



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Q Shelter demands new National Housing Strategy in response to rising homelessness

The state's peak body for housing and homelessness services, Q Shelter, has called for a new National Housing Strategy in response to an alarming jump in the rate of homelessness.

New Census data shows that between 2011 and 2016, the number of Australians experiencing homelessness has soared to 116,427 people – an increase of 14%.

In Queensland, there's been an increase in the rate of homelessness from around 43 to 46 persons per 10,000 people.

Q Shelter's Executive Director, Leone Crayden, said that there were worrying trends arising from this new Census data.

"We're seeing an acceleration in the rate of homelessness for Queenslanders over 55 years of age." Ms Crayden said.

"We're ranked third in the country for the highest number of people experiencing homelessness, and second for the highest increase in the rate of homelessness."

Q Shelter said they were particularly concerned about the rapid growth in the number of people staying with friends and relatives, in boarding houses, or living in severely overcrowded conditions.

"These figures suggest that there's a shrinking pool of longer term secure accommodation for those experiencing homelessness. People have no choice but to live in overcrowded housing, stay with friends or relatives – the alternative is rough sleeping." Ms Crayden added.

Q Shelter said it was concerning to see homelessness increase despite record new housing supply and strong economic growth in the state.

"More housing supply through the private market isn't making a dent in rates of homelessness." Ms Crayden said.

"Continued economic growth isn't making a difference to rates of homelessness either."

"Queensland's housing and homelessness sector are doing the best they can in these circumstances, but they're now under even more pressure and need help."

"There's been some dips in regional homelessness, but metropolitan areas like Cairns and Brisbane have seen massive jumps in homelessness, which is putting pressure on housing and homelessness services."

Q Shelter said that the Commonwealth Government needs to develop a National Housing and Homelessness Strategy to tackle this issues



“When we’re faced with societal issues, we develop National Strategies to fix them.” Ms Crayden said.

“We’ve got a National Strategy on Disability, National Strategy on Drugs, a National Strategy on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, and a National Strategy on Youth – why not on housing and homelessness?”

“When we’ve got 116,000 people experiencing homelessness and sliding home ownership rates, where’s our National Housing and Homelessness Strategy?”

ACOSS are calling for a similar strategy, as is Mission Australia, Life without Barriers, Homelessness Australia, and housing and homelessness services from across the country.

“Our questions for the Prime Minister is this – how bad does homelessness have to get before we get a National Strategy to tackle it?”

ENDS

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Q Shelter’s Executive Director, Leone Crayden, is available for interviews on the new ABS data.

Queensland Key Statistics – Census 2016

Type	2011	2016	Change
Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out	1,584	1,736	+152
Persons in supported accommodation for the homeless	3,787	3,722	-65
Persons staying temporarily with other households	4,311	4,796	+485
Persons living in boarding houses	2,987	3,600	+613
Persons in other temporary lodgings	196	211	+15
Persons living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	6,187	7,601	+1414



Regional Key Statistics – Census 2016

Area	2011	2016	Change
Regional Areas			
Queensland- Outback	2104	1892	-10%
Mackay-Isaac Whitsunday	860	695	-19%
Central Queensland	1330	929	-30%
Local Government Areas			
Townsville	918	806	-15%
Charters Towers	38	43	+11%
Gold Coast	1340	1708	+27%
Brisbane	4189	5813	+38%
Cairns	950	1357	+43%
Burdekin	40	88	+120%

Queensland Shelter

Queensland Shelter is the state's peak body for the housing and homelessness sector.

Founded over thirty years ago, Queensland Shelter is a member-based organisation funded by the Queensland Government.

They work with both the state government and housing and homelessness sector to reform, grow, engage, and build the capacity of the housing and homelessness sector.