



AFP

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE

35,000 people are reported missing each year
105,000 people are homeless each night

NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS COORDINATION CENTRE

FACT SHEET



▶ Missing persons and homelessness

A person experiencing homelessness may be having issues with aspects of life that prevent access to safe and secure shelter.

A missing person is defined as anyone who is reported missing to police, whose whereabouts is unknown and there are fears for the safety or welfare of that person.

The reasons why people become homeless or missing are diverse. However; there are some similar risk factors and experiences that characterise homelessness and/or being missing.

35,000 people are reported missing each year

- Groups most at risk of going missing are those living with a mental illness, young people and older people with dementia.

- Those most likely to be listed as missing long-term, (for more than six months), tend to be adult men.

- Approximately one third of missing persons go missing more than once – this is particularly the case with young people and for people with dementia.

- For every missing person reported, at least 12 others are affected whether it is emotionally, psychologically, physically or financially.

- 99.5 per cent of missing persons are found; however there are approximately 1,600 long-term missing persons in Australia.

- You do not have to wait 24 hours before reporting someone as missing. If you have fears for the safety of a person, immediately report them as missing to your local police.

105,000 people are homeless each night

- More than 100,000 people receive support from homeless services annually.

- One in two people are turned away each night from overstretched services.

- Poverty and lack of affordable housing are significant causes of homelessness.

- Some 16,000 people experience 'primary' homelessness, that is, living on the street or in improvised shelters.

- Homelessness can cause a range of health problems, as well as social isolation, and a sense of shame.

- Though demand is very high, services exist to help homeless people reconnect with their communities, find stable housing and resolve health and personal issues.

20,000 people who go missing are under the age of 18



"I RAN AWAY FROM HOME TO GET AWAY FROM MY STEPDAD. I SLEEP IN A DUMPSTER" THOMAS, 16

- Older people, particularly those with dementia or memory loss are also at risk.
- People living with a mental illness are more likely to go missing compared to the general population.
- Reasons for going missing include rebellion, escape from domestic violence/ family conflict, drugs/alcohol abuse, mental illness and dementia related illnesses.

- A high proportion of missing persons are from supported care, mental health and juvenile care institutions.
- Approximately equal numbers of men and women go missing.

76,000 people who receive homeless support are children under 15

- Contrary to common perception, almost half of Australia's homeless people are children and young people under 25.
- One in 40 children under five use a homeless service each year.



"MY ENGLISH IS NOT THAT GOOD BUT I AM A GOOD PERSON, I LIVE IN THIS SHELTER." SOPHIA, 73



"I LIVE AROUND BUT SOMETIMES I CAN'T REMEMBER THINGS, MOST TIMES I SLEEP IN A PARK."

- The largest single cause of homelessness in Australia is domestic and family violence, which overwhelmingly affects women and children.
- Much preventable homelessness is caused when people leave institutions for unstable housing situations.
- Men, women, young people, children and families are among the homeless population.

James, Putt and Anderson, *'Missing persons in Australia'*, 2008

Homelessness content provided by Homelessness Australia.

For more information

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

The NMPCC, Australian Federal Police, provides a national leadership and coordination approach to the Australian Government's response to missing persons. Its mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons.

The NMPCC works within the PLEASE policy principles of Prevention, Location, Education, Awareness, Support and Evaluation.

Find out more by visiting our website.

Homelessness Australia

Homelessness Australia is the national peak body working to prevent and respond to homelessness in Australia.

For more information visit homelessnessaustralia.org.au