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Finding answers to Victoria's rising Indigenous homeless numbers



Street art above Melbourne's Hosier Lane area. (Getty Images)

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It is estimated that one in 12 Indigenous Australians experienced homelessness last year but the figures are even higher in Victoria.

A conference has been held in Melbourne seeking answers to the homelessness crisis affecting Indigenous people living in the state.

Aboriginal Housing Victoria estimates that 11,000 Indigenous Victorians seek help from homeless assistance services every year - a rate 10 times higher than the general population.

Advocate Jenny Samms said contributing factors were expensive housing and rent.

"Victoria has the highest rate of Aboriginal homelessness in the country," she said.

"We need to immediately address this crisis. The first answer to homelessness is a house, so we need to build a housing supply."

Ms Samms suggested that long-term solutions might involve programs to support property ownership.

"Aboriginal people have been shut out of the private rental and private ownership market for generations, which means you don't get the intergenerational wealth built up through housing," she said.

"We are also looking very hard at programs to support Aboriginal people to buy houses, or for the Aboriginal community to own houses that are independent of government.

"We don't want to be reliant on government."