



MEDIA RELEASE

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Counting the Homeless: 105,000 is too many

Today's Australian Bureau of Statistics release, 'Counting the Homeless 2006' has reported an overall increase in the number of people who are homeless by 5,000

Homelessness Australia, the peak national body for homelessness support services, had suspected an increase. The ABS results send a clear message for the Federal Government's Homelessness White Paper, due later this year, that we need to:

- increase funding for early intervention to prevent people becoming homeless;
- increase funding for homeless support services; and
- increase funding for pathways out of homelessness.

The Census show that early intervention programs work. Youth homelessness (ages 12 to 18) decreased over 20% since 2001. This is most likely due to programs aimed at this age group such as Reconnect, an early intervention program for young people. "Resources for programs like this have been shown to have an impact on homelessness", said Simon Smith, Executive Officer.

However the report also shows that more needs to be done in a range of areas to better respond to homelessness. For example 'Counting the Homeless' also reported that almost 27,000 Australian families experienced homelessness, a 17% increase since the last Census. "That is a huge shame for this country," said Mr Smith. "Instead of leading a normal life working, attending school, having a home, a bed and socialising, they are dealing with critical life issues."

"There is usually no 1 reason why people experience homelessness thus no 1 solution," says Mr Smith. "Issues such as unemployment, addiction, mental health and domestic and family violence need to be addressed. More funding is needed across the board", he said.

"We look forward to working with the Government over the coming weeks to develop a strong set of recommendations that will respond to the increase in homelessness", said Mr Smith.

For further information and comment:

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