

DONDUNSTANFOUNDATION
INSPIRING ACTION FOR A FAIRER WORLD



**2017 HOMELESSNESS
CONFERENCE**

**WORKING TOGETHER
TO END HOMELESSNESS**

17 August 2017, 9.00am – 5.00pm, Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide

A snapshot of homelessness South Australia

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Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning (CHURP)

The University of Adelaide

Defining and measuring homelessness

Three sources of data in Australia:

- **Census of Population and Housing:** provides estimates of official prevalence of homelessness in Australia: a point in time prevalence measure
- Definition of homelessness in Census:
When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:
 - Is a dwelling that is inadequate; or
 - Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
 - Does not allow them to have control of and access to space for social relationships
- **Specialist Homelessness Services Collection:** government's administrative data set:
 - Homeless status determined by aligning as closely as possible with the ABS's statistical definition.
- **Surveys – Journey Home, street counts**

Defining and measuring homelessness

- All familiar with statistic 105,000 people homeless at 2011 census; in South Australia we accounted for 5985 of these people
- In all states/territories this was an increase on 2006
- The number of rough sleepers fell between 2006 and 2011 by 6 per cent from 7,247 to 6,813. However, overall homelessness went up due to severe crowding and temporary accommodation.
- What can we expect from the 2016 Census ?

Anticipated and current trends

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NEWS 15



ROUGH SLEEPER: Warren Bridgeland collects cans and bottles in Hindley St.

Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

Homelessness is 'worst in 50 years'

LANAI SCARR

MORE Australians are sleeping rough or without a place to call home than ever before, according to one of the sector's leading advocates.

Reverend Bill Crews from the Exodus Foundation has been working with the homeless since 1970 and says the issue is the worst he has seen it in close to 50 years.

"Honestly it's worse than I've ever seen since 1970 and it's getting worse," Rev Crews said.

"There is so much contract work, so there are a lot of people who are really underemployed and just aren't able to pay for housing.

"Domestic violence issues are also on the rise leading to more women and children sleeping in their cars or on the street. It's devastating the amount of people we are seeing on the streets.

"And the problem is no longer confined to the cities. Almost every suburb you go into now you will find someone who is homeless."

Kids Help line says it has received contacts from an alarming number of children reaching out to the service saying they are couch surfing and without a home.

The service has received 3091 contacts from children and young people where

homelessness was a concern from 2014-2016.

The most recent census data on homelessness is yet to be made available, however estimates put the figure up 20 per cent since 2011, with around 23,000 Aussies sleeping rough.

News Corp Australia today launches the AskIzzy power card campaign in order to address this worsening issue. Members of the public can purchase a \$15 power card for someone in need which charges their phone for four hours and keeps them in touch with services like food and shelter.

AskIzzy is a mobile app and website that allows homeless users to search for vital services in their area. News Corp Australia can also reveal the Federal Government will today begin making available \$117.2 million in key funding to support more than 700 critical frontline homelessness services. The money will prioritise services to women and children experiencing domestic violence and young people experiencing homelessness.

Warren Bridgeland, 52, sleeps rough in Adelaide, and collects cans and bottles.

"I'm only getting about \$5 an hour - so you've got to be keen," he said.

To donate to the AskIzzy power card campaign go to www.westpac.com.au/askizzy.

- WITH BRENTON EDWARDS

'Tsunami of homeless' on streets of city

JADE GAILBERGER
CITY EDITOR

ROUGH sleeper numbers in the city are up 44 per cent from last year, and one East End business says it's had enough of cleaning up "bottles of warm urine" and cigarette butts left by people sleeping in their doorway.

The number of rough sleepers in Adelaide's CBD and parklands soared in August 2016 and has remained high.

In the survey conducted in February this year by the Inner City Street Crew, 123 people were identified as "sleeping rough" for at least two nights. It will conduct another survey this month.

Figures released by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion show 110 people were counted in May, compared to 76 people at the same time last year — a 44 per cent increase. But the state's peak housing organisation, Shelter SA, warns Adelaide is about to face "a tsunami" of

rough sleepers. One East End retail owner, who wished to remain anonymous, said she was confronted daily by the issue outside her shop. "From food strewn all across the doorway, cigarette butts butted out in the carpet, half-eaten food, I've moved bottles of warm urine, tissues," she said.

She has been empathetic, and even befriended a man who had occupied their doorway, giving him food and storing his bedding. He's moved into a boarding house but the owner said "there's definitely been an increase in the amount of rough sleepers around". She has contacted the council and police, has put up notes in the shop window asking rough sleepers to be respectful, and has now put up a "no camping" sign so they can be moved on.

"The other day, I came in and there were cigarette butts wedged under the door," she said. "If the store catches fire, then everything we've been working for ... goes up in flames — that would be devastating."

Shelter SA chief executive Dr Alice Clark said a lack of affordable private rentals and jobs was driving the increase.

"The emergency accommodation that we have is usually full, so we probably could do with more," Dr Clark said.

She said establishing housing targets that SA must meet under a national housing and homelessness agreement between states would be the first step towards change.

Last week, rough sleepers in Sydney's Martin Place were forced to dismantle their tent city and move on.

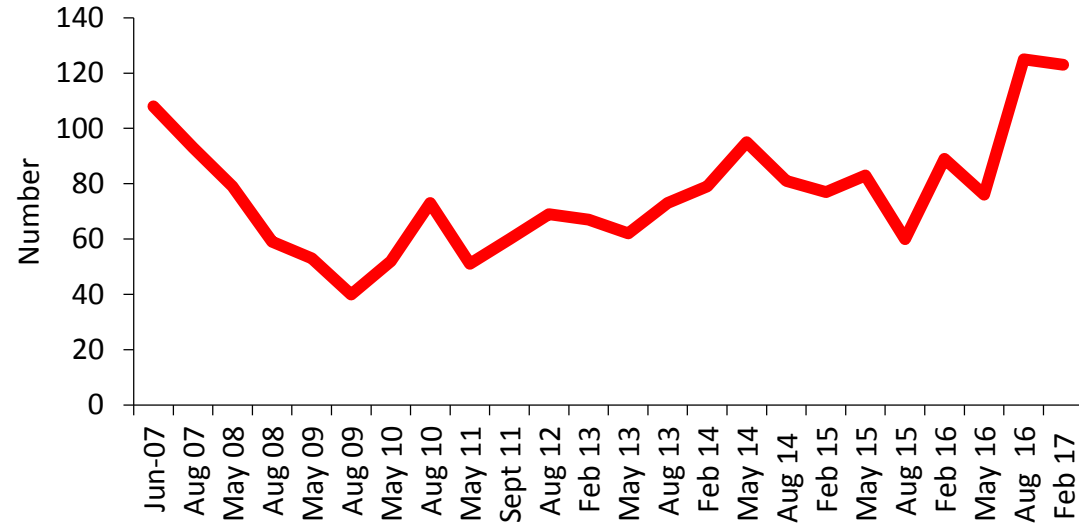
Another East End business owner, Steve Maras, said it was a "worrying sign" and someone needed to take responsibility.

"There's no reason why we, collectively with local, state and federal government, can't actually address the problem and help these people," he said.

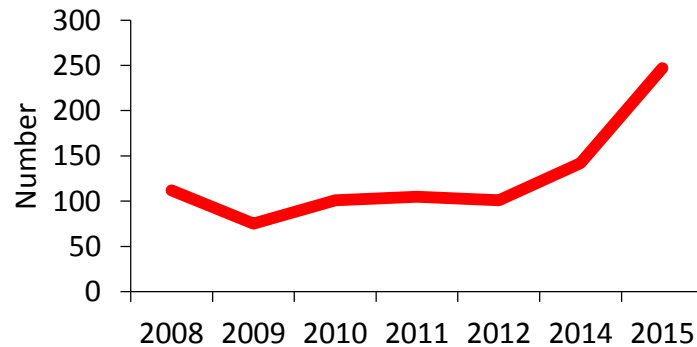
Social Housing Minister Zoe Bettison said the State Government was spending \$64.8 million of homelessness this financial year.

Rough sleeping

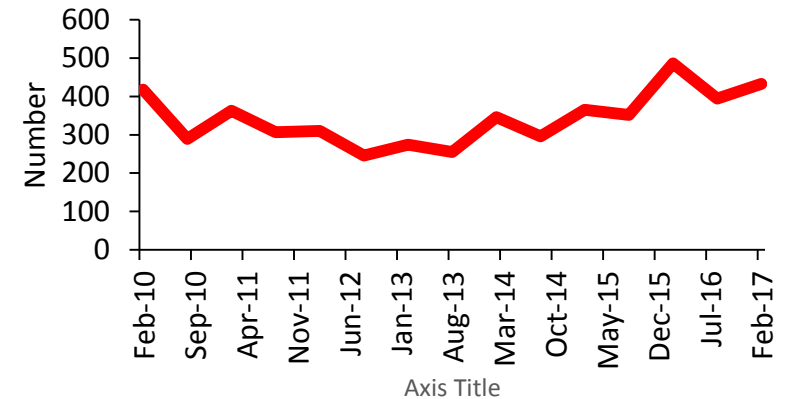
Adelaide



Melbourne



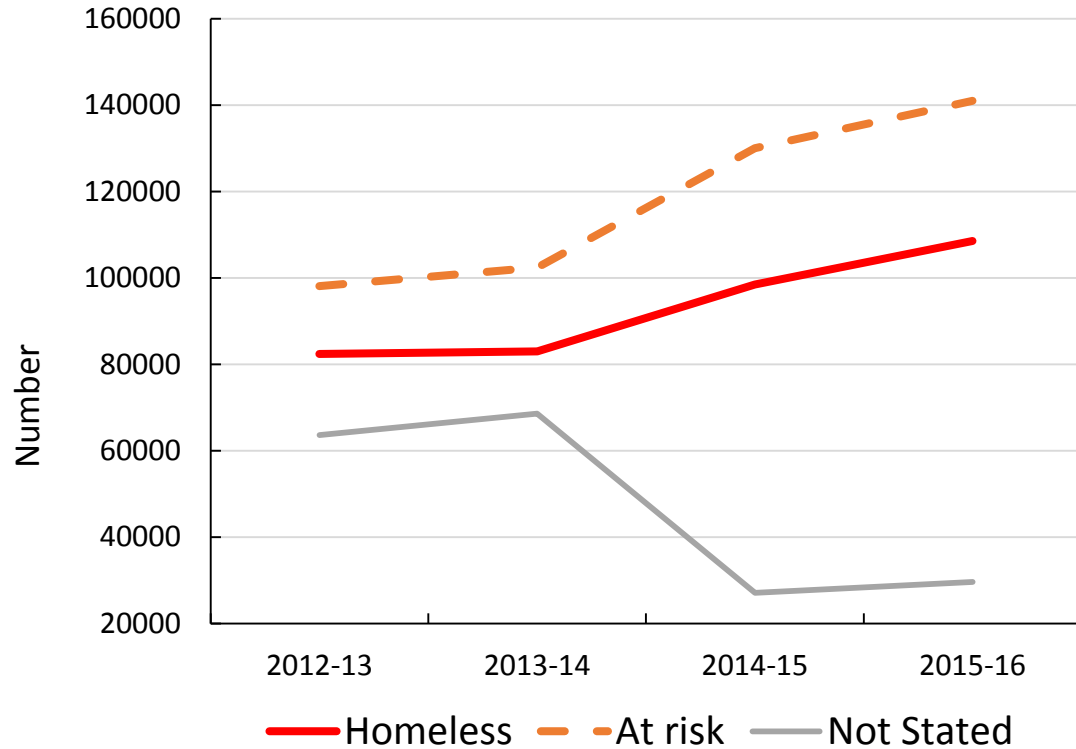
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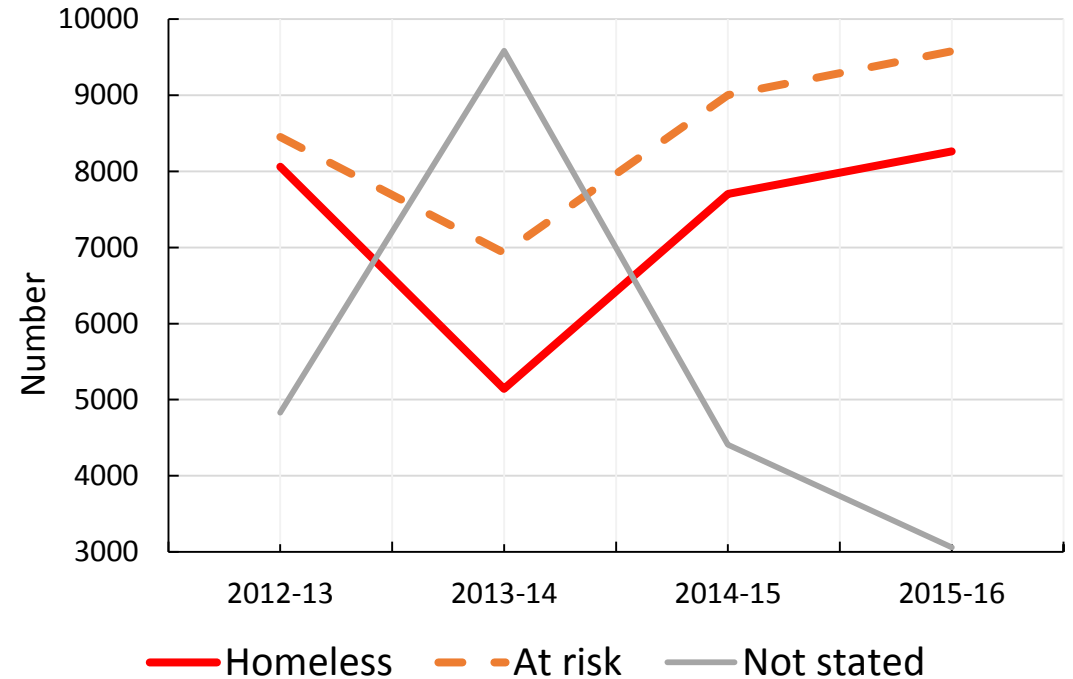
Specialist Homelessness Services Data

Clients, by housing situation at first presentation, 2012-13 to 2015-16

Australia



South Australia



Total no. of clients			
2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
244,176	254,001	255,656	279,196

Total no. of clients			
2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
12,476	21,665	21,116	20,898

Older women have no place to call home

CLARISSA BYE
DI MATTSOON

RISING divorce rates, rocketing rents and the gender pay gap have combined to create a new homeless epidemic in which women in their 50s and 60s are the victims.

Social workers warn Australia faces a generational "tsunami" of this demographic in coming years as a lack of superannuation, casual jobs and high-priced housing take their toll.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports the number of homeless older women seeking help has risen 44 per cent since the collection began in 2011-12. Close to 10,000 older women ac-

cessed these services in the past financial year.

Charities say the increasing number of older women arriving at homeless shelters have led "traditional" lives, been housewives or worked part time, but with the death of a partner or divorce, are bewildered to find themselves virtually on the streets.

Domestic violence, a lack of superannuation and more casual jobs have also been blamed for driving the phenomena, social workers say. Catherine House chief executive Linda Matthews said some inquiries from this age group include women facing domestic violence and others with mental health problems.

"For a growing amount of women that age, they might have finally decided to leave," she said.

"If they have suffered effects of domestic violence over longer period of time, it has a profound effect.

"It can be really hard to leave after living with abuse for a long time hoping it will get better.

"They also don't have the same employment options, and less time ... in the rest of their lives to work to gain security for their old age."

Mark Henley from Uniting Communities said housing affordability for women leaving abusive relationships is a challenge.

"There is clear evidence of an increase in calls for help from older people, and women, particularly seeking crisis accommodation over summer," he said.

"Women over 50 often haven't experienced this before, and reporting is definitely on the rise."

Newly emerging group: first time homelessness amongst older people, particularly women

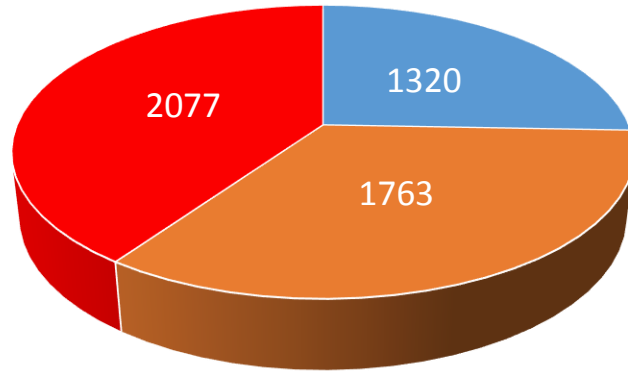
- Nationally 20% increase in homelessness for women aged 55 years+ between 2006-2011 censuses; 818 people in SA
- Nationally SHS data 2015-16 – older people 8% of all homeless clients BUT numbers increased by 44% over 5 years and increase for this age group greater than all other age groups
- 83% increase in numbers women aged 50+ couch surfing over last 4 years;
- 75% increase in women aged 55+ sleeping in cars
- S.A., 2015-16, 5.5 per cent (1152 persons) of people accessing Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) were aged 55 years and over.
- S.A. 2016 data: 4900 low income older people aged 65 years+ at risk of homelessness (paying 30%+ income in rent (907 households 50% income in rent)

note a rise in the number of older women seeking shelter.

Picture: TRICIA WATKINSON

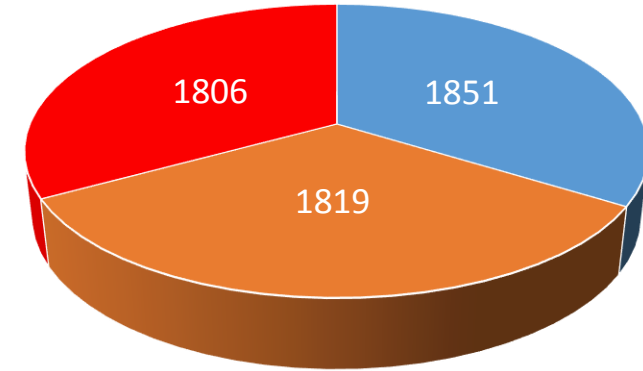
SHS: Clients housing situation at first presentation, Homelessness

no shelter/improvised dwelling



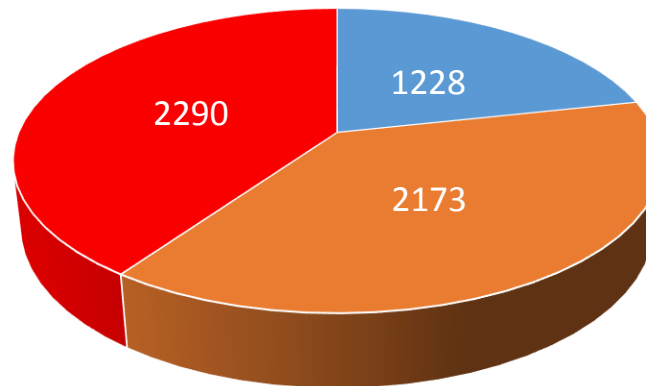
■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-16

short term crisis accommodation



■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-16

couch surfing



■ 2013-14 ■ 2014-15 ■ 2015-16

SHS: Clients reasons for seeking assistance

Reasons	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		3 year % change in number
	No.	% of all reasons	No.	% of all reasons	No.	% of all reasons	
Financial reasons	4687	21.6	4737	22.4	4692	22.4	0.1%
Domestic violence	6368	29.4	6606	31.3	6953	33.3	9%
Housing crisis	6643	30.7	12514	34.0	12842	37.5	93%

SHS: Clients main reason for seeking assistance

Main Reason	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		3 year % change in number
	No.	% of all reasons	No.	% of all reasons	No.	% of all reasons	
Financial reasons	1646	8.0	1467	6.9	1363	6.5	-17.1%
Domestic violence	5022	23.0	5273	25.0	5393	25.8	7.4%
Housing crisis	4698	22.0	5122	24.3	5712	27.3	21.6%

SHS: Clients with closed support by housing situation at first presentation and at end of support, 2015-16

	No shelter or improvised/inadequate dwelling	Short term temporary accommodation	Couch surfer with no accommodation	Public/private housing	Institutional
No shelter or improvised/inadequate dwelling (1105 clients)	393	147	70	485	10
Short term temporary accom (1006 clients)	27	408	58	473	40
Couch surfer with no accom (2012 clients)	40	144	809	1088	20

Conclusions

Despite increased policy focus, government funding and the dedication of the homelessness sector, the incidence of homelessness appears to be increasing.

The SHS data is likely to be an undercount of the state of homelessness in Australia.

The indicators moving forward (ongoing housing affordability issues, decline in public and community housing and increasing waiting lists; depressed state economy, unemployment and casualisation of workforce; and ongoing social issues such as family breakdown, domestic and family violence, discrimination in the housing market) suggests this situation will only worsen over the coming decade.

Is it time for something different, a new approach?