



Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count

August 2015

Contents

Background	2
Review of methodology	3
August 2015 Count	4
Participation in Count	4
Results	4
Trends	4
Sleeping rough and having a house elsewhere	5
Sleeping rough without a house elsewhere	6
Presence in previous Counts	10
Appendix A	12

The twentieth Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count was conducted on 4 August 2015. The Count located 60 people who were unsheltered or 'sleeping rough', of whom three had a house elsewhere.

Background

The Rough Sleeper Street Counts aim 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. While the Counts and Census data cannot be compared, estimates released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show South Australia recorded a 41% drop in the number of people sleeping rough, down from 436 in 2006 to 258 in 2011. This is in comparison to a 6% decrease across Australia.

Previous Counts were conducted on:

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

The Counts are a partnership between the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and thirteen key inner city homeless services from 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.¹

¹ 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.

In the early morning of the day of the Count, Street to Home staff visited the Park Lands and other areas around the city to locate people sleeping 'out'. Workers at the other homelessness services approached people attending their service that day. Workers from DCSI coordinated data collection at Fred's Van in the evening and approached people visiting this service. If the people approached had slept rough the previous night, data collectors invited their participation in completing a short survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). This replicated the basic methodology in previous Counts.

Review of methodology

Since the inception of the Counts, there have been two significant changes to the methodology:

1. With the advice and assistance of the inner city homelessness services, the questionnaire was revised in May 2011 to focus definitively upon those who were rough sleeping the previous night.
2. Following a forum in June 2012 with a wide range of stakeholders, a working group was established to provide advice to improve the robustness of the information collected. Their recommendations were 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 consequence of these recommendations, a Count in February 2013 was implemented and an additional nine homelessness services agreed to participate (giving a total of thirteen services).



August 2015 Count

The data reported in this Bulletin were collected on the 4 August 2015 at the thirteen homelessness services listed above.

Participation in Count

One hundred and forty-eight questionnaires were received.² Of the people approached by collectors and invited to participate:

- 17 (12%) declined or were not capable of participating and where they had slept the previous night was not known
- Four (3%) had already completed the survey at another service.

This left 127 people who participated in the Count. A number of people who were sleeping rough declined to answer questions on their circumstances (up to 14% of respondents). This should be considered when interpreting the results, particularly when comparisons are made with previous Counts.³

Results

Sixty participants had slept rough the previous night. However, three of these reported having a house or home elsewhere.

Trends

As seen in Figure 1, the August 2015 Count found a decrease in the number of people sleeping rough, from 83 in May 2015 to 60.

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

³ Non-response varied across questions. Level of non-response is lower to the previous Count (around a third).

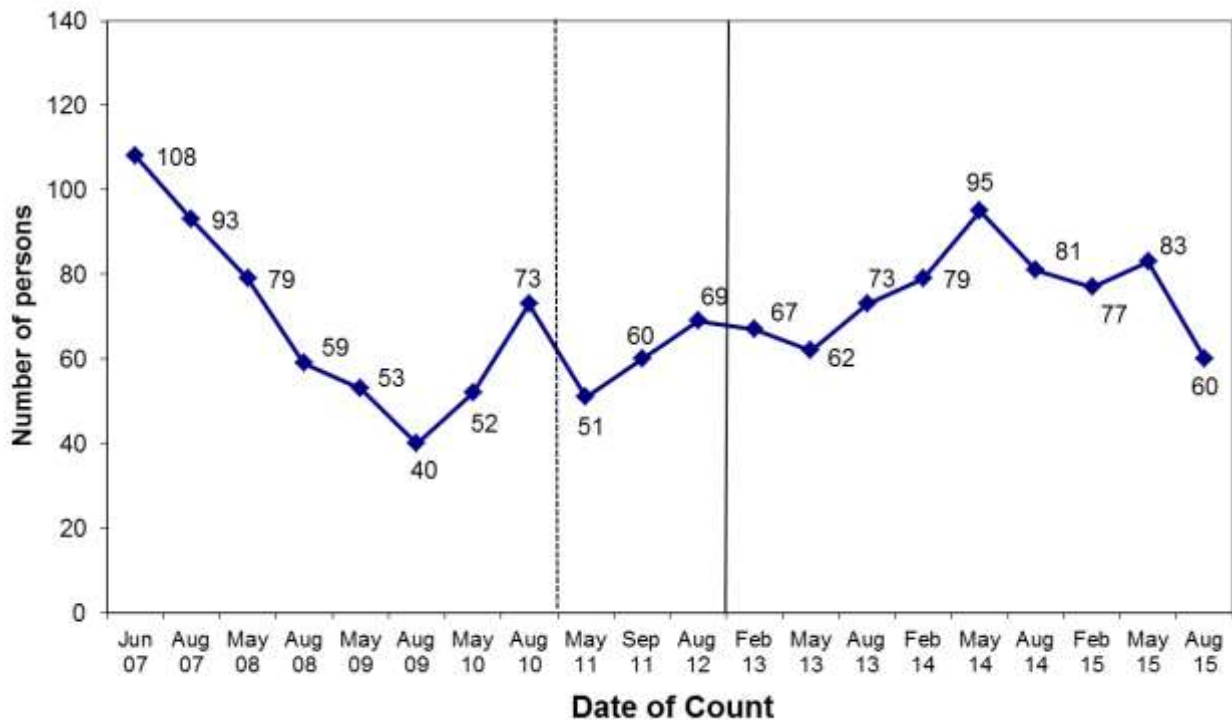


Figure 1: Total number of participants sleeping rough⁴

Sleeping rough and having a house elsewhere

Three people indicated that, although they had slept rough the previous night, they had a home elsewhere. They represent 5% of all those who had slept rough. Two indicated they had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or Park Lands and one in the Adelaide suburbs.

When asked why they had not slept at their own home, various reasons were reported. One did not feel safe staying at their home, one had a relationship breakdown and the house was too far away for one. None of the three indicated they had attempted to find other accommodation the night before. One reported conflict with a family for not seeking other accommodation and two did not indicate a reason.

The pattern of rough sleeping over the last year varied between the three people. One person indicated they had slept rough ‘almost all of the time’ and two ‘about half of the time’. Two people reported having slept rough for more than two years and one for one week or less.

Of this group, two identified themselves as Aboriginal and one was a women. One was aged 25 to 34 years, one was 35 to 44 years and one was 45 to 54 years. All reported they had spent most of their time over the last year in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

⁴ The solid vertical line in Figure 1 is to indicate the inclusion of additional collection points (implemented in 2013) and the dashed vertical line is to indicate the change in the questionnaire to focus purely on people sleeping rough (implemented in 2011).

Sleeping rough without a house elsewhere⁵

Fifty-seven people had slept rough the previous night, without having a home elsewhere.⁶ Forty-one (72%) had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or Park Lands, twelve (21%) had slept in the Adelaide suburbs and four people (7%) did not report their location.

Table 1 summarises the reasons given for sleeping rough. The most common reason reported by 29 people (51%) was that there was no other option (*'Because I had nowhere safe to go'* #56⁷ and *'Don't have accommodation, don't like to rely on services'* #89). Seven people reported financial reasons (*'Lack of money - thought that he didn't have any other options'* #102). A small number of other reasons were reported including: personal preference (*'Been rough sleeping for years'* #146), being kicked out of their previous accommodation (*'Disagreement with landlord so nowhere to go'* #75), a relationship breakdown and a mental health issue. A reason was not provided by eight people (14%).

Table 1: Reasons why people had slept rough

	n	%
No other options	29	50.9
Financial reason	7	12.3
Personal preference	3	5.3
Evicted / kicked out	2	3.5
Relationship breakdown	2	3.5
Mental health issue	2	3.5
Waiting for other housing options	1	1.8
Other	3	5.3
Not stated	8	14.0
Total	57	100.0

Fourteen people (25%) who slept rough reported they had attempted to find accommodation elsewhere for the previous night (Table 2). Of these, eight had sought assistance from support services including the Housing SA, Detox at Salvation Army, Trace-a-place, Hutt St Centre, St Vincent de Paul Men's Crisis Accommodation Service, Street to Home, Catherine House and Nunkuwarrin Yunti. Four attempted to use their personal connections (friends and family), one

⁵ Please note that throughout the remainder of the report all percentages are calculated based on the 57 people who slept rough and did not report having a house or home elsewhere.

⁶ This figure includes six people who did not answer the question as to whether they had a home elsewhere.

⁷ The # symbol identifies the unique client ID of the person who made the comment. Different client IDs indicate that comments were made by different people.

tried to source private accommodation (hostel) and two did not provide any further clarification of the type of shelter they had sought.

Table 2: Where people attempted to find alternative shelter

	n	%
Sought service support ^a	8	14.0
Personal connections ^a	4	7.0
Private accommodation ^a	1	1.8
Type of shelter not indicated	2	3.5
Did not attempt to find	38	66.7
Not indicated if attempted to find	5	8.8
Total number of respondents	57	100.0

^a People could have attempted to find accommodation at multiple types of alternative shelter (e.g. service support and personal connections) and two people did not indicate where they attempted to find alternative shelter.

Two-thirds (67%, 38 people) indicated they had not attempted to find alternative shelter elsewhere for the previous night and a range of reasons were reported (Table 3). Six people reported financial issues (*'Can't afford it, getting bills paid first'* #14). Four people had given up (*'Not worth it'* #27), four do not have personal connections (*'I don't know anyone'* #100) and four preferred sleeping rough (*'Happy camping in the van, cheaper than paying the landlord'* #75). Another eight gave divergent responses (*'I wouldn't be able to tolerate people at St Vincent De Paul'* #9 and *'Too late and had three dogs in car'* #33).

Table 3: Why people did not seek alternative shelter

	n	%
Financial reason	6	10.5
Given up	4	7.0
Lack of personal connections	4	7.0
Preferred sleeping rough	4	7.0
Other	8	14.0
Not stated	12	21.1
Attempted to find alternative shelter	14	24.6
Not indicated if attempted to find	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0



As shown in Table 4, 39% (22 people) had been sleeping rough for a year or more and over half (61%, 35 people) reported sleeping rough for three months or more. In regards to the amount of time spent sleeping rough in the last year, 58% (33 people) reported sleeping out 'most' or 'almost all of the time' (Table 5).

Table 4: How long people have been sleeping rough

	n	%
1 week or less	6	10.5
2 to 4 weeks	4	7.0
5 to 11 weeks	7	12.3
3 to 6 months	10	17.5
7 to 12 months	3	5.3
1 to 2 years	7	12.3
More than 2 years	15	26.3
Not stated	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0

Table 5: Sleeping rough pattern over the last year

	n	%
Almost all of the time	21	36.8
Most of the time	12	21.1
About half of the time	5	8.8
Some of the time	8	14.0
Hardly ever	6	10.5
Not stated	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0



People were also asked to identify how long it has been since they last had stable housing. As shown in Table 6, 41 (72%) reported not having had stable housing for three months or more and of these, 19 (33%) had not had stable housing for over two years.

Table 6: How long since people have had stable housing

	n	%
1 week or less	4	7.0
2 to 4 weeks	2	3.5
5 to 11 weeks	4	7.0
3 to 6 months	6	10.5
7 to 12 months	6	10.5
1 to 2 years	10	17.5
More than 2 years	19	33.3
Not stated	6	10.5
Total	57	100.0

Most people had been primarily based in the Adelaide metropolitan area over the last 12 months (Table 7). For the seven people primarily based interstate, different states were reported (two in Victoria, two in Western Australia, one in Queensland, one in New South Wales and one in the Northern Territory).

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

	n	%
Adelaide metropolitan area	42	73.7
Country South Australia	2	3.5
Interstate	7	12.3
Not stated	6	10.5
Total	57	100.0

Demographic information is summarised in Table 8 and Table 9. Most people sleeping rough were male and non-Aboriginal and almost two-thirds (65%) were 35 to 54 years. Ten (18%) identified themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There were ten women (18%) (three of whom identified as Aboriginal) and five (9%) people under 25 years (none were under 18 years).



Table 8: Aboriginal status by gender

	Males		Female		Not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Aboriginal	7	15.9	3	30.0	0	0.0	10	17.5
Non-Aboriginal	33	75.0	6	60.0	1	33.3	40	70.2
Not Stated	4	9.1	1	10.0	2	66.7	7	12.3
Total	44	100.0	10	100.0	3	100.0	57	100.0

Table 9: Age by gender

	Males		Females		Not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Under 18	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
18-24	3	6.8	2	20.0	0	0.0	5	8.8
25-34	2	4.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	3.5
35-44	14	31.8	3	30.0	1	33.3	18	31.6
45-54	16	36.4	3	30.0	0	0.0	19	33.3
55-64	6	13.6	1	10.0	0	0.0	7	12.3
65 and over	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not stated	3	6.8	1	10.0	2	66.7	6	10.5
Total	44	100.0	10	100.0	3	100.0	57	100.0

Presence in previous Counts

Twenty-eight (49%) people who were sleeping rough (without a home elsewhere) provided identifier information. Table 10 shows how many times people had been identified as sleeping rough in previous Counts.

According to the information available from previous rough sleeper Counts, 21 (75%) of the 28 people who provided identifier information could not be identified in any of the previous nineteen Counts as sleeping rough.

Seven (12%) of the 57 people who had slept rough (without a home elsewhere) could be traced to sleeping rough in at least one previous Count. One of these seven was identified in the previous Count (May 2015) as sleeping rough.



Table 10: Repeat presentations of those sleeping rough (without a home elsewhere) in previous Counts

	n	%
In August 2015 and sleeping rough in no previous Counts	21	36.8
In August 2015 and sleeping rough in one previous Count	4	7.0
In August 2015 and sleeping rough in two previous Counts	3	5.3
Participant did not provide identifier information	29	50.9
Total	57	100.0



Appendix A

Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count Questionnaire: August 2015

1. Have you already completed a survey today?

- Yes (If Yes, do not ask any further questions or complete form)
- No

- Declined to participate in the survey
- Not capable of participating in the survey

(If you feel reasonably confident that the person is a rough sleeper, please fill out all possible questions)

2. Where did you sleep last night?

- Slept out

Includes:

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

- 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 client answered with any of the 'Sheltered' options above – Thank them for their participation and conclude the interview.

Note: the following questions are only for those who answered 'slept out'.

3. At what location did you sleep out last night?

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

4. Why did you sleep out last night? (Please prompt for why slept out)

5. Did you try and find any other accommodation last night (e.g. 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?

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

- Yes
- No

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

7. 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

8. 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

9. 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

10. 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

11. What is your age?

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

12. Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

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



13. Do you have a child/children under 18 who stayed with you last night?

- Yes If yes: How old are they?
 No

14. 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 Evaluation and Research Unit in 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 and year of birth?

Month Year

Survey Completed. Thank you for your time.

