

Under Pressure Everybody's Home Sector Survey



INTRODUCTION

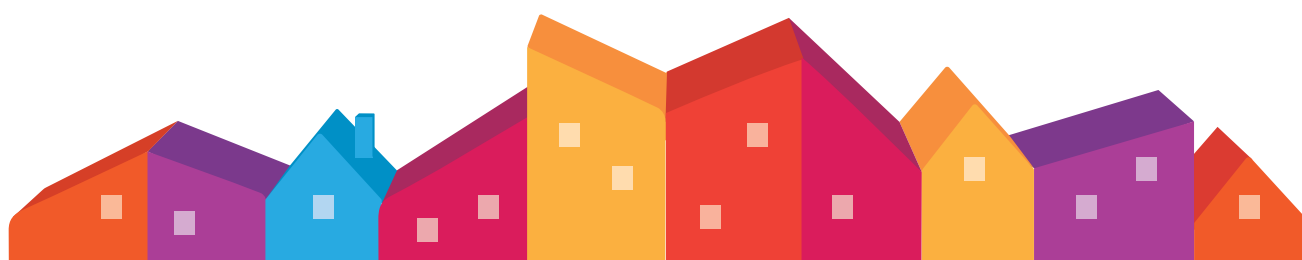
Australia is in the midst of an escalating housing crisis that is pushing more people into financial hardship, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Between rents that are at historic highs, cost of living pressures, and a massive shortfall in social housing, frontline services are being stretched to breaking point. Community organisations, homelessness services, and social welfare providers are experiencing unprecedented demand as more Australians struggle to find and maintain stable housing.

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted among organisations affiliated with the Everybody's Home campaign. The survey captures the perspectives of organisations operating across multiple service sectors, including homelessness, domestic and family violence support, financial counselling, and emergency relief. Their insights paint a concerning picture of a system under strain, where rising costs and a lack of affordable housing are creating insurmountable barriers for vulnerable people.

The results are clear. 98 percent of organisations reported an increased workload over the past 12 months, with 87 percent experiencing a further surge in demand since December. Rising rents, housing shortages, and inadequate government support were identified as key contributors to the growing crisis.

Alarmingly, organisations also reported that their own staff and volunteers were being impacted, with many struggling to afford housing themselves.

With the 2025 Federal Election approaching, the survey highlights the urgent need for decisive government action. Increased investment in social housing, rent regulation, tax reform, and raising Centrelink payments are among the key policy measures required to alleviate the crisis. Without bold intervention, service providers will continue to face mounting pressures, and more Australians will be left without a safe and stable place to call home.



Methodology

This survey examines the experiences of organisations supporting individuals impacted by Australia's housing crisis. The survey was distributed among organisations affiliated with the Everybody's Home campaign, capturing insights from 61 organisational respondents. Data collection for the survey was conducted between 23 January 2025 and 4 February 2025.

The respondents included organisations operating across multiple sectors, reflecting the complexity and intersectionality of housing-related services. These organisations provide essential services such as financial counselling, emergency relief, domestic violence support, and homelessness intervention, operating in every state and territory.

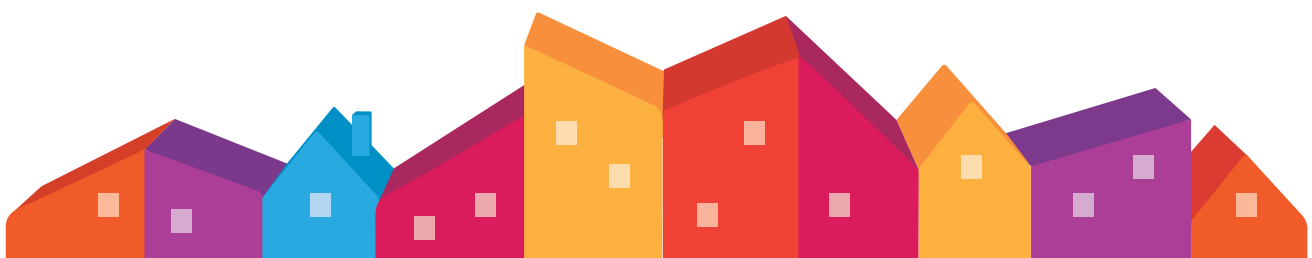
The data collected provides an account of the challenges these organisations face, the impact on their staff, and the ways in which their clients are affected.

The breakdown of organisational survey respondents by survey type is below outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Survey respondents by sector

Sector	% Responses
Homelessness	62.30%
Social and community services	37.70%
Domestic and family violence	32.79%
Housing	32.79%
Advocacy and legal services	26.23%
Employment and welfare	8.20%
Disability	8.20%
Aged care	6.56%
Health	4.92%
Local government	3.28%
Other	8.20%

Note: Respondents can select multiple values



SURVEY RESULTS

Services Under Strain

For organisations supporting individuals in housing distress or at risk of homelessness, the impact of the housing crisis is widely felt. When asked whether they have been busier or if their workload has increased over the past 12 months due to the crisis, 98 percent of organisational respondents answered yes (Table 2). This aligns with broader concerns in the sector about mounting service pressures, limited resources, and an ever-growing demand for assistance.

TABLE 2. Increased workload over the past 12 months

	% Responses
Yes	97.83%
No	2.17%

Many respondents noted that this increase in workload has made it increasingly difficult to maintain service quality and ensure clients receive timely support. Organisations described facing resource shortages, increased waitlists, and more complex cases requiring long-term assistance.

One respondent captured the sentiment, telling us that “we are seeing more people than ever before, and we simply don’t have the resources to meet their needs.” Another respondent noted, “the demand for housing support has skyrocketed, and we are turning away more people than ever before due to a lack of available housing and support services.” Another organisation highlighted the emotional toll on staff: “We are seeing increasing burnout and compassion fatigue among our team, as they constantly face the distressing reality of clients with nowhere to go.”

Surging Demand Over Recent Months

Respondents were asked how their workload had changed over the summer period since December 2024. A significant majority of the respondents (87 percent) reported that their organisation has been busier, or that their workload has increased during the December-January period compared to the same time period in previous years.

TABLE 3. Increased workload since December 2024

	% Responses
Yes	86.96%
No	13.04%

Among those who reported increased workloads, organisations highlighted a range of significant impacts (Table 4). The most commonly cited issue was increased casework complexity (76 percent), followed by longer waitlists (72 percent) and the inability to provide long-term housing solutions (67 percent). Many organisations also reported staff burnout (63 percent) and difficulties in meeting client needs (59 percent).

One respondent described the growing burden on frontline workers: “There is a deep sense of helplessness among staff who are seeing more and more people in crisis but have nowhere to house them.”

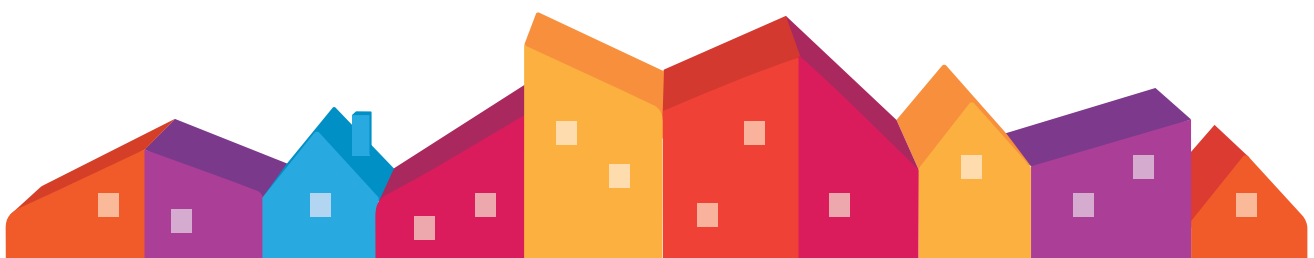


TABLE 4. Impacts of increased workloads on organisations

Impact	% Responses
Increased casework complexity	76.09%
Increased waitlists and waiting times	71.74%
Unable to provide long-term housing	67.39%
Staff burnout or attrition	63.04%
Unable to meet client needs	58.70%
Budgetary constraints	50.00%
Fewer resources per client	50.00%
Reduced staff capacity	45.65%
Reduced program capacity	32.61%
Less time taken with each client	21.74%
Volunteer burnout or attrition	19.57%
Other	13.04%

Note: Respondents can select multiple values

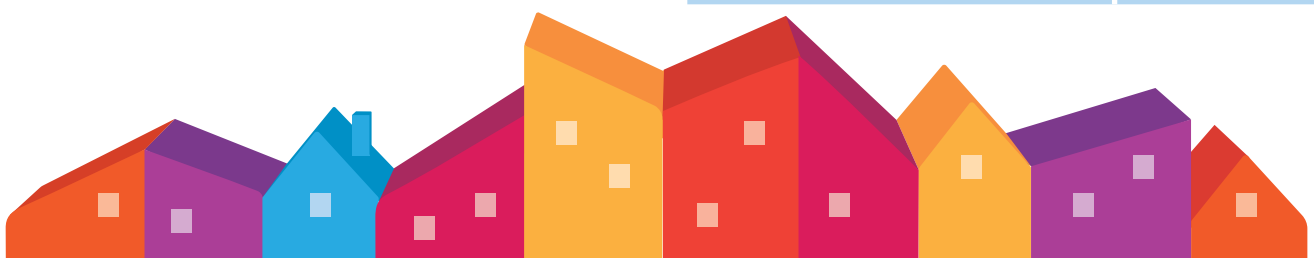
Direct Impacts on Clients

The survey also explored how the housing crisis is affecting clients directly. One of the most common impacts was homelessness, reported by 57 percent of organisations (Table 5). Other major impacts included financial stress (59 percent) and the inability to afford rent or mortgage payments (48 percent).

Alarming, 26 percent of organisations noted that clients were unable to leave unsafe home environments, often due to a lack of alternative accommodation options. One respondent told us that "... clients are forced to stay in dangerous living situations because there simply aren't enough housing options available."

TABLE 5. Impacts of the housing crisis on clients

Impact	% Responses
Financial stress	58.70%
Homelessness	56.52%
Inability to afford rent or mortgage	47.83%
Mental stress or ill-health	39.13%
Inability to leave an unsafe home environment	26.09%
Eviction	13.04%
Inadequate or inappropriate housing conditions	10.87%
Disconnection from family or community	10.87%
Frequent relocation	8.70%
Difficulty parenting or caring	6.52%
Other	21.74%



Note: Respondents can select multiple values

Staff and Volunteer Challenges

The housing crisis is also affecting those providing support. Nearly all organisational respondents (89 percent) indicated their staff and volunteers were directly impacted (Table 6). Many described the difficulty of maintaining morale and preventing burnout. One respondent explained: “We are losing staff because they themselves cannot afford housing, making it even harder to provide support to clients.”

TABLE 6. Impacts of the housing crisis on staff and volunteers

	% Responses
Yes	89.13%
No	2.17%
Unsure	8.70%

Looking Ahead

The vast majority (98 percent) of organisations expect demand for their services to continue growing in 2025 (Table 7). Instead of a reprieve, it appears that organisations expect demand to continue to surge.

TABLE 7. Expected demand for services in 2025

	% Responses
Yes	97.67%
No	0.00%
Unsure	2.33%

With the 2025 Federal Election approaching, organisations have expressed concerns about government action on housing. The majority of respondents (65 percent) feared that major political parties would fail to offer solutions that match the scale of the crisis. Additionally, 56 percent of organisations worried that inadequate funding for social housing would persist, while 42 percent raised concerns that tax reform would not be pursued ahead of the election (Table 8). Notably, 40 percent of respondents were concerned that political parties will not commit to improving Centrelink payments. Adequate welfare payments are known to be crucial for individuals struggling to maintain housing or find affordable housing options.

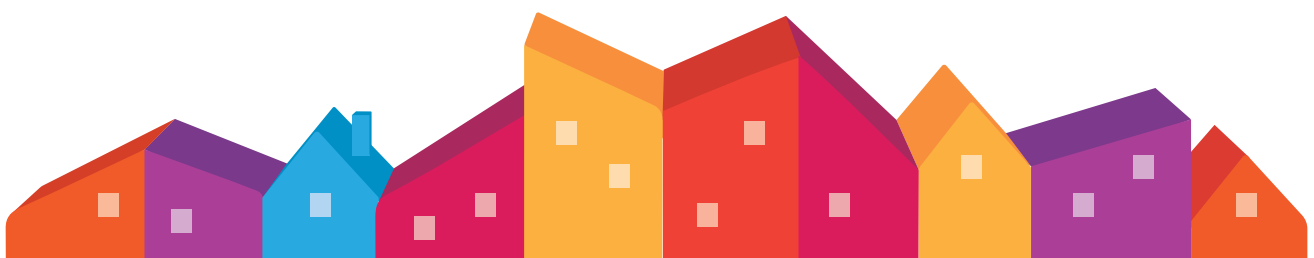


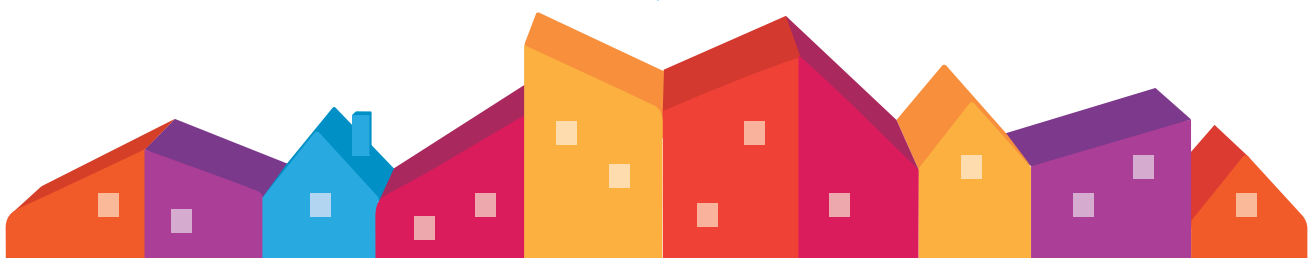
TABLE 8. Concerns for the 2025 Federal Election

Concern	% Responses
Major parties will fail to offer solutions that match the scale of the housing crisis	65.12%
Major parties will not commit enough funding to build the amount of social housing required	55.81%
Major parties will be too afraid to propose tax reforms that make housing fairer	41.86%
Major parties will not commit to a meaningful increase to Centrelink payments	39.53%
Property investors will be prioritised over people who need affordable homes	30.23%
Housing will become less of a priority for the Government after the election	18.60%
The next government will scrap or fail to expand existing housing reforms, such as the Housing Australia Future Fund	13.95%
Major parties will fail to commit to coordinating nationally consistent renter protections	11.63%
Candidates will fail to prioritise housing issues locally	9.30%
Organisations like mine will be left out of the housing debate	6.98%
Other	6.98%

Note: Respondents can select multiple values

Several organisations voiced frustration at political inaction. One respondent stated: “We have been calling for systemic housing reform for years, but political leaders continue to sidestep meaningful commitments to social housing.” Another noted: “Without substantial policy changes, we will continue to see the same cycle of homelessness and housing stress escalate.”

These responses underscore the growing strain on frontline organisations stemming from the worsening housing crisis. Without action to limit rent increases and boost social housing, the situation is likely to worsen, further exacerbating the challenges faced by both service providers and those who turn to them for help.



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Boost Social Housing

The survey results highlight an urgent need for increased investment in social housing to address the growing pressures faced by service providers and their clients. The growing demand for help, rising rental and housing costs, and longer waiting lists for housing services underscore the severity of the crisis. Organisations report that individuals and families are struggling to secure stable housing, forcing them into precarious living conditions or homelessness.

A key finding from the survey is that 98 percent of organisations have experienced increased workload over the past 12 months, with 87 percent noting a continued rise in demand over this summer period. This trend is not sustainable, as service providers face budget constraints (50 percent), and staff attrition and burnout (63 percent), limiting their capacity to respond effectively. Increased social housing investment would alleviate these pressures by providing permanent, affordable housing solutions, reducing the reliance on crisis services.

Additionally, 57 percent of organisations identified homelessness as a direct impact of the housing crisis, while 26 percent reported that clients remain in unsafe home environments due to a lack of alternatives. Expanding social housing would provide critical stability for these vulnerable populations, particularly women and children fleeing domestic violence.

The concern about government inaction is evident, with 65 percent of respondents fearing that major parties will fail to offer adequate housing solutions in the upcoming election. Without a substantial boost in social housing funding, the cycle of housing stress, homelessness, and service strain will continue to worsen.

A strong and sustained commitment to social housing investment is essential to prevent further deterioration of housing security, alleviate the burden on service providers, and create long-term, stable housing options for those most in need.

Tax Reform for Fairier Housing

The survey results underscore the urgent need to reform investor tax concessions, including abolishing negative gearing and the capital gains tax (CGT) discount for investors. These tax breaks overwhelmingly benefit property investors, driving up housing costs and reducing affordability for renters and first-home buyers. At the same time, they drain billions from public revenue that could be redirected into social housing to address Australia's growing homelessness crisis.

It is clear that rising rental and housing costs are driving increased demand for services. The financialisation of housing—where properties are treated as investment vehicles rather than homes—has contributed to this crisis, with investors outbidding owner-occupiers and pushing up property prices. By phasing out negative gearing and reducing the CGT discount, the government can help cool speculative investment, stabilising prices and making housing more affordable.

Investor tax concessions have also fueled inequality, benefiting high-income property owners while lower-income renters struggle with unaffordable housing. The impact is clear in the survey results: 57 percent of organisations reported that homelessness was a major consequence of the housing crisis for their clients, and 48 percent cited an inability to afford rent or mortgage payments. These figures highlight the need for urgent policy intervention to rebalance the housing market.

By reforming tax concessions, the government could reinvest the billions saved into social housing construction, providing stable, long-term housing for those in need. This dual benefit—curbing speculative demand while funding social housing—would directly address the issues raised by frontline service providers. Without action, housing affordability will continue to worsen, exacerbating homelessness and deepening the housing crisis. Reforming investor tax concessions is a necessary step toward a fairer, more sustainable housing system.



Raise the Rate of JobSeeker and Other Centrelink Payments

The survey findings make a compelling case for increasing JobSeeker and other Centrelink payments to address the financial distress driving housing insecurity. With 59 percent of organisations identifying financial stress as a key issue among their clients, it is clear that existing support payments are insufficient to cover basic living costs, including housing. The inability to afford rent or mortgage payments was reported by 48 percent of respondents, highlighting how stagnant income support rates are forcing many Australians into crisis.

A significant proportion of organisations (72 percent) reported an increase in demand leading to increased wait lists and wait times, a trend directly linked to the inadequacy of welfare payments. One respondent noted: "We are seeing more people who simply can't make ends meet, even with full government support. Rent, food, and bills have outpaced payments." The increasing demand for assistance places additional strain on frontline services, diverting resources from long-term support to crisis intervention.

The inadequacy of Centrelink payments is also contributing to homelessness. More than half (57 percent) of organisations identified homelessness as a major impact of the housing crisis on their clients, while 26 percent said individuals were unable to leave unsafe home environments due to a lack of affordable housing options. Raising welfare payments would help break this cycle by enabling recipients to maintain stable housing, reducing the reliance on emergency shelters and crisis support services.

Without action, financial hardship will continue to escalate, further burdening community organisations and leaving thousands at risk of homelessness. Increasing JobSeeker and related payments to reflect real living costs is essential to providing financial security, preventing evictions, and ensuring all Australians have access to safe and stable housing.

Rent Regulation and Limits on Increases

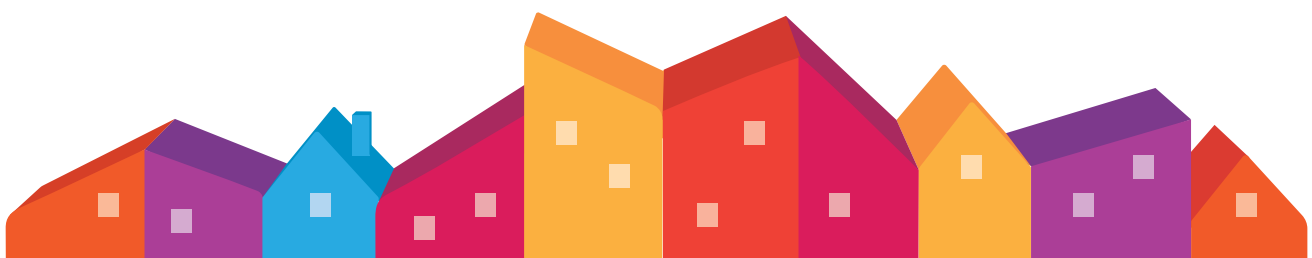
The survey findings highlight an urgent need to regulate and limit rent increases in private rentals to prevent further housing stress and homelessness. Rising rental costs are a key driver of service demand, and 59 percent of respondents reported financial stress as a direct impact on clients. Another 48 percent cited an inability to afford rent or mortgage payments.

Without intervention, the private rental market will continue to drive people into crisis situations, increasing demand on already overburdened support services. Many respondents reported clients being forced into unsafe housing conditions, overcrowding, or homelessness due to unchecked rent hikes. One organisation shared: "We are seeing more families who have never needed help before—they simply cannot keep up with rising rents."

Service providers themselves are also impacted, with staff struggling to secure housing while working in essential roles. Many respondents (89 percent) indicated that their workforce is experiencing the housing crisis firsthand, contributing to burnout and attrition in critical support sectors.

Regulating rent increases would provide stability to renters, reducing financial stress and preventing unnecessary evictions. Limiting rent hikes to fair and sustainable levels would help ensure wages and support payments remain sufficient for housing costs. In turn, this would alleviate pressure on homelessness services, domestic violence shelters, and emergency relief providers.

With 65 percent of organisations fearing that political leaders will fail to take meaningful action on housing, the upcoming Federal Election presents an opportunity to implement stronger rental protections. A nationwide cap on rent increases, improved tenancy rights, and enforcement of fair rental standards are essential to preventing further displacement and instability in the housing market.



CONCLUSION

The findings of this survey highlight the overwhelming strain the housing crisis is placing on frontline service providers and the people they support. Across all sectors—homelessness, domestic violence, financial counselling, and emergency relief—organisations are reporting record levels of demand, with 98 percent experiencing increased workloads over the past year. Rising rental costs, inadequate income support, and a lack of affordable housing have created a perfect storm, pushing more Australians into housing stress and forcing service providers to operate beyond capacity.

The crisis is not only affecting society's most vulnerable but is increasingly impacting low- and middle-income earners who can no longer afford the cost of housing. Service providers are being forced to turn people away due to resource shortages, leaving many without safe accommodation.

The policy solutions are clear. Immediate investment in social housing is essential to provide long-term, stable accommodation for those most in need. Additionally, regulating rent increases in the private rental market would provide much-needed relief to renters struggling with unsustainable price hikes. Raising JobSeeker and other Centrelink payments

is another crucial measure to ensure that income support recipients are not forced into homelessness due to unaffordable rents. Finally, reforming investor tax concessions—such as negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount—would help curb property speculation while freeing up funding for social housing.

This Federal Election presents a critical opportunity for policymakers to act. Without urgent intervention, housing stress and homelessness will continue to rise, deepening inequality and placing even greater pressure on already overburdened support services. The time for meaningful housing reform is now.

