



Facts Vs Perceptions on homelessness in Australia

Did you know?

Homelessness is a Human Rights issue

A human rights approach departs from a welfare approach to homelessness by demonstrating that homeless people are not merely objects of charity, seeking help and compassion. Like all Australians, they are individuals who are entitled under international law to protection and promotion of their human rights. (*Australian Human Rights Commission*)

What is the Reality?

On any given night, there are 105,000 homeless Australians, 20, 5111 of which are in Victoria and 63% of 34 or younger (Census 2006)

54.8% of organisations working with the homeless reported that they are struggling to meet the growing demand for their services.

47% increase (between 2009 and 2010) in the number of people being turned away from financial support/emergency relief (Across Community Sector Survey, 2010)

Who are they?

- More women than men
 - Indigenous people are overrepresented
 - One in every 3 is a child
 - Half of all people using homelessness services are parents with children
 - The most common cause of homelessness is domestic violence
 - 2/3 of children presenting at services are with their mothers escaping domestic violence
 - Indigenous people are overrepresented (while they make up 2% of the Australian population, they make up 18% of people in homelessness services)
 - Problematic drug and alcohol use and mental health are issues, but they are **not** the most common issues. (* Problematic drug and alcohol use is an issue in 12% of periods of support. Mental health issues are an issue in about 19% of periods of support)
- (Data from service providers)

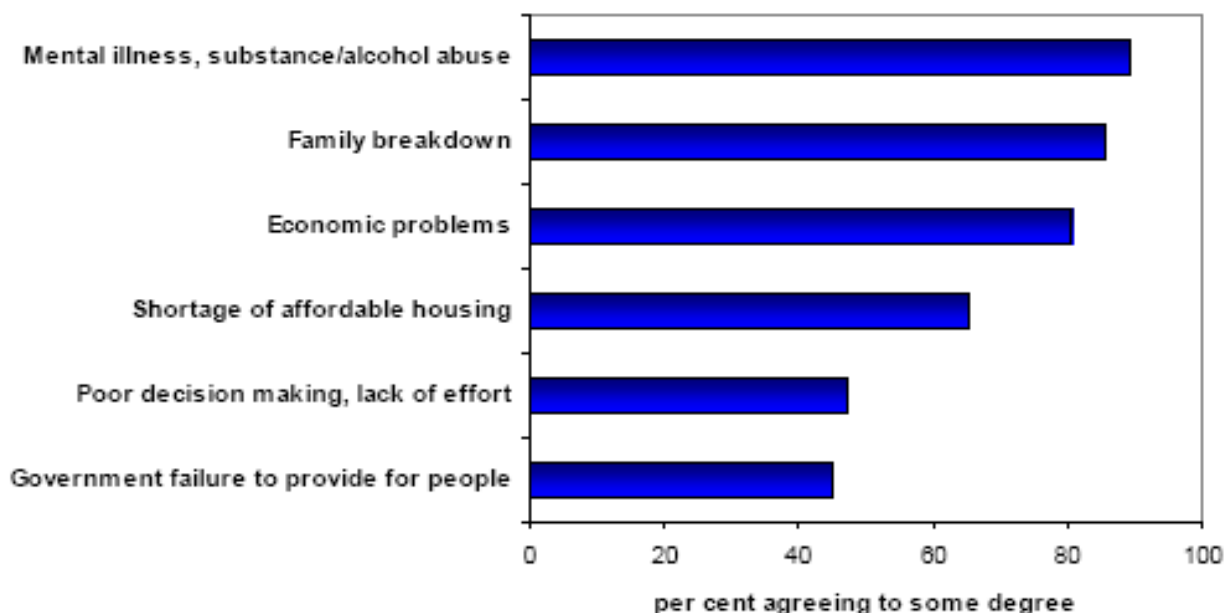


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Public perceptions of homelessness and reality do not line up.

Hanover Welfare Services Research unit asked two questions in the 2007 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AUSSA):

1) What are the causes of homelessness?



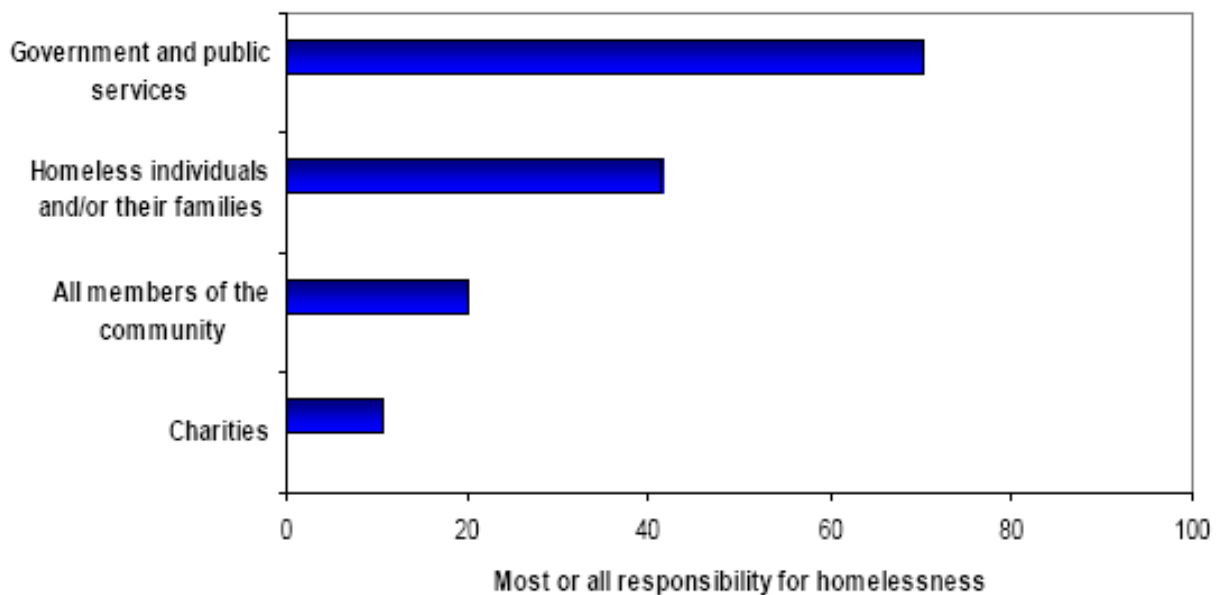
Public perceptions on the causes of homelessness don't line up with the facts, in particular beliefs about mental health and drug and alcohol abuse.

- AuSSA conducted by ANU
- National mailout survey
- 2769 Australian respondents



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2) Who are responsible for solving homelessness?



People continue to strongly believe it is the sole problem of the individual, their family and the government. There is a lack of personal engagement or community involvement with the issue.

But homelessness IS a human rights issue and since human rights belongs to everyone; shouldn't it be our responsibility as a community to ensure that the rights of all people are respected and protected?

How? By fostering a greater sense of responsibility and community involvement, breaking incorrect stereotypes by education and empowering those who experience homelessness to have a voice.

We hope you will join Street Stories with our aim to empower our guides by providing an opportunity to engage and educate the community through their stories with a unique and entertaining walking tour of an unseen Melbourne!



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Do you want to find out more information about homelessness in Australia?

Hanover Welfare Services

The above research presented has been conducted by an independent welfare agency called Hanover. Hanover provides housing and support services to people experiencing homelessness or housing crisis at 7 sites across Melbourne. They also actively conduct research and advocacy work. Find out more: www.hanover.org.au

Council to Homeless People

Street Stories guides have been found through a program by Council to Homeless People (CHP). CHP is the peak Victorian body representing individuals and organisations with a stake or interest in homelessness. Their mission is to work towards ending homelessness through leadership in policy, advocacy and sector development. Find out more: www.chp.org.au

References:

Australian Government FaHCSIA (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) (2011), Australian Social Policy Journal no.10

Australian Human Rights Commission

Batterham, D.,(2007) 'Understanding Public Perceptions and Attitudes to homelessness in Australia', Hanover Welfare Services.