



Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count

February 2016

The twenty-first Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count was conducted on 2 February 2016. The count located 89 people who were unsheltered or 'sleeping rough', of whom six had a house elsewhere.

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1 Background

The Inner City Rough Sleeper Street Count is a survey questionnaire that was first conducted in 2007 to monitor the number of people sleeping rough in the inner city of Adelaide. The survey provides information about the circumstances and profile of this population. In mid 2011 the survey questionnaire was revised to focus definitively upon those who were rough sleeping the previous night and some questions were added to try and source some 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 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

1.1 Survey methodology

The survey is a point in time and it is conducted in the early morning of the day of the count. Street to Home staff visit the parklands and other areas around the city to locate people sleeping 'out'. Workers at the other homelessness services 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, data collectors invite their participation in completing the short survey (see Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). This replicated the basic methodology of previous Counts.

1.2 Review of methodology

Since the inception of the survey, there have been two significant changes to the methodology; Firstly, 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

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.

sleeping the previous night. Secondly, 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 survey in February 2013 was implemented and an additional nine homelessness services agreed to participate; giving a total of thirteen services.

1.3 Survey timeframe

The inner city rough sleeper count has been undertaken 21 times and has been conducted 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

2 February 2016 Count

The data reported in this Bulletin were collected on the 2 February 2016 at the thirteen homelessness services listed in section 1.

2.1 Participation

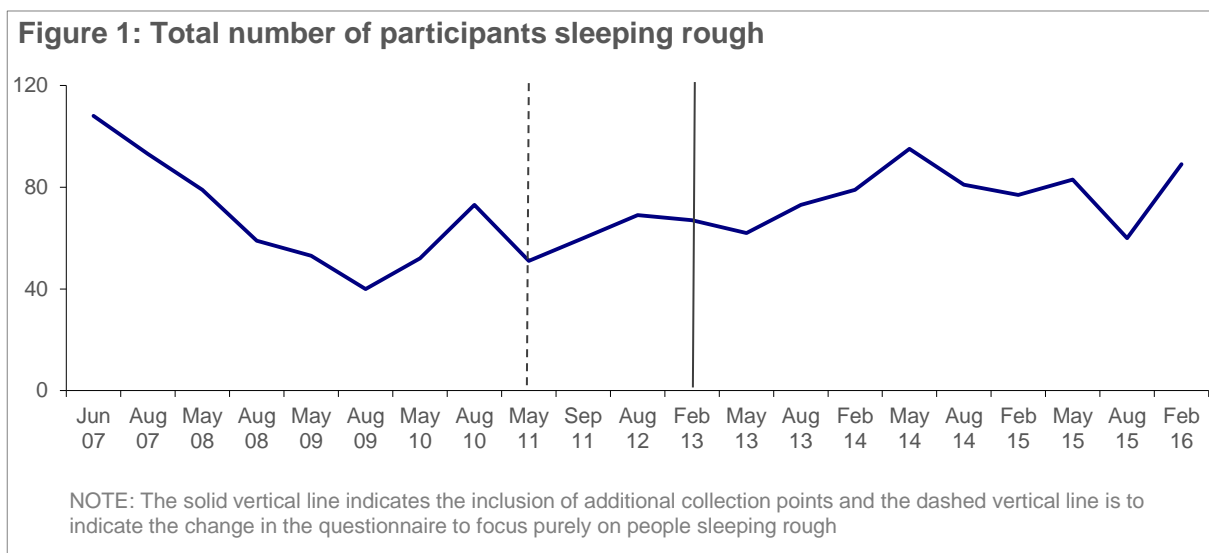
One hundred and fifty-one questionnaires² were received. Of the people approached by collectors and invited to participate:

- 127 people participated in the survey.
- 22 people or 14.6% declined to participate or were not capable of participating and where they had slept the previous night was not known.
- 2 people or 1.3% had already completed the survey at another service.

A considerable number of people who were sleeping rough declined to answer questions on their circumstances. This should be considered when interpreting the results, particularly when comparisons are made with previous surveys³.

2.2 Results

Of the 127 people who participated in the survey, 89 participants (70.1%) had slept rough the previous night. Of these, six participants reported having a house or home elsewhere. Figure 1 shows that the number of people sleeping rough overall has been increasing since August 2009. The number of people sleeping rough has increased from 60 in August 2015 to 89 in the most recent survey.



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 survey (around a third).

The Census of Population and Housing which also collects information at a point in time but on a 5-yearly basis collects data on a person's accommodation type on census night. While these counts and the 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.

2.2.1 Sleeping rough and having a house elsewhere

Six people indicated that, although they had slept rough the previous night, they had a home elsewhere. They represent 6.7% of all those who had slept rough. All indicated they had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or parklands.

When asked why they had not slept at their own home, various reasons were reported. Two stated that their home was located in another state, one was unable to get home, one was intoxicated, one had come to Adelaide for a medical treatment and one avoided returning home since their house guests were drug users. Two of the six indicated they had attempted to find other accommodation the night before.

The pattern of rough sleeping over the last year varied between the six people. Two people indicated they had 'hardly ever' slept rough and two 'about half of the time'. The other two people had slept rough either some of or most of the time. The person who has been sleeping rough most of the time also reported having been sleeping rough for 5-11 weeks at the time the questionnaire was conducted. The majority reported having slept rough 1 week or less.

Of this group, three identified themselves as male and non-Aboriginal. Two identified themselves as female and Aboriginal. One male identified himself as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Four respondents were aged between 35 to 54 years, one was between 18 to 24 years and one was between 65 to 74 years. Three reported they had spent most of their time over the last year in the Adelaide metropolitan area, one in country South Australia and two interstate.

2.2.2 Sleeping rough without a home elsewhere

Of the total number of respondents, 83 people⁴ had slept rough the previous night, without having a home elsewhere. They represent 93.3% of all those who had slept rough. 60.2% (50 people) had slept rough in the Adelaide inner city or parklands, 15.7% (13 people) had slept in the Adelaide suburbs and 24.1% (20 people) did not report their location.

Table 1 summarises the reasons given for sleeping rough. The most common reason reported by 45.8% was that there was no other option ('No available accommodation for two of us' #34⁵ and 'Homeless. Nowhere else to go' #35). Financial reasons were provided by 9.6% of those sleeping rough ('No money to find a place' #28). A small number of other reasons were reported including: being kicked out of their previous accommodation ('Kicked out of backpackers last year. Had trouble finding accommodation' #36), personal preference ('That's my home. Gypsy.' #42) and mental health issues. A reason was not provided by 26.5% of people who had slept rough.

Table 1: Reasons why people had slept rough

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| No other options | 38 | 45.8% |
| Financial reason | 8 | 9.6% |
| Personal preference | 2 | 2.4% |
| Evicted / kicked out | 3 | 3.6% |
| Mental health issue | 1 | 1.2% |
| Waiting for other housing options | 1 | 1.2% |
| Other | 8 | 9.6% |
| Not stated | 22 | 26.5% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

Table 2 shows that 53.0% (44 people) who slept rough did not attempt to find alternative shelter compared to 24.1% (20 people) who had attempted to find accommodation elsewhere for the previous night.

⁴ This figure includes 20 people who did not answer the question as to whether they had a home elsewhere.

⁵ 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.

Of the 20 people who had tried to find alternative shelter, 12 people had sought assistance from support services including the Housing SA, Hutt St Centre, Sobering Up Unit, Uniting Care, Trace-a-place, St. Vincent de Paul Accommodation Service and the Salvation Army. Four attempted to use their personal connections (family and friends), two tried to source private accommodation (Caravan Parks, Boarding Housing and Private Rental) 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

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Sought service support | 12 | 14.5% |
| Personal connections | 4 | 4.8% |
| Private accommodation | 2 | 2.4% |
| Unknown | 2 | 2.4% |
| Did not attempt to seek alternative shelter | 44 | 53.0% |
| Did not answer the question | 19 | 22.9% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

Of the 44 people who had not attempted to find alternative shelter elsewhere for the previous night, a range of reasons were reported. Table 3 shows that the most common reason was their personal preference to not find alternative accommodation ('Happy in my tent' #75 and 'I don't want to' #61). Seven reported financial issues ('No income, most of them ask for money' #52). Four people had given up trying to find alternative accommodation ('Tried many other times and got nothing' #35). Three reported they are waiting for support options ('Waiting for Housing SA to offer housing' #83). Nine people gave divergent responses ('No contact details' #63).

Table 3: Why people did not seek alternative shelter

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Financial reason | 7 | 15.9% |
| Given up | 4 | 9.1% |
| Personal preference | 14 | 31.8% |
| Waiting for support options | 3 | 6.8% |
| Other | 9 | 20.5% |
| Not stated | 7 | 15.9% |
| Total | 44 | 100.0% |

Those who were surveyed have been sleeping rough for various periods of time. Table 4 shows that 24.1% had been sleeping rough for more than two years and 20.5% reported sleeping rough for one to two years.

Table 4: How long people have been sleeping rough

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 week or less | 0 | 0.0% |
| 2 to 4 weeks | 9 | 10.8% |
| 5 to 11 weeks | 7 | 8.4% |
| 3 to 6 months | 12 | 14.5% |
| 7 to 12 months | 5 | 6.0% |
| 1 to 2 years | 17 | 20.5% |
| More than 2 years | 20 | 24.1% |
| No response | 13 | 15.7% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

In regards to the amount of time spent sleeping rough in the last year, 57.9% (48 people) 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 | 36 | 43.4% |
| Most of the time | 12 | 14.5% |
| About half of the time | 11 | 13.3% |
| Some of the time | 10 | 12.0% |
| Hardly ever | 1 | 1.2% |
| No response | 13 | 15.7% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

People were also asked to identify how long it has been since they last had stable housing. Table 6 shows that 87.8% or 73 people reported not having had stable housing for three months or more and of these, 28.9% had not had stable housing for over two years.

Table 6: How long since people have had stable housing

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Currently have stable housing | 0 | 0.0% |
| 1 week or less | 0 | 0.0% |
| 2 to 4 weeks | 4 | 4.8% |
| 5 to 11 weeks | 6 | 7.2% |
| 3 to 6 months | 7 | 8.4% |
| 7 to 12 months | 7 | 8.4% |
| 1 to 2 years | 25 | 30.1% |
| More than 2 years | 24 | 28.9% |
| No response | 10 | 12.0% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

Most people had been primarily based in the Adelaide metropolitan area over the last 12 months . For the 14 people primarily based interstate, different states were reported (one in New South Wales, three in Victoria, one in Western Australia, two in Tasmania, two in Queensland, three in the Northern Territory, one reported more than one state and one did not provide a response)(Table 7).

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

| | Total Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Adelaide metro | 55 | 66.3% |
| Country South Australia | 2 | 2.4% |
| Interstate | 14 | 16.9% |
| No response | 12 | 14.5% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

Demographic information is summarised in Tables 8 and 9. Males were 2.6 times more likely to be sleeping rough than females. Males sleeping rough tended to be from a non-Aboriginal background between the ages of 35 to 44 years. Women who were sleeping rough were predominantly from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background between the ages of 45-54.

Table 8: Aboriginal status by gender

| | Male | | Female | | Not stated | | Total | |
|--|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 13 | 22.4 | 12 | 54.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 25 | 30.1 |
| Non-Aboriginal | 40 | 69.0 | 9 | 40.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 49 | 59.0 |
| Not stated | 5 | 8.6 | 1 | 4.5 | 3 | 100.0 | 9 | 10.8 |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | 22 | 100.0 | 3 | 100.0 | 83 | 100.0 |

Table 9: Age (in years) by gender

| | Male | | Female | | Not stated | | Total | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Under 18 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 18 to 24 | 3 | 5.2 | 2 | 9.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 6.0 |
| 25 to 34 | 15 | 25.9 | 6 | 27.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 21 | 25.3 |
| 35 to 44 | 18 | 31.0 | 5 | 22.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 23 | 27.7 |
| 45 to 54 | 8 | 13.8 | 7 | 31.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 15 | 18.1 |
| 55 to 64 | 9 | 15.5 | 2 | 9.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 11 | 13.3 |
| 65 to 74 | 1 | 1.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.2 |
| 75 and over | 1 | 1.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 1.2 |
| Not stated | 3 | 5.2 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 100.0 | 6 | 7.2 |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | 22 | 100.0 | 3 | 100.0 | 83 | 100.0 |

2.2.3 Participation in previous Inner City Rough Sleeper Survey Counts

People who were sleeping rough (without a home elsewhere) and provided identifier information made up 66.2% of the respondents. This information was then used to determine how many people have been identified as sleeping rough through the survey in previous counts. Table 10 shows how many times people had been identified as sleeping rough previously.

According to the information available from previous surveys, 59.0% of people could not be linked to any of the previous twenty rough sleeper surveys, and 7.2% 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 February 2016 and sleeping rough in no previous survey | 49 | 59.0% |
| In February 2016 and sleeping rough in one previous survey | 3 | 3.6% |
| In February 2016 and sleeping rough in two or more previous surveys | 3 | 3.6% |
| Participant did not provide identifier information | 28 | 33.7% |
| Total | 83 | 100.0% |

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.