

Hearts and homes

Public perceptions on homelessness

Martin Foley MP

Address to the National Homelessness Conference

Tuesday 7 August 2018, Melbourne

People in Victoria think homelessness is an important issue and are keen to help



A **majority of Victorians** are taking active steps to try and help those who are homeless, and think it is a highly visible and important issue.



Nearly **half of Victorians** think homelessness is the most serious issue facing our state today – ranking it as more serious than threat of a terror attack, bushfires or traffic congestion.



Nearly **50 per cent of Victorians** are taking practical steps to help those experiencing homelessness – including giving food, clothing, making donations and volunteering.



However, almost **40 per cent of Victorians** were either unsure their efforts to help were effective or wanted better direction on how to make a positive difference.



Victorians are well informed and **keen to help** with short-term responses which serve immediate needs of people – such as a meal, access to a shower, clothing or blankets, but are less aware of longer-term supports which make a critical difference for people experiencing homelessness.

Victorians empathise with people who are homeless

No-one deserves to be homeless.

68 per cent
agree

2 per cent
disagree

Homeless people deserve as much help as anyone else.

48 per cent
agree

2 per cent
disagree

We should not judge homeless people as we don't know their story.

60 per cent
agree

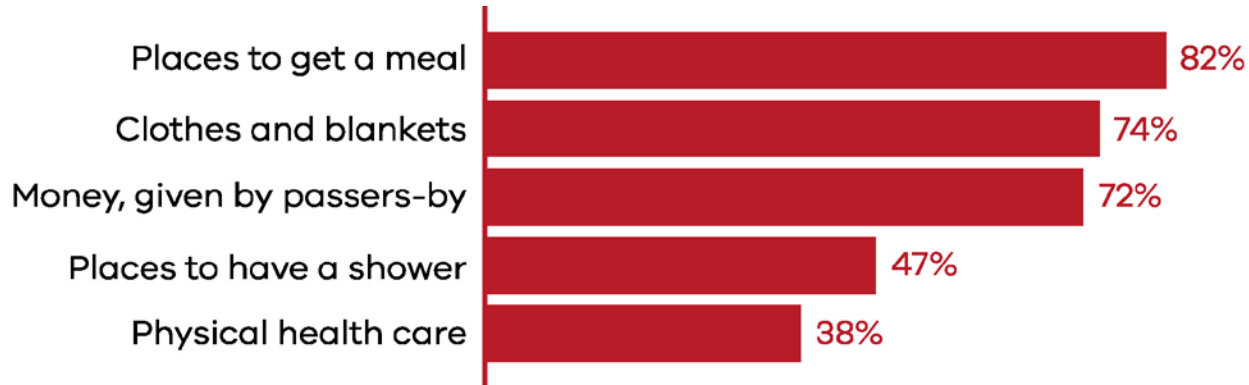
2 per cent
disagree

Homelessness can happen to anyone – we are all just one bad decision away from homelessness.

41 per cent
agree

7 per cent
disagree

There is better awareness of short-term, material responses, than long-term ones...



...and these short term response are perceived to be more effective



More than **8 in 10 people** know where a person experiencing homelessness can go to get a meal. Nearly **60 per cent agree** providing meals is an effective support.



More than **7 in 10 people** know where a person experiencing homelessness can go to get clothing or blankets. More than **50 per cent agreeing** this is an effective support.



Nearly **half** of those surveyed know where a person experiencing homelessness can have a shower. About **46 per cent agreed** it was an effective support.



Fewer than **6 in 10 people** were aware of the availability of temporary or emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. About **38 per cent** of people agreed it was an effective support.

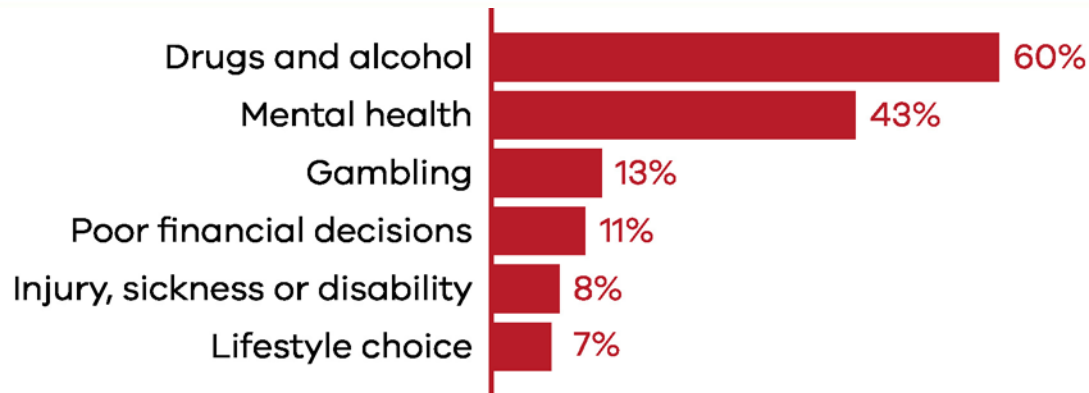


Similarly, **6 in 10 people** were aware of the availability of drug and alcohol counselling, but only **37 per cent** of people said it was effective.



Only **half of respondents** were aware of somewhere a person experiencing homelessness could get mental and emotional help. Less than **40 per cent** agreed this was an effective method of support.

Homelessness is caused by personal challenges, rather than systemic issues



Everyone has a role, but some community stakeholders could do more

- People have moderate opinions about where responsibility lies for providing support and recognise that the whole community has a role
- Charities were perceived as giving the most support to those experiencing homelessness
- **29 per cent** said Australian Government was not doing enough; **6 per cent** said it was doing too much
- **24 per cent** said Victorian Government was not doing enough; **8 per cent** said it was doing too much
- **21 per cent** said businesses were not doing enough; **5 per cent** thought the private sector was doing too much.
- People more likely to identify businesses as not having a role in supporting people experiencing homelessness, compared to other community stakeholders.

Hearts and Homes

Public Perceptions of homelessness

#heartsandhomes #Endinghomelessness