

5 INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS

In Tasmania, 95 per cent of people answered the census question: 'Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander origin?' and 3.7 per cent identified as Indigenous. However, there was no information on the Indigenous status of the homeless young people staying temporarily with friends or relatives, who were not counted in the census. We use census data on homeless people staying with other households (the 'usual address' question) to estimate how many Indigenous young people were missed by the census.

There is a risk of underestimating Indigenous homelessness, because many Indigenous households make sense of the 'usual address' question within a different cultural frame of reference. When Indigenous people leave home to escape domestic violence or other family problems, they often move in with members of their extended family. In these circumstances, it is not culturally appropriate to record 'no usual address' on census night, because 'home' is understood in a different way. This creates underreporting in this category.

5.1 NUMBER OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATES OF HOMELESSNESS PER 10 000, 2001 AND 2006

	2001			2006		
	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Total*	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Total**
Number	2235	151	2415	2281	207	2507
Rate	50	92	52	50	118	53

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2001, 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2001, 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2001, 2006.

* Figures were adjusted for missing data on Indigenous status, except in 29 cases where there was inadequate information to make the adjustment.

** Figures have been adjusted for missing data on Indigenous status, except in 19 cases where there was inadequate information to make the adjustment.

There were 207 homeless Indigenous people in Tasmania on census night 2006 (Table 5.1). The rate was 118 per 10 000 of the population compared with a rate of 92 in 2001. The rate of homelessness for non-Indigenous people was 50 per 10 000, the same as in 2001. Indigenous people were overrepresented in the homeless population in all states and

territories in 2006, but the rate of Indigenous homelessness has increased in Tasmania since 2001.

There were 95 homeless Indigenous people in Hobart (Table 5.2), 40 in Launceston, 39 in Burnie-Devonport, and 33 in rural areas. There were 17 Indigenous people who were marginal residents of caravan parks, mainly in Burnie-Devonport.

5.2 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS HOMELESS PEOPLE, 2006

	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	
	N	%	N	%
Hobart	955	42	95	46
Launceston	446	20	40	19
Burnie-Devonport	354	15	39	19
Rural	526	23	33	16
	2281	100	207	100

Source: Census of Population and Housing 2006; SAAP Client Collection 2006; National Census of Homeless School Students 2006.