**Homelessness**

**Introduction:**

Homelessness is when people do not have housing and are instead living on the streets of cities and towns. Homeless people have existed in almost every single society throughout history and is an almost unavoidable issue. However, there different societies have had various methods of dealing with this issue and have had differing amounts of homeless people. There are many factors causing people to become homeless. These factors include unemployment, poverty, mental illness, drug abuse, child neglect domestic violence, housing shortage and increasing cost of living. This report will investigate the causes, demographics, and effects of homelessness.

**Demographics:**

The homeless population in Australia does not exactly fit the demographics of the larger population. Of the roughly eight thousand homeless people in Australia, two thirds are male, one third are female. One fifth of the homeless people sleeping rough are Aboriginal this is compared to 3.2% of the population who identify as aboriginal (AIWH, 2021). This discrepancy of six times is one of many which shows inequity surrounding Aboriginal peoples in Australian society. Around half have mental health problems. A third have alcohol or drug addictions. People who have been homeless for more than four years only account for 13% of the total homeless population. In this smaller group the mental health issues rate increases to 80% (AIHW).

**Effects:**

The rate of homelessness has a profound effect on communities. A high rate of homelessness makes streets less safe for everyone. This is because many homeless people are mentally unstable and prone to committing crimes such as theft, assault, drug abuse typically due to their desperation and mental health issues. This gives people a stake in the amount of homelessness in their community and a reason to want to reduce it. Another effect of homelessness is the increased burden on the welfare system. Homeless people are typically poorer and have more health issues. This means that they require more money from the government which uses taxpayer money for something that could have been avoided if people become in the first place.

**Causes:**

Perhaps the most important part of the issue, the causes of homelessness are key to understanding and preventing homelessness. The primary overarching cause of homelessness is poverty. If someone has money they can obtain housing, if someone doesn’t have any money, they may not be able to obtain housing. For the most part welfare is used effectively to somewhat alleviate this poverty to get people off the streets however many individuals are unable to effectively use these payments such as people suffering with mental health issues and drug abusers. Another cause of homeless which primarily effects women and by extension their children is domestic violence which makes their homes unliveable and forces them onto the street.

**Conclusion**

To conclude homelessness is a large social issue with many factors, causes and effects. Due to its complexity, it requires equally complex solutions including prevention and care.

Reference List

AIHW (2021). Homelessness and homelessness services. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/homelessness-and-homelessness-services