

5 HUNTER AND ILLAWARRA

5.1 OVERVIEW

The statistical division of Hunter has a population of 589 000. The Newcastle subdivision covers the Greater Newcastle Metropolitan area including Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Port Stephens. The subdivision of Hunter SD Balance includes surrounding rural communities and small towns such as Singleton and Muswellbrook.

Illawarra has a population of 394 000 and includes three subdivisions: Wollongong (including Kiama and Shellharbour); Nowra-Bomaderry (including Shoalhaven); and Illawarra SD Balance which covers surrounding rural areas and country towns.

Table 5.1 shows that the census identified 1981 homeless people in Hunter and 1338 in the Illawarra. The rate of homelessness was 34 per 10 000 in both statistical divisions.

5.1 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATE PER 10 000 IN HUNTER AND ILLAWARRA

	Hunter			Illawarra			
	Newcastle	Hunter SD Balance	Total	Wollongong	Nowra- Bomaderry	Illawarra SD Balance	Total
Number	1574	407	1981	941	145	252	1338
Rate	32	42	34	36	47	25	34

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

In Hunter, about 80 per cent of homeless people were in Newcastle where the rate was 32 per 10 000. In Illawarra about 70 per cent of homeless people were in Wollongong where the rate was 36 per 10 000. The rate of homelessness was higher in Hunter SD Balance (42 per 10 000) and Nowra-Bomaderry (47 per 10 000), but the number of homeless people in these subdivisions was 407 and 145 respectively. When policy makers allocate resources, they should consider the number of homeless people in a community, as well as the rate of homelessness.

5.2 HUNTER AND ILLAWARRA

Table 5.2 shows that 53 per cent of the homeless in Newcastle were staying with friends or relatives, as were 43 per cent of the homeless in Hunter SD Balance. In Newcastle, 19 per cent of the homeless were in SAAP, compared with 15 per cent of homeless in Hunter SD Balance. Newcastle also had a higher proportion of homeless people in boarding houses (20 per cent compared with six per cent), but a much lower proportion in improvised dwellings and sleepers rough (eight per cent compared with 36 per cent). In both Newcastle and Hunter SD Balance, the majority of improvised dwellings were either owned or being purchased.

5.2 PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION, HUNTER

	Newcastle		Hunter SD balance	
	N	%	N	%
Boarding house	313	20	22	6
SAAP	299	19	62	15
Friends and relatives	829	53	175	43
Improvised dwellings	133	8	148	36
	1574	100	407	100

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

In Wollongong, 40 per cent of the homeless were in SAAP, 34 per cent were staying temporarily with other households, and 21 per cent were in boarding houses (Table 5.3). In Nowra-Bomaderry, half (52 per cent) of the homeless were in SAAP and one-third (35 per cent) were with friends and relatives. Illawarra SD Balance was the only subdivision that had a majority of people staying with other households (63 per cent) and it also had more people in the primary population (26 per cent compared with five per cent in Wollongong). Most people in Illawarra's primary population were in improvised dwellings that were owned or being purchased.

5.3 PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION, ILLAWARRA

	Wollongong		Nowra-Bomaderry		Illawarra SD Balance	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Boarding house	202	21	10	7	19	7
SAAP	376	40	76	52	10	4
Friends and relatives	315	34	51	35	158	63
Improvised dwellings	48	5	8	6	65	26
	941	100	145	100	252	100

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

Overall, the census identified about 1981 homeless people in Hunter and 1338 in Illawarra. The rate of homelessness was 36 per 10 000 in Wollongong and 32 per 10 000 in Newcastle. The homeless population was also distributed differently in the two cities with Wollongong having twice as many people in SAAP (40 per cent compared with 19 per cent) and fewer people staying temporarily with friends and relatives (34 per cent compared with 53 per cent).

5.3 MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS

There were 636 marginal residents of caravan parks in Hunter and 472 in Illawarra (Table 5.4). This was approximately double the number of people in boarding houses in these communities (335 and 231 respectively). In Hunter and Illawarra, caravans are used as an alternative to boarding houses.

5.4 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS, HUNTER AND ILLAWARRA

	Hunter			Illawarra			
	Newcastle	Hunter SD Balance	Total	Wollongong	Nowra-Bomaderry	Illawarra SD Bal	Total
Number	1574	407	1981	941	145	252	1338
Rate per 10 000	32	42	34	36	47	25	34
Caravan	474	162	636	279	69	124	472
Total	2048	569	2617	1220	214	376	1810
Rate per 10 000	42	59	44	46	69	38	46

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

For some policy purposes, marginal residents of caravan parks might be thought of as part of the tertiary population. If this is the case, then the rate of homelessness increases from 34 to 44 per 10 000 in Hunter (2617 people) and from 34 to 46 per 10 000 in Illawarra (1810 people).

