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# APPENDIX: CITY PROFILE ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA



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According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Liveability Index, Adelaide was rated third in the top 10 most liveable cities in the world (based on a total of 140 cities worldwide). However, access to affordable and appropriate housing has become increasingly difficult, especially for low-income families.<sup>1</sup> The 2021 Anglicare Report on rental affordability shows that private rental in Greater Adelaide was non-existent for households on income support.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, overall social housing stock in South Australia has fallen greatly over the last couple of decades, despite a growing population.<sup>3</sup> In the mid-1990s, stock fell from about 63,000 dwellings (12.0% of all dwellings) to 46,624 dwellings (6.9% of all dwellings) in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

Homelessness in South Australia worsened in the five years to 2021. The latest census shows that a total of 7,408 people were counted as homeless on census night 2021, up from 6,200 people in 2016. Rough sleeping, meanwhile, had a relatively small drop, down from 387 people sleeping rough in 2016 to 323 people in 2021.

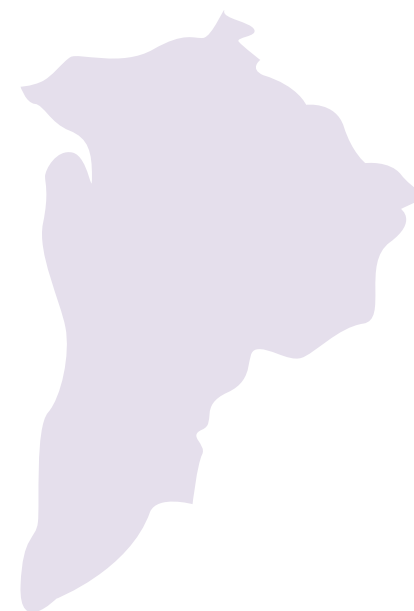
Like most Australian states and territories, the Government of South Australia responded quickly to the COVID-19 global pandemic, providing funding to move people sleeping rough to temporary safe accommodation. Around \$8 million dollars enabled more than 500 people to be placed into short-term hotel/motel accommodation, which included support packages for 12 months.

In November 2020, a total of 250 people who had been sleeping rough before the pandemic were permanently housed after leaving emergency hotel/motel accommodation. Unlike the historical investment in social housing announced in Victoria, the South Australian Government did not allocate additional funding for social housing, because of COVID-19.

A renewed focus on housing and homelessness was outlined in the State Government's *Our Housing Future 2020-30* Strategy, which aims to deliver 20,000 affordable housing properties over ten years. South Australia is also in the early stages of reforming the homelessness sector. The extent to which the reforms, outlined in *Future Directions for Homelessness*, will effectively tackle homelessness will crucially depend on sector access to housing supply. However, there is no mention of the need for an increased supply of housing in the Strategy.

## Geographical area

Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia (SA), is on the lands of the Kaurna People. Greater Adelaide comprises 23 local government areas and includes the city of Adelaide and the regional centres of Gawler and Mount Barker. The region covers an area of 3,240 square kilometres and in 2021 was home to an estimated 1,402,393 resident population.<sup>5</sup>



1 20-Year Infrastructure Strategy, May 2020. Available at: [https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf](https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf) (p.70)

2 <https://www.anglicare.asn.au/publications/rental-affordability-snapshot-2021/>

3 20-Year Infrastructure Strategy, May 2020. Available at: [https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf](https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf)

4 20-Year Infrastructure Strategy, May 2020. Available at: [https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf](https://www.infrastructure.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/197511/20-Year-State-Infrastructure-Strategy-Full.pdf) (p.70)

5 <https://dbr.abs.gov.au/region.html?lcr=gccsa&rgn=4GADE>

## Definition of rough sleeping and homelessness

According to the official definition from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), homelessness refers to anyone who has no dwelling, or is in an inadequate dwelling, provides no tenure or tenure is short or limited or prevents them from having control of, and access to, space for social relations.<sup>6</sup> This broad definition recognises that while homelessness is about the lack of shelter, importantly, it is also about the loss of home (security, privacy, warmth, connection, and belonging).

Rough sleeping, the most extreme form of homelessness, refers to people who are destitute on the streets, sleeping in cars, parks, tents, or in derelict buildings. But homelessness also includes anyone staying in specialist homelessness services, anyone staying temporarily with other families, living in boarding houses or other temporary lodgings, or living in 'severely crowded' dwellings.<sup>7</sup>

## Population and ratio of rough sleeping and homelessness

The 2021 census figures show there were 323 people sleeping rough across South Australia on census night, 64 fewer people than in 2016, or 17%. This compares with a 50% increase recorded in the 2016 census, up from 258 people in 2011.

As a point-in-time count, the census provides a snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough at a particular time every five years. As such, it does not reflect the dynamics of rough sleeping over time. This can include, for example, people moving between different categories of homelessness, from rough sleeping to couch surfing to specialist homelessness services and back to rough sleeping. Such changes are not captured by a census undertaken once every five years. However, the census does provide important insights into homelessness trends over time.

The 2021 Census may be an exception, given the extent of government policy measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.<sup>8</sup> These measures, plus better use of administrative data and refined targeted count strategies, have affected the 2021 Census homelessness estimates for rough sleeping, supported accommodation, temporary accommodation, and boarding houses.<sup>9</sup>

- As indicated in [Table 1](#), across Greater Adelaide, 147 individuals were counted as sleeping rough in 2021, which is 38 fewer people than in 2016.<sup>10</sup>
- As a rate, this translates to 11 people sleeping rough per 100,000 residents, on any given day.
- As a contrast, data from the Adelaide Zero project indicate that at the end of 2021 a total of 128 people were counted sleeping rough in the City of Adelaide alone.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that the census figure is likely an underestimate of the scale of rough sleeping in the larger Greater Adelaide area.

**Table 1. Rough sleeping (point-in-time)**

Greater Adelaide (2021)	
<b>Estimated number sleeping rough:</b>	147 People*
<b>Rate of rough sleeping per 100,000 residents:</b>	11 People**

**Sources:**

\* 2021 Census - Counting Persons, Estimating Homelessness (Enumerated), TableBuilder: Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out by Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) (PIT).

\*\* Based on the 2021 estimated population for Greater Adelaide: 1,387,290, Census of Population and Housing 2021, TableBuilder: Person's Place of Usual Residence by GCCSA.

6 Cat. No. 4922.0 – Information Paper – A Statistical Definition of Homelessness (2012), <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4922.0>

7 Severely crowded is defined as needing an extra four or more bedrooms to accommodate a household's usual residents, based on the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4922.0main+features62012>

8 <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/brief/what-2021-census-data-told-us-about-homelessness>

9 Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/estimating-homelessness-census-methodology/2021>

10 Estimating Homelessness, 2021 Census of Population and Housing, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/2021#homeless-operational-groups>

11 Adelaide Zero Dashboard, Functional Zero data: <https://www.dunstan.org.au/adelaide-zero-project/dashboard/>

## Overall homelessness

Homelessness in South Australia deteriorated over a five-year period. On census night 2021, a total of 7,408 people were counted as homeless across all South Australia, an increase of 1,208 people (or 19%). This compares with 6,200 people counted as homeless in 2016.

In Greater Adelaide, overall homelessness totalled 5,556 people on census night 2021, compared with 4,624 people in 2016, an increase of 20%.

Rough sleeping, while highly visible, represents a proportionally small component of total homelessness. Most people experiencing homelessness remain 'invisible', staying in some form of precarious or insecure accommodation, including specialist homelessness services, boarding houses, temporary lodgings, with other households, or in severely crowded dwellings.

The diverse forms of homelessness experienced by people in Greater Adelaide on census night in 2021 are presented in [Table 2](#).

- Overall, the more than 5,500 people counted as homeless translates to a rate of 400 people homeless per 100,000 residents.
- There were 235 people staying in other temporary lodgings (hotels/motels) compared with 25 people in 2016, a substantial increase of 840%, but representing just 4% of total homelessness.
- Representing more than a third (35%) of total homelessness, close to 2,000 people were counted in supported accommodation, 894 more than in 2016.
- The number of people counted in severely crowded dwellings on census night 2021 remained relatively high and was up by 105 people from 2016; but as a proportion of total homelessness, it was down to 30% compared with 34% in 2016.
- Severe overcrowding<sup>12</sup> involves stressful and difficult circumstances that can force people into other forms of homelessness, including rough sleeping.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 2. Type of homelessness (point-in-time)**

	Greater Adelaide (2021)
People living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out (rough sleeping)	147 (3%)
People in supported accommodation for the homeless	1,952 (35%)
People staying temporarily with other households	919 (2%)
People living in boarding houses	616 (11%)
People in other temporary lodgings (hotels/motels)	235 (4%)
People living in 'severely' crowded dwellings	1,692 (30%)
<b>Total number homeless</b>	<b>5,556 (100%)*</b>
<b>Rate of homelessness per 100,000 population</b>	<b>400 people**</b>

**Sources:**

\* 2021 Census of Population and Housing, Estimating Homelessness (Enumerated), TableBuilder, Homelessness Groups by Greater Capital City Statistical Area (GCCSA) (Point-in-time).

\*\* Rate per 100,000 based on 2021 estimated population for Greater Adelaide: 1,387,290, Census of Population and Housing 2021, TableBuilder: Person's Place of Usual Residence by GCCSA.

<sup>12</sup> A severely crowded dwelling needs an extra four or more bedrooms to accommodate a household's usual residents, as defined by the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4922.0main+features62012>

<sup>13</sup> What is overcrowding and severe overcrowding and what can be done about it? Policy Evidence Summary, September 2019, AHURI, available at: [https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/810123/overcrowding-and-severe-overcrowding-policy-evidence-summary.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/810123/overcrowding-and-severe-overcrowding-policy-evidence-summary.pdf)



## Structural factors affecting homelessness

### Social and affordable housing

Social housing in South Australia has been declining since 1993. Between 2006 and 2018, the overall stock fell by 5,632 dwellings.<sup>14</sup> Across Greater Adelaide, there is a shortfall of 25,500 social and affordable rental properties, which is expected to increase to 40,400 by 2036.<sup>15</sup>

As indicated in [Table 3](#), and consistent with Melbourne and Sydney, Greater Adelaide has a problem with the supply of social and affordable housing.

- Social housing amounts to 5.6% of all dwellings in Greater Adelaide (compared with 7% OECD average)<sup>16</sup>, and with an overall drop in dwellings, it is not sufficient to meet demand, leaving vulnerable families to turn to the private rental market.
- However, the private rental market has failed to respond to the housing needs of these families. Recipients of income support are especially disadvantaged, given the almost complete absence of affordable private rentals; just 40 of the approximately 1,800 rental properties listed on 26 March 2021 for Greater Adelaide were affordable and appropriate to anyone on income support.
- Further, of all low-income families renting in the private market in Greater Adelaide, more than a third (close to 32,000 households) were in rental stress, and therefore, at increased risk of homelessness.

**Table 3. Social and affordable housing measure**

	Greater Adelaide
<b>Number of social housing rented dwellings (% of total dwellings) (2021)</b>	30,236 (5.6%)*
<b>Number of new private rental listings affordable for households on income support (2021)</b>	40 (2.0%)**
<b>Number of low-income households in rental stress (bottom 40% of income distribution paying more than 30% of gross income on housing) (2019-20)</b>	31,615 (34.9%***)

**Sources:**

- \* (2021 data) Social Health Atlas of Australia, 2022, available at: <https://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases/data#social-health-atlases-of-australia-local-government-areas>, Total private dwellings: 536,048.
- \*\* Anglicare Rental Report, 26 March 2021, <https://anglicareras.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/sa.pdf> (Total new listings = 1788 in metropolitan Adelaide).
- \*\*\* Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia, 2019-20, Table 13.1, available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/housing-occupancy-and-costs/2019-20#data-download>, % based on total number lower-income renter households: 90,580.

### Level of income and poverty

Between 2020 and 2021, 18,600 people sought support from specialist homelessness services in South Australia, with many seeking help due to financial difficulties (18%, or 3,431 people).<sup>17</sup> For those aged 15 years and over, 11,000 people (82%) relied on income support payments as their main source of income, indicating widespread financial vulnerability and poverty.<sup>18</sup>

[Table 4](#) presents the median cost of private rental, average incomes, and the extent of poverty in Greater Adelaide:

- In general, rental housing in Greater Adelaide is unaffordable. Even on an average income, a typical family would spend around 37% of their income on the cost of rental housing in Greater Adelaide, indicating rental stress.
- But for low-income families, a typical rental was completely unaffordable; with 86% of average income needed to cover the cost of the median rent, it would leave just \$64 (or \$9 per day) to cover the cost of basics.

<sup>14</sup> Audit of South Australia's current housing assets and mapping of future demand, Chris Leishman and Emma Baker, 2019, available at: [https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/97482/AHURI-Report.pdf](https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/97482/AHURI-Report.pdf) (p.36)

<sup>15</sup> Snapshot: Anglicare SA, Rental Affordability Report, 2022, available at: <https://anglicaresa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/AnglicareSA-Rental-Affordability-Report-2022.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/eis/family/PH4-2-Social-rental-housing-stock.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Specialist homelessness services, 2020-21, Data tables, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/data> (Table: CLIENTS.20)

<sup>18</sup> Specialist homelessness services, 2020-21, Data tables, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/data> (Table: CLIENTS.16)

Table 4. Income and poverty measure

	Greater Adelaide
Median weekly rent (2021)	\$390.00*
Mean weekly equivalised disposable household income (2019-20)	\$1,068.00**
Mean weekly equivalised disposable household income – bottom 20% income distribution (2019-20)	\$454.00**
Poverty rate – overall (2016)	7.1%***
Poverty rate – children (under 15 years) (2018)	Not available+

## Sources:

- \* Private Rental Report, Quarterly Rent Report – December 2021, SA Housing Authority, available at: [private-rental-report-2021-12.xlsx](https://www.sahousing.gov.au/private-rental-report-2021-12.xlsx) (live.com).
- \*\* Data cube 13: States and Territories, (Table 13.5) <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/finance/household-income-and-wealth-australia/latest-release#:~:text=In%202019%E2%80%9320%20the%20average,income%20was%20%24%2C124%20per%20week.>
- \*\*\* <https://www.sacoss.org.au/poverty-rate-twice-high-regional-sa#:~:text=131%2C945%20people%20or%208%25%20of,povetry%20line%20in%20Greater%20Adelaide.>
- + 22,350 children in SA live in poverty, but no breakdown for Greater Adelaide.

## Family violence

In the last financial year (2020-21), 18,600 people were assisted by specialist homelessness services in South Australia, of whom 30% (or 5,569 people) sought assistance due to family violence (including domestic violence).<sup>19</sup>

- [Table 5](#) shows the number of family violence-related crimes recorded by police in Greater Adelaide during 2020-21, and indicates the number of people potentially at risk of homelessness.
- In general, the rate of family violence was 647 crimes per 100,000 population, based on 8,900 family violence-related crimes recorded by police in Greater Adelaide over the 12 months.

Table 5. Family violence measure

	Greater Adelaide
Number of family violence-related crimes (2020-21)	8,906*
Reported family violence crimes per 100,000 population	647.0**

## Sources:

- \* South Australia Police, Family & Domestic Abuse related-offences 2020-21, <https://data.sa.gov.au/data/dataset/crime-statistics/resource/9d8e1ddd-ffd5-4aba-a190-a2ece9cddb53>. Correspondence file reference: ABS (2018) ASGS Geographic Correspondences (2016), ABS Geospatial Solutions, Commonwealth of Australia. Available at: <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/asgs-geographic-correspondences-2016>, accessed 17/3/2022.
- \*\* Rate based on 2020 estimated resident population for Greater Adelaide: 1,376,601, ABS, Regional population, 2019-20, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population/2019-20>.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/2ec69877-b64c-47f8-8545-42a885cd8041/SA\\_factsheet.pdf.aspx](https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/2ec69877-b64c-47f8-8545-42a885cd8041/SA_factsheet.pdf.aspx)

# POLICY CONTEXT



## Rough sleeping and homelessness

Released in September 2020, the homelessness strategy, *Future Directions for Homelessness*, is part of *Our Housing Future 2020-2030 reforms*.<sup>20</sup>

The homelessness strategy is a major reform of the service system in South Australia, based on an 'alliance model' where agencies work together in a coordinated and integrated approach, to deliver more effective outcomes to people experiencing homelessness. Much like they did during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the reforms have been welcomed, some services have expressed concern that the strategy will add to the administrative burden without providing additional funds, without improving service provision.<sup>21 22</sup>

As noted in the strategy, the key ambition is to 'create a Housing First approach, but the strategy makes no mention of the need for an increased supply of housing. Access to housing supply is vital to any measures to prevent and end homelessness.<sup>23</sup>

In 2017, the City of Adelaide partnered with the Institute of Global Homelessness to become a Vanguard City, committed to ending homelessness. In February 2022, that commitment was broadened to include the rest of South Australia; the world's second Vanguard state.<sup>24</sup>

## Investment in social and affordable housing

The deterioration in social and affordable housing is the result of policy inaction.<sup>25</sup> The supply of social housing in South Australia has fallen (although not to the same extent as in Victoria and New South Wales) over the past 25 or more years, as noted in section 1.5. This has occurred in the context of an increasing population, rising housing costs and stagnant wage growth, and rising homelessness. Between 2006 and 2020, the state's social housing stock fell by 11%.<sup>26</sup> Across the state, in 2022, around 16,000 applicants (excluding transfer applicants) were on the waitlist for public housing.<sup>27</sup>

Our Housing Future 2020-30 is the South Australian Government's plan, in partnership with the community and business sectors, to get the 'housing and homelessness system back on track'.<sup>28</sup>

20 <https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/our-housing-future/future-directions-for-homelessness#:~:text=Our%20Housing%20Future%202020%2D2030&text=The%20reforms%20aim%20to%20provide,in%20and%20out%20of%20homelessness>.

21 <https://anglicaresa.com.au/media-statement-anglicaresa-welcomes-state-governments-future-directions-for-homelessness/>

22 <https://indaily.com.au/news/2020/11/13/homelessness-to-continue-to-grow-under-sa-govt-reform-sector/>

23 [https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/296537/Future-Directions-for-Homelessness.pdf](https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/296537/Future-Directions-for-Homelessness.pdf)

24 <https://www.dunstan.org.au/adelaide-zero-project/a-vanguard-city/>

25 Australian Homelessness Monitor, 2018, available at: [https://data.launchhousing.org.au/app/uploads/2018/05/LaunchHousing\\_AHM2018\\_Report.pdf](https://data.launchhousing.org.au/app/uploads/2018/05/LaunchHousing_AHM2018_Report.pdf)

26 [https://cityfutures.adelaide.unsw.edu.au/documents/685/Waithood\\_paper.pdf](https://cityfutures.adelaide.unsw.edu.au/documents/685/Waithood_paper.pdf)

27 Report on Government Services 2022, <https://www.pc.gov.au/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2022/housing-and-homelessness/housing> (Table 18A.5)

28 <https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/our-housing-future/our-housing-future-2020-2030>

The goal of the \$550 million investment is to develop 20,000 affordable housing dwellings over the next 10 years (amounting to 2,000 dwellings per year), which includes:

- More than \$452 million for new social and affordable housing supply;
- \$75 million to address the backlog in public housing maintenance;
- \$20 million toward a homelessness prevention fund to support innovative housing trials; and
- In 2021-22, an additional \$5 million over five years was allocated to the Affordable Housing Fund, which will result in more than 1,000 homes, including 720 reserved as social housing.<sup>29</sup>

However, unlike the historical social housing investment announced in Victoria, there was no additional funding for social housing by the South Australian government as a result of COVID-19.

In general, the strategy is crucial but it will do little to address current housing needs. This includes the thousands of low-income households in rental stress, and the 5,100 people supported by specialist homelessness services across South Australia, on any given day.<sup>30</sup>

## Responding to homelessness and the COVID-19 pandemic

Rough sleeping in Adelaide was virtually eliminated through the swift response of the South Australian Government.<sup>31</sup>

Funding of \$8.2 million went into the COVID-19 Emergency Accommodation Response for Rough Sleepers (CEARS), which enabled 542 people to be placed temporarily into hotel and motel accommodation, along with support packages for 12 months. The funding also provided temporary accommodation to Aboriginal people from remote communities who were sleeping rough<sup>32</sup>

In November 2020, a total of 250 individuals who were sleeping rough before COVID-19 were successfully housed after leaving emergency motel accommodation.<sup>33</sup>

29 Our Housing Future' Government of South Australia, December 2019. Retrieved from [Our Housing Future 2020-2030](#) (pp.10-15)

30 <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/efccb1c6-ca53-48a4-be30-c8fbf4948aa5/aihw-hou-327-infographic-SA.pdf.aspx>

31 Hartley, C., Barnes E., Writer, T. More than temporary? An evaluation of the accommodation of people sleeping rough in inner city Sydney during the COVID-19 pandemic, (2021), Sydney: Centre for Social Impact, available at: <https://homelessnessnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/More-than-temporary-Homelessness-NSW-Report-June-2021-FINAL.pdf> (p.11)

32 Flatau, P., Lester, L., Seivwright, A., Teal, R., Dobrovic, J., Vallesi, S., Hartley, C. and Callis, Z. (2021). Ending homelessness in Australia: An evidence and policy deep dive. Perth: Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia and the University of New South Wales. DOI: 10.25916/ntba-f006. Available at: <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2022-02/apo-nid315326.pdf> (p.179)

33 10/09/2020 | Michelle Lensink MLC | Better Services. Retrieved from [Hundreds of SA rough sleepers housed in pandemic | Premier of South Australia](#)