

Counting the homeless in Adelaide

Bulletin

August 12, 2008

This report summarises results from the fourth Inner City Homeless Count, held on 12 August 2008.

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 13th May 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 August 12 (see Appendix for survey 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 survey. 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 59 people who were in primary homelessness, ie unsheltered or sleeping rough on the day of the count, in comparison to those who were in other accommodation arrangements (excluding those who were in their own home).

Accommodation of all participants

291 people were counted in contact with participating services on 12th August. 59 of these were unsheltered (Table 1). No information about housing status was available for 32 people who declined to be part of the survey. Given the focus of the Count on people who are homeless or marginally housed, the 99 people in their own home and the 32 unknown have not been included in the analysis in this Bulletin.

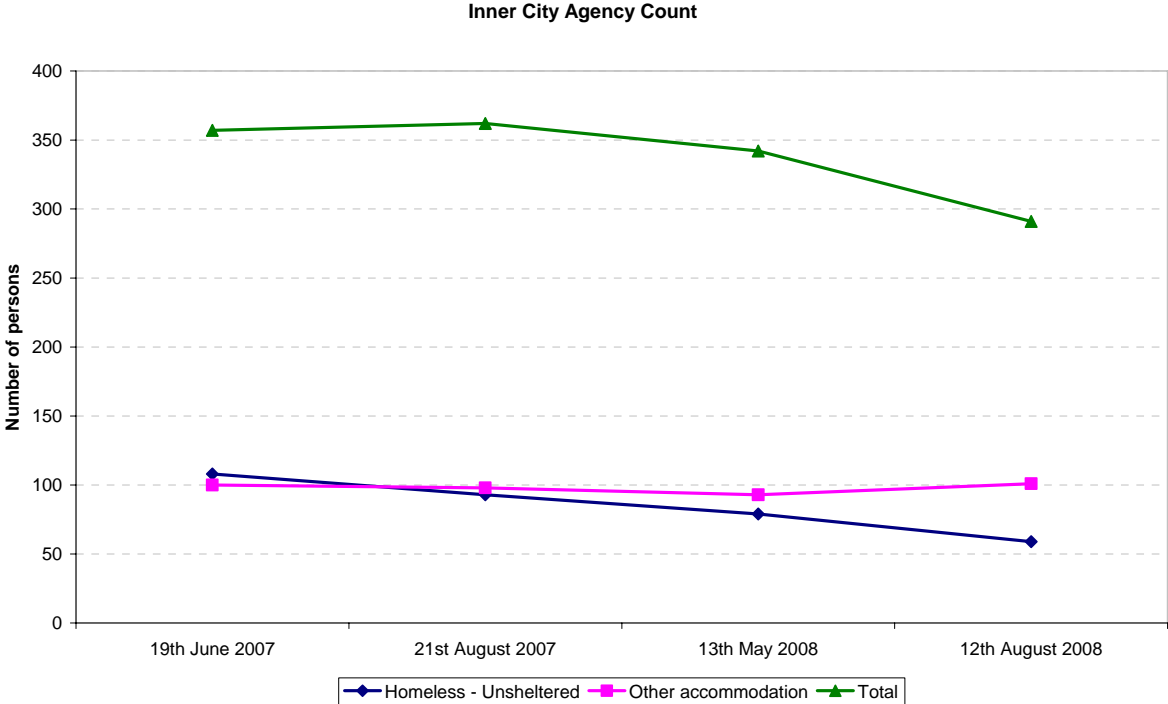
Table 1: Type of current shelter on 12 August 2008, individuals

Type of shelter	N	%
Homeless - unsheltered	59	20.3
Other accommodation	101	35.1
Own home/ flat	99	33.7
Unknown	32	11.0
Total	291	100.0

Trends

Compared to the previous three surveys, there were fewer people in contact with the participating services on the day of the August 2008 count. There has been a decline in the number of *unsheltered* persons over the four counts whilst numbers in *other accommodation* have remained relatively stable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Inner City Counts, number of participants and homeless - unsheltered



Current accommodation

Two thirds of the 59 *unsheltered* people were staying in the streets or the parklands, with all but four 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: Type of shelter, unsheltered / other accommodation

Type of shelter last night	N	%
Homeless - unsheltered		
Car	5	8.5
Squat	3	5.1
Streets / park	39	66.1
Tent / camped out	4	6.8
Unsheltered (other or unknown type)	8	13.6
Total	59	100.0
Other accommodation		
Boarding house	48	47.5
Friend's or relative's house (temporary)	13	12.9
SAAP Accommodation	13	12.9
Sobering up unit / Detox	10	9.9
Hotel / motel	6	5.9
Hospital	2	2.0
City watch house	1	1.0
Sheltered - Other	8	7.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 3: Location of shelter last night, Unsheltered / other accommodation, 12 August 2008

Location of shelter last night	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	N	%	N	%
Adelaide city or parklands	55	93.2	77	76.2
Adelaide suburbs	4	6.8	24	23.8
Total	59	100.0	101	100.0

Recent housing history

Participants were asked how long they had been staying in their current accommodation (Table 4 and Table 5). The median length of stay was 12 weeks for those who were *unsheltered*, ranging from less than a week to 29 years (one person). The median length of stay for those in *other accommodation* was 4 weeks, with a range from one day to 7 years.

Table 4: Length of time (weeks) staying at current accommodation, homeless – unsheltered / other accommodation, 12 August 2008

Type of shelter last night	Maximum Weeks	Minimum Weeks	Median Weeks	N
Homeless - unsheltered				
Car	156 (3 yrs)	8	18	5
Squat	16	4	10	3
Streets / park	1500 (29 yrs)	1	20	39
Tent / camped out	12	10	11	4
Unsheltered (other or unknown type)	52	52	52	8
Other accommodation				
Boarding house - other	350 (7 yrs)	1	12	48
City watch house	1	1	1	1
Friend's or relative's house (temporary)	4	1	1	13
Hospital	1	1	1	2
Hotel / motel	104	1	3	6
SAAP Accommodation	6	1	1	13
Sheltered - Other	52	1	5.5	8
Sobering up unit / Detox	52	1	1	10

Table 5: Length of time, homeless – unsheltered / other accommodation, 12 August 2008

Length of stay in current accommodation	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accomm	
	N	%	N	%
Less than or equal 1 week	6	10.2	37	36.6
2 to 4 weeks	3	5.1	14	13.9
5 to 11 weeks	10	16.9	15	14.9
3 to 6 months	10	16.9	12	11.9
>6 to 12 months	6	10.2	3	3.0
>1 to 2 years	4	6.8	6	5.9
Greater than 2 years	6	10.2	8	7.9
Unknown	14	23.7	6	5.9
Total	59	100.0	101	100.0
Median (weeks)	12		4	

Respondents were asked to indicate where else they had been staying in the last twelve months to provide an indication of recent housing history¹. This information was provided by 50 in *unsheltered* circumstances and 100 in *other accommodation*. 5 of the *unsheltered* group indicated they had been in their own house or flat at some time in the last twelve months (compared to 12 in *other accommodation*.) 44% of those in *other accommodation* experienced primary homelessness at some time in the past twelve months (Table 6).

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

Table 6: Previous Accommodation used in past twelve months*

Accommodation last 12 months	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	N	%	N	%
Primary homeless	37	62.7	44	43.6
Boarding house	9	15.3	40	39.6
Friends or relatives house	7	11.9	28	27.7
St Vincent de Paul Shelter	4	6.8	20	19.8
Catherine House	0	0.0	5	5.0
Backpackers	0	0.0	1	1.0
Hotel/ motel	3	5.1	7	6.9
City watchhouse	0	0.0	1	1.0
Prison	3	5.1	9	8.9
Remand Centre	0	0.0	1	1.0
Hospital	1	1.7	9	8.9
Detox/ Sobering up unit	0	0.0	5	5.0
Caravan	3	5.1	7	6.9
Own house or flat	5	8.5	12	11.9
Other	1	1.7	8	7.9
Not stated	9	15.3	1	1.0
Total	59		101	

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

Around half 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 not their current accommodation type) in the last twelve months.

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	32	54.2	27	26.7
2	21	35.6	38	37.6
3	4	6.8	18	17.8
4+	2	3.4	18	17.8
Total	59	100.0	101	100.0

Note: accommodation history was not stated for 9 people in unsheltered and 1 person in other accommodation

Respondents were asked to identify the housing type in which they had spent most time over the past year (Table 8). 37% of the respondents (59 people) from both accommodation groups combined stated they had spent most time over the past twelve months in primary homelessness.

² 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.

Table 8: Accommodation stayed most in past twelve months

Accommodation stayed most in last 12 months	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary homeless	33	55.9	26	25.7	59	36.9
At friends or relatives house	2	3.4	13	12.9	15	9.4
Boarding house	6	10.2	31	30.7	37	23.1
Caravan	1	1.7	3	3.0	4	2.5
Hotel/ motel	0	0.0	2	2.0	2	1.3
Prison	1	1.7	4	4.0	5	3.1
Own house or flat	3	5.1	12	11.9	15	9.4
Other	0	0.0	3	3.0	3	1.9
Not stated	13	22.0	7	6.9	20	12.5
Total	59	100.0	101	100.0	160	100.0

Most respondents had spent most of the last twelve months in the Adelaide metropolitan area (Table 9). Of the 23 who had spent most of the last twelve months interstate, 10 were from NSW and 5 from Victoria (Table 10).

Table 9: Location in the last twelve months, homeless – unsheltered / other accommodation

Location in last 12 months	Homeless - unsheltered		Other accommodation	
	N	%	N	%
Adelaide metro	39	66.1	75	74.3
Country SA	3	5.1	8	7.9
Interstate	9	15.3	14	13.9
Not stated	8	13.6	4	4.0
Total	59	100.0	101	100.0

Table 10: Location in last twelve months (interstate), homeless – unsheltered / other accommodation

Location in last 12 months (interstate)	Homeless - unsheltered	Other accomm
NSW	4	6
NT	1	2
Qld	1	1
Victoria	2	3
WA	1	1

Demographics

Table 11 and Table 12 provide demographic profiles of the two groups. The groups were very similar in terms of gender, cultural background and country of birth, although those who were *unsheltered* tended to be younger than those in *other accommodation*.

Table 11: Demographics, 12 August 2008 Homeless - unsheltered

	Female		Male		Not Stated		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Homeless unsheltered								
Cultural background								
Aboriginal	3	60%	10	19%	1	100%	14	24%
No (non-Indigenous)	2	40%	43	81%	0	0%	45	76%
Country of birth								
Australia	5	100%	45	85%	1	100%	51	86%
Other	0	0%	8	15%	0	0%	8	14%
Age								
18 to 24	0	0%	3	6%	0	0%	3	5%
25 to 34	1	20%	15	28%	1	100%	17	29%
35 to 44	4	80%	19	36%	0	0%	23	39%
45 to 54	0	0%	16	30%	0	0%	16	27%
Total	5	100%	53	100%	1	100%	59	100%

Table 12: Demographics, 12 August 2008 Other accommodation

	Female		Male		Not Stated		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Other accommodation								
Cultural background								
Aboriginal	7	50.0	14	16.7	1	33.3	22	21.8
No (non-Indigenous)	7	50.0	69	82.1	2	66.7	78	77.2
Not stated	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	1.0
Country of birth								
Australia	13	92.9	70	83.3	2	66.7	85	84.2
Other	0	0.0	10	11.9	1	33.3	11	10.9
Not stated	1	7.1	4	4.8	0	0.0	5	5.0
Age								
18 to 24	0	0.0	5	6.0	0	0.0	5	5.0
25 to 34	4	28.6	11	13.1	0	0.0	15	14.9
35 to 44	7	50.0	29	34.5	1	33.3	37	36.6
45 to 54	2	14.3	23	27.4	1	33.3	26	25.7
55 to 64	1	7.1	11	13.1	1	33.3	13	12.9
65 and over	0	0.0	4	4.8	0	0.0	4	4.0
Not stated	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	1.0
Total	14	100.0	84	100.0	3	100.0	101	100.0

Only one respondent currently had children living with them: this man was living in a boarding house with two children.

Multiple service usage

One third of both groups said they had used or intended to use another inner city service on the day of the Count (20 of the *unsheltered*, 36 of those in *other accommodation*). Westcare was the service most frequently cited, followed by the Salvation Army and Hutt Street.

Individual identifiers

As in previous surveys, all respondents were asked if they were willing to have an individual identifier recorded on the form (initials; year of birth; gender). 192 (66%) of the total respondents (including those in their own homes) provided this identifier. 35 (18%) of these were currently in *unsheltered* circumstances and 80 (42%) were in *other accommodation*. 59% of the respondents in *unsheltered* circumstances and 79% in *other accommodation* provided an identifier.

Only four respondents in this survey had participated in all three previous surveys (Table 13).

Table 13: Repeat presentations

Number of surveys	N
August 2008 survey and One previous survey	34
August 2008 survey and Two previous surveys	12
August 2008 survey and All three previous surveys	4

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?
(e.g. 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 got 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 Q7)

.....

9. What location did you spent 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"/> Victoria |
| | | | <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			

SURVEY COMPLETED. THANK THE PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME.