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The Sharehouse Generation

The new Australian household. Findings from a survey of Australians living in share accommodation (3,562 unique respondents), conducted in March and April 2026 in partnership with Flatmate Finders, set against public data from the ABS, Cotality (CoreLogic), PropTrack, the Australian Energy Regulator and Flatmates.com.au.

44%
of respondents are aged 40 or over

69%
did not expect to still be sharehousing at their age

31%
no longer expect to ever own a home

By Scott McKeon
Founder, Homerun

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many, sharehousing is no longer a short term phase.

For most of the last fifty years, the Australian sharehouse was understood as a waiting room: a few noisy years between the family home and a mortgage. This report finds that the waiting room has become permanent housing infrastructure for a large and rapidly ageing population, and that almost nobody who lives there planned to be.

Five findings define the 2026 picture

- **44%** of sharehouse residents surveyed are aged 40 or over. The single largest age group in this study is not students. It is people old enough to have adult children.
- **69%** say that when they were 20, they did not expect to still be living in a sharehouse at their current age. Among the over 40s, that rises to 78%.
- **31%** do not believe they will ever own a home. A further 11% put ownership more than a decade away. For four in ten residents, the sharehouse is not a stepping stone to anywhere.
- **75%** say higher property prices have extended how long they expect to keep sharehousing, including 55% who say significantly longer.
- **71%** of households saw at least one person move in or out in the past 12 months. Sharehouses change shape constantly, and the paperwork rarely keeps up: 38% of residents have moved in without fully understanding the lease or house rules, and 40% believe they have at some point paid more than their fair share of household bills.

Put together, these findings describe a structural change in how Australia houses itself, not a life-stage story about students. About a million Australians live in share accommodation, and the ABS has watched that share climb from 3% to 4% of the population since 2001. The average first home buyer is around 36 years old, and national rents have risen 42.9% in five years. The sharehouse has quietly become the country's pressure valve for a housing market that no longer clears at the individual level. This report documents who lives there, why they stay, and what the experience is really like.

FOUNDER'S NOTE

Scott McKeon
Founder, Homerun

After nearly a decade of living in sharehouses myself, this research was important to understand the current profile of sharehouses beyond my own personal experience. It's clear that sharehousing is much more of a permanent housing class than the general public perceive, and it comes with its own challenges that anyone who's lived in a sharehouse would understand.

The stereotypical sharehouse is the minority

Ask an Australian to picture a sharehouse and they will describe a student household. The data describes something else entirely.

44%
of respondents are aged 40 or over, the largest single age group in the survey

35%
have lived in sharehouses for five years or more. 18% have passed the ten year mark

17%
already own a home. Many are owner hosts renting out rooms to cover a mortgage that no longer works on one income

This is not a quirk of one dataset. Flatmates.com.au's national survey of more than 10,300 users found Australians aged 55 to 64 were the fastest-growing cohort on the platform, up 21% in a single year, with 65 to 74 year olds close behind. Our survey confirms the trend from inside the household: the sharehouse population is ageing faster than the population itself.

Two forces are pushing the age of the average sharer up. The first is arithmetic: with the median Australian dwelling now around $940,000 and capital city rents near $680 a week, a single income increasingly cannot carry a household alone. The second is biographical, and it is the least reported story in Australian housing.

The restart

Respondents were asked, in their own words, why they live in a sharehouse. Among the over 40s, roughly one in ten volunteered a life rupture as the primary reason: separation, divorce, or the death of a partner. These answers were unprompted.

> *"Divorce stripped me of equity in my home and I cannot afford to re-enter the housing market."*

> *"My husband died and I could not afford a rental house on my own. I'm 65. I did not expect this."*

> *"Recently separated. Finding my feet."*

For this group the sharehouse works as a safety net. It catches people when a two-income household becomes a one-income life. Australia has no housing category, no policy language and almost no consumer products built for that moment, yet these households are now a defining part of share accommodation.

CHAPTER TWO

Nobody expected to still be sharehousing

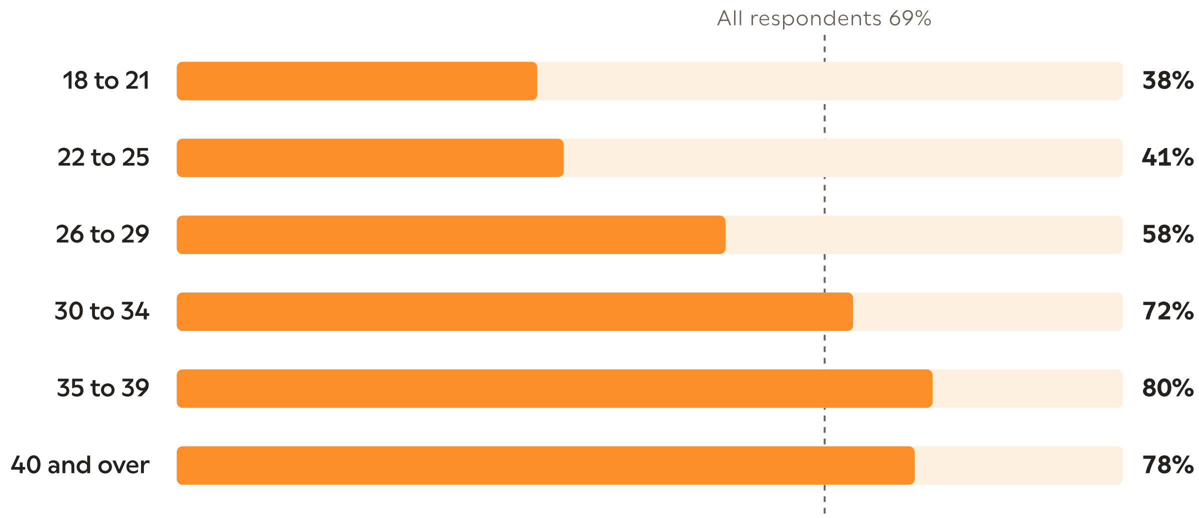
The most striking single number in the survey has nothing to do with money. It measures expectations.

69%

did not expect, when they were aged 20, to still be living in a sharehouse at their current age.

The expectation gap widens with every year of age. Among 18 to 21 year olds, 38% say sharehousing was not the plan. By 30 to 34 it is 72%, and by the late thirties it touches 80%. Each cohort is living a version of adulthood its younger self did not forecast, and property prices are the reason they give.

DID NOT EXPECT, WHEN THEY WERE 20, TO STILL BE SHAREHOUSING AT THEIR CURRENT AGE



The expectation gap widens with every year of age until the late thirties, then plateaus. Homerun with Flatmate Finders, n=3,562, March to April 2026.

Scott McKeon
Founder, Homerun

COMMENTARY

Once I saw the data come in, I felt embarrassed that I had put 40 and over as a single category. It reflects the misconception of how prevalent sharehousing is for people over the age of 40.

AGE GROUP	DID NOT EXPECT TO BE SHAREHOUSING	HIGH COST OF HOUSING HAS EXTENDED THEIR STAY IN SHAREHOUSES	DO NOT EXPECT TO EVER OWN
18 to 21	**38%**	**73%**	**18%**
22 to 25	**41%**	**74%**	**20%**
26 to 29	**58%**	**79%**	**22%**
30 to 34	**72%**	**81%**	**26%**
35 to 39	**80%**	**81%**	**28%**
40 and over	**78%**	**70%**	**41%**

Homerun with Flatmate Finders, n=3,562 unique respondents, March to April 2026.

The external data explains the gap. Home ownership has fallen to 36% among 25 to 29 year olds and to 50% among 30 to 34 year olds, and the average first home buyer is now around 36. The rungs of the ladder have moved, and the sharehouse is where the country waits, except that for 31% of residents, the honest answer is that they are no longer waiting for anything. They believe ownership will never come.

> *"The current housing market will never have someone my age independently buying a home."*
>
> SURVEY RESPONDENT, 22 TO 25

This reframes what a sharehouse is. When almost a third of residents have stopped expecting to own, share accommodation is no longer a transition for them. It becomes a tenure class in its own right, sitting alongside owning and solo renting, with none of the institutional support either of those enjoys.

CHAPTER THREE

Types of Australian sharehouse

Australians do not share for one reason, and the households they build are not one thing. These are the shapes that recur in the data.

> **These types overlap and are not a segmentation.** Each is counted against its own base, so one household can be several at once and the figures below do not add up to 100. Each type is drawn from the survey responses rather than from a single household.

ROUGHLY 1 IN 10 OF THE OVER 40S

The Restart

Entered share accommodation after separation, divorce or widowhood. Named unprompted in a free text box, so the true share is almost certainly higher than the count. Sized against the over 40s rather than the full panel.

35% OF THE PANEL

The Long Hauler

Five or more years in share accommodation, with 18% past the ten year mark. For this group sharing is not a stage on the way to something else. It is their housing.

17% OF THE PANEL

The Owner Host

Owns a home and lets rooms to carry the mortgage, rising to 26% of the over 40s. The spare room has become a mortgage buffer.

45% OF THE PANEL

The Pair

A two person household, and the most common shape in the data. The highest admin load per person, and nowhere for a shared cost to hide.

27% OF THE PANEL ARE IN THEIR THIRTIES

The Priced Out Professional

In their thirties and expected to own by now. Sized on the age band. 80% of the 35 to 39 band did not expect to be sharehousing, the widest expectation gap in the dataset.

20% OF THE PANEL

The Found Family

Describes the household as social and close. The good news in the dataset, and the answer to the loneliness story that usually gets told about renting.

The house the stereotype was built on is still out there: everyone under 25, first place out of home, furniture nobody bought and a lease nobody read. It is simply outnumbered now. The Restarts, the Owner Hosts, the Long Haulers and the Priced Out Professionals together account for far more of this panel than the household the country pictures.

The revolving door of housemates

The Australian sharehouse changes occupants more often than any other household in the country.

71%
had at least **one person** move in or out in the last 12 months

41%
had **two or more people** move in or out in the last 12 months

18%
had **three or more people** move in or out in the last 12 months

Two unrelated figures in this report share the digits 18%: the share who have shared for more than ten years, and the share of households where three or more people moved in or out.

Turnover is what makes the paperwork fail. 38% of residents have moved into a sharehouse without fully understanding the lease or the house rules, and a household cycling two or three people through in a year rarely stops to fix it. Every one of those moves involves real money and real paperwork: bond shares, rent transitions, final bills, a replacement housemate to find and settle in. 16% of respondents describe the transition process as difficult or very difficult, and the free-text answers suggest the rest have simply normalised the friction.

The churn also explains why sharehouse problems compound. House knowledge, who is on the lease, whose name the electricity is in, what was agreed about the bond, walks out the door with the person who held it. Each new household effectively starts from zero.

Scott McKeon
Founder, Homerun

COMMENTARY

I've heard a lot of stories of people moving into conditions they didn't fully realise until they had been living there a while. Especially with long term, continuous sharehouses, condition reports can be outstanding for years, which creates risks for newer housemates.

Improving this part of sharehousing is a big focus area we are working on with Homerun. It's also where Flatmate Finders plays a huge role in the community.

What it feels like

Living with people you did not grow up with means sharing costs and decisions with no rulebook. Most houses make it work, but almost everyone carries a story about the time it did not:

- **40%** believe they have paid more than their fair share of household bills at some point.
- **33%** have had to chase a housemate for late rent.

None of this is presented as scandal by the people living it. It comes up the way people talk about weather: unavoidable, mildly wearing, and part of the deal. Cleaning, communication and fairness are the three most common things residents say they would improve, and even so, 86% describe their household as a positive place to live.

CHAPTER FIVE

What holds it together

If the first half of this report reads as a catalogue of pressure, the counterweight is just as strong: most sharehouses work, and people are clear-eyed about why.

86.1%

describe their household vibe as positive: 66.6% friendly but independent and 19.5% social and close. Only 3.7% describe it as actively tense.

Asked what they love most, the answers cluster into two ideas of almost equal weight: community and cost. Roughly a quarter of all free-text answers name friendship, connection or family-like bonds. Almost exactly as many name affordability. A further 16% talk about meeting people from different cultures and walks of life. In a country where loneliness is a recognised public health issue, the sharehouse is doing double duty as social infrastructure.

> *"It's like living with your family, but you actually chose to live together."*
>
> MELBOURNE, 26 TO 29

> *"Collaborative living but separate lives."*
>
> SYDNEY, 30 TO 34

This is the tension that defines the sharehouse generation. The household form Australians were told was temporary turns out to be the one delivering the connection and affordability the rest of the market cannot. What it lacks is not spirit. It is structure: the roles, records and rails that every other tenure class takes for granted.

Scott McKeon
Founder, Homerun

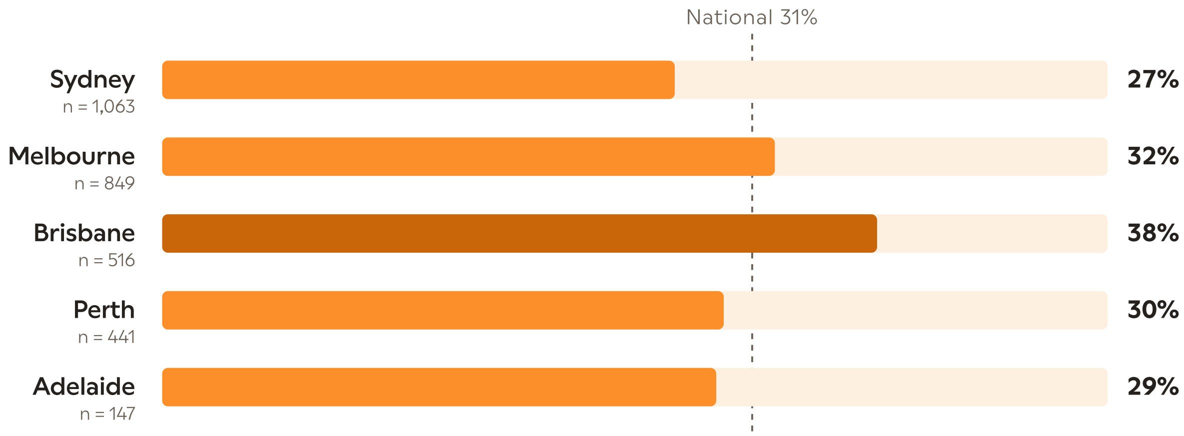
COMMENTARY

I've loved living in sharehouses over the past decade, and would choose that over solo renting every time. It's amazing when it works, but there is still plenty to improve to match the experience as a more permanent housing class.

The five capitals

The national picture holds in every capital, but not evenly. The same five measures, cut by city.

DO NOT EXPECT TO EVER OWN A HOME, BY CAPITAL



Brisbane sharers are the most likely in the country to say ownership will never happen. Adelaide sits on a base of 147 and is indicative only. Homerun with Flatmate Finders, n=3,562.

CITY	RESPONDENTS	AGED 40 OR OVER	DID NOT EXPECT TO STILL BE SHAREHOUSING	NEVER EXPECT TO OWN	HOUSEMATE MOVED THIS YEAR	HOUSEHOLD IS POSITIVE
National	**3,562**	**44%**	**69%**	**31%**	**71%**	**86%**
Sydney	**1,063**	**35%**	**69%**	**27%**	**71%**	**88%**
Melbourne	**849**	**46%**	**66%**	**32%**	**72%**	**85%**
Brisbane	**516**	**45%**	**67%**	**38%**	**69%**	**86%**
Perth	**441**	**41%**	**69%**	**30%**	**72%**	**88%**
Adelaide (indicative)	**147**	**54%**	**70%**	**29%**	**71%**	**84%**

Adelaide is reported on a base of 147 and is indicative only. The remaining responses came from Canberra, Hobart, Darwin and regional areas. Homerun with Flatmate Finders, n=3,562, March to April 2026.

Sydney has the lowest share who have given up on owning, at 27.1%, and Brisbane the highest, at 37.8%. The widest spread across the capitals is on age: 35.2% of Sydney sharers are 40 or over, against 54.4% in Adelaide. Melbourne is the oldest of the big four at 45.7%, and the most churned, with 72.2% seeing a housemate move against 71.7% in Perth. Perth and Sydney report the most positive households, at 87.8% and 87.6%.

What the Census sees

The ABS counts share housing every five years. Its numbers are the official picture, and they are worth reading against this study, because the two measure different things and the gap between them is itself a finding.

361,822
group households in the 2021 Census, **3.9%** of classified occupied private households

848,162
people classified as group household members, **3.6%** of people in occupied private dwellings

+53.8%
growth in group household residents aged **55 and over**, 2011 to 2021

Where the Census agrees

The ageing is in the official data too. Between 2011 and 2021, group household residents aged 55 and over rose 53.8%, and those aged 65 and over rose 73.1%, from 48,009 people to 83,102. That corroborates the central finding of this report from a completely different direction: the ABS counted dwellings, we asked the people inside them. The Census also shows how concentrated the stereotype is: the highest shares in the country are inner city and university areas, led by Melbourne CBD North at 26.2% of households, against 5.6% in Greater Darwin and 3.5% in Greater Perth across whole capitals. The share house of popular imagination is real, and it lives in about a dozen postcodes.

Where it counts something narrower

A Census group household is one where every resident is unrelated to every other, which excludes three arrangements this study found often: someone renting a spare room in a family home; an owner letting rooms in their own house to cover the mortgage, 17% of our respondents; and a couple sharing with others, classified as a family household rather than a group one, which matters when 45% of our respondents live in a two person household. The official 848,162 is a floor, not a count of everyone sharing a home with people they are not related to.

CENSUS YEAR	GROUP HOUSEHOLDS	CHANGE
2001	**262,551**	**baseline**
2006	**280,856**	**+7.0%**
2011	**321,007**	**+14.3%**
2016	**354,911**	**+10.6%**
2021	**361,822**	**+1.9%**

ABS Census 2001 to 2021. Counts and shares from Time Series Profile Table T14 and General Community Profile Table G27; geographic figures from 2021 QuickStats and the General Community Profile SA2 DataPack. Growth slowed sharply in the last period, on a Census taken in 2021.

The ABS can tell you how many share households exist and where. It cannot tell you whether the people in them expected to be there, or whether they still believe they will own a home. That is what this study set out to ask.

REFERENCE

The numbers behind the numbers

External sources used to frame the survey findings. None of these are our data.

- National rents have risen 42.9% in five years, adding roughly $204 a week to the median rental value (Cotality, formerly CoreLogic). Median advertised rents rose about 48% in the decade to March 2025.
- The median capital city rent reached approximately $680 a week in early 2026, and renting households are dedicating a record share of pre-tax income to housing.
- The national median dwelling value passed $940,000 in May 2026 after an 8.6% annual rise. PropTrack rates affordability at its worst since records began in 1995. Prices have since eased in several markets, Brisbane among them. The external figures here describe the market as it stood around the fielding window and should be read against current data.
- Rental vacancy sits near 1.7% nationally against a pre-pandemic average around 3.3%.
- The average first home buyer is now around 36 years old. Home ownership has fallen to 36% among 25 to 29 year olds and 50% among 30 to 34 year olds.
- Flatmates.com.au's national survey (10,300+ respondents) found 48% share primarily because they cannot afford to live alone, with over-55s the fastest growing cohort on the platform.

METHODOLOGY

About this research

This is not a representative sample of all Australian sharehouses. It is a study of Australians actively forming or reforming one, recruited through Flatmate Finders and Homerun.

Fielded March to April 2026. 3,672 responses received. 110 duplicate submissions from the same email address were removed, giving an analysis base of 3,562 unique respondents currently living in, or hosting, share accommodation across Australia. Deduplication changed no headline figure by more than one percentage point. Participation was incentivised.

Sydney 30%, Melbourne 24%, Brisbane 15% and Perth 12% account for the bulk of responses. The remainder came from Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart, Darwin and regional areas.

Self-completed online, distributed through Flatmate Finders and Homerun channels. No quotas and no panel provider. Questions were single-choice, multiple-choice and open text. Open text questions carried no prompts, so a figure described as volunteered or unprompted was raised by the respondent without being asked.

Our own figures are unweighted and rounded to whole percentages, so some groupings will not total exactly 100; unrounded figures are on request. External figures are reproduced as published. Percentages are of the full base of 3,562 unless a subgroup base is stated. Subgroup figures are calculated against their own base. No imputation: a respondent who did not answer a question is excluded from it. Free-text responses were coded by hand and are reproduced with light spelling corrections and no identifying details.

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Important data caveats

- **It does not describe all sharehouses.** Respondents came through Flatmate Finders and Homerun, so the study reaches people actively forming or reforming a household. Those who settled years ago and never went looking again are underrepresented.
- **Turnover and tenure figures are the most exposed to that.** A panel recruited through a matching service will naturally over-count people who have recently moved, so treat the 71% turnover figure as a floor for this population rather than a national rate.
- **It is a single point in time.** Fielding ran through March and April 2026. It shows no trend, and any comparison with earlier years belongs to the external sources cited, not to this data.
- **Smaller cuts carry wider error.** Adelaide sits on 147 responses. City and age cuts below roughly 150 are directional and are flagged where they appear.

Question wording and full frequency tables are available on request.

If you are interested in particular data being collected in future surveys, please let us know at scott@homerun.app.

ABOUT

About Homerun

Homerun is an Australian company building software for sharehouses. Rent, bills, household admin and the everyday coordination that keeps a share home running.

Almost every housing product in this country assumes a family or a single tenant. A household of unrelated adults runs on different mechanics: costs are split rather than owed by one person, the membership changes, and no single name holds all the information. Very little has been built for that, which is the gap Homerun exists to close.

Research is how we understand the households we build for. The Sharehouse Generation is the first study we have published and we intend to run it annually, so that the picture in this report can be compared rather than just cited.

About Flatmate Finders

Flatmate Finders is one of Australia's largest share accommodation services.

Flatmate Finders partnered with Homerun on this study and opened the survey to customers that used their service over the past 12 months. The research was designed and analysed by Homerun.

Media enquiries and interview requests: scott@homerun.app · Interactive report: homerun.app

Homerun is an Australian household technology company.