

INNER CITY HOMELESS COUNT JUNE 2007

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Background

Policy and service responses to assist homeless people require reliable information on the number of homeless people in the community as well as information on the social characteristics and geographical spread of the population and changes over time.

Since 1996 the ABS Census of Population and Housing has been used to enumerate the homeless population.¹ Information is derived from the Census to identify people who are:

1. Primary homeless (lacking conventional shelter, for example sleeping in cars, improvised dwelling, squats, tents, in the open air)
2. Secondary homeless (people moving frequently from one form of temporary accommodation to another, including accommodation funded through the SAAP program and people 'couch-surfing', or staying temporarily with others)
3. Tertiary homeless (people in boarding houses who lack security or tenure and access to an accepted community standard of amenity).

Analysis of the 2001 Census found 7,586 homeless people on Census night in South Australia, 12% of whom (897 people) were classified as 'primary homeless'. There was a particularly high concentration of homelessness in the inner city of Adelaide, where 712 homeless people were located, including 104 in primary homelessness.

According to an initial analysis of 2006 Census data, there has been a 5% decrease in the numbers of people in primary homelessness in South Australia since 2001². In comparison, the national trend has been for an increase (averaging 19% nationally) with particularly high increases in some jurisdictions (for example, 37% across the combined southern states of NSW, ACT, Vic and Tasmania.)³ The number of people 'sleeping rough' in the inner city of Adelaide in 2006 was similar to 2001, with a total of 135.

¹ Through special consultancy projects conducted by A/Professor Chris Chamberlain & David Mackenzie. The National Counting the Homeless Report will be released by the ABS in 2008 and will report on primary homelessness in the context of additional data on secondary and tertiary homelessness. The SA specific report will be released some time later.

² Census data relating to people in improvised dwellings, tents & sleeping out who were 'at home' or had no usual address on Census night in 2006 has been analysed for and provided to the SA government by the ABS. These are the data items used to derive figures on primary homelessness. However, the official ABS numbers on primary homelessness will not be available until the release of the Chamberlain and McKenzie report in 2008.

³ It is possible that there may be some minor variations in these figures when the official primary homelessness numbers are published in the Counting the Homeless report in 2008. No data on secondary or tertiary homelessness is available until the release of the 2008 report.

The ABS Homelessness Enumeration Strategy is exceptional in the quality of data it produces and the extent and depth of its coverage. Unfortunately, however, new data is only available every 5 years, with a considerable lag between data collection and release. This is an acute issue in South Australia, where the government has identified reducing homelessness as a key social policy goal - the South Australian Strategic Plan has a specific target of halving 'rough sleeping'. Additional approaches are therefore needed to collect more regular and 'up to the minute' information on homelessness numbers, especially in key areas such as the inner city.

A strategy has therefore been devised to conduct a twice annual count of homeless people in the City of Adelaide. This is being done as a collaborative project between state government and key inner city homelessness services.

This Report outlines the findings from the first of these counts, undertaken in June 2007.

2. Method

The Inner City Homeless Count was conducted on 19th June. Collection was undertaken by and through four agencies: Street to Home; Byron Place Day Centre; Westcare; and Hutt Street Day Centre.

In the early morning on the day of the Count, Street to Home visited the Parklands and other locations known to be frequented by people sleeping in unsheltered accommodation. Day Centres approached all people attending their service and invited their participation in the survey. All collection was undertaken in the morning.

The brief questionnaire included nine questions (see Appendix), with the first being "*Where did you sleep last night?*" and "*How long have you been there?*"

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). However, the ABS count occurred over 3 days. The ABS Census Short Form (specifically targeted at 'rough sleepers') was modified to fit the specific purposes of this Count (for example, to provide more information on housing history and less information on demographic characteristics such as marital status and income).

3. Total Numbers

A total 362 surveys were completed by the 4 agencies. Matching of identifiers and other information indicated that 5 people completed the survey twice. The first and repeated surveys from those 5 people were then combined into one record. Therefore, it is considered that a total **357 individuals**⁴ were in contact with the designated agencies on the day of the count.

⁴ Note that there may have been less individuals due to potential 'double counting' in the non-participant group (ie identifiers and other information were not recorded, but the same individuals could have been recorded more than once in different services on the same day as 'refused').

Of the 357 people, 56 (15.7%) refused to provide data for the survey and their accommodation type is unknown. 108 people (30.3%) indicated they were in some form of primary homelessness; with the remaining 198 people (54.0%) in various forms of accommodation (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1: Type of Current Shelter on day of count

	Number of people	%
Homeless – Unsheltered	108	30.3
Other accommodation	100	28.0
Own home / Flat or share house	93	26.1
Declined / Incapacitated	56	15.7
Total	357	100.0

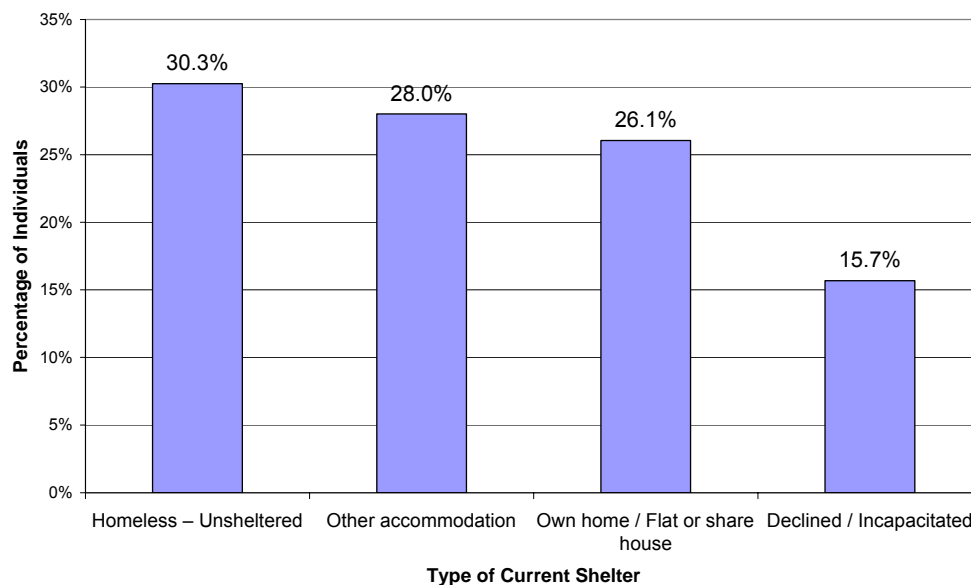


Figure 1: Type of Current Shelter on day of count (n=357)

Table 2 and Figure 2 summarises the types of shelter indicated by those who were *homeless -unsheltered*.

Table 2: Type of Current Shelter for people in Homeless - Unsheltered accommodation (n=108)

Type of Shelter	Number	%
Car	14	13.0
Squat	12	11.1
Street / Park*	64	59.3
Tent / Camped out	13	12.0
Toilet	5	4.6
Total	108	100.0

* Includes unknown type of shelter

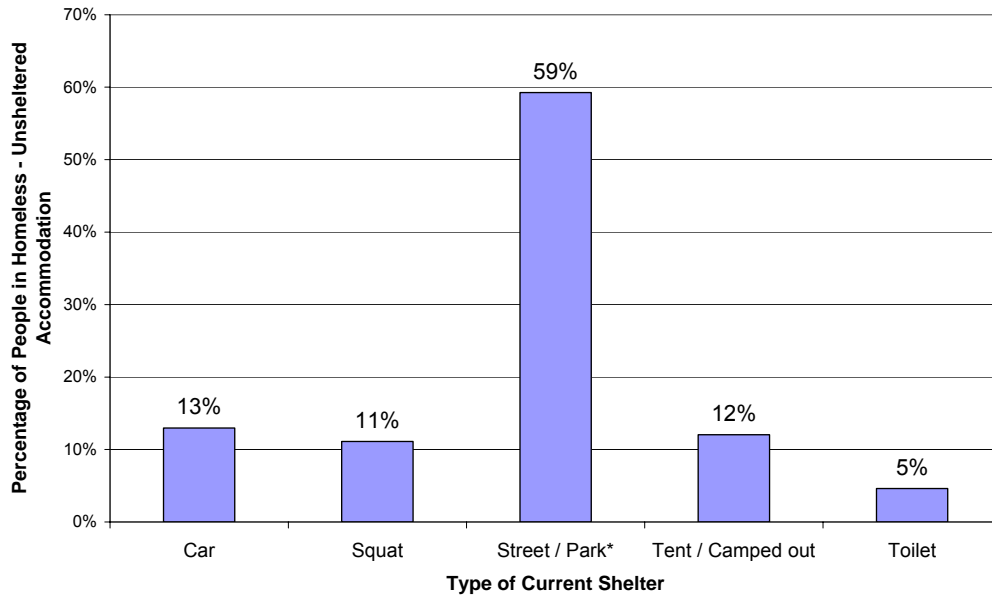


Figure 2: Type of Current Shelter for people in Homeless - Unsheltered accommodation (n=108)
 (*includes unknown type of shelter)

The 93 people who were in their own accommodation included 92 who were in their own home or flat and one person in share accommodation.

The remaining 100 people were in a range of accommodation/shelter on the night of the count (Table 3 and Figure 3).

Table 3: Type of Current Shelter for people in Other accommodation (n=100)

Type of Shelter	Number	%
Boarding House (specified MACHA)	13	13.0
Boarding House (not specified)	26	26.0
Caravan	3	3.0
Friend's / relative's house (temporary)*	31	31.0
Hotel / Motel / Backpackers	7	7.0
SAAP accommodation	14	14.0
Sobering up unit / detox	3	3.0
Other shelter†	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

*Note this included one person who indicated they had been staying with friends for 10 years (since childhood)

†The types of shelter included with 'Other shelter' were 1 person in 'prison cell – lock up', 1 in 'shelter (in city)' and 1 in 'temporary accommodation (at Carrington St)'.

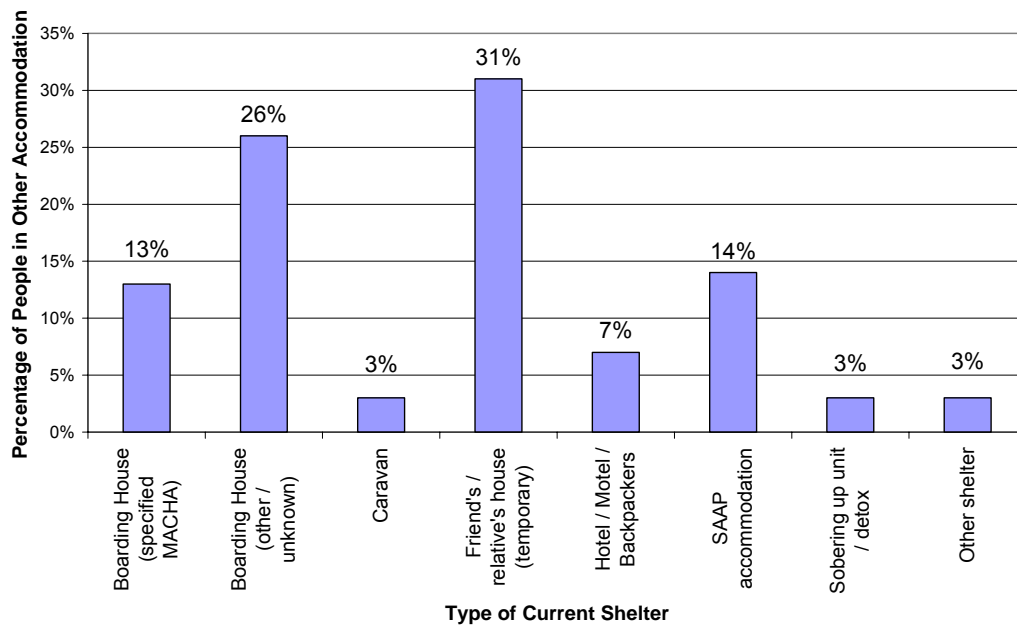


Figure 3: Type of Current Shelter for people in Other accommodation (n=100)

Most commonly, people identified they were staying in the inner city. However, for almost a third the location of their accommodation was not indicated (Table 4 and Figure 4). The ‘unsheltered’ group were most likely to be staying in the city area, whilst those with their own home were most likely to be living in the suburbs.

Table 4: Location of current Shelter

	Homeless- Unsheltered		Other		Own home		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Inner City	82	75.9	55	55.0	33	35.5	168	47.1
Other metropolitan	11	10.2	30	30.0	47	50.5	88	24.6
Not Indicated	15	13.9	15	15.0	13	14.0	101	28.3
Total	108	100.0	100	100.0	93	100.0	357	100.0

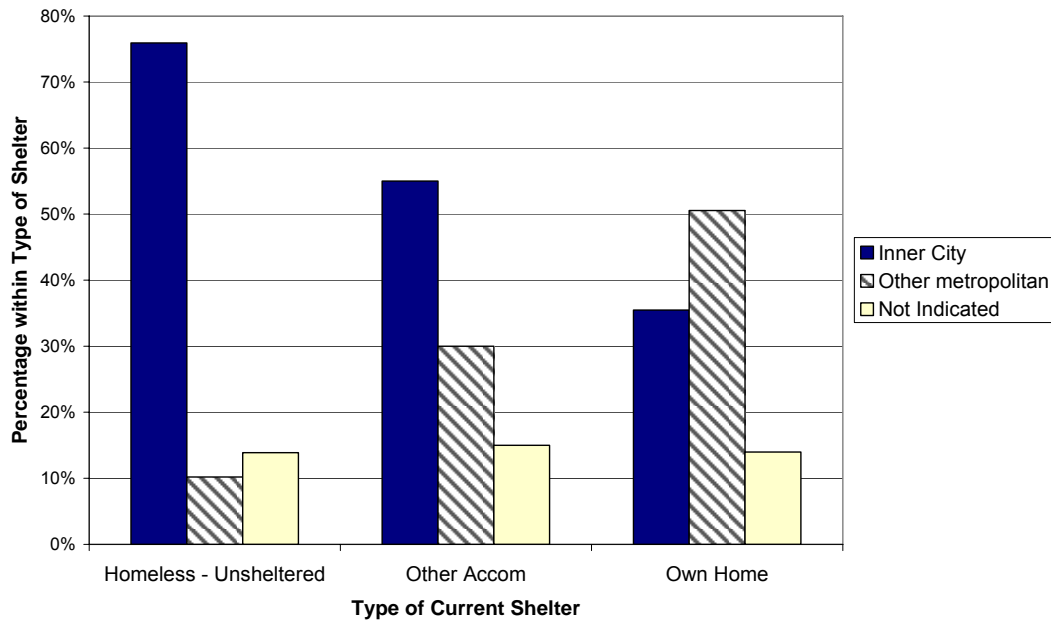


Figure 4: Location of Current Shelter within Type of Current Shelter

Respondents were also asked how long they had been staying in their current accommodation (Table 5 and Figure 5). Generally, answers to this question were impressionistic, rather than precise (eg ‘*about a year*’; ‘*a long time*’) and results should therefore be treated with caution.

The maximum length indicated by those in ‘*homeless – unsheltered*’ group was 15 years, with 64% indicating they had been in their current accommodation for 6 months or less.⁵

The maximum time in accommodation for those in ‘*other accommodation*’ was 20 years. People in the other accommodation group for 10 years or more included 4 people living in boarding houses, one in a caravan and one who said they were living with friends. 77% of this group had been in their current accommodation for 6 months or less.

The longest period in accommodation for those living in their own home was 29 years. This group generally had a very different pattern of accommodation stability, with only 19% in their housing for 6 months or less and 52% in their housing for two years or more.

⁵ Note this question was poorly answered for the ‘homeless - unsheltered’ group. Some provided answers as to how long they had been sleeping in unsheltered accommodation (and usually in very imprecise terms). Others answered the question as how long they had been sleeping at their current site.

Table 5: Distribution of how long you have been staying at their accommodation

	Homeless - Unsheltered		Other		Own home		Combined	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
≤ 1 week	16	15	32	32	0	0	48	16
2 to 4 weeks	21	19	23	23	3	3	47	16
5 to 12 weeks	18	17	11	11	10	11	39	13
4 to 6 months	14	13	11	11	5	5	30	10
7 to 12 months	2	2	6	6	12	13	20	7
>1 to 2 years	8	7	5	5	14	15	27	9
3 to 5 years	10	9	3	3	20	22	33	11
6 to 9 years	4	4	1	1	5	5	11	4
≥ 10 years	6	6	6	6	18	19	30	10
Not indicated	9	8	2	2	5	5	16	5
Total	108		100		93		301	

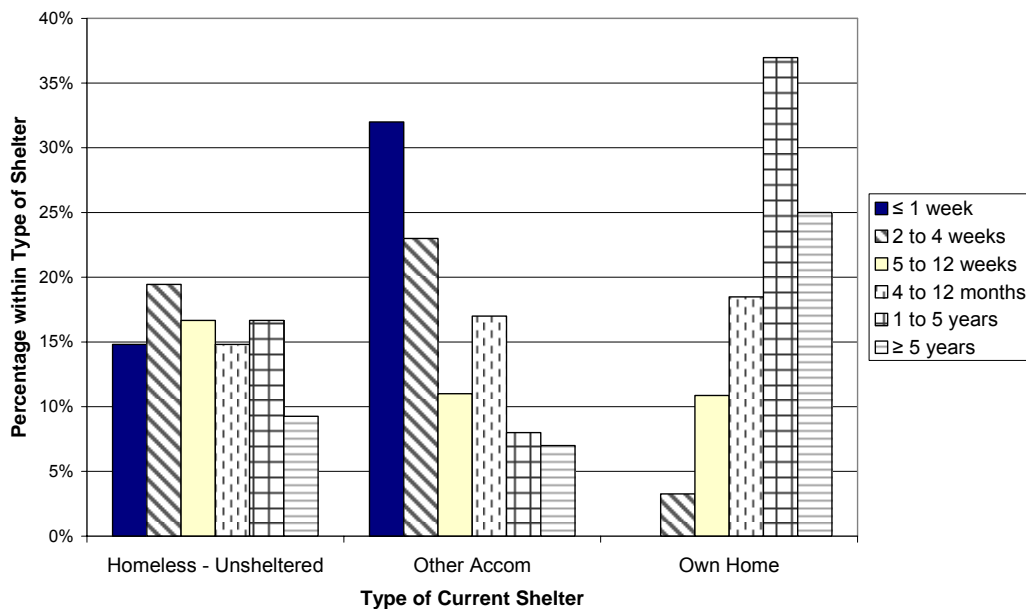


Figure 5: Distribution of how long you have been staying at their accommodation within Type of Current Shelter

If people indicated that they had been in their current accommodation for less than 12 months, they were asked a further question as to where else they had been staying over the year (Table 6 – 202 respondents). Responses to this question varied in quality – for example, some simply recorded ‘*everywhere*’ – and answers often appeared to be abbreviated, rather than comprehensive.

Table 6: Other type of Shelter used within last 12 months (n=202)

	Homeless - Unsheltered		Other Shelter		Own Home		Combined	
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*
Unsheltered accommodation	34	40	39	46	17	55	90	45
SAAP Accommodation	8	9	13	15	1	3	22	11
Boarding House	14	16	18	21	3	10	35	17
Hotel / Motel / Backpackers	5	6	4	5	1	3	10	5
Friend's / relative's place (temporary)	12	14	23	27	1	3	36	18
Hospital	1	1	3	4	1	3	5	2
Prison	2	2	10	12	0	0	12	6
Caravan	2	2	2	2	1	3	5	2
Support residential facility	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
Detox / Sobering up unit	5	6	4	5	1	3	10	5
Share house	1	1	0	2	0	0	1	1
Own House or flat	11	13	17	20	3	10	31	15
Other	8	9	6	7	2	6	16	8
TOTAL†	86	100	85	100	31	100	202	100

* Percentage calculated from the number of people that indicated another type of shelter within last 12 months (n=86 for homeless - unsheltered, n=85 for other accommodation, n=31 for own home and n=202 for combined)

† People may have been in more than one form of accommodation therefore aggregate totals will be more than 100%

4. Demographic information

Respondents' ages are summarised in Table 7 and Figure 6, and additional demographics in Table 8, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10. The median age of the *homeless-unsheltered* group was 40 years; for those in *other shelter* 40 years; and for those in their own home 49 years.

Table 7: Age distribution

	Homeless- Unsheltered		Other shelter		Own home		Declined		All	
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*
< 18	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	<1
18 to 24	8	7	9	9	1	1	4	7	22	6
25 to 34	26	24	23	23	8	9	11	20	68	19
35 to 44	38	35	29	29	20	22	27	49	114	32
45 to 54	30	28	22	22	31	34	8	15	91	26
55 to 64	5	5	10	10	21	23	5	9	41	11
65+	0	0	7	7	11	12	0	0	18	5
Not indicated	0		0		1		1		2	

* Not indicated data excluded from percentages

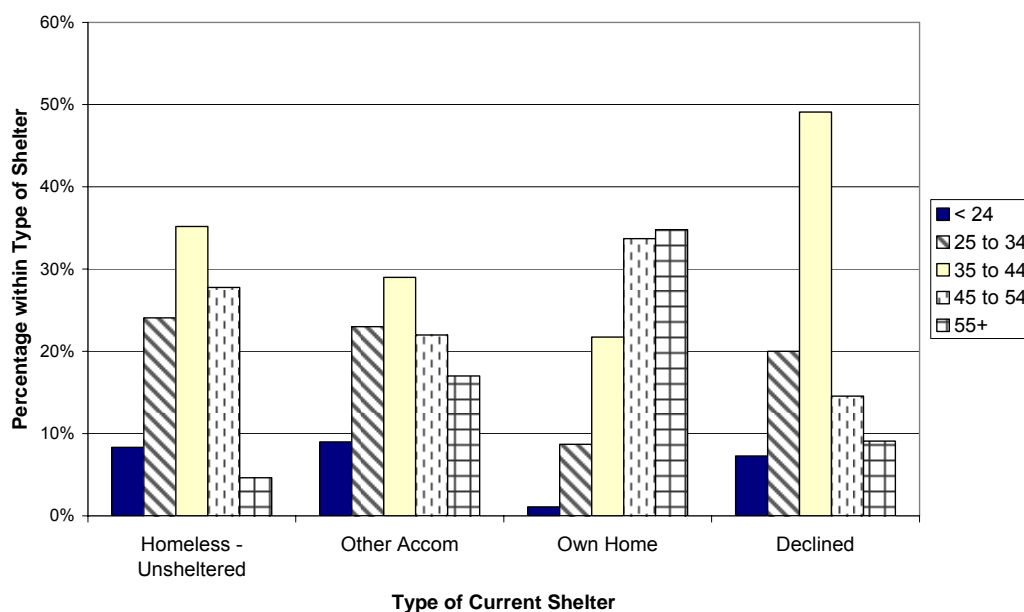


Figure 6: Age (years) distribution within Type of Current Shelter

Table 8: Demographics

	Homeless- Unsheltered		Other shelter		Own home		Declined		All	
	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*	n	%*
Country of birth										
Australia	89	85	84	84	73	79	18	90	264	83
Other†	16	15	16	16	20	22	2	10	54	17
Not indicated	3		0		0		36		39	
Cultural background										
Aboriginal	32	30	18	18	15	16	19	35	84	24
Torres Strait Islander	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	<1
Non-Indigenous	75	70	81	82	76	83	35	65	267	76
Not indicated	1		1		1		2		5	
Presenting Family Unit										
Single Person	93	87	91	91	82	88	54	98	320	90
Person with children	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	4	1
Couple	14	13	8	8	7	8	0	0	29	8
Couple with children	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1
Not indicated	1		0		0		1		2	
Gender										
Male	81	76	79	81	73	79	46	88	282	80
Female	25	24	19	19	20	22	6	12	70	20
Not indicated	2		2		0		1		5	

* Not indicated data excluded from percentages

† The majority of the 54 people who indicated they were born outside Australia were from European countries (42 people) with over half of these from the United Kingdom.

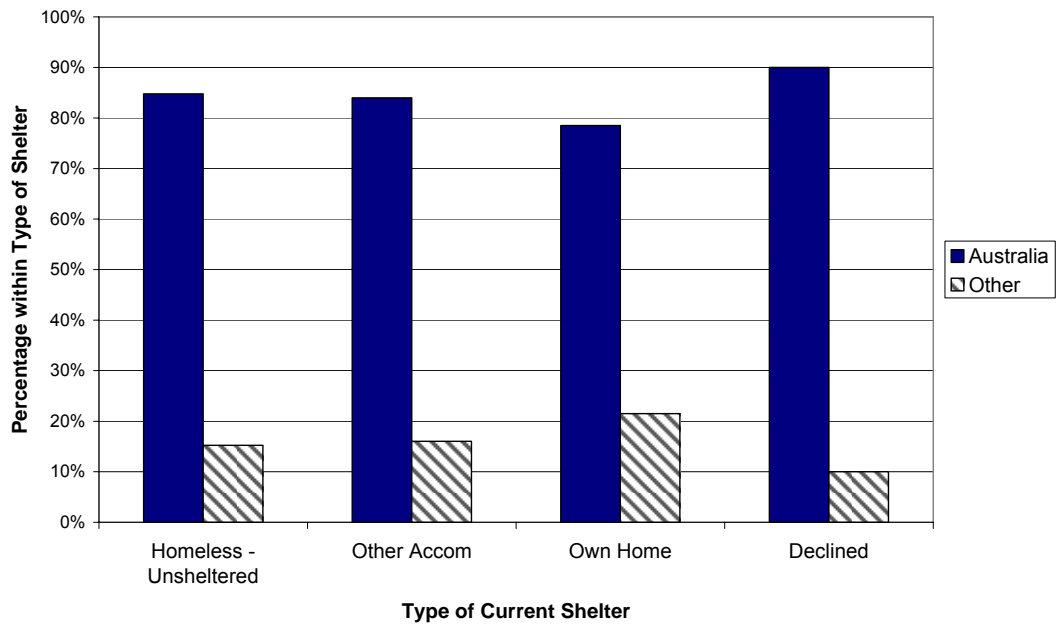


Figure 7: Distribution of Country of Birth within Type of Current Shelter

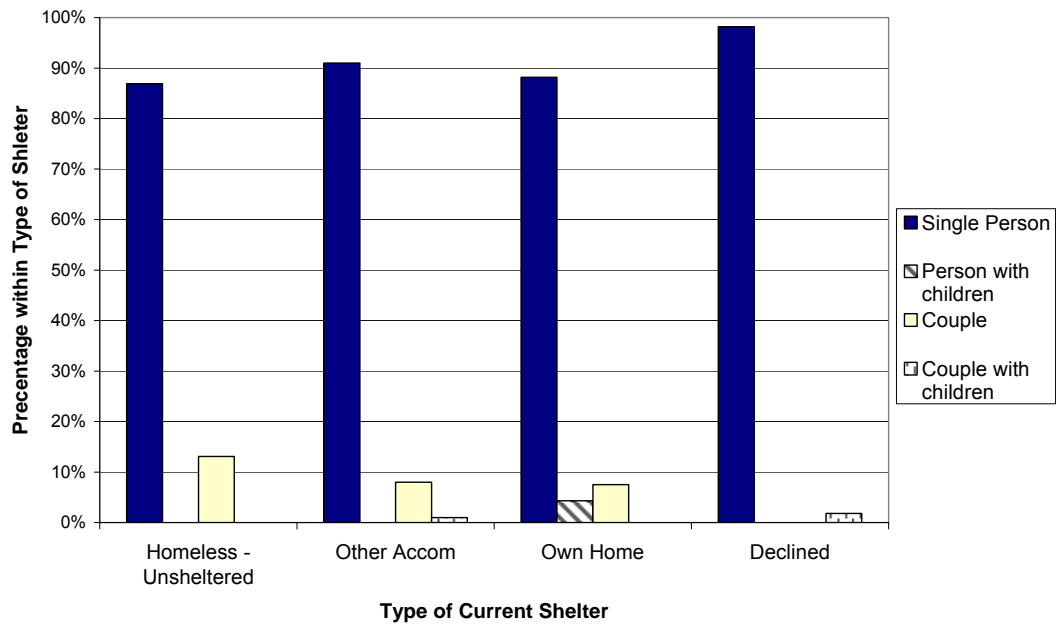


Figure 8: Distribution of Presenting Family Unit to agency within Type of Current Shelter

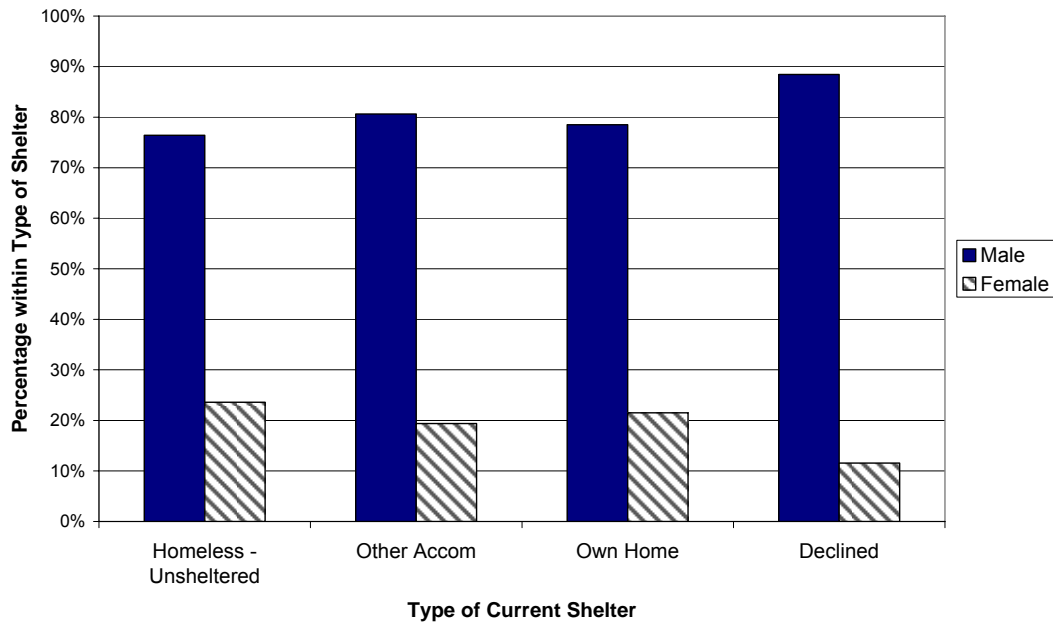


Figure 9: Distribution of Gender within Type of Current Shelter

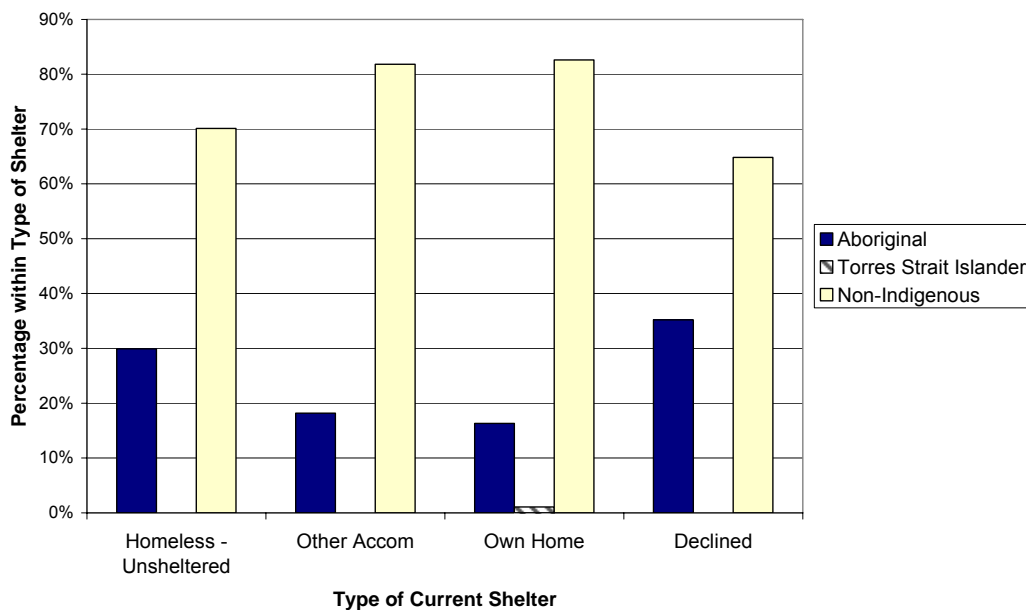


Figure 10: Distribution of Cultural Background within Type of Current Shelter

Only 7 out of the 357 people surveyed indicated they had children currently living with them. 3 people had a least one child aged from 0 and 4, 5 had a least one child aged from 5 and 12, 3 had a least one child aged from 13 to 15 and 1 had a least one child aged form 16 to 18 (Table 9). The type of accommodation for the 2 people with children in *Other Shelter* was at friend's / relative's place (temporary) and at SAAP accommodation.

Table 9: Number of people with children of various ages that are currently living with them

Age of Children (years)	Homeless-Unsheltered	Other Shelter	Own home	Declined	All (n=7)*
0 to 4	0	2	1	0	3
5 to 12	0	1	3	1	5
13 to 15	0	0	3	0	3
16 to 18	0	0	1	0	1
Any children*	0	2	4	1	7

* People may have indicated children in more than one age group and therefore aggregate total could be more than the total number people with children

5. Movement from Interstate and Regional SA

Information on people’s movements from interstate or regional SA was not intentionally sought. However, a number of respondents indicated that they were predominantly inter-state or in regional SA within the last 12 months or else recently arrived in South Australia (Table 10 and Figure 11). The numbers below could be assumed to be an undercount because not all respondents were asked about areas in which they had lived.

Table 10: People Inter-state or Regional SA over last 12 months

	Homeless - Unsheltered		Other shelter		Own Home		Combined	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Inter-state	20	19	12	12	6	7	38	13
Regional SA	6	6	4	4	1	1	11	4
Total	108		100		93		301	

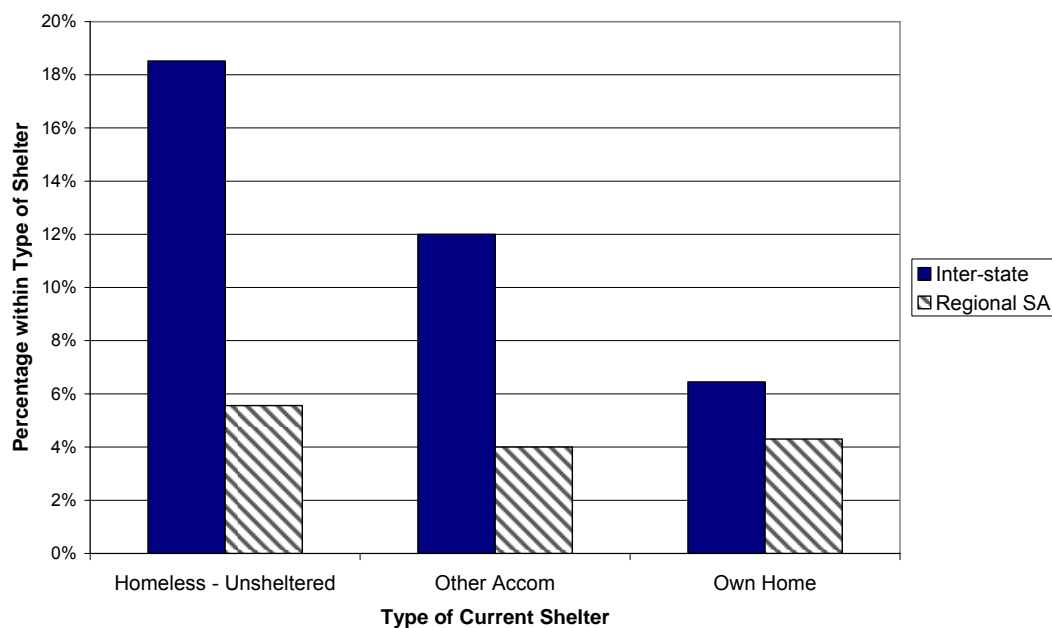


Figure 11: Percentage of People Interstate or Regional SA over last 12 months

6. Use of other Inner City Services

52 people (48%) in *homeless - unsheltered*, 34 people (34%) in other accommodation and 21 people (23%) in their own home - indicated they had used or intended to use another inner city service on the day of the count.

Of the 107 people that indicated they had used or intended to use another inner city service, 92 intended to use only 1 other service (86%). The list of inner city services indicated is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: People who indicated they would use another Inner City Services

Inner city Service	Homeless – Unsheltered (n=52)	Other shelter (n=34)	Own Home (n=21)	Combined (n=107)
Adelaide Day Centre	0	1	2	3
Byron Place	9	1	3	13
Centrelink	0	1	0	1
Fred’s Van	3	1	0	4
Hutt St	7	3	0	10
Nunkawarrin Yunti	3	0	0	3
Magdalene Centre	0	4	0	4
Magistrates Court	0	0	1	1
Otherway Centre	2	0	0	2
Positive Living Centre	0	1	0	1
RAH	2	0	0	2
SAHT	0	1	1	2
Salvation Army	0	1	0	1
Stabilisation Unit	0	1	0	1
St Vincent de Paul	0	1	0	1
Westcare	27	25	13	65
Service not indicated	2	0	3	5