

**Justice is  
fundamental to  
every society  
that values the  
wellbeing of all  
its members.**

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# **JUSTICE 2021**

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## **TOWARD A MORE JUST AUSTRALIA**



Australian Baptists are a multi-cultural and multi-generational movement of people centred on Christ and serving communities in metropolitan, regional, coastal, rural and remote Australia through a network of almost 1000 churches, State Associations and Service Organisations.

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It is our aim that  
our advocacy  
reflects the voices  
of those who are  
experiencing  
injustice.

## INTRODUCTION: Australian Baptists and Justice

Justice is fundamental to every society that values the wellbeing of all its members. In the Christian tradition, to which the Australian Baptist churches belong, justice is grounded in the conviction that the earth and its resources are the gifts of God for the sustaining of all life, and that human communities are to be both the recipients and the stewards of this divine generosity.

There are many ways in which Australians can celebrate our deep and rich experience of a generous and just enjoyment of life. In this report however our focus is on areas in which our stewardship falls short, in which our society is not delivering on its promise of justice for all. This report calls for action by the Australian Parliament and the Commonwealth Government to move our society towards a greater realisation of justice for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- people seeking refuge and asylum;
- women experiencing domestic violence;
- people unable to secure safe and affordable housing;
- older members of our society in need of support and care;
- people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change;
- people living in extreme poverty; and
- people subject to modern slavery and ongoing violation of their human rights.

There are, of course, other manifestations of injustice that are deserving of attention. We have selected those in which Australian Baptists have some “skin in the game” through our community services agencies; our global humanitarian and development agency; and our State Associations of churches. In some of these areas we have longstanding ties with individuals and communities whose wellbeing is impacted by their experiences of injustice. In others our engagement is new and growing. In all cases it is our aim that our advocacy reflects the voices of those who are experiencing injustice.

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We offer this report with an awareness of our own responsibilities. Achieving justice is not the sole preserve of governments, but something that requires the involvement of every member of society and every part of society. In Australia, the Baptists are a community of more than 1000 local congregations, our churches can be found in every State and Territory, and we serve the wellbeing of our fellow human beings through the ministries of our local churches and through bodies such as Global Interaction, Baptist Care Australia and Baptist World Aid. Globally we are a movement of 47,000,000 people with a presence in 126 countries and territories. We are committed to contributing towards a more just world, aware that the nature of justice can be contested, that our realisation of justice has been imperfect, but committed to a world in which there is justice for all.

# 1 Justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

**The dispossession of Australia's First Peoples has had destructive and ongoing impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and remains the nation's oldest unresolved injustice. It is vital to the interests of all Australians that our nation take the steps necessary to achieve a deep and lasting reconciliation.**

This will not be accomplished in any single action or program but through a “walking together” in which the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original inhabitants and stewards of country is recognised, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ languages and cultures are recovered and celebrated, equality is achieved in health and life expectancy, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to determine their futures.

In recent decades, important steps have been taken to this end, including the achievement of land rights; the rejection of the doctrine of terra nullius; the apology to the Stolen Generations; the Uluru Statement from the Heart; the work of State governments toward treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; growing public support for NAIDOC week and Reconciliation Week; and growing respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the world’s oldest living cultures and embrace of the wisdom embedded in them. These have been necessary steps on the journey toward reconciliation, but more remains to be done.

## ► Progress the Uluru Statement calls for Voice, Treaty, and Truth-telling

In the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders outlined “a sequence of reforms aimed at doing what bureaucracy and politicians have been unable to do, empower Indigenous communities to take control of their future”. These reforms were for Voice, Treaty & Truth-telling.<sup>1</sup>

The Government is currently considering the shape of a Voice to Parliament. The Voice aims to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have input into laws and policies that affect them and their communities.

We affirm the call for the Voice to be enshrined in the Constitution. This is both appropriate as a part of Constitutional recognition of the First Nations and ensures that Governments must give attention to the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on matters that affect them. If the Voice is merely legislated Governments can simply legislate to abolish it, something that has precedence in Australia’s political history. We recognise that Constitutional Reform must be undertaken with due care and caution yet note that two former Chief Justices of the High Court of Australia, Murray

Gleeson, and Robert French, both support the inclusion of the Voice within the Constitution.<sup>2</sup>

We also affirm the need for the Voice to be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and inclusive of the breadth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and perspectives.

We call on the Commonwealth Government to put the Voice to the Australian population by referendum as soon as possible, and certainly with sufficient time for the passing of the referendum and the enactment of necessary legislation to be achieved within the next term of Parliament. We call the Coalition, the ALP, and the minor parties to work collaboratively to ensure a referendum question that satisfies the aspirations of the Uluru Statement for Voice and that has non-partisan support.

## ► Implement Closing the Gap Agreement

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience substantial disadvantages relative to non-indigenous Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more likely to die before the age of 5; less likely to access early childhood education; and less likely to complete Year 12. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely to experience domestic and family violence. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated; less likely to be employed; and more likely to experience psychological trauma. These are legacies of dispossession.<sup>3</sup>

Since 2008 the “Closing the Gap” initiative of the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) sought to name and address these inequalities, with largely disappointing results. A major review was conducted in 2018 which confirmed what many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities had long argued, that is, that COAG’s approach had failed because it tended toward service delivery that did not involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in design, delivery and evaluation of programs and did not build on strengths within communities.<sup>4</sup> In 2020, a refreshed Closing the Gap agreement was launched, with an expanded set of goals and a commitment to place partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities at the centre of programming. We welcome this change of focus. It recognises the centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as a resource and self-determination as the preferred pathway to community development. The great challenge will be for COAG to cultivate cultural change within government departments necessary to supporting the new model. To this end we believe the ongoing review process must be thorough, inclusive of input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the recommendations and actions taken to implement them publicly reported.

## ► Implement recommendations to reduce rate of arrest and incarceration

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders have expressed alarm at the high rate of incarceration of their peoples. The Uluru Statement from the Heart says: “Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the

**COAG’s approach had failed because it tended toward service delivery that did not involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in design, delivery and evaluation of programs and did not build on strengths within communities.**

planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.”<sup>5</sup>

The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody found that disproportionately high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were dying in custody due to the fact that disproportionately high numbers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were subject to arrest and imprisonment. The Royal Commission made recommendations aimed at reducing these unacceptably high incarceration rates. Yet thirty years later Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to be incarcerated in 2020 as they were in 1991.

This must be an issue of high priority for the Commonwealth and State governments. Incarceration rates have been included in the Refreshed Closing the Gap Targets, with a goal of reducing the rate of adult Indigenous incarceration by 15% by 2031 and the youth Indigenous detention rate by 30% by 2021.

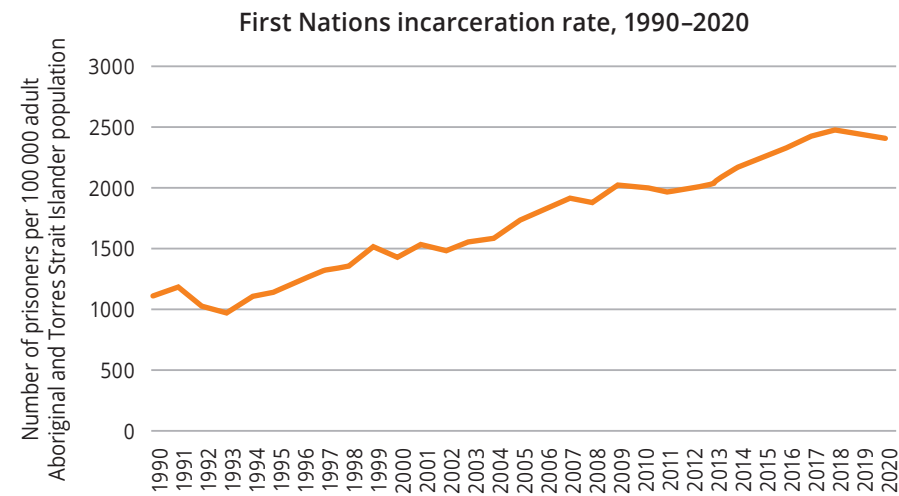
“Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.”<sup>5</sup>

ULURU STATEMENT  
FROM THE HEART

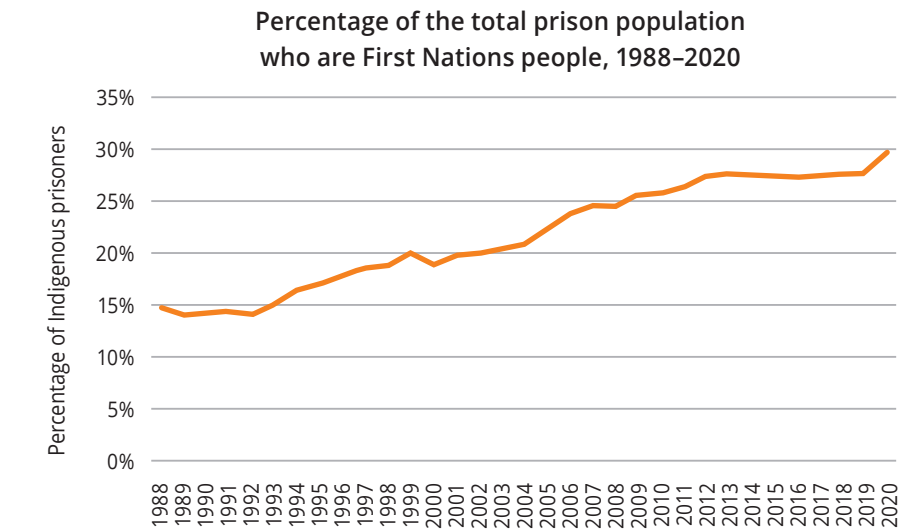
We affirm the commitment to reducing the Indigenous incarceration rate and its inclusion in the refreshed Closing the Gap program. We also call on Commonwealth and State Governments to give urgent attention to implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and to the findings and recommendations of the 2017 Law Reform Commission’s *Pathways to Justice* Report.

“It is about the recognition of Indigenous Australians in the constitution, which empowers the Parliament to legislate the Voice to Parliament as the means by which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised in the nation. Australia does not make sense without recognition; Australia is incomplete without recognition. How could there be an Australia without its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Indigenous peoples? As long as its Indigenous peoples remain unrecognised, then Australia is an absurdity, a nation missing its most vital heart.”

Noel Pearson, Address to the National Museum of Australia, 17 March 2021



Source: ANU Centre for  
Aboriginal Economic Policy  
Research, Working Paper  
140/2021.



Source: ANU Centre for  
Aboriginal Economic Policy  
Research, Working Paper  
140/2021.

## WHAT WE’RE ASKING

We believe all Australian politicians and governments should heed the calls of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, working and walking together to:

- 1 Achieve the vision of the Uluru Statement from the Heart for Voice, Treaty and Truth-telling, particularly working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to design and enshrine a Voice in Australia’s Constitution.
- 2 Achieve the goals of the refreshed Closing The Gap agreement of 2020.
- 3 Reduce rates of arrest and incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ensure their safety through implementing the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the findings and recommendations of the 2017 Law Reform Commission’s Pathways to Justice Report.

1 Megan Davis, July 11, 2019, “The Voice to Parliament: Our Plea to Be Heard”, ABC Religion website  
2 Gabrielle Appleby, August 1, 2019, “A worthwhile project: why two chief justices support the Voice to parliament, and why that matters.” The Conversation website.  
com/a-worthwhile-project-why-two-chief-justices-support-the-voice-to-parliament-and-why-that-matters-120971  
3 See the Closing the Gap Reports issued annually since 2008. The 2020 Report outlines an expanded set of targets.

4 Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2018, *Closing the Gap Retrospective Review*  
5 Uluru Statement, 2017. The claim that Australia’s Indigenous people are proportionally the most incarcerated in the world was fact checked by the Conversation and found to be factual. See “Thalia Anthony & Eileen Baldry, June 6 2017, “Factcheck Q&A. Are Indigenous Australians the Most Incarcerated People on Earth?”.



# 2 Justice for People Seeking Refuge and Asylum

At the end of 2019, more than 34 million people were refugees, asylum seekers or in a refugee-like situation. This was triple the number a decade earlier, due to both continuing and new conflicts that force people to flee their home country and the unwillingness of the international community to provide those already refugees with permanent solutions.<sup>1</sup>

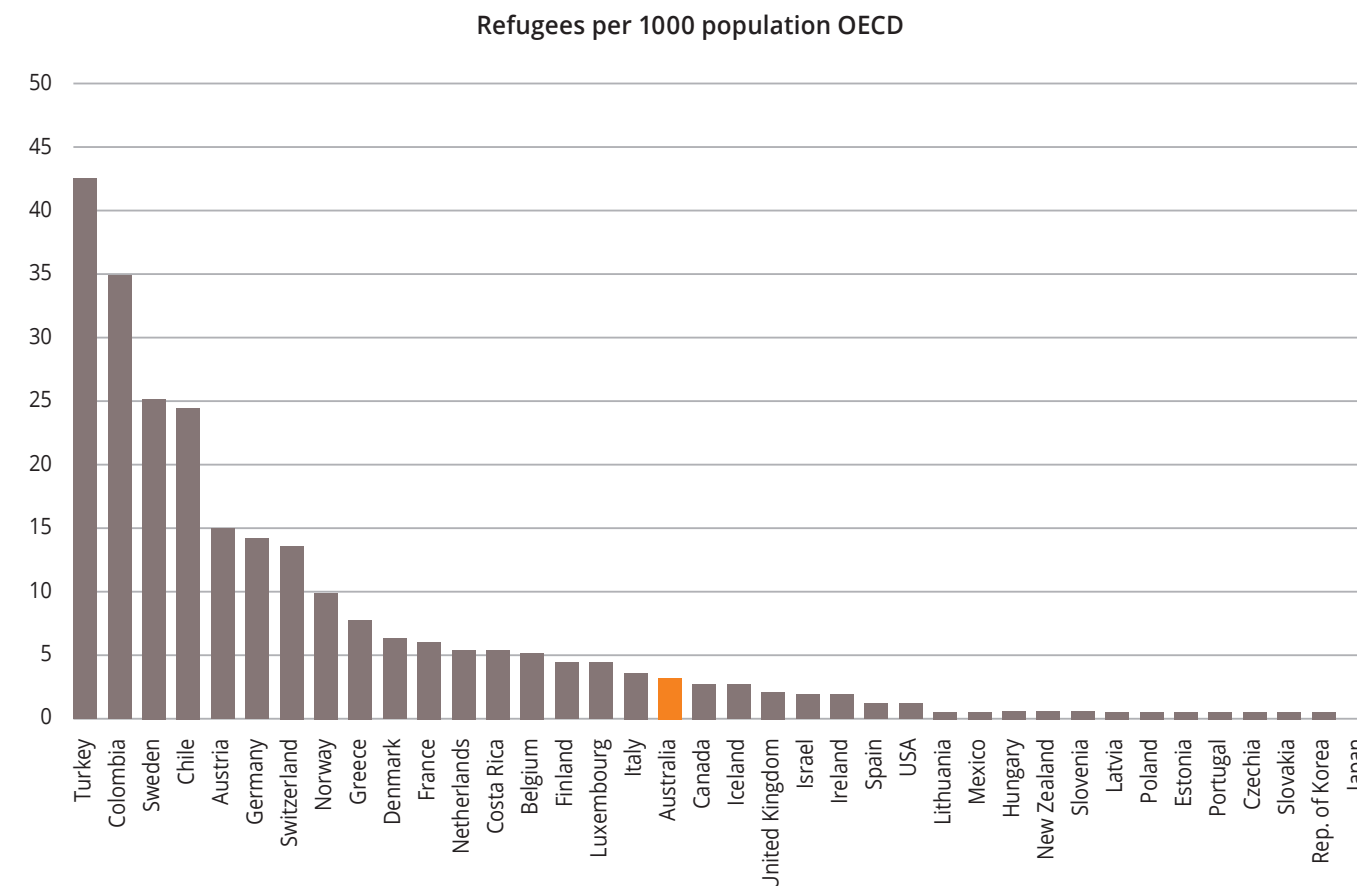
The vast majority of refugees come from a handful of nations marked by high levels of violence. For example, at the end of 2019 more 60% of the world's refugee population came from just four countries — Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar.<sup>2</sup> Given that the vast majority of those who flee seek safety in a neighbouring country, refugee populations are also concentrated in a handful of mainly developing countries.

The living circumstances of people seeking refuge are typically precarious. Most have experienced trauma and have left behind familiar places, wealth, social institutions, relational networks, and other resources on which people usually draw in times of crisis. In almost every host country they experience restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to school, work, healthcare, and social protections. Where the conflict in their home country is prolonged and in the absence of opportunities to become permanent residents of their host country or to resettle in a third country, people can live for decades in marginality and danger.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the difficulties people face when seeking safety outside their home country. They have been disproportionately impacted by job loss, reduced working hours, and reduced income. Women who seek refuge, already living within households and communities experiencing high levels of trauma and absent established societal mechanisms for preventing violence, were more likely to suffer increased

A REFUGEE is a person living outside their country who is unable to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinion.

An ASYLUM SEEKER is a person who has applied or intends to apply for protection as a refugee but has not yet had their claim to refugee status assessed by authorities.



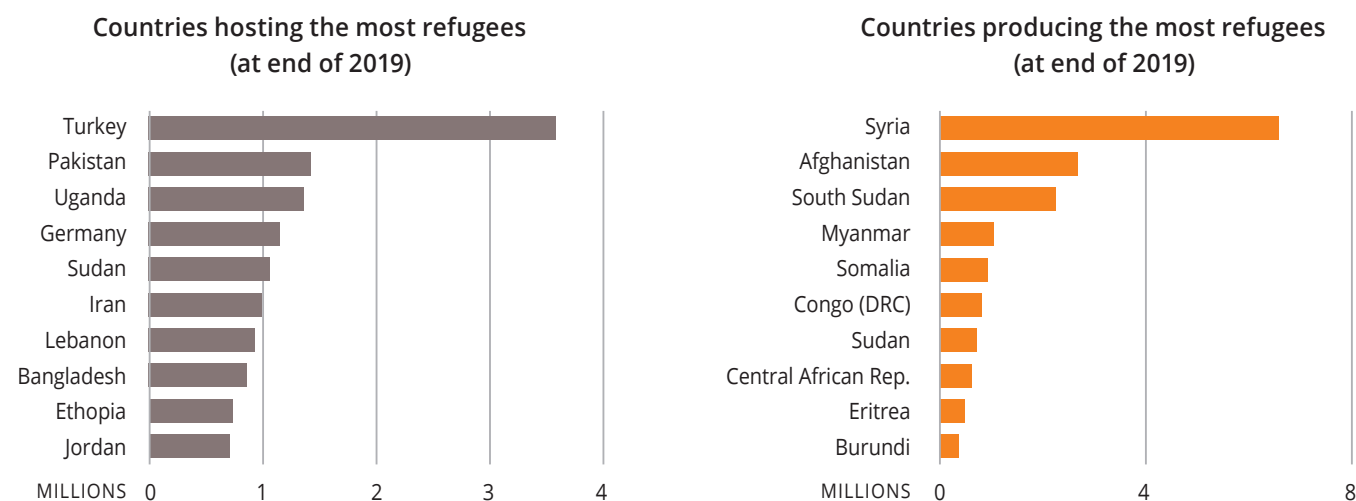
Source: UNHCR 2020

levels of domestic violence. Children make up more than 50% of the global refugee population and more likely than other children to be impacted by the pandemic. As 94% of the world's students experienced school closures of up to 7 months in 2020, children seeking refuge were among the most severely impacted given very low rates of access to online and other remote forms of learning. Girls were left more exposed to violence, sexual abuse, and child marriage as a result of the pandemic.

As an island state somewhat distant from the places where people face the greatest threats to their lives and freedoms, Australia has never had to provide safety for vulnerable people in large, unexpected groups on the scale experienced by countries that border conflicted and fragile states. Our role in the international protection system has been to:

- Provide asylum to refugees who arrive at our borders seeking it (an obligation we assume as a signatory to the Refugee Convention);
- Resettle refugees from other host nations;
- Provide financial and technical support to host nations in the developing world; and
- Promote peace and prosperity in our region and the world.

Australia has substantial capacity to engage in these areas. The UNHCR offers two indicators of country capacity to provide protection to refugees — ratio of refugees to GDP and the ratio of refugees to population. With 0.1 refugees per \$1000 GDP Australia ranks 98th in the world on the first indicator and 3.1 refugees per 1000 members of population Australia ranks 57th on the second.<sup>3</sup>



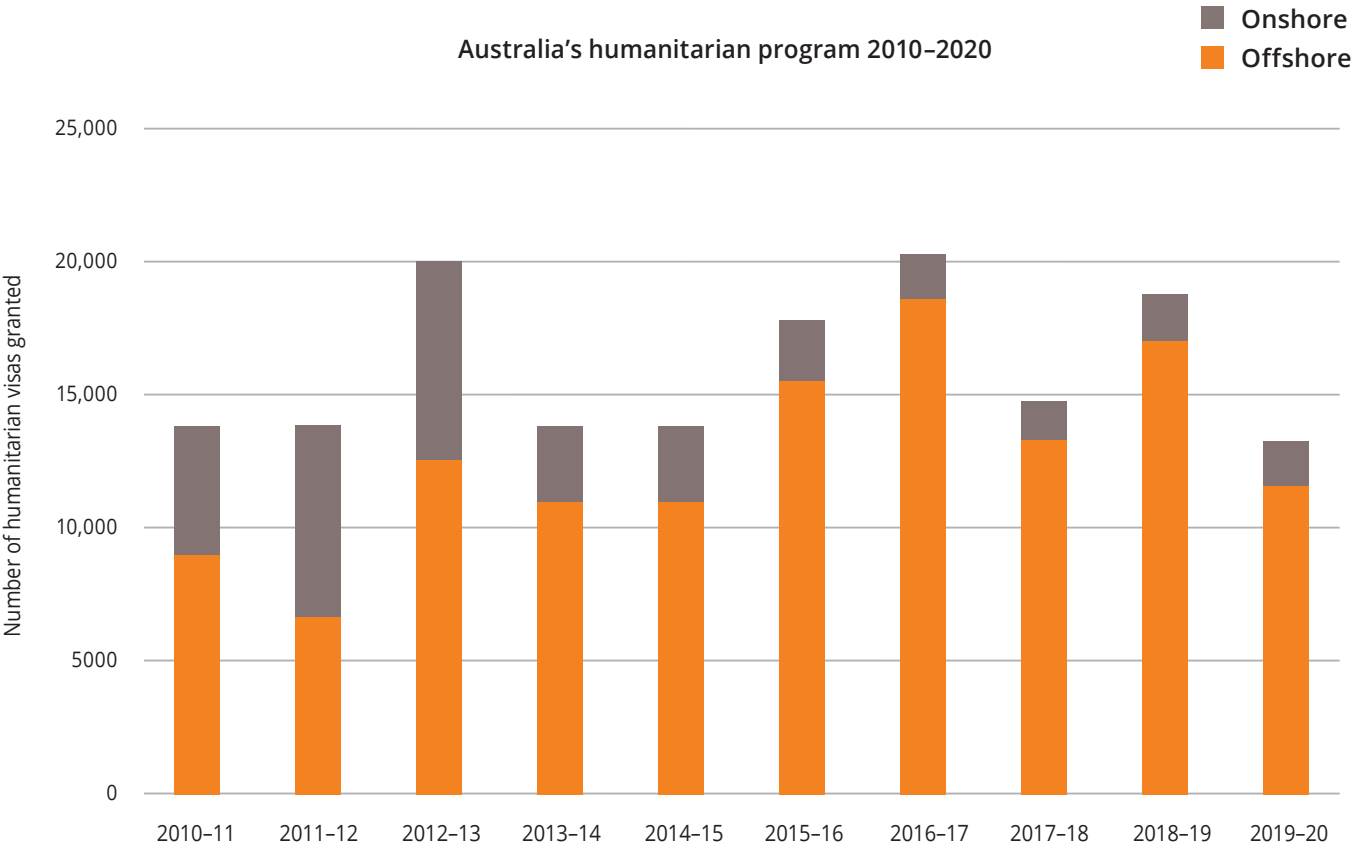
Source: UNHCR 2020

The provision of asylum to people seeking refuge in Australia is an obligation of the Refugee Convention to which Australia is a signatory. People who arrive in Australia seeking asylum make their way here by boat or plane. Yet despite the relatively low numbers who do so, the response to those seeking to arrive by boat has been the most contested area of refugee policy since such boats started arriving in the 1970s. Successive Governments imposed measures designed to deter boat arrivals and to satisfy public anxieties. Today these measures include the use of naval force to turn asylum boats away from Australian waters and a refusal to allow refugees who arrive by boat to settle in Australia. In our view this is a violation of Australia's obligations under the Refugee Convention.

Australia maintains one of the world's few refugee resettlement programs. This is not required under the terms of the Refugee Convention but is consistent with the role nations such as ours can play in the international protection system as identified in the Global Compact for Refugees.

In 2019–20 the Government had planned to offer visas to 18,750 people, with a minimum of 17,100 places to those living “offshore”, that is, refugees living in an overseas host country who have applied for protection in Australia. Measures to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus saw the offshore program suspended in March 2020. As a result, only 13,171 visas were granted in 2019–20, 11,521 to those in the offshore component and 1,650 to those in the onshore component (i.e., people who applied for protection after arriving in Australia).<sup>4</sup> The 2020–21 Commonwealth budget indicates that the Australian Government will maintain a reduced cap of 13,750 for 2021–2025.

**The provision of asylum to people seeking refuge in Australia is an obligation of the Refugee Convention to which Australia is a signatory.**



Sources: Janet Phillips, (Sept 2017) “Australia's Humanitarian Program: a quick guide to the statistics since 1947”, Australian Parliamentary Library; Dept of Home Affairs, Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Program statistics for 2018–19 and 2019–20.

## WHAT WE'RE ASKING

We believe Australia can and should do more to contribute to durable solutions for people seeking safety which their home country is unable or unwilling to provide. We call on the Commonwealth Government to:

- 1 Increase the number of visas under the Special Humanitarian Program back to 18,750 as soon as Covid-19 quarantine and travel restrictions allow, and in the course of the next Parliament establish a timetabled plan to raise the number to between 27,000–30,000 annually;
- 2 Conduct fair and timely assessment of all claims for refugee status.
- 3 Support people seeking asylum to live in the community with adequate income and access to health care during assessment of their claims.
- 4 Proceed with the introduction of a community sponsorship program that is accessible by community groups, affordable and in which the number of people entering through the community refugee program are additional to the number entering through other programs. Provision should be made for this in the 2021–22 Federal budget.



PHOTO: ROBERTO TADDEO

Globally, more than 34 million people are refugees including this woman and child in a refugee camp in the Eastern Mediterranean.

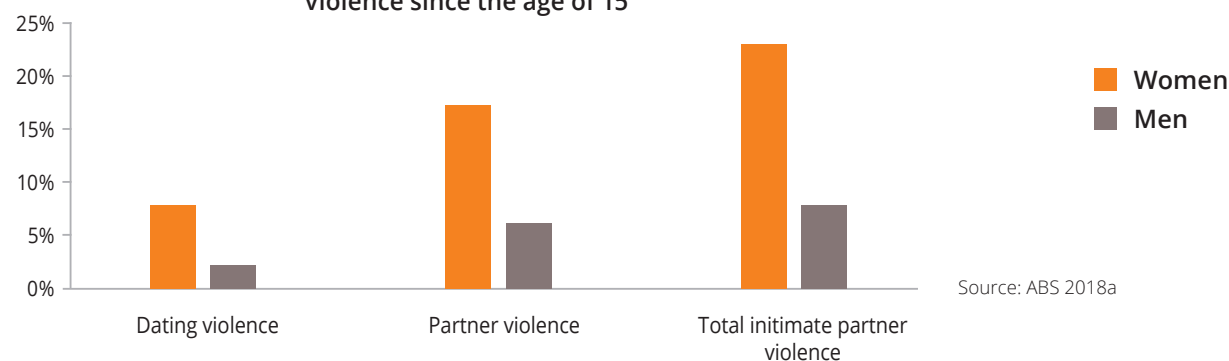
1 UNHCR (June 2020), Global Trends, Statistical Annex, Table 20  
2 Note this refers to refugees under the mandate of UNHCR and excludes approximately 5 million Palestinian refugees under the mandate of UNRWA and 3 million people who have fled Venezuela but are not classified as refugees.  
3 UNHCR, Global Report 2019, Statistical Annex, Table 21  
4 Public Information and Reporting Section of the Department of Home Affairs (September 2020), Australia's Offshore Humanitarian Program: 2019–20 p1

# 3 Justice for Women Experiencing Domestic Violence

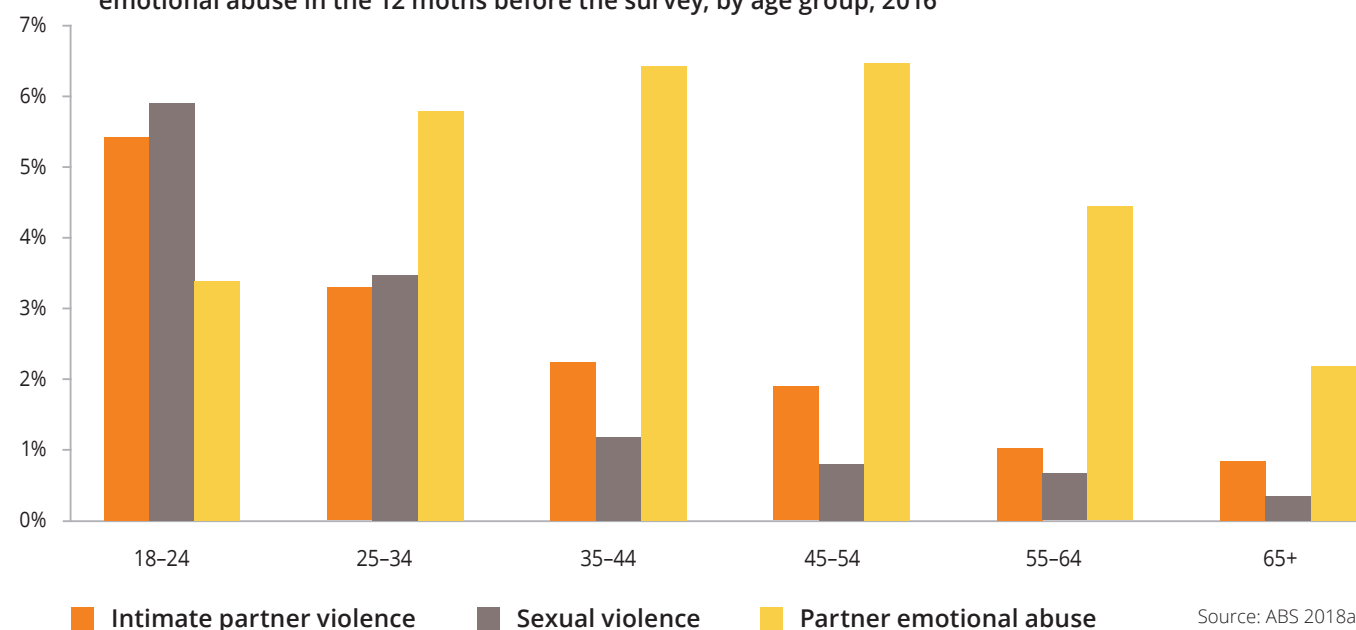
Domestic violence is an issue of significant concern for Australia. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare declares, “family, domestic and sexual violence [to be] a major national health and welfare issue that can have lifelong impacts for victims and perpetrators.”<sup>1</sup>

Although men can experience domestic violence, research shows that perpetrators are overwhelmingly male while victims and survivors are mostly women and children. One in six women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15. One in four women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15.<sup>1</sup>

Women and men aged 18 and over who had experienced dating violence, cohabiting partner violence, or any intimate partner violence since the age of 15



Women who experienced intimate partner violence, sexual violence or emotional abuse in the 12 months before the survey, by age group, 2016



Statistics continue to paint a complex picture of domestic violence in Australia. When rates of partner violence were reviewed in 2019, they appeared to be stable since 2005. However, the following have increased:

- The number of people accessing services because of domestic violence including police, hospital, child protection, and homeless services;
- The number of women being hospitalised for domestic violence (an increase of 23% for women from 2014/15 to 2016/17). According to the AIHW, “almost eight women were hospitalised each day in 2014/15 after being assaulted by their spouse or partner”;<sup>2</sup>
- The number of reported incidents (for example there was a 9.4% increase in Victoria in 2020).<sup>3</sup>

The full picture is hard to verify with the number of women who did not seek advice or support about violence by a partner being 46% of women for whom there is current partner violence and 37% of women for whom there was previous partner violence.<sup>4</sup> In addition, frontline domestic violence workers in NSW indicated a “dramatic spike” in calls to national and state-wide domestic violence hotlines and a rise in client numbers through the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

While our understanding of domestic violence may be deepening, societal recognition that it includes non-physical forms of abuse and control (often referred to as coercive control) is not well understood. There is still significant work to be done to embed an understanding of coercive control in preventative work, law enforcement, and the legal system. Coercive control is present in relationships prior to a perpetrator murdering their partner or former partner.<sup>6</sup> The need for a better understanding of coercive control is high as “intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability, illness and injury among women aged 18–44.”<sup>7</sup>

Frontline domestic violence workers in NSW indicated a “dramatic spike” in calls to national and state-wide domestic violence hotlines and a rise in client numbers through the pandemic.

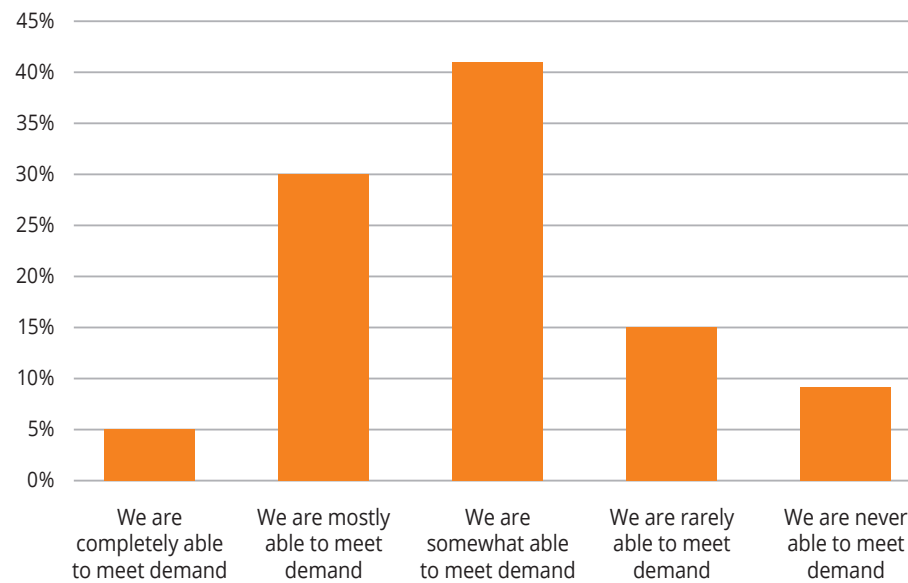
## Our evaluation

In 2018, Baptist leaders from across the nation met with politicians in Canberra to advocate for victims of domestic violence. At that time we issued a report based on interviews with domestic violence service providers in 28 federal electorates and identified two key issues:

1. There was a significant lack of safe, secure, and affordable housing options for people seeking to leave abusive relationships, and the consequences of this can be traumatic. There is a shortage of suitable crisis and emergency accommodation and of secure, long term social or affordable housing.
2. The vast majority of organisations that provide domestic violence services are fully stretched and only able to meet the demand for their services by either limiting what they offer or to whom they offer it.<sup>8</sup>



Proportion of respondents who perceived their main service or program was able to meet demand (number of responses = 1,433)



Source: <https://www.acoss.org.au/publications/demand-for-community-services-snapshot-december-2019/>

While we welcome the funding boost from no new funding for domestic violence in 2020 to \$1 billion over three years in the recent Commonwealth budget, it was well short of the \$3 billion over three years requested by women's safety organisations and is insufficient to enable domestic violence service providers to meet the demand for their services and to assure victims of abuse that if they leave their perpetrator, they will be supported.<sup>9</sup>

- A report commissioned by the NSW Council of Social Services and other peak bodies, found that 62,000 employees are needed by 2030 to meet the demand for services in NSW;<sup>10</sup>
- 56% of people seeking crisis accommodation did not receive it;<sup>10</sup>
- Frontline DV workers reported 2020 to be the 'worst year on record' for family violence;<sup>11</sup>
- Demand for a court advocacy service in NSW rose 35% in 2020<sup>11</sup>

One service provider we spoke to recently said that they had a waitlist of 8 months for their domestic violence therapy group and have had to close the wait list four times in recent months. They also said that while the Victorian Royal Commission into Domestic Violence report recommendations (given in 2016) were welcome, they have not been implemented to completion and services are almost always at capacity.

Over the course of the last decade, there has been rising awareness of DV within the Australian community and women experiencing violence have been encouraged to come forward and seek support. Yet as a nation we are not delivering on provision of that support. If Australia is to see real change to domestic violence and give assurance to women coming forward, the message that needs to be sent to victims of abuse is that "we have your back" and that we have your back every step along the way:

- When you contact the police; that the police will understand coercive control and how to look for signs and evidence.

**If Australia is to see real change to domestic violence and give assurance to women coming forward, the message that needs to be sent to victims of abuse is that "we have your back".**

- When you go through the family court system; that wait times will be reasonable, that you will be given support and that when you raise concerns about your partner or ex-partner you will be taken seriously.
- If your children are given interim orders allowing your partner access to them, the access visits will be supervised to ensure the safety of the children.
- When you access services, whether they are in the crisis or therapeutic stage, you will not have a one-year long wait list or be expected to be out of the crisis stage in six weeks.
- When you seek crisis accommodation; that you will not be turned away because it is full.
- When you look for affordable housing or whether you want to stay in your own home safely; you are able to access what you need.
- Whether you live in a regional, rural, or urban area; that you will have access to services.

In addition to this, significant primary prevention is needed through awareness raising and education of the public. This will help to prevent abusive relationships before they start and alert people to the early warning signs of coercive control.

## WHAT WE'RE ASKING

**We ask for a commitment from COAG to ensure women in Australia leaving situations of domestic violence can access the full suite of services they require. This should include:**

**1** An increase of Commonwealth domestic violence funding to \$1billion pa from the 2021 Federal Budget and assurance of long-term funding for the full range of prevention, early intervention, and tertiary programs to prevent and respond to family violence.

**2** A commitment to fund a public education initiative around coercive control as well as increased education for frontline workers, police, lawyers, judicial officers, and child protection workers on coercive control.

**3** The development of a mechanism to assess unmet need for services to assist victims/survivors across Australia, in order to inform funding and program decisions, in collaboration with State and Territory Governments, and relevant non-government peak bodies and alliances.<sup>12</sup>

**4** An increased investment in safe, secure, and affordable housing. Without a significant investment in social and affordable housing, we will continue to push people who are experiencing domestic and family violence into homelessness, or back into violent relationships.

1 AIHW. 2019. "Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story." <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/b0037b2d-a651-4abf-9f7b-00a85e3de528/aihw-fdv3-FDSV-in-Australia-2019.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

2 AIHW. 2018. "Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018." <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-in-australia-2018/data>

3 Tuohy, W. 6 March 2021. "False Hope" <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/false-hope-women-stuck-in-violent-homes-fives-years-after-royal-commission-20210325-p57e3p.html>

4 Education Centre Against Violence and NSW Health. 2019. "Avoiding the 3 'M's." [http://www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au/uploads/60438/ufiles/publications\\_and\\_reports/Published\\_Reports/VAN\\_Resource/Factsheet\\_3\\_digital\\_2.pdf](http://www.ecav.health.nsw.gov.au/uploads/60438/ufiles/publications_and_reports/Published_Reports/VAN_Resource/Factsheet_3_digital_2.pdf)

5 Hickey, S. 07 April 2021. "Domestic violence workers plead for adequate funding." <https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/domestic-violence-workers-plead-for-adequate-funding/>

6 McGorry, P. and McMahon, M. 2020. "Coercive control is a key part of domestic violence" <https://disruptr.deakin.edu.au/society/coercive-control-is-a-key-part-of-domestic-violence-so-why-isnt-it-a-crime-across-australia/>

7 ANROWS. 2016. "Further examination of the burden of disease." <https://www.anrows.org.au/news/further-examination-the-burden-disease/>

8 Australian Baptist Ministries. Higgins, S. 2018. "No Room: A report on domestic violence services in Australian communities."

9 Mirage News. 12 May 2021. <https://www.miragenews.com/federal-budget-has-increased-focus-on-womens-558415/>

10 Amin, M. 12 March 2021. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-12/findings-show-60-per-cent-domestic-violence-victims-dont-report/13239476>

11 Hickey, S. 2021. "Domestic violence workers plead for adequate funding." <https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/domestic-violence-workers-plead-for-adequate-funding/>

12 Australian Women Against Violence Alliance. 2020. <https://awava.org.au/2020/08/18/submissions/submission-on-priorities-for-the-2020-2021-budget-budget-measures-to-address-violence-against-women>

# 4 Justice for People Unable to Access Safe and Secure Housing

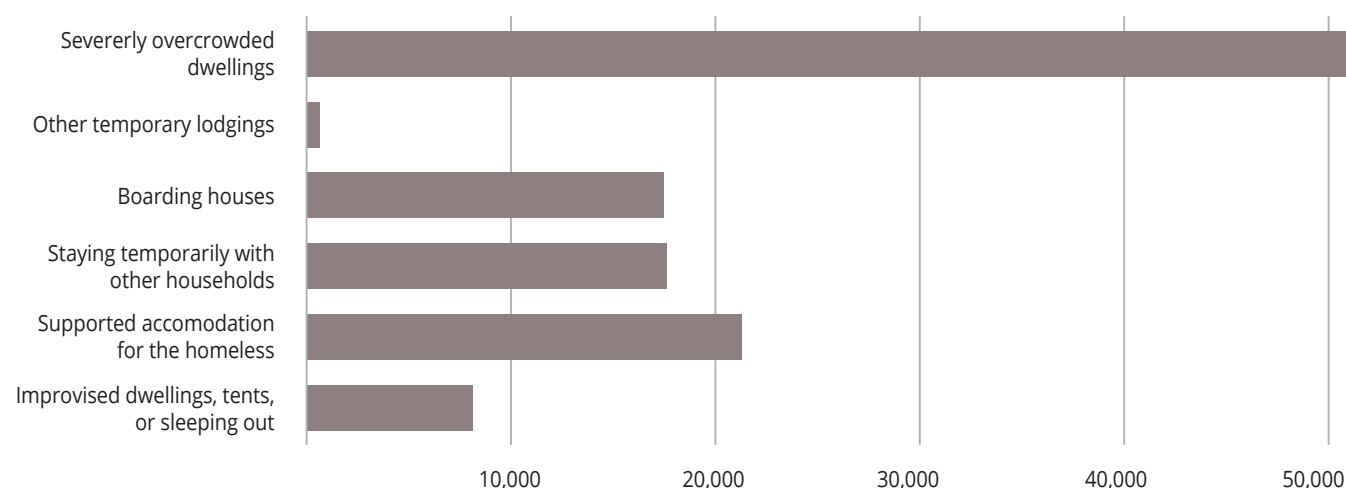
Access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing is fundamental to the enjoyment of life and wellbeing. The Productivity Commission describes it “as a vital determinant of wellbeing that is associated with better outcomes in health, education and employment, as well as economic and social participation”.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in Australia today a large and growing number of people are homeless, many more are at risk of homelessness, and others are experiencing unsustainable rent stress that is pushing them into poverty. We believe that Commonwealth and State governments can do more to implement policies that will reverse this trend and drive down rates of homelessness.

In the mind of many “homelessness” conjures images of people sleeping rough on the streets. This is but one way in which people find themselves without access to adequate, safe and secure housing. Homelessness can also take forms such as a woman and her children who have fled domestic violence and sleep in their car; an elderly man evicted from his home due to an inability to make rent payments and now sleeps in a boarding house; a young person who has been kicked out of home and “couch surfs” in the homes of friends; and a large group made up of extended family members sharing a house to the point that it is severely overcrowded.<sup>2</sup>

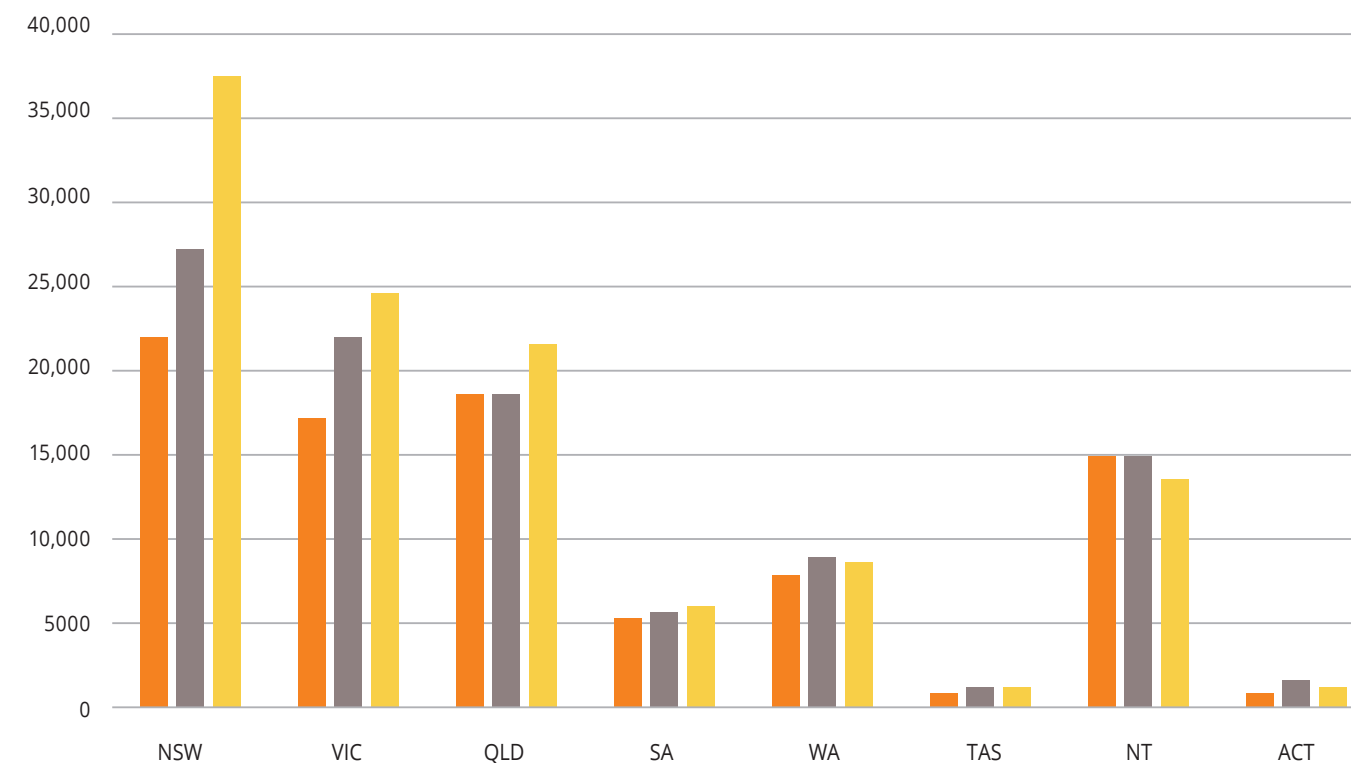
The number of people in Australia who experience homelessness is growing. On the night of the 2006 census 95,309 people were homeless. Ten years later the number was 116,367, an increase of 22% and greater than the rate of population increase.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, while these figures provide a snapshot of homelessness at a given point in time, over time people move in and out of

Types of homelessness 2016



Source: ABS Census 2016

Number of people homeless in Australia



2006  
2011  
2016

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing

homelessness.<sup>4</sup> Consequently in any given year the number of people experiencing homelessness or at high risk of homelessness and in need of specialist services to stay out of homelessness far exceeds the numbers homeless on census night. In 2018–19 for example, 290,300 people were clients of specialist homelessness services, a number that has been growing year on year.

Homelessness is a reality in every state and territory. Due to their larger population sizes the eastern seaboard states (Qld, NSW, Vic) have the largest numbers of people who are homeless, but it is the Northern Territory in which the rate of homelessness is more than ten times greater than any other Australian state or territory.

The causes of homelessness are complex and include personal and structural factors. Personal circumstances place some groups of people at higher risk of homelessness than others. Those at higher risk include people experiencing family and domestic violence; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people living with mental illness; people living with a disability; people who experience problematic drug or alcohol use; people who have been incarcerated; and former members of the defence forces.<sup>5</sup>

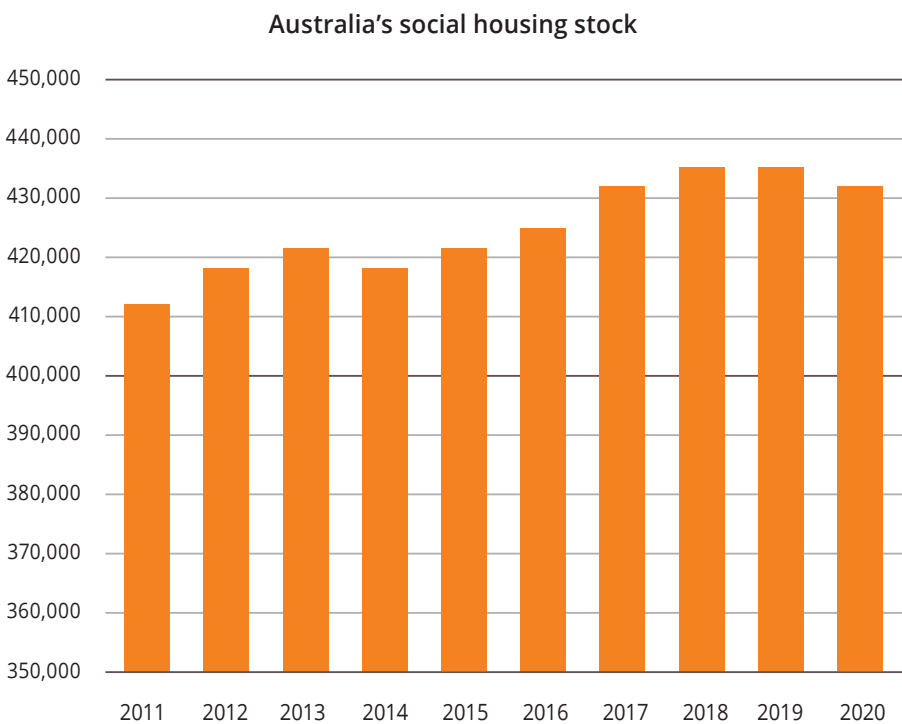
These circumstances alone do not create and sustain homelessness, but do so in a social system in which housing affordability is low for lower income households. Housing affordability is commonly defined in terms of the proportion of household income devoted to housing costs (rent payments, rate payments and housing related mortgage payments). Lower income households (that is, households in the lowest 40% of household income) are likely to experience housing stress when more than 30% of their income is devoted to housing costs.<sup>6</sup>

To alleviate housing stress, Commonwealth and State governments provide a number of supports and services.

1. Social housing: subsidised rental housing provided by not-for-profit, non-government or government organisations;
2. Specialist homeless services: direct assistance for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including accommodation and other services;
3. Financial assistance: targeted payments to assist with payment of rent or purchase of homes.

These are currently insufficient to overcome housing stress and prevent homelessness.

1. Australia lacks sufficient social housing stock. It has been estimated that Australia should maintain social housing stock equal to 6% of all occupied housing.<sup>7</sup> Yet the actual number of social housing units falls way below this (a gap of 130,000 dwellings in 2016), the total number of social housing stocks rose by just 20,969 in the ten years to 2020, and the proportion of households who are accessing social housing has fallen from 4.6% of all households in 2014 to 4.2% in 2020.<sup>8</sup> It is notable that government expenditure on homelessness emergency services rose by 27% in the four years to 2018–19 while social housing expenditure increased by just 4% over the same period.<sup>9</sup>
2. Specialist homelessness services report that on any given day they are unable to meet 260 requests for assistance;<sup>10</sup>
3. More than 1 in 2 recipients of Commonwealth rental support payments would be in housing stress without the payment, and almost 1 in 3 remain in housing stress after receiving the payment.<sup>11</sup>



Source: Productivity Commission  
Review of Government Service 2021

**Circumstances alone do not create and sustain homelessness, but do so in a social system in which housing affordability is low for lower income households.**

## WHAT WE'RE ASKING

We believe that Australia can and should do more to ensure access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing through:

**1** A national housing strategy. Australia needs a new national housing strategy that requires a significant departure from business as usual. Although responsibility for housing and homelessness services belongs to State Governments, the Commonwealth Government controls the main levers critical to a bold new strategy — the power of taxation and control of the social welfare system. We call on the Commonwealth Government to take the initiative in the formation of a COAG national housing strategy that works with civil society to ensure all Australians are able to access safe, affordable and sustainable housing.

**2** A national plan to end homelessness. Homelessness is varied and complex, yet a number of innovative approaches have been trialled both here in Australia and overseas with some promising measures of success.

These now need to be scaled up into a national strategy to end homelessness. We call on the Commonwealth Government to take the initiative in the formation of a COAG national homelessness strategy that works in partnership with civil society and those who are homeless to eradicate homelessness within a decade.

**3** National leadership in fast tracking a lasting solution. We are calling on the Australian Government to lead the national commitment to invest in the creation of social and affordable housing. We are asking the Government to support the building of 25,000 dwellings per year with a total of 100,000 over 5 years with incentives that will encourage the States and Territories, local government and philanthropic sources into deeper and long-term investment.



PHOTO: BAPTIST CARE SA

During the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, Baptist Care SA's WestCare Centre was unable to offer seated dining, but continued to meet growing demand by providing takeaway meals, six days a week.

1 Productivity Commission, 2021, Report on Government Services 2021. Section G. Housing & Homelessness.  
2 ABS, 2018, Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2016.  
3 ABS, 2018, Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2016.  
4 Andrew Beville, Abraham Chigavira, Nicolas Herault, Guy Johnson, Julie Moschion, Rosanna Scutella, Yi-Ping Tseng, Mark Wooden and Guyonne Kalb, 2015, Journeys Home Research Report No 6, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research  
5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Specialist Homelessness Services annual report 2018–19. Cat. no. HOU 318. Canberra: AIHW; Productivity Commission 2021; Beville et al, 2015, Journeys Home Research Report No 6.  
6 AIHW, June 30, 2021, Housing Affordability Snapshot, Housing affordability – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)  
7 Dr Judy Yates, 2016, Social and Affordable Housing Projections for Australia 2016–2026/36, Everybody's Home Campaign.  
8 AIHW June 30, 2021  
9 Pawson, POarcell, Liu, Hartley & Thompson, 2020, Australian Homelessness Monitor 2020, Launch Housing.  
10 AIHW 2020. www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services  
11 Productivity Commission, 2021, Report on Government Services 2021



# 5 Justice for Older Members of our Society in Need of Support and Care

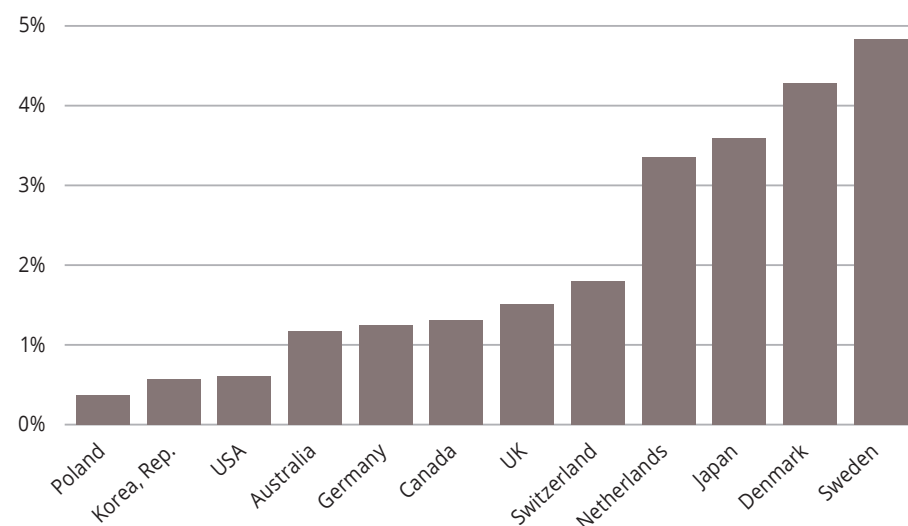
The Covid-19 pandemic brought to the surface many of the problems that Australia's aged care system is facing. The fact that the aged care system has problems is not new, with the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety being the latest of more than 20 such inquiries into aged care since major reforms were introduced to the system through the Commonwealth Aged Care Act 1997.<sup>1</sup> For years, this system was considered world class, but the Royal Commission confirmed what many already knew — that Australia's aged care system needs dramatic change.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's titled their Interim Report 'Neglect'. It concluded that 'the current aged care system fails to meet the needs of older Australians, does not deliver uniformly safe and quality care, is unkind and uncaring towards older people and, in too many instances, it neglects them'.<sup>2</sup> The need for change is urgent as it is well-known that Australia's older population is dramatically increasing and consequently demand for aged care services is growing. This will serve to put more stress on a system that is already at breaking point.

## ▶ A system chronically underfunded

The work of the Royal Commission found that 'that the reforms necessary to improve the quality and safety of aged care will require a significant injection of additional funding'.<sup>3</sup> This funding needs to be spent over all aspects of aged care to improve quality, ensure service sustainability, and guarantee access to the people that need it.

Expenditure on long-term care for older people as a percentage of GDP (2015)



Source: Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Review of International Systems for Long-term Care of Older People – Research Paper No. 2, January 2020

In 2021, the Australian economy is set to become the world's 12th largest economy. Even with the Covid-19 pandemic, Australia's public debt will remain low by global standards, with the Australian Government describing Australia's financial performance as 'rock-solid'.<sup>4</sup> Yet despite our well performing economy, Australia only spends about 1.2 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on aged care. That's less than half the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 2.5 per cent.<sup>5</sup> In other words, Australia spends 1.3 per cent less of its GDP on aged care compared to the OECD average. We can do better.

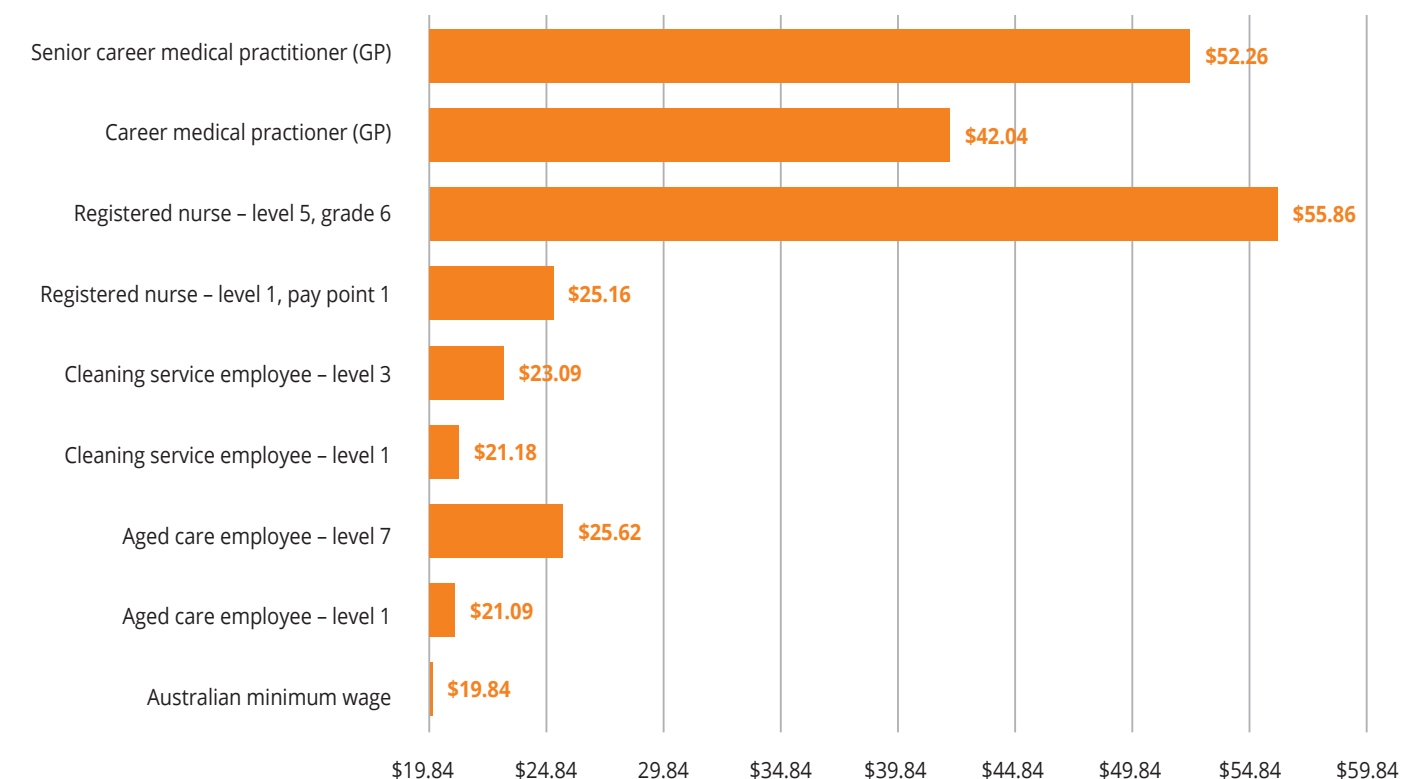
## ▶ A workforce undervalued

Aged care is facing a workforce 'perfect storm'. The population and demand for services is increasing whilst the volume of workers is in decline. The existing workforce — which consists of personal care workers, nurses, support workers and allied health staff<sup>6</sup> — is ageing and younger workers are choosing other roles and careers. Aged care providers are finding it increasingly difficult to find workers, a problem compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic with migration and working visas coming to a halt.

One of the biggest challenges is that staff in the sector are not paid well. Many earn close to minimum wage and even roles such as nurses are not able to attract the same wage as their public or health care counterparts. This is also true for other workers such as Personal Care Workers who can attract higher wages in areas such as cleaning. This detracts people from entering the aged care workforce and is also a reason cited for their exit.

...despite our well performing economy, Australia only spends about 1.2 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on aged care. That's less than half the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average...

Full-time award rate comparison of hourly pay



Source: Farr-Wharton, B., Xerri, M. and Brunetto, Y., 2021.



The Royal Commission heard that “The staff in our aged care homes are not well paid. There are all too often not enough of them to provide the care they would like to — for example, to sit and have a chat over a cup of tea. Many work in stressful and sometimes unsafe workplaces. Some are untrained; others have inadequate training”.<sup>7</sup> The current system is not funded to provide enough staff members with the right qualifications to provide level of quality care that Australians expect and deserve. While providers believe wages should be higher, they find it difficult to pay them due to lack of funding that would allow for wage increases.<sup>8</sup>

Short, medium, and long-term strategies are required to overcome workforce issues in aged care. This includes a greater emphasis on successful workforce planning, training and development and a more positive industry image.<sup>9</sup> It must also include an increase in worker wages and increases in provider funding that enable sustainability and the match the cost of providing care, including appropriate increases in wages.

▶ **Deserved care, denied**

A rights-based aged care system needs to include ensuring that older people get access to the care they need, when they need it. There have been policy shifts in recent years that have been aimed at assisting more older people to stay at home for as long as possible. Research from many sources has confirmed time and again that this is what Australians want.

However aged care provided in the in home is currently rationed, a practice that the Aged Care Royal Commission called ‘cruel and discriminatory’. When an older person is deemed eligible for a Home Care Package, they must first wait in the national prioritisation queue before a package of services is ‘assigned’, and then they must find a service provider to deliver their care. That can all take a very long time — up to a year or even longer — especially for those who have higher care and support needs.<sup>10</sup> It is essential for senior Australians, their families, and carers that a needs-based system that ensures timely access to services is implemented as a priority.

Number and percentage of people waiting for a Home Care Package (HCP) at their approved level who were also approved for permanent residential care, by level of approval at 31 December 2020.

Number of people on the Home Care Package (HCP) Waiting List (Dec 2020)

APPROVED LEVEL	Number of people waiting for a HCP at their approved level who also have an approval for permanent residential care	Number of people waiting for a HCP at their approved level	Percentage of people waiting for a HCP at their approved level who also have an approval for permanent residential care
Level 1	895	3,384	26.4%
Level 2	20,485	41,810	49.0%
Level 3	26,824	38,473	69.7%
Level 4	10,869	13,192	82.4%
TOTAL	59,073	96,859	61.0%

Source: Australian Government Department of Health, 2021

▶ **Impact of Covid-19 on the aged care sector**

Amidst the challenges of the aged care reforms, we can’t omit to focus on the pandemic which is impacting the aged care sector very significantly. Due to the vulnerability of older people, aged care providers and government have been required to take precautionary measures. As a result, residents, their families, and aged care staff suffered strongly during the pandemic as thousands of residents in homes endured months of isolation which has affected people’s physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.<sup>11</sup> It is vital that Government and providers develop innovative ways to protect and support residents during these difficult times.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING**

We believe Australia must deliver uniformly safe and quality care for all older Australians and call on the Commonwealth Government to:”

- 1

Adopt all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.
- 2

Increase spending in aged care to levels equivalent or higher than comparable OECD countries.
- 3

Establish an independent aged care pricing authority by July 2022 to determine prices for aged care services based on a casemix classification and funding model and annual costing studies which have regard to, inter alia, minimum casemix adjusted staffing levels.
- 4

Announce a joint Australian Government, employer, and union application to the Fair Work Commission in 2021–22 to increase minimum award wages which includes provision for funding award increases.
- 5

Fund a workforce program to support training, clinical placements, scholarships, and other initiatives to respond to workforce challenges in a targeted and commit the development of a 10-year workforce strategy to ensure a sufficient supply and distribution of health and aged care workers for the aged care sector and to inform future targeted workforce initiatives.
- 6

Provide funding for removing the home care package waiting list by December 2022, and thereafter offering services based on assessed need within one month of assessment.
- 7

Commit to the development and implementation by July 2024 of a new uncapped and better integrated aged care program.

1 The Australian Aged Care Collaboration, 2021. Report: It’s time to care about aged care. Canberra: The Australian Aged Care Collaboration, p.22.

2 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2019. Interim Report: Neglect. Volume 1. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p.1.

3 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2020. Consultation paper 2 – Financing Aged Care. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, p.1.

4 Austrade.gov.au. 2021. Why Australia – Benchmark Report – Resilient economy. [online] Available at: <https://www.austrade.gov.au/benchmark-report/resilient-economy> [Accessed 16 June 2021].

5 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Review of International Systems for Long-term Care of Older People – Research Paper No. 2, January 2020, accessed 22 January 2021, <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Research%20Paper%20%20-%20Review%20of%20international%20systems%20for%20long-term%20care%20of....pdf>. P62.

6 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Review of International Systems for Long-term Care of Older People – Research Paper No. 2, January 2020, accessed 22 January

2021, <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Research%20Paper%20%20-%20Review%20of%20international%20systems%20for%20long-term%20care%20of....pdf>

7 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. 2020. Counsel Assisting’s submission on workforce. [online] Available at: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/counsel-assistings-submissions-workforce> [Accessed 16 June 2021].

8 Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce, A Matter of Care Australia’s Aged Care Workforce Strategy, June 2018

9 Aged Care Workforce Industry Council. 2021. Our Industry. [online] Available at: <https://acwic.com.au/our-industry/> [Accessed 4 July 2021].

10 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2019. Interim Report: Neglect. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

11 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 2020, Aged care and COVID-19: a special report, available at: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/aged-care-and-covid-19-a-special-report.pdf>

# 6 Justice for People Vulnerable to the Impacts of Climate Change

Without a healthy planet to live on, the health and wellbeing of people and all other living things is impacted. We are a small part of an ecosystem much larger than ourselves, yet human activity has degraded this ecosystem, which threatens our ability to thrive for future generations. A protected environment is not only beneficial for humans and nature, but integral to our ongoing survival.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are two of the most urgent interconnected environmental issues we face this century. Climate change drives biodiversity loss, and conversely, protecting and restoring biodiversity is essential in addressing climate change. The United Nations Environment Programme states that climate change and biodiversity loss are twin crises that should be tackled together — and the next ten years will be crucial in doing so.<sup>1</sup>

Already the most devastating impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss are being felt by the most vulnerable communities both globally and here in Australia. All predictions for coming years suggest that this will continue to be the case.

The World Health Organisation estimates there will be an additional 250,000 climate change related deaths per year between 2030 and 2050 resulting from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress.<sup>2</sup>

Rising sea levels, more frequent and severe natural disasters, and fresh water and food shortages could see over a billion people displaced from their homes by the year 2050.<sup>3</sup>

Although these issues will affect all of humanity, low and middle-income countries are less likely to have sufficient infrastructure to address these ecological threats or funding to prepare for and address disasters as they happen. Populations across Sub-Saharan and North Africa, South Asia, and Latin America are at greatest risk, despite being some of the lowest emissions contributors.

These impacts mean that responding to these ecological crises and finding pathways for just transition are an issue not only of environmental justice but also of justice for some of the world’s most vulnerable people.

## ▶ Australia, the Paris Agreement and Climate Change

Australia is a party to the Paris Agreement, which has the stated purpose of “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change”. As well as

setting targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions, the Paris Agreement includes a mechanism for targets to be reviewed every five years, and for the provision of climate finance to developing countries.

In 2015, Australia made a Paris Agreement commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26–28% from 2005 levels by 2030. While this is a step in the right direction, Australia’s Climate Change Authority notes that more ambitious targets are required to meet the Paris Agreement goals.<sup>4</sup>

Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions are tracked through the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory. To December 2020, total emissions have dropped by 20% from June 2005. This figure includes a 5% reduction between 2019 and 2020 reflecting the impact of Covid-19.<sup>5</sup>

As a high-income country and one of the highest per capita greenhouse gas emitters in the world, Australia’s current commitments are significantly lower than other comparable nations for example the US (50–52% reduction by 2030), UK (78% by 2035), or Canada (40–45% by 2030).

Responding to these ecological crises and finding pathways for just transition are an issue not only of environmental justice but also of justice for some of the world’s most vulnerable people.

G20 Countries’ Green House Gas emissions per capita and 2050 Commitments

Country	CO <sup>2</sup> emission per capita 2018	Commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050
India	1.8	No
Brazil	2	2060
Indonesia	2.2	No
Mexico	3.7	No
Argentina	4	✓
France	4.6	✓
Turkey	5	No
Italy	5.4	✓
United Kingdom	5.4	✓
China	7.4	2060
South Africa	7.5	✓
Germany	8.6	✓
Japan	8.7	✓
Russia	11.1	No
South Korea	12.2	✓
United States	15.2	✓
Saudia Arabia	15.3	No
Canada	15.5	✓
Australia	15.5	No

Sources: World Bank Data 2021<sup>6</sup> and Sustainable Development Report 2021: G20 and Large Countries Edition.



► **Climate financing to developing nations**

Australia also has a responsibility under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement to provide financial assistance to developing nations to mitigate and adapt to climate related challenges. The UNFCCC has strongly urged developed countries including Australia to scale up their level of support to jointly provide USD \$100 billion annually from 2020.<sup>7</sup>

The UN Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the main vehicle through which these funds are distributed. Australia stepped back from this fund in 2018, deciding against direct monetary contributions. Between 2015 and 2020, Australia pledged \$1 billion in climate finance, but did so through alternative channels such as bilateral partnerships with governments in neighbouring countries. In December 2020, Australia made a new commitment to provide \$1.5 billion of support to developing countries’ climate responses in the period between 2020–25.

► **Biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

While addressing climate change is a core challenge for ensuring ecological and human wellbeing, the growing biodiversity crisis remains an important inter-related ecological crisis.

Australia has documented the largest decline in biodiversity of any continent over the last 200 years.<sup>8</sup> There are over 1900 species and ecological communities listed as threatened with extinction under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999.



PHOTO: IAN ALTMAN

Aftermath of bushfires on the NSW South Coast.

Addressing climate change is a core challenge for ensuring ecological and human wellbeing, and the growing biodiversity crisis remains an important inter-related ecological crisis.

Despite this, funding for biodiversity protection in Australia has fallen 39% since 2013.<sup>9</sup> The Independent Review of the EPBC Act released in January 2021, found that current environmental regulations and policies are failing to protect the environment and address challenges like climate change, and that fundamental reform must be embraced.<sup>10</sup>

Australia is also a party to the global Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi Targets, which were agreed in Japan in 2010. None of these targets have been achieved at the global level.<sup>11</sup> A new agreement is due to be negotiated in Kunming China in October 2021, and Australia has joined the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People calling for at least 30% of the earth’s land and oceans to be protected by 2030 to prevent mass extinctions and ensure natural production of clean air and water.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING**

Australia has both the opportunity and the responsibility to adopt policies that are positive for people and the planet. We call on the Federal Government to:

- 1

Commit to more ambitious emissions reduction targets that see Australia contribute its fair share to addressing climate change while supporting a just transition. This should include:

- A firm commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050; and
  - A credible national climate plan and interim targets that are consistent with limiting warming to 1.5 degrees and support a just transition in impacted communities.
- 2

Increase funding for climate mitigation and adaptation and renew support for the Green Climate Fund. We need to:

- Deliver on the commitment to provide \$1.5 billion in climate change assistance by 2025
- 3

Commit to national laws and global agreements that protect biodiversity. The Australian Government needs to:

- Implement all recommendations of the Independent Review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act; and
  - Support an agreement that is ambitious for nature and people at the Kunming Summit on the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- in addition to the existing aid budget;

- Encourage and contribute to increased global commitments at the Glasgow Summit; and
  - Renew support for the Green Climate Fund.

1 UNEP 2020 <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/news/tackling-climate-change-and-biodiversity-loss-together#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20the%20direct,crucial%20to%20addressing%20climate%20change>.

2 WHO 2018 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

3 IEP 2020 [https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ETR\\_2020\\_web-1.pdf](https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ETR_2020_web-1.pdf)

4 Climate Change Authority 2020 <https://www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-06/toolkit-2020/2020%20Toolkit%20summary.pdf>

5 Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. 2021. <https://www.industry.gov.au/data-and-publications/national-greenhouse-gas-inventory-quarterly-update-december-2020>

6 World Bank. 2021. World Bank Data 2021. [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC?name\\_desc=false](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC?name_desc=false)

7 UNFCCC 2021 <https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/the-big-picture/climate-finance-in-the-negotiations#:~:text=Climate%20Finance%20in%20the%20Paris,existing%20obligations%20under%20the%20Convention>.

8 Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 2021 <https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/conservation#:~:text=and%20future%20generations-,Conservation%20on%20private%20land,incentives%20to%20private%20land%20holders>.

9 Australian Conservation Foundation 2021 [https://www.acf.org.au/budget\\_throws\\_loose\\_change\\_at\\_environment\\_climate](https://www.acf.org.au/budget_throws_loose_change_at_environment_climate)

10 Independent Review of the EPBC Act 2020 <https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/resources/final-report>

11 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020) Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 – Summary for Policy Makers. Montréal. [gbo-5-spm-en.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/global-biodiversity-outlook-5) (cbd.int)



# 7 Justice for People Living in Extreme Poverty

The world has made remarkable and consistent progress in tackling poverty over the last three generations. In 1960 it is estimated that 8 in 10 people lived in the most extreme poverty; today that figure is closer to 1 in 10. This progress has seen children access vaccinations and girls go to school; it has improved health and nutrition, and access to safe water and sanitation.

Assistance from countries like Australia has been a critical contributor to this progress — through well targeted aid, conflict reduction and peacekeeping efforts, and reforms to open up economic opportunities in developing nations. The Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the world in 2015 outline an ambitious but achievable goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030 through 17 inter-linked goals focused on a better and more sustainable future for people and the planet.

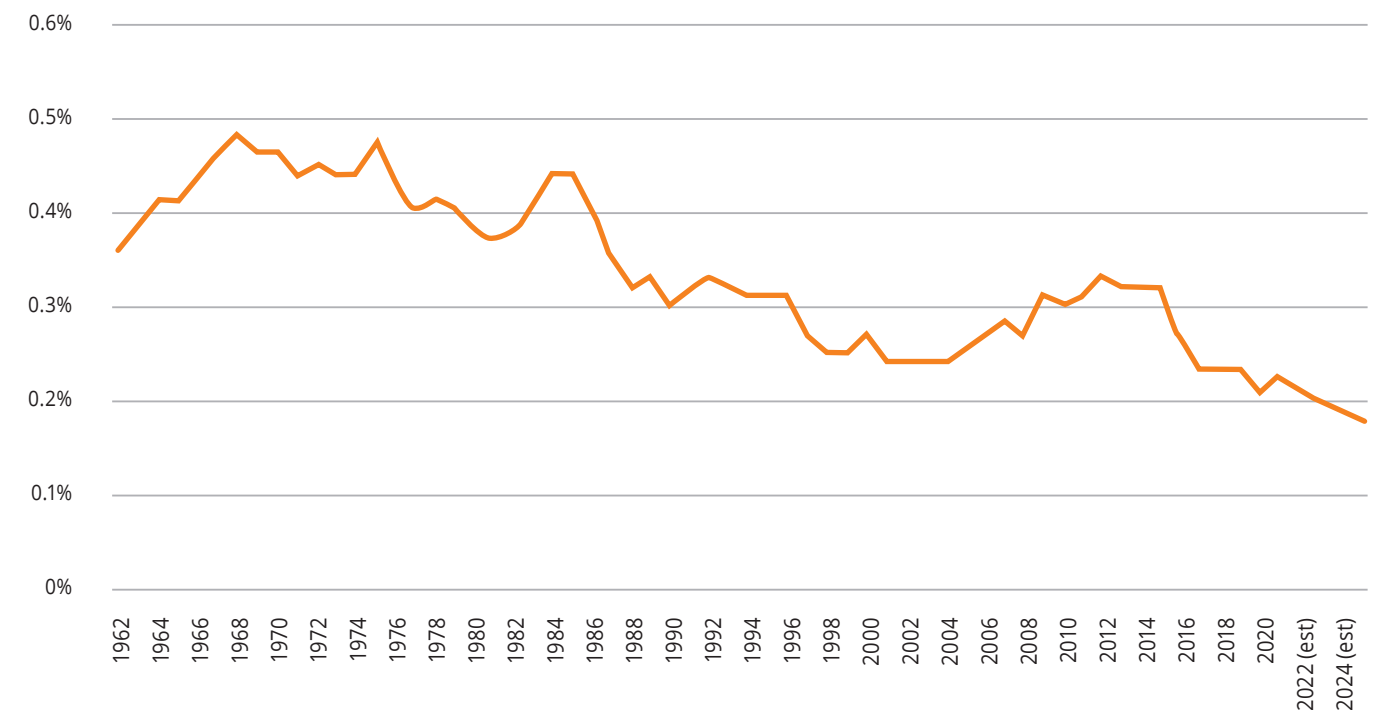
However, despite this significant and historic success, progress has stalled and begun to reverse in recent years. For the first time since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased between 2017 and 2021. This reversal is linked to overlapping humanitarian emergencies, conflict, and climate change.

**For the first time since 1990, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased between 2017 and 2021.**



Udaya works to care for her young children in Bangladesh.

Australian aid as a percentage of GNI over time



Source: <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/trends>

Conflict and climate change have impacted developing countries disproportionately, especially people living in poverty as they are more exposed to climate-induced disasters, tend to incur greater losses, and have fewer available resources to cope and recover. In the Pacific, rising sea levels have caused loss of livelihoods and homes. In Africa, continued droughts have exacerbated difficult living conditions for people in conflict impacted regions.

Covid-19 has also had a catastrophic impact on the levels and intensity of global poverty. 700 million of the global population were living below the international poverty line of less than US\$1.90 in 2017. Compounded by the pandemic, it is estimated that an additional 120 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 and forecasts expect this to worsen further in 2021.<sup>1</sup> The impact of Covid-19 has also seen the rise in poverty in middle income countries where those pushed below the poverty line are likely to be engaged in informal services, manufacturing, and construction rather than agriculture. This group are particularly vulnerable when it comes to national lock downs because of the density of living arrangements and the impact of their livelihoods. Covid-19 has also added a layer of adversity to people already in crisis, increasing the number of people who need lifesaving assistance by 40%. It is estimated that 1 in 33 people worldwide will now need humanitarian assistance and protection.<sup>2</sup>

## ► Australia's Current Aid Response

Australia's 2021–22 aid budget measured by the level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) sits at \$4.335 billion. This represents approximately 0.21% of the country's Gross National Income (GNI) and is a decline of \$144 million from the previous year. This is the lowest level of aid on record and forward estimates projected continuing declines over the next four years.<sup>3</sup>



The aid budget is increasingly focused in the Pacific (\$1.44 billion) and South East Asia (\$1.01 billion) regions. This year's budget includes \$335 million of Covid-19 specific measures designed to assist the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and India to address the impacts of the virus and provide access to vaccines, and lifesaving medical supplies.<sup>4</sup>

Current overall levels of aid, reflecting continual decline since 2014–15 and mean Australia is now considerably less generous than other comparable nations. Australia now ranks 21st among the 30 nations that are members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) based on the percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) committed to development and humanitarian aid. This is despite Australia being the 10th largest economy<sup>5</sup> and having one of the highest levels of average wealth in the world. Among the OECD nations of Europe and North America to which Australia is traditionally compared, only two are less generous than Australia.<sup>6</sup>

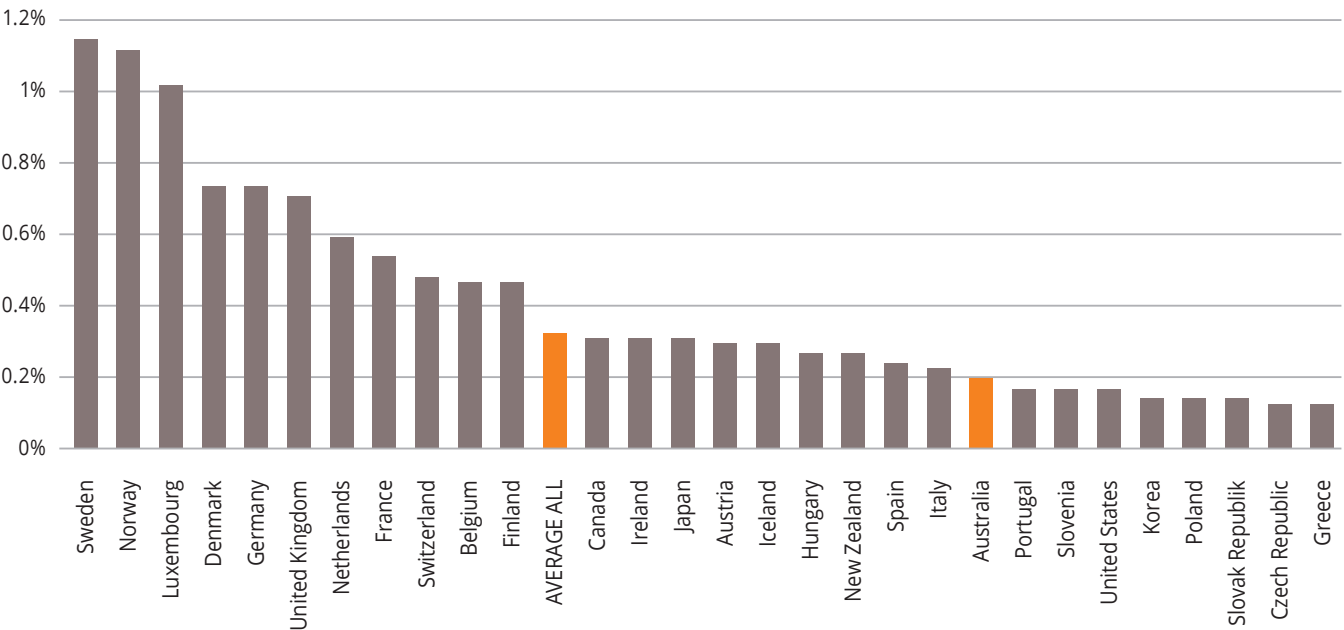
**Australia is now considerably less generous than other comparable nations. Australia now ranks 21st among the 30 nations... This is despite Australia being the 10th largest economy and having one of the highest levels of average wealth in the world.**

▶ **Humanitarian crises and Covid-19**

Australia's international humanitarian financing has also not kept pace with global needs. The UN's 2021 Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) outlines that in 2021 US\$35 billion is needed to meet the immediate needs of 160 million people across 56 countries.<sup>7</sup>

The 2021–2022 Australian Budget saw a modest increase of humanitarian assistance from \$475.7 million in 2020–2021 to \$485.3 million. This remains below the stated commitment of \$500 million a year outlined in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper. It is a long way off Australia's global fair share which has been estimated at \$861 million in 2021. While there has been an increase in the humanitarian aid budget since 2017, current budget estimates this will plateau over the next few years. This increase has also come at a cost from other ODA funded areas as the ODA budget has seen a downward trend during the same period.

Peer country 2020 ODA as a percentage of GNI



Source: <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/comparisons>

As Covid-19 has impacted on the Indo-Pacific region and globally, Australia has also announced a number of special support measures, investing over \$623 million in vaccination support for the Pacific, Timor-Leste, and Southeast Asia. This includes a \$523.2 million Regional Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative and the \$100 million Quad Vaccine Partnership. Australia has also committed \$130 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to help vaccinate the 92 lowest income countries.<sup>8</sup>

**WHAT WE'RE ASKING**

**We call on the Australian Government to contribute to justice for people living in extreme poverty globally through ensuring we:**

- 1** Commit to growing Australia's contribution to addressing the development challenges of our global and regional neighbours. Australia's immediate response to the growing challenges of poverty and inequality due to Covid-19 should be continued and built upon. This should include:

  - Making the additional aid funding announced in response to the pandemic permanent through committing to a new base ODA budget of \$4.5 billion; and
  - Increasing aid as a percentage of Gross National Income in each subsequent year
- 2** Ensure Australia meets its fair share contribution to global humanitarian funding. As global humanitarian needs escalate and the funding gap increases, Australia should commit to:

  - Providing at least \$861 million per year in humanitarian funding as part of an increasing ODA program; and
  - Within this funding total, adopt a \$150 million famine prevention package to address rising hunger and child malnutrition in conflict-affected countries.
- 3** Commit to supporting global measures to end Covid for all

  - Continue to increase the ambition and level of Australia's investment and vaccine sharing contributions to help end the pandemic faster.
  - Continue to respond to outbreaks with emergency assistance including personal protective equipment, oxygen, and Australian expertise.

1 World Bank. 2021. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>  
2 UNOCHA. Global Humanitarian Overview 2021. <https://gho.unocha.org/>  
3 Stephen Howes, "Development Assistance in the News". 2021. <https://devpolicy.org/development-assistance-in-the-news-dont-mention-the-aid-budget-20210521/>  
4 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2021. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/portfolio-budget-statements/pbs-2021-22-aid-budget-summary>  
5 Australia Aid Tracker. "Comparisons". 2021. <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/comparisons/>  
6 Australia Aid Tracker. "Comparisons". 2021. <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/comparisons/>  
7 UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service. "Humanitarian aid contributions". 2021. <https://fts.unocha.org/>  
8 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2021. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/portfolio-budget-statements/pbs-2021-22-aid-budget-summary>

# 8 Justice for People Subject to Modern Slavery, Forced and Child Labour

More than 250 years after the end of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, modern slavery takes different forms to those of the past, but it is every bit as real. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that approximately 40.3 million people are currently trapped in modern slavery.<sup>1</sup> This number comprises 24.9 million adults and children in forced labour, and 15.4 million people in forced marriage.<sup>2</sup> 160 million children are in child labour worldwide, with one in two working in jobs considered hazardous.<sup>3</sup>

Global supply chains are complex, secretive, and span multiple countries and industries, creating a perfect environment for these illegal labour practices to thrive. Forced and child labour are found in both emerging economies and developed countries but are particularly common in regions with high rates of poverty and large informal and/or private workforces. Women and girls face a higher risk of forced and child labour, comprising 70 percent of people in modern slavery. People working outside their home country and temporary workers also experience a higher risk of becoming trapped in forced labour situations.<sup>4</sup> 16 million people work in private industries including domestic work, construction, mining, and agriculture, and 4.8 million are exploited in the sex industry. Regions with the most significant overlap of population vulnerability and industries prone to illegal labour practices include Africa and the Asia-Pacific.

CHILD LABOUR is defined by the ILO as 'any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.'

FORCED LABOUR is defined by the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29), as "all work or service that is exacted from any person under the menace of penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntary."



Source: International Labour Organization 2021.

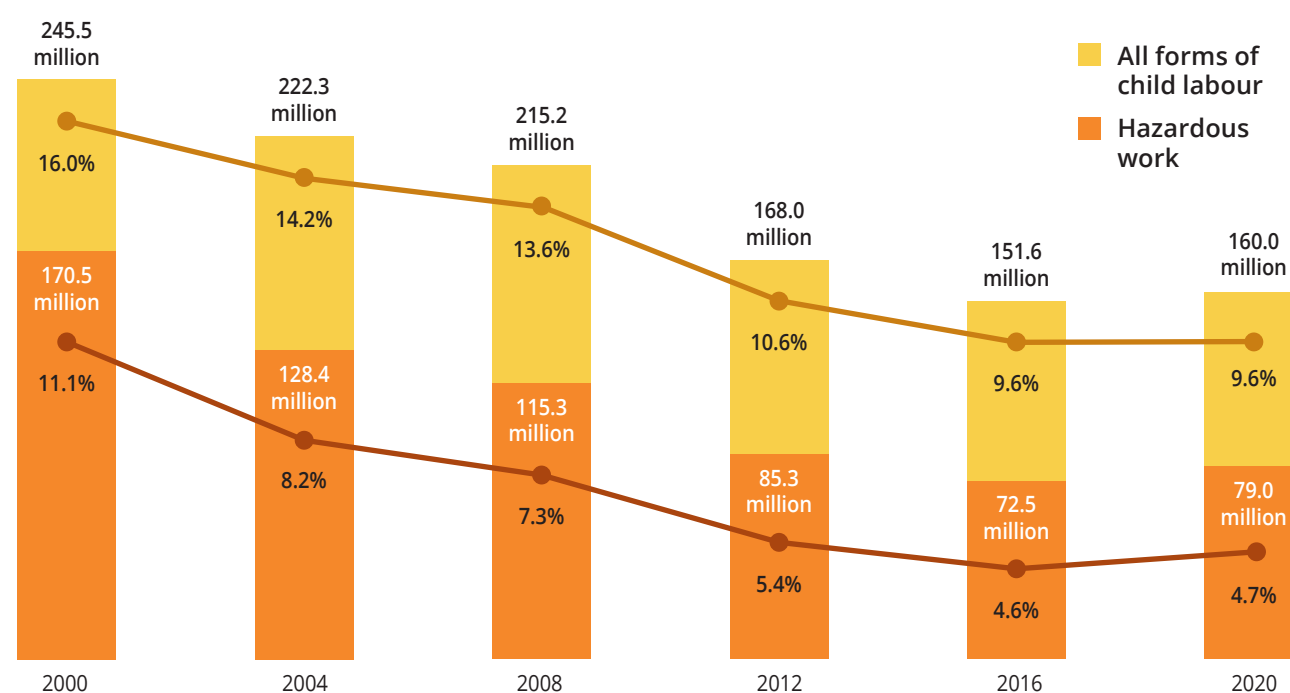
In addition to those experiencing exploitative practices in private industries, 4 million people are currently in some form of state-sponsored forced labour.<sup>5</sup> Examples of state-sponsored forced and child labour include prisoner labour, systemic upheaval of a group of citizens based on culture, race, or religion, or indiscriminately forcing of citizens to work in a particular industry for a period of time for low or no pay. State-sponsored forced and child labour in the cotton industry is known to be occurring in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and more recently, allegations of forced labour and other atrocities have been made against the Chinese government for their treatment of the country's Uyghur Muslim population. North Korea is considered to have the largest population in government-enforced forced-labour across multiple industries. This form of modern slavery adds a layer of complexity to the issue as it is endorsed by the governing power of a country, and often requires more severe action, such as trade sanctions, to remedy.

The International Labour Organisation estimated in 2012 that modern slavery generates a global profit of US\$150 billion. Rates of modern slavery have doubled since 2012, and it is believed to be the third largest criminal enterprise in the world after arms trade and drug smuggling.

Multiple international instruments have been created to facilitate collaborative efforts to eradicate modern slavery in all its forms, including the ILO Global Alliance Against Forced Labour and the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. The ILO Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No.29) is the most significant piece of international law governing modern slavery practices, and in 2014 a Protocol and Recommendation were adopted to provide support to countries working to enact the requirements of the Convention. Ten countries, including Australia, have also passed domestic laws to require businesses to assess and mitigate the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains.

**Rates of modern slavery have doubled since 2012, and it is believed to be the third largest criminal enterprise in the world after arms trade and drug smuggling.**

Percentage and number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour and hazardous work



Source: Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward. ILO and UNICEF 2021.

The Covid-19 crisis has severely increased the number of people vulnerable to modern slavery. The economic impacts of the pandemic have significantly impacted industries that pose a high risk of forced and child labour, many of which comprise large portions of the workforce of countries with large vulnerable populations.

► **Australia’s current response**

Australia has not adopted the Protocol and Recommendation of the ILO but has passed national legislation to regulate the business practices as they pertain to modern slavery of companies operating in Australia. The Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 (MSA) requires businesses with an annual revenue of more than \$100 million to assess and disclose the risks of modern slavery in their business operations and develop a strategy to reduce these risks. The law covers around 3000 companies in its scope.

Australia’s legislation is fairly strong due to strict mandatory criteria outlining what companies must include in their statements, and the requirement for all modern slavery statements to be published on an online public database. However, the legislation does not carry any penalties for businesses that do not submit a statement. It therefore relies heavily on the assumption that transparency will create enough accountability for businesses to act.

In 2021, Australia held a Senate inquiry into whether to amend the Customs Act 1901 to ban the importation of goods produced in the Xinjiang province of China and goods from other areas of China produced by forced labour, due to concerning allegations of state-sponsored forced labour against the Uyghur minority group. The Senate inquiry report released in June 2021 contained 14 recommendations including that “legislation be amended to prohibit the import of any goods made wholly or in part with forced labour, regardless of geographic origin” and that “the government initiate the review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 as soon as possible” and consider “provisions for its strengthening and broadening”.<sup>6</sup>



ILO/M. CROZET

Ten countries, including Australia, have also passed domestic laws to require businesses to assess and mitigate the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains.

Child labour can take many forms and includes any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

**WHAT WE’RE ASKING**

Australia should continue to build on its response to the forms of modern slavery that rob people of human dignity and freedom both domestically and globally including through:

- 1

Adopting all recommendations of the recent Senate inquiry into the Customs Amendment (Banning Goods Produced by Uyghur Forced Labour) Bill 2020 including the proposed prohibition of any goods made wholly or in part with forced labour.
- 2

Initiating the review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 with a view to strengthening the Act including through:
  - the addition of penalties for non-compliance;
  - an independent and properly resourced
- 3

Ratifying ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (PO29) to ensure the development of holistic legislative framework that will sit alongside the Modern Slavery Act.
- Anti-Slavery Commissioner

whose role includes the investigation of allegations of forced labour, child labour and human trafficking in supply chains; and
  - mandatory reporting specifically on products or services from high-risk areas identified in the prohibited productions and source countries list.

1

International Labour Organization. 2021. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

2

International Labour Organization. 2021. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

3

International Labour Organization and UNICEF. 2021. “Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward.” <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-labour-2020-global-estimates-trends-and-the-road-forward/>

4

Walk Free Foundation. “Global Slavery Index 2018. [https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/resources/downloads/GSI 2018 Report](https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/resources/downloads/GSI%2018%20Report)

5

International Labour Organization. 2021. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

6

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Defence\\_and\\_Trade/UyghurForcedLabourBill/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/UyghurForcedLabourBill/Report)





**Baptist Care Australia** works to bring equality and opportunity to Australian communities, advocating nationally on social issues such as homelessness, aged care and domestic violence. We represent Baptist community service organisations and their clients in the national policy debate.



**A Just Cause** is a ministry under the auspices of Australians Baptist Ministries that assists local Baptist churches and the denominational leaders connect with opportunities to advocate for justice.



**Baptist World Aid** is a Christian aid and development organisation with a vision for a world where poverty has ended and all people enjoy the fullness of life God intends. We partner with like-minded agencies overseas to empower communities to lift themselves out of poverty, challenge injustice and build resilience; and enable generous giving, ethical consumption, courageous advocacy and faithful prayer in order to achieve justice for people living in poverty.