeless population numbers, as estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) when analysing data from the 2016 Census.

**Figure 1: Number of people experiencing homelessness by State and Gender**



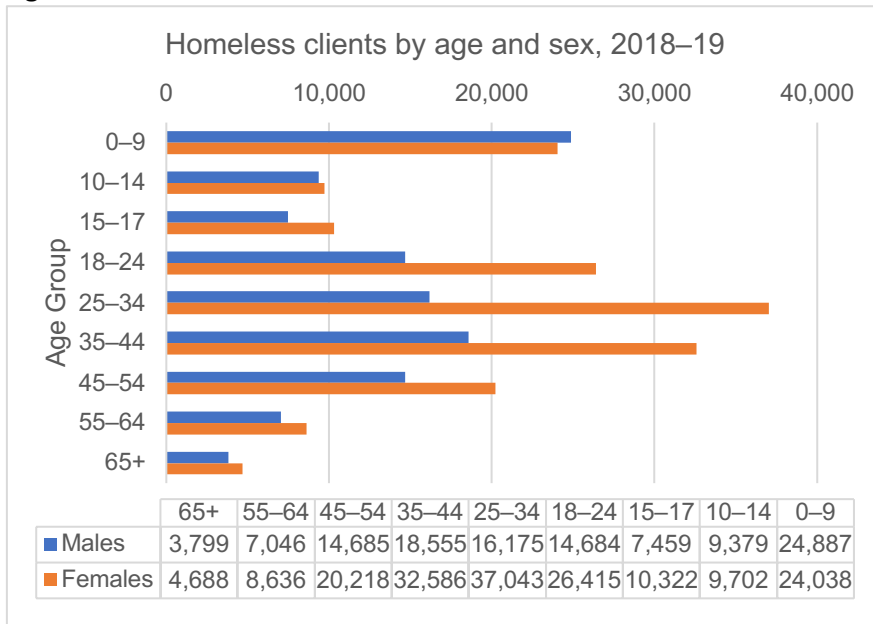
Source: ABS *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016*

In the fiscal year 2018-19, 290,317 people presented to a Specialist Homelessness Service provider; of these 59.8 percent were females (Figure 2). Homelessness agencies in Victoria report that around 25,000 people experience homelessness around the State on any given night.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: *Specialist Homelessness Services annual report 2017-18*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-2017-18/contents/policy-framework-for-reducing-homelessness-and-service-response>

<sup>2</sup> ABS 2018c as mentioned in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: a focus report on housing and homelessness, 2019*

**Figure 2**

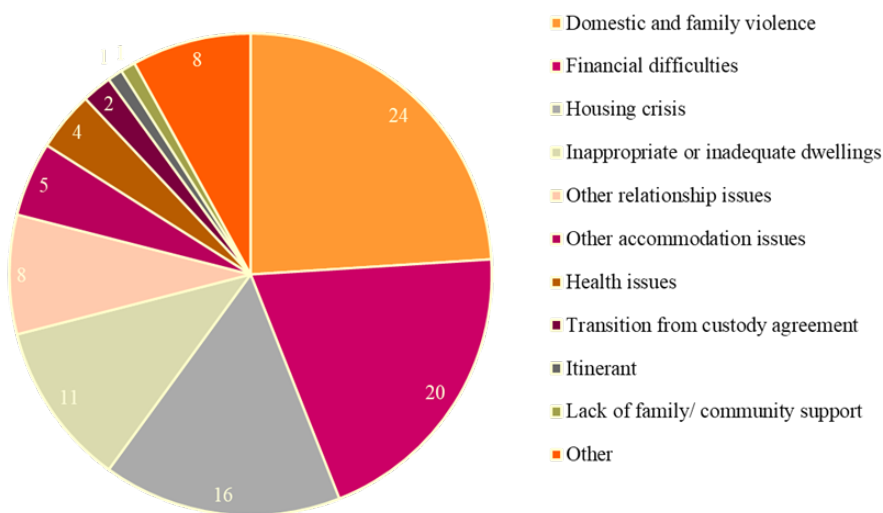


Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection 2018-19, National supplementary table CLIENTS.1

Reasons behind homelessness are complex. In Australia, the most significant reported reason for homelessness was domestic and family violence (24%) follows by financial difficulties (20%) and housing crisis (16%). Together, these 3 cohorts represent 60% of people affected by homelessness, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

**Reasons for being homeless**





Source: Homelessness Australia, 2016 – Homelessness in Australia <sup>3</sup>

Organisations providing support to people experiencing homelessness in Australia are largely not-for-profits. Around 1,550 agencies exist across Australia of varying size and service speciality. In the 2017-18 financial year homelessness agencies provided supportive services to 288,795 people in Australia who were experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. Short-term or emergency accommodation was the most common service sought, with 39% of clients needing this service and nearly 60% receiving this service. Clients expressing a need for long-term housing composed 38%, yet only 4% of clients were provided with this service.<sup>4</sup> This demonstrates very substantial unmet need for long-term housing, as a direct consequence of a lack of investment and growth in public housing provision.

While expressed homelessness is a significant and growing issue in Australia, this picture does not reflect the real number of people in need. There is a very large and growing cohort of people in Australia experiencing housing stress and precarity. Modelling to arrive at a more realistic understanding of the size of housing need has estimated that around 1.3 million households, or around 14% of the total number of households, is in housing need in Australia.<sup>5</sup> This is modelled to increase to around 1.7 million in 2025 – a model that predated the COVID19 pandemic and its economic consequences.

This means that a fair and just public housing system would actually need to be ready to accommodate around 14% of all households in Australia to satisfy current need. Currently, the social housing system in Australia accommodates merely 4.2% of all households. Recent modelling undertaken to estimate housing need (prior to the pandemic)<sup>6</sup> would need to be updated to account for two factors:

1. That COVID19 and its economic consequences has and will continue to swell the numbers of people in housing need in Australia; and
2. That since the modelling was undertaken, no investment has been made on the scale required to meet housing need.

**Unless this disparity is addressed by an urgent and realistic program of federal and state funding, the situation will further deteriorate to a level unacceptable to a modern developed country.**

### Public and community housing in Australia

Comparative to other countries, Australia has never performed well in relation to the provision of non-market housing. After a sustained period of public housing building in the post-war years, public housing peaked in the mid 1960s when a total of 8% of all dwellings in Australia were held in public tenure.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Homelessness Australia: *Homelessness in Australia* Fact Sheet, January 2016.

<https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/sites/homelessnessaus/files/2017-07/Homelessness%20in%20Australiaiv2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> AIHW Unmet demand for specialist homelessness services, 2018-19

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/ef6a725c-a863-480e-a037-d4d66cca2839/Specialist-Homelessness-Services-annual-report-2018-19.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

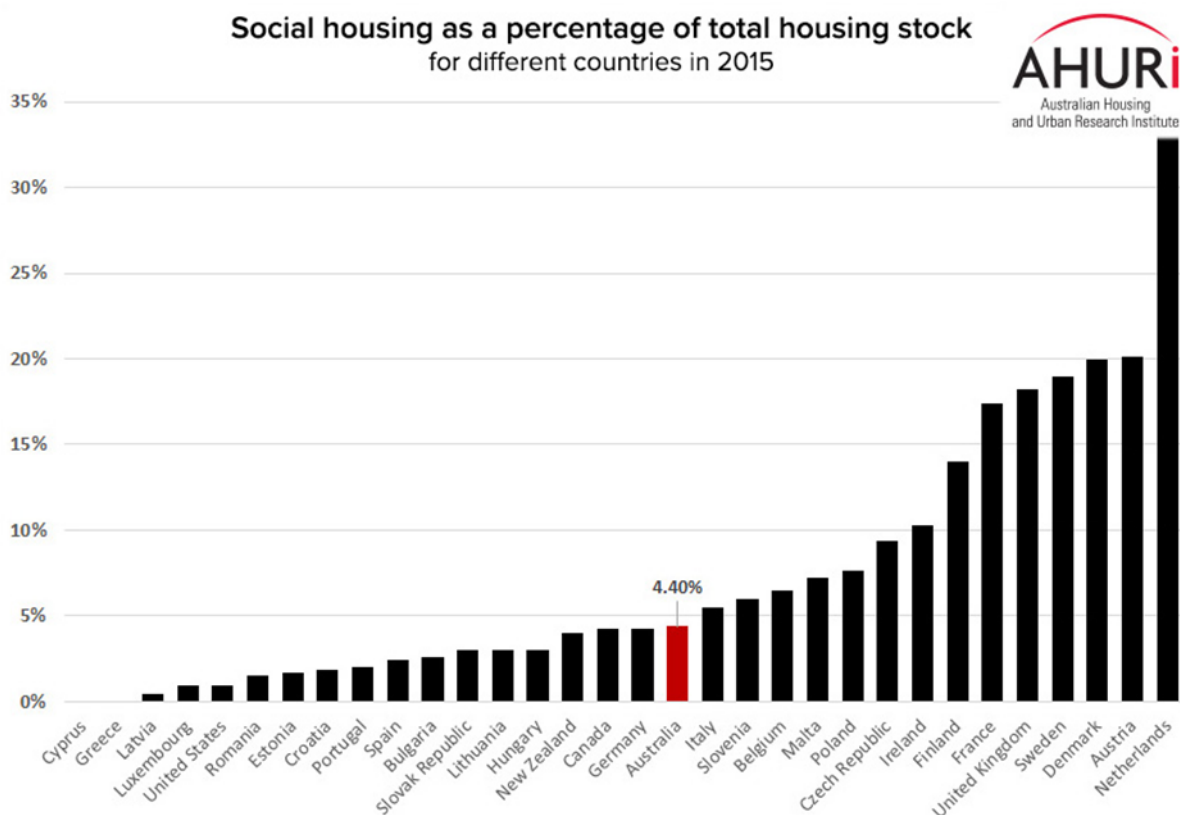
<sup>5</sup> AHURI, Rowley, S., Leishman, C., Baker, E., Bentley, R. and Lester, L. (2017) Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, AHURI Final Report 287, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/287>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-8106901.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Hayward, D. (1996). The Reluctant Landlords? A History of Public Housing in Australia. *Urban Policy and Research*, 14(1), 5-35

In Australia, the level of public and community housing provision is less than a quarter of the level of equally developed countries, such as the UK (see Figure 4).

Figure 4



Source: Housing Europe (2015).<sup>8</sup>

Australia’s non-market or social housing system contains a number of categories: public housing, community housing, state owned and managed Indigenous housing, and Indigenous community housing. Of these, public housing and community housing are the largest components.

Public housing is defined in Australia as housing that is both owned and managed by government, usually a State Government housing department. Community housing is defined as housing that is managed and/or owned by a non-government community housing provider.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 5 shows that social housing in Australia has been declining overall in the past 30 years despite a brief spike in the early 1990s from a peak of 7.1% of total households in 1991 to 4.2% in 2016.

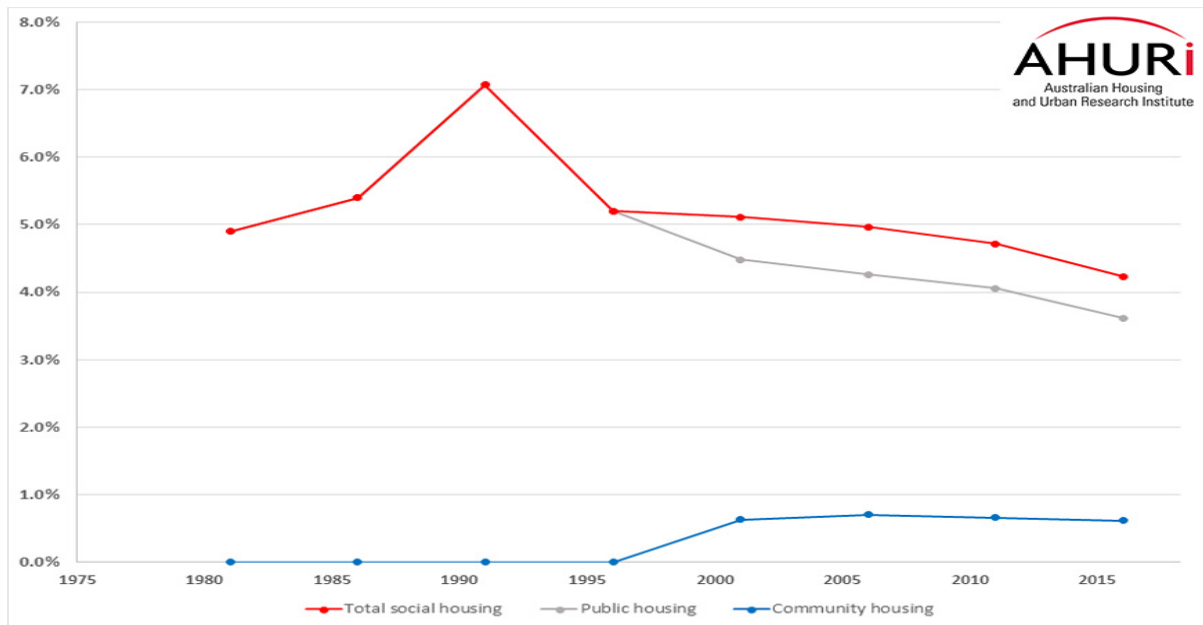
Public housing as a component has been declining more steeply and community housing has grown in numbers, though not significantly as a proportion of all households. This is often occurring at the

<sup>8</sup> As in AHURI Brief: What is the right level of social housing for Australia?

<sup>9</sup> Victorian Auditor-General’s Report *Managing Public Housing*, June 2017. Page vii

direct expense of public housing through a national program of stock transfers and other policy mechanisms.

**Figure 5: Social housing (public and community housing) as a proportion of all households in Australia**



Source: AHURI Final Report No. 231 plus ABS, Census population and housing 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.)<sup>10</sup>

There is high variation between the States in the proportion of public housing (and all other housing programs) to the total number of households (see Appendix 1).

This disparity in availability of public housing is due to:

- Lack of federal government initiative, guidance and funding on initiatives for the eliminating homelessness, i.e. lack of policy, strategy, plan;
- Different attitudes by State governments on the need for reducing and eliminating homelessness
- Fiscal and financial priorities that are indifferent to the problem and biased towards private housing investment and speculation.

The lack of and declining availability of social housing in Australia has also resulted in rapidly growing waiting lists. Waitlists for social housing are long and growing: the Australian Institute of Health and

<sup>10</sup> Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute - AHURI – Final Report No. 231 (Last updated 16 August 2017): Census data shows falling proportion of households in social housing [https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/census-shows-falling-proportion-of-households-in-social-housing?utm\\_source=AHURINews&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=2017Sep1](https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/census-shows-falling-proportion-of-households-in-social-housing?utm_source=AHURINews&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2017Sep1)

Welfare reported the national waiting list in 2017 at 189,400 households.<sup>11</sup> In Victoria, the combined public and community housing waiting list is currently at nearly 100,000 people.

The inadequacy of public and community housing supply is one reason why many households do not apply for social housing as the waiting lists are long and it is seen as a “futile exercise”.<sup>12</sup>

Over time, the term social and community housing has come to be used in a way that denies or hides what is often effectively a privatisation of public housing. For example, definition of the term *Social Housing* was inserted in the *Housing Act (Victoria) 1983* in 2016. Stock transfers have resulted in significant amounts of public housing stock being transferred to non-government organisation ownership. Between 2008 and 2018, for example, there was a 6% decrease in the number of public housing dwellings in Australia – around 20,200 dwellings were lost to the public system<sup>13</sup>. At the same time the number of community housing dwellings more than doubled, jumping from 39,800 in 2008-09 to 87,800 in 2017-18.<sup>14</sup>

During that same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity or need. This demonstrates that the shift from public to community housing is detrimental to the housing rights and needs of all Australians.

#### 4. Is Australia violating the human rights of homeless persons?

We believe that the moral obligation arising from being a signatory to the United Nation *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR)<sup>15-16-17</sup> with regard to homelessness and housing security, has been miserably disregarded by all levels of Australian governments. No credible strategy or plan exists for the issue to be brought under control, gradually reduced and eventually eliminated.

Based on the statements made by the Australian Human Rights Commission,<sup>18,19</sup> both the moral and legal obligations held by Australian governments to resolve homelessness and housing insecurity have been abrogated.

This relates to violation of a number of international conventions and treaties:

- The *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which states:

*In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms*

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia-2018/contents/social-housing-dwellings>

<sup>12</sup> Groenhart, L. and Burke, T. (2014) *Thirty years of public housing supply and consumption: 1981–2011*, AHURI Final Report No.231. Melbourne: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. Page 55. Available from: <<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/51002>>. [22 10 2017].

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia-2018/contents/social-housing-dwellings>

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Preamble

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, Article 21.2

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, Article 25.1

<sup>18</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission. *What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?*

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/what-universal-declaration-human-rights>

<sup>19</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11.1

**and to guarantee the right of everyone**, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably **in the enjoyment of the following rights:**

...

**The right to housing**<sup>20</sup>

- The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, which states:

*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:*

...

*To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to **housing**, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.*<sup>21</sup>

- The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which states:

*States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and **housing**.*<sup>22</sup>

- The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which states:

*States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and **housing**, ... and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right, including measures:*

...

*(d) To ensure **access by persons with disabilities to public housing Programmes** ...*<sup>23</sup>

- The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which states:

**Indigenous peoples have the right**, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, **inter alia, in the areas** of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, **housing**, sanitation, health and social security.

...

*Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. **In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them** and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 5 (d)(iii)

<sup>21</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Article 14.2 (h)

<sup>22</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 27.3

<sup>23</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 28.1, 28.2 (d)

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 21.1, 23

## 5. What could Australia do: Recommendations

Australian governments at both Federal and State levels must be pressed to directly invest in national and local programs of public housing provision and homelessness services. The following sets out our key recommendations, based on this submission:

1. Prepare a national plan for a fair, sustainable and adequate housing system that is appropriately funded and targeted to areas and populations of need.
2. Direct government funding and building, preferably using government-owned land, of around 730,000 public housing dwellings over the next 20 years to equate to an annual average growth of 5.5% over existing stock<sup>25</sup>
3. Bring currently vacant public housing units into active use through a program of refurbishment and repair for those currently experiencing homelessness and in temporary COVID19 crisis accommodation
4. Cease renewal programs of public housing estates and move to a refurbishment and upgrading model
5. Secure a current Commonwealth-State housing agreement that retains public housing, ceases stock and management transfers, and ceases the sale of government-owned land until a review and feasibility study of all sites for potential public housing provision can be undertaken; and develops a model for rent controls.
6. Secure and strengthen all tenants rights by: a continuation of the prohibition of evictions; requiring landlords to accept rent proposals that tenants can afford; and prohibits accrual of rental arrears as debt.
7. Extend the period of the current legislative COVID19 responses beyond the end of September.

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<sup>25</sup> Lawson, J., Pawson, H., Troy, L., van den Nouwelant, R., & Hamilton, C. (2018). Social housing as infrastructure: an investment pathway. *Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute*(306).

## 6. Appendix 1: additional social housing data

Persons and Households and Public housing (PH), State-owned and managed Indigenous housing (SOMIH), Community housing (CH) and Indigenous community housing (ICH) dwellings (Number and %), by state and territory, at 30 June 2018.

Persons (d) and Households (x 000)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT (e)	NT	Aust.
Population	4,747	4,776	3,734	4,178	3,980	2,960	1,522	1,024	26,921
Households	2,351	2,446	1,995	2,168	2,166	1,620	773	541	14,060
Ratio PH/SOMIH to Households	4.9%	2.6%	2.7%	1.5%	1.5%	0.4%	1.4%	1.9%	2.3%
Ratio All programs to Households	6.6%	3.3%	3.6%	2.0%	2.1%	0.8%	1.6%	2.3%	3.1%
Housing program	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust.
PH	111,341	64,295	51,413	33,293	32,686	7,005	11,181	5,017	316,231
SOMIH <sup>(a)</sup>	4,603	..	3,292	..	1,449	222	..	5,120	14,686
CH <sup>(b)</sup>	35,345	14,486	11,116	8,062	11,561	5,980	895	374	87,819
ICH <sup>(c)</sup>	4,971	1,707	5,224	2,704	928	81	..	1,862	17,477
<b>All programs</b>	<b>156,260</b>	<b>80,488</b>	<b>71,045</b>	<b>44,059</b>	<b>46,624</b>	<b>13,288</b>	<b>12,076</b>	<b>12,373</b>	<b>436,213</b>
PH	71.3	79.9	72.4	75.6	70.1	52.7	92.6	40.5	72.5
SOMIH(a)	2.9	..	4.6	..	3.1	1.7	..	41.4	3.4
CH(b)	22.6	18.0	15.6	18.3	24.8	45.0	7.4	3.0	20.1
ICH(c)	3.2	2.1	7.4	6.1	2.0	0.6	..	15.0	4.0
<b>All programs</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
.. Not applicable									

Persons (d) and Households (x 000)	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT (e)	NT	Aust.
Population	4,747	4,776	3,734	4,178	3,980	2,960	1,522	1,024	26,921
Households	2,351	2,446	1,995	2,168	2,166	1,620	773	541	14,060
Ratio PH/SOMIH to Households	4.9%	2.6%	2.7%	1.5%	1.5%	0.4%	1.4%	1.9%	2.3%
Ratio All programs to Households	6.6%	3.3%	3.6%	2.0%	2.1%	0.8%	1.6%	2.3%	3.1%
Housing program	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust.
<p>(a) NT data were reported for the first time in 2016–17.</p> <p>(b) For community housing, tenancy (rental) units are reported as these are equivalent to dwellings in other housing collections.</p> <p>(c) Includes permanent dwellings managed by funded and unfunded providers.</p> <p>(d) Number of persons aged 15 years and over</p> <p>(e) Greater Capital City counts for the ACT relate to total ACT</p> <p>Notes</p> <p>1. Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.</p> <p>2. Data may not be comparable across jurisdictions and comparisons could be misleading. See the relevant data quality statements for more information.</p>									
<p>Source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons and Households: ABS, 6523.0 - Household Income and Wealth, Australia, 2017-18, LATEST ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 12/07/2019,</li> <li>Housing Programs: AIHW, <i>Housing Assistance in Australia 2018 Report</i>.<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>									

<sup>26</sup> Source:

- Persons and Households: Part of *Survey of Income and Housing, Final sample, 2017–18*  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6523.0Explanatory%20Notes12017-18?OpenDocument>
- Housing Programs: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia-2018/contents/housing-in-australia> Table DWELLINGS.2 and 3



## 7. Appendix 2: additional homelessness data

### Persons by Homeless operational groups, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016 (a)

	2001		2006		2011 (b)		2016	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out	8 946	9	7 247	8	6 810	7	8 200	7
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	13 420	14	17 329	19	21 258	21	21 235	18
Persons staying temporarily with other households	17 880	19	17 663	20	17 374	17	17 725	15
Persons living in boarding houses	21 300	22	15 460	17	14 944	15	17 503	15
Persons in other temporary lodging	338	-	500	1	682	1	678	1
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	33 430	35	31 531	35	41 370	40	51 088	44
<b>All homeless persons</b>	<b>95 314</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>89 728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102 439</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>116 427</b>	<b>100</b>

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

(a) Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. As a result, cells may not add to the totals.

(b) Homeless estimates from 2011 for the category 'Persons living in boarding houses' have been revised.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> ABS 2049.0 – Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2016, Table 1.1 Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 14/03/2018

## 8. Appendix 3: Estimating future housing need in Australia

AHURI defines *Housing need* as:

*... as the aggregate minimum housing requirements (as defined by policy) of a nation or region that are unlikely to be satisfied through market-provided housing.<sup>28</sup>*

### Total housing need estimates 2017-2025, by State

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Australia
<b>2017</b>	372,900	291,400	381,300	103,700	132,000	31,400	8,200	12,600	1,333,500
<b>2018</b>	358,900	297,400	344,300	101,700	129,000	30,800	8,400	12,900	1,283,400
<b>2019</b>	348,100	301,700	321,500	100,600	125,500	30,400	8,600	13,100	1,249,500
<b>2020</b>	405,000	309,700	308,700	99,900	137,700	30,300	8,700	13,300	1,313,300
<b>2021</b>	489,200	321,300	306,100	100,200	142,100	30,400	8,800	13,500	1,411,600
<b>2022</b>	589,900	337,200	307,100	100,700	137,500	28,900	8,900	13,700	1,523,900
<b>2023</b>	643,700	365,600	308,400	101,400	115,300	27,400	9,100	14,000	1,584,900
<b>2024</b>	671,100	407,200	317,700	102,200	109,500	25,800	9,200	14,200	1,656,900
<b>2025</b>	677,500	461,900	331,400	104,300	121,300	27,400	10,200	14,400	1,748,400

Source: AHURI, Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, Table 4, page 35.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> AHURI, Rowley, S., Leishman, C., Baker, E., Bentley, R. and Lester, L. (2017) Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, AHURI Final Report 287, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/287>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-8106901. Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, August 2017, page 8.

<sup>29</sup> AHURI, Rowley, S., Leishman, C., Baker, E., Bentley, R. and Lester, L. (2017) Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, AHURI Final Report 287, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/287>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-8106901. Modelling housing need in Australia to 2025, August 2017

## 9. Appendix 4: An example of the impact of homelessness in Indigenous communities

### Homelessness in the Northern Territory

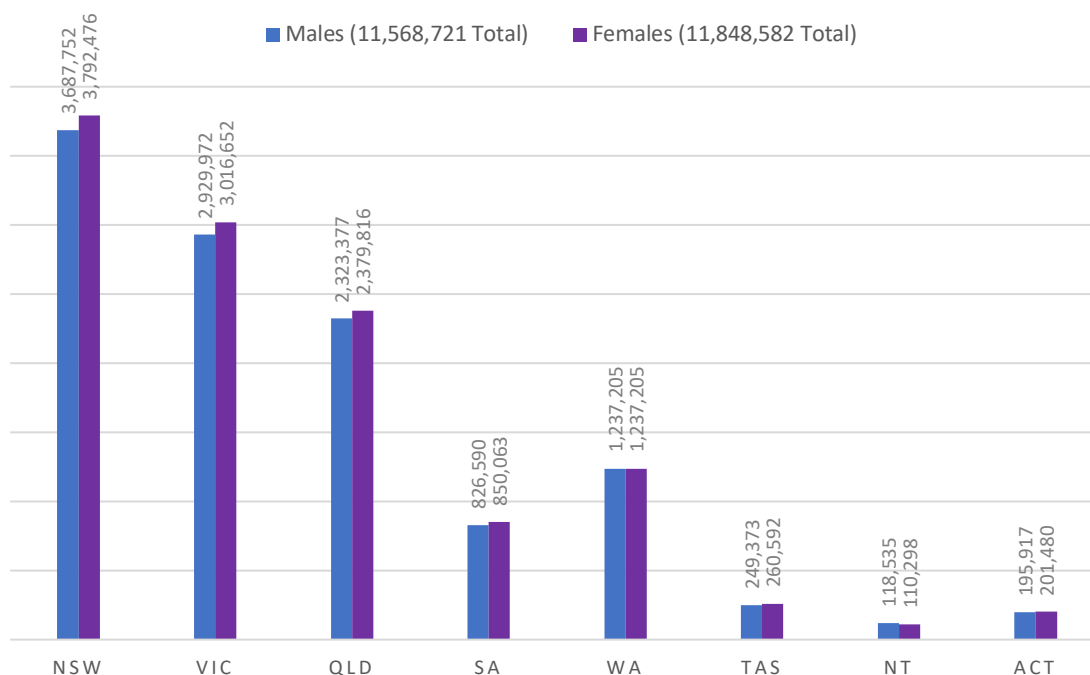
To have a clearer understanding of the homelessness situation in the Northern Territory it's necessary to compare the population in Australia, illustrated by Figure 5, with the ratio of homeless to the general population, illustrated by Figure 6.

The situation is particularly dire: compared to the Australian average, **males are homeless by a 9.9 factor and females are homeless by a 15.1 factor**. This is an indication of general social desperation and institutional neglect, abominable and unacceptable in a developed country such as Australia. Sadly, this is also only one aspect of the discriminations tolerated by the governing authorities in Australia and in the Northern Territory.

A 2018 report by Deloitte Economics into implementation of the recommendations resulting by the Royal Commission into the Aboriginal Death in Custody (RCIADIC)

*The final report of the RCIADIC was delivered in 1991 and made 339 recommendations concerning procedures for persons in custody as well as social factors including youth policy, alcohol, health, employment, **housing**, land rights, self-determination and reconciliation. It was found that police and prisons failing their duty of care, and high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being arrested and incarcerated were key contributors to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody.<sup>30</sup>*

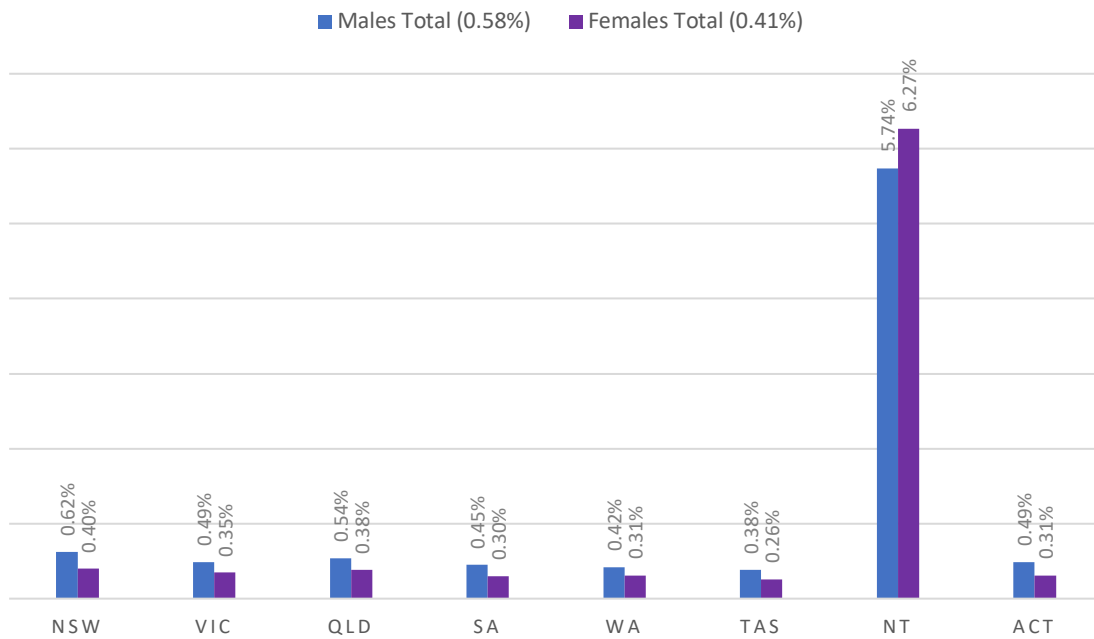
**Figure 5: Population in Australia by State and Gender**



Source: ABS *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016*

<sup>30</sup> Deloitte Access Economics: *Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, August 2018

**Figure 6: Ratio of homeless to general population, by State and Gender**



Source: ABS *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016*

This data doesn't reflect the real number of people in need. It only reflects the current classification method - updated to revised criteria of 'need' measurement. The periodic revision of lists and criteria make it very difficult to compare data over time, and the emerging data bears little relationship to actual need resulting from serious affordability problems or the appropriateness of current household accommodation.