



What is homelessness?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines homelessness as “when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives.”

This includes:

- Sleeping rough or in a tent or other makeshift accommodation.
- Moving from one temporary shelter to another like refuges, couch surfing or emergency accommodation.
- Living in below minimum standards such as boarding housing and caravan parks.

Why do women become homeless?

Women generally become homeless because of family violence or mental illness.

Women and female-headed households are at increased risk of homelessness as a result of their greater exposure to violence, poverty and inequality.

One in two women who seek specialist homelessness services, such as McAuley, do so because of family violence.

What is homelessness for women?

Women are ‘out of sight, out of mind’ when it comes to homelessness.

They are rarely seen sleeping on the streets.

If women don’t sleep on the streets, where are they?

- Women may be sleeping on a friend’s sofa – this is known as couch surfing.
- They may live in a car.
- Some pay very high rent and can’t afford food.
- Or they remain trapped in abusive relationships because they have nowhere to go but do not want to become homeless.

In Australia, on any given night 1 in 200 people are homeless.

In Victoria there are currently:



22,773 Victorians who are **homeless**



Nearly **10,000** are **women**



Of people sleeping rough,
302 are **women** (5%)



Of people staying in supported
accommodation, **4,105** are **women**