



Media release – 11 December 2020

Women comprised more than two-thirds of all people seeking homelessness support who were not able to be assisted this year

New Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data released today about people accessing specialist homelessness services (SHS) reveals that **more than two-thirds of people needing help who were unable to be assisted were women or girls.**

Chair of Homelessness Australia Jenny Smith says, “There is no doubt that 2020 has been a difficult time for those doing it tough, especially women. Today’s data shows that women continue to bear the brunt of any crisis, whether it be fires, a pandemic, or an economic recession.

“Demand for homelessness services continually exceeds capacity, with there being inadequate access to both accommodation and support staff to respond to the enormous need. In 2019-20, every day, 260 people seeking support missed out. Over two-thirds, or 67 per cent, of this group who missed out on help were women or girls.

“This includes many women who were presenting to homelessness services with young children. There were 11,201 children under ten who missed out on support this year.

Number of people with unable to be assisted broken down by age and sex (where specified)

Age group	Male		Female		Total
	Number	Proportion of sex (per cent)	Number	Proportion of sex (per cent)	Number
0-9	5,479	24.9	5,722	12.8	11,201
10-14	1,951	8.9	2,467	5.5	4,418
15-17	2,133	9.7	3,255	7.3	5,388
18-24	2,830	12.9	7,311	16.3	10,141
25-34	3,124	14.2	10,843	24.2	13,967
35-44	3,195	14.5	9,020	20.1	12,215
45-54	2,232	10.2	4,306	9.6	6,538
55-64	699	3.2	1,383	3.1	2,082
65+	324	1.5	476	1.1	800
Total	21,967	100.0	44,783	100.0	66,750

“The number of people that homelessness services have to turn away has continued to grow each year. It’s clear that there is a growing gap between the demand for support and the resources available to homelessness services,” says Jenny Smith.

“Despite states and territories investing millions in 2020 to provide temporary accommodation for people without a home, there was still a significant shortage of accommodation options for people seeking support. Over 86 per cent of all requests that were not able to be met in 2019-20 related to short term housing or other accommodation.

“Many states and territories have stepped up during this crisis to provide temporary accommodation and funding for support staff, so that people without a home have had a roof over their heads. It’s made an enormous difference to the lives of thousands, but what has



been missing is additional resources for housing or for homelessness services from the Federal Government.

“Instead of urgently needed additional investment to respond to projected growth in homelessness in 2021, the 2020 Budget revealed the Federal Government plans to cut \$41.3 million in homelessness service funding from July 2021.

“With homelessness set to soar in 2021, now is the time for Federal action to reduce homelessness.

“Homelessness Australia calls on the Federal Government to:

- Reverse the planned cuts to the Coronavirus supplement and permanently increase JobSeeker so people without work can afford rent
- Immediately invest to deliver 30,000 new social housing dwellings nationwide as economic stimulus
- Increase homelessness service funding to meet demand, including reversing the planned cut to homelessness funding in July 2021.”

“The Federal Government could change the lives of thousands by investing in homelessness support and building more housing options that are affordable, so that next year, no woman and child without a home misses out on the support they need,” says Jenny Smith.

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