Poverty in Brisbane
2026 Micah Projects

Read the data and details that demonstrate poverty in Brisbane in Anti-Poverty Week 2026.



People experiencing homelessness, particularly those sleeping rough, experience one of the most harmful kinds of poverty, impacting health, safety, and access to basic rights.

Poverty is structural

For people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, poverty is about more than not having enough money. It is structural. When low incomes, high housing costs, insecure work, unemployment, inadequate access to services and limited social supports intersect, people become trapped in circumstances that cannot be overcome through individual effort alone.

People experiencing homelessness, face multiple and interconnected challenges including poverty, trauma, family and relationship breakdown, domestic and family violence, disability, health issues, unemployment and limited support networks.

For people leaving domestic and family violence, they face the challenge of finding suitable housing, financial constraints, or simply having nowhere else to turn. These issues are interrelated rather than separate. Family and domestic violence should never end in homelessness, yet it is the main reason women and children experience homelessness. Poverty deters women from leaving violence. They face the probability of a life of policy-induced poverty.

Once housing is lost, the barriers multiply. Without a stable address, it is harder to secure employment, access healthcare, heal, rebuild, recover, keep children connected to school, and engage with services.

Poor housing and homelessness deepens the very disadvantage that contributed to them in the first place.

Homelessness is not an individual problem to be solved

When demand for affordable housing, social housing and support services exceeds supply, people can move between temporary accommodation, homelessness services, overcrowded housing and insecure tenancies without ever reaching a stable foundation. For some, the barriers are so persistent that every step forward is followed by another setback.

At Micah Projects, we see the human impact of this every day

People are caught in a perfect storm: unable to access social housing or immediate housing relief, facing fewer crisis accommodation options, rising living costs, unaffordable rents, a shortage of affordable housing, and growing health and wellbeing challenges.

People are seeking help but the supports they need simply aren't available. Others remain invisible within the system because they don't meet eligibility criteria, don't have somewhere appropriate to go, or are unable to navigate increasingly complex pathways to support.

The impacts on children are profound and long-lasting. Children are more likely to experience developmental delays, poorer mental health outcomes, disrupted education, and ongoing interaction with service systems later in life.

The combination of low income, healthcare needs, high housing costs, inadequate affordable supply and capacity to absorb a crisis creates a structural trap.

The challenge for Brisbane

The challenge for Brisbane is not simply to provide more housing, although affordable and secure housing is essential to our Housing First Approach, it is to address the conditions that allow poverty and homelessness to become entrenched in the first place, and to provide the housing, income security, health, social and practical supports that people need to break the cycle.

It is to create enough affordable, secure and appropriate housing, while providing the level of support required by people whose circumstances are complex. Without both, the system can become very good at responding to homelessness without having the capacity to end it.

Health and Wellness of people experiencing homelessness

Brisbane Zero, 2025-26

28% high health system users

15% of families and **25%** of individuals do not seek medical help when sick

Anxiety: **43%** of families, **32%** of individuals

Chronic health condition: **44%** of families, **55%** of individuals

Assertive Outreach by Micah Projects Street to Home Team, 2025-26

12,863

presentations at the Home for Good Homelessness Hub at West End **8,018 individuals** presented **1,579 families** presented (totalling approx. **3060 children**)

8,286

engagements in public space

558

people supported with **4,140 occasions** of direct nursing care across day and night

38

Number of families supported into private rentals

131

99 families and 32 individuals were moved into a long-term, safe and stable home, helping them settle in with comfort, dignity and a sense of home

Where things stand

Brisbane Zero, 2025-26

779 individual adults and **307 families** including **474 children** experiencing homelessness in Brisbane (Brisbane Zero By-Name List, June 2026)

499 heads of household were aged 55 and over.

604 individuals and **268 families** identified as First Nations people

These figures reflect a growing gap between the needs of children and families and the capacity of current systems to respond effectively.

Poverty Line March Quarter 2026, including housing costs [1]

$1,319.91

per week for a family comprising two adults, one of whom is working, and two dependent children

$569.81

per week
Single person
(not in workforce)

$769.11

per week
Single parent
(not in workforce)
one child

$959.05

per week
Single parent
(not in workforce)
two children

1 Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research 2026, Poverty lines: Australia, March quarter 2026, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, viewed August 28, 2026. https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/5585387/Poverty-Lines-Australia-March-Quarter-2026.pdf.

Income Support Payments

	Basic Payment of Person	Family Tax Benefit Part A	Family Tax Benefit Part B	Rent Assistance	Total Income	Poverty Line
Single person	401.20	-	-	107.70	508.90	569.81
Single with 1 child	505.10	115.43	68.46	126.56	815.55	769.11
Single with 2 children	505.10	230.86	68.46	126.56	930.98	959.05
Single with 3 children	505.10	346.29	98.08	143.01	1,092.48	1,148.98

Comparison of the poverty lines with income support payments (maximum welfare payments and have no other income)[2]

Median private rents Brisbane LGA [3]

Local Government Area	Dwelling	Jun 2025	Sep 2025	Dec 2025	Mar 2026	Jun 2026
Brisbane (C)	Flat 1	$550	$550	$550	$580	$575
Brisbane (C)	Flat 2	$670	$680	$690	$715	$700
Brisbane (C)	Flat 3	$800	$800	$840	$870	$850
Brisbane (C)	House 2	$600	$600	$630	$640	$640
Brisbane (C)	House 3	$675	$680	$700	$700	$720
Brisbane (C)	House 4	$800	$800	$830	$850	$850
Brisbane (C)	Townhouse 2	$600	$620	$620	$650	$660
Brisbane (C)	Townhouse 3	$680	$690	$700	$710	$725
Brisbane (C)	All dwellings	$650	$620	$650	$630	$675

Social Housing

Waiting list Brisbane Council Area – at 30 June 2026 (people flagged as at risk of homelessness)

Number including Active and Inactive applications [4]

825
Families on the waiting list – 539 <12 months

773
(of the total of families) are Single parent with children – 510 <12 months

1824
Single person

416
single person over 55 – 252 <12 months

33
couples – 15 <12 months

Only 2.8%
additional families moved into social housing Qld (531) and Brisbane (123)

761 (only active applications)
Families on the waiting list – 482 <12 months

2 Services Australia 2026, A Guide to Australian Government Payments: 1 January 2026 to 19 March 2026, Australian Government, viewed 12 October 2026, servicesaustralia.gov.au.
3 Residential Tenancies Authority 2026, Median rents quarterly data, Queensland Government, viewed 12 October 2026, https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/forms-resources/rta-data-releases/median-rents-quarterly-data.
4 Queensland Government. Social Housing Register at 30 June 2026 – Data File. Open Data Portal. Updated June 9, 2025. Accessed August 28, 2026. https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/963c1f5e-3819-4b02-af0c-8695739ca4cf/resource/c90d7921-5a1c-45cc-99f7-3d224bc53f3d/download/social-housing-register-at-30-june-2025-data-file.csv



Case Study

Amy, 64 years is carer for her husband Brian, 74 years. Both also care for their grandchild, 3 years of age, while experiencing homelessness due to financial difficulties, chronic health conditions, and unemployment. Before seeking help at Micah Projects, Amy, Brian and their grandchild were sleeping in their car.

The family has been living in motel accommodation since February 2025. Both adults are managing chronic health conditions and receive ongoing support from hospital services. However, the lack of stable and appropriate housing is contributing to a decline in their physical and mental health and family wellbeing overall. It is also impacting their grandchild's ability to access childcare and support the child's ongoing development. During this period, their 25-year-old son, David, provided essential support to the family following Amy's brain surgery, helping them manage day-to-day responsibilities.

Amy and her husband receive the Disability Support Pension (DSP), Family Tax benefit, and Carers Payment. However, their combined income is insufficient to access private rental, while at the same time exceeding the eligibility threshold for social housing by $7. After multiple engagements with the Department of Housing, their social housing application was lodged.

When David was added to the social housing application, it impacted on Amy and Brian's eligibility for housing assistance. The application has since been amended to remove David, and he is now sleeping in his car outside the motel where Amy, Brian and their grandchild are living so the family can maintain their eligibility, and their housing application was finally approved.

Amy's family have been experiencing homelessness for more than 18 months, and despite the positive engagement with homelessness services, and with hospital social workers, the family are still waiting for a social housing outcome.

Sources *• A Guide to Australian Government Payments, Australian Government • Brisbane Zero, Families, 2026 • Brisbane Zero, Individuals, 2026 • The extent and nature of poverty in Australia, Senate Community Affairs References Committee • Living Affordability in Queensland 2025, QCOSS • Poverty in Australia 2025: Overview, ACOSS and UNSW Sydney • Poverty Lines: Australia — March Quarter 2025, Melbourne Institute • Public Safety Survey, 2016 • Raising Queensland, QCOSS • South East Queensland Displacement Monitoring: 2025 update, AHURI Professional Services for Q Shelter, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited • The Choice: Violence or Poverty, Paul Ramsay Foundation, 2022*

Micah Projects
PO Box 3449, South Brisbane Q 4101
Ground Floor, 162 Boundary Street, West End Q 4101
Ph 07 3029 7000 | Fax 07 3029 7029
info@micahprojects.org.au | micahprojects.org.au

MICAH PROJECTS

Breaking Social Isolation
Building Community