

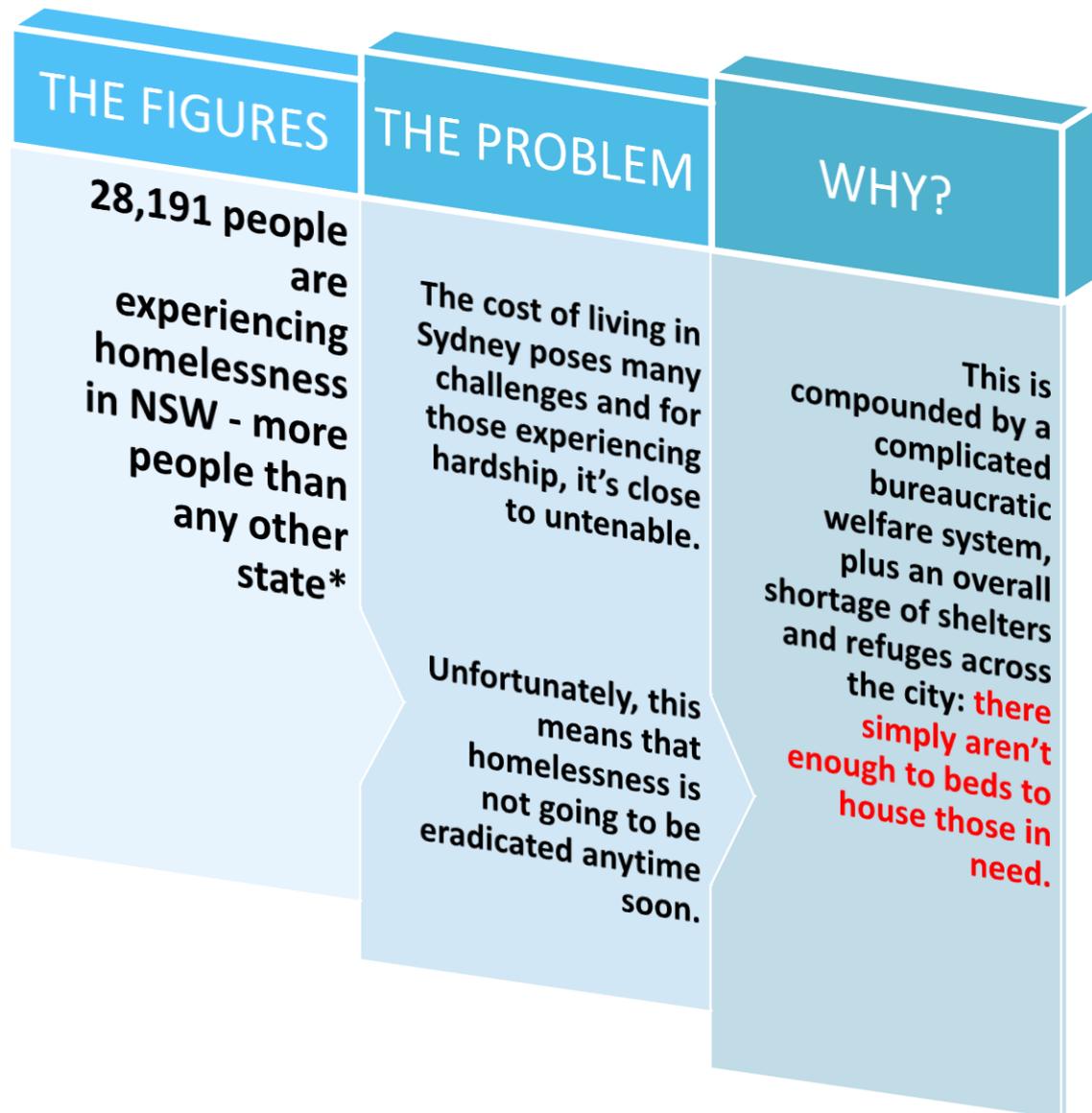
NEWTOWN

Neighbourhood Centre

NEWTOPIAN DREAM TEAM: 2018 COMMUNITY HOMELESS OUTREACH PROJECT

Information Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions





HOMELESSNESS IN NEWTOWN

As one of Sydney's most progressive, diverse and transient areas, and given the housing affordability crisis across Sydney, Newtown is increasingly becoming a destination for those experiencing homelessness. There are many organisations in the area who work with people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of, including Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC), Newtown Mission, Lentil as Anything, Launchpad (youth specific, based in Newtown), Missionbeat, and the Greek Orthodox Church.

Every year, the City of Sydney and Inner West Council undertake a street count to determine the approximate homeless population across their local government areas. Many factors influence the statistics: in February this year, despite a rainy night, 28 rough sleepers were counted in Newtown, which is a huge jump from two in 2017 and four recorded in 2016.

SO, HOW EXACTLY IS HOMELESSNESS DEFINED?

The United Nations identifies homeless people under two broad groups:

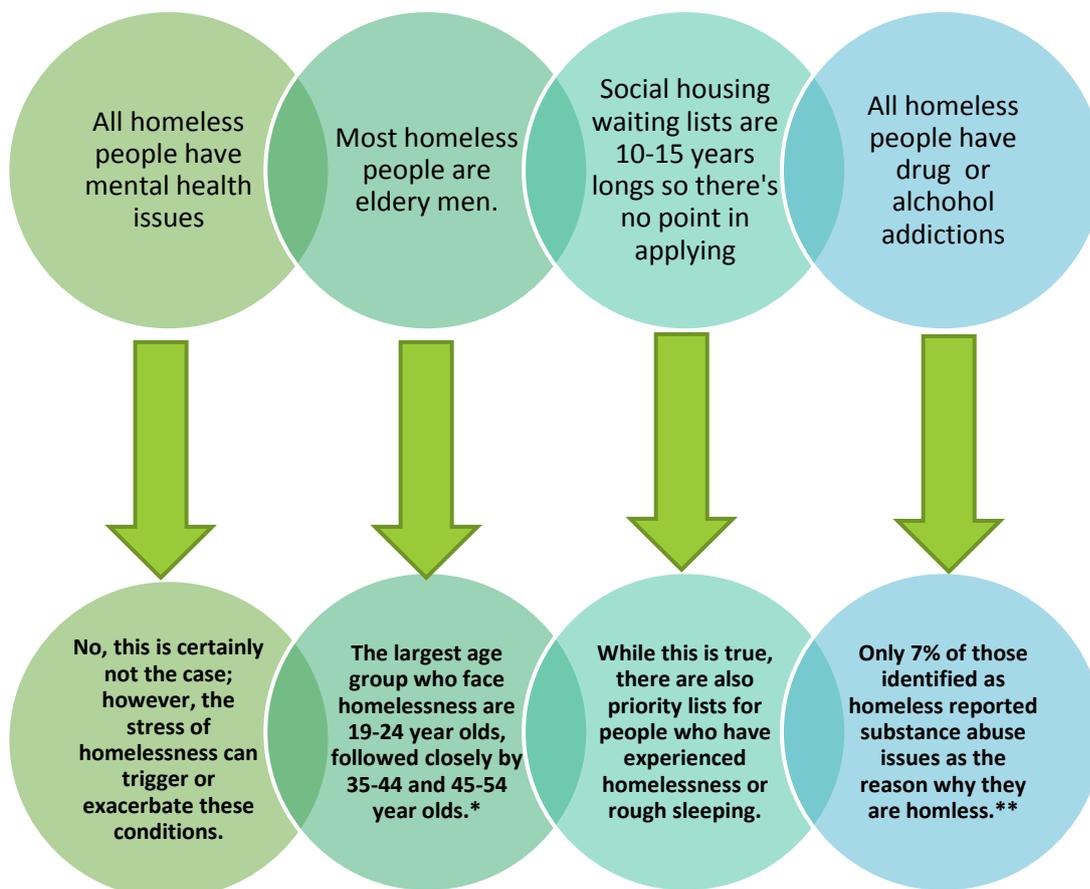
PRIMARY HOMELESSNESS

- This category includes persons living in the streets without a shelter that would fall within the scope of living quarters.

SECONDARY HOMELESSNESS

- Persons with no place of usual residence who move frequently between various types of accommodations (including dwellings, shelters and institutions for the homeless or other living quarters).

LET'S DISPEL SOME MYTHS SURROUNDING HOMELESSNESS



Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE NEWTOPIAN DREAM TEAM?

At Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC) we work towards creating our version of utopia, or as we like to call it: Newtopia. A place where people's human rights and basic needs are met, where people have affordable housing, where the community is safe and connected and finally, a place where the community is pro-active in creating social change. And ultimately, we wish for Newtown to remain vibrant, quirky, diverse and weird.

The Newtopian Dream Team is a group of 20 passionate and committed volunteers who will work in collaboration with the Centre on a Community Homeless Outreach Project, supported by Inner West Council, Westpac and Uniting.

WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Volunteers who are willing to engage with rough sleepers in Newtown and offer and provide support where necessary. This project is also about changing perceptions and debunking false assumptions about those experiencing homelessness. We want volunteers who are open to sharing their experiences with others, and dispel some of the myths for friends and family.

While this work can be incredibly rewarding, volunteers must also be mindful that not everyone will want assistance and there will be barriers and complications along the way. Therefore, we want all volunteers to approach this project with realistic expectations. Also, as the nature of this work can be unpredictable and sometimes volatile, we want volunteers who can cope well under pressure.

DO YOU NEED ANY EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?

No, volunteers do not require any prior experience as comprehensive training will be provided. All we ask is for your enthusiasm, commitment and willingness to support all residents of our community.

WHAT WILL THE TRAINING INVOLVE?

Four Wednesday evenings from 6-9pm on May 16, 23, 30 and June 6. Training will be delivered by professional practitioners and experts, covering topics such as mental health, housing pathways, trauma, drug and alcohol, plus practical information such as where to seek help, obtain free meals and food etc.

DO YOU NEED A POLICE CHECK?

Yes, NNC will undertake police checks for all volunteers even if you already have a valid one.

WHERE WILL THE OUTREACH TAKE PLACE?

The outreach will take place every Wednesday evening from 6-8pm, June 13 to September 19 (inclusive). Each Outreach volunteer will be rostered on for one shift per month during this period. After the four outreach shifts, volunteers will have the opportunity to attend one more information session, which will be a visit to either a domestic violence refuge, homeless shelter, boarding house or youth refuge.

HOW WILL THE OUTREACH WORK?

Teams of three, made up of two outreach volunteers plus one team leader, will be designated streets in the Newtown area where rough sleepers are known to be present. The group will be required to approach any persons who appear to be homeless and offer any assistance necessary.

Once the outreach shift is complete, all volunteers will return to NNC for a debrief and update supervisors of their experience. Outreach volunteers will also be required to input data into a spreadsheet before signing off from their shift.

WHAT NNC EXPECTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

As we're running this project as a pilot program, our time and funds are limited. We therefore require 100% commitment from our volunteers as it is imperative that you receive as much information as we can provide to ensure successful outreach sessions. We understand that emergencies and illnesses are sometimes unavoidable, but we ask that you try your best to attend all training sessions and allocated outreach shifts.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To receive an application, please contact mel@newtowncentre.org or call 9564 7309. Alternatively, you can attend our Information Night on March 21, register [here](#).

Once we've received your application, you will be invited in for an interview.

WHEN WILL I KNOW IF I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

We will notify all applicants of the status of their application by 27th April.

KEY PROJECT DATES

Training session 1	16 th May (6-9pm)
Training session 2	23 rd May (6-9pm)
Training session 3	30 th May (6-9pm)
Training sessions 4	6 th June (6-9pm)
1 st Outreach	13 th June
Last Outreach	19 th September
Accommodation visits (4 different refuges)	26th September – 17th October (one per week)

USEFUL RESOURCES:

If you want to learn more about what it's like to be homeless, check out SBS's, Filthy, Rich and Homeless on SBS On

Demand: <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/program/filthy-rich-and-homeless>

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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References:

* Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2012.

**https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/sites/homelessnessaus/files/2017-07/NSW_-_updated_Jan_2014.pdf