

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL CATEGORIES

There are a number of ways of approaching a geographical analysis. The Australian Bureau of Statistics uses the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) for the collection and dissemination of geographically organised statistics (ABS 2006c). The ASGC provides seven interrelated classification structures that are designed for different practical purposes. This report uses the 'Main Structure' that covers the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. The Main Structure comprises five hierarchical levels: census districts, statistical local areas, statistical subdivisions, statistical divisions, and states and territories. This analysis uses statistical divisions and statistical subdivisions as the main geographical categories, because patterns can be identified more easily if larger geographical categories are used.

In each state and territory, the capital city is treated as a statistical division that includes the greater metropolitan area, including any anticipated growth corridors for at least 20 years. The statistical division 'represents the city in a wider sense' (ABS 2006c, p. 15). The Australian Capital Territory contains two statistical divisions: Canberra with a population of 323 056, and ACT Balance with a population of 269 (Map 1).

The statistical division of Canberra is divided into seven statistical subdivisions. According to the ABS, statistical divisions are 'socially and economically homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable links between the inhabitants' (ABS 2006c, p. 14). The statistical subdivisions in Canberra are North Canberra, Belconnen, Woden Valley, Western Creek-Stromlo, Tuggeranong, South Canberra, and Gungahlin-Hall.

4.3 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

Homeless people move around in Canberra and we would expect the number of homeless to fluctuate in different statistical subdivisions. Despite this, Table 4.1 shows a distinct geographical pattern in Canberra on census night. There were 381 homeless people in North Canberra where the rate of homelessness was 90 per 10 000. In the remainder of Canberra there were 983 homeless people and the rate of homelessness was 35 per 10 000. It is common to find a higher rate of homelessness in the inner suburbs of the capital cities. This is the case in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane Adelaide, and Hobart. Homeless people gravitate to the inner suburbs, especially if they are coming from interstate.

4.1 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATE PER 10 000 OF THE POPULATION

	North Canberra	Remainder of Canberra	ACT
Number	381	983	1364
Rate	90	35	42

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

Table 4.2 shows that 38 per cent of the homeless in North Canberra were in SAAP accommodation and another 38 per cent were staying with friends and relatives. Twelve per cent were in boarding houses and 12 per cent were in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough. In contrast, half (51 per cent) of the homeless in suburban Canberra were staying with other households and 40 per cent were in SAAP. There was a smaller proportion (six per cent) in boarding houses in suburban Canberra, as well as a smaller proportion (three per cent) in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough.

4.2 NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION, NORTH CANBERRA AND REMAINDER OF CANBERRA

Percentage

	North Canberra	Remainder of Canberra	ACT
Boarding house	12	6	8
SAAP	38	40	39
Friends and relatives	38	51	47
Improvised dwellings	12	3	6
	100	100	100

Number

	North Canberra	Remainder of Canberra	ACT
Boarding house	47	61	108
SAAP	143	388	531
Friends and relatives	146	501	647
Improvised dwellings	45	33	78
	381	983	1364

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

The rate of homelessness varied across the subdivisions in suburban Canberra, as did the number of homeless people (Table 4.3). The rate was 29 and 34 per 10 000 in Tuggeranong and Belconnen where there were 250 and 284 homeless people. The rate of homelessness was similar in Western Creek-Stromlo and Woden Valley (26 and 32 per 10 000), but the number of homeless people was lower (58 and 102) because these areas had smaller populations. The rate of homelessness was higher in South Canberra (48 per 10 000) and Gungahlin-Hall (56 per 10 000) where there were 113 and 176 homeless people.

4.3 NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE AND RATE PER 10 000 IN SELECTED CANBERRA SUBDIVISIONS

	Belconnen	Woden Valley	Western Creek-Stromlo	Tuggeranong	South Canberra	Gungahlin-Hall
Number	284	102	58	250	113	176
Rate	34	32	26	29	48	56

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

In 2001, 77 per cent of the homeless in suburban Canberra were staying with friends and relatives (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2004a, p. 34). Table 4.4 shows that in 2006 the proportion staying with friends and relatives varied between the statistical subdivisions. In Belconnen, Western Creek and Tuggeranong, about 60 per cent of the homeless were staying with other households, but this dropped to 52 per cent in South Canberra, to 38 per cent in Woden Valley and to 25 per cent in Gungahlin-Hall. There was also variation in the proportion in SAAP, ranging from 19 per cent in Western Creek-Stromlo, to 37 per cent in Tuggeranong, to 62 per cent in Gungahlin-Hall. Finally, there were few people in boarding houses in suburban Canberra, and in only two subdivisions were people recorded sleeping rough. In South Canberra, 12 per cent were in improvised dwellings or sleeping rough and in Gungahlin-Hall it was 11 per cent.

4.4 PERSONS IN DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION, SELECTED CANBERRA SUBDIVISIONS

Percentage						
	Belconnen	Woden Valley	Western Creek-Stromlo	Tuggeranong	South Canberra	Gungahlin-Hall
Boarding house	6	14	19	3	9	2
SAAP	33	48	19	37	27	62
Friends/relatives	61	38	62	60	52	25
Imp. dwelling	0	0	0	0	12	11
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Number						
	Belconnen	Woden Valley	Western Creek-Stromlo	Tuggeranong	South Canberra	Gungahlin-Hall
Boarding house	17	14	11	6	10	3
SAAP	95	49	11	93	30	110
Friends/relatives	172	39	36	151	59	44
Imp. dwelling	0	0	0	0	14	19
	284	102	58	250	113	176

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

4.4 MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS

The ABS defines marginal residents of caravan parks as people who are renting caravans or cabins, where there was no one in the dwelling who had full-time employment (35 hours or more), and they were at their usual address (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008a, Ch. 7). There is a sense in which caravans are used as an alternative to boarding houses outside of the capital cities.

The 2006 Census found that 70 per cent of boarding house residents were in the capital cities and 30 per cent were in regional centres and country towns (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2008a, Ch. 7). In contrast, 71 per cent of marginal caravan park dwellers were in regional centres and country towns and 29 per cent were in capital cities. SAAP workers sometimes refer people to the local caravan park if there is no emergency accommodation available or if there are no boarding houses. Caravan parks may also house some people on a longer-term basis who are unable to re-enter the private rental market.

4.5 MARGINAL RESIDENTS OF CARAVAN PARKS, SELECTED GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

	North Canberra	South Canberra	Remainder of ACT	Total
Number of homeless	381	113	870	1364
Rate per 10 000	90	48	34	42
Caravan park residents	5	34	3	42
Total	386	147	873	1406
Rate per 10 000	92	62	34	43

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

The issue of whether to include marginal residents of caravan parks as part of the homeless population is particularly important for policy makers in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia, because 93 per cent of marginal residents of caravan parks were in those states.

In the Australian Capital Territory, there were 42 marginal residents of caravan parks (Table 4.5) in 29 dwellings. The caravan park numbers make little difference to the overall number of homeless people. For some policy purposes, marginal caravan park dwellers might be thought of as part of the tertiary population. If this is the case, then the rate of homelessness was 43 per 10 000 in the Australian Capital Territory, compared with 42 per 10 000 using the ABS definition (Table 4.5).

