

Shining the Light on Homelessness

Digby Hughes
Policy and Research Officer



Homelessness?

- People don't choose to become homeless – it is not a life style choice. Being homeless is being without: without shelter, without resources, without support, without recognition, without power to influence society.



Who is Homeless?

- At the time of the 2006 Census, it was estimated that there were 27 374 people homeless in NSW.
- 58% of the homeless were in the younger age groups (under 35), 42% were aged 35 or older.

Who is Homeless?

➤ Of this group

- 28% were staying in boarding houses,
- 40% were staying with friends and relatives,
- 13% were sleeping rough and
- 19% were staying in services funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

Understanding the homelessness experience

Australia has one of the most advanced homelessness data collection programs in the western world, allowing for an accurate picture of the 19% of the homeless population in SAAP. This data identifies some of the key factors impacting on homeless people.

SAAP data 2006 / 07

It is estimated that SAAP services in NSW supported 25,950 clients during the twelve-month period in 2006-2007. Some of these individuals returned to services two or three times over the year so that services actually supported 40,900 people on separate occasions over the year.

- Male (42%)
- Female (52.9%)

SAAP data 2006 / 07 cont...

➤ **Most common reasons for homelessness in NSW**

- Domestic and family violence (21.4%)
- Problematic drug, alcohol, substance abuse (13.9%)
- Relationship/family breakdown (10.2%)
- Financial difficulty (10.2%)

The most common reasons for homelessness

Male alone, aged under 25	Relationship/family breakdown (17.2%) Time out from family (12.1%) Financial difficulty (11.4%)
Male alone, aged 25 or over	Drug/alcohol/substance abuse (34.6%) Emergency accommodation ended (11.5%)
Female alone, aged under 25	Relationship/family breakdown (20.1%) Financial difficulty (15%)
Female alone, aged 25 or over	Domestic and family violence (39.8%) Drug/alcohol/substance abuse (12.6%)
Couple with no children	Financial difficulty (17.7%) Eviction, asked to leave (13.8%) Emergency accommodation ended (12.2%)
Couple with children	Financial difficulty (20.2%) Eviction/asked to leave (20.1%)
Male with children	Relationship/family breakdown (17.5%) Financial difficulty (14.6%)
Female with children	Domestic and family violence (55.2%) Relationship/family breakdown (8.3%)

Where to?

- Green Paper
- White Paper
- Homelessness Framework
- NAHA
- Ha Ha