

MCM's Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot 2024

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melbourne city mission

in partnership with

SVA
Social
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Australia



Melbourne City Mission and Social Ventures Australia acknowledge and pay our respects to the past and present Traditional Custodians and Elders of this country on which we work.

We commit to ensuring everyone we work with is safe, empowered, supported and respected.

We support and celebrate diversity of ethnicity, culture, ability, gender, sexuality and gender identity.

Artwork by Mandy Nicholson, Wurundjeri artist and Traditional Custodian.

About this snapshot

MCM's inaugural Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot represents, on a given day in 2024, the reality faced by young people accessing MCM's homelessness programs.

It shines a light on the intersecting experiences of young people across three key areas: **family violence**, **mental health**, and **persistent homelessness**.

Selected macro-economic and budgetary data is included to create a better understanding of Victoria's current economic context and government spending across these three areas, often treated in silos¹.

The hope is that this annual snapshot will support future decision-making and contribute towards **a joined-up approach across government and the community sector to address the systemic, interdependent root causes of youth homelessness in Victoria**.

¹ The macro-economic and budgetary data selected for this snapshot is based on the 2024 Victorian budget papers

Cover: Residents in the lounge area of MCM's Frontyard Youth Services located in Melbourne CBD.

About the data

Data was collected by frontline teams from **177 young people aged 15 to 24 years old accessing MCM's homelessness programs** in Victoria on 27 February 2024.

Programs include the state-wide specialist homelessness access point for young people **Frontyard Youth Services**, youth refuges, crisis accommodation, intensive case management programs, foyers, and specific refuges and crisis services for young women.

The data set reflects the **intersectionality** among young people experiencing homelessness crisis²:

- 13% identified as **First Nations**,
- 33% identified as **CARM**,
- 15% identified as **LGBTIQA+**, and
- 26% were from a **regional, rural, or remote** area.

Of the 177 young people, 110 identified as female, 65 as male, and 2 as non-binary.



The data supports the conclusions of existing research:

Family violence leads to homelessness for young people.³

In turn, **homelessness erodes mental health**, increasing the risk of self-harm and suicide.⁴

And **homelessness persists with no access to secure, supported, and affordable housing.**⁵

2 See, e.g., Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) (2021) *Final Report: Towards a Youth Homelessness Strategy for Victoria*. 3 See, e.g., Australian Catholic University (2017) *Youth homelessness and its relationship with family conflict: Models for policy and practice*. 4 See, e.g., AHURI (2018) *Housing, homelessness and mental health: towards systems change*. 5 See, e.g., AHURI Brief (2023) *What are the real costs of the housing crisis for Australia's young people?*.

Family violence leads to homelessness for young people

4 in 5 young people **grew up experiencing family violence**




- Experienced family violence
- Did not experience family violence
- No data regarding family violence

Of those young people, 1 in 2 were **known to child protection**



- Known to child protection
- Not known to child protection
- No data regarding child protection involvement



In the 2024 Victorian budget, **\$35.8 million** was allocated for the 2024-25 financial year to the ‘Family violence victim survivors supports’ initiative. While this includes specialist supports for young people experiencing family violence, it is unclear how much of the funding is dedicated for young people.⁶

⁶ Victorian Government (2024) *Budget Paper No. 3: Service Delivery (Chapter 1, Output, asset investment, savings and revenue initiatives)*. Note that it is not clear from the budget papers whether the allocated funding corresponds to the continuation of lapsed funding, or is funding for new or increased services.

Homelessness erodes mental health

1 in 2 young people had **attended an emergency department for mental health concerns**




- Attended an emergency department
- Did not attend an emergency department
- No data regarding emergency department attendance

Of those young people, 2 in 3 were **discharged from hospital into homelessness**



- Discharged into homelessness
- Not discharged into homelessness
- No data regarding post-discharge accommodation

In addition to the metrics highlighted on this page, 97 (55%) of the 177 young people reported **self-harm**, experiencing **suicidal ideation**, or **attempting to take their own life**.

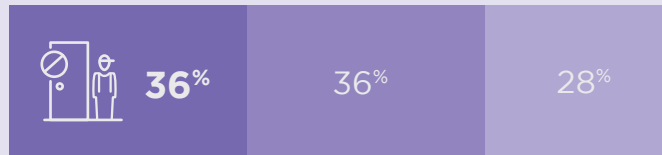


In the 2024 Victorian budget, **\$13.8 million** was allocated for the 2024-25 financial year to ‘Continuing Orygen’s Moderated Online Social Therapy program’, which is dedicated to supporting young people’s mental health, to continue the ‘Living Learning’ program that provides integrated mental health, education, psychosocial and vocation support to young people, and ‘Suicide prevention initiatives’ which supports groups disproportionately impacted by suicide, including young people.⁷

⁷ Victorian Government (2024) *Budget Paper No. 3: Service Delivery (Chapter 1, Output, asset investment, savings and revenue initiatives)*.

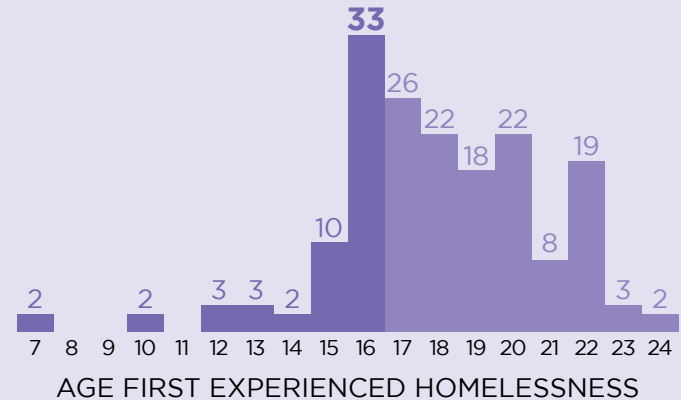
Homelessness persists with no access to appropriate housing


2 in 3 young people had **experienced homelessness for at least 2 years**⁸



- 5 years or more
- 2 to 4 years
- 1 year or under

1 in 3 young people **first experienced homelessness at 16 years or under**⁸





In the 2024 Victorian budget, **\$42.3 million** was allocated for the 2024-25 financial year to the ‘Breaking the cycle of homelessness’ initiative. While this includes new initiatives and ongoing funding for frontline services that support young people experiencing homelessness, it is unclear how much has been dedicated for young people.⁹

⁸ Note that there are two data points for which the number of years since and the age at which homelessness was first experienced is unknown. ⁹ Victorian Government (2024) *Budget Paper No. 3: Service Delivery (Chapter 1, Output, asset investment, savings and revenue initiatives)*.

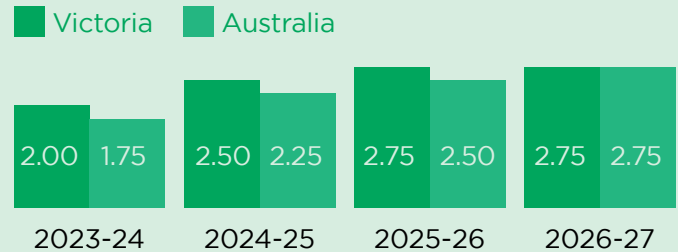
Meanwhile the Victorian economy is steadily improving

Victoria's **economy** is forecast to grow at 2.5% or more per year over the next three years, outpacing the rest of Australia.¹⁰

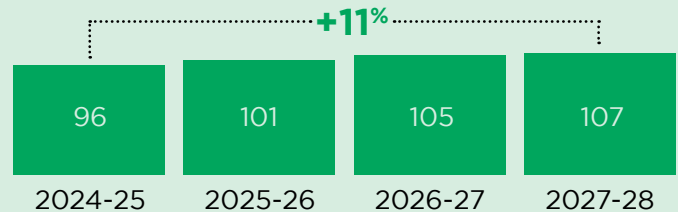
The strong economy has driven a strong labour market, with **workforce participation** in Victoria near record highs at 68%.¹¹

Victorian **government revenues** are estimated to grow at an average of 3.6% per year, from \$96 billion this financial year to \$107 billion in 2027-28.¹²

Real economic growth actual and forecast (%)



Victorian government revenues budget and estimate (\$ billion)



An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Melbourne, Australia, with a construction worker in a high-visibility vest and hard hat in the foreground. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the upper left quadrant, containing text.

There is an **opportunity now** to **work together across government and across the community sector** to address the systemic, interdependent root causes of **youth homelessness in Victoria.**

10 Victorian Government (2024) *Budget Paper No. 2: Strategy and Outlook*. 11 Ibid.; Australian Bureau of Statistics (May 2024) *Labour Force, Australia*. 12 Victorian Government (2024) *Budget Paper No. 5: Statement of Finances*.

About MCM

Melbourne City Mission (MCM) is a leading community support organisation working alongside people to live the life they aspire to, their way, providing a broad range of support in Homelessness, Disability, Palliative Care and Education service areas. We are a leading provider of specialist services for young people in the homeless system, providing wraparound support so that young people can transition to independence and their positive pathways of choice.

For more information, contact us:

info@mcm.org.au

About SVA

Social Ventures Australia (SVA) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with partners to alleviate disadvantage – towards an Australia where all people and communities thrive.

SVA Consulting is one of Australia's leading not-for-profit consultancies. We focus solely on social impact and work with partners to increase their capacity to create positive change. Thanks to more than 15 years of experience working with not-for-profits, government and funders, we have developed a deep understanding of the sector and 'what works'.

For more information, contact us:

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The front entrance of MCM's Frontyard Youth Services located in Melbourne CBD