

Shelter WA Key Statistics

July 2026





Our Vision

All people living in Western Australia have housing that **enables** them to **thrive**

Our Members



Who we are

82
Member
Organisations



Our Workforce

17,000+
staff
9,700+
volunteers

Latest data: Homelessness

Overview



Homelessness in WA

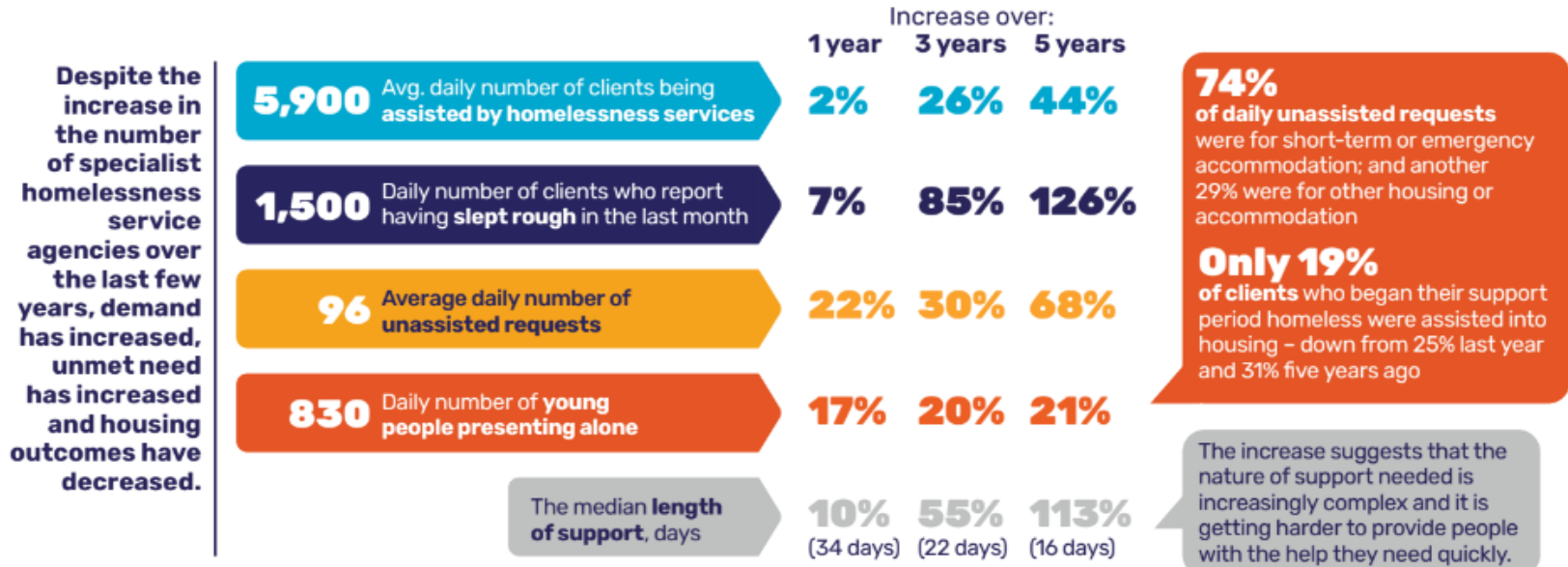
People experiencing homelessness by homeless operational groups, 2021



Homelessness in WA

REGION	Rate of homelessness per 10,000 people	2016 total homeless	2021 total homeless	% change
Perth Metro	27.6	5002	5489	9.7%
Peel	21.5	315	314	-0.3%
Goldfields-Esperance	105.9	566	571	0.9%
Great Southern	54	145	331	128.3%
Kimberley	286	1207	1031	14.6%
Mid-West	66.7	285	352	23.5%
Wheatbelt	30.4	290	224	-22.8%
South-West	37.2	415	676	62.9%
Gascoyne	196.5	123	182	48%

Homelessness services: demand



One report estimated that for the 2023-24 financial year, the number of unique people accessing homelessness services in WA could be **47%-59% higher** than currently reported.

Homelessness services: unmet need

Unmet need

WA has the **highest daily average unassisted requests** at 96, followed by VIC at 91, and NSW at 59

72% of daily average unassisted requests for **short term or emergency accommodation** were not provided because there was **no accommodation available**.

Daily average **unassisted requests** were for:

74% **short term or emergency accommodation** (60% nationally)

29% **other housing or accommodation** (26% nat.)

23% **general assistance and support** (27% nat.)

12% **assistance for family/domestic violence** (9% nat.)

90% of people who began support **at risk of homelessness** were assisted to maintain housing, **BUT ...**

... only 19% of clients who began support as **homeless** were assisted into housing (compared to 31% five years ago)

Of all unassisted requests:

63% were **women**, the same as last year (65% nat.)

56% were **children and young people** (aged 0-24), similar to last year (44% nat.)

Most needed accommodation type vs. service provision status



Long-term housing



Medium-term/transitional housing



Short-term emergency accommodation

■ Provided ■ Referred ■ Not provided or referred

Source: SHSC 2024-25, supplementary table CLIENTS.24.



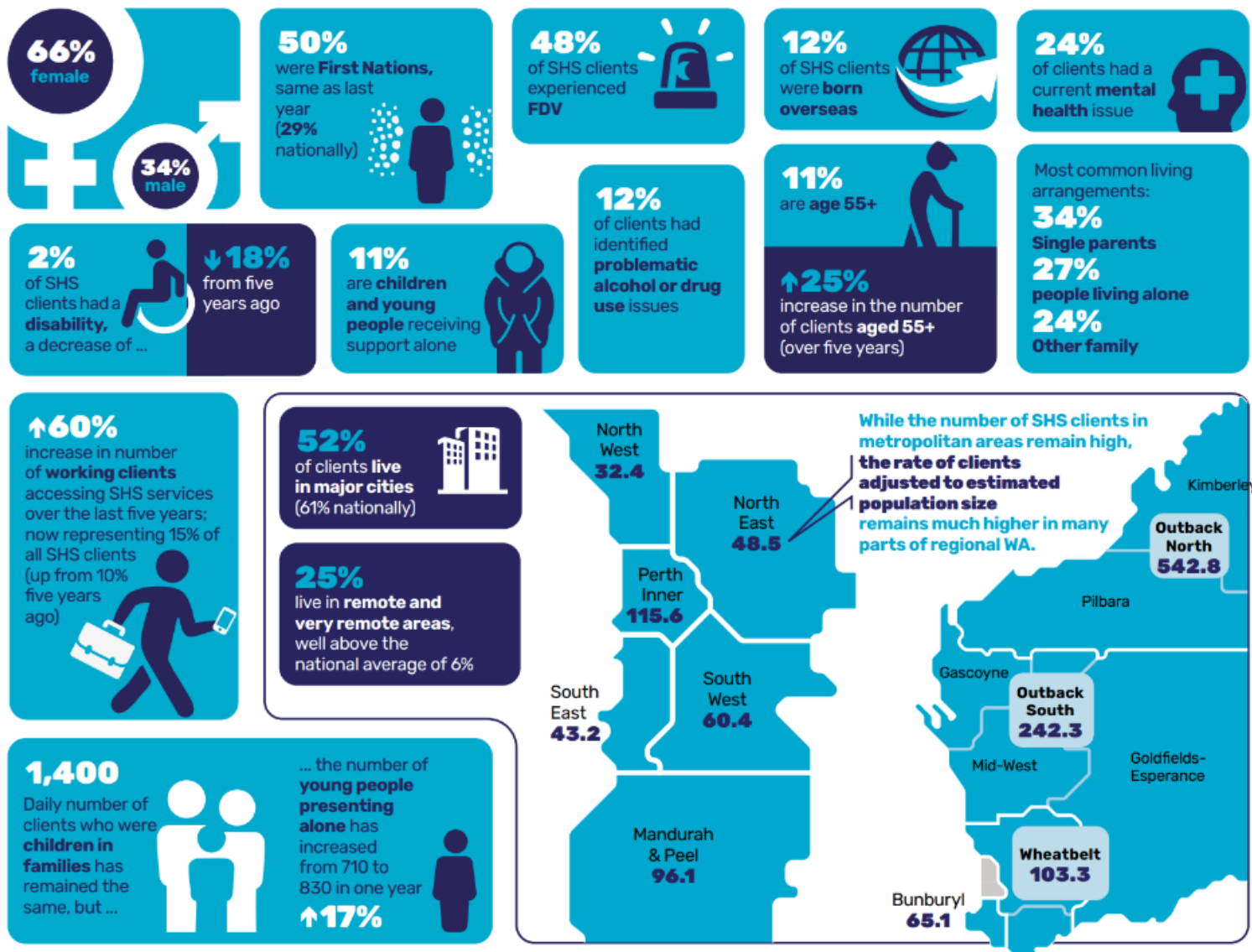
Proportion of **unmet need** for: (When assistance was neither provided nor referred)

Drug and alcohol services
31%

Mental health services
27%

Disability services
25%

Homelessness services: client groups



Homelessness: costs and causes

Homelessness costs

- Total costs to health services and justice systems due to young people experiencing homelessness is an average of **\$17,868** (pp/py); **\$14,986** more than unemployed youth ([CSI](#)).
- Cost savings to the health care system can equate to approximately **\$21,500** per person over the first year ([CSI](#)).
- The NSW Department of Communities showed that the average service use costs (for justice, health, housing, child protection and welfare) for people experiencing homelessness were **three to four times higher** than those who weren't.
- The median cost-to-government for people experiencing homelessness and presenting to an SHS was **\$166,000**, about 11 times higher than the median cost for the broader NSW population ([NSW Government](#)).

Homelessness causes

The top three reasons cited for seeking assistance from SHS include:

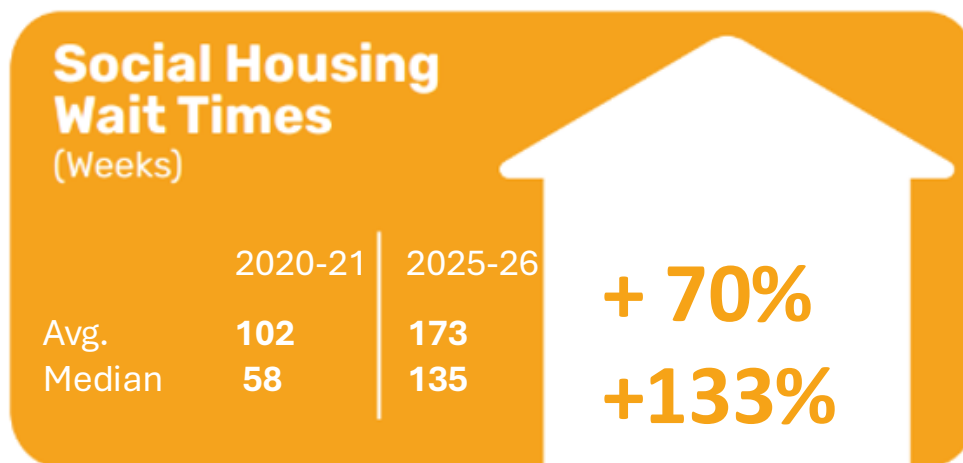
- 46%** family and domestic violence
- 35%** financial difficulties
- 28%** housing affordability stress

Homelessness spending

	2020-2021	2024-2025	
WA (\$ per person)	\$38.73	\$55.68	+ 44%
Australia (\$ per person)	\$55.68	\$64.05	+ 15%

Latest data: Housing

Social housing waitlist

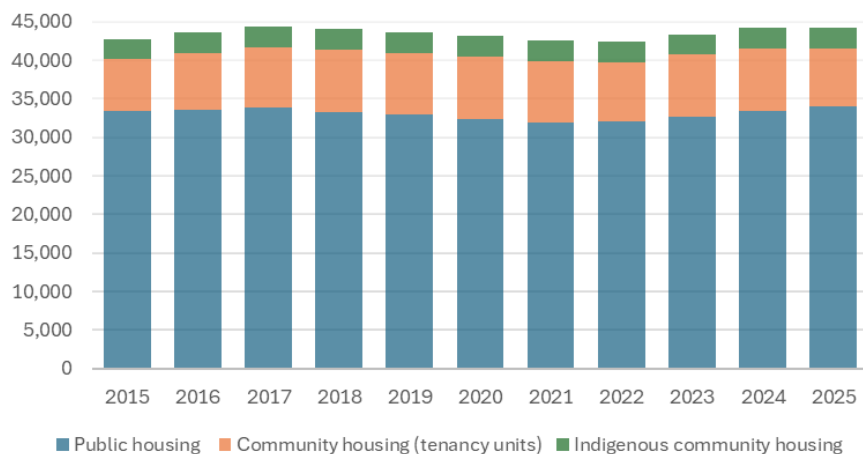


Waitlist: Hansard questions without notice.

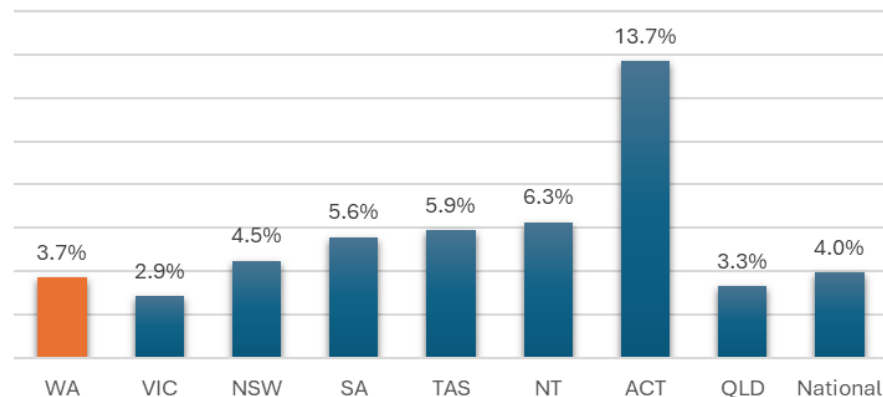
Wait times: 2020-21 figure: WA Government, Department of Communities (2021) [Housing Authority Annual Report 2020-21](#); 2025-26 figure: WA Government (2026) 2026-27 Budget, [Budget Paper 2 Vol. 2](#), p.583.

Social housing stock

SOCIAL HOUSING STOCK, WA



Proportion of total housing stock that is social housing, June 2025



Social housing figures: Productivity Commission (2026) [Report on Government Services, Part G: Housing and Homelessness](#). Table 18A.3

Total housing stock: ABS (2025) [Total value of dwellings](#) – June figures.

Note: there is a slight discrepancy in social housing stock figures in WA parliamentary sources versus the Productivity Commission's annual ROGS data. These graphs use the Productivity Commission figures to enable a time series and national comparison.

Social housing eligibility thresholds

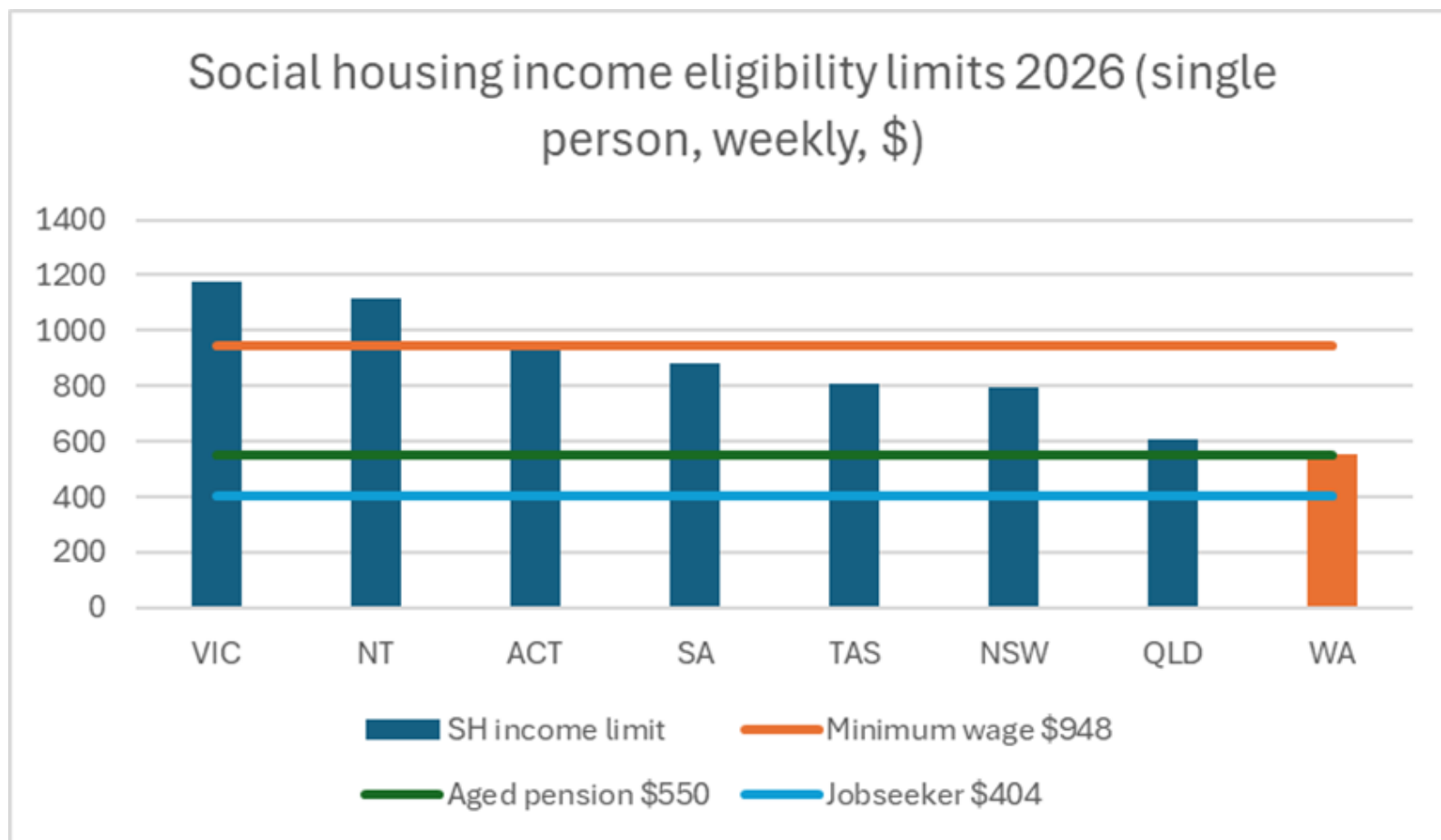


Table accurate as at March 2026. Figures manually collated from State and Commonwealth Government policies. Please note: WA income limits are higher for people living in the North-West/ remote regions and/or if they have a disability. The WA figure in the graph is \$551 which is one dollar more than the aged pension.

Social housing government spend

WA Government spend (social housing)

	2020-21	2024-25	
Net recurrent Expenditure (per capita)	\$252.92	\$307.37	+21%
Capital expenditure	\$64.7(m)	\$575(m)	+789%

National social housing spend - net recurrent (per capita) is \$214.67

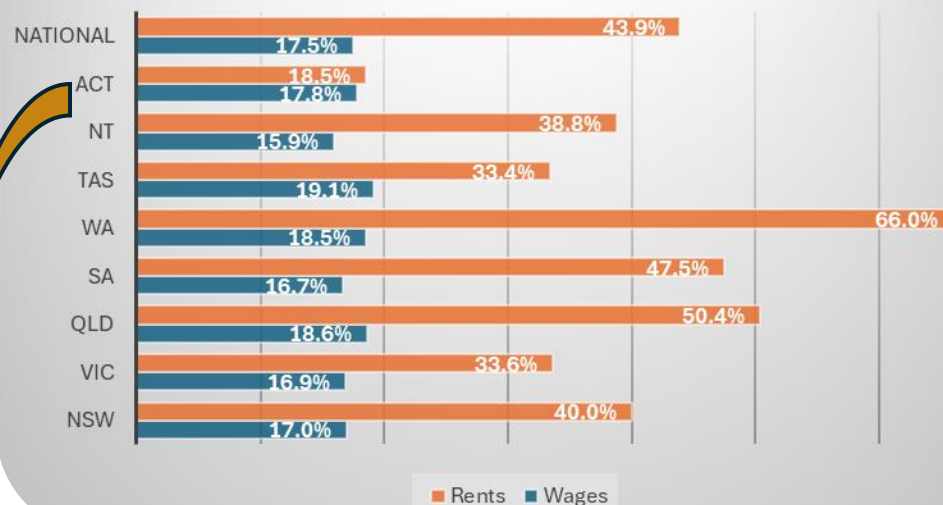
Renting in WA

Across the entire state, there is **not a single property** – even a room – affordable to someone on **Jobseeker, Youth Allowance** or the **Disability Support Pension**. [1]

“A person earning \$70,000 in Perth will spend 58% of their income on rent, and the average Australian now needs to earn \$130,000 to rent a unit comfortably.” [2]

Since 2021, the average WA renter household is paying an **additional \$377 per week, or \$19,622 extra per year**. [3]

Wages vs rent price increase 2020-2025



WA experienced **18.5% wage growth** in the five years to September 2025 but **rental prices went up by 66%** in the same period.

The ACT is the only jurisdiction to have a cap on rent increases. This policy appears to have been successful in keeping rents in line with inflation.

1. Anglicare WA (2025) [2025 Rental affordability snapshot](#).

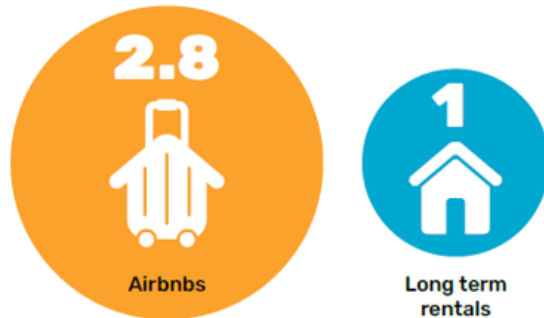
2. Everybody's Home (2025) [Priced out: an index of affordable rentals for Australian voters](#).

3. Make Renting Fair (2026) [If the cap fits: the case for rent stabilisation in WA](#).

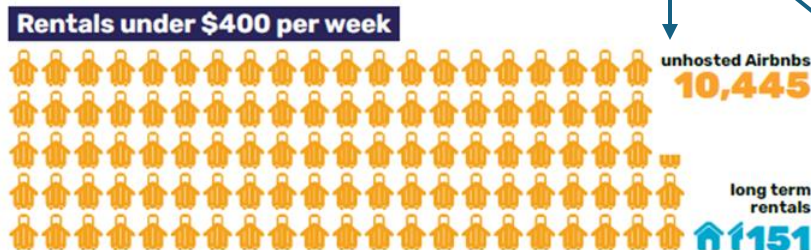
Graph: Cotality (2026) [Monthly Chart Pack - February](#). September figures.

The impact of short term rental accommodation (STRA)

In 2025, there were **10,445** unhosted Airbnbs compared with just **3753** private rentals listed across WA.



STRA is cannibalising affordable housing options, including 1 & 2 bedroom dwellings, and regional housing markets.



Worst ratios of Airbnb to long-term rental:
regional WA

	Locales	Unhosted Airbnbs listed	Total Rentals listed	How Many Airbnbs for Every Rental?
1.	Gingin	201	0	201 to 0
2.	Dandaragan incl Durien Bay	106	0	106 to 0
3.	Nannup	90	0	90 to 0
4.	Lancelin	85	0	85 to 0
5.	Jerramungup incl Bremer Bay	53	0	53 to 0
6.	Harvey	49	0	49 to 0
7.	Irwin	35	0	35 to 0
8.	Plantagenet	28	0	28 to 0
9.	Shark Bay	19	0	19 to 0
10.	Dardanup	18	0	18 to 0
11.	Coorow	17	0	17 to 0
12.	Carnarvon	15	0	15 to 0
13.	Kondinin	14	0	14 to 0
14.	Donnybrook-Balingup	58	1	58 to 1
15.	Toodyay	30	1	30 to 1
16.	York	26	1	26 to 1
17.	Northampton incl Kalbarri	238	2	119 to 1
18.	Denmark	186	2	93 to 1
19.	Bridgetown-Greenbushes	62	2	31 to 1
20.	Guilderton	50	2	25 to 1

1 & 2 bedroom dwellings account for over half (52%) of all unhosted Airbnbs listed

Renting in Perth

Rent per week

	June 2021	June 2026
House	\$450	\$750
Unit	\$380	\$700

+ 67%

+ 84%

Rental vacancy rate (Perth)

May 2026: 0.7%

REIWA considers a vacancy rate between 2.5% and 3.5% as indicative of a balanced market.

September 2019 is the last time Perth was at the 2.5% mark.

Snapshot – renting in the regions

Renting in the regions

	Vacancy rate	Median rent 2021	Median rent 2026	5 year change...
Albany	0.3%	\$380	\$700	+84%
Broome	0.4%	\$580	\$1100	+90%
Busselton	1.2%	\$500	\$830	+66%
Geraldton	0.9%	\$350	\$580	+66%
Kalgoorlie	0.9%	\$400	\$700	+75%

Vacancy rates: [SQM Research](#) – May 2026 figures, by postcode.

Median rent prices: [Domain Rental Report, June 2026](#).

Shelter WA

Priorities

2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission: Priorities

- 1 Urgently increase accommodation options for people experiencing homelessness
- 2 Deliver 5,000 additional social and affordable homes each year
- 3 Invest in a homelessness prevention and early intervention fund
- 4 End homelessness for children and young people
- 5 Community Housing sector growth package
- 6 Boost tenancy support services
- 7 Expand social housing upgrades for cost of living relief
- 8 Deliver permanent supportive housing across the state
- 9 Funding to boost the homelessness sector workforce
- 10 Expand and improve the AtoZ Framework
- 11 Close the housing gap

2026-27 Pre-budget Submission: complementary asks

1

Reform of the *Residential Tenancy Act* for secure and healthy homes

2

Commit to adopting in full the NCC liveability and accessibility standard

3

Legislate the right to housing through a WA Human Rights Act

4

Urgently progress the recommissioning of homelessness services

5

Reform income eligibility limits in social housing