

# Reactive not preventative solutions

## What is the problem we want to fix?

*The support and housing responses for people entering, re-entering, at risk or already homeless are short-term and reactive approaches. Less emphasis is placed on longer-term person-centred solutions that are connected and preventative.*

Key drivers of homelessness in South Australia include domestic and family violence, mental health, financial crisis and substance abuse. Younger people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be homeless but, in recent years, older single women have been a rapidly growing group amongst the homeless. Homelessness has various definitions but the largest groups are those who live in overcrowded or severely overcrowded conditions. Typically these people are couch surfing or living in rooming house type arrangements with very insecure tenure. These groups grew by more than 50% between 2006 and 2016 alone.

Domestic and family violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness in South Australia. The sector has increased awareness, changed legislation to allow people to stay in their homes by removing perpetrators and increased support options via a crisis. Other causes of homelessness include mental health, substance abuse and low income, requiring a collaborative support approach from agencies to address both the homelessness and its cause.

Like much of the Nation, South Australia has had a decrease in affordability in both the rental and home ownership markets. Demand for long-term housing has increased and there is a lower number of social housing properties available. People in social housing properties are staying longer, reducing the turn-over of vacancies.

### New Public Housing Tenancies and Emergency Accommodation Expenditure



## Why is this important?

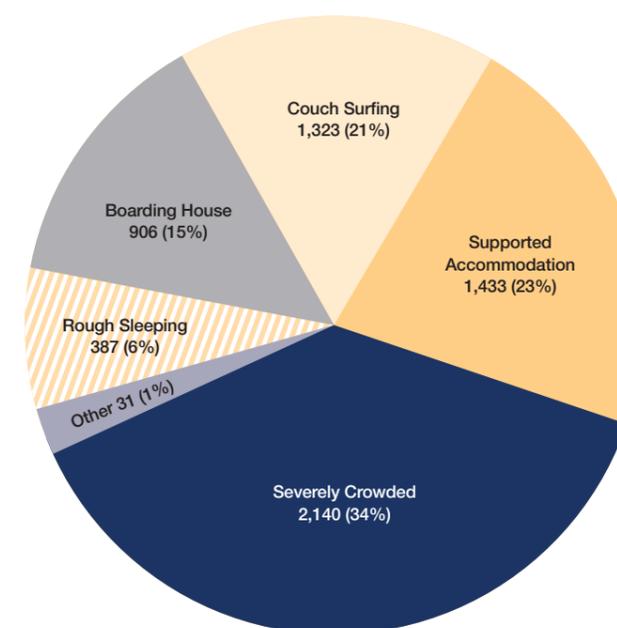
This has led to a housing system that is congested, reactive and unable to provide the right supports and the right housing options at the right times in the right places.

Without a stable home there is often reduced access to education, health and the community. This reduces the capacity to seek employment and become self-sufficient in the future. Increased homelessness requires higher levels of expenditure (primarily government funded) with less income going to the government (tax) from employment. People have reduced options for housing due to decreased affordability in the rental and ownership markets.

By being proactive and implementing solutions that address the cause of homelessness we can break patterns of instability. This includes helping people create connections with their community once housed, and continuing to provide support to stabilise them so they do not re-enter homelessness.

### 2016 SA Homelessness Estimates

Total = 6,244



## Who is impacted?

- Victims of family and domestic violence - South Australia has the second highest number of older women accessing homeless services as a result of domestic violence in Australia.
- Children and young people - 13% of homeless people are aged under 12.
- Older people - 7% of homeless people are aged 65 and over
- Aboriginal people represent 2% of the South Australian population and are overrepresented in the homelessness system (27%).
- Young people leaving an institution including guardianship
- People experiencing repeat homelessness - 5% of clients receiving specialist homelessness services had experienced repeat periods of homelessness in the previous year.
- People requiring accommodation services - In 2017/2018, 1801 (17%) of clients receiving specialist homelessness services did not receive the accommodation they needed or a referral.

### 2017/2018 SA Specialist Homelessness Service Clients who required accommodation

