

Position Statement

Housing and Homelessness

Jewish Care has one clear vision: **Together, building and supporting a healthy, resilient, and inclusive Jewish community.** Our values are universal and enduring in nature, but are also particular to the Jewish approach to creating a meaningful life, and a strong, cohesive community.

Our foundational values define who we are and underpin everything we do. The values, **Respect** (*derech erez*), **Community** (*kehilla*), **Inclusion** (*hachlala*) and **Social Responsibility** (*achrayoot chevratit*), are about people - they provide a moral compass for the way we respond to challenges and the decisions we make.

These values pervade every aspect Jewish Care, informing relationships between colleagues, staff and clients, and our organisation and the wider community.

The Board of Jewish Care seeks to demonstrate our commitment to these values by clearly stating Jewish Care's position on important issues that are contextual to the Jewish community's rich history or because it frames the way we will conduct ourselves and our engagement with members of the community.

Preface

Stable and secure housing contributes to a range of essential benefits including shelter, health, wellbeing, regular employment and financial security for its occupants. Yet not everyone has access to stable and secure housing within their means. Housing is one of the highest costs for most Australians.

Homelessness

Homelessness is not just a result of too few houses, nor is it a choice. There are a range of structural and individual factors that contribute to a person/family becoming homeless including but not limited to family violence, inadequate affordable housing, mental health issues, social security and immigration policies, under or unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and/or family breakdown. The complex interplay of individual and structural factors not only leads to homelessness but contributes to why a person may remain homeless. People without safe accommodation are some of the most vulnerable in the community.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), there are over 105,000 homeless people in Australia, a rise of 17% since 2006ⁱ (0.5% of the populationⁱⁱ).

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achrayoot chevratit
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These include rough sleepers, those in boarding houses, in temporary or inappropriate accommodation or staying in homeless accommodation services. Over 22,500 Victorians were recorded as homeless in 2011 (i.e. 42.6 per 10,000 population)ⁱⁱⁱ. Almost half were young people under 25 years old and 16% were children under 12 years old (3,600)^{iv}. Analysis on the 2011 ABS data indicates that 220 people in the Victorian Jewish Community at any one time are homeless with an additional 130 at risk of homelessness^v.

Housing Affordability

Rental or mortgage strain and housing affordability are key contributors to the risk of homelessness. The Census 2011 identified 78,342 people at risk of homelessness, living in marginalised housing arrangements^{vi}.

The average cost of housing has increased substantially over the past decade. National house prices increased 147% between 2001 and 2011—from \$169,000 to \$417,500^{vii}. The proportion of Australian households in housing stress has increased, from 14% in 1994–95 to 18% in 2011–12^{viii}. Of these, 2 in 5 (41%) were low-income households^{ix}.

The waiting list for public housing remains long, as those at extreme risk of homelessness or with special needs spend more than two years wait time^x. In 2016, there were about 34,000 people on the public housing waiting list in Victoria^{xi}.

In 2011, approximately 4,500 Jewish Victorians were living in households experiencing rental stress and 3,000 were living in households experiencing mortgage stress^{xii}.

Position Statement

Jewish Care seeks to promote social justice and basic human rights by reducing barriers to enable access to safe, secure and affordable housing, particularly for those most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the Jewish Community.

Jewish Care:

- believes that safe, affordable, secure and sustainable housing is a basic human right for all people;
- recognises that in addition to being affordable and sustainable, housing for the Jewish Community should be accessible, culturally appropriate and available in areas that enable the continuation of religious and cultural activities including locations close to Jewish schools, synagogues and community activity;

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- identifies that the Jewish Community is diverse and hence housing solutions need to respond to this diversity in order to flexibly meet the varied needs and circumstances of individuals and families;
- supports all government, private and not-for profit initiatives that result in significant investment in a range of social and affordable accommodation and housing models;
- identifies that homelessness is an outcome of many and varied issues and commits to tackling the causes by responding to those factors that lead to homelessness through a person-centred approach that wraps services and supports around the individual and/or family; and
- commits to advocating for increases in social and affordable housing stock in areas that the Jewish Community reside.

People without access to safe and secure accommodation remain some of the most vulnerable in the community.

This Position Statement was reviewed and approved by the CEO in August 2021.

ⁱAustralian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimated homelessness, 2011 Cat. No. 2049.0*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 10 April 2017

<<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2049.0Main%20Features22011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2049.0&issue=2011&num=&view>>.

ⁱⁱHomelessness Australia 2016, *Homelessness in Australia*, Homelessness Australia, ACT, viewed 10 April 2017, <<http://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/index.php/about-homelessness/homeless-statistics>>.

ⁱⁱⁱAustralian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimated homelessness, 2011 Cat. No. 2049.0*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 10 April 2017

<<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2049.0Main%20Features22011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2049.0&issue=2011&num=&view>>.

^{iv}Ibid.

^vMarkus, A 2013, *Housing needs within the Jewish population of Melbourne*, Report prepared for Jewish Care Victoria. Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, Melbourne.

^{vi}Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimated homelessness, 2011 Cat. No. 2049.0*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 10 April 2017

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^{vii}Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013, *Housing Assistance in Australia*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, viewed 10 April 2017

<<http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129545051>>.

^{viii}Ibid.

^{ix}Ibid.

^xIbid.

^{xi}Department of Human Services 2017, Public housing waiting and transfer list, Department of Human Services, State government of Victoria, Melbourne, viewed 10 April 2017 <<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/research-data-and-statistics/public-housing-waiting-and-transfer-list>>.

^{xii}Markus, A 2013, *Housing needs within the Jewish population of Melbourne*, Report prepared for Jewish Care Victoria. Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University, Melbourne.

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