



Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort

Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home

Victorian Aboriginal Housing and
Homelessness Framework

2021

ANNUAL REPORT CARD



Contents

Throughout this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Unless noted otherwise, the term should be considered inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The authors would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout Victoria. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to live in spiritual and sacred relationships with this country.

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Foreword


In February 2020, senior Ministers of the Victorian Government and the leadership of the Victorian Aboriginal community came together in the Victorian Parliament to launch ***Mana-na woorn tyeen maar-takoort***, the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (the Framework), a community led Framework outlining actions required to develop a resourced and capable housing and homelessness system within Victoria. A year on, this document provides the first annual report card of progress in implementing the Framework and measuring the difference it will make in housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

Mana-na woorn tyeen maar-takoort (*Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home*) is not only the first policy framework to address the housing needs of Aboriginal people in our state's history, it is the first policy statement of its kind in any Australian jurisdiction to be developed by the Aboriginal community at the request of an Australian Government. Work to develop the Framework was led by a Steering Committee, chaired by Professor Kerry Arabena and also comprised of senior Aboriginal leaders, sector leaders and senior officers from the Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Families, Fairness and Housing (then the Department of Health and Human Services). In a reversal of usual roles, the Aboriginal leadership of Victoria, through work led by Aboriginal Housing Victoria, drafted the policy in consultation with experts from State Government. At the centre of the policy are Aboriginal voices: voices of Elders, tenants, housing workers and ordinary family members. People often struggling to make difficult transitions in an unforgiving housing market shared their insights to inform what would bridge the divide for them between homelessness and secure housing.

Professor Arabena presented the accomplished policy framework to the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Richard Wynne MP and the, then, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC on 26 February 2020 asserting the right for every Aboriginal person to have a home. This is the Vision and the meaning of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*.

The Victorian Government has commissioned, launched and embraced the Framework making it central to Government policy. In the first year, an Implementation Working Group, jointly chaired by Aboriginal Housing Victoria and Homes Victoria, has provided strength to this policy and has also begun the process of careful, steady investment in its implementation.

The Framework sets out inter-related strategies and actions designed to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. It contained the following commitment: "these strategies must be backed up by targets and progress measures to ensure investments are focused and accountability is maintained. Monitoring and reporting must be undertaken at least annually and complemented by regular evaluation. This should be publicly available to ensure transparency and accountability by all parties."



The co-chairs responsible for implementation of the Framework have agreed to report progress against key measures of housing security for Aboriginal Victorians in a report to be released annually to coincide with the Framework's launch. It is intended that we will chart changes in outcome measures comparing results for Aboriginal people over time with outcomes for other Victorians and with Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia and report the results in the first quarter of each year.

Our first annual report card has three sections. **Section 1** describes the actions we have taken in our first year as an Implementation Working Group to begin the process of implementing the Framework. **Section 2** documents outcomes against 20 measures of housing wellbeing for Aboriginal people in Victoria. **Section 3** concludes with an overview of where outcomes are improving, where they are declining and where there is not enough data to know.

The data outcomes for this year's report are necessarily retrospective, largely dealing with 2019-20 as the latest year for which data is available in most instances. The measures reflected in this first report provide a baseline for what we expect to be future improvements in outcomes.

In November 2020 the Victorian Government announced the largest ever state government investment into social and affordable housing with the \$5.3 billion dollar *Big Housing Build*. This package includes a commitment of 10 per cent of social housing allocated to Aboriginal Victorians. This 10% target delivers on the VAHHF commitment for improving the amount of social housing for Aboriginal Victorians.

As joint Chairs of the Framework Implementation Working Group, and in the spirit of Self-determination, we commend to you the first annual report card of progress against *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*.



DARREN SMITH
CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria
Co-Chair
VAHHF Implementation
Working Group



BEN RIMMER
CEO, Homes Victoria
Co-Chair
VAHHF Implementation
Working Group

Section 1: Launch of the Framework and First Year Actions

Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort (the Framework) was launched in February 2020 as an aspirational policy framework, largely without an implementation plan and lacking an investment strategy.

Much of the work on the Framework in its first year has been focused on:

- Creating the governance arrangements to implement the framework,
- Developing and commencing delivery of an implementation work plan, and
- Securing the resources to commence delivery of Framework Goals and Objectives.

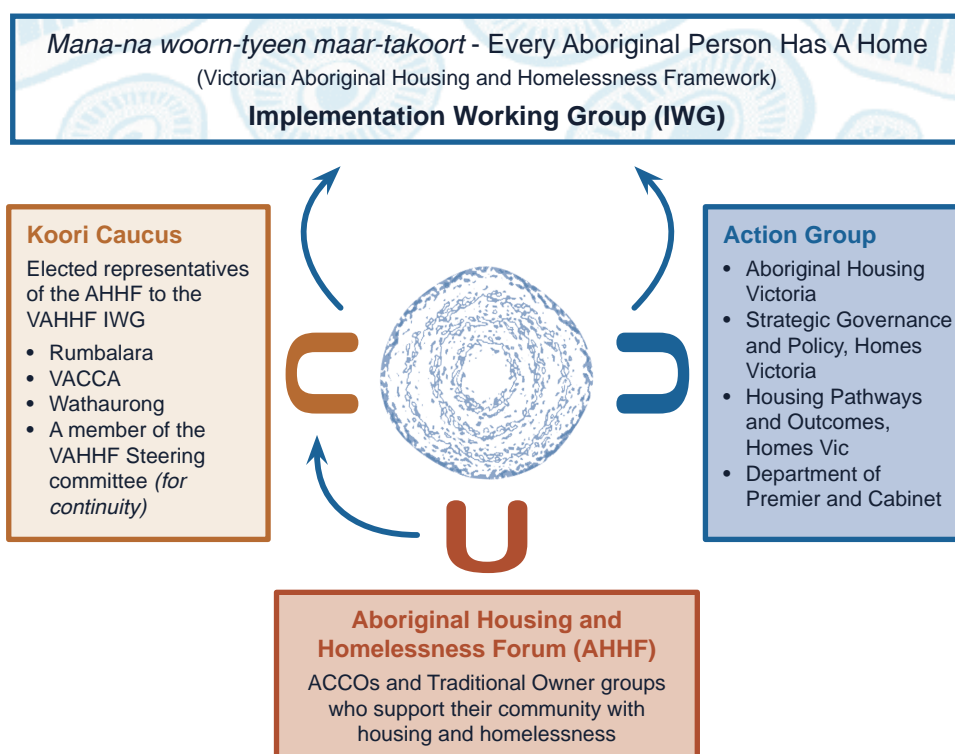
A. Creating the Governance Framework

The Victorian Government and Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) established an Implementation Working Group (IWG) to implement the Framework, meeting for the first time in July 2020 and held three meetings in 2020. The IWG is co-Chaired by Ben Rimmer (CEO of Homes Victoria) and Darren Smith (CEO of Aboriginal Housing Victoria). As well as senior Aboriginal community leaders, which are core to its membership, senior representatives from Homes Victoria, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (formerly Department of Health and Human Services).

The VAHHF Implementation Working Group has created a structure to ensure Aboriginal self-determination is central to IWG decision making and that Aboriginal voices inform all of its deliberations.

The structure underpinning the IWG is set out in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: Governance for Implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*



The Terms of Reference for the IWG charge it with responsibility to:

1. Oversee the development of plans to implement the Framework, including:
 - a. [An Annual Work Plan for 2020-21](#)
2. Advise on [sequencing implementation](#) of initiatives to inform a 2020-21 work plan.
3. Prepare an investment strategy to [secure resources](#)¹ (financial, human and capital) to implement initiatives.
4. Play a key [role as the central forum](#) for all housing and homelessness issues for Aboriginal Victorians.
5. Guide the development of [business cases](#) to underpin implementation of major initiatives.
6. Build [partnerships](#) between the Aboriginal community, senior Government decision makers and relevant leaders in the private and philanthropic sectors.
7. Engage in [strategic advice](#)² and [advocacy](#)³ to advance the goals, objectives and targets and secure commitments to advance critical initiatives in line with implementation work plans.
8. [Provide advice to the Victorian Government](#) on housing/homelessness targets in Aboriginal policy documents as they are reviewed/updated.
9. Establish a [monitoring](#) framework to develop metrics and track progress in achievement of Framework targets.
10. Oversee preparation of annual [reports of progress](#), including progress on:
 - a. Outputs (Implementation of initiatives in line with work plans)
 - b. Outcomes (Progress against targets)
11. [Review and refine the policy](#) Framework as required in co-operation with the Aboriginal community and stakeholders, as new information becomes available.
12. Support implementation of housing related [Close the Gap](#) commitments and initiatives.

¹ Noting Government representatives provide advice on how to seek resources but the Government makes Budget decisions through the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet

² Government members

³ Community members



B. Developing and Actioning a Work Plan

The IWG identified 10 critical actions to be achieved as part of its 2020-2021 Work Plan. These are as follows:

ACTION	STATUS
1. Agreement of Terms of Reference and establishment of governance arrangements	Complete
2. Development of an implementation work plan for 2020-2021	Complete
3. Staff recruited to form a Secretariat	Complete
4. Setting annual strategic actions and the measurement of progress against targets	Complete
5. Identification of potential projects and agreement about the order of sequencing	Ongoing
6. Delivery of Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forums	9 Forums held in 2020
7. Development of feasibility studies	In progress
8. Financial analysis of ACCO residential stock	In progress
9. Whole of sector EOI proposal for \$35m stimulus funding	Complete
10. Progress made towards securing additional resources to implement other priority proposals from 2021.	In progress

C. Securing the resources to deliver the Framework Goals and objectives.

A major challenge for 2020 was to secure additional resources to begin to implement priority proposals in 2021. The following additional resources were secured to enable implementation to commence and to advance each of the five strategic Goals at the heart of the Framework:

1. Secure housing improves life outcomes
2. Build supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population
3. Open doors to home ownership and private rental
4. An Aboriginal focused homelessness system
5. A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs.

The Implementation Working Group will oversee deployment and monitor the impact of these investments in improving outcomes. Results will be reflected in future annual reports when reporting against the Strategic Goals.



Additional Resources	VAHHF Related Strategic Goal
<p>10% of the 8,200 Big Housing Build's new affordable housing units (earmarked for Aboriginal Victorians on the Victorian Housing Register) and other funding packages allocated to Aboriginal Victorians. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$4.719m – <i>Building Works program</i>, Stream 10 \$6.428m – <i>Building Works</i>, Stream 2 	2
\$800k to resource VAHHF implementation	1-5
\$4.2m to establish an Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program.	3
\$150K to extend the life of the <i>More Than a Landlord Program</i> .	1
Resources to allow the completion of financial analysis of the housing assets of ACCOs and the best ways to deploy them.	5
The launch of a cultural safety framework with the Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria (CHIAVic) to guide mainstream social housing providers.	5
Establishment of a project with the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to investigate racial discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market.	3
\$300K committed to undertake a feasibility study into reform of the homeless service system to establish clearer access points for Aboriginal people in Victoria.	4
\$440K committed to fund positions to provide housing and homeless support in Aboriginal community controlled organisations to help in the transition of homeless people following the end of COVID-19 support.	4
\$35m secured for Aboriginal community controlled housing providers, including AHV for purposes of maintenance, upgrades and modular housing.	5
Discussions with the Department of Treasury and Finance to explore funding for a shared equity housing initiative, proposed in the VAHHF, designed specifically to assist Aboriginal Victorians to purchase houses.	3
\$1.2m secured to implement the Aboriginal Home Connect project to enable welfare and education checks on over 4,000 Aboriginal families in social housing.	1

Section 2: Report against Outcome Measures

This section reports outcomes for approximately 20 measures from homelessness⁴ to home ownership. Where the data is available, the measures compare:

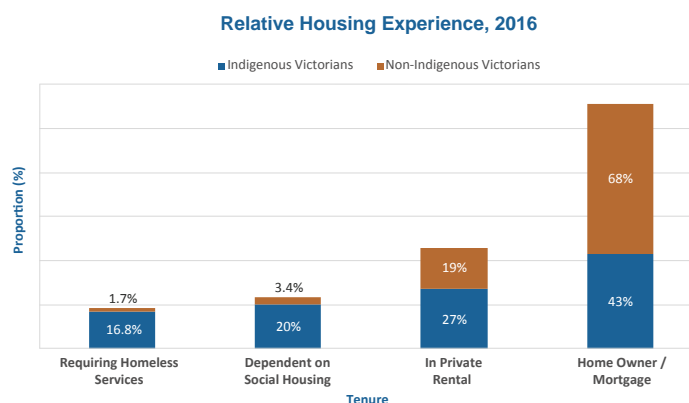
- **Victoria’s Indigenous outcomes relative to the national Indigenous rate**
- **Victoria’s performance relative to the previous year / time period**
- **Indigenous experience in Victoria relative to mainstream experience**

Outcomes for all measures are derived from data provided by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services, ABS Census data or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (including Homes Victoria).

When reading the charts that follow, there are some areas of year on year improvement or areas in which the transitions of a highly disadvantaged Aboriginal population may be better than for the non-Indigenous population. Isolated positive outcomes must be understood in the context of a wider picture provided by the evidence of Aboriginal people in Victoria:

- Experiencing contact with homeless services at ten times the rate of other Victorians,
- Securing home ownership rates 25 percentage points lower than other Victorians,
- Depending on social housing at around ten times the rate of other Victorians, and
- Facing a growing exposure to a private rental market in which around half of low-income earners experience housing stress.

Figure 2: Relative Housing Disadvantage Based on Tenures: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Victorians⁵



⁴ The estimate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons who were homeless when this data was collected may be an underestimate, particularly for those staying temporarily with other households, reflecting both a relatively large under enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in the datasets compared to the total population and because for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons a usual address may be reported that is associated with a ‘place’ rather than with a home or dwelling

⁵ Note the proportion of Aboriginal people dependent on social housing is an estimate based on best available data. Private rental and home ownership is derived from 2016 census. SHS client status is provided by AIHW. Different data sources and some cross over between tenures means totals do not sum to 100%

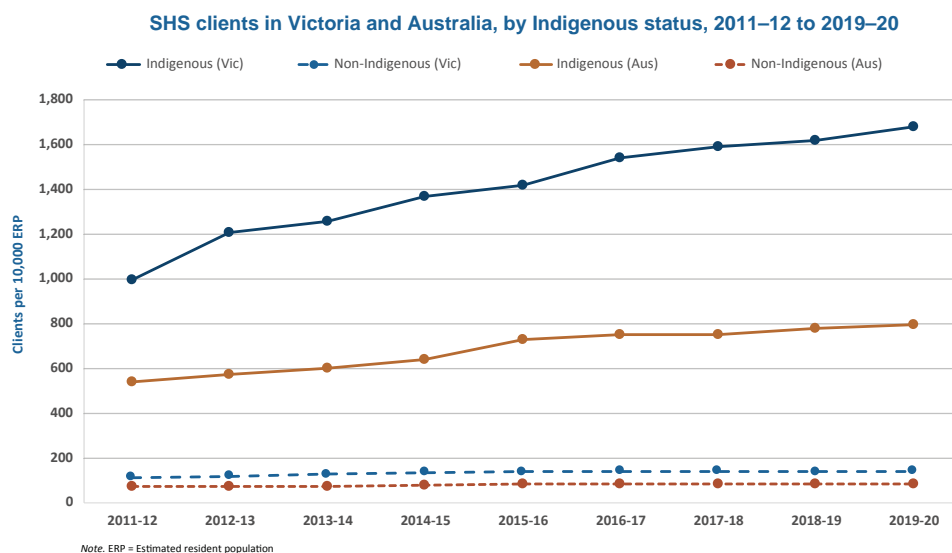
Presenting to specialist homelessness services per capita (rate per 10,000 population)

Source: AIHW

M1

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	1,617.2	1,679.6	782.0	798.3
Non-Indigenous	174.7	174.8	116.2	114.5

Figure 3: SHS clients in Victoria and Australia by Indigenous Status 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Aboriginal Victorians presented to specialist homelessness services at a rate of 17% per annum in 2019-20, or ten times the rate of other Victorians. This rate of Aboriginal presentation to homeless services is far higher than what we saw in Victoria a decade ago (998.1 per 10,000 in 2011-2012)⁶. Aboriginal people in Victoria are twice as likely as other Aboriginal people to seek homelessness assistance. While this may relate to service availability, the notion that one in six Aboriginal people in our state require homeless assistance (43.1% of whom are homeless on presentation) suggests a continuing crisis and vindicates the Government’s decision to assign 10% of new social housing investment to Aboriginal families.

⁶ Note there were higher rates of Indigenous or non-Indigenous status remaining unstated in the earlier years of the data collection which may have impacted the data.

M2

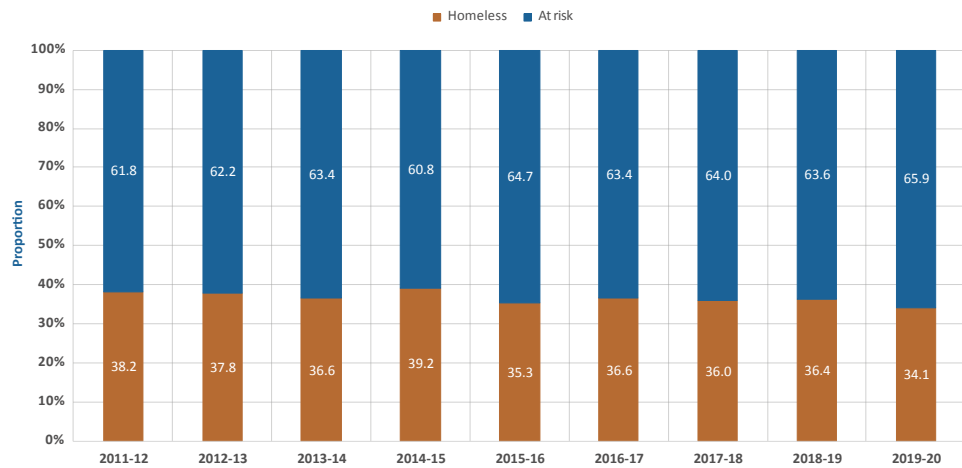
Proportion of clients who exit specialist homelessness services homeless (%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	36.4	34.1	34.9	33.7
Non-Indigenous	30.5	29.1	30.8	30.3

Figure 4: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

One in three Aboriginal Victorians who presented to specialist homelessness services in 2019-20 were homeless when their support period ended, 5% higher than the rate for Victorians as a whole. Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia experienced similarly high rates. The shortage of affordable housing options evident in this data reinforces the importance of major investment by the Victorian Government in social and affordable housing through the Big Housing Build.

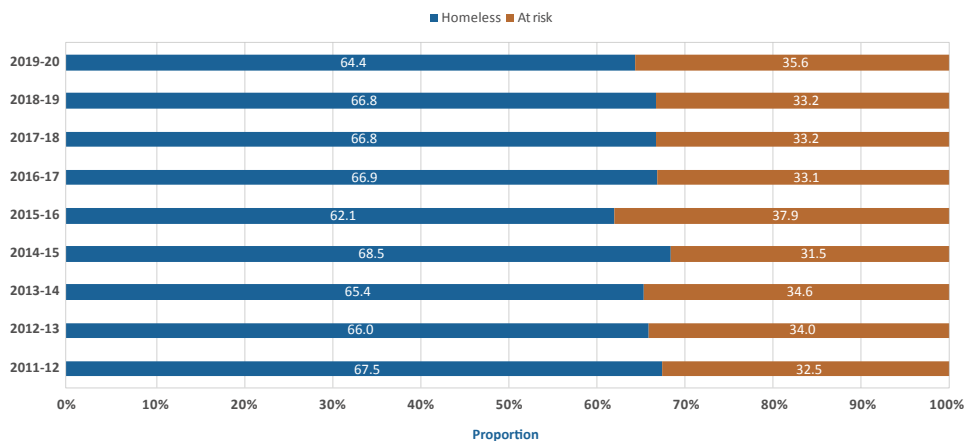
Proportion of clients who exit the Specialist Homelessness Services System homeless who were homeless on entry (%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	66.8	64.4	62.3	62.9
Non-Indigenous	68.8	68.3	61.0	61.1

Figure 5: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support who were homeless at the start of support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support who were homeless at the start of support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Two in three Aboriginal Victorians who were homeless when they presented to specialist homelessness services in 2019-20 remained homeless after support ended. This is a similar rate to non-Aboriginal Victorians engaging with specialist homelessness services. While not all people in this system are seeking accommodation, this data nevertheless underlines the connection between the homeless support system and the social and affordable housing sectors. Without a major expansion in the pipeline of affordable housing options, the homeless support system will continue to see an increase in demand.

M3

M4a

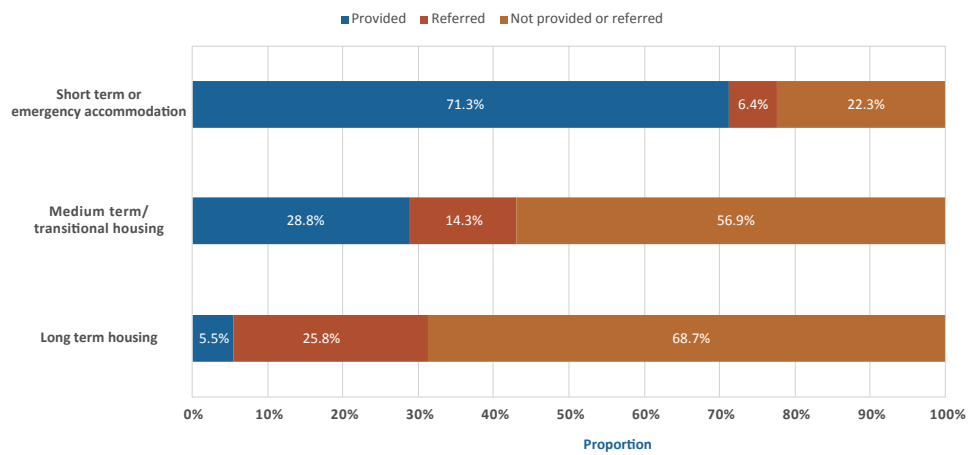
Unmet need⁷ for short term / emergency accommodation (excluding referral only) (%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	24.5 (30.9)	22.3 (28.7)	24.2 (33.3)	25.8 (34.7)
Non-Indigenous	32.3 (37.6)	28.9 (33.7)	33.2 (44.1)	33.3 (44.1)

Figure 6: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with needs for accommodation support, by service provision status, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria, with need for accommodation support, by service provision status, 2019-20



Commentary

Twenty-two per cent (22%) of Aboriginal Victorians requiring short term / emergency housing do not receive it, a slightly lower rate than for Victorians as a whole. The Victorian system performs better than the rest of Australia in this respect, but more than one in five Aboriginal Victorians are left without a basic safety net of emergency housing.

⁷ Neither provided nor referred

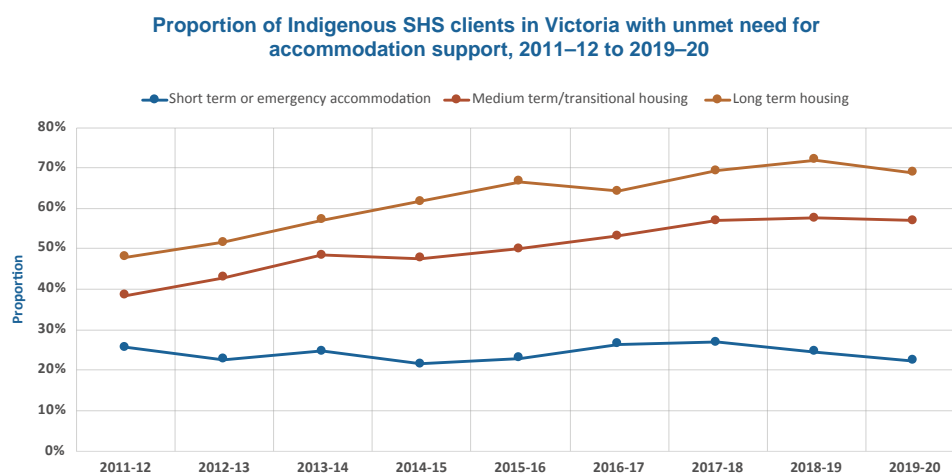
Unmet need for medium / transitional accommodation need (excluding referral only) (%)

M4b

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	57.4 (69.5)	56.9 (71.2)	52.8 (71.3)	53.0 (72.9)
Non-Indigenous	62.7 (70.7)	60.9 (71.1)	58.2 (73.0)	57.6 (74.3)

Figure 7: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients with unmet need for accommodation support in Victoria, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Only 29% of Aboriginal Victorians requiring transitional housing are directly provided it and fewer than half are provided or referred to such housing. The rate of provision is similar for Victorians as a whole.

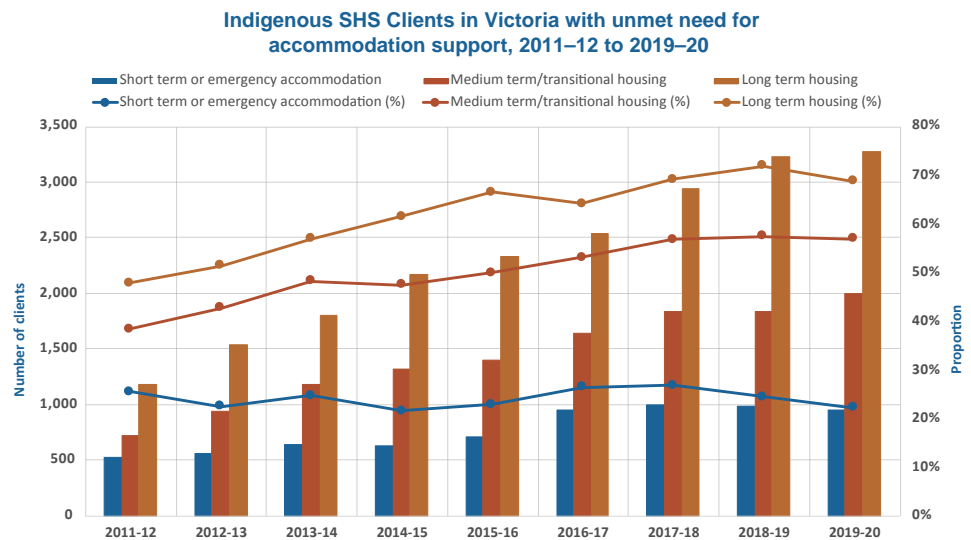
M4c

Unmet need for long term accommodation (excluding referral only) (%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	71.9 (96.2)	68.7 (94.5)	67.5 (96.5)	68.8 (96.5)
Non-Indigenous	76.8 (95.8)	74.9 (96.0)	71.7 (96.2)	71.4 (96.4)

Figure 8: Indigenous SHS Clients in Victoria with unmet need for accommodation support, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Fewer than six per cent of Aboriginal Victorians assessed as requiring long-term accommodation directly received it last year and fewer than one third either received or were referred to such housing. This finding highlights the growing shortfall in social and affordable housing in Victoria and Australia more broadly.

Presentations to specialist homelessness services following housing crisis (including eviction) (%)⁸

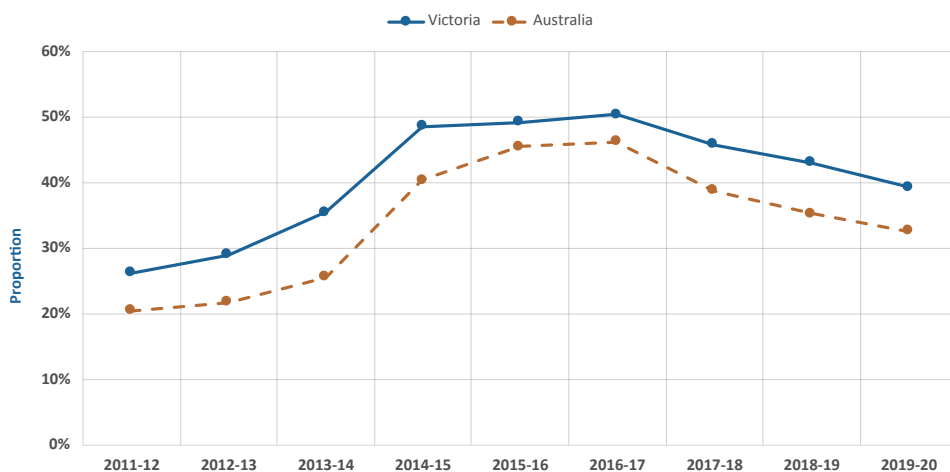
Source: AIHW

M5

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	43.1	39.4	35.4	32.7
Non-Indigenous	38.8	34.7	38.9	36.1

Figure 9: Indigenous SHS Clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Indigenous SHS clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Note. Housing crises include: the client was formally evicted from their previous accommodation arrangement or the client was asked to leave their previous accommodation.

Commentary

Two in five Aboriginal Victorians (over 4,000 people) who presented to specialist homelessness services over the past year did so due to housing crisis (including eviction). The total number is slightly lower than the previous year, possibly reflecting the Victorian Government's moratorium on evictions, rent relief for eligible tenants, suspension of rental increases, and establishing a continued dispute resolution process for part of the 2019-2020 reporting period in response to COVID-19. Aboriginal Victorians are presenting to homeless services following eviction at higher rates than other Victorians. The Residential Tenancies Commissioner, AHV, Victoria Legal Aid, the Consumer Rights Policy Centre and Swinburne University, have commenced a project to investigate the impacts of racial discrimination against Aboriginal Victorians in the private rental market. The project will offer further intelligence to the barriers faced and inform future efforts to improve the cultural responsiveness and safety of the private rental market for Aboriginal Victorians.

⁸ % of cohort seeking assistance due to housing crisis

M6

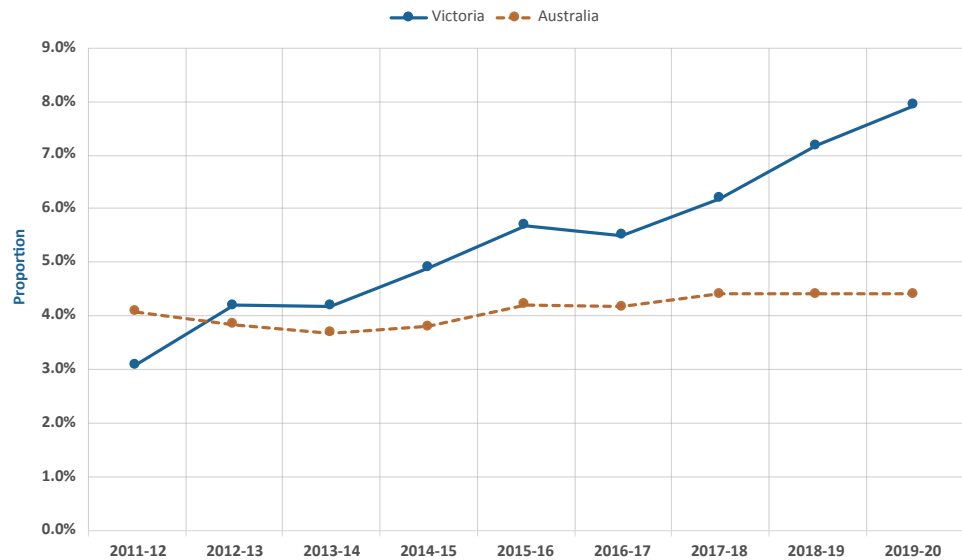
Presentations to specialist homelessness services following exit from custody (number)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	586	686	2376	2481
Non-Indigenous	4020	3877	6745	6568

Figure 10: Proportion of Indigenous SHS Clients exiting custodial arrangements in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients exiting custodial arrangements in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

One in six prisoners that exit custodial settings into the homeless support system in Victoria is Aboriginal, despite the Aboriginal population comprising less than 1% of the total Victorian population. 1,797 Indigenous prisoners were discharged from Victorian prisons in 2019-20, an increase of over 400% on the number released a decade earlier (344 in 2009-10)⁹. 7.9% of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria are exiting prisoners, up from 3% a decade ago. Future resourcing opportunities will need to be targeted towards supporting Aboriginal Victorians exiting prisons, which offers the ability to decrease recidivism knowing stable accommodation offers the ability for individuals to seek support through the existing service system.

⁹ Corrections Victoria, Annual Statistical Profile 2009-10 to 2019-20, Table 3.3

Presentations to specialist homelessness services following exit from a psychiatric facility (number)

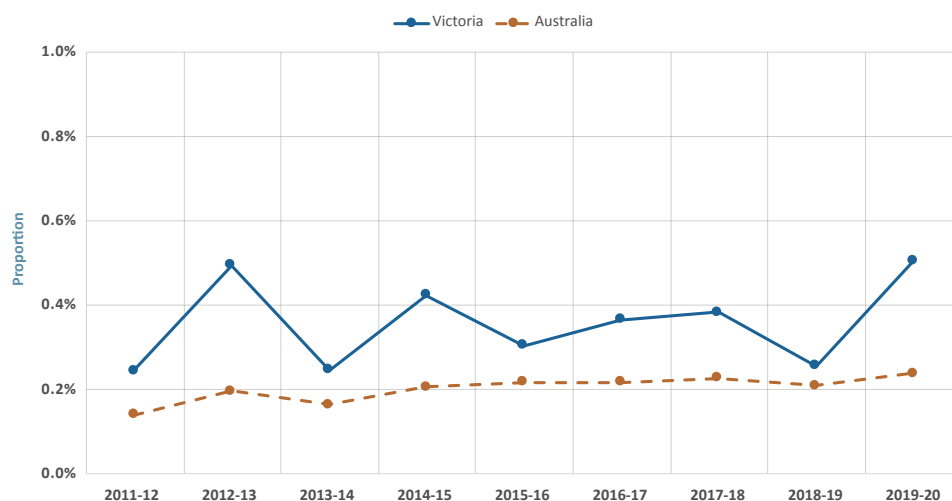
Source: AIHW

M7

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	23	48	134	159
Non-Indigenous	417	427	1023	1022

Figure 11: Proportion of Indigenous SHS Clients in psychiatric hospital/unit at the start of support in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in a psychiatric hospital/unit at the start of support in Australia and Victoria, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Forty-eight (48) Aboriginal Victorians were discharged from clinical psychiatric settings into the specialist homelessness services system in 2019-20, up from 23 such instances in the previous year. Victoria accounted for over 40% of such instances in Australia in 2019-20, a finding which may be of interest to Victoria's Royal Commission into Mental Health.

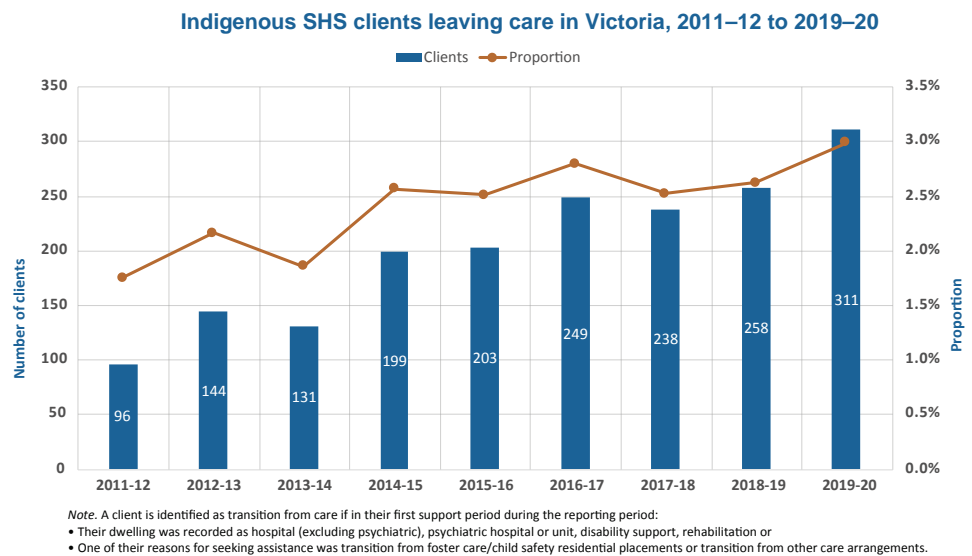
M8

Presentations to specialist homelessness services following exit from out of home care (number)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	258	311	1595	1612
Non-Indigenous	1882	1921	4904	4809

Figure 12: Indigenous SHS Clients leaving care in Victoria, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

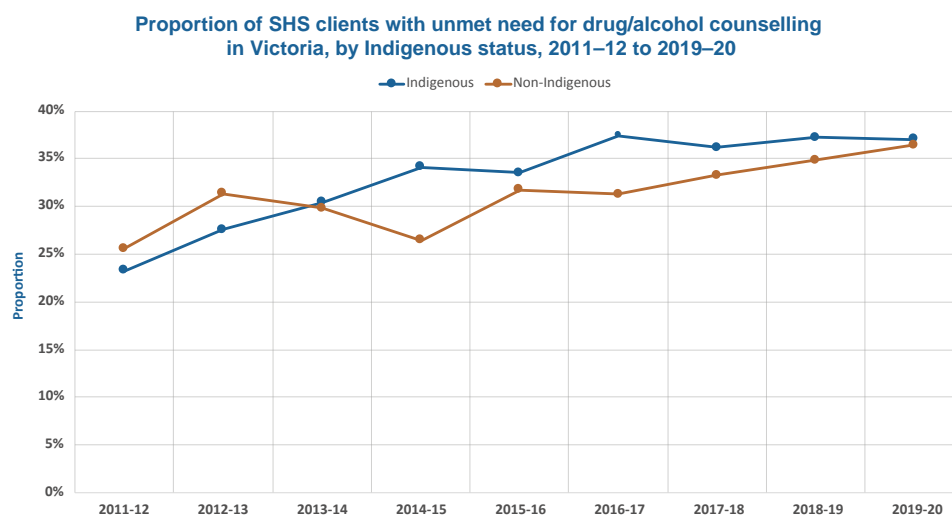
One in six young people presenting in the homeless system following exit from care are Aboriginal in Victoria and have been identified as a priority cohort for housing support as part of the Victorian Government's future investment through the *Big Housing Build* housing stimulus.

Proportion of specialist homelessness services clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling¹⁰(%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	37.2	37.0	37.2	39.8
Non-Indigenous	34.8	36.4	34.0	35.9

Figure 13: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Across Australia more than one in three specialist homelessness services clients requiring drug or alcohol counselling are unable to access services or support. This has steadily increased from around one in four at the beginning of the decade. The experience of Victorian Aboriginal people accessing services reflects that of others with alcohol and drug dependency. Aboriginal people in our state are far more likely to require assistance.

¹⁰ Neither provided nor referred

M10

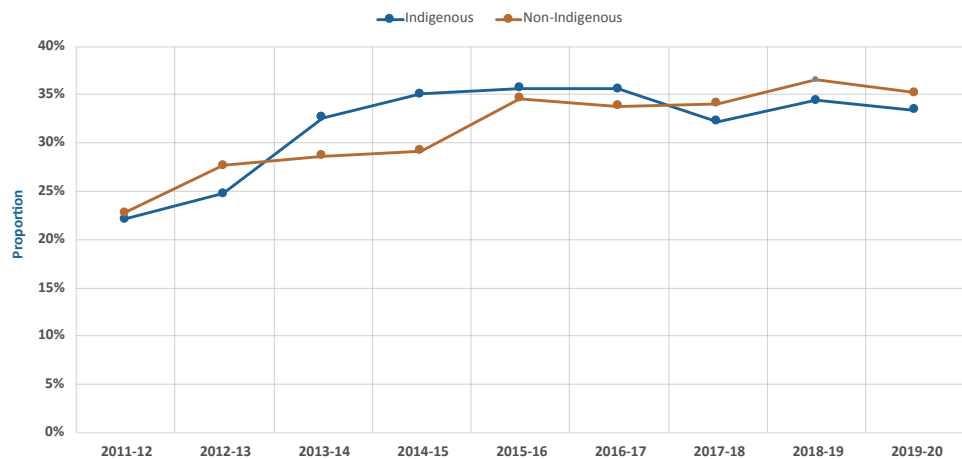
Proportion of specialist homelessness services clients with unmet need for mental health support¹¹(%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	34.4	33.5	33.3	35.3
Non-Indigenous	36.5	35.2	34.0	34.4

Figure 14: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for mental health support in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of SHS clients with unmet need for mental health support in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

Across Australia more than one in three specialist homelessness services clients requiring mental health counselling are unable to access services or supports. This has steadily increased from around one in five at the beginning of the decade. VAHMF Annual Report Card measures 9 and 10 reveal a profile of increasingly complex needs of both Aboriginal and other people presenting to homeless support services. This highlights the importance of services to help sustain the tenancies of people once they are housed. The Framework provides examples of a Housing First model, in which intensive case management support is delivered within a stable housing environment. This is fundamental to ending cycles of homelessness.

¹¹ Neither provided nor referred

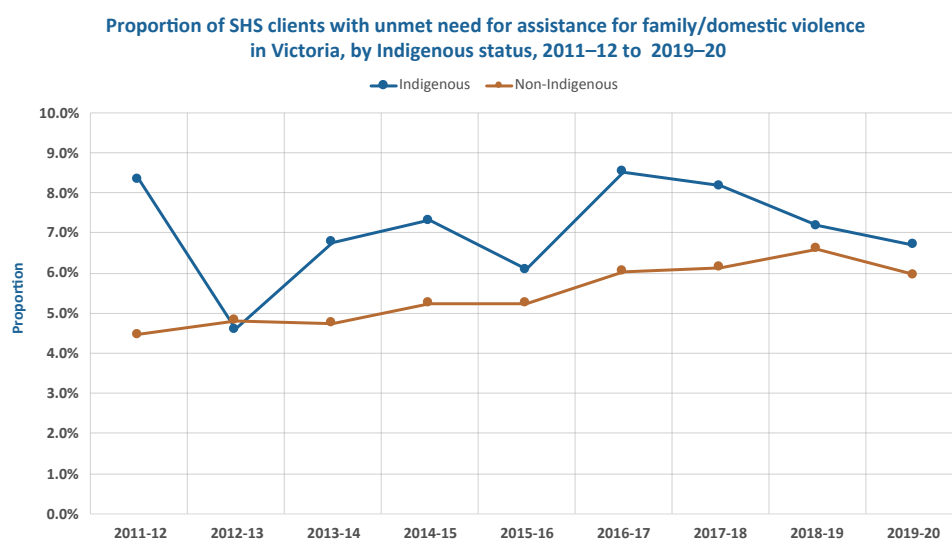
Proportion of specialist homelessness services clients with unmet need for family violence support (%)

M11

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	7.2	6.7	7.4	8.6
Non-Indigenous	6.6	6.0	7.7	8.0

Figure 15: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for assistance for family/ domestic violence in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Commentary

In Victoria, priority is given to people experiencing family violence, with more than 90% of Aboriginal Victorians provided assistance when managing or escaping family violence. The data suggests a high level of effectiveness in family violence first aid for Victorians and our state performs slightly better than Australia as a whole on this measure.

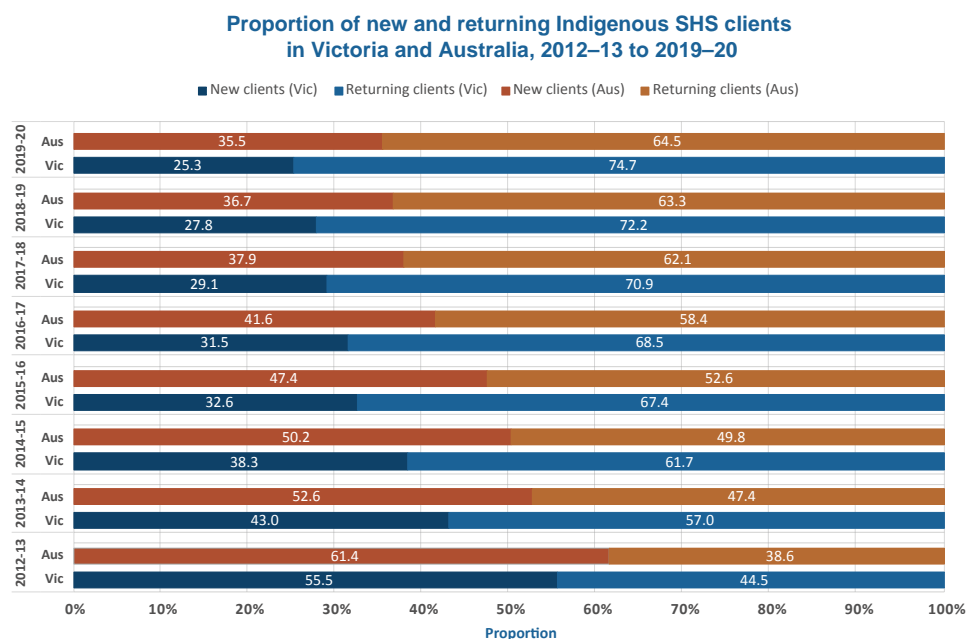
M12

Returning specialist homelessness services clients (%)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	72.2	74.7	63.3	64.5
Non-Indigenous	60.3	60.8	55.9	57.1

Figure 16: Proportion of new and returning Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria and Australia, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Commentary

Three in four Aboriginal Victorians presenting to specialist homelessness services over the past year had been in this system before, a significantly higher rate than other Victorians or Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia. The rate of returning clients has risen each year since 2011-12. With 4,879¹² Aboriginal Victorians on the Victorian Housing Register Waiting List, the reversal of this trend will require a sustained investment in affordable and social housing targeting the Aboriginal population.

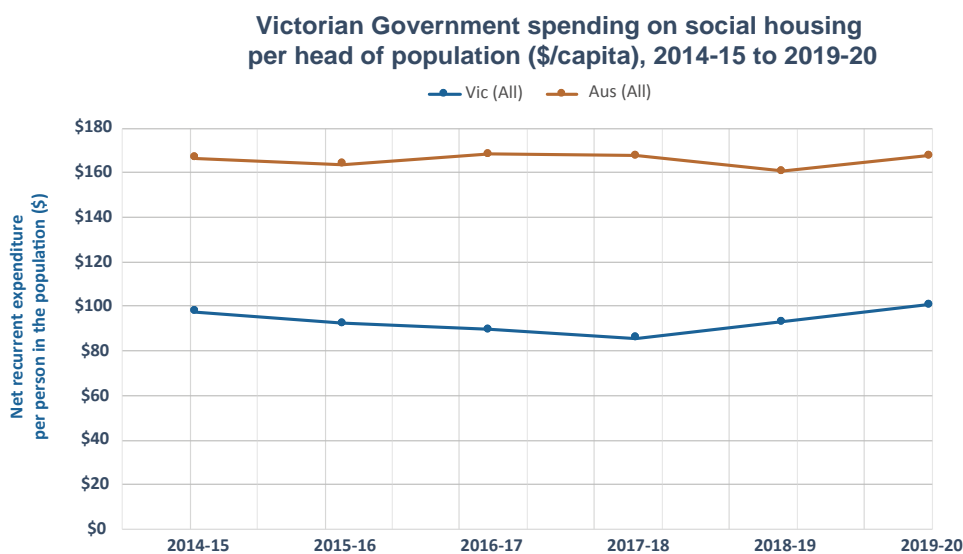
¹² Victorian Housing Register Waiting List, 2020

Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population (\$/capita)

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
All	\$93.5 ¹³	\$101.3 ¹⁴	\$161.3	\$168

Figure 17: Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population, 2014-15 to 2019-20



Commentary

Victoria's per capita investment in social housing has begun to grow from a low base relative to the rest of Australia. The Victorian Government committed in November 2020 to an unprecedented investment through the *Big Housing Build* that is expected to increase the social housing stock directly for Aboriginal Victorians, which will be reflected in these figures in next year's report. This will begin to reverse the long-term trend of social housing falling as a share of Victoria's total housing stock.

¹³ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 2020

¹⁴ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 2020

M14

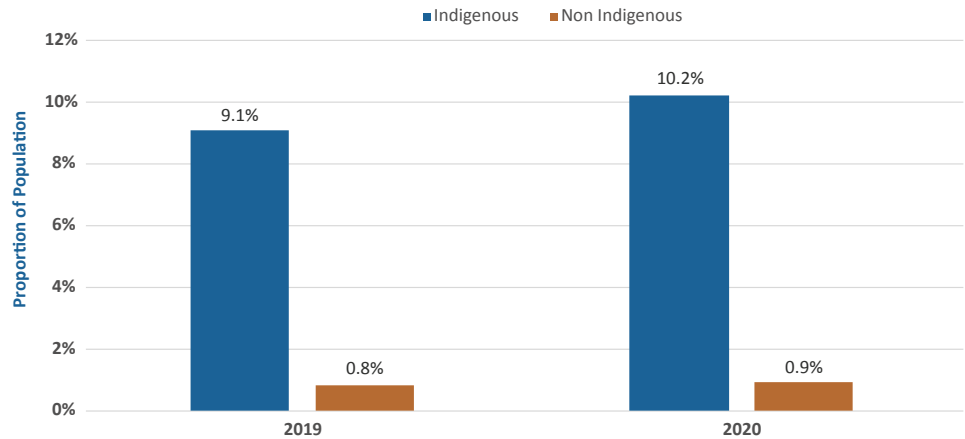
Proportion of Population on the Housing Register Waiting List % (Number)

Source: Victorian Housing Register

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019	2020	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	9.05 (4,324)	10.21 (4,879)	NA	NA
Non-Indigenous	0.84 ¹⁵ (50,145)	0.90 (53,120)	NA	NA

Figure 18: Proportion of Population in Victoria to Lodge a Housing Register Application, 2019 - 2020

Percentage of Population in Victoria to Lodge a Housing Register Application, 2019 - 2020



Commentary

Around one in ten Aboriginal people in our state have lodged applications for social housing with the Victorian Housing Register compared with around one in 100 other Victorians. The number of Aboriginal people on the waiting list rose by 555 between June 2019 and June 2020. Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort forecasts the need for an additional 300 social housing units per annum for Aboriginal households to meet population driven demand. This data suggests that this may underestimate demand.

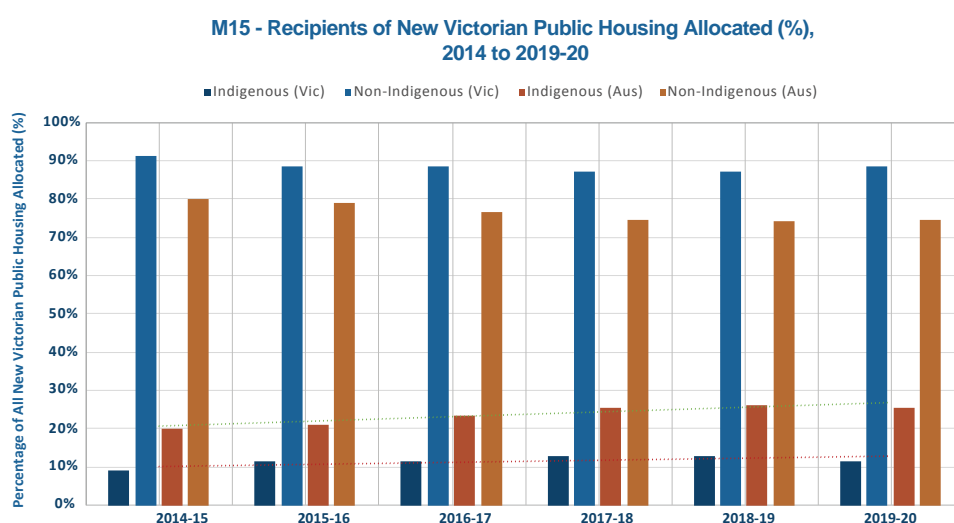
¹⁵ To ascertain the proportion we have used the population number provided by the 2016 census for Victoria (5,926,624) and for Aboriginal Victorians (47,787).

Recipients of New Victorian Public Housing Allocated (%)

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20 ¹⁶	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	12.9% ¹⁷	11.5% ¹⁸	26.0%	25.4%
Non-Indigenous	87.1%	88.5%	74.0%	74.6%

Figure 19: Recipients of new Victorian Public Housing Allocated, 2014-15 to 2019-20



Commentary

The Aboriginal share of new public housing allocations in Victoria has risen from less than 8% in 2013-14 to 11.5% in 2019-20. This is consistent with growing rates of presentation to specialist homelessness services evidenced in this report.

¹⁶ Due to the impacts of COVID-19, there were less exits from dwellings in all jurisdictions in the last 6 months of 2019-20. As a result, there was less turnover of stock and therefore a decrease in new allocations and transfers. Waiting lists have increased in some jurisdictions as a result.

¹⁷ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.4 and 18A.5 ROGS 2020

¹⁸ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.4 and 18A.5 ROGS 2020

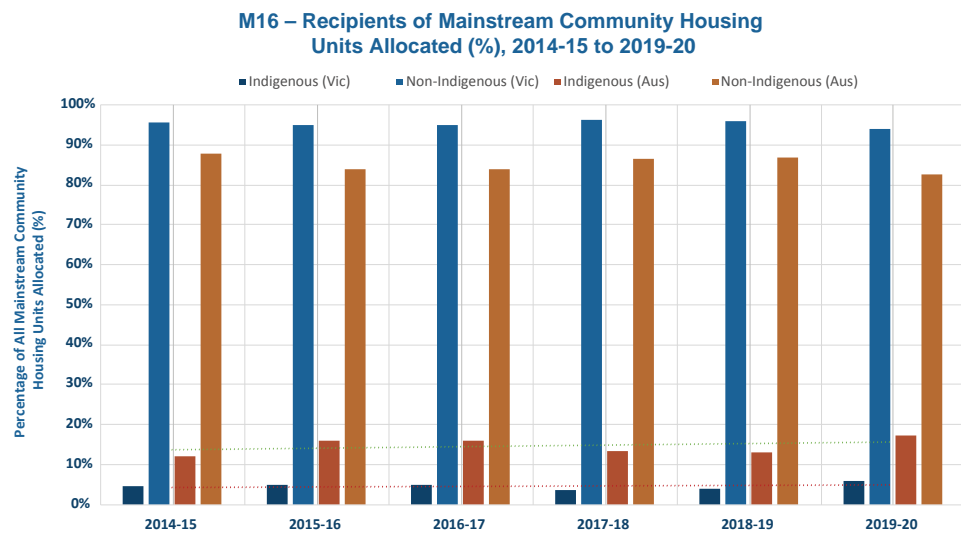
M16

Recipients of Mainstream Community Housing Units Allocated (%)

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	3.9% ¹⁹	6.0% ²⁰	13.0%	17.4%
Non-Indigenous	96.1%	94%	87%	82.6%

Figure 20: Recipients of new Victorian Community Housing Units Allocated, 2014-15 to 2019-20



Commentary

On average from 2014-15 to 2018-19, Victorian Aboriginal households have constituted between 3.7% and 4.9% per annum of Victorian households newly assisted with social housing, despite comprising more than 10% of Victoria’s homeless population. Inroads to addressing the housing needs of Aboriginal Victorians from mainstream community housing providers occurred in 2019-20 with 6% of new Victorian Community Housing Units allocated to Aboriginal Victorians, however this will continue to demand a higher priority from mainstream community housing providers.

¹⁹ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.7 ROGS 2020

²⁰ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.7 ROGS 2020

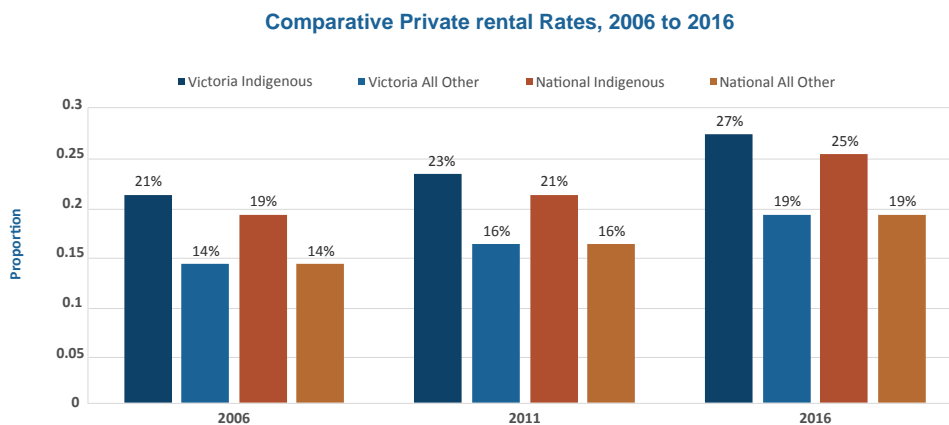
Private Rental Market (% of Population in this tenure)

Source: ABS Census

M17

	Victoria		Australia	
	2011	2016	2011	2016
Indigenous	23	27	21	25
Non-Indigenous	16	19	16	19

Figure 21: Comparative Private Rental Rate, 2006 to 2016



Commentary

From 2006 to 2016²¹ the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians engaged in the private rental market has increased by around six (6) percentage points (2006 – 21%, 2011 – 23% and 2016 – 27%) and is now eight percentage points higher than for the mainstream population. Aboriginal Victorians are increasingly exposed to a private rental market characterised by high rates of housing stress. Both lower rates of home ownership and Victoria’s smaller than average proportion of social housing contribute to this exposure. While Aboriginal participation in the private market can provide agency and mobility, if this level of exposure continues to rise, vulnerability to homelessness is also likely to escalate.

²¹ Data includes private rental of separate house, semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse and flat house or apartment. This does not include ‘other dwellings’ or ‘dwelling not stated’.

M18

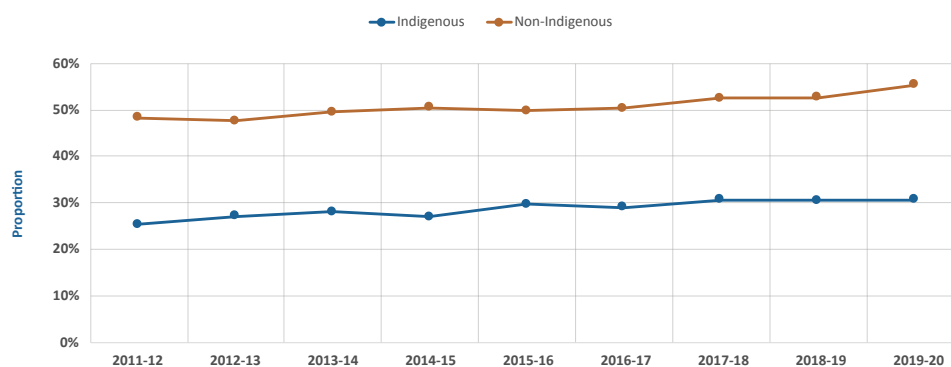
Transition from SHS into Private Market (% at Exit)

Source: AIHW

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19	2019-20
Indigenous	25.3 ²²	25.7 ²³	21.4 ²⁴	21.4 ²⁵
Non-Indigenous	43.6 ²⁶	46.6 ²⁷	42.6 ²⁸	44.2 ²⁹

Figure 22: Proportion of SHS clients in Victoria with closed support were in private or other housing at the end of support, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20

Proportion of SHS clients in Victoria with closed support were in private or other housing at the end of support, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Note. A client is considered to be living in private or other housing if, at the end of support, their dwelling type is house/townhouse/flat and their tenure type is renter or rent free in private housing, life tenure scheme, owner—shared equity or rent/buy scheme, owner—being purchased/with mortgage, owner—fully owned, or other renter or rent free.

Commentary

One in four Aboriginal Victorians enter the private rental market following their transition from the homeless support system compared with close to one in two other Victorians. This pattern is consistent with the rest of Australia and suggests both:

- Higher levels of dependence on social housing, and
- Fewer options in the private rental market available to Aboriginal people, with both costs and discrimination posing significant barriers.

Dependence on the private rental market has grown over the past decade for Aboriginal Victorians and the urgent implementation of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (funded through the Framework) is critical to addressing these system barriers.

²² 1789 of 7066 exited to the private market

²³ 1872 of 7274 exited to the private market

²⁴ 11150 of 52062 exited to the private market

²⁵ 11523 of 53838 exited to the private market

²⁶ 29845 of 68388 exited to the private market

²⁷ 33049 of 70921 exited to the private market

²⁸ 63769 of 149854 exited to the private market

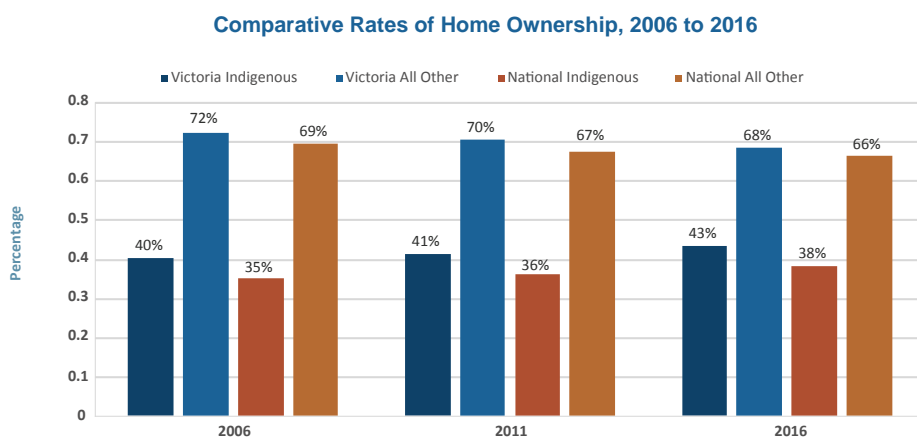
²⁹ 65861 of 149158 exited to the private market

Home Ownership Rate (% in this tenure)

Source: ABS Census

	Victoria		Australia	
	2011	2016	2011	2016
Indigenous	41	43	36	38
Non-Indigenous	70	68	67	66

Figure 23: Comparative Rates of Home Ownership, 2006 to 2016



Commentary

While during the period 2006 to 2016³⁰ the proportion of home ownership³¹ for Aboriginal Victorians has increased by around three (3) percentage points from 40% to 43%, the gap of 25 percentage points in rates of ownership between Aboriginal and other Victorians, highlights the need for a targeted approach to support Aboriginal Victorians into home ownership, reducing the reliance on social and affordable housing systems.

³⁰ Source: AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

³¹ Data includes both homes owned outright and owned with a mortgage. This does not include 'other dwellings' i.e. Caravan, Cabin/Houseboat, improvised home (including tents) or House or flat attached to a shop/office.

M20

Number Assisted by Government Shared Equity Program to Purchase a Home

Source: DTF/AHV

	Victoria		Australia	
	2018-19	2019-20	2018-19 ³²	2019-20
Indigenous	1 ³³	1	NA	NA
Non-Indigenous	160 ³⁴	85	NA	NA

Commentary

This is a new initiative for Victoria and therefore a new measure so limited trend data is available. AHV continues to work with Victoria's Department of Treasury and Finance to achieve a shared equity program that can facilitate sustainable Aboriginal home ownership into the future.

³² No comparable program at a National level

³³ Source: Homes Victoria Program – AHV records

³⁴ Victorian Government Department of Treasury and Finance

Section 3: Summary of Outcomes

Getting Better

The Government has recognised the serious challenges created by the shortfall in social and affordable housing in our state and responded with the largest investment in our state's history - \$5.3B over four years. Rates of home ownership are slowly improving for Aboriginal people in Victoria, rising from 40% in 2006 to 43% in 2016 at a time when overall rates of ownership have fallen. The vast majority of Aboriginal people seeking specialist homelessness services (SHS) assistance when experiencing family violence receive assistance. Aboriginal people's share of the highly rationed offering of new public housing lettings in our state has risen from less than 8% in 2013-14 to closer to 13% and 11.5% in the most recent reporting periods (2018-19 and 2019-20). The Government has placed a floor under social housing offerings through the Big Housing Build, quarantining 10% of housing for Aboriginal Victorians. Inroads to addressing the housing needs of Aboriginal Victorians from mainstream community housing providers occurred in 2019-20 with 6% of new Victorian Community Housing Units allocated to Aboriginal Victorians. This trend will continue to demand a higher priority from mainstream community housing providers.

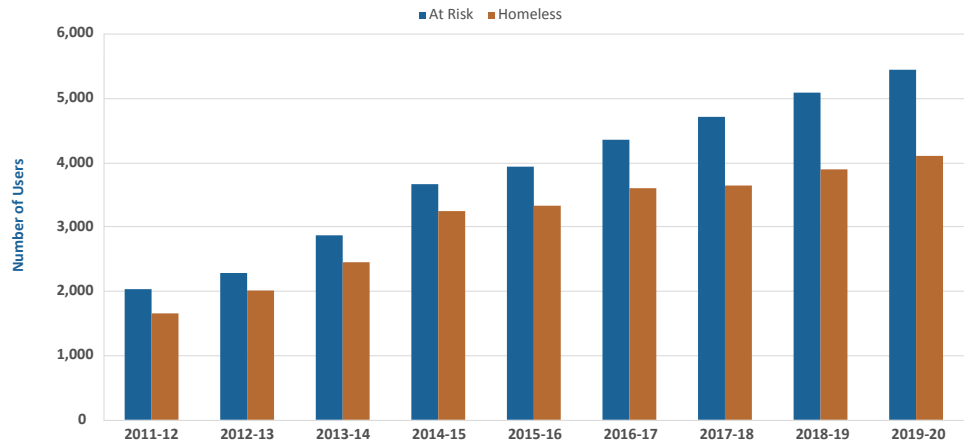
Getting Worse

A decade ago, fewer than one in ten Aboriginal people had reason to seek specialist homeless assistance. That number has grown to more than one in six (17%) and 43.1% of these people are homeless on presentation. This means, at a minimum, more than 7% of Victoria's Aboriginal population experienced homelessness in 2019-20. The number of Aboriginal Victorians presenting to SHS services homeless was 4,119 in 2019-20, up from 1,649 in 2011-12 (see Figure 24 (below)). Two in three people who enter specialist homeless services homeless are still homeless when support ends. The proportion of people with unmet mental health and unmet drug and alcohol support needs has continued to grow over the past decade, Australia-wide. Around 1 per cent of Victoria's Aboriginal population exited custody into the specialist homeless services system in 2019-20, as did over 300 vulnerable young people leaving out of home care. In both instances the highest rates in Australia. The unmet need for long-term accommodation has continued to rise over the past decade, with only around 5% of those in need being provided with such accommodation and only 31% of Aboriginal people provided or referred to such accommodation, compared with around 50% a decade ago. A higher proportion of Aboriginal people are living in private rental (27% in 2016 compared with 21% in 2006) where around half of low income families experience housing stress. Housing security for Aboriginal people in Victoria has declined overall over the past decade.



Figure 24: Number and Housing Status of Victorian Aboriginal Homeless Service Users when First Presenting to SHS

Housing Status of Victorian Aboriginal Homeless Service Users, 2011-12 to 2019-20



Too Little Data to Say

While this report provides an important start, there is much that we do not know. This report does not disaggregate data spatially or by cohorts within the Aboriginal community. We cannot be definitive about the numbers of Aboriginal Victorians who are homeless or experiencing housing stress. More work is required to unpack why such a large proportion of Aboriginal SHS clients in Victoria re-enter the system and how many Aboriginal people do not enter the system at all. The report begins a conversation on the evidence which, with goodwill, has potential to expand further.

Conclusion

This report provides baseline data that will enable us to measure progress in improving the housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. While the report card confirms high levels of homelessness and housing distress in Victoria's Aboriginal community, it is accompanied by an unprecedented financial commitment by the Government to improve housing outcomes experienced by Aboriginal Victorians. It has also committed through a new partnership with Victoria's Aboriginal leadership to do this on a basis of self-determination. Together we are determined to build a Victoria in which the vision of our framework that - *Mana-na woorn-tyeen Maar-takkort* - Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home, can be achieved.

Implementation Working Group

Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework

March 2021

Implementation Working Group Members Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework

Chair

1. The Working Group is Chaired by:
 - a. Ben Rimmer, CEO Homes Victoria, and
 - b. Darren Smith, CEO Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Members

2. The Working Group will comprise nine additional members, including:
 - a. James Atkinson, VAHHF Policy Development Steering Committee
 - b. Muriel Bamblett, CEO of an Aboriginal Homelessness Provider (VACCA), representing the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum
 - c. Luke Bo'sher, Executive Director, Strategy, Partnerships & Governance, Homes Victoria
 - d. Sherri Bruinhout, Executive Director, Housing Pathways and Outcomes, Homes Victoria
 - e. Carol Cann, Housing Manager of Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative, representing the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum
 - f. Teresa Fels, Executive Director, Service Delivery and Reform, DTF
 - g. Bonnie Matheson, A/Assistant Director, Aboriginal Affairs Policy, DPC
 - h. Rachel Oxford, A/Manager of Housing Services engaged in direct service delivery at Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, representing the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum

Advisors

3. The Working Group will include two advisors from the Secretariat, including:
 - a. Jenny Samms, Special Adviser to Aboriginal Housing Victoria
 - b. Louise Carey, Director Strategy and Performance, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Secretariat Executive Officer

