



research bulletin



Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count August 2009

This report summarises results from the sixth Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count, held on the 11th August 2009.

These Counts are part of a strategy to monitor trends in primary homelessness or 'rough sleeping' in the Adelaide inner city area. Previous Counts were conducted on the 19th June and 21st August 2007, 13th May and 12th August 2008 and the 5th May 2009. The Counts are conducted as a collaboration between the Department for Families and Communities, the Social Inclusion Unit and key homeless services in the inner city: Street to Home, Byron Place Day Centre, Westcare Day Centre and Hutt Street Day Centre.

The data in this report was collected in the morning or early afternoon of August 11th (see Appendix for questionnaire). In the early morning, Street to Home visited the parklands and other areas around the City in order to locate people 'sleeping rough'. The three Day Centres also approached people attending their services that day and invited their participation. The methodology for the Count was very similar to that used by the ABS in the 2006 Census (ie, the same agencies were involved in the collection of data and similar collection strategies were used).

Housing status of all participants

The Count recorded 266 people in contact with the participating services on the 11th August. However, not all of these were homeless (Table 1). Eighty-one people were currently living in their own homes, and housing information was not provided by 52 people. Given the focus of the Count on those who are homeless or marginally housed, this report focuses on the 40 people who were *unsheltered* and the 93 who were in *other accommodation*. Analysis in this report does not include those in their own home or whose housing was unknown.

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Table 1: Type of shelter stayed in last night on 11 August 2009, individuals

Type of shelter last night	n	%
Homeless - unsheltered	40	15.0
Other accommodation	93	35.0
Own home / flat	81	30.5
Unknown	52	19.5
Total	266	100.0

Trends

A slightly higher number of people were in contact with the participating services on the 11th August 2009 Count compared to the May 2009 Count. There has been a consistent decline in the number of people who were *unsheltered* over the six Counts whilst numbers in *other accommodation* have remained relatively stable (Figure 1). A higher number of people with *unknown accommodation* were recorded in August 2009 compared to the two previous Counts. This was largely due to one Day Centre not having the personnel rostered to administer the survey effectively: 77% of all the reported incidences of *unknown* came from this service and the number of *unknown* responses at this service doubled from the May 2009 Count. For other services, the incidences of *unknown* either fell or remained stable.

Current accommodation

Three-quarters of the 40 *unsheltered* people were staying in the streets or the parklands, with all but three in the Adelaide city area (Table 2 and Table 3).

The category of *other accommodation* includes a range of short-stay arrangements, most of which could be categorised as secondary or tertiary homelessness. The most common housing for people in this group was in a Boarding House.

Figure 1: Total number of participants, homeless – unsheltered, other accommodation and unknown.

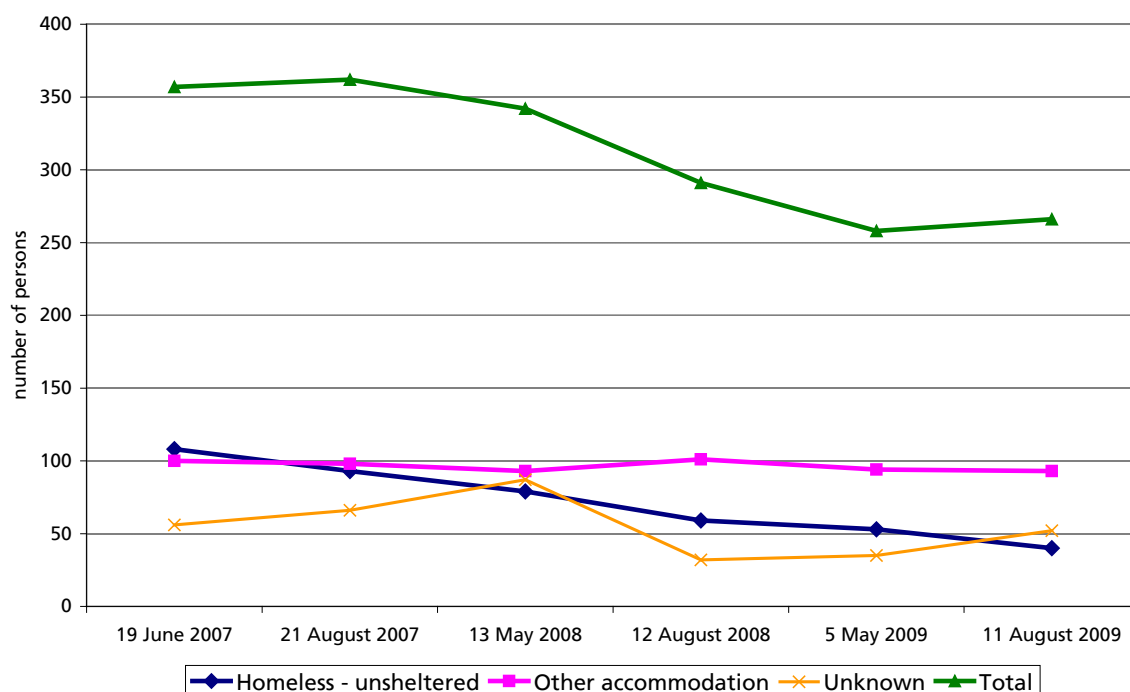


Table 2: Specific type of shelter used last night, 11 August 2009

Type of shelter last night	n	%
Homeless - unsheltered		
Car	3	7.5
Squat	2	5.0
Streets / park	30	75.0
Tent / camped out	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0
Other accommodation		
Backpackers	2	2.2
Boarding house - other	39	41.9
City Watch House	1	1.1
Friend's or relative's house (temporary)	20	21.5
Hotel / motel	4	4.0
SAAP accommodation	14	15.1
Sheltered - other	5	5.4
Sobering up / detoxification unit	7	7.5
Supported residential facility	1	1.1
Total	93	100.0

Table 3: Location of shelter used last night, 11 August 2009

Location of shelter last night	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Adelaide city or parklands	37	92.5	67	72.0
Adelaide suburbs	3	7.5	26	28.0
Total	53	100.0	94	100.0

Recent housing history

Participants were asked how long they had been staying in the accommodation they used on the previous night (Table 4 and Table 5). The median length of stay was 34 weeks for those who were *unsheltered*, with a range from one night to 23 years (for one person). The median length of stay for those in *other accommodation* was 4 weeks, with a range from one night to 28 years.

Table 4: Length of time at shelter used last night, 11 August 2009

Length of time at shelter used last night	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Less than or equal 1 week	4	10.0	18	19.4
2 to 4 weeks	2	5.0	30	32.3
5 to 11 weeks	4	10.0	6	6.5
3 to 6 months	7	17.5	17	18.3
>6 to 12 months	4	10.0	6	6.5
>1 to 2 years	6	15.0	4	4.3
Greater than 2 years	11	27.5	8	8.6
Unknown	2	5.0	4	4.3
Total	40	100.0%	93	100.0%
Median (weeks) (range)	34 (1 night to 23 yrs)		4 (1 night to 28 yrs)	

Table 5: Length of time (weeks) at shelter used last night, 11 August 2009*

Type of Shelter	n*	Median weeks	Minimum weeks	Maximum weeks
Homeless - unsheltered				
Car	3	26	6	416 (8 yrs)
Squat	2	39	<1	78 (1.5 yrs)
Streets / park	27	47	<1	1196 (23 yrs)
Tent / camped out	5	30	6	520 (10 yrs)
Total	37	34	<1	1196 (23 yrs)
Other accommodation				
Backpackers	2	9	2	16
Boarding house - other	39	26	2	1456 (28 yrs)
City Watch House	1	<1	<1	<1
Friend's or relative's house (temporary)	17	2	<1	8
Hotel / motel	4	14.5	12	156 (3 yrs)
SAAP accommodation	14	2	<1	12
Sheltered - other	5	2	1	104 (2 yrs)
Sobering up / detoxification unit	7	2	<1	520 (10 yrs)
Total	89	4	<1	1456 (28 yrs)

* Information was not recorded for some respondents

To provide an indication of recent housing history, respondents were asked to indicate where else they had been staying in the last twelve months. Of those who were *unsheltered*, 5 indicated they had been in their own house or flat for some period in the last twelve months (compared to 16 in *other accommodation*) (Table 6). Just over a third of those in *other accommodation* had experienced primary homelessness in the past twelve months (35.5%).

Table 6: Types of accommodation used in last twelve months (including current accommodation)* †

Type of accommodation	Currently Homeless - unsheltered		Currently Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Primary homeless	40	100.0%	33	35.5%
Boarding house	4	10.0%	51	54.8%
Own home or flat	5	12.5%	16	17.2%
Friend or relatives house	6	15.0%	41	44.1%
SAAP accommodation	6	15.0%	25	26.9%
Backpackers	1	2.5%	4	4.3%
Hotel / motel	2	5.0%	8	8.6%
City Watch House	2	5.0%	3	3.2%
Prison	2	5.0%	6	6.5%
Remand centre	2	5.0%	3	3.2%
Hospital	1	2.5%	8	8.6%
Sobering up / detox unit	2	5.0%	17	18.3%
Caravan	0	0.0%	4	4.3%
Other sheltered	0	0.0%	11	11.8%
Total	40	100.0%	93	100.0%

* More than one type of accommodation used in the last twelve months could be indicated.

† All respondents indicated at least one other type of shelter used within the last 12 month if they have been at their current shelter for <12 months.

Around half of the people who were *unsheltered* indicated they had used another type of accommodation in the last twelve months (Table 7). Around 80% in *other accommodation* said they had also been in another type of accommodation (i.e. not the accommodation type used last night) in the last twelve months. Generally, people who were *unsheltered* had used fewer forms of accommodation than those living in *other accommodation*.

Table 7: Number of types of accommodation used in past twelve months¹

Types of accommodation used in last twelve months	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
1	22	55.0%	20	21.5%
2	10	25.0%	39	41.9%
3	5	12.5%	21	22.6%
4+	3	7.5%	13	14.0%
Total	40	100.0%	93	100.0%

Respondents were asked to identify the housing type in which they had spent most time over the past year (Table 8). A third of the total respondents (43 people) said they had spent most time in primary homelessness.

Table 8: Accommodation spent most time at in past twelve months

Types of accommodation	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
At friends or relatives house	1	2.5%	13	14.0%	14	10.5%
Boarding house	2	5.0%	28	30.1%	30	22.6%
Caravan	0	0.0%	2	2.2%	2	1.5%
Detox / sobering up unit	0	0.0%	2	2.2%	2	1.5%
Hotel/ motel	1	2.5%	3	3.2%	4	3.0%
Other - sheltered	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	1	0.8%
Own house or flat	3	7.5%	11	11.8%	14	10.5%
Primary homeless	30	75.0%	13	14.0%	43	32.3%
Prison	0	0.0%	4	4.3%	4	3.0%
St Vincent de Paul	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	1	0.8%
Unknown	3	7.5%	15	16.1%	18	13.5%
Total	40	100.0%	93	100.0%	133	100.0%

¹ It should be noted that only moves between accommodation types, rather than within accommodation types, was recorded, which means an undercounts of moves may be possible. For example, an individual could have moved between a number of different boarding houses, but only one accommodation type (a boarding house) was recorded.

Generally, respondents had spent most of the past year in the Adelaide metropolitan area (Table 9). Of the 21 who had been predominantly interstate, 6 were from Western Australia, 5 from Victoria and 4 from the Northern Territory (Table 10). Seven of the 21 people who had been predominantly interstate identified as Aboriginal, 3 were from Western Australia, 2 from the Northern Territory, 1 from Victoria and 1 from New South Wales.

Table 9: Location of accommodation spent most time at in the last twelve months

Location	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Adelaide metro	35	87.5%	71	76.3%
Country SA	1	2.5%	4	4.3%
Interstate	3	7.5%	18	19.4%
Unknown	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
Total	40	100.0%	93	100.0%

Table 10: Location of interstate accommodation spent most time at in the last twelve months

Interstate Location	Homeless - unsheltered	Other accommodation
	n	n
New South Wales	0	2
Northern Territory	0	4
Queensland	0	2
Tasmania	0	1
Victoria	1	4
Western Australia	2	4
Not Stated	0	1
Total	3	18

Demographics

Table 11 and Table 12 provide demographic profiles of the two groups, which were very similar in terms of gender, cultural background and country of birth. Those who were unsheltered tended to be younger than those in *other accommodation* (median age of 40 years for the *unsheltered* compared to 54 years).

Table 11: Demographics: Homeless - unsheltered, 11 August 2009

	Male		Female		Unknown		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cultural background								
Aboriginal*	7	21.2%	6	100.0%	0	0.0%	13	32.5%
No (non-Indigenous)	26	78.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	26	65.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	2.5%
Country of birth								
Australia	27	81.8%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	34	85.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	6	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	15.0%
Age groups								
Under 18	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
18 to 24	5	15.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	12.5%
25 to 34	2	6.1%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	5	12.5%
35 to 44	11	33.3%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	13	32.5%
45 to 54	8	24.2%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	9	22.5%
55 to 64	6	18.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	15.0%
65 and over	1	3.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.5%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	2.5%
Total	33		6		1		40	100.0%

* No respondent identified themselves as a Torres Strait Islander

Table 12: Demographics: Other accommodation, 11 August 2009

	Male		Female		Unknown		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cultural background								
Aboriginal*	13	17.6%	12	75.0%	0	0.0%	25	26.9%
No (non-Indigenous)	61	82.4%	4	25.0%	2	66.7%	67	72.0%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	1	1.1%
Country of birth								
Australia	60	81.1%	16	100.0%	2	66.7%	78	83.9%
Not stated	1	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Other	13	17.6%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	14	15.1%
Age groups								
Under 18	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
18 to 24	2	2.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.2%
25 to 34	11	14.9%	6	37.5%	0	0.0%	17	18.3%
35 to 44	14	18.9%	9	56.3%	2	66.7%	25	26.9%
45 to 54	23	31.1%	1	6.3%	1	33.3%	25	26.9%
55 to 64	16	21.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	17.2%
65 and over	8	10.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	8.6%
Not stated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	74		16		3		93	100.0%

* No respondent identified themselves as a Torres Strait Islander

Children

Two respondents (one who was *unsheltered* and one in homeless accommodation) reported that they were currently living with children. Other details on the survey forms, however, suggested that this information was likely to be a data reporting error. The Day Centres that surveyed each respondent were contacted and confirmed that both respondents were unlikely to be living with children.

Multiple service usage

About a third of those in *unsheltered* circumstances (n=14) and slightly higher than a third in *other accommodation* (n=36) reported they had used or intended to use another inner city service on the day of the Count. Westcare was the service most frequently cited, distantly followed by Hutt Street, Byron Place and the Salvation Army.

Individual identifiers

As in previous Counts, all respondents were asked if they were willing to have an individual identifier recorded on the form (initials; month and year of birth; gender). 155 (58%) of all respondents (including those in their own homes) provided this identifier. Of these, 30 (19%) were currently *unsheltered* and 69 (45%) in *other accommodation*. Some 75% of the respondents in *unsheltered* circumstances and 74% in *other accommodation* provided an identifier.

Only one of the 266 respondents in this Count was identified as having participated in all five previous Counts (Table 13). Of the 133 people who were *unsheltered* or in *other accommodation*, 32 were identified as having participated in at least one previous Count (24%).

Table 13: Repeat presentations in previous Counts

	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation		All respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Number of respondents	40	100.0	93	100.0	266	100.0
Respondents with identifier	30	75.0	69	74.2	155	58.3
In Aug 2009 and one previous Count	4	10.0	11	11.8	29	10.9
In Aug 2009 and two previous Count	3	7.5	9	9.7	21	7.9
In Aug 2009 and three previous Count	1	2.5	2	2.2	9	3.4
In Aug 2009 and four previous Count	1	2.5	0	0.0	3	1.1
In Aug 2009 and five previous Count	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.4

For more information about the *Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count*, including information about previous Counts, please visit the Department for Families and Communities Research Unit webpage at www.dfc.sa.gov.au/research/

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The information in
this publication can
be provided in an
alternative format or
another language on
request.
Please contact
(08) 8207 0218.

Appendix

INNER CITY AGENCY COUNT

1. Have you already completed a survey today? (If Yes, **do not** ask any further questions or complete form)
2. **Declined to participate in the survey**
No more Questions (By observation fill out Questions 10, 11, 12 and 17)
3. **Incapacitated to participate in the survey**
No more Questions (By observation fill out Questions 10, 11, 12 and 17)
4. Where did you sleep last night?
(eg park, car, own home, boarding house or homeless shelter)

5. Where was this located? (Please tick one box only)
 Adelaide city or parklands Adelaide suburbs Other, please state

6. How long have you been staying there/ sleeping out?

(If answer is **more than 12 months** go to Q.10)
7. Where else have you been staying in the last 12 months? (Tick as many as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary homeless (eg streets/ park/ squat/ car)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel / motel
<input type="checkbox"/> Boarding house	<input type="checkbox"/> City watchhouse
<input type="checkbox"/> Own house or flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Prison
<input type="checkbox"/> At a friend's or relative's house (temporary)	<input type="checkbox"/> Remand Centre
<input type="checkbox"/> St Vincent de Paul shelter	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital
<input type="checkbox"/> Catherine House	<input type="checkbox"/> Detox / sobering up unit
<input type="checkbox"/> Backpackers	<input type="checkbox"/> Caravan park
<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state _____	
8. Where did you spend most time in the last 12 months?
(please indicate one of the above from Q.7)

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Adelaide metro	<input type="checkbox"/> Country South Australia	<input type="checkbox"/> Interstate (please indicate which state)	<input type="checkbox"/> Vic
			<input type="checkbox"/> WA
			<input type="checkbox"/> Qld
			<input type="checkbox"/> NSW
			<input type="checkbox"/> Tas
			<input type="checkbox"/> NT
			<input type="checkbox"/> ACT
10. What is your age? years
11. What is your country of birth?
 Australia Other _____

12. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
 No Yes, Aboriginal Yes, Torres Strait Islander

13. Are you here by yourself or with your partner or other family member?

- Presenting Family Unit
- Single Person
 - Single with Child/ren
 - Couple
 - Couple with Child/ren
 - Other _____

14. Do you have children currently living with you?

- Yes
- No
- Noted on partner's form

15. How old are they?

16. Have you or will you use another inner city service today?

- No
- Yes Name(s): _____

17. Is this person male or female? (By observation)

- Male
- Female

We will be doing this survey again 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 months and year of birth? This information will be given to the Research Unit in the Department for Families and Communities who will keep it confidential and safe and will be used for statistical purposes only.

- No Survey completed. Thank the participant for their time.
- Yes Fill out boxes below

First name initial	Last name initial

What is your month & year of birth?

MONTH	YEAR
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SURVEY COMPLETED. THANK THE PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME.