



research bulletin



Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count May 2009

This report summarises results from the fifth Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count, held on the 5th May 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, and the 13th May and 12th August 2008. 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 reported in this Bulletin was collected in the morning or early afternoon of May 5th (see Appendix for questionnaire). In the early morning, Street to Home visited the parklands and other locations known to be frequented by people sleeping in unsheltered arrangements and asked if they would be willing to answer the questions in the Count. Meanwhile, the three Day Centres approached all 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).

This Bulletin summarises data in relation to the 53 people who were in primary homelessness (ie unsheltered or sleeping rough on the day of the Count) and the 94 people who were in other accommodation arrangements (excluding those who were in their own home).

Accommodation of all participants

The Count identified 258 people who were in contact with participating services on the 5th May. Of these, 53 had stayed in unsheltered circumstances the previous night (Table 1). No information about housing status was available for 35 people who declined to be part of the Count. Given the focus of the Count on people who are homeless or marginally housed, the 76 people in their own home and the 35 unknown have not been included in the analysis in this Bulletin.

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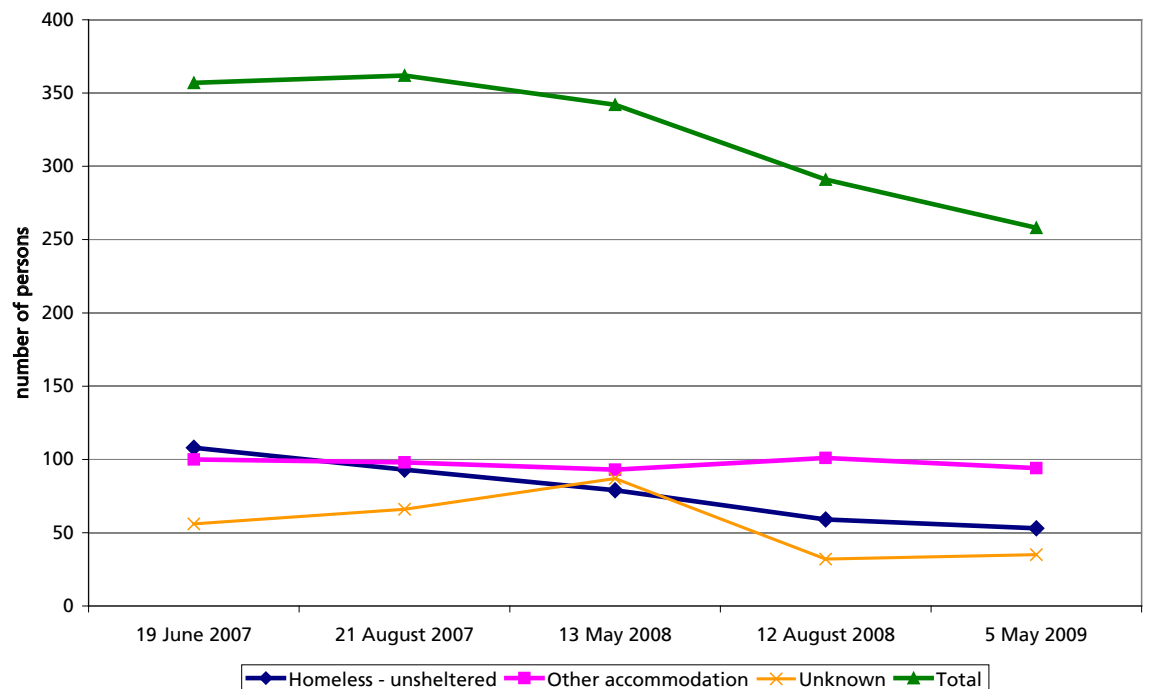
Table 1: Type of shelter stayed in last night on 5 May 2009, individuals

Type of shelter last night	n	%
Homeless – unsheltered	53	20.5
Other accommodation	94	36.4
Own home/flat	76	29.5
Unknown	35	13.6
Total	258	100.0

Trends

Compared to the previous four Counts, there were fewer people in contact with the participating services in the May 2009 Count. There has been a decline in the number of *unsheltered* persons over the five Counts, whilst numbers in *other accommodation* have remained relatively stable (Figure 1). A lower number of people with *unknown accommodation* has been recorded in the last two Counts.

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



Current accommodation

The majority of the 53 *unsheltered* people were staying in the streets or the parklands, with all but eight in the Adelaide city area (Table 2 and Table 3). The category of *other accommodation* includes a range of short-stay arrangements, the

majority of which could be categorised as secondary or tertiary homelessness. The most common housing for people in this group was in a Boarding House.

Table 2: Specific type of shelter used last night, 5 May 2009

Type of shelter last night	n	%
Homeless – unsheltered		
Car	6	11.3
Squat	4	7.5
Streets/park	39	73.6
Tent/camped out	1	1.9
Unsheltered (other or unknown type)	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0
Other accommodation		
Boarding house	57	60.6
Friend’s or relative’s house (temporary)	7	7.4
SAAP accommodation	12	12.8
Sobering up unit/detox	8	8.5
Hotel/motel/backpackers	6	6.4
Sharehouse	1	1.1
Sheltered – other	3	3.2
Total	94	100.0

Table 3: Location of shelter used last night, 5 May 2009

Location of shelter last night	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Adelaide city or parklands	45	84.9	80	85.1
Adelaide suburbs	8	15.1	14	14.9
Total	53	100.0	94	100.0

Recent housing history

Participants were asked how long they had been staying in the accommodation they used the previous night (Table 4 and Table 5). The median length of stay was 5 weeks for those who were *unsheltered*, with a range from one night to 12 years (one person). The median length of stay for those in *other accommodation* was 9 weeks, with a range from one night to 7 years.

Table 4: Length of time at shelter used last night, 5 May 2009

Length of time at shelter used last night	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Less than or equal 1 week	12	22.6	25	26.6
2 to 4 weeks	12	22.6	11	11.7
5 to 11 weeks	3	5.7	12	12.8
3 to 6 months	6	11.3	25	26.6
> 6 to 12 months	5	9.4	7	7.4
> 1 to 2 years	4	7.5	10	10.6
> 2 years	6	11.3	2	2.1
Unknown	5	9.4	2	2.1
Total	53	100.0	94	100.0
Median (weeks) (range)	5 (1 night to 12 yrs)		9 (1 night to 7 yrs)	

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

Type of shelter	Maximum weeks	Minimum weeks	Median weeks	n*
Homeless – unsheltered				
Car	104	<1	1.3	6
Squat	2	<1	0.8	4
Streets/park	624 (12 yrs)	<1	17	35
Tent/camped out	3	3	3	1
Unsheltered (other or unknown type)	78	<1	39	2
Total	624 (12 yrs)	<1	5	48
Other accommodation				
Boarding house	364 (7 yrs)	<1	22	56
Friend's or relative's house (temporary)	8	<1	1.5	6
SAAP accommodation	4	<1	1	12
Sobering up unit/detox	104	<1	4	8
Hotel/motel/backpackers	156	<1	2.5	6
Share house	16	16	16	1
Sheltered – other	21	<1	1	3
Total	364 (7 yrs)	<1	9	92

* Information was not known 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 months¹. This information was provided by 51 people in *unsheltered* circumstances and 91 in *other accommodation*. Of those who were *unsheltered*, 8 indicated they had been in their own house or flat for some period in the last twelve months (compared to 10 in *other accommodation*) (Table 6). Just over a third of those in *other accommodation* had experienced primary homelessness in the past twelve months (37%).

Table 6: Other type of accommodation used in past twelve months*†

Type of accommodation	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Primary homeless	53	100.0	35	37.2
Boarding house	4	7.5	65	69.1
Friend or relative's house	16	30.2	22	2.4
SAAP accommodation	6	11.3	19	20.2
Backpackers	1	1.9	2	2.1
Hotel/motel	0	0.0	9	9.6
Prison	3	5.7	4	4.3
Hospital	1	1.9	6	6.4
Detox/sobering up unit	5	9.4	11	11.7
Caravan	2	3.8	3	3.2
Own home or flat	8	15.1	10	10.6
Other	1	1.9	7	7.4
Total	53		94	

* A person could indicate more than one type of accommodation used in the last twelve months

† Two respondents in *unsheltered* circumstances and 3 in *other accommodation* did not indicate other types of accommodation used in the last 12 months.

Around 60% of the people in *unsheltered* circumstances indicated they had used another type of accommodation (ie aside from unsheltered) in the last twelve months (Table 7). Around 70% in *other accommodation* indicated they used another type of accommodation (ie different from the type of accommodation used in the previous night) during the last twelve months.

1 Results should be treated with caution as information on accommodation history may be incomplete.

Table 7: Number of types of accommodation used in past twelve months²

Types of accommodation used in last twelve months	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
1	22	41.5	30	31.9
2	18	34.0	44	46.8
3	10	18.9	12	12.8
4+	3	5.7	8	8.5
Total	53	100.0	94	100.0

Note: Accommodation history was not stated for 2 people in unsheltered and 3 people in other accommodation. These people were allocated with one type of accommodation used in the last twelve months.

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 (49 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	%
Primary homeless	26	49.1	23	24.5	49	33.3
At friend's or relative's house	10	18.9	8	8.5	18	12.2
Boarding house	2	3.8	35	37.2	37	25.2
Caravan	1	1.9	2	2.1	3	2.0
Hotel/motel	0	0.0	3	3.2	3	2.0
Prison	1	1.9	2	2.1	3	2.0
Detox/sobering up unit	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.7
Own home or flat	5	9.4	7	7.4	12	8.2
Other	0	0.0	4	4.3	4	2.7
Not stated	8	15.1	9	9.6	17	11.6
Total	53	100.0	94	100.0	147	100.0

² It should be noted that only moves between accommodation types, rather than within accommodation types, was recorded, which means an undercounts of moves is likely. 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 last twelve months in the Adelaide metropolitan area (Table 9). Of the 22 who had spent most of the last twelve months interstate, 6 were from Queensland and 5 were from New South Wales (Table 10).

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

Location	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	n	%	n	%
Adelaide metro	41	77.4	70	74.5
Country SA	1	1.9	7	7.4
Interstate	8	15.1	15	16.0
Not stated	3	5.7	2	2.1
Total	53	100.0	94	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
Queensland	0	6
NSW	2	3
Victoria	2	2
NT	2	2
WA	1	1
ACT	0	1
Total	8	15

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, however, to be younger than those in *other accommodation* (median age of 42 years for the *unsheltered* compared to 46 years).

Table 11: Demographics: Homeless - unsheltered, 5 May 2009

	Male		Female		Not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cultural background								
Aboriginal*	8	18	4	67	0	0	12	24
No (non-Indigenous)	36	82	1	17	1	100	38	74
Not stated	0	0	1	17	0	0	1	2
Country of birth								
Australia	40	87	6	100	1	100	46	88
Other	6	13	0	0	0	0	6	12
Age (years)								
Under 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18 to 24	2	5	2	33	0	0	4	8
25 to 34	11	26	0	0	0	0	11	22
35 to 44	16	37	1	17	0	0	17	35
45 to 54	11	26	2	33	0	0	13	27
55 to 64	3	7	0	0	1	100	3	6
65 and over	0	0	1	17	0	0	1	2
Total	46	100	6	100	1	100	53	100

* No respondent identified themselves as a Torres Strait Islander

Table 12: Demographics: Other accommodation, 5 May 2009

	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Cultural background						
Aboriginal*	12	15	4	31	16	17
No (non-Indigenous)	69	85	9	69	78	83
Country of birth						
Australia	68	84	12	92	80	85
Other	13	16	1	8	15	15
Age (years)						
Under 18	0	0	0	0	0	0
18 to 24	4	5	0	0	4	4
25 to 34	11	14	0	0	11	12
35 to 44	23	28	8	62	31	33
45 to 54	21	26	3	23	24	26
55 to 64	13	16	2	15	15	16
65 and over	9	11	0	0	9	10
Total	81	100	13	100	94	100

* No respondent identified themselves as a Torres Strait Islander

Children

Two respondents in *other accommodation* reported that they were currently living with children. One woman was living with her 8 year old child at a friend's house and another was living with her 2 year old at a hotel. No respondents in *unsheltered* circumstances reported that they had children living with them.

Multiple service usage

About half of those in *unsheltered* circumstances (n=25) and a third in *other accommodation* (n=30) 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, followed by Byron Place and Fred's Van.

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). 189 (73%) of all respondents (including those in their own homes) provided this identifier. Of these, 44 (23%) were currently in *unsheltered* circumstances and 76 (40%) were in *other accommodation*. Some 83% of the respondents in *unsheltered* circumstances and 81% in *other accommodation* provided an identifier.

Only two of the 258 respondents in this Count were identified as having participated in all four previous Counts (Table 13). Of the 147 people in *unsheltered* circumstances or *other accommodation*, 25 were identified as having participated in at least one previous Count.

Table 13: Repeat presentations in previous Counts

	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation		All respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Number of respondents	53	100.0	94	100.0	258	100.0
Respondents with identifier	44	83.0	76	80.9	189	73.3
In May 2009 and one previous Count	7	13.2	8	8.5	33	12.8
In May 2009 and two previous Count	3	5.7	4	4.3	13	5.0
In May 2009 and three previous Count	0	0.0	2	2.1	9	3.5
In May 2009 and four previous Count	0	0.0	1	1.1	2	0.8

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Please contact
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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 website at www.dfc.sa.gov.au/research/

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.