

2025 Homelessness in Mornington Peninsula



In Mornington Peninsula Shire homelessness is rapidly increasing, and is likely to worsen without action to address the key challenges in the region. Recent research found that in Australia, the average life expectancy for a person experiencing homelessness is 44 years old, compared to 77 years old for those who are housed. ^[8]

948

people sought homelessness services across the 2024-25 financial year through independently funded services.

37%

Increase in the number of people being classified as homeless in the Census from 2016-2021 (430 people in 2021). ^[1]

2,624

applicants waiting for public housing in March 2025, who chose Mornington Peninsula as one of their 5 preferred locations. ^[3]

1,361

social housing households in Mornington Peninsula in June 2024. ^[10]

Important note on data

It is not known how many visit both independently funded and government funded services.

Counts of people experiencing homelessness are likely to be under-reported as they depend on service provider capacity, and people proactively seeking help or being visible to outreach workers.

Definitions

Rough sleeper: A person who is sleeping in a place they do not have permission to be, or is not meant for long-term human habitation.

Person experiencing homelessness: a person who does not have access to safe, secure, and adequate housing, including no tenure or non-extendable tenure.

In December 2024 Mornington Peninsula teamed up with Launch Housing and local service providers to develop a 'by-name list' (BNL) of people who are sleeping rough. The latest total BNL count can be found at https://www.melbournezero.org.au/mornington_peninsula_shire (monthly updates).

110

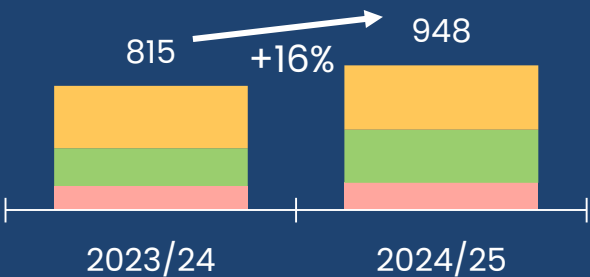
people were on the BNL as at 30 June 2025. This represents the known **current number of people without permanent housing** each night. This number changes every month.

75%

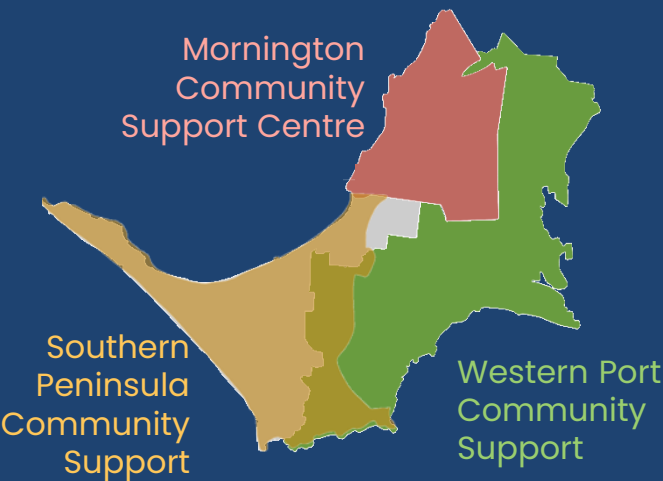
Of those on the BNL were sleeping rough as at 30 June 2025. This is the highest proportion of all local governments using the BNL project, including higher than City of Melbourne.

Independent service provider activity 2024/25

People seeking assistance for homelessness through independent service providers*



*can't combine with state funded number as there could be some duplication and they offer different services.



SPCS

421 individuals experiencing homelessness assisted through outreach programs and main centre in 2024/25. Count includes 195 rough sleepers (22% increase from 2023/24). Further 311 people at risk of homelessness supported through Low Income Support and Family Support case work programs. Homelessness-specific programs: Homeless Connections (assertive outreach); SPLaSh laundry & shower, emergency relief / crisis support / complex case work. Outcomes include food and material aid, public housing and crisis housing applications and placement, complex case management, and financial supports. Demographics of rough sleepers:

- 63% men
- 18% 55+ year olds

MCSC

178 individuals assisted who don't have permanent housing in 2024/25. Count covers just those without housing - Sleeping rough, boarding housing, crowded dwellings, crisis accommodation, staying temporarily with family. The service provides on-site case workers who help with support such as no interest loans, assistance with government department, filling in forms etc. They also manage The Ranch crisis accommodation. Outcomes include providing material assistance (food, fuel vouchers) and referrals. Demographics of clients:

- 62% woman/female
- 48% 40-64 years
- 38% single person

WPCS

349 individuals presented to the centre for housing support in 2024/25. Count includes those who presented to the agency as homeless, including at-risk of homelessness. The service provides 3 on-site programs: Housing, Family Support and Complex Client Support Program. 111 worked more intensively with the Specialist Housing Caseworker, where the outcomes were assistance with rent, public housing applications and advocacy. Other outcomes include provision of material assistance and assistance with costs for medical, transport and removals. Demographics of clients:

- 63% women
- 30% 55+

The Salvation Army

458 individuals were assisted through this **state government funded** service in 2024/25. 144 of these were provided with financial assistance through the HEF (Housing Establishment Fund).

The Salvation Army is the DFFH funded entry point for people experiencing homelessness in the Mornington Peninsula Region (located in Rosebud). Through IAPs (initial assessment and planning), each persons' needs are assessed and supported through a combination of referrals to specialist services (homelessness, health etc.), financial assistance for emergency accommodation or rent through the HEF, advice on housing options and other assistance, and for those most at risk, placement in available housing.

Most common presenting issues were:

- 30% inadequate / inappropriate housing
- 23% accommodation ending
- 22% housing crisis (e.g. evicted)

IAP assessment client characteristics:

- 57% female
- 20% 55+ year olds and 10% youth



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Other support in the region.

- **Bolton Clarke** (2 x Community Health Nurses who provide nursing outreach to homeless and those at risk of homelessness through the Homeless Persons Program - HPP). Funding through government programs, philanthropic funds and service partnerships.
- **Peninsula Health** (6 x clinical outreach case managers). Government funded.
- **Fusion (Youth)** - 48 housed in our supported housing placements in 2024/25 (including 9 placements within lead-tenant property, 2 Family houses, 1 THM). Also provide intensive external casework (29 in 2024/25); HEF support (52 in 2024/25); living skills support and education; material support; and IAP. Independently funded.
- **Lighthouse Foundation (Youth)**. Independently funded.

Understanding the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness

There are 2 overarching types of need.

Those who need suitable, safe affordable housing to rent

Characterised by:

- 25-55 year olds who have had a relationship end or change in work circumstances (particularly 30-39 year old females).
- Older adults on low incomes.

Key needs:

- No additional support required if they can get appropriate, affordable, safe, long-term housing quickly. Failure to achieve this puts them at risk of developing complex needs.

Those with complex needs

Characterised by:

- Young people with no renting experience and/or low incomes.
- Those impacted by family violence.
- Rough-sleepers.
- Long-term Rooming house tenants.
- Those with physical and/or mental health issues.

Key needs:

- Ongoing outreach support required (in addition to safe affordable housing) to help them develop tenancy skills and/or improve health.

Housing options and key segments

Private rentals and rooming houses provide the fastest options for housing those who are homeless. Service providers aim to work with those at risk to stay in their rental, as well as support people in finding private rentals and public housing

3.5% of rentals in Mornington Peninsula were affordable to low income households in December 2024. ^[4]	1 single bedroom rental was affordable to low income households in December 2024. ^[4]	17 public rooming houses in Mornington Peninsula. ^[12]	\$273 per week is the average rooming house rent in Mornington Peninsula (based on those engaged by PCLC). ^[12]
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The data shows that in terms of demographics, there are three key segments, each with unique circumstances and needs:

12-24 year olds (Youth)	25-55 year olds	55+ year olds
Challenges - Low income youth find it difficult to secure rentals. - No local housing support for those with complex needs. 20% of homeless in 2021 Census were under 18.^[1] 11% of people on the BNL as at 30 June 2025 were under 25.^[11] - Forecast increase of 527 12-25 year olds from 2021 to 2036.^[6]	- Key segment seeking support through services (74% SPCS outreach, 56% Westernport & 52% MCSC 2023/24).^[2] 68% of people on the BNL as at 30 June 2025 were 25-55.^[11] - SHS reports show 30-39 year old females increased from 50 in 2020/21 to 69 in 2022/23.^[3]	- Pension not increasing in line with rental increases – priced out of private rentals. - Good household management skills. 19% of people on the BNL as at 30 June 2025 were 55+ years.^[11] - One or two person households need smaller houses (not prioritised for public housing).
Needs - Safe affordable housing for after crisis housing. - Intensive case management to help build resilience and independent life skills. - Outreach mental health nurses.	- Safe affordable housing through the rental market. - Financial support to stay in rentals. - Single bedroom affordable private rentals.	- Private, safe, affordable rentals. - Appropriate for those with reduced physical health. - Single bedroom affordable rentals.



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Lone person households

need smaller
affordable private
rentals

The number of lone person households in Mornington Peninsula increased by over 2,000 from 2016–2021^[1], and is forecast to increase by another 2,300 by 2036^[6]. However, the region has a significant lack of housing suitable for lone person households (only 11,000 properties with 2 bedrooms or less in 2021, with almost 18,000 lone person households).^[1]

As at December 2024, there were only three 2 bedroom rentals affordable for people on a low income, and one 1 bedroom affordable rentals.^[4]

Women

need safe,
affordable housing
and longer term
crisis support

In 2023/24, higher instances of those seeking general crisis support were women (69% Westernport, 62% MSCS, 57% SPCS).^[2]

33% of people on the BNL were women (as at 30 June 2025).^[11]

The 2021 Census showed that most women experiencing homelessness were staying with others or in supported accommodation.^[1]

On average, a higher proportion of women experience long term mental health conditions (12%) than males (8%).^[1]

74% of those effected by family violence in 2024 were female.^[7]

Those impacted by family violence

need longer-term
support

The rate of family violence per 100,000 population increased by 16% from 2024 to 2025.^[7]

74% of those effected in 2025 were female.^[7]

Crisis housing duration is often not long enough, and people need safe affordable housing to go to after crisis housing.

Employed people

need fast transition
to private rentals

The incidence of people seeking support who are employed is increasing over time. From 2021 to 2024 the following increases were recorded in the independent crisis support provider data: From 2% to 12% for Westernport, from 3% to 7% for MCSC, and from 3% to 6% for SPCS.^[2]

16% of those classified as homeless in the 2021 Census were employed.^[1]

Fast transition is needed to minimise risk of additional vulnerabilities associated with homelessness (reduced health)

Mental health

need longer-term
proactive outreach
mental health
nurses

In 2024, 38% of those seeking help through MCSC and SPCS presented with mental health challenges^[2] and 19% of those classified as homeless in the 2021 Census had a long term mental health issue.^[1]

What is causing the crisis?



Lack of appropriate affordable housing, particularly rentals, is the key driver behind the increase in homelessness. Those with high housing costs are particularly vulnerable to cost of living increases.

Housing stress (spending more than 30% of household income on rent/mortgage) is being experienced by ^{[1][5]}:

35% of those in private rentals. Compared to 27% Greater Melbourne.	11% of those with a mortgage. Compared to 13% Greater Melbourne.	26% of single parent households.	18% of lone person households.
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References:

- [1] 2021 ABS Census, accessed through Tablebuilder and Tablebuilder Pro.
- [2] Operational data provided by service providers in July 2025: Mornington Community Support Centre (MCSC), Westernport Community Support (WPCS), and Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS).
- [3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Specialist Homeless Services data 2014-15 to 2023-24 through the [data explorer tool](#).
- [4] Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, [Quarterly median rents by local government area](#) March 2024.
- [5] ID Housing Monitor, accessed at <https://housing.id.com.au/mornington-peninsula>
- [6] ID Forecast data, accessed at <https://forecast.id.com.au/mornington-peninsula>
- [7] Crime Statistics Agency Victoria data for year ending March 2025, accessed at <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>
- [8] Knaus, 2024, *Homeless Australians are dying at age 44 on average in hidden crisis*, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/feb/05/homeless-australians-are-dying-at-44-on-average-in-hidden-crisis> accessed 5 February 2024
- [9] 2021 Demographic data mapping accessed at <https://atlas.id.com.au/mornington-peninsula>
- [10] Social Housing dwelling counts thorough AIHW, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia/data>, July 2025.
- [11] By Name List facilitated by Launch Housing, June 30 2025 figures (changes daily).
- [12] PCLC Rooming House Report, July – December 2024 (provided to Council) and <https://registers.consumer.vic.gov.au/rhrsearch>, July 2025

Additional insights provided through in-depth interviews conducted by ASDF Research with key homelessness support services in Mornington Peninsula. Thanks goes to the following organisations for their valuable input: MCSC, WPCS, SPCS, Peninsula Health, Salvation Army, Peninsula Voice, White Lion, Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Bolton Clarke, Lighthouse, Mornington Peninsula Foundation and Fusion.