



MEDIA RELEASE

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PEAK BODY CAUTIOUSLY WELCOMES RELEASE OF REVIEW

Homelessness Australia welcomes the release of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Discussion paper on proposed changes to the methodology used to analyse the count of people experiencing homelessness on Census night.

“We are pleased that the ABS have released the findings of their review of the methodology and now the homelessness services and other interested people can consider the implications of assumptions and findings and provide their expert feedback,” Homelessness Australia Chairperson Narelle Clay said today.

The census date of 9th of August provides a point in time count of national, state/territory and regional homelessness statistics once every five years. Other valuable data comes from Specialist Homelessness Services through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare which provides information on the numbers of people who are supported by Specialist Homelessness Services over the course of the year. Other research also enhances our understanding of homelessness in this country.

“The Census night data provides a critically important point in time count of homelessness in Australia. It is immensely valuable in helping us to understand the overall level of homelessness in Australia as well as homelessness in particular regions,” Homelessness Australia’s Chief Executive Officer Nicole Lawder said.

Homelessness Australia supports processes that assist us to better understand the nature and extent of homelessness in this country and that support and lead to action to address the problem. However counting homeless people in the Census is a complex task and there is potential for some over-counting but also for significant under-counting particularly amongst vulnerable groups such as young people, women and children escaping domestic violence and Aboriginal people.

“The views of those experts working in the field will be valuable to the ABS in making a final determination about the most valid and credible way to analyse the Census data. Homelessness Australia encourages all interested parties to read the review paper and make comment,” Narelle Clay said.

Homelessness Australia and Services all over the country are working closely with Government to meet the target of halving homelessness by 2020.

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