



Homelessness Australia
Creating a framework for ending homelessness

Making Them Count: Data on people experiencing homelessness

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Who we are

- national peak body for people experiencing homelessness. Our members are
 - NGOs providing services
 - govt agencies
 - individuals
- started in 1998, vision is to ‘create a framework for ending homelessness’



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Data on Homelessness

- How we count homelessness is now very important: White Paper headline goal to halve homelessness by 2020
- Two major sources of data, each under review
 - Census count
 - Supported Accommodation Assistance program



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Census: How is it done?

- The ABS “cultural definition” includes:
- **Primary Homelessness:** Rough sleepers and people in improvised dwellings.
- **Secondary Homelessness:** People staying in homelessness services or with friends/relatives.
- **Tertiary Homelessness:** People staying in Boarding Houses with no security of tenure.



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Broad Definition

- This is critical -shapes who is part of homelessness in Aust,
 - means we include young people, women, families that we probably wouldn't
- People often cycle through different categories of homelessness



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Census: how is it done?

- Count is adjusted for under-, over-counting in a number of ways
- Things we do to count homelessness:
 - Strategies for rough sleepers
 - national census of school students
 - ‘no usual address’
 - People staying in boarding houses
 - People staying in SAAP



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Census: how is it done?

- What we do to adjust the count takes into account knowledge, understanding we have
- Other things that we could do better
 - Counting rough sleeping amongst indigenous people; NT count for eg went down by 26% between 2001 and 2006
 - Overcrowding amongst indigenous households



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Census: challenging stereotypes

- Count gives us insights into the changing nature of homelessness in Australia
 - Families up 17% (4 Corners)
 - Elderly homeless up 30%
 - Youth homelessness falling



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SAAP data

- About 202,500 people are supported by specialist homelessness services each year
- Data from SAAP tells us
 - Who uses services
 - What support they get
 - Reasons for seeking assistance



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Future of SAAP data

- Data on SAAP changing – current collection funded until 2010-11
- No longer a single national program



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Data from other programs

- How do we capture all of the new services for people who are homeless?
- How do we capture when people who are homeless are using “mainstream” services?
 - Eg 1 in 8 people who were homeless used the Personal Support Program



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Social Inclusion

- Homelessness is an extreme manifestation of social exclusion
- Having a place to call home enables one to connect to community activities and services
- A range of initiatives/strategies are needed