



2 August 2021

## **Mortality average of 50 years for those experiencing homelessness** ***A third of premature deaths avoidable***

The Salvation Army is hoping this National Homelessness Week (August 1-7) will draw attention to the alarming reduction in life expectancy of those without stable housing.

New research has shown being homeless multiplies the risk of early death between three and seven times, to an unacceptable national average of 50 years. Even more distressing, a third of such premature deaths have been found to be preventable, the result of illnesses that are amenable to treatment.

The findings, sponsored by The Salvation Army, Micah Projects Queensland, Jesuit Social Services, Sacred Heart Mission, Wintringham and Bolton Clarke and The Council for Homeless Persons (CHP) appear in the CPH's August 2021 edition of its *Parity* publication.

"These alarming statistics reveal what we have seen in our work with the homeless over the years and that is that secure and safe housing is literally a lifesaver," Dr Jed Donoghue, The Salvation Army's General Manager of Homelessness says.

"We agree with the report's findings that homelessness must be recognised as a threat to health, just as smoking and asbestos now is. Effective responses to this problem need to be identified and actioned immediately to stop any further unnecessary and tragic early deaths."

The Salvation Army believes everyone deserves a safe place to call home yet, according to the last Census, (2016, ABS):

- 116,000 Australians classified as homeless
- For every rough sleeper on streets, park benches, in public toilets, tents and under bridges, there are there are 13 others sleeping in a car, couch surfing, in refuges or transitional houses or in severely overcrowded housing.

The Salvation Army is the leading provider of homelessness services in Australia. In 2019-20, The Salvation Army's homelessness services assisted more than 41,000 people who were at risk of or experiencing homelessness.\*

The Salvos' vast network of social services enables people experiencing homelessness to access accommodation, case management services, advocacy, financial assistance, counselling and meals, as well as connection and referral to other specialist services.

Some reasons for those presenting to The Salvation Army's homelessness services include:

- Housing crisis (imminent eviction) – 26.5%
- Domestic or family violence – 13.7%
- Financial difficulties – 12.2%
- Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling – 11.1%
- Transition from custodial arrangements – 5.5%

The Salvation Army's theme for National Homelessness Week this year is 'Unlocking the door to 'home''. If you or someone you know is experiencing homelessness and needs support, or if you would like more information about The Salvos in National Homelessness Week, visit <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/homelessness-support-services/national-homelessness-week/>

**ENDS**

For more information, please contact The Salvation Army's Media Relations Department on (02) 94663143

\* The Salvation Army Annual Report, 2019-20