



CITY OF HOBART

# **AGENDA**

## **Council Meeting**

### **Open Portion**

**Monday, 3 June 2019**

**at 5:00 pm**

**Council Chamber, Town Hall**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM**

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

- 18. Homelessness and Housing - Request for Council Response ..... 3**

**The General Manager reports:**

“That in accordance with the provisions of Part 2 Regulation 8(6) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2015*, these supplementary matters are submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

Pursuant to Regulation 8(6), I report that:

- (a) information in relation to the matter was provided subsequent to the distribution of the agenda;
- (b) the matter is regarded as urgent; and
- (c) advice is provided pursuant to Section 65 of the Act.”

**18. Homelessness and Housing - Request for Council Response**  
**File Ref: F19/70871; 17-239**

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Report of the General Manager and the Director Community Life of 3 June 2019 and attachments.

Delegation: Council

**REPORT TITLE: HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING - REQUEST FOR COUNCIL RESPONSE****REPORT PROVIDED BY:** General Manager  
Director Community Life**1. Report Purpose and Community Benefit**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to request the Council to call on the State and Federal Government to deliver immediate crisis, short, medium and long term housing and associated services to support the community services sector in responding to the current housing and homelessness crisis.
- 1.2. Community Services Sector organisations including Hobart City Mission and Colony 47 have advised that they are at crisis point in delivering services to the community and are requesting that the Council assist them through advocating to the State and Federal government for immediate action. The correspondence is shown at **Attachments A and B**.

**2. Report Summary**

- 2.1. With the colder weather arriving the number of community members experiencing homelessness due to the unaffordability of housing in Hobart is becoming more visible with increasing numbers of people sleeping rough, in cars and couch surfing.
- 2.2. The growing pressures on social and affordable housing in Greater Hobart, Tasmania and across all Australian Cities has resulted in a sharp increase in housing stress and homelessness across the country.
- 2.3. It is acknowledged that the direct provision of housing and homelessness services is not the role of Local government, however it is the City's role to advocate for all members of the community and to support the Community Services Sector who operate in our city and support our most vulnerable citizens.
- 2.4. The information being provided by the Community Services Sector is that they are in a very difficult position where all crisis accommodation is at capacity, and the options for transitioning people sleeping rough into crisis and short term accommodation is extremely limited.
- 2.5. It is acknowledged that the current housing shortage needs action across the housing spectrum and that although there is a strong current focus on crisis and short term accommodation, the solutions need to also address the supply of social and affordable housing in the mid and longer term.

- 2.6. Correspondence has been received from key community sector organisations Hobart City Mission and Colony 47 advising that the City is experiencing a homeless crisis and that they are seeking the Council's support in advocating to the State and Federal governments to take immediate measures to support the community services sector to respond to the crisis.
- 2.7. Shelter Tasmania has provided advice that they would be happy to meet with the City of Hobart's General Manager to discuss housing and homelessness issues and how best to respond to the chronic issues in Hobart and more broadly. They have noted that it is important to have a coherent and systematic response across State and Local Government to ensure the most effective options are considered and implemented, and to avoid fragmented or duplicated responses – whether local, regional or state-wide.

### 3. **Recommendation**

#### ***That:***

1. ***The Council call on the State and Federal Government to deliver immediate crisis, short, medium and long term housing and associated services to support the community services sector in responding to the current housing and homelessness crisis.***
2. ***Council officers participate in and support relevant working groups and forums that will be investigating opportunities to respond to the current homelessness and housing crisis.***

### 4. **Background**

- 4.1. It is difficult to quantify in numbers the exact amount of people experiencing primarily homelessness, as a formal count of rough sleepers is not undertaken in Hobart. Anecdotally, service providers are reporting that there are approximately 120 primary homeless people in Greater Hobart at the current time.
- 4.2. The figures for homelessness (in all three tiers) across from the 2016 census data show that 1,622 Tasmanians were homeless. The advice from service providers is that this figure would have increased. The Shelter Tasmania. Fact Sheet based on the 2016 census data is shown as **Attachment C** and an Australian Institute of Health and Welfare fact sheet on Specialist Homelessness services 2017/18 in Tasmania is shown at **Attachment D**.

- 4.3. It is noted that on the morning of 3 June 2019 there were 40 people sleeping rough in tents and swags on the Domain alone. It is reported that there would be another 40 sleeping rough across Hobart CBD. It is noted that this number varies considerably with rain or extreme weather, when people temporarily locate to drier spaces if possible.
- 4.4. There has also been an increase of the number of people sleeping in cars in a range of locations across the city.
- 4.5. The three categories of homelessness are determined as follows:
- Primary homelessness - where a person has an improvised dwelling, tent or no accommodation at all; also known as 'rough sleeping'.
  - Secondary homelessness - where a person is accommodated in a hostel, shelter, refuge or another person's home on a temporary basis.
  - Tertiary homelessness - where a person is accommodated in a boarding house, shelter or hotel on a medium term basis.
- 4.6. Kate Colvin, Everybody's Home campaign spokesperson recently outlined the reasons for people becoming homelessness nationally:
- 40% due to affordability (overcrowding, evictions)
  - 30% due to family and domestic violence
  - It was noted that around 10% of homelessness could be attributed to mental health, alcohol and other drugs, gambling and released prisoners
  - 23% of those seeking support are turned away with providers being unable to meet demand
  - Increases in the cost of rental properties are being felt most at the lower end of the market, with little affordable rentals and social housing available in capital cities.
- 4.7. It is noted that according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report 2017/18, in Tasmania the reasons for clients seeking homelessness assistance are as follows:
- Housing crisis (58% compared with 39% nationally)
  - Financial difficulties (40% compared to 39% nationally)
  - Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (39% compared with 24%)

## 5. Proposal and Implementation

- 5.1. It is proposed that the Council call on the State and Federal Government to deliver immediate crisis, short, medium and long term housing and associated services to support the community services sector in responding to the current housing and homelessness crisis.

- 5.2. Council officers participate in and support relevant working groups or forums that will be investigating opportunities to respond to the current homelessness and housing crisis.

## **6. Strategic Planning and Policy Considerations**

- 6.1. The Council's Community Vision identified the importance of embracing the community members who live in and access the city. Pillar 2 is Community Inclusion, Participation and Belonging. This clearly recognises the importance of inclusion, and celebrating our diversity and including each other in City life in action 2.2.
- 6.2. The Social Inclusion Strategy also clearly identifies the importance of the fundamental right of every individual to have equal opportunity to participate socially, culturally, economically, physically, spiritually and politically in society. The exercise of these rights benefits everyone and is the fundamental building block for maintaining healthy and whole communities.
- 6.3. Social exclusion occurs when disadvantage experienced by individuals, families and communities make it difficult for them to participate in community life - these can include unemployment, low income, intergenerational poverty, addiction, low literacy or numeracy, lack of access to services, homelessness, disability, poor health, mental health issues, discrimination and/or locational disadvantage.
- 6.4. The Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2016-2019 (currently under review) also clearly articulates the role that the Council has in advocating for and supporting the most marginalised and vulnerable members of the community.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. Funding Source and Impact on Current Year Operating Result
  - 7.1.1. There are minimal direct financial impacts resulting from this report apart from potential support for forums/meetings through the provision of catering or meeting spaces funded through existing budget allocations.
- 7.2. Impact on Future Years' Financial Result
  - 7.2.1. If further support is requested by the Community Sector apart from catering, or the provision of forum/meeting space, a further report would be provided to the Council for consideration.
- 7.3. Asset Related Implications
  - 7.3.1. There are no asset related implications from this report.

**8. Legal, Risk and Legislative Considerations**

- 8.1. There are no legal, risk or legislative requirements resulting from this report.

**9. Social and Customer Considerations**

- 9.1. With the colder weather arriving the number of community members experiencing homelessness due to the unaffordability of housing in Hobart is becoming more visible with increasing numbers of people sleeping rough, in cars and couch surfing.
- 9.2. The growing pressures on social and affordable housing in Greater Hobart, Tasmania and across all Australian Cities has resulted in a sharp increase in housing stress and homelessness across the country.
- 9.3. It is acknowledged that the direct provision of housing and homelessness services is not the role of Local government, however it is the City's role to advocate for all members of the community and to support the Community Services Sector who operate in our city and support our most vulnerable citizens.
- 9.4. The information being provided by the Community Services Sector is that they are in a very difficult position where all crisis accommodation is at capacity, and the options for transitioning people sleeping rough into crisis and short term accommodation is extremely limited.
- 9.5. It is acknowledged that the current housing shortage needs action across the housing spectrum and that although there is a strong current focus on crisis and short term accommodation, the solutions need to also address the supply of social and affordable housing in the mid and longer term.

**10. Marketing and Media**

- 10.1. It is noted that the issue of homelessness within the City has been the subject of many media reports over the past few weeks with increasing community concern as winter approaches and an expectation that all levels of government have a role to play in addressing this issue.
- 10.2. It is acknowledged that there may be community members who vocalise that the provision of housing and homelessness services is not the role of Local Government. However, in line with the Social Inclusion Strategy, it is considered that it is the City's role to advocate for all members of the community and to support the Community Services Sector who operate in our city to assist our most vulnerable citizens.

**11. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

11.1. In the preparation of this report, consultation has taken place with John Stuble, Chief Executive Officer Hobart City Mission; Danny Sutton, Chief Executive Officer Colony 47; Pattie Chugg, Executive Officer Shelter Tasmania; Don Mccrae, Salvation Army; Manager Inclusive, Resilient and Creative Communities; and Community Programs Coordinator.

**12. Delegation**

12.1. This report is delegated to the Council for consideration.

*As signatory to this report, I certify that, pursuant to Section 55(1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hold no interest, as referred to in Section 49 of the Local Government Act 1993, in matters contained in this report.*



N D Heath  
**GENERAL MANAGER**



Tim Short  
**DIRECTOR COMMUNITY LIFE**

Date: 3 June 2019  
File Reference: F19/70871; 17-239

Attachment A: Correspondence from Colony 47 ↓  
Attachment B: Correspondence from Hobart City Mission ↓  
Attachment C: Shelter Tas Fact Sheet - Homelessness in Tasmania 2018 ↓  
Attachment D: Specialist Homelessness Services 2017-18: Tasmania ↓

**Subject:** Emergency Support for Rough Sleepers in Greater Hobart

Dear Danielle

Following our discussion today, I would like to confirm that Colony 47 is actively working with a number of clients who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness in greater Hobart area.

The traditional response for these clients is the crisis accommodation system through shelters that are targeted at meeting the needs of specific target groups.

We understand that a number of shelters are experiencing high levels of demand and are not always able to meet the needs of all of the clients seeking support.

On that basis, Colony 47 is looking to provide additional immediate safe and fit for purpose options for people who are experiencing homelessness.

It should be noted that safe and fit for purpose accommodation will depend on the specific needs of individual clients and families.

Colony 47 would welcome the support of the Hobart City Council in terms of identifying options and funding sources that may be available to address these immediate need.

Regards

Danny Sutton  
**Chief Executive**  
**Colony 47**

Hi Kimbra,

Hobart City Mission provides emergency assistance in addition to Housing Connect accommodation support services. We continue to see an increase in the level of demand for emergency assistance. For every two people we are able to provide assistance to, we turn another one away. Increasingly we are being approached by "the working poor" seeking assistance. That is people who are employed, earning a reasonable wage, who simply are not able to make ends meet. Dramatically higher rent levels are a significant factor in this, as well as low income growth rates.

What is possibly of even greater concern is that we are hearing more and more stories of people "couch surfing": living with family or friends because they simply cannot find properties to rent, let alone at affordable rates. This is starting to impact every day, middle class families, which we have not seen before.

The reality is we don't see this situation improving any time soon, but in fact worsening. It will be some years before the building industry is able to address the dramatic and ever increasing shortage of housing in Tasmania, and particularly in the greater Hobart area.

We are thus keen to support the development of short-term and medium-term housing solutions to help address the growing need until such time as a longer-term, permanent housing solution is reached.

We look forward to working with the Council in the near future to address this present and growing need.

*John*

**John A. Stubley**  
FCA GAICD

Chief Executive Officer  
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## SHELTER TAS FACT SHEET - HOMELESSNESS IN TASMANIA 2018

Updated to reflect Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016

### Why Homelessness is a Problem

Homelessness is a serious problem in Tasmania that affects people across all ages.

For many people homelessness is temporary, until they are able to recover and stabilise their situation. For others, homelessness can be longer term and difficult to break out of.

Homelessness doesn't just cost individuals, it costs society as well as. Studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on housing a homeless person governments can save between \$2 - \$13 in health and justice costs alone.<sup>i</sup>

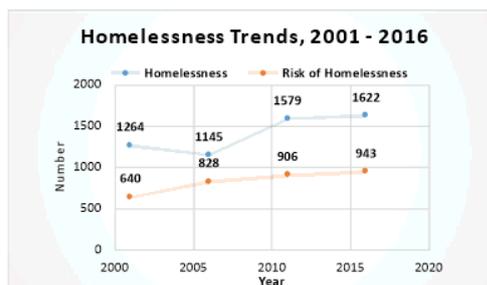
**Having a secure and affordable home is a most basic human need and a human right. It also makes good economic sense.**

### About homelessness in Tasmania

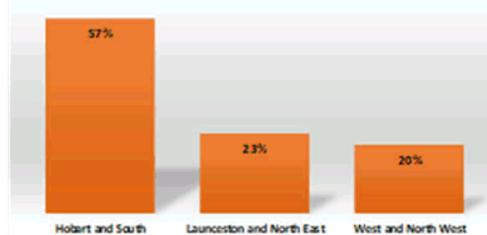
Homelessness has been increasing across the State for over a decade. Census 2016 showed:<sup>ii</sup>

- 1,622 Tasmanians are homeless. Over half are in the south, mainly in Hobart (57%).
- More males than females experience homelessness (58% males, 42% females).
- Most homelessness is hidden. Only 8% of homeless people sleep rough (137 people).
- Nearly 4 in 10 homeless people are younger than 25 years (38%). Of these, 48% couch surf or live with severe overcrowding, and 44% stay in supported accommodation.
- Nearly 2 in 10 homeless people are older than 55 years (18%).
- 1 in 10 homeless people are Indigenous (10.7%).

### What Census 2016 Shows:<sup>ii</sup>



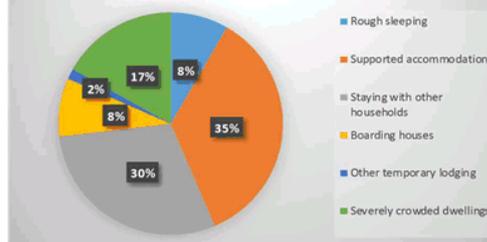
### Homelessness Across Tasmania, 2016



### Age groups affected, 2016



### Where people stay, 2016



**What causes homelessness?**

Homelessness has many causes, which can include a lack of affordable housing; loss of employment; family breakdown and domestic violence; transition from care or custody; mental health issues; and substance abuse.

More than 74,000 Tasmanians live below the poverty line.<sup>iii</sup> As housing costs rise, it is increasingly difficult for low income Tasmanians to find a home they can afford. Lack of affordable housing is the most common reason for people seeking help from homelessness services (64% of all requests).

As well as being a major cause of homelessness, the lack of affordable housing keeps people in homelessness for longer. More people are also experiencing repeated episodes of homelessness, with returning clients now outnumbering new clients. Extended and repeated homelessness increases the support needs of clients.

Homelessness disproportionately affects young people and children, who now represent 52% of all homelessness services clients. A real concern is that children who experience homelessness have an increased risk of becoming homeless later in life.<sup>iv</sup>

**Data about the use of homelessness services in Tasmania<sup>v</sup>**

- Homelessness services assisted 7,789 Tasmanians in 2016-17
- Services are unable to keep pace with growing demand. The average number of daily unmet requests for assistance in the last year has increased to 25 requests (up from 21 in the previous year)
- The average length of support provided has increased to 98 days per client (a 22% increase on the previous year)
- 43% of requests for help are from families with children
- On average each day 14 requests from families with children go unmet (a 25% increase on the previous year)
- Young people and children are the fastest growing cohort of homeless people:
  - 1 in 2 requests for help are from young people under 25 years (52% up from 32% in the previous year)
  - 1 in 5 requests involve children under 10 years (20%)

**Homelessness Support Services**

A network of Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) across Tasmania help house and support people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. These services employ highly skilled and experienced staff well equipped to provide support.

Assistance is provided with finding housing and accommodation, including emergency and supervised accommodation; with issues of domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness; and support to help people maintain their existing tenancies or to (re)establish themselves in independent living. SHS services also provide information and advice, advocacy and financial supports.

Housing Connect is the first point of contact for help by people in housing stress, or who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in Tasmania.

**For assistance call: 1800 800 588**

### What is needed?

Homelessness can be ended by providing access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing, along with the support needed to help people stay housed. A combination of National and State level approaches is needed, including:

- An increased supply of public and community housing to provide rental housing that will remain affordable in the long term.
- Increased investment in Tasmanian homelessness and crisis accommodation support.
- A strategic approach that integrates forward planning for housing with the other key Government portfolio areas (including population growth, land use planning and economic development), in collaboration with the community and development sectors.
- Strengthening and broadening of Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy.
- A review of the Residential Tenancy Act, 1997 to improve housing security for tenants.
- A National Housing Plan to increase the supply of targeted affordable housing and social housing.

Further information is available in [Shelter Tasmania's Budget Submission 2018-19](#)

## Housing ends homelessness

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### ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> Bennett V, Young A (2013). *Cost Benefit Analysis of the RESOLVE Program*. Mission Australia. Brisbane; Witte, E. 2017 'The case for investing in last resort housing', MSSl Issues Paper No. 10, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, The University of Melbourne; Wood, L., Flatau, P., Zaretsky, K., Foster, S., Vallesi, S. and Miscenko, D. (2016) *What are the health, social and economic benefits of providing public housing and support to formerly homeless people?*, AHURI Final Report No. 265, AHURI, Melbourne

<sup>ii</sup> Homelessness Estimates, Census 2016

<sup>iii</sup> Based on Census 2011 and NATSEM (2013) Poverty, Social Exclusion and Disadvantage in Australia, prepared for UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families. Canberra.

<sup>iv</sup> Mission Australia (2016). *Home & Away*.

<sup>v</sup> AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection Data 2013/14-2016/17



Australian Government  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## Specialist homelessness services 2017-18: Tasmania

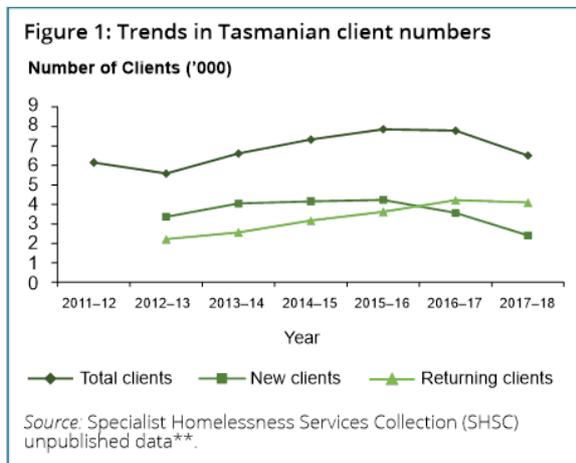
Homelessness can profoundly affect a person's mental and physical health, their education and employment opportunities, and their ability to fully participate in society. Governments across Australia fund a range of specialist services to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) deliver services for specific groups (such as people experiencing domestic and family violence and young people) as well as more generic services for people in housing crisis.

### How many people were assisted?

One in 80 people in Tasmania (Tas) received homelessness assistance, higher than the national rate (1 in 85). The top 3 reasons for clients seeking assistance were:

- housing crisis (58%, compared with 39% nationally)
- financial difficulties (40%, compared with 39%)
- inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (39%, compared with 24%).

On average, 28 requests for assistance went unmet each day.



\*\*Note: Data for 2011-12 to 2016-17 have been adjusted for non-response. Due to improvements in rates of agency participation and SLK validity, 2017-18 data are not weighted. The removal of weighting does not constitute a break in time series and weighted data from 2011-12 to 2016-17 are comparable with unweighted data for 2017-18. For further information, please refer to the Technical notes.

### Quick facts

- **6,508 clients** were assisted by services located in Tasmania, representing 2% of the national Specialist Homelessness Services population (288,795 total clients).
- **53% were homeless on first presentation**, higher than the national rate (43%).
- **84% of clients at risk of homelessness** were assisted to maintain housing.
- **Almost half (46%) of clients who were homeless** were assisted into housing.



Table 1: Tasmanian client characteristics, 2017-18

		Tas	Australia
Sex (%)	Male	46	39
	Female	54	61
Indigenous (%)	Major cities	2	62
	Inner regional	88	23
Remoteness (%)	Outer regional	10	11
	Remote and very remote	—	5
Living arrangements (%)	Living alone	41	30
	One parent with child/ren	29	35
	Couple with child/ren	9	12
	Couple without child/ren	4	5
Labour force (%)	Other family or group	17	18
	Employed	7	12
Education status (%)	Unemployed	45	48
	Not in labour force	48	40
Education status (%)	Education/training	18	22
	Not in education/training	82	78
Median length of support (days)		69	39
Median length of accommodation (nights)		36	32
Proportion receiving accommodation (%)		46	29

— nil or rounded to zero  
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.  
Sources: SHSC National and Tas supplementary tables 2017-18.

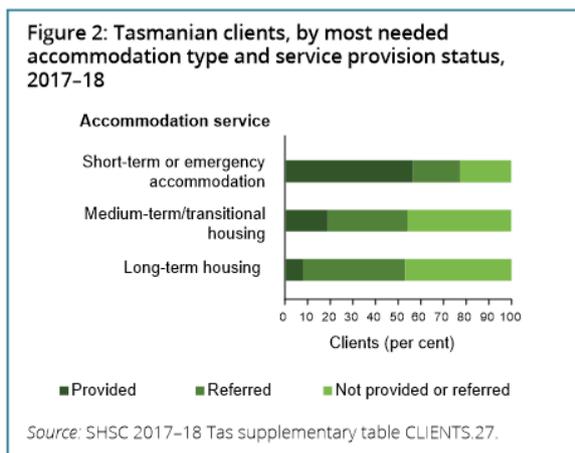


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### Accommodation services

A greater proportion of Tasmanian clients needed accommodation compared with the national SHS population (92% and 56%, respectively).



### Client groups of interest

Most service use rates in Tasmania were lower in 2017-18 compared with the previous year, with higher rates reported for some priority groups, including young people presenting alone.

Table 2: Client rate per 10,000, by priority group

	Tasmania		Australia	
	2016-17	2017-18	2016-17	2017-18
All clients	150.5	124.9	119.1	117.4
Indigenous	377.4	326.6	813.9	802.7
Young people presenting alone (15-24)	22.9	26.1	17.4	17.6
Older people (55 and over)	10.7	10.9	9.7	9.8
Domestic and family violence	43.9	35.0	47.4	49.2
Disability	9.7	4.8	4.5	3.2
Mental health	56.1	56.0	32.0	32.9
Exiting custodial arrangements	4.6	4.5	3.4	3.4
Leaving care	5.0	5.1	2.9	2.8
Children on protection orders	3.0	1.9	3.6	3.5
Drug/alcohol use	16.3	16.3	11.3	11.0

Notes

- Crude rates are used except for Indigenous rates which are directly age-standardised (see online technical information).
  - Minor adjustments in rates may occur between publications reflecting revision of the estimated resident population by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Sources: SHSC National and Tas supplementary tables 2016-17 and 2017-18\*\*.

### Housing outcomes

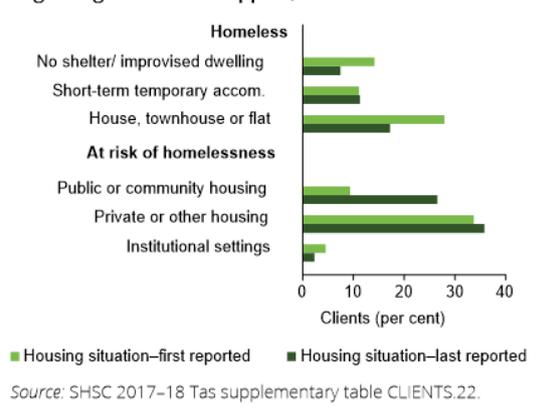
Housing outcomes are described for clients whose support had ended and housing situation known.

Of the nearly 2,000 clients who began support homeless, 46% (over 900 clients) were assisted into housing. Of these clients, 49% (or around 450 clients) were housed in public or community housing, while 48% (or around 450 clients) were housed in private or other housing.

Of the almost 1,900 clients who began support housed but at risk of homelessness, 84% were assisted to maintain housing. Of these clients at risk:

- 270 (70%) of those in public or community housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 16% (60 clients) were assisted into private or other housing
- 860 (64%) of those in private or other housing were assisted to remain in their tenancy and a further 21% (around 280) were assisted into public or community housing.

Figure 3: Tasmanian clients, by housing situation at beginning and end of support, 2017-18



### More information

More information is available from <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-2017-18/contents/contents>>.

Specific information on Tasmania is available from <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-2017-18/data>>

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