

Homelessness in Mornington Peninsula in 2024



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]

680+

individuals sought support for homelessness through the key **independently funded** service providers in 2023-24 [2]

607

individuals registered for Specialist Homelessness Services through **government funded providers** in 2022-23, up from 581 in 2020-21. [3]

37%

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

33%

Increase in the number of homelessness related visits to crisis support from 2021-22 to 2023-24. [2]

! 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 are dependant on service provider capacity, and people:

- proactively seeking help; or
- being visible to outreach workers.

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**

= 1,000 households



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 mental or physical health issues.

Key needs:

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

The data shows that in terms of demographics, there are **three key segments**, each with unique circumstances and needs:

	Youth (12-25 year olds)	25-55 year olds	55+ year olds
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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] • Forecast increase of 527 12-25 year olds from 2021 to 2036. ^[6] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key segment seeking support through services (74% SPCS outreach, 56% Westernport & 52% MCSC 2023/24). ^[2] • Public housing wait list over 15 years (unless they have vulnerabilities). • SHS reports show 30-39 year old females increased from 50 in 2020/21 to 69 in 2022/23. ^[3] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension not increasing in line with rental increases – priced out of private rentals. • Good household management skills. • One or two person households need smaller houses (not prioritised for public housing due to under utilisation).
Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe affordable housing for after crisis housing. • Intensive case management to help build resilience and independent life skills. • Outreach mental health nurses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe affordable housing through the rental market. • Financial support to stay in rentals. • Single bedroom affordable private rentals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private, safe, affordable rentals. • Appropriate for those with reduced physical health. • Single bedroom affordable rentals.

In addition to age related need, a number of other key segments of need were emerging in the data:



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 June 2023, there were only two 2 bedroom rentals affordable for people on a low income, and zero one 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% MCSCS, 57% SPCS).^[2]

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 7% from 2023 to 2024.^[7]

74% of those effected in 2024 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 MCSCS, 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 MCSCS 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]

The following map shows areas where there is:

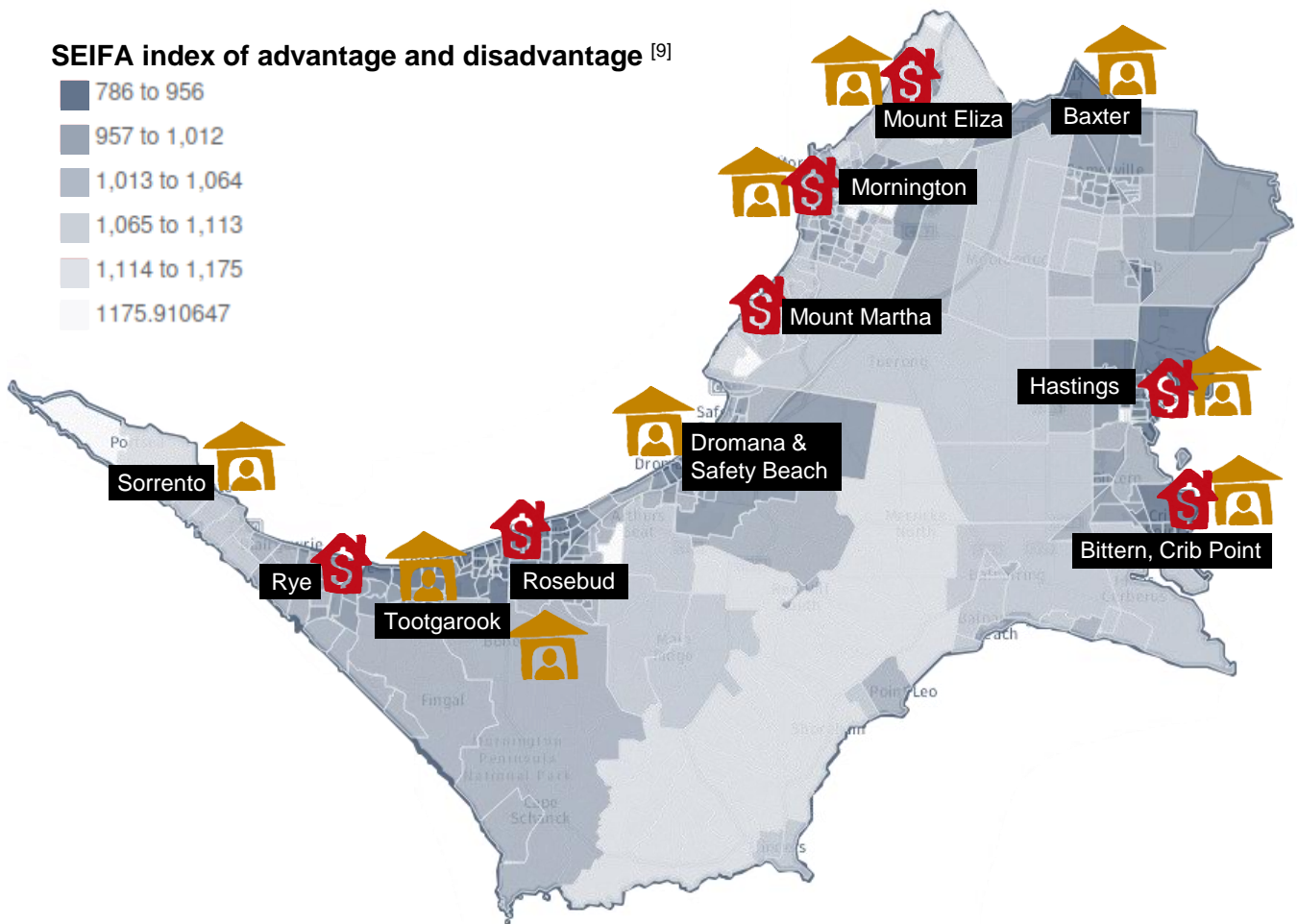


Forecast increase in lone person households / lack of small house supply



Higher instances of housing stress

SEIFA index of advantage and disadvantage [9]



References:

- [1] 2021 ABS Census, accessed through Tablebuilder and Tablebuilder Pro.
- [2] Operational data provided by service providers in July 2024: Mornington Community Support Centre (MCSC), Westernport Community Support (WCS), and Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS).
- [3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Specialist Homeless Services data 2014-15 to 2022-23 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, 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>

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, ECS, SPCS, Peninsula Health, Salvation Army, Peninsula Voice, White Lion, Peninsula Community Legal Centre, Bolton Clarke, Lighthouse, Mornington Peninsula Foundation and Fusion.