



Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count

May 2016

The twenty-first Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count was conducted on 3 May 2016. The count located 76 people who were unsheltered or 'sleeping rough', of whom two 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.¹

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.

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.

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 21 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
- 2016 – 3 May

2 May 2016 Count

The data reported in this Bulletin was collected from the 3 May 2016 rough sleeper count survey from nine of the thirteen homelessness services listed in section 1. Any comparisons made; are to the previous survey held 2 February 2016.

2.1 Participation

One hundred and forty-nine surveys² were received. Of the people approached to participate in the survey:

- 119 people participated in the survey.
- 29 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 surveys³).

2.2 Results

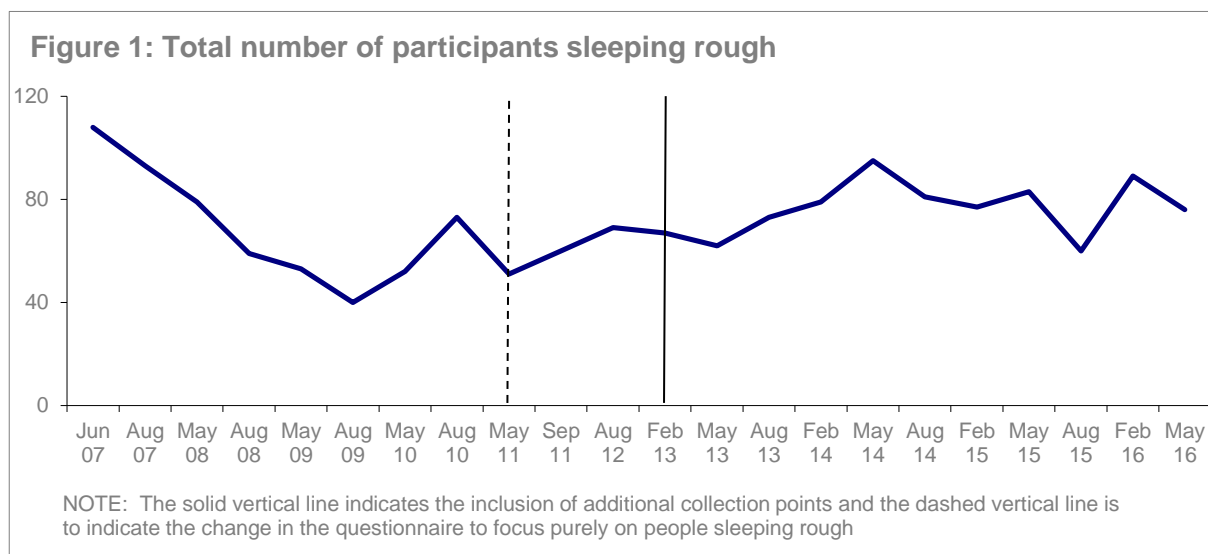
Of the 149 surveys received, 77 participants had slept rough the previous night, one participant had already completed the survey elsewhere, and two had a house or home elsewhere. It should be noted that 23 of the participants who slept rough the previous night were either incapable of completing the survey or had declined to participate.

Compared to the previous survey, of the 151 surveys that were received, 91 participants had slept rough the previous night. Of these rough sleepers, two had already completed the survey elsewhere and six reported having a house or home elsewhere. Similarly to the current survey, 21 participants from the last survey who slept rough the previous night were either incapable of completing the survey or had declined to participate.

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 higher to the previous survey (around a third).

Figure 1 shows that the number of people sleeping rough had been increasing between August 2009 and August 2013 but has remained relatively stable since then. The number of people sleeping rough decreased from 89 in February 2016 to 76 in the most recent survey⁴.



Other collections that report on rough sleeping in South Australia include the Census of Population and Housing, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which also collects information at a point in time. Information is collected on a 5-yearly basis and includes data relating to a person’s accommodation type on census night. While the Inner City Rough Sleeper Count surveys and the Census cannot be compared, estimates released by the ABS 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.

2.2.1 Sleeping rough and having a home elsewhere

In May 2016, two people indicated that although they had slept rough the previous night, they had a home elsewhere. This represents 2.6% of the number of people who had slept rough. Only one of the two 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 family problems and issues with neighbours and/or authority.

⁴ Figures include participants sleeping rough who have a home elsewhere.

The pattern of rough sleeping over the last year varied between these two people. One indicated they had slept rough 'most of time' and had done so for more than two years, while the other indicated that they have been sleeping rough 'some of the time' for approximately 2-4 weeks at the time the questionnaire was conducted.

From this group, both people identified themselves as Aboriginal. One was a female participant, aged 65-74 years who had indicated that she spent the majority of her time interstate over the past year. The other was a male participant, aged between 35-44 years who indicated that he had spent the majority of his time in the Adelaide metropolitan area over the past year.

2.2.2 Sleeping rough without a house elsewhere

Of the total number of participants who had slept rough, 74⁵ people (97%) had slept rough the previous night, with no home elsewhere. Of these 74 people, 59 (80%) had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or parklands, 4 (5%) had slept in the Adelaide suburbs and 11 (15%) 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 45% participants was that there was no other option ('No choice #47⁶, and 'Homeless' #4, and Nowhere else to go' #24). In line with the previous survey, financial reasons were the second main reason for sleeping rough and were provided by 7% of participants ('Cannot afford any accommodation' #21). A small number of other reasons were reported for sleeping rough included: being evicted from their previous accommodation ('Kicked out of previous house. in between homes' #149), personal preference ('Choose to' #125) and mental health issues. 30% of people who had slept rough did not provide a reason as to why they were sleeping rough.

⁵ This figure includes 22 people who did not answer the question as to whether they had a home elsewhere.

⁶ 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.

Table 1: Reasons why people had slept rough

	Total Number	Percentage
No other options	33	45%
Financial reason	5	7%
Personal preference	3	4%
Evicted / kicked out	4	5%
Mental health issue	0	0%
Waiting for other housing options	4	5%
Other	3	4%
Not stated	22	30%
Total	74	100%

Table 2 shows that 55% of participants who slept rough did not attempt to find alternative shelter and 10% of participants attempted to find accommodation elsewhere for the previous night.

Of the seven participants who had tried to find alternative shelter:

- two people had sought assistance from support services such as St. Vincent de Paul Accommodation Service,
- one attempted to use their personal connections (family and friends),
- one tried to source private accommodation such as a backpackers, and
- one person stipulated that they tried absolutely everything except for shelters.

Table 2: Where people attempted to find alternative shelter

	Total Number	Percentage
Sought service support	2	3%
Personal connections	2	3%
Private accommodation	2	3%
Unknown	1	1%
Did not attempt to seek alternative shelter	41	55%
Did not answer the question	26	35%
Total	74	100%

Of the 41 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 reason given was that participants had given up trying to find alternative accommodation ('No hope' #16, 'Nowhere to go' #28). This differs to the previous count where the most common reason was personal preference to not find alternative accommodation.

Table 3: Why people did not seek alternative shelter

	Total Number	Percentage
Financial reason	6	15%
Given up	9	22%
Personal preference	6	15%
Waiting for support options	0	0%
Other	8	20%
Not stated	12	29%
Total	41	100%

The people who were surveyed have been sleeping rough for various lengths of time. Table 4 shows that the majority of participants (22%) had been sleeping rough for more than two years, on par with the previous survey. This figure could potentially be much higher considering that 27% of participants did not provide a response to the length of time they had been sleeping rough.

Table 4: How long people have been sleeping rough

	Total Number	Percentage
1 week or less	4	5%
2 to 4 weeks	14	19%
5 to 11 weeks	3	4%
3 to 6 months	9	12%
7 to 12 months	0	0%
1 to 2 years	8	11%
More than 2 years	16	22%
No response	20	27%
Total	74	100%

In regards to the amount of time spent sleeping rough in the last year, 36% (27 participants) reported sleeping out 'most' 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	18	24%
Most of the time	9	12%
About half of the time	9	12%
Some of the time	11	15%
Hardly ever	7	9%
No response	20	27%
Total	74	100%

Participants were also asked to identify how long it has been since they last had stable housing. Table 6 shows that 53% (39 participants) reported not having had stable housing for three months or more with 34% (25 participants) not having stable housing for over two years. In comparison, when the survey was previously conducted, 76% (63 participants) reported not having had stable housing for three months or more with 29% not having stable housing for over two years

Table 6: How long since people have had stable housing

	Total Number	Percentage
Currently have stable housing	1	1%
1 week or less	2	3%
2 to 4 weeks	4	5%
5 to 11 weeks	3	4%
3 to 6 months	4	5%
7 to 12 months	4	5%
1 to 2 years	6	8%
More than 2 years	25	34%
No response	25	34%
Total	74	100%

Most participants (51%) stated that they had been primarily based in the Adelaide metropolitan area over the last 12 months. Participants who were primarily based interstate, reported basing themselves in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland (Table 7).

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

	Total Number	Percentage
Adelaide metro	38	51%
Country South Australia	2	3%
Interstate	9	12%
Unknown	3	4%
No response	22	30%
Total	74	100%

The demographic information from the survey is summarised in Tables 8 and 9. On par with the previous survey; males were 2.6 times more likely to be sleeping rough than females. Males sleeping rough were mostly from non-Aboriginal backgrounds, and were 45 to 54 years old. Women who were sleeping rough were predominantly from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background and were 25 to 44 years old.

Table 8: Aboriginal status by gender

	Male		Female		Not stated		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	10	20%	12	63%	0	0%	22	30%
Non-Aboriginal	34	69%	5	26%	2	33%	41	55%
Unknown	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Not stated	4	8%	2	11%	4	67%	10	14%
Total	49	100%	19	100.0%	6	100%	74	100%

Table 9: Age (in years) by gender

	Male		Female		Not stated		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 18	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	1	1%
18 to 24	2	4%	2	11%	0	0%	4	5%
25 to 34	12	24%	6	32%	1	17%	19	26%
35 to 44	9	18%	6	32%	2	33%	17	23%
45 to 54	19	39%	3	16%	0	0%	22	30%
55 to 64	6	12%	1	5%	1	17%	8	11%
65 to 74	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
75 and over	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not stated	1	2%	0	0%	2	33%	3	4%
Total	49	100%	19	100%	6	100%	74	100%

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 69% of the respondents. This information was used to determine the number of participants who had been identified as sleeping rough through the survey in previous rough sleeper surveys. Table 10 shows the number of times participants had been identified as sleeping rough previously.

According to the information gathered from previous surveys, 61% of the people who participated could not be linked to any of the previous rough sleeper surveys, and 8.1% could be 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 2016 and sleeping rough in no previous survey	45	61%
In May 2016 and sleeping rough in one previous survey	5	7%
In May 2016 and sleeping rough in two or more previous surveys	1	1%
Participant did not provide identifier information	23	31%
Total	74	100%

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

SURVEY COMPLETED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.