



2001

2050.0

CORRIGENDUM
AUSTRALIAN CENSUS ANALYTIC PROGRAM

COUNTING THE HOMELESS

EMBARGO: 11:30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUES 9 DEC 2003

C O R R I G E N D U M

An error has been detected in the age breakdown of the homeless population in table 3 on page 4 and in table 5.1 on page 37. The error has occurred in the number of people aged 25-34 years who are homeless. The error does not affect the total or percentage values in the table.

This corrigendum contains replacement pages for 2050.0.

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Views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Where quoted or used, they should be clearly attributed to the author.

I N Q U I R I E S

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3 AGE BREAKDOWN OF HOMELESS POPULATION

Years	no.	%
Under 12	9 941	10
12–18	26 060	26
19–24	10 113	10
25–34	16 567	17
35–44	12 992	13
45–54	10 349	10
55–64	7 883	8
65 or older	5 995	6
Total	99 900	100

54

Source: Census of Population and Housing, SAAP Client Collection and National Census of Homeless School Students.

7 MALES AND FEMALES

Table 4 (Chapter 5.1) shows the number of males and females in different segments of the homeless population on census night. Almost three-quarters (72%) of boarding house residents were male compared with one-quarter (28%) who were female. This accords with the findings from the 1996 census (Chamberlain 1999, p. 33). Just over 60% of people in improvised dwellings were male. Homeless people sleeping out in the capital cities are more likely to be male, but the occupants of improvised dwellings in rural locations are more likely to be families or couples with both males and females. Men outnumbered women staying with other households by 53%–47%. However, women outnumbered men in SAAP by a similar margin. There is a significant sector of services for victims of domestic violence, and because of the perceived vulnerability of homeless women, their access to services is often facilitated. Overall, there were more males in the homeless population (58%–42%), but women are now a substantial minority, compared with 30–40 years ago.

4 SEX BY DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION

	Boarding house (N=22 877)	Friends or relatives (N=48 614)	SAAP (N=14 251)	Improvised dwellings (N=14 158)	All (N=99 900)
	%	%	%	%	%
Males	72	53	47	61	58
Females	28	47	53	39	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Census of Population and Housing, SAAP Client Collection and National Census of Homeless School Students.

The analysis in this monograph has been complicated. This chapter summarises our main findings and this chapter examines the social characteristics of homeless people, beginning with the age and gender profiles of the population. Then we examine the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Finally, we estimate whether most people have a long or a short-term problem with homelessness. This is a difficult task, because there is no temporal information on most groups in the population.

5.1 AGE AND GENDER

There is information on age for all groups in the population, but we have to estimate the number of males and females aged 12–18 years who were outside of the census net. We know that 55% of homeless school students were female (Chamberlain and MacKenzie 2002, p. 19). We also know that the census identified 1,500 young people staying with other households and 52% were female. These figures were used to estimate the overall gender composition of young people missed by the census.

5.1 AGE BREAKDOWN OF HOMELESS POPULATION

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Source: 2001 Census of Population and Housing, SAAP Client Collection and National Census of Homeless School Students.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was thought that the homeless population was disproportionately made up of middle aged and older men (de Hoog 1972; Jordan 1973/94). For example, Jordan (1973/94, p. 21) reported that there were few teenagers in the population and that 80% of the men in his sample were aged 35 years or older. Table 5.1 shows that the situation is now very different. Just over half (54%) of the population were aged 25 years or older, including one-quarter (24%) who were 45 years or over. However, 36% were aged 12–24 years, and another 10% were accompanying children under 12 years.

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