



## MEDIA RELEASE

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**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9AM AEST, THURS 9 JULY**

### **The numbers are in – now its time to see the State Plans**

Homelessness Australia welcomes the release today of new data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare providing an up-to-date picture of homelessness in every state and territory of Australia.

The trend *Counting the Homeless* state and territory reports document is grim. Nationally 105,000 people were counted as homeless. With the economic downturn likely to hit the community over the coming 12 months, there is a real risk this figure is likely to increase further still.

Homelessness is highest in NSW (27,400) and Queensland (20,500). But the rate of homelessness per population is highest in the NT, where 250 people were homeless for every 10,000 people living in the Territory.

“State and Territory figures released today show that the some of the highest rates of homelessness are in regional Australia”, said Homelessness Australia Chairperson Narelle Clay. “This is no surprise to people living and working in areas outside of the capital cities. It does give strong evidence of the need to put resources and energy into the regions if we are to successfully reduce homelessness. Access to affordable housing and to government services is just as important for these people as it is for those living in big cities”.

“Now that the numbers are out, it is time for every state and territory to make public their plans to reduce the numbers of homeless people counted in this census in line with the White Paper reforms”, Homelessness Australia Executive Officer Simon Smith said today.

Announced last December, the Homelessness White Paper sets out a policy vision to halve homelessness by 2020. But the agreements between the Commonwealth and the states and territories setting out how they will progress the reforms, have yet to made public.

“Today’s figures reaffirm the scale of this national problem. Six months after the White Paper reforms were announced, it is now time for state and territory governments to make public how they plan to improve policy and program responses to homelessness,” Mr Smith said.

“There are many measures states and territories can take in cooperation with the community, homelessness services and people experiencing homelessness to halve homelessness. Lets make the most of this once in a generation opportunity”.

#### **For comment:**

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