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Nearly a fifth of low-income earners paying more than half their income in private rent

Some 185,000, or nearly a fifth of low-income private renters, are paying more than half of their household income in rent, well above the accepted maximum tolerable measure of 30 per cent, according to a major new report from leading housing services organisation, Launch Housing.

Launch Housing's 2018 - 2022 Homeless Monitor, says this low-income group is especially exposed to the risk of homelessness as rentals continue to skyrocket and low-income housing stock falls.

The report also found that this month alone, an estimated 91,000 Australians will reach out to homelessness services, an eight per cent jump over four years with First Nations Australians and people affected by mental ill health being the fastest growing groups seeking help.

Francis Sullivan, Chair of Catholic Social Services Australia, said that the housing crisis is an Australian wide disaster affecting everyone from the unemployed through to double income families.

"Across Australia, we are seeing more and more families and individuals being forced out of their homes, sleeping on couches, in cars or on the streets," Mr Sullivan said.

"And while state and federal governments have plans to generate around 9,000 new social rental dwellings in 2024 this is barely enough to keep up with demand.

"The facts speak for themselves; among the 46,000 private rental properties advertised for let across Australia in March this year, just 1.4 per cent were affordable to an age pensioner couple," Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Sullivan said that what is welcoming is that the new Labor government has begun to re-engage with the homelessness policy challenge having pledged a five-year program to construct 20,000 new social housing units, and 10,000 affordable rental dwellings from around 2023-24.

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