

FULLY-FUND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

Australia faces an acute crisis of homelessness, where over 100,000 people are without a roof over their head on any given night. This is shameful and entirely preventable.

The Greens will tackle homelessness by building one million public and community homes over 20 years and by fully-funding frontline homelessness services so they do not have to turn away anyone seeking shelter and support.

THE GREENS WILL:

- ▲ **Tackle the homelessness crisis through a fivefold increase to funding for homelessness support services, with a boost of \$550 million per year and indexed to CPI to ensure it never falls behind again.**
- ▲ **Guarantee the increased homelessness funding for ten years so service providers can have certainty**
- ▲ **Develop a National Housing and Homelessness Strategy**

We are in a homelessness crisis that disproportionately harms older women, survivors of domestic violence, First Nations and LGBTQIA+ people, and refugees and migrants.

Hundreds of thousands of people seek support from specialist homelessness services each year and the numbers of people being turned away are increasing. In 2020–21, Specialist Homelessness Services provided support to almost 278,300 people.¹ A third of people who needed assistance from these services were told there were not enough beds.² The situation is bad and getting worse, fast.

Older women are the fastest growing group of people experiencing homelessness, with homelessness in women over 55 growing by 31% in the last census.³ The number of older women seeking Specialist

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Specialist Homelessness Services: Annual Report 2020-21*

<<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/summary>>

² A total of around 114,000 people were turned away when they approached services for assistance in 2020–21, which is 18,700 more than in 2019–20. See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Specialist Homelessness Services: Annual Report 2020-21*

³ ABS, 2018

Homelessness Services has also risen steadily in the last decade⁴ and most women report being on Government support payments when they seek specialist support⁵.

We know homelessness and housing insecurity are not inevitable, but the result of deliberate public policy choices made by governments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw hundreds of thousands of people lifted out of poverty overnight, thanks to the JobSeeker COVID supplement. Similarly, governments mobilised across the country to provide people sleeping rough with safe, secure places to sleep, and implemented protections for people suffering rental and mortgage stress. This shows when there is political will to end homelessness, we can and will be able to house everyone safely.

The Greens plan will build one million new sustainable, accessible and affordable homes, and increase funding to provide specialist homelessness services, more beds for people experiencing crisis, or in need of respite or supported transitional housing. The Greens will:

- ▲ Increase base funding for homelessness services through the National Housing & Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) by \$550m a year, which will be indexed. This is more than a fivefold increase per year to the dedicated Commonwealth funding for homelessness services in the NHHA, which was only \$129m in 2020-21.⁶
- ▲ Develop a National Housing and Homelessness Strategy aimed at ensuring everyone's right to a home and assuring appropriate support, including providing early intervention programs for people who are at risk of homelessness.
- ▲ Build one million new publicly-owned, affordable, accessible, high-quality and sustainable homes over 20 years that will obliterate projected public housing waiting lists.
- ▲ Strengthen renters' rights with nationally consistent standards to prohibit no-grounds evictions, cap rent increases, ensure appropriate tenancy protections for victim-survivors of domestic violence in all states and territories, and boost funding for tenancy advocacy services with \$30m per year.

In addition to these measures, the Greens will address the systemic drivers of homelessness through a guaranteed livable income, tackling the gender pay and superannuation gaps, earlier access to the Age Pension, and preventing family and domestic violence.

⁴ Australian Association of Gerontology (2018) Background Paper: Older women who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. <https://www.aag.asn.au/documents/item/2234>

⁵ "A high proportion (79.5 %) of women 15 years of age and over who accessed Australian Specialist Homelessness Services in 2016-17 reported that their main source of income was government payments, including Newstart allowance (22.4 %), Disability Support Pension (12.3 %), and the age pension (2.4 %) - See <https://www.aag.asn.au/documents/item/2234>

⁶ See the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement | Department of Social Services, Australian Government (dss.gov.au) <https://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support-programs-services-homelessness/national-housing-and-homelessness-agreement>

PAYING FOR OUR PLAN

By making billionaires and big corporations pay their fair share of tax and winding back handouts to big polluters, we can build a better life for all of us.

1 in 3 big corporations pays no tax and many big corporations and billionaires send their profits offshore tax free.

The Greens will tax billionaires with a new 'billionaires tax', require big corporations making excessive profits to pay a 'corporate super-profits tax' and axe billions of dollars in handouts to the coal, oil and gas giants that are driving the climate crisis.

These measures have all been costed by the independent Parliamentary Budget Office.

When big corporations and billionaires pay their fair share, everyone can have the services they need for a better life.

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES:

greens.org.au/platform