2025-2026 | **BRISBANE ZERO**

HOMELESSNESS SNAPSHOT

FIRST NATIONS FAMILIES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience homelessness, including rough sleeping, at disproportionately higher rates than other Australians. Historic and ongoing systemic gaps have contributed to inequitable housing outcomes for First Nations people and continue to create barriers to accessing and sustaining safe and appropriate housing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Brisbane come from diverse Nations, communities, and backgrounds. Alongside challenges like racism and intergenerational trauma many people experience, there are significant strengths, resilience, cultural knowledge, and community connections that support good health and wellbeing.

This snapshot provides an overview of First Nations familes with children who have experienced homelessness in Brisbane. It draws on Brisbane Zero data and the importance of cultural responsiveness to better understand housing experiences, support needs, and opportunities to strengthen coordinated responses that help people move into housing quickly and sustain their tenancy over time.

The following data belongs to First Nations peoples. In line with Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles, this data snapshot was developed in collaboration with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) and Murri Watch, core members of Brisbane Zero, with contributions from First Nations and non-Indigenous support and community services.



268 First Nations families experienced homelessness at some point during the year.

37 slept rough at some point during the year.

27% of the **Brisbane Zero** Families By-Name List identify as **First Nations**.

2% of the Brisbane population identify as **First Nations.**

75 First Nations families on the Brisbane Zero By-Name List **moved to their own home.**

> Being housed means stability. That's the first word that immediately pops into my head. Getting housed gave me and my little family stability. Before this, it was really hard. We were living really rough in just a tent – and there was almost a chance moment there when my family was gonna get split up. Now, the kids have enough stability to go to school and can come home. This stability has completely changed their attitude and temperament! Everyone can allow themselves to finally relax.
>
> **First Nations woman raising children as a sole parent**

Photo for illustrative purposes only

Everyone's journey is different.
Our shared data helps us making their experiences visible.

A First Nations mother while raising her five children under 8 years old, experienced more than two years of homelessness following DFV, moving between couch surfing and crisis accommodation. Barriers to suitable housing, including income and property eligibility issues, prolonged the family's homelessness disrupting the children's education and wellbeing. Through coordinated advocacy and culturally safe support, the family secured housing in July 2026 and is now connected to ongoing support, education, and community.

THE BY-NAME LIST (BNL)

It helps us identify every person sleeping rough (on streets, in parks, tents, cars or cycling through motels and emergency accommodation) in Brisbane, their needs and the support services required.

THE SURVEY

Families on the BNL were surveyed using the Australian Homelessness Vulnerability Triage Tool (AHVTT). To help services to match housing and support for people experiencing homelessness in our community.

HOW DO WE SUPPORT FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES IN BRISBANE?

Striving to be culturally responsive, we work together to understand a person and their story, allowing for self-determination, choice and agency, sharing power and decisions, and being trauma aware and healing informed in our support and engagement approach.

In this snapshot, the term "First Nations peoples" is used to refer collectively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

These figures reflect the ongoing impacts of systemic inequality and demonstrate that too many First Nations families continue to be left behind. Housing is far more than a roof over a family's head. It is the foundation for health, safety, educational engagement, cultural connection and community wellbeing.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, access to safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing is one of the most significant determinants of lifelong health and wellbeing, shaping opportunities to learn, grow and thrive.

Secure housing also creates the conditions for families and communities to heal, reconnect and flourish. It supports family reunification, strengthens relationships, enables access to healthcare and support services.

THE BNL
WHO EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS

268 First Nations families, including more than **222 children*,** experienced homelessess during the past year.

193 were headed by **First Nations women raising children as a sole parent.**

33 years was the average age of the first head of household.

85% (229) Female head of household

15% (39) Male head of household

37 families **slept rough** at some point during the year.

93 newly identified as experiencing homelessness by Brisbane Zero services.

11 returned to homelessness from permanent housing.

132 were also experiencing homelessness during the previous financial year.

THE SURVEY
UNDERSTANDING HOUSING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

92 First Nations families **responded to the survey** who were experiencing homelessness.

HOUSING HISTORIES

11% (10) were rough sleeping at time of survey.

7 months was the average time spent sleeping rough.

62% (57) had been experiencing homelessness for longer than 12 months.

36% (33) faced discrimination when trying to access services.

21% (19) had members of the family live in a foster or group home.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING
FOR ANY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY

77% (71) experienced at least **one** health or substance use challenge.

61% (56) disclosed at least **one** mental health challenge.

47% (43) disclosed at least **one ongoing** health challenge.

Key disclosed health challenges

1. **Anxiety**	61% (56)
2. **Clinical Depression**	43% (40)
3. **PTSD**	18% (17)

Health system usage

20% (18) needed to access health service systems 5 or more times in the past year.

SOCIAL AND DAILY NEEDS

30% (28) did not have enough money to take care of day to day needs.

SAFETY

58% (53) had members of the family experience violence in the past year.

34% (31) did not feel safe where they sleep.

FAMILY UNIT

64% (59) families disclosed that homelessness made it difficult to engage with children.

41% (38) families had children who were unable to attend school consistently.

49% (45) families had children living with friends, family, or foster care.

THE BNL
HOUSING OUTCOMES

75 First Nations families on the Brisbane Zero By-Name List **moved to their own home.**

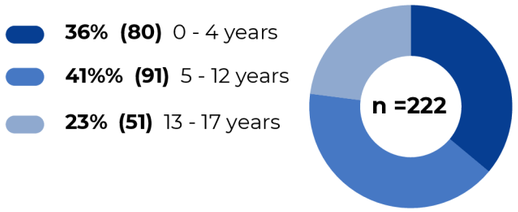
66 children were housed**

Housing type	
Public Housing	51% (38)
Private Rental	25% (19)
Community Housing	16% (12)
Other	5% (4)
Self-Housed	3% (2)

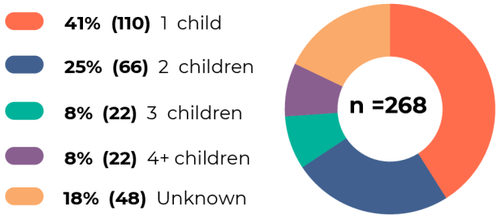
**** Excludes 10 households who had an unknown number of children***

CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS*

Age of children (n = number of children)



Children per household (n= no. of households)



The number of children is higher than 222, as 48 households had an unknown number of children

> Cultural safety is determined by the people we serve. We respect families' choice of service, recognising barriers such as limited availability, long wait times, and concerns about privacy and unwanted community connections.
>
> Family Support & Advocacy Worker



Unlocking systems
to end homelessness

BRISBANE ZERO

The Brisbane Zero First Nations Homelessness Snapshot 2025–26 reflects both people's experiences and services' capacity to give visibility to their circumstances.

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This data was collected by Brisbane Zero First Nations and non-Indigenous organisations, who collaborate and provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing homelessness in our community.

First Nations families remained the largest group represented in Brisbane Zero BNL in 2025-26, making up 27% of all families, up from 25% in 2024-25. One-third of families sleeping rough identified as First Nations, highlighting the need for culturally informed, coordinated housing responses.

Secure housing also creates the conditions for families and communities to heal, reconnect and flourish. It supports family reunification, strengthens relationships, enables access to healthcare and support services, and helps children maintain strong connections to culture, Country, kin and community.

Conversely, homelessness, overcrowding and housing instability can disrupt education, negatively impact health and wellbeing, and place significant stress on families. Investment in First Nations-led housing solutions, increased social housing supply and well-resourced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations is therefore an investment in stronger families, thriving children, resilient communities and self-determined futures, helping to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage and advance Closing the Gap outcomes.

What's next?

We will continue to strengthen Brisbane Zero by responding to changing patterns of homelessness, listening to the voices and lived experiences of First Nations Peoples, and using data to inform culturally safe, meaningful and lasting change.

Through collaboration with First Nations communities, services, government and people with lived experience, we will use shared data to make homelessness more visible, advocate for culturally appropriate housing pathways, and support solutions grounded in self-determination, connection and care.

Brisbane Zero is a collaborative partnership with organisations who strive to achieve optimal housing outcomes and support for as many people as possible. Brisbane Zero was supported by the Ellen Whitty Trust and Department of Housing and Public Works Queensland

This Data Snapshot includes contributions from the following Brisbane Zero members:

BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE
NEW FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

communify
Supporting our community on all sides

kyabra
Strength in Community

IUIH institute for urban indigenous health

MICAH PROJECTS
Breaking Social Isolation
Building Community

Anglicare
Southern Queensland

UnitingCare
Queensland

THE SALVATION ARMY