



Government  
of South Australia

Department for Communities  
and Social Inclusion

# Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count

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May 2017

The twenty-fifth Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count was conducted on 9 May 2017. The count located 110 people who were unsheltered or 'sleeping rough', of whom eleven had a house elsewhere.

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# 1 Background

The Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count is a survey questionnaire that monitors the number of people sleeping rough in the inner city of Adelaide. The survey was first conducted in 2007 and provides information about the circumstances and profile of people sleeping rough in the inner city of Adelaide. In mid-2011 the survey was revised to focus definitively upon those who were rough sleeping the previous night, and additional questions were added to try source more relevant data that could be used in analysis.

The survey is a partnership between the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and thirteen key inner city homeless services, which span across eight different organisations. These services are: Street to Home; Hutt Street Centre (The Daughters of Charity); WestCare Centre (Baptist Care SA); Fred's Van (St Vincent de Paul); St Vincent de Paul Men's Crisis Accommodation Service; Magdalene Centre (Anglicare); Helping Young People Achieve (HYPA) (Service to Youth Council); New ROADS (Uniting Communities); Streetlink (Uniting Communities); Emergency Assistance – Adelaide (Salvation Army); and Towards Independence (Salvation Army), which incorporates the Sobering Up Unit, Supported Accommodation and Recovery Services – East, and Supported Accommodation and Recovery Services – West.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Survey methodology

The survey is a point in time count that aims to monitor levels of rough sleeping in the Adelaide inner city area, as well as provide information about the circumstances and profile of the population. The survey is conducted in the early morning of the day of the count by Street to Home staff who visit the parklands and areas around the city to locate people sleeping 'out', as well as workers from other homelessness services who approach people attending their service that day. Workers from DCSI coordinate data collection at Fred's Van in the evening and approach people visiting this service. If the people approached had slept rough the previous night, they would be invited to participate in completing the survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey). This replicates the basic methodology from previous surveys.

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to February 2013, the Counts involved four participating homelessness services: Street to Home, New ROADS (formerly Byron Place), Hutt Street Centre and WestCare Centre. Additional inner city homelessness services have been participating since the February 2013 Count.

## 1.2 Review of methodology

There have been two significant changes to the survey methodology since the rough sleeper count survey was created. Firstly, in May 2011 the survey was revised with the assistance of the inner city homelessness services, to focus only on people who were rough sleeping the previous night. Secondly, following a forum in June 2012 with a range of stakeholders, a working group was established to provide advice to improve the robustness of the information collected. The working group recommended to:

- Increase the frequency of the Count by conducting an additional Count in the summer months (in addition to the May and August Count).
- Increase collection points by approaching additional inner city homelessness services to be involved in the Count to collect data.

As a result of these recommendations, a revised survey was implemented in February 2013, with nine additional homelessness services participating; increasing the total number of participating services to thirteen.

## 1.3 Survey timeframe

The inner city rough sleeper count has been conducted 24 times on the following dates:

- 2007 – 19 June and 21 August
- 2008 – 13 May and 12 August
- 2009 – 5 May and 11 August
- 2010 – 4 May and 10 August
- 2011 – 10 May and 13 September
- 2012 – 7 August
- 2013 – 12 February, 7 May and 6 August
- 2014 – 4 February, 6 May and 5 August
- 2015 – 3 February, 5 May and 4 August
- 2016 – 2 February, 3 May, 30 August
- 2017 – 7 February, 9 May

## 2 May 2017 Count

The data reported in this Bulletin was collected from the 9 May 2017 rough sleeper count survey from nine of the thirteen homelessness services listed in Section 1. Any comparisons made are to the previous survey held 7 February 2017.

### 2.1 Participation

Two hundred and twenty five surveys<sup>2</sup> were received. Of the people approached to participate in the survey:

- 159 people participated in the survey.
- 65 people either declined to participate, were not capable of participating, or the place they had slept the previous night was not known.
- One person had already completed the survey with another service.

A considerable number of participants who were sleeping rough declined to answer questions surrounding their circumstances (this should be considered when interpreting the results, particularly when comparisons are made with previous surveys<sup>3</sup>).

### 2.2 Results

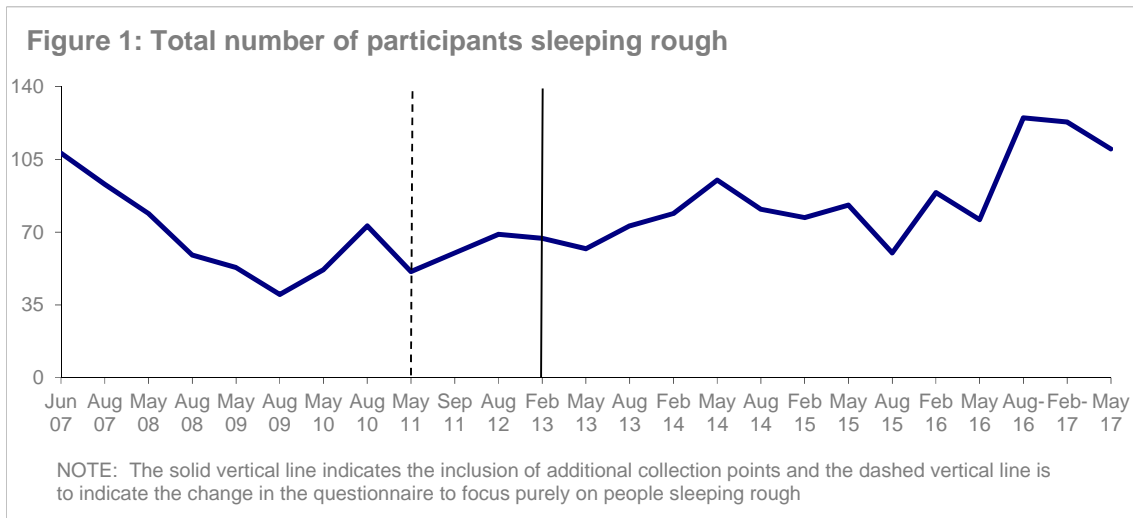
Of the 225 surveys received, 110 participants had slept rough the previous night. Eleven participants had a house or home elsewhere. It should be noted that 15 of the participants who slept rough the previous night were either incapable of completing the survey or had declined to participate.

This figure slightly decreased compared to the previous survey, in which out of the 219 surveys received, 123 participants had slept rough the previous night. Of these rough sleepers, nine reported having a house or home elsewhere. Furthermore, 23 participants who slept rough were either incapable of completing the survey or had declined to participate. Figure 1 shows that in general, the number of people sleeping rough has been increasing since August 2009.

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<sup>2</sup> This figure should not be used to infer the number of clients attending at the inner city homelessness services.

<sup>3</sup> Non-response varied across questions. Level of non-response is higher to the previous survey (29% compared to 24% previously).



### 2.2.1 Sleeping rough and having a home elsewhere

In May 2017, eleven people indicated that although they had slept rough the previous night, they had a home elsewhere. This represents 10% of the total number of people who had slept rough. Eleven participants indicated they had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or parklands. When the participants were asked why they had not slept at their own home, a number of reasons were reported: including their house being interstate, dispute with the landlord and to avoid family members.

Ten indicated that they have been sleeping rough ‘almost all of the time’, ‘most of the time’ or ‘about half of the time’ for between seven months to two years while one participant indicated they have only been sleeping rough for one week or less.

From this group, five people identified themselves as Aboriginal. One was male, aged between 25 and 34. Four were female aged between 25 and 44 years, one who also has two children aged 4 and 8 years of age and has been sleeping rough for more than 2 years. The remaining six participants were all male, non-Aboriginal aged between 35 and 64, who had spent most of their time in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

### 2.2.2 Sleeping rough without a home elsewhere

Of the total number of participants who had slept rough, 99<sup>4</sup> people (90%) had slept rough the previous night, with no home elsewhere. Of these 99 people, 80 (81%) had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or parklands, eight (8%) had slept in the Adelaide suburbs and 11 (11%) either did not report their location, or slept somewhere other than the Adelaide city, parklands or suburbs.

Table 1 summarises the reasons given for sleeping rough. In line with the previous survey, the most common reason reported by 36% of participants was that there was no other option. In line with the previous survey, financial reasons were the second main reason for sleeping rough and were provided by 3% of participants (20 percentage points drop compared to previous survey). One percent of participants slept rough out of personal preference while 2% slept rough due to being evicted or kicked out. A further 44% of people who had slept rough did not provide a reason as to why they were sleeping rough, a increase of 20 percentage points from the previous survey.

**Table 1: Reasons why people had slept rough**

|                                   | Total Number | Percentage  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| No other options                  | 36           | 36%         |
| Financial reason                  | 3            | 3%          |
| Personal preference               | 1            | 1%          |
| Evicted / kicked out              | 2            | 2%          |
| Mental health issue               | 0            | 0%          |
| Waiting for other housing options | 0            | 0%          |
| Relationship breakdown            | 2            | 2%          |
| Other                             | 11           | 11%         |
| Not stated                        | 44           | 44%         |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

Table 2 shows that 37% of participants who slept rough did not attempt to find alternative shelter, an decrease of 26 percentage points from the previous survey result. Only 14% of participants attempted to find accommodation elsewhere for the previous night. Of the 14 participants who had tried to find alternative shelter:

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<sup>4</sup> This figure includes 32 people who did not answer the question as to whether they had a home elsewhere.

- eight people had sought assistance from support services such as St. Vincent de Paul Accommodation Service,
- two attempted to use their personal connections (family and friends),
- three tried to source private accommodation through the newspaper real estate section.

**Table 2: Where people attempted to find alternative shelter**

|   | Total Number | Percentage  |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| Sought service support                      | 8            | 8%          |
| Personal connections                        | 2            | 2%          |
| Private accommodation                       | 3            | 3%          |
| Unknown                                     | 1            | 1%          |
| Did not attempt to seek alternative shelter | 37           | 37%         |
| Did not answer the question                 | 48           | 48%         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

Of the 37 participants who had not attempted to find alternative shelter elsewhere for the previous night, a number of different reasons were reported. Table 3 shows that the most common reasons given by participants were financial. This differs to the previous count where participants were referring to financial reasons for not finding alternative accommodation. There has also been a 13 percentage point increase in participants who were waiting for government service and therefore were not seeking alternative support.

**Table 3: Why people did not seek alternative shelter**

|                                  | Total Number | Percentage  |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Financial reason                 | 5            | 14%         |
| Given up                         | 3            | 8%          |
| Personal choice                  | 10           | 27%         |
| Waiting for a government service | 6            | 16%         |
| Other                            | 4            | 11%         |
| Not stated                       | 9            | 24%         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>37</b>    | <b>100%</b> |



The people who were surveyed have been sleeping rough for various lengths of time. Table 4 shows that the majority of participants (21%) had been sleeping rough for more than two years, an increase of four percentage points from the previous survey.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 4: How long people have been sleeping rough**

|                   | Total Number | Percentage  |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 week or less    | 7            | 7%          |
| 2 to 4 weeks      | 5            | 5%          |
| 5 to 11 weeks     | 6            | 6%          |
| 3 to 6 months     | 10           | 10%         |
| 7 to 12 months    | 8            | 8%          |
| 1 to 2 years      | 10           | 10%         |
| More than 2 years | 21           | 21%         |
| Unknown           | 0            | 0%          |
| No response       | 32           | 32%         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

In regards to the amount of time spent sleeping rough in the last year, 48% (48 participants) reported sleeping out ‘most of the time’ or ‘almost all of the time’ (Table 5).

**Table 5: Sleeping rough pattern over the last year**

|                        | Total Number | Percentage  |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Almost all of the time | 40           | 40%         |
| Most of the time       | 8            | 8%          |
| About half of the time | 6            | 6%          |
| Some of the time       | 7            | 7%          |
| Hardly ever            | 4            | 4%          |
| Unknown                | 2            | 2%          |
| No response            | 32           | 32%         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

Participants were also asked to identify how long it has been since they last had stable housing. Table 6 shows that 53% (52 participants) reported not having had stable housing for three months or more, including 29% (29 participants) who reported not having stable housing

<sup>5</sup> This figure could show a marked increase due to a higher percentage of respondents providing a response to the length of time they had been sleeping rough, 78% as opposed to 51% in the previous survey.

for over two years. In comparison, when the survey was last conducted, 70% (80 participants) reported not having had stable housing for three months or more with 39% not having stable housing for over two years.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 6: How long since people have had stable housing**

|                               | Total Number | Percentage  |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Currently have stable housing | 0            | 0%          |
| 1 week or less                | 1            | 1%          |
| 2 to 4 weeks                  | 5            | 5%          |
| 5 to 11 weeks                 | 1            | 1%          |
| 3 to 6 months                 | 3            | 3%          |
| 7 to 12 months                | 7            | 7%          |
| 1 to 2 years                  | 13           | 13%         |
| More than 2 years             | 29           | 29%         |
| Unknown                       | 2            | 2%          |
| No response                   | 38           | 38%         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

Most participants (56%) stated that they had been primarily based in the Adelaide metropolitan area over the last 12 months. Of the six participants who were primarily based interstate, one each based themselves in New South Wales, Northern Territory and Victoria. The remaining three participants based themselves in more than one state. (Table 7).

**Table 7: Area spent the most time in over the last 12 months**

|                         | Total Number | Percentage  |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Adelaide metro          | 55           | 56%         |
| Country South Australia | 3            | 3%          |
| Interstate              | 6            | 6%          |
| Unknown                 | 1            | 1%          |
| No response             | 34           | 34%         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>99</b>    | <b>100%</b> |

<sup>6</sup> This decrease could be due to a lower percentage of participants giving a response in regards to how long since they had stable housing, 62% as opposed to 80% in the previous survey.

The demographic information from the survey is summarised in Tables 8 and 9. Males were 7.7 times more likely to be sleeping rough than females(3.3 times in the last survey). Males sleeping rough were mostly from non-Aboriginal backgrounds, and were 35 to 54 years old. Women who were sleeping rough were predominantly from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background and were 35 to 54 years old. These demographics are consistent with the previous survey.

**Table 8: Aboriginal status by gender**

|  | Male      |             | Female    |             | Not stated |             | Total     |             |
|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|  | #         | %           | #         | %           | #          | %           | #         | %           |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 17        | 22%         | 8         | 80%         | 0          | 0%          | 25        | 25%         |
| Non-Aboriginal                           | 59        | 77%         | 2         | 20%         | 0          | 0%          | 61        | 62%         |
| Unknown                                  | 0         | 0%          | 0         | 0%          | 0          | 0%          | 0         | 0%          |
| Not stated                               | 1         | 1%          | 0         | 0%          | 12         | 100%        | 13        | 13%         |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>77</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>12</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>99</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Table 9: Age (in years) by gender**

|              | Male      |             | Female    |             | Not stated |             | Total     |             |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|              | #         | %           | #         | %           | #          | %           | #         | %           |
| Under 18     | 1         | 1%          | 1         | 10%         |            | 0%          | 2         | 2%          |
| 18 to 24     | 3         | 4%          | 1         | 10%         |            | 0%          | 4         | 4%          |
| 25 to 34     | 10        | 13%         | 0         | 0%          |            | 0%          | 10        | 10%         |
| 35 to 44     | 25        | 32%         | 3         | 30%         |            | 0%          | 28        | 28%         |
| 45 to 54     | 26        | 34%         | 4         | 40%         |            | 0%          | 30        | 30%         |
| 55 to 64     | 7         | 9%          | 1         | 10%         |            | 0%          | 8         | 8%          |
| 65 to 74     | 3         | 4%          | 0         | 0%          |            | 0%          | 3         | 3%          |
| 75 and over  | 0         | 0%          | 0         | 0%          |            | 0%          | 0         | 0%          |
| Unknown      | 0         | 0%          | 0         | 0%          |            | 0%          | 0         | 0%          |
| Not stated   | 2         | 3%          | 0         | 0%          | 12         | 100%        | 14        | 14%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>12</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>99</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### 2.2.3 Participation in previous Inner City Rough Sleeper Survey Counts

Participants who were sleeping rough (without a home elsewhere) and provided identifier information made up 56% of the respondents. This information was used to determine the number of participants who had been identified as sleeping rough through the previous rough sleeper survey reports. Table 10 shows the number of times participants had been identified as sleeping rough previously.

According to the information gathered, 31% of the people who participated could not be linked to any of the previous rough sleeper surveys while 13% were traced to sleeping rough in at least one previous survey.

**Table 10: Repeat presentations of those sleeping rough without a home**

|   | Total Number | Percentage    |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| In May 2017 and sleeping rough in no previous Counts          | 31           | 31.3%         |
| In May 2017 and sleeping rough in one previous Count          | 13           | 13.1%         |
| In May 2017 and sleeping rough in two or more previous Counts | 11           | 11.1%         |
| Participant did not provide identifier information            | 44           | 44.4%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>99</b>    | <b>100.0%</b> |



### 3 Appendix A – Inner City Rough Sleeper Survey Questionnaire

#### INNER CITY AGENCY STREET COUNT

Hi, I'm ..... Have you heard about the count happening today? It's to find out more about people who are sleeping out/rough sleeping and a bit of background information.

It's important for the government to have accurate information about how many people in the inner city have housing problems or are homeless. This tells government what is working or not working with plans and services to help people to get safe and better housing.

Would you mind if I asked you a few questions as part of the count? It will only take a few minutes. It's anonymous, confidential and you can withdraw at any time.

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion will put together and look after all of the information collected today. No one else will see it. The report they produce will just be total numbers of people and there is no chance that you will be identified in any way. You can see the report when it's done if you want to.

#### ONLY COMPLETE A SURVEY FOR THOSE:

- have NOT participated in the Rough Sleep Survey today, and
- consent to participate.
- If the person declines record a tally mark on the 'decline to Participate Sheet'.
- Slept out last night

#### 1. Where did you sleep last night?

Slept inside/sheltered

Includes:

- Your own house or unit
- Friend's or family's place
- Hotel/motel
- Boarding house
- St Vincent de Paul Shelter
- Catherine House
- Backpackers
- Caravan Park
- City Watchhouse
- Prison
- Remand Centre
- Detox / Sobering up unit
- Hospital

**If the participant slept INSIDE or in SHELTERED accommodation thank them for their participation and conclude the interview.**

Slept out *Go to question 2.*

Includes:

- Car
- Park/ street
- Shed
- Tent
- Squat
- Verandah

#### 2. At what location did you sleep out last night?

- Adelaide city or parklands
- Adelaide Suburbs
- Other, please state .....

#### 3. Why did you sleep out last night? (Please prompt for why they slept out (not where) )

.....

.....

.....

4. Did you try and find any other accommodation last night (eg homeless shelter, with friends or family)?

Yes



a) Where did you try to find other accommodation?

.....  
.....



b) What happened when you approached this agency/person(s) for accommodation?

.....  
.....

No – why not

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you have a house or home somewhere else?

Yes

No



If yes: why didn't you stay there last night?

.....  
.....

6. How long have you been sleeping out?

- 1 week or less
- 2 to 4 weeks
- 5 to 11 weeks
- 3 to 6 months
- 7 to 12 months
- 1 to 2 years
- More than 2 years

7. Over the last year have you slept out (read out the following options):

- Almost all of the time
- Most of the time
- About half of the time
- Some of the time
- Hardly ever



**8. How long has it been since you last had stable housing?**

- Currently have stable housing
- 1 week or less
- 2 to 4 weeks
- 5 to 11 weeks
- 3 to 6 months
- 7 to 12 months
- 1 to 2 years
- More than 2 years

**9. What area did you spend most of your time in the last 12 months? (Please tick one box only)**

- Adelaide metro
- Country South Australia
- Interstate (please indicate which state?)
- Victoria
- WA
- Qld
- NSW
- Tas
- NT
- ACT
- Overseas

**10. What is your age?**

- Under 18
- 45 to 54
- 18 to 24
- 55 to 64
- 25 to 34
- 65 to 74
- 35 to 44
- 75 and over

**11. Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

**12. Do you have a child/children under 18 who STAYED with you last night?**

- Yes
- No

If yes: How old are they?

.....

**13. Gender of respondent?**

- Male
- Female

We will be doing this survey again in next year. It would be very helpful for us to have some idea of how many people who were here today are also here when we do the next count, and if their circumstances and housing have changed. It's entirely up to you, but would you mind letting me write down your initials and month and year of birth? This information will be given to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion who will keep it confidential and safe and will be used for statistical purposes only.

- No Survey completed.
- Yes Fill out boxes below

| First Name Initial | Last Name Initial |
|--------------------|-------------------|
|                    |                   |

What is your month & year of birth?

| MONTH |  | YEAR |  |
|-------|--|------|--|
|       |  |      |  |

**SURVEY COMPLETED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**

