

A snapshot of people experiencing homelessness and/or in housing stress in Newcastle

People experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness and/or in housing stress, are among Australia's most socially and economically disadvantaged.

Homelessness can include sleeping rough, couch surfing, and staying in boarding houses, unstable or overcrowded accommodation. The drivers of homelessness can include a shortage of stable and affordable housing, long term unemployment, family domestic sexual violence, family breakdown, mental ill-health and alcohol and other drug misuse. There are different ways of estimating and measuring people who are homeless and insecure housing:

- Just over **1,800 people** in Newcastle (local government area) were assisted by **Specialist Homelessness Services**¹ in 2022-23 - this captures just the first contact for the financial year, not subsequent support periods or number of services involved at each contact
- In 2022-23, the highest numbers of people engaged with Specialist Homelessness Services were in Newcastle-Cooks Hill (475), Shortland-Jesmond (262) and Mayfield-Warabrook (195)
- All homeless persons, Newcastle LGA 2021 - **1,081**²

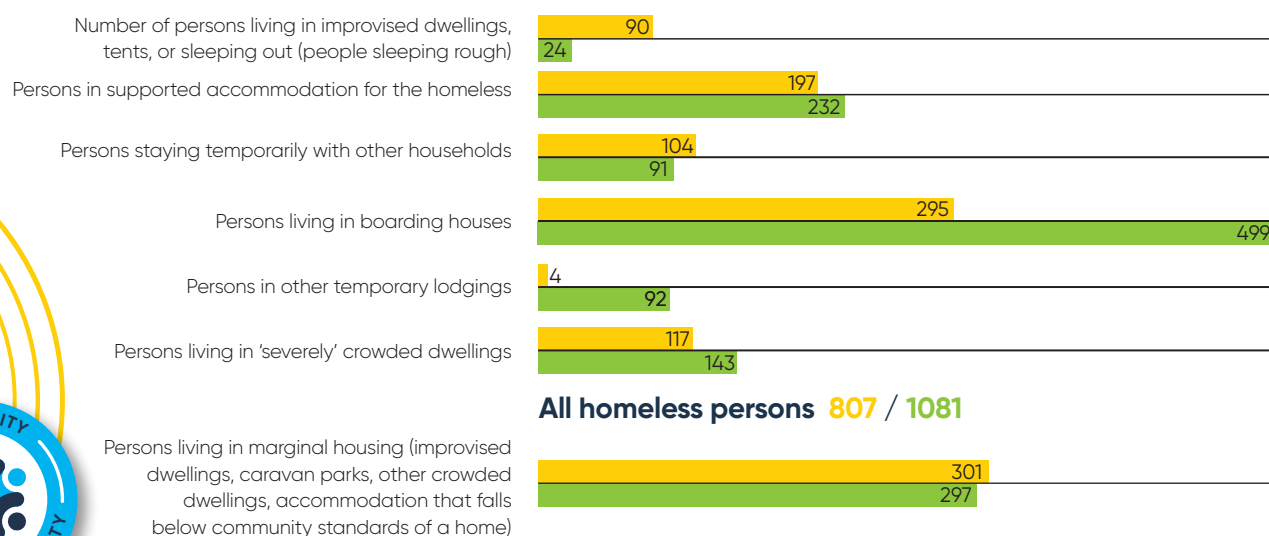


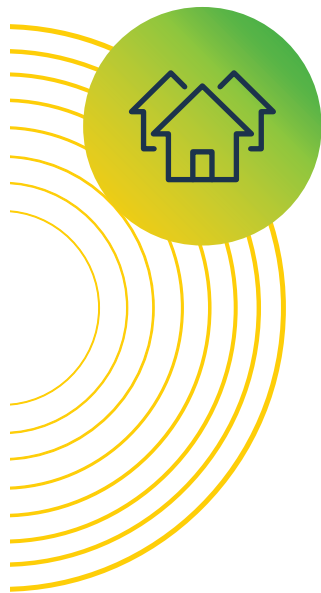
Of the 1,801 individuals homeless in Newcastle in 2021:

- Just under **200** were children and youth under 19 years of age
- Just over **150** were aged over 55 years
- Just over **100** were Indigenous Australians
- **64/36%** male and female split aged over 20 years
- **277** were employed

What types of homelessness are people experiencing?³

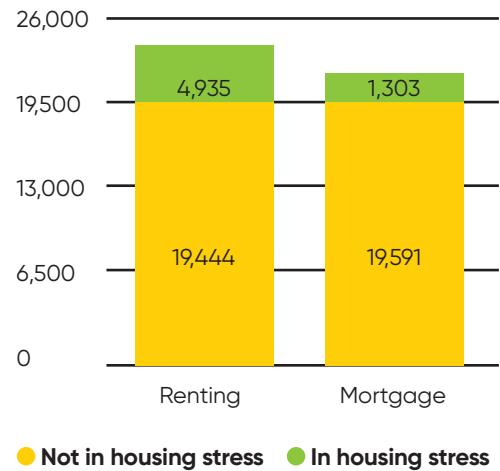
● 2016 ● 2021





Housing stress⁴

- Of the 20,700 households in private rentals in Newcastle, 4,935 (23.8%) were in rental stress in 2021. This is lower than the Regional NSW 2021 average (28.1%). And, the 20,894 households with a mortgage in Newcastle, 1,303 (6.2%) were in mortgage stress in 2021. This is lower than the Regional NSW average (8.4%)⁵.
- Housing stress is one method of quantifying housing need, based predominantly on Census data; a tangible measure of how many households in an area may be in financial difficulties. If many households are in housing stress, it indicates that housing is unaffordable, but many people may have a necessity to live in the area, and so are paying this anyway.



Social Housing Need - in the Newcastle area⁶



Affordable Housing Need

- Just under 4,000 households needed affordable housing in Newcastle in 2021. This represented 5.8% of the area's total 68,811 households, slightly higher than 5.0% for Regional NSW⁷. In Newcastle, 'families' (941 households) were the household type most in need of affordable housing. Figures for Newcastle's affordable housing need is the aggregate of the following groups: Homeless, marginally housed, very low-, low- and moderate-income households in long-term rental stress. These groups/households have difficulty accessing market housing or requiring housing assistance in the private rental market to avoid rental stress over the long term (greater than a year)⁸.

In the Newcastle area, in the 5 years ending 2023⁹

- Medium dwelling purchase prices have increased - house prices by an average of 6.6% p.a in Newcastle (9.3% p.a increase in Regional NSW), and unit prices have increased by an average of 6.6% p.a (7.8% p.a increase in Regional NSW)
- Medium dwelling rental prices have increased - house rents by an average of 6.6% p.a in Newcastle (5.4% p.a increase in Regional NSW), and unit rents by an average of 5.7% p.a in Newcastle (4.9% p.a increase in Regional NSW).

Adapted from 'A demographic profile of diverse communities within the City of Newcastle'. Prepared by Jan Fallding, May 2021

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Specialist Homelessness Services Collection (SHSC) data cubes, 202223

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census: Estimating Homelessness, 2021, Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA)

³NB: Some population groups are underestimated in the ABS Census and homelessness estimates. This includes: youth experiencing homelessness; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and people displaced from domestic and/or family violence.

⁴ Definition of housing stress used by some State Governments of Australia is: Households spending more than 30% of their gross household income on either rent or mortgage repayments are in housing stress (their housing arrangement is unaffordable, with risks of homelessness). Limiting household spending capacity on other necessities such as food, medical and education.

⁵ Compiled by: <https://housing.id.com.au/newcastle>, with data from: ABS Estimating Homelessness 2021 and ABS Census 2021

⁶ Compiled by: <https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/data/housing-and-homelessness-dashboard/>, with data from: AIHW 2024; social housing need forecasts from: UNSW City Futures

⁷ Compiled by: <https://housing.id.com.au/newcastle>, with data from: PropTrack Pty Ltd (ABN 43 127 386 298). Updated twice annually

⁸ Modelling Housing Need in Australia to 2025 (2017), AHURI - <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/287>

⁹ Compiled by: <https://housing.id.com.au/newcastle>, with data from: ABS Estimating Homelessness 2021 and ABS Census

