

# Creating Room In the Boom Homeless Persons Week Survey

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Shelter WA  
October 2008



# Creating Room in the Boom (CRiB) Partners

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- Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS)
- Tenants Advice Service WA (TAS)
- Community Housing Coalition of WA (CHCWA)
- Shelter WA



# Creating Room in the Boom Campaign Recommendations

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1. Restore public housing to 6% of total housing;
2. Allocate 15% of all new housing developments for social housing;
3. Legislation to protect tenants from unfair rent hikes, along with other consumer rights; and
4. Increase the number of crisis beds in homeless services by 50% and fund services to meet the need.

(Tenants Advice Service 2008)

# Definition of homelessness (ABS)

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## Primary homelessness

- People without conventional accommodation (ie rough sleepers);

## Secondary homelessness

- People who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another including SAAP services, hostels and refuges, staying with others (couch surfing); and,

## Tertiary homelessness

- People who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis (ABS cat. no. 2050.0)



# The aim of the survey

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- to canvas public opinion to inform and support the CRiB campaign
- to explore the views and experiences of a cross section of the WA population about homelessness
- to seek solutions about what can be done to address homelessness; and
- to raise awareness of the definitions of homelessness.

# Perception and Opinions about Homelessness in Western Australia and the Need for Government Response

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## Method

- During *Homeless Persons Week 2008* (4-8 August) in Perth
- 5 minutes, anonymous, at random
- Photograph and media permission
- Provide practical service information



# Survey questions

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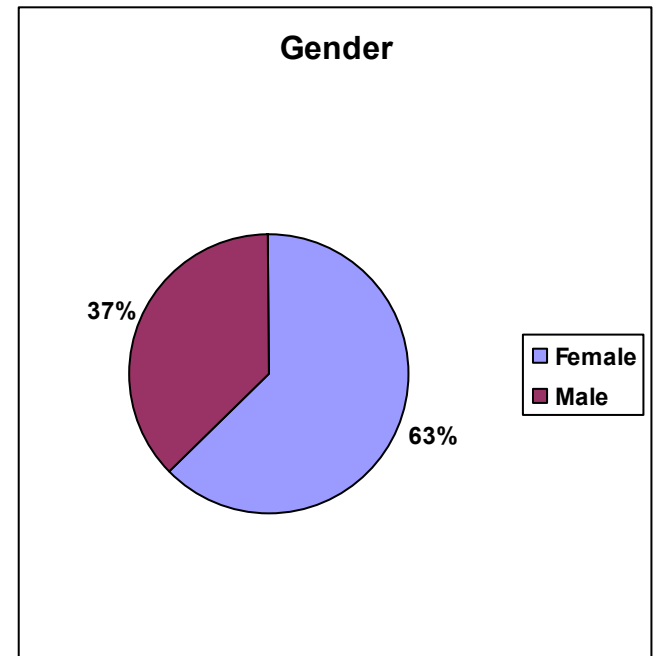
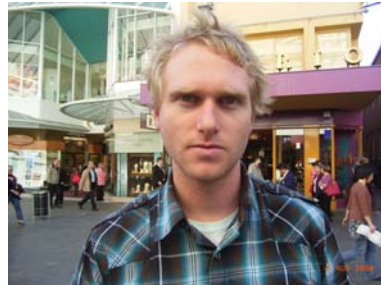
The survey questions could be grouped in 4 categories:

1. Demographic questions – gender, age range and current housing tenure;
2. Experience of homelessness - personal experience and that known to have been experienced by friends and relatives of the interviewee;
3. Perceptions of the severity of homelessness; and
4. Opinions and suggestions about the requirement for government action if any

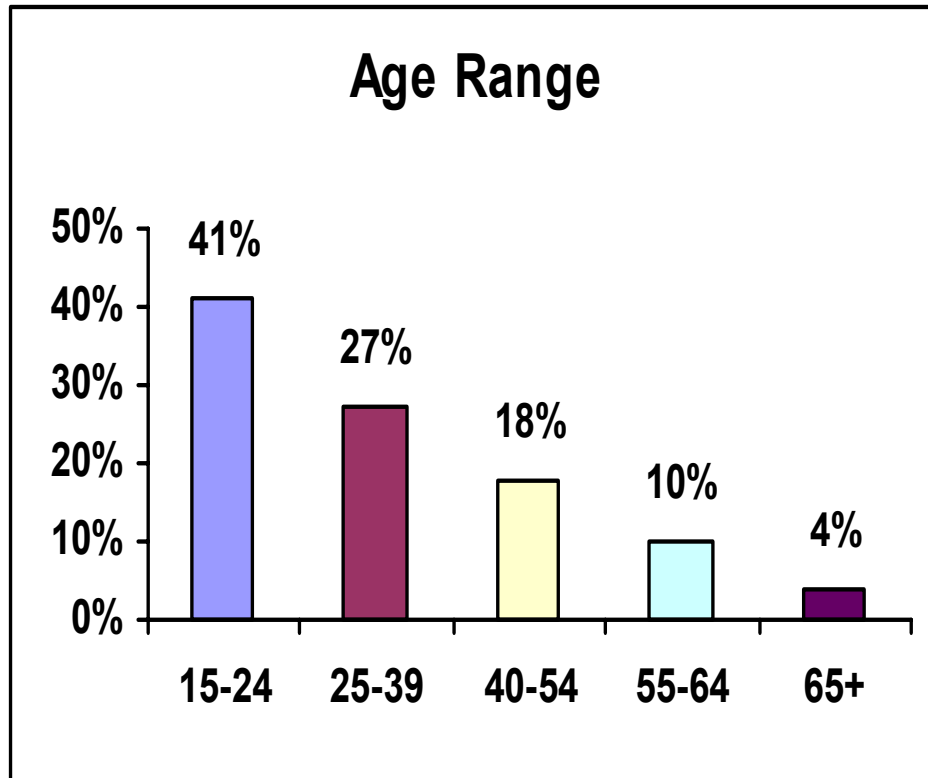
# About participants of the survey

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- A total of 91 respondents
- 63% (n=57) female
- 37% (n= 34) male

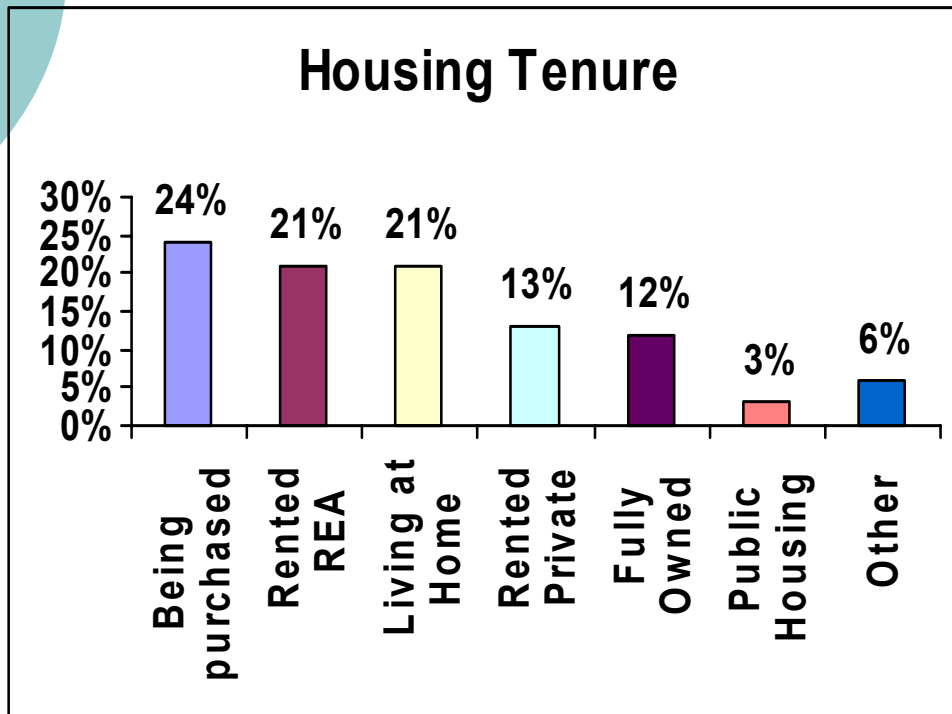


# Age range of participants



Age range (years)	Persons (n)
15-24	37
25-39	25
40-54	16
55-64	9
65	4

# Housing Tenure of the participants



Tenure type	Persons (n)
Being Purchased	22
Rented Real Estate Agent	19
Living at Home	19
Rented Private	12
Fully Owned	11
Public Housing	3
Other	5

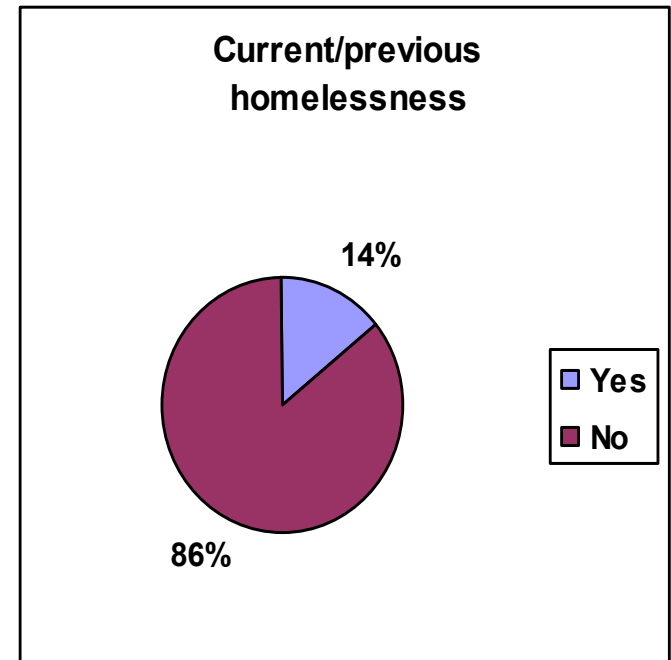
# Current/Past homelessness (self)

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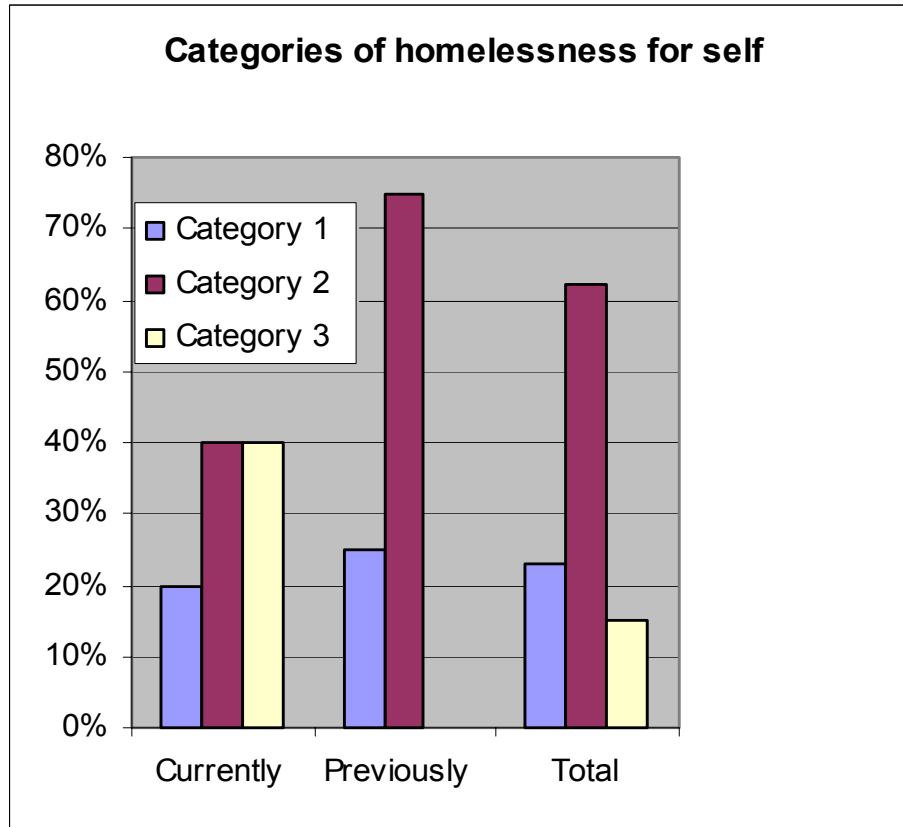
Are you currently/or  
have you been  
homeless in the  
past 5 years?

Yes: 14% (n=13)

No: 86% (n=88)



# Current/Past homelessness (self)



Homeless category	Current	Past	Total
1 (primary)	1	2	3
2 (secondary)	2	6	8
3 (tertiary)	2	0	2
Total	5	8	13

# Homelessness (self) cont.

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Duration of homelessness

Current

Average: 23.2 months

Median: 10 months

Previous

Average: 4.6 months

Median: 4 months

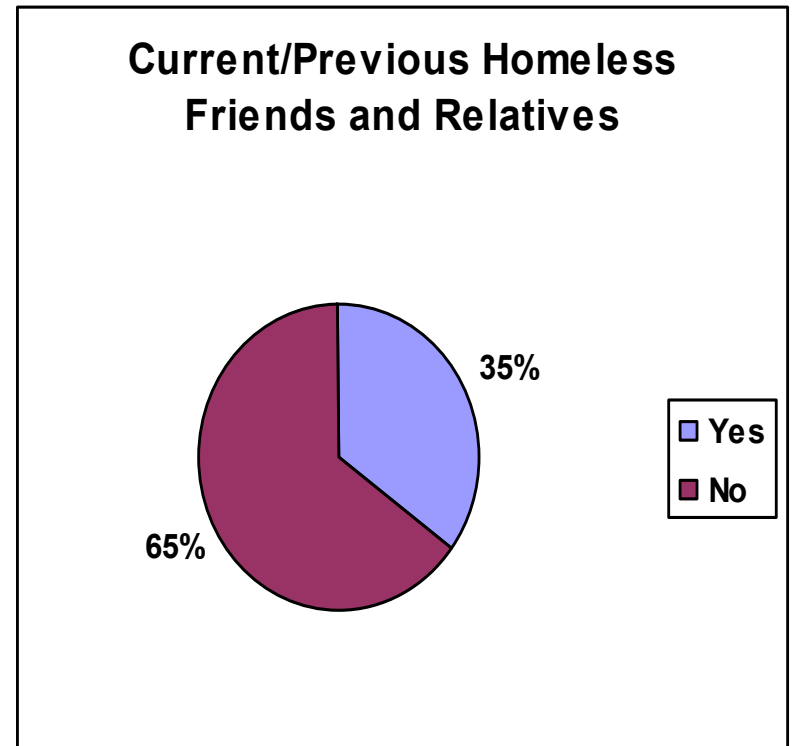
# Current/past homelessness (Friends and Relatives)

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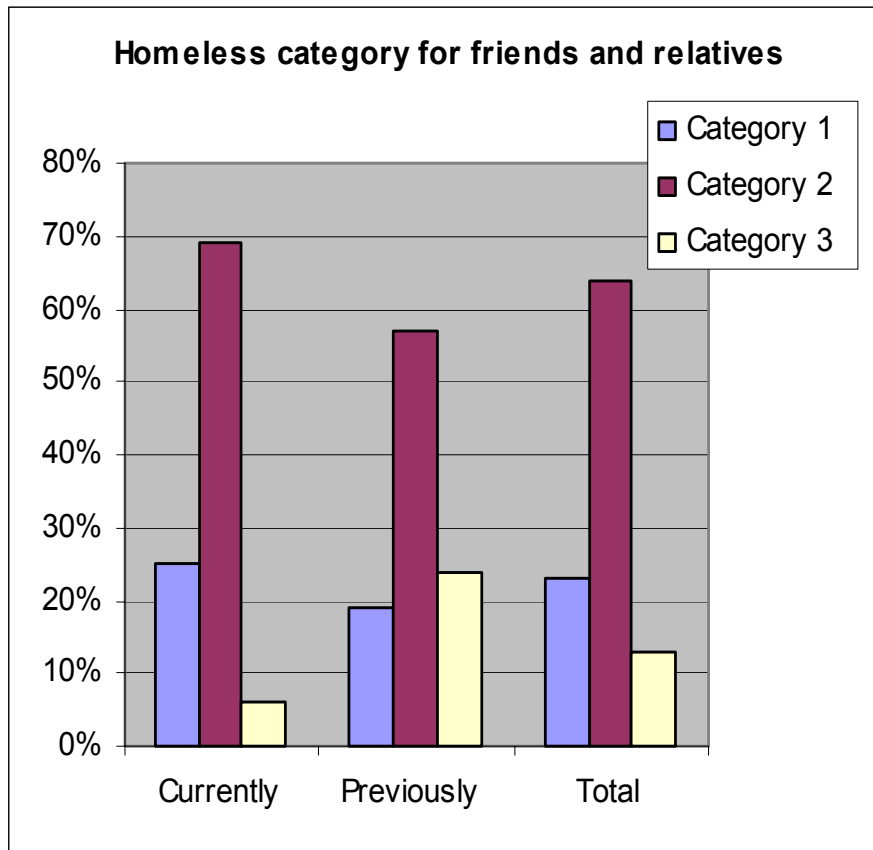
Is anyone you know  
currently/have  
they been  
homeless in the  
past 5 years?

Yes: 35% (n=32)

No: 65% (n=59)



# Current/past homelessness (Friends and Relatives) cont.



Homeless category	C	P	T
1 (primary)	8	4	12
2 (secondary)	22	12	34
3 (tertiary)	2	5	7
Total	32	21	53

# Current/past homelessness (Friends and relatives) cont.

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## Duration of homelessness

### Current

Average: 31 months

Median: 3 months

### Previous

Average: 9.3 months

Median: 6 months

# Is Homelessness a Problem in WA?

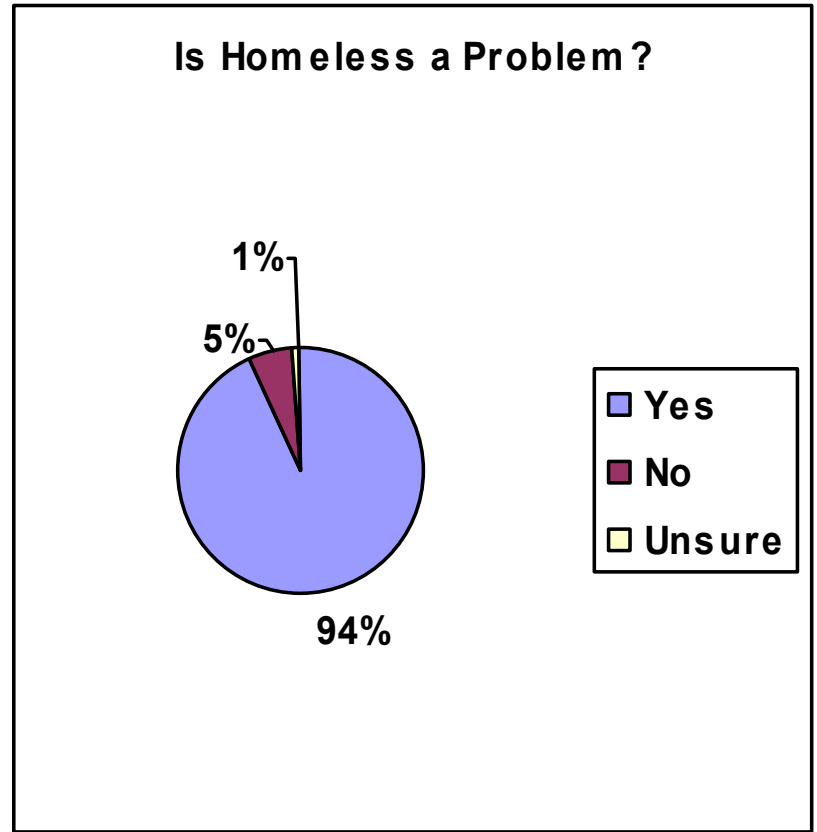
Yes: 94% (n=85)

No: 5% (n=5)

Unsure: 1% (n=1)

If yes, how do you rate  
(1-5) the severity of  
homelessness?

1. Extremely bad
2. Very bad
3. Quite bad
4. Bit of a problem
5. Not much of problem

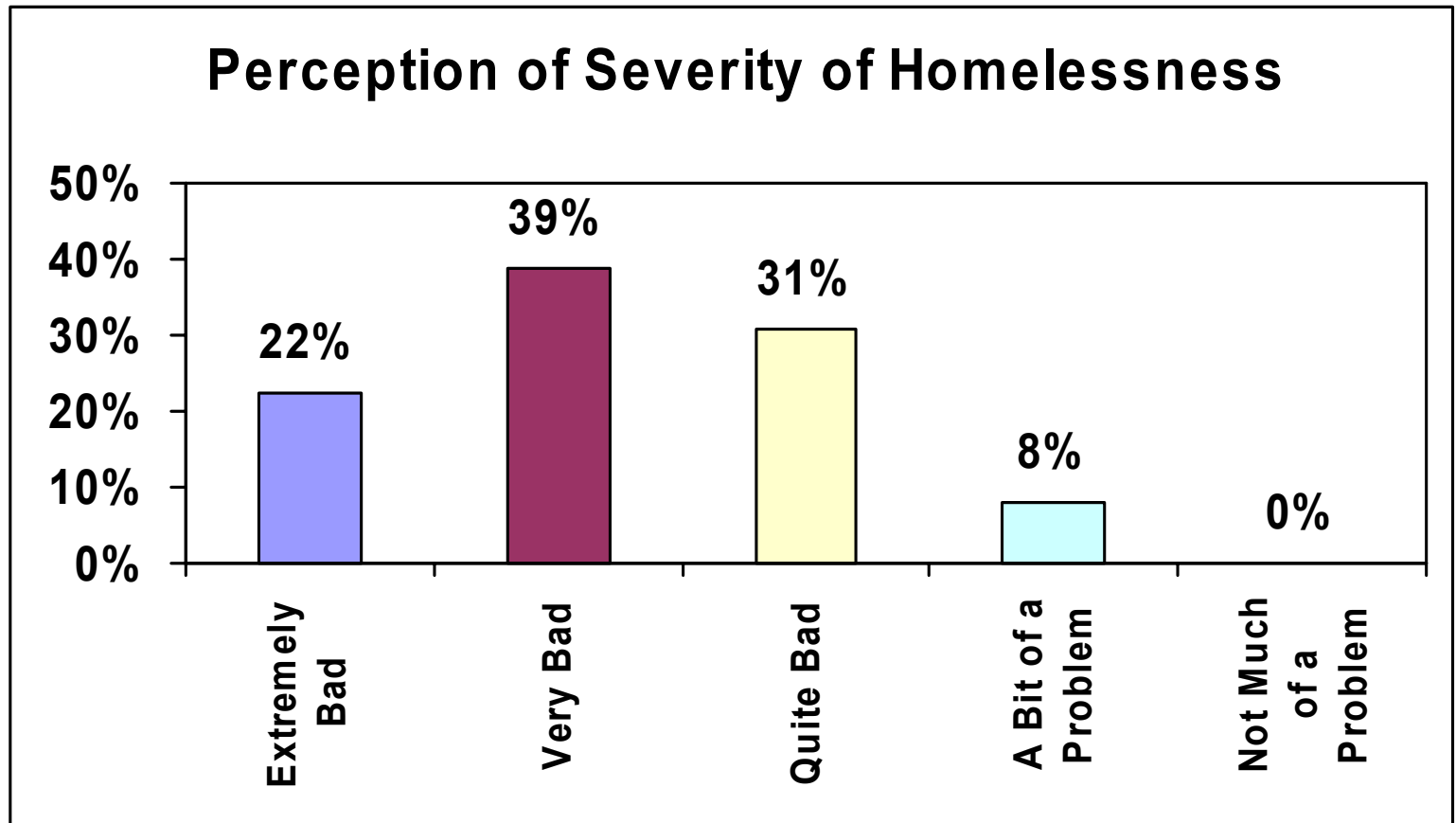


# Perception of the Severity of Homelessness

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<b>Is Homelessness Problem in WA?</b>	<b>Yes (n)</b>	<b>No (n)</b>	<b>Unsure (n)</b>
<b>1. Extremely Bad</b>	<b>19</b>	-	-
<b>2. Very Bad</b>	<b>33</b>	-	-
<b>3. Quite Bad</b>	<b>26</b>	-	-
<b>4. A Bit of a Problem</b>	<b>7</b>	-	-
<b>5. Not Much of the Problem</b>	<b>0</b>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

# Perception of the Severity of Homelessness



# Government responsibility for homelessness

Should Commonwealth, State and Local governments do something to address the issue of homelessness?

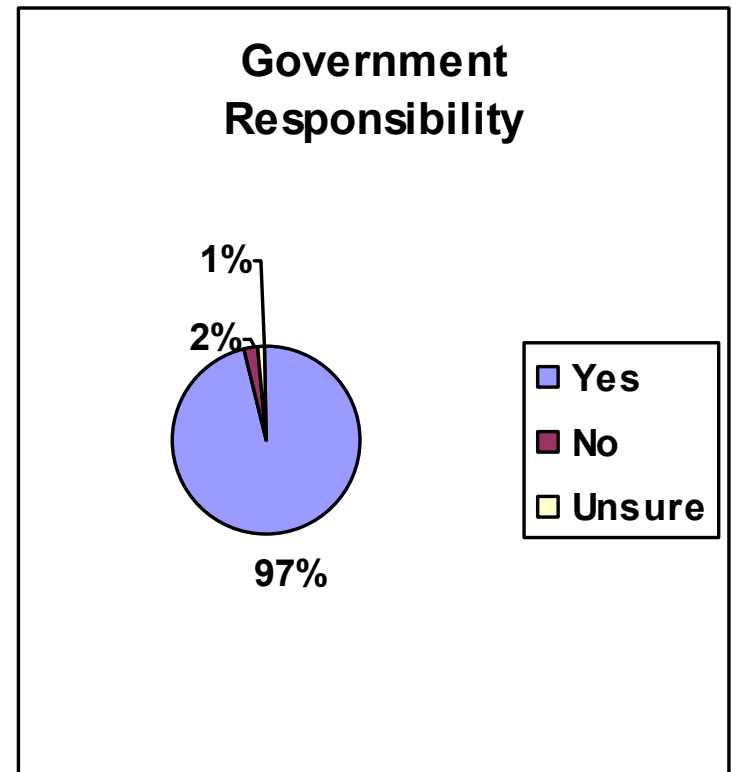
Yes: 97% (88)

No: 2% (2)

Unsure: 1% (1)

If yes, what should they do?

- Qualitative answers
- Quantitative answers
  - CRiB Campaign 7 Recommendations



# CRiB Campaign 7 Recommendations

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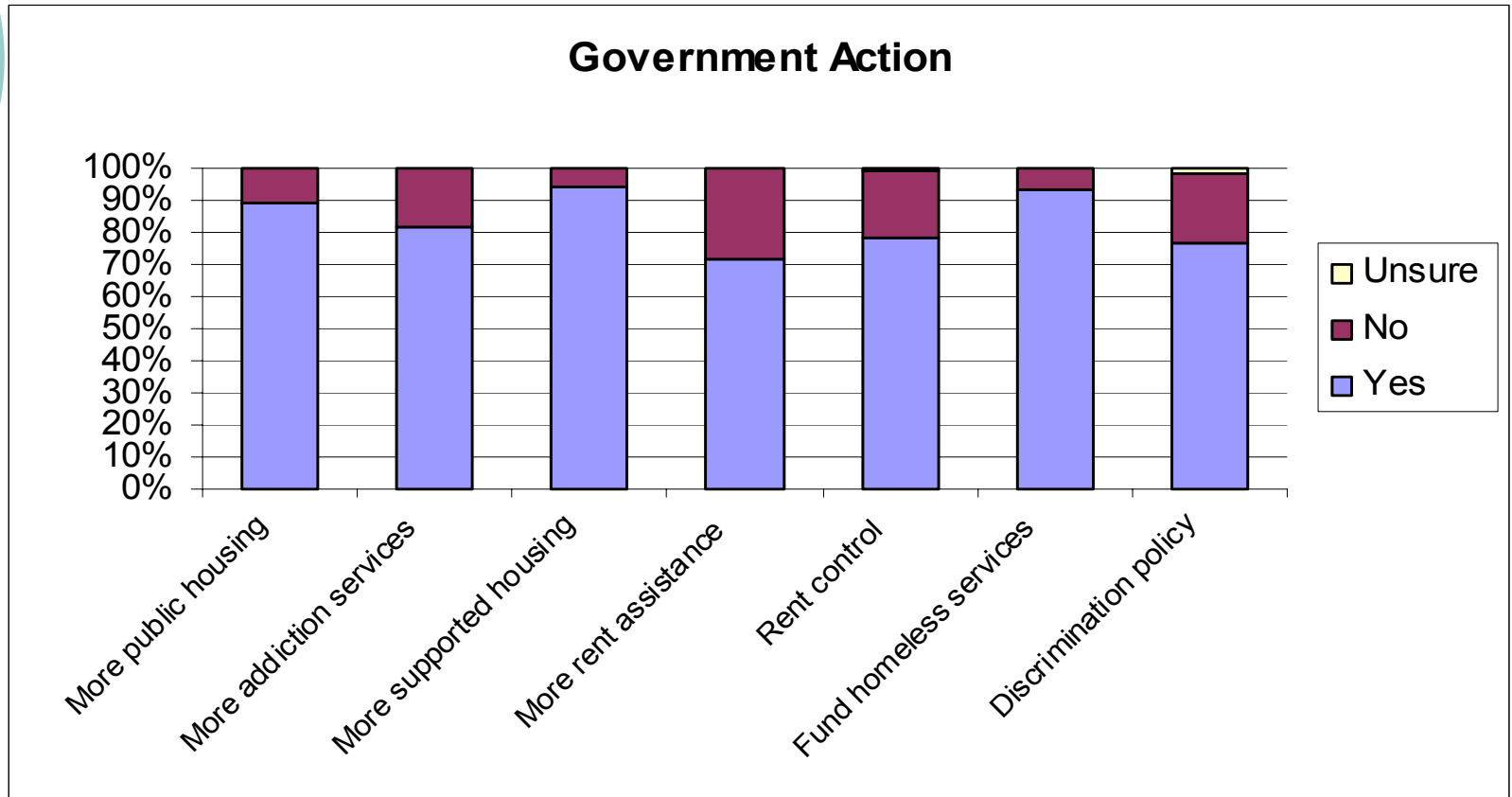
1. Build more public housing;
2. Provide more drug, alcohol and gambling addiction services for people to overcome these problems;
3. Provide more supported housing for people with mental health problems and other disabilities;
4. Give more rent assistance to people on Centrelink so they can afford to pay the rent;
5. Limit the amount landlords can put the rent up;
6. Fund more homeless services; and
7. Impose penalties on landlords for discrimination against Aboriginal people and those from other cultures.

# Government actions CRiB Campaign Recommendations

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<b>Government actions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Unsure</b>
<b>Build more public housing</b>	78	10	0
<b>Provide more drug, alcohol and gambling addiction services</b>	72	16	0
<b>Provide more supported housing for people with mental health problems and other disabilities</b>	83	5	0
<b>Give more rent assistance to people on Centrelink benefit</b>	63	25	0
<b>Limit the amount landlords can put the rent up</b>	69	18	1
<b>Fund more homeless services</b>	82	6	0
<b>Impose penalties on landlords for discriminating against Aboriginal people and those from other cultures</b>	68	18	2

# Government responsibility for homelessness



# Key findings and recommendations

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The majority of people surveyed

- believe homelessness is a problem in WA (94%; n=85)
- believe Government is responsible for addressing the issue of homelessness (97%; n=88)
- support CRiB Recommendations (72% - 94%)

# Key findings and recommendations

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## Suggestions to government

### 1. Provision of housing

- More affordable housing
- More crisis/emergency accommodation
- More hostels/boarding houses
- Build granny flats in backyards
- Supported housing for people with dual diagnosis (mental health and alcohol and drug issues)

# Key findings and recommendations

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## Suggestions to government

### 2. Provision of services

- More services for families, youth and Indigenous people
- Rehabilitation for people with mental health issues
- Outreach and community support
- Holistic/inter-agency approach
- Increase workers and resources to homeless services
- Educate people about rental contract
- Teach young people how to budget

# Key findings and recommendations

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Suggestions to government

## 3. Policy responses

- Education, training and capacity building
- Crown Land control
- Collaboration with the private enterprises to supply affordable housings
- Research on homelessness
- Control living costs

# References

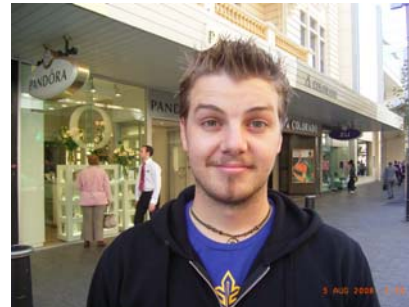
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- Chamberlain, C. and D. MacKenzie. 2008. *Australian census analytic: Counting the homeless Australia 2006*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/57393A13387C425DCA2574B900162DF0/\\$File/20500-2008.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/57393A13387C425DCA2574B900162DF0/$File/20500-2008.pdf) (accessed September 4, 2006).
- Tenants Advice Service. 2008. *Creating Room in the Boom Campaign: Background brief overview and recommendations*. <http://www.taswa.org/crib/2008/pdf/2008-crib-overview.pdf> (accessed September 22, 2008).

# Special thank you to...

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- Bronwyn Kitching (Shelter WA)
- Tenants Advice Service WA
- Community Housing Coalition of WA
- WA Council of Social Services
- Curtin University Social Work Department
- Survey volunteers  
(Gary Kleyn, Dave Jeavons, Keiko Miyazaki, Heidi Stewart, Heidi Guldbaek, and Ellen Walker)
- Survey Participants





# Shelter WA website

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The report of this survey is on the Shelter WA website:

<http://www.shelterwa.org.au>