

WOMEN'S HOUSING NEEDS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines key housing needs and challenges for women through national research undertaken across regional Australia. It offers new knowledge and insights that are relevant for policy and key decision makers across all levels of government, community housing providers, researchers and the private sector.

HOUSING CHALLENGES

1 in 5

said their current housing was not appropriate or suitable for them

1 in 3

women who live in unsuitable housing do not feel safe at home in their own house

1 in 4

(23%) said their finances and housing had been impacted by domestic violence

1 in 3

have experienced physical and/or mental health issues that affected their financial and housing situations

3 in 10

experienced separation or divorce affecting their finances and housing



MANAGING FINANCES

87%

carry some level of financial stress

78%

worry about having enough money in retirement

76%

worry about having enough money to meet all their expenses

51%

worry they could become homeless if their circumstances change

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WOMEN EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL HARDSHIP.



41%

asked for financial help from family or friends

39%

could not pay their electricity, gas or telephone bills on time

28%

could not pay their credit card or other personal debt on time

Women used different strategies to meet rent or mortgage payments including refraining from heating or cooling their home (44%), pawning or selling something (36%), going without medical treatments (33%) and going without meals (30%).

EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS



63%

have some level of housing stress. One quarter are very or extremely stressed. 77% of these women say this stress impacts their mental health and wellbeing, and more than half report this stress impacts on their ability to manage their day-to-day, relationships, friendships, and work.

1 in 4

have lived in temporary accommodation in the last five years because they could not afford private rental accommodation

1 in 8

have been homeless in the last five years. 1 in 4 of them hid their homelessness from others.

1.7%

are currently homeless

20%

know at least one woman who is currently homeless

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

What do women say would help them the most?

49%

a reduction or subsidy on current housing costs

34%

access to more affordable housing in the community

16%

access to better quality housing

11%

help to move closer to support networks

Women would ask for assistance from:

1

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

2

GOVERNMENT PROVIDERS

3

COMMUNITY PROVIDERS

HOUSING PRIORITIES

Women in regional areas told us their key housing priorities are:

1. Safety
2. Independence and autonomy
3. Security of tenure
4. Access to community amenities and social infrastructure
5. Reduced costs and financial pressures

Appropriate housing for women enhances their health, wellbeing and safety.

Women who currently live in unsuitable housing (n=182) say their overall quality of life would improve with more appropriate housing.



YWCA
National Housing
Women Building Futures