

## **No Place Like Home: Homelessness in Western Australia**



Prepared by  
Paul Pendergast,  
December 2004

# No Place Like Home: Homelessness in Western Australia

## Contents

|                                                               |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1: Introduction</b> .....                                  | <b>2</b>  |
| Definition of Homelessness .....                              | 2         |
| <b>2: The Extent of Homelessness in WA</b> .....              | <b>3</b>  |
| Regional Homelessness .....                                   | 4         |
| Regional Distribution by Cultural Background .....            | 6         |
| Supported Accommodation Assistance Program .....              | 6         |
| Overcrowding .....                                            | 7         |
| Homelessness Taskforce .....                                  | 10        |
| <b>3: A Profile of Homeless Households in WA</b> .....        | <b>11</b> |
| Methodology .....                                             | 11        |
| Requests for Accommodation by Method of Contact .....         | 11        |
| Assistance Requested by Type .....                            | 11        |
| Urgency of Request for Assistance .....                       | 12        |
| Type of Housing Required .....                                | 12        |
| Households Experiencing Homelessness .....                    | 12        |
| Homeless People by Age .....                                  | 13        |
| Degrees of Homelessness .....                                 | 14        |
| Who did the Homeless Stay With? .....                         | 14        |
| Income and Housing Affordability .....                        | 14        |
| Access to Rental Housing .....                                | 15        |
| Cultural Background .....                                     | 15        |
| <b>4: Experiencing Homelessness in WA</b> .....               | <b>17</b> |
| Methodology .....                                             | 17        |
| Common Themes .....                                           | 18        |
| What the Agencies Said .....                                  | 18        |
| What the Service Users Said .....                             | 19        |
| Multiple Problems with No One Simple Solution .....           | 19        |
| Solution Starts with a Stable Living Environment .....        | 21        |
| Lack of Exit Points and Appropriate Accommodation .....       | 22        |
| Conclusion .....                                              | 23        |
| <b>5: Conclusion and Recommendations</b> .....                | <b>24</b> |
| Recommendations .....                                         | 25        |
| <b>Appendix 1: Canadian National Occupancy Standard</b> ..... | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Appendix 2: Survey Form and Information</b> .....          | <b>27</b> |

# 1: Introduction

*The objective of Shelter is to implement programmes, develop policy, and provide education directed towards the elimination of homelessness and housing related poverty*

Shelter WA Constitution August 1990

This report is the outcome of a three year project investigating the causes and consequences of homelessness in Western Australia. The project, entitled *A Profile of Households Experiencing Homeless in Western Australia* (Profile), aims to identify changes in the nature of homelessness in WA. This report brings together data from the project with information from a range of other sources.

Section 2 of this report contains an overview of statistical and other information on homelessness in Western Australia presented in a number of recent reports and projects. However, the core of the project is presented in Section 3 of this report. Between June 2001 and March 2004, Shelter WA conducted five surveys of agencies dealing with homeless people, providing information about a total of 412 homeless households. Surveys were conducted in June 2001 (68 respondents), April 2002 (71), September 2002 (98), February 2003 (76), and, March 2004 (99).

In addition to the five quantitative surveys, the report also presents the views of homelessness agencies and the people accessing these agencies directly in a series of interviews. Section 4 outlines and explores the responses from the homelessness agencies to the problem of addressing homelessness and compares this to the experiences of those people who are homeless and in contact with these agencies.

Finally, Section 5 contains a conclusion and set of recommendations based on the findings of the report. The recommendations focus on increasing both the supply of affordable housing and the availability of support options.

## Definition of Homelessness

There are several different definitions of homelessness. This report uses the Australian Bureau of Statistic's definition of homelessness. The definition describes three levels of homelessness, being:

- ▶ **Primary homelessness:** people without conventional accommodation;
- ▶ **Secondary homelessness:** people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another; and,
- ▶ **Tertiary homelessness:** People who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis.<sup>1</sup>

---

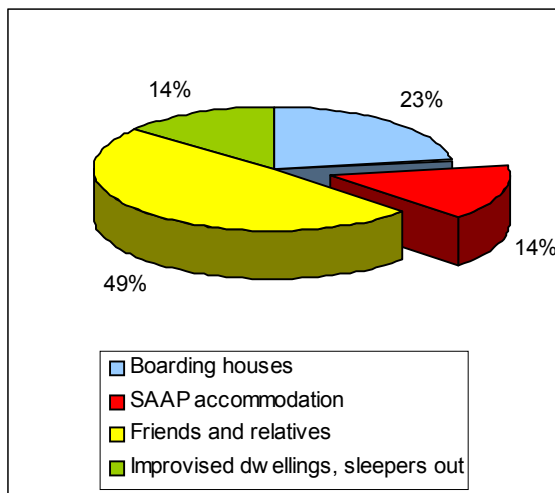
<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau Of Statistics, 2041.0 Occasional Paper: Census Of Population & Housing – Counting The Homeless 1999.

## 2: The Extent of Homelessness in WA

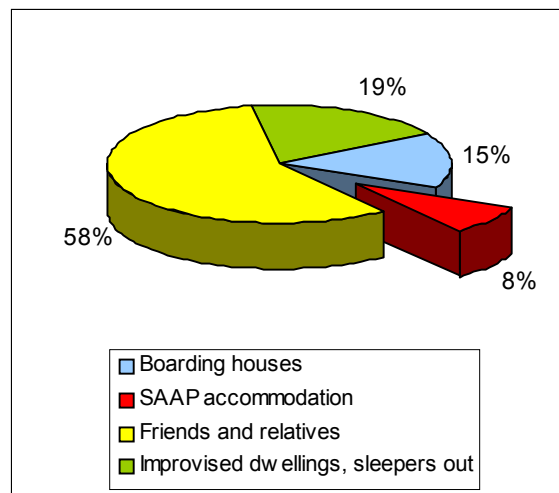
The most comprehensive overview of homelessness in Western Australia is contained in Chamberlain and Mackenzie's, *Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia*. Their analysis reveals that on Census night 2001 there were 99,900 homeless people in Australia. Western Australia (WA) was over represented, accounting for 12% (11,697) of the nation's homeless people but only 10% of its population.<sup>2</sup>

Chamberlain and Mackenzie demonstrate some significant differences between WA and Australia. The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) is Australia's primary response to homelessness. Figure 1 demonstrates that only 8% of WA's homeless people were accommodated in SAAP compared to 14% nationally. Two thirds of homeless people in WA staying temporarily with friends and relatives, compared to half nation-wide. Also of note is the high proportion of improvised dwellings and sleepers out in WA (19%) compared to the national figure (14%).

**Figure 1a:** Australia's homeless population by sector 2001.



**Figure 1b:** Western Australia's homeless population by sector 2001.

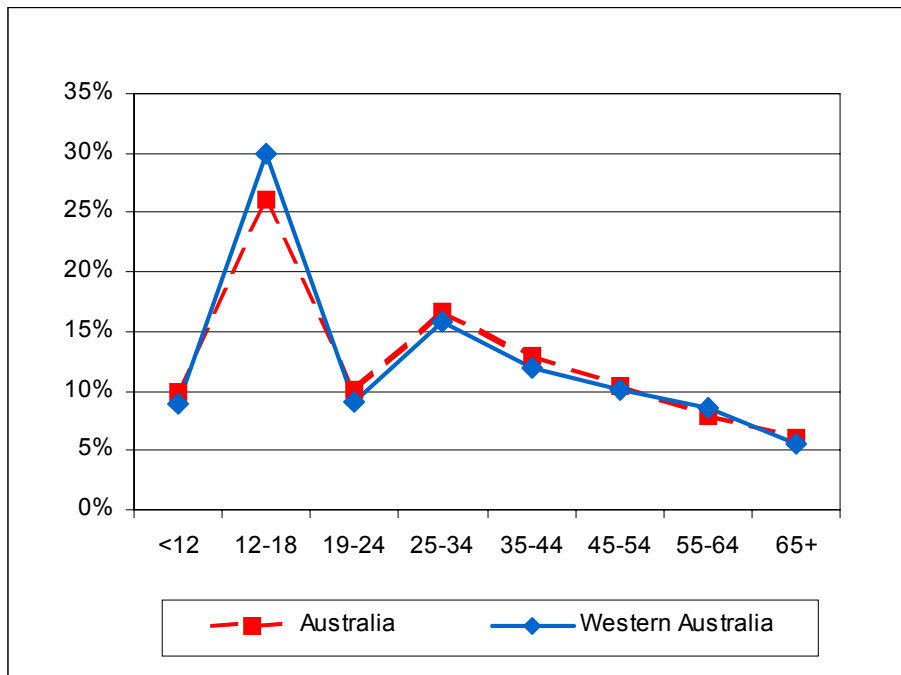


**Source:** Chris Chamberlain, David Mackenzie, *Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia*, Melbourne, 2004

One of the most disturbing aspects of Chamberlain and Mackenzie's analysis is the number of homelessness children. Figure 2 below compares the age profile of the homeless in WA with Australia and demonstrates that children aged under 12 years make up 9% (1,040) of the homeless and 12 and 18 year olds 30% (3,508) and about half are under 25 years.

<sup>2</sup> Chris Chamberlain & David Mackenzie, *Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia*, Melbourne, 2004.

**Figure 2:** Age profile of homeless people Australia and Western Australia.



**Source:** Chris Chamberlain, David Mackenzie, *Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia*, Melbourne, 2004

### Regional Homelessness

While nearly half of all homeless people are located in Perth, the homelessness *rate*<sup>3</sup> increases considerably with remoteness from the metropolitan area. Figure 3 demonstrates that Perth has a homeless rate of 42 per 10,000 compared to the Pilbara 169 and the Kimberley 555. Chamberlain and Mackenzie’s analysis also adds weight to a distinctive pattern identified by Shelter WA, namely that the rate of homelessness increases with remoteness from Perth.<sup>4</sup>

**Perth:** On Census night 2001 the Perth metropolitan area had 5,637 homeless people, a rate of 42 homeless people per 10,000 of the population. Only about a fifth of Perth’s homeless were located in the Central City area (1,262). The largest number of homeless people were in the Fremantle / Rockingham area (1,349), while 1,112 were in the South East (Victoria Park to Armadale) and 1,082 in the North Metropolitan area.

**South West:** The South West (which includes Margaret River) has a homelessness rate of 52 per 10,000, which is 1.2 times the rate for Perth.

**South Eastern:** The South East (which includes Kalgoorlie) rate of homelessness is 116 per 10,000, which is 2.7 times the rate for Perth.

**Central:** The Central Region has a homelessness rate of 221 per 10,000, which is 5.2 times the rate for Perth.

<sup>3</sup> Defined as the number of homeless people per 10,000 residents.

<sup>4</sup> Shelter WA, *Community Forum: Housing Indigenous People in Regional WA*, October 2003

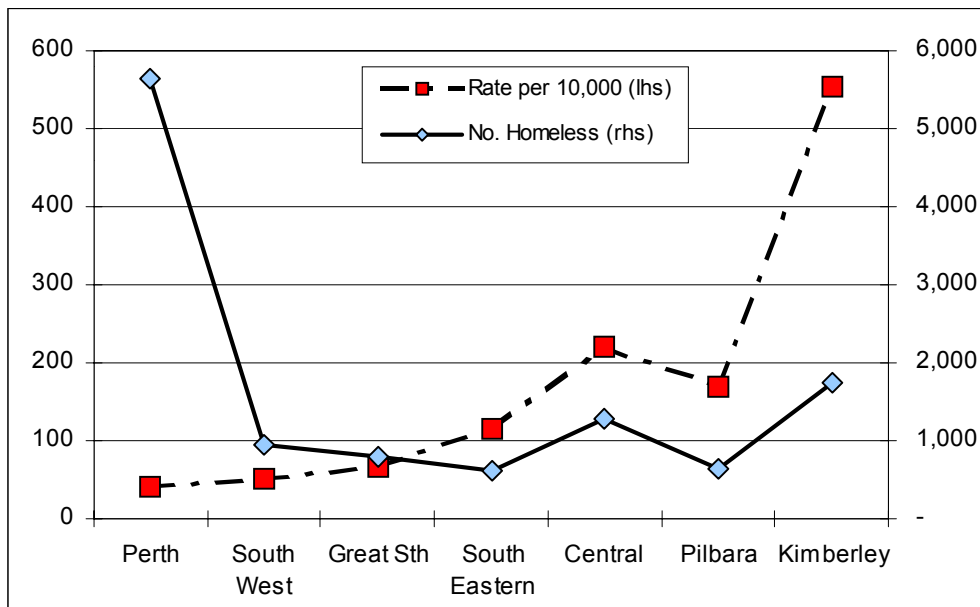
**Pilbara:** The Pilbara has a homelessness rate of 169 per 10,000, which is 4 times the rate for Perth.

**Kimberley:** The Kimberley is not only W A’s most northern region but it also has its highest homelessness rate at 555 per 10,000, more than 13 times the rate for Perth.

It should be noted that the issue of ‘fringe dwellers’, Indigenous people from outlying communities who stay in town for sometimes prolonged periods of time without appropriate accommodation, makes it somewhat difficult to assess the true extent of homelessness in Regional Centres. Not only are fringe dwellers difficult to isolate statistically from the rest of the homeless population, their number also appears to fluctuate considerably according to seasonal and cultural factors.

Nevertheless, a recent National Reconciliation Forum concluded that the number of permanent homeless in Kalgoorlie-Boulder is small, with the bulk of homelessness and overcrowding consisting of ‘fringe dwellers’. Similar trends have also been identified as part of Regional Forums conducted by Shelter WA in Derby and Broome.

**Figure 3:** Number of homelessness people and rate per 10,000 of the population by region Western Australia 2001.

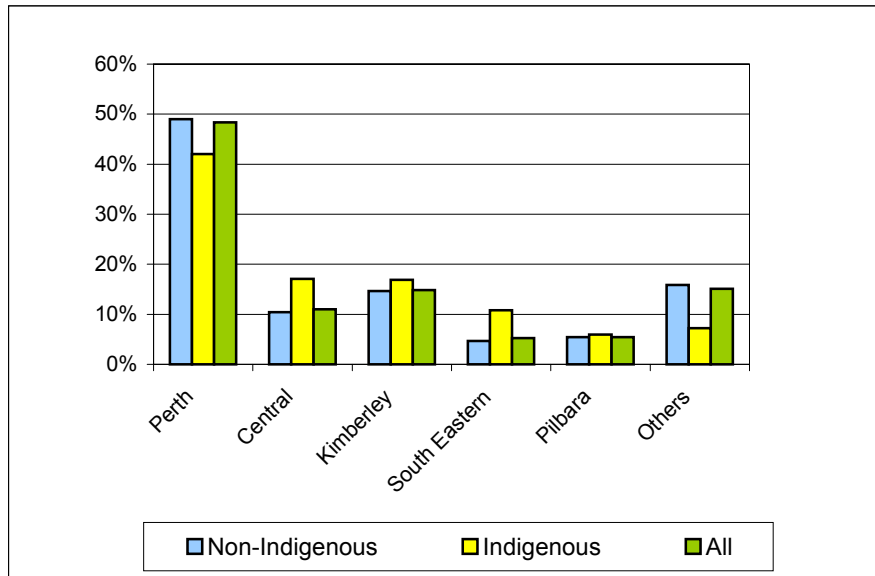


**Source:** Chris Chamberlain, David Mackenzie, Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia, Melbourne, 2004.

### Regional Distribution by Cultural Background

There are some differences between the location of non-Indigenous and Indigenous homelessness, Figure 3 below demonstrates that about half of non-Indigenous homeless are located in Perth while close to two thirds of Indigenous homeless are located in non-metro areas and in particular, Central and the Kimberley.

**Figure 3:** Regional distribution of homeless people by cultural background.



**Source:** Chris Chamberlain, David Mackenzie, Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia, Melbourne, 2004.

### Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) provides temporary accommodation and support services for homeless people. In 2003 in WA the SAAP received \$29 million in joint Commonwealth/State funding and accommodated 9,300 clients.<sup>5</sup>

In 2001-02, nearly 17% of the adults assisted under SAAP were Indigenous Australians. The main reason given for the use of SAAP services by 33% of the Indigenous clients was to escape from domestic violence, compared with 19% for other SAAP clients. Other reasons were accommodation difficulties (18%) and relationship/family breakdown (16%).<sup>6</sup> Chamberlain and Mackenzie analysis reveals some serious structural problems with SAAP. These include:

**Limited supply:** SAAP in WA only scratches the surface of the homelessness problem, Figure 1b (above) demonstrates that only 8% of the States homeless people are accommodated in SAAP services compared to 14% nationally.

**Geographic mismatch:** Early intervention is an effective way of short-circuiting homelessness, ensuring that temporary episodes aren't allowed to develop into chronic homelessness. The correct location of homelessness services is critical to effective early intervention:

<sup>5</sup> Pauline Bagdonavicius, Department of Community Development, Address to the "Lets Celebrate Community Housing" Conference, 8 December 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4704.0 The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, August 2003

*“There were 945 people accommodated in SAAP in WA [on Census night 2001], and one-third (33 per cent) were in Central Perth. Yet most people become homeless in outer suburbs, regional centers and country towns. The provision of early intervention services in these areas assists people in the early stages of homelessness, including those at risk, and reduces the move to the inner city”.<sup>7</sup>*

**Duration of homelessness:** The shorter the period of time people experience homelessness the more effective the intervention will be. Chamberlain and Mackenzie’s finding that two thirds of SAAP clients remain homeless for more than six months (exceeding the chronic homelessness threshold) is therefore alarming.

About 70 SAAP providers recently attended the *More than a Bed Forum* to consider the future of the SAAP in WA. The Forum heard that SAAP is in need of additional 25% increase just to meet current levels of unmet demand (in 2003 the average turn away rate was 52 households per day). There was strong support for SAAP funding to be substantially increased and in particular, for service capacity to be increased.<sup>8</sup> Any additional resources need to be directed toward early intervention in locations with significant homeless populations.

### Overcrowding

Overcrowding is a secondary form of homelessness that *“...results from having insufficient rooms to adequately house the number of people residing in the dwelling. Overcrowding has been demonstrated to have a severely detrimental impact on health, reduces education opportunities, often disrupts sleep patterns and can contribute to tension and domestic violence. In addition, excessive numbers of people living in a dwelling can result in damage to the property. In the case of private tenants, this can lead to tenant liability, eviction and homelessness”*.<sup>9</sup>

A large number of Indigenous people live in overcrowded conditions. Strategies to address homelessness will struggle to be effective if they do not include strategies to increase the supply of housing. Over the past quarter of a century, the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments have conducted major inquiries into Indigenous housing conditions, deaths in custody and child protection. These inquiries have all heard about the impact of housing shortages, inappropriate design and overcrowding. But recent housing data shows that government efforts to resolve Indigenous housing disadvantage have been inadequate.

Twenty-three years have past since Elliott Johnston QC reported the findings of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*. He found that inadequate housing was one of the main underlying causes of Aboriginal people coming into contact with the justice system. The chapter about housing *“commences by pointing out the relationships that exist between poor and inappropriate housing, poor health, and the over-representation of Aboriginal people in custody. A central theme of the chapter is that Aboriginal people have lost control over the location, design and functions of their living spaces, with serious adverse consequences.”*

The Report is explicit when it comes to describing the impact on family members of housing shortages and states that:

*“Grossly overcrowded housing—particularly when associated with excessive drinking—creates a context for domestic violence. Women and children are primarily*

<sup>7</sup> Chris Chamberlain & David Mackenzie, *Counting the Homeless 2001: Western Australia*, Melbourne, 2004, p.10.

<sup>8</sup> SAAP SAC, Forum: More than a Bed, 28 October 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Karel Eringa, Regional Housing Analysis Kalgoorlie-Boulder, November 2004

*the subjects of this violence, and men are arrested. Other consequences that may follow include children being unable to sleep or eat properly. This situation in turn contributes to child malnutrition and high truancy rates...*"

Johnston also points out that at the Commonwealth Government had been made aware of the inadequate housing conditions faced by Indigenous people six years prior to the Royal Commission and states that, "...*the appalling conditions in which many Aboriginal people live have long been a concern to government. The problems confronting Aboriginal communities in their quest for adequate housing were summarised in a report commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction in 1985*". They included:

- ❑ insufficient consultation leading to misunderstanding and limited involvement of tenants and local Aboriginal communities in providing housing;
- ❑ lack of access to private rental because of low incomes and discrimination;
- ❑ the stress placed on tenancies associated with providing accommodation for visitors and kin,
- ❑ insufficient housing stock in areas preferred by Aboriginal people;
- ❑ housing programs have been subject to a large component of bureaucratic control because funds have generally been provided from outside;
- ❑ enormous variety of housing schemes and agencies, denying Aboriginal people knowledge of relevant procedures; and,
- ❑ The expectations and needs of various urban, rural and remote Aboriginal communities are diverse and rapidly changing.<sup>10</sup>

The Gordon Inquiry into *Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities*, in its supporting evidence recognised poor housing and overcrowding as major contributing factors to child abuse and that overcrowding exacerbate health problems, property damage that could lead to eviction, and provide conditions conducive to family violence. The Inquiry also noted that to change family violence accommodation issues have to be addressed and overcrowding avoided.<sup>11</sup>

However, the Inquiry's housing recommendations fell far short of the type of commitment needed to address overcrowding. In particular, Gordon favoured the housing options of private rental and home ownership,<sup>12</sup> which are virtually impossible dreams to achieve without an adequate housing base and stable income.

While some communities will benefit from the posting of additional employees from the WA Police Service and Department for Community Development as a result of the Inquiry, the housing issues facing families in remote communities must also be addressed. It should be noted that the Aboriginal Housing Infrastructure Directorate funds the construction of new housing and upgrade maintenance exclusively within discrete Aboriginal Communities, where no other housing assistance can be accessed but this program needs to be significantly increased in order to address the housing shortages facing many remote communities.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that Nationally, "*using the Canadian National Occupancy Standard definition of overcrowding,*<sup>13</sup> *15% of households with Indigenous person(s) were considered overcrowded (i.e. requiring at least one extra*

<sup>10</sup> Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, National Report Volume 2 Commissioner Elliott Johnston, QC Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra. 1991

<sup>11</sup> Sue Gordon, Kay Hallahan and Darrell Henry, Putting the Picture Together: Inquiry into Responses by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities, July 2002, Perth.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 1.

bedroom), compared to 4% of other households. In households with Indigenous person(s), overcrowding increased with remoteness. In Major Cities, about 11% of all households with Indigenous person(s) require at least one extra bedroom, compared with 42% of households with Indigenous person(s) in Very Remote areas of Australia. In other households, overcrowding varied only slightly with the level of remoteness, fluctuating between 3% to 4%.<sup>14</sup>

Research by Shelter WA shows that overcrowding follows a similar geographical pattern to homelessness. In particular, overcrowding increasing with remoteness from Perth and Indigenous people face much higher rates of overcrowding than non-Indigenous people.

Table 1 demonstrates that in Perth, 11% of all Indigenous households lived in overcrowded conditions, compared to 2% of non-Indigenous households. This increased to 18% (Indigenous) and 4% (non-Indigenous) in Geraldton, 20% / 5% in South Hedland, and 31% / 12% in Broome. Finally, in Warburton, overcrowding stood at 50% for Indigenous households and 2% for non-Indigenous households. In Kununurra a similar proportion (48%) of Indigenous households lived in overcrowded conditions, compared to 8% of non-Indigenous households.

**Table 1:** Overcrowding by ATSI Region and Indigenous status.<sup>1</sup>

| ATSI Region     | Indigenous   |               |              | non-Indigenous |                |             | All Households |                |             |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                 | Over-crowded | All           | %            | Over-crowded   | All            | %           | Over-crowded   | All            | %           |
| Perth           | 591          | 5,628         | 10.5%        | 9,237          | 485,987        | 1.9%        | 9,828          | 491,615        | 2.0%        |
| Narrogin        | 258          | 1,905         | 13.5%        | 2,364          | 82,019         | 2.9%        | 2,622          | 83,924         | 3.1%        |
| Kalgoorlie      | 154          | 811           | 19.0%        | 558            | 14,302         | 3.9%        | 712            | 15,113         | 4.7%        |
| Geraldton       | 259          | 1,407         | 18.4%        | 665            | 16,996         | 3.9%        | 924            | 18,403         | 5.0%        |
| Sth Headland    | 231          | 1,144         | 20.2%        | 394            | 8,356          | 4.7%        | 625            | 9,500          | 6.6%        |
| Warburton       | 228          | 454           | 50.2%        | 30             | 1,271          | 2.4%        | 258            | 1,725          | 15.0%       |
| Broome          | 272          | 881           | 30.9%        | 297            | 2,561          | 11.6%       | 569            | 3,442          | 16.5%       |
| Derby           | 346          | 879           | 39.4%        | 61             | 770            | 7.9%        | 407            | 1,649          | 24.7%       |
| Kununurra       | 381          | 801           | 47.6%        | 164            | 1,315          | 12.5%       | 545            | 2,116          | 25.8%       |
| <b>Total WA</b> | <b>2,720</b> | <b>13,910</b> | <b>19.6%</b> | <b>13,770</b>  | <b>613,577</b> | <b>2.2%</b> | <b>16,490</b>  | <b>627,487</b> | <b>2.6%</b> |

**Data Source:** ABS Census 2001:I25 and Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, Proxy Occupancy Standard

1) Only includes households where both bedroom numbers and number of occupants were known.

The National Indigenous Housing Guide has the following to say about the impact and solutions to overcrowding:

*Crowded living conditions increase the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, such as meningococcal disease, rheumatic fever, tuberculosis and respiratory infections.*

*Crowding can be addressed by building more houses; developing the yard and edges of houses to provide more household services; and by ensuring the health hardware in most houses in a community is functioning most of the time through regular maintenance.<sup>15</sup>*

<sup>14</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4704.0 The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, August 2003

<sup>15</sup> Family and Community Services, Second Edition, National Indigenous Housing Guide: Improving the Living Environment for Safety, Health and Sustainability, Canberra 2003.

In other words, addressing overcrowding requires a significant increase in appropriate and affordable housing for Indigenous people across Western Australia. However, while the benefits in terms of reduced homelessness, improved health, education, child safety and employment outcomes might be great, this would not be a cheap solution. Research by Shelter WA demonstrates that just to fix the overcrowding problem in the Shire of Broome, which is not at the top of the range for overcrowding, would require the construction of more than 350 units of affordable housing. Providing this quantity of housing would cost over \$85 million immediately and then \$5 million annually.<sup>16</sup>

The Department of Housing and Works has been aware of housing shortages in Broome for some time,<sup>17</sup> but its ability to respond is restricted by land shortages and lengthy delays in resolving Native Title Claims. It is hoped that the recent resolution of the Rubibi Land Claim will help free up land for the construction of additional social housing.

### **Homelessness Taskforce**

In response to growing concern within the Western Australian community about homelessness, the State Government established a Homelessness Taskforce. The Taskforce commenced in July 2001 and produced its Final Report in January 2002. In May 2002 the State Government responded to the Taskforce's recommendations by making a four year commitment to respond to homelessness. The response contained three themes:

**Better options for housing** - Improve access to affordable housing;

**Vulnerability and transition** - Assist people through important transitions from institutions and other situations; and

**Stability in housing** - Provide services to keep people housed.

The Government committed \$32 million to the Strategy over 4 years from 2002. The primary commitments include:

- \$10.5million to build new public housing;
- \$7 million to assist private and public sector tenants to keep their housing;
- \$3.8 million to provide services and accommodation for people with mental illness;
- \$3.5 million to help homeless children;
- \$2 million for non-Government organisations to provide financial counselling services;
- \$2.4 million to help young people leaving long term care;
- \$1.4 million to support people exiting the justice system; and
- \$1 million to assist people directly into stable accommodation by bypassing crisis accommodation.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Shelter WA, Meeting Youth Housing Needs in Broome Through Collaborative Practice, Perth 2003.

<sup>17</sup> See Shelter WA, Meeting Youth Housing Needs in Broome Through Collaborative Practice, Perth 2003

<sup>18</sup> State Homelessness Strategy, Welcome to Western Australia's State Homelessness Strategy Website, <http://www.homeless.dhw.wa.gov.au/index.html>, visited 16-12-2004.

### 3: A Profile of Homeless Households in WA

Between June 2001 and March 2004, Shelter WA conducted a series of five surveys that aimed to identify the nature of homelessness in Western Australia. Over the course of the project, these surveys collected information from a total of 412 homeless households. Surveys were conducted in June 2001 (68 respondents), April 2002 (71), September 2002 (98), February 2003 (76), and, March 2004 (99).

#### Methodology

For each of the five surveys, *Shelter WA: Counting the Homeless* survey forms and information packages were distributed to 304 community agencies in February 2004; copies of the survey form and information package are included in Appendix 2. These agencies were drawn from Shelter WA's contact database. Around a third of the agencies that were surveyed were funded specifically to provide service to the homeless; the remainder are community agencies that deliver a broad range of community services.

Participating agencies completed one survey form for each homeless household requesting accommodation assistance but who were not accommodated on the specified night. Agency workers completed the surveys on behalf of the household requesting assistance. The survey form contained 10 questions, which collected information on:

- ▶ Method of contact;
- ▶ Type of assistance requested;
- ▶ Urgency of request;
- ▶ Type of accommodation required;
- ▶ Household type making request;
- ▶ Age and sex of household members;
- ▶ Type of accommodation utilised on the previous night;
- ▶ Who the household stayed with on the previous night;
- ▶ Combined household income; and
- ▶ The household's cultural background.

#### Requests for Accommodation by Method of Contact

Respondents were asked to identify the method of contact used by households approaching their agency for assistance. Across the five surveys agency workers primarily dealt directly with the households seeking assistance, with about half contacting by phone and a third presenting at the agency in person.

#### Assistance Requested by Type

Homeless households requesting accommodation only varied widely across the five surveys and range between a high of two thirds and a low in Survey Five of a quarter. While, households requesting accommodation and consistently accounted for about half of requests. The high proportion of households requiring both accommodation and support in Survey 5 is most likely related to the high number of urgent requests.

### Urgency of Request for Assistance

Respondents were asked to rate the level of urgency of the request for assistance. Households requiring accommodation within 24 hours accounted for two thirds of requests in four out of five surveys. Survey Two had a low of one quartet requiring accommodation within 24hrs and two thirds within seven days.

### Type of Housing Required

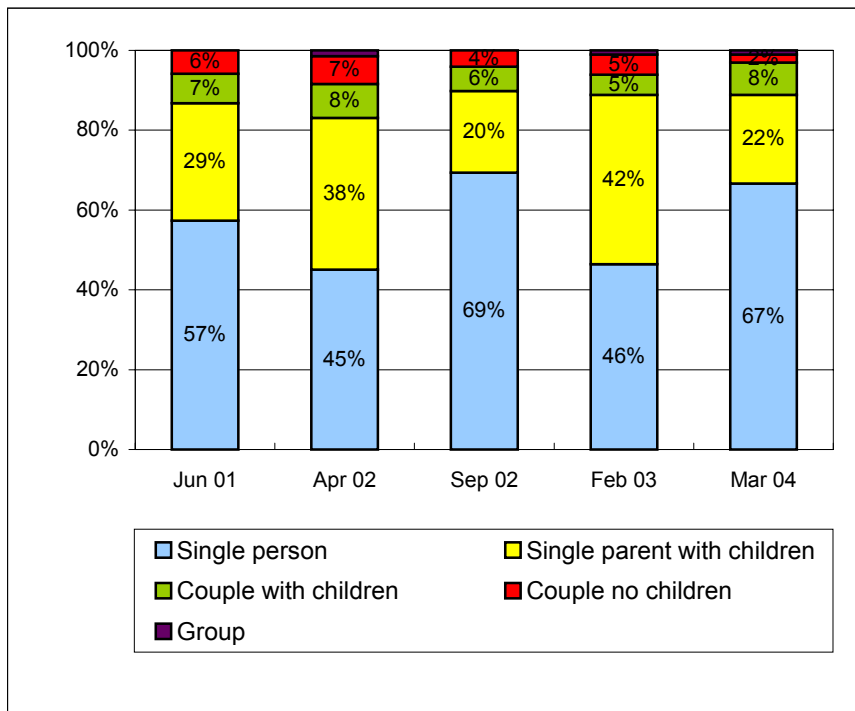
Respondents were asked to identify the type of housing assistance required. Demand for crisis / short-term accommodation accounted for two thirds of requests across all five surveys. Requests for social housing ranged from one tenth to one fifth of requests.

### Households Experiencing Homelessness

Understanding the household make up of the homeless is critical to providing appropriate housing responses to the homeless. Yet there is little household information available. Chamberlain and Mackenzie were very successful in identifying the number of individuals experiencing homeless but their report focuses on individuals rather than households.

Shelter WA recognised the shortage of household information when formulating *Profile* and this focus has begun to reveal some common themes, in particular, that most of the households experiencing homelessness are either singles or single parents with children. Figure 4 reveals that singles consistently made up between half and two thirds of the homeless households counted, while single parents with children make up between a quarter and a third of homeless households.

**Figure 4:** Homeless households by household type time series.



**Source:** Shelter WA, A Profile of Homeless Households. Total number of homeless households: June 2001 (68); April 2002 (71); September 2002 (98); February (76); and, March 2004 (99).

Respondents were asked to identify households by household type. Survey 5 data indicate that single parents with children continue to represent around 1 in 5 households.

Interestingly, this family type accounted for more than half of the Indigenous households in Survey 5, but only for around 1 in 10 non-Indigenous households. Another difference is that nearly 80% of non-Indigenous homeless households in Survey 5 were single persons, while this group only accounted for just over one third of Indigenous households.

Households in Survey 5 ranged in size from 1 to 6 people and included 30 families with between 1 and 5 children. Table 1 demonstrates the median number of people by household type.

**Table 2:** Homeless household types by median number of persons and size March 2004.

| Household type           | Median size | Range |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Couple + children        | 4           | 3-6   |
| Couple only              | 2           | 2-2   |
| Single parent + children | 3           | 2-6   |
| Single person            | 1           | 1-1   |

Source: SWA: Counting the Homeless (March 2004)

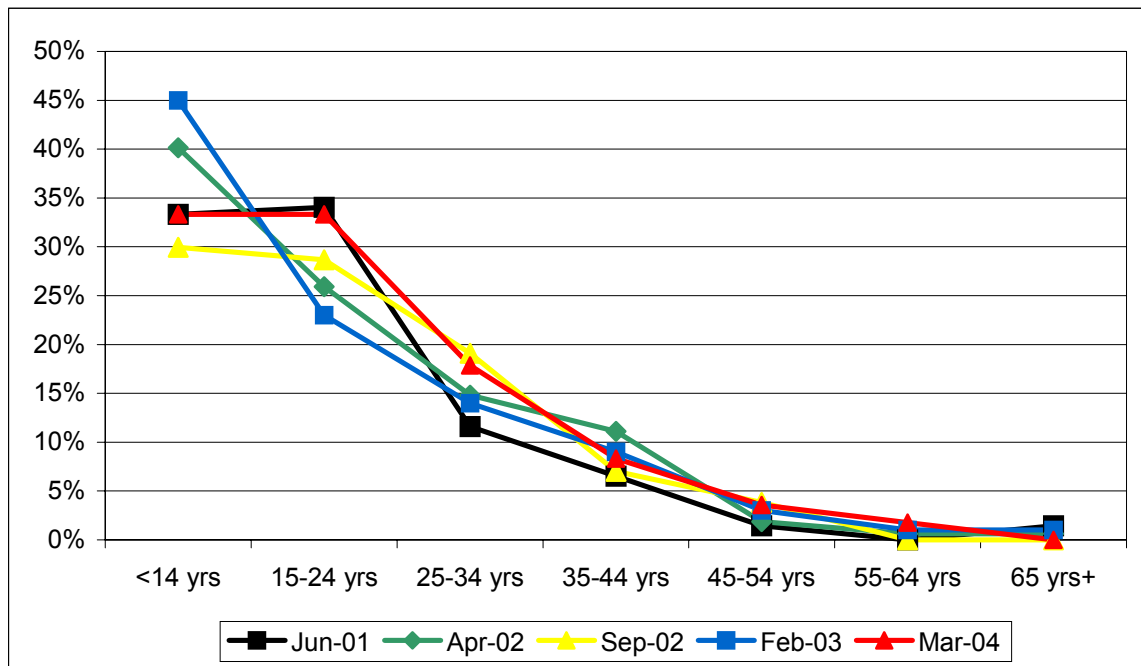
### Homeless People by Age

In keeping with the high proportion of single parent families among the homeless counted as part of Profile, the age profile reveals that homeless has a young face in Western Australia. Figure 5 demonstrates that children have continued to represent about a third of the homeless people approaching homelessness services and young people 15 to 24 years from a quarter to a third. Those 25 years plus make up the remaining third of the homeless counted.

Homelessness amongst children under the age of 14 years remains one of the most disturbing findings of Profile. Respondents provided details on 168 homeless people (61 Indigenous and 107 non-Indigenous).

Throughout the Profile series children have accounted for about a third of the homeless and the findings for Indigenous children are even worse, as children constitute nearly half of all homeless Indigenous persons. For non-Indigenous persons the largest age grouping was 15 to 24 year olds, which accounted for about a third of non-Indigenous homeless people in the survey.

**Figure 5:** Age profile of homeless persons in Western Australia, time series.



**Source:** Shelter WA: Counting the Homeless (March 2004). Number of homeless households: June 2001 (138); April 2002 (162); September 2002 (157); February (166); and, March 2004 (168).

### Degrees of Homelessness

Respondents were asked to identify the type of accommodation utilised by the household on the night before the survey date. Across the five surveys about a third stayed in rental housing on the previous night, between a tenth and a quarter stayed in supported housing and about a tenth were among the primary homeless.

### Who did the Homeless Stay With?

Respondents were asked to identify whom the household stayed with on the night prior to the survey. Across the five surveys from one quarter and one third of households stayed temporarily with friends or relatives and about a third stayed alone.

This question identified significant cultural differences. More than a half of Indigenous households stayed with friends or relatives, compared to about one in ten for non-Indigenous.

### Income and Housing Affordability

The high proportion of single income households among the homeless also contributes to low incomes being a common feature of homeless households with most falling within the bottom forty percent of incomes (less than \$441 per week in WA).<sup>19</sup>

Chamberlain and Mackenzie recognise the growth in low income households as contributing to increasing homelessness and state:

<sup>19</sup> Department of Housing and Works, Housing Strategy WA Occasional Paper Supply of Low Cost Rental Housing in Western Australia, Perth, August 2001.

*Some low income households can survive financial crises, because they have relatives or friends who assist them, but a minority slide into homelessness. The increase in low income households underpins the increase in homelessness over the past two decades<sup>20</sup>.*

Profile has also consistently revealed the very low incomes received by homeless households. Table 3 demonstrates that most homeless households had weekly incomes of less than \$399 and around a quarter earned less than \$200.

**Table 3:** Combined weekly household income.

|              | Jun-01      | Apr-02      | Sep-02      | Feb-03      | Mar-04      |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$0 to 99    | 10%         | 1%          | 0%          | 4%          | 4%          |
| \$100 to 199 | 34%         | 20%         | 22%         | 22%         | 42%         |
| \$200 to 299 | 9%          | 10%         | 4%          | 12%         | 17%         |
| \$300 to 399 | 19%         | 14%         | 3%          | 20%         | 29%         |
| \$400 to 499 | 4%          | 4%          | 2%          | 4%          | 6%          |
| \$500 plus   | 0%          | 3%          | 1%          | 3%          | 3%          |
| nil income   | 1%          | 0%          | 0%          | 0%          | 0%          |
| don't know   | 22%         | 48%         | 67%         | 36%         | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>101%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> |
|              | N=68        | N=71        | N=98        | N=76        | N=99        |

**Source:** Shelter WA, A Profile of Homeless Households

### Access to Rental Housing

The National Housing Strategy (1992) stated that those in the lowest two income quintiles who spent more than 30% of their income on housing, can be said to be suffering from housing stress<sup>21</sup>.

Housing stress was consistent feature of homeless households across all five surveys, requiring from 45% to 78% of their incomes to access median priced rental housing in Perth, well in excess of the generally accepted benchmark for housing stress<sup>22</sup>

### Cultural Background

Respondents were asked to identify the cultural background of people requesting housing assistance.

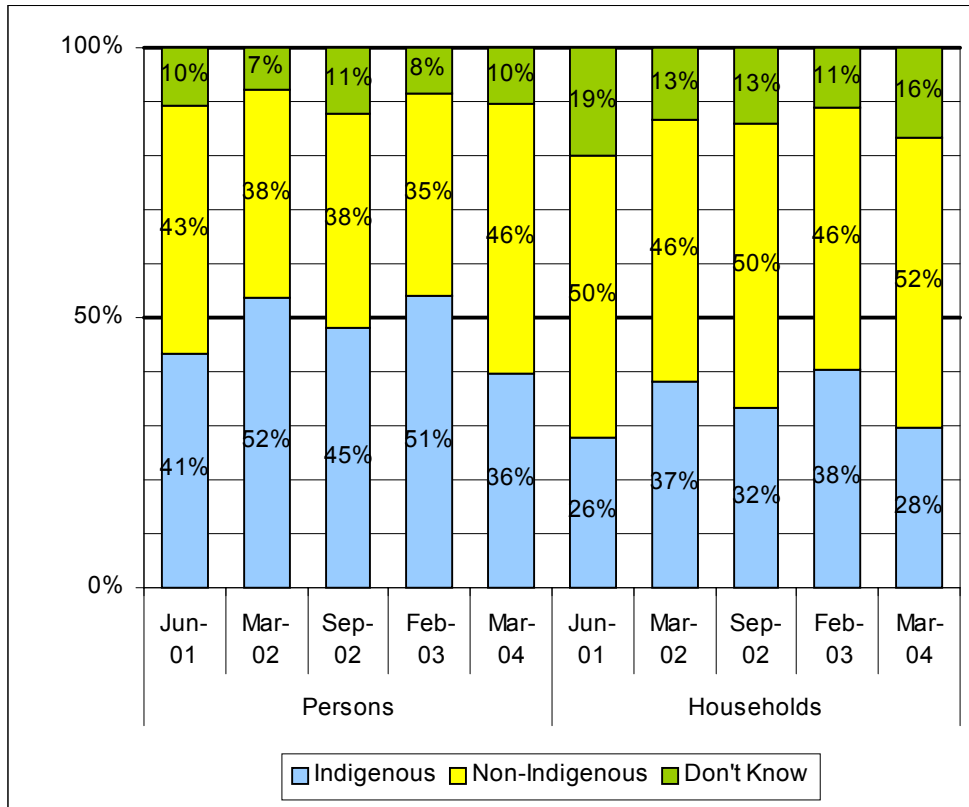
Figure 6 indicates that Indigenous persons continue to be over represented amongst homeless people. In all five Profile surveys, Indigenous people have represented more than a third of person and more than a quarter of households. Non-Indigenous households account for around 4 out of 10 persons and half the homeless households.

<sup>20</sup> Chris Chamberlain and David Mackenzie, Australian Census Analytic Program: Counting the Homeless 2001, Canberra.

<sup>21</sup> ABS CAT. No. 4102.0

<sup>22</sup> The National Housing Strategy (1992) stated that those in the lowest two income quintiles who spent more than 30% of their income on housing, can be said to be suffering from housing stress (ABS CAT. No. 4102.0).

**Figure 6:** Cultural background of homeless persons and households June 2001 and March 2004.



**Source:** SWA Counting the Homeless Survey (June 2001, March 2002, Sep 2002, February 2003 and March 2004).

1) Number of homeless households: June 2001 (68); April 2002 (71); September 2002 (98); February (76); and, March 2004 (99).

2) Number of homeless households: June 2001 (138); April 2002 (162); September 2002 (157); February (166); and, March 2004 (168).

## 4: Experiencing Homelessness in WA

In addition to the five quantitative surveys, the project also sought the views of homelessness agencies and the people accessing these agencies directly in a series of interviews. This section outlines and explores the responses from the homelessness agencies to the problem of addressing homelessness and to compare this to the experiences of those people who are homeless and in contact with these agencies.

The agencies were interviewed in regards to the services that they provide, the people using the services and the perceptions of homelessness within the agency. The names of participating agencies and individuals have been withheld, as the study was conducted under an agreement that anonymity would be maintained.

The agencies included women's refuges, single men's accommodations, youth hostels, community housing providers, youth outreach centres, counselling services, single people's outreach and accommodation centres and community development organisations. These agencies are located in both Metropolitan and Rural areas within Western Australia. In addition, interviews were conducted with service users from a single men's hostel, a youth accommodation service and a women's refuge, located both in Perth and in rural WA.

A variety of responses to the interview questions were obtained from the interviews with the agencies and the service users, and are included to highlight the views, the personal stories, and differences between the thoughts of the providers and users of the service. Four common themes were identified:

1. Inadequate funding of support services;
2. Multiple problems with no one simple solution;
3. Solution starts with a stable living environment; and
4. Lack of exit points and appropriate accommodation.

### Methodology

Between July and November 2003 Sarah Durell and Chelsie Lowery, two Social Work Students from Curtin University, undertook qualitative research into homelessness as part of a placement with Shelter WA. This section is based on face-to-face interviews with 10 agencies as well as 12 people currently experiencing homelessness.

The agencies and groups of homeless people to be interviewed were identified by reviewing past survey results and participation of agencies in Shelter WA's *Counting the Homeless Surveys*. From the agencies that had previously participated the final selection was based on the agencies primary target groups matching with those identified within the surveys. In addition, the researchers sought to achieve a balance of city and rural agencies.

The agencies interviewed assisted the researchers to make contact with people experiencing homelessness and to organise interviews with them. The interview questions were devised with the need to identify common themes and structures within the agency. To do this past reports were reviewed and common themes identified, these in turn set the focus for the questions.

An interview guideline was developed that was sensitive to the personal experiences of service users and would assist the researchers to gain insights to the service user's views on the agency and their perception of housing issues. These provide a comparison to the views of the agency. It was also an opportunity for the interviewee to share their story and explore and reflect on their current situation.

All interviews were recorded in writing and common themes were identified. Prior to the interviews taking place, consent forms were signed to guarantee confidentiality.

## Common Themes

### Inadequate Funding of Support Services

The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) funds organisations that aid homeless people or help people to gain safe and secure housing. The Department of Family and Community Service (FACS) offers this description:

*SAAP is a support program assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, through a range of support and supported accommodation services. It is an important part of Australia's overall response to homelessness and of the broader social safety net designed to prevent disadvantage in the community.*

*The overall aim of SAAP, as set down in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act, is to provide transitional supported accommodation and a range of related support services, in order to help people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness to achieve the maximum possible degree of self-reliance and independence.*

*Within this aim the goals are to:*

- *resolve crisis;*
- *re-establish family links where appropriate; and*
- *re-establish the capacity of clients to live independently of SAAP.*<sup>23</sup>

All agencies interviewed as part of this research expressed a concern that the level of funding they receive from SAAP was not sufficient to meet the ever-increasing demand on their services. They also noted that grants and other funding, provided through corporate or small business, are minimal and hard to obtain. The level of funding received by agencies impacts upon and restricts the services provided. Some of these impacts, as reported by the agencies, include:

- an inability to employ an appropriate level of staffing to meet the needs that are presented;
- employees being overworked; and
- agencies are not always able to provide a safe and secure environment in which those seeking assistance are able to adequately gain support and succour.

### What the Agencies Said

One agency providing services to young people suggested that it is imperative that there be an increase in funding in order for the agency to expand to meet the growing housing needs, and to adequately provide assistance to those seeking it. Another agency that provides crisis accommodation to women said that they have to turn away a substantial number of women because there was not enough staff and funding to extend their service.

The agencies believed that a range of services is required, including crisis, medium and long term housing. This theme was common for both metropolitan and rural agencies visited. A related theme among workers within the city agencies was a lack of funding. Some relevant quotes were:

---

<sup>23</sup> FACS, SAAP – the supported accommodation assistance program, Canberra.

*“A lack of funding results in a shortage of resources and therefore staff, which restricts the quantity of services provided by the agency”*

youth service

*“The funding within this agency is not enough to meet the needs of the men that access the agency and want to use the services”*

men’s refuge

By contrast, a small number of rural services indicated that their funding was adequate for the services that they currently provide. However, all of these services also indicated that their funding was inadequate to allow these agencies to respond to demand by providing a broader range of services. It should be stressed that the majority of rural agencies indicated that their funding levels were inadequate for the services that they currently provide. Some quotes:

*“Our agency is only just surviving on the money that we receive”.*

*“More funding would mean that we would be able to offer more services to the young people, including recreational activities”*

rural youth accommodation and support service

### **What the Service Users Said**

Agencies are restricted in the types of services that they can offer. Some of the single men and youth suggested that recreation and other activities would improve the services offered by agencies. Some believed that increasing housing provision was the main priority.

*“It would also be good to have more entertainment – at the moment we have table tennis and board games, but it would be nice to have something else to do as well. Not all of the men know how to play the board games, nor do they participate so it would be good to have some more choice.”*

*“I think there needs to be a greater amount of cheaper housing for low income earners in Perth.”*

*“It would be good to have more frequent recreational activities that we can participate in.”*

Both agencies and service users agree that there is a higher demand for housing support services than is currently provided in both country and metropolitan areas. In order for this to change, increased funding is needed by those services that want to expand the accommodation and support they are providing.

### **Multiple Problems with No One Simple Solution**

Homeless people presenting at agencies often deal with many varied and complex personal problems. Many of the agencies reported difficulties coping with this demand, as there is not one solution that fits all. Ideally, every individual would receive a unique response appropriate to his/her personal issues. However, this is a costly and time

consuming approach, and generally not feasible taking into consideration the lack of funding and staff available.

There is a complex dichotomy of issues that an individual presents with, and generally the combination of issues presents a professional dilemma. The provider needs to assess whether a range of underlying factors need to be dealt with before the lack of housing can be addressed or, alternatively, to obtain housing for the individual and subsequently work through some of the non-housing issues. The advantage of the latter approach is that the individual will be in stable and secure housing whilst addressing underlying factors, but this does present the problem that users are likely to require substantial support to live independently.

Given the complexity of the issues and the limited resources available, many agencies report struggling to adequately assess and determine individuals' needs. In addition, they report difficulties providing a range of services required to address the broad variety of needs, which are not always immediately obvious.

Several agency workers expressed a belief that some individuals band-aid or cover up problems through the use of drugs and alcohol and other unsafe behaviours (whether to themselves or to others). This contributes to difficulties understanding the causes of the individual's behaviour as well as its effect on housing issues and homelessness. In both rural and metropolitan areas, agencies suggested that, with very few exceptions, individuals would present with more than one issue or problem. Some quotes are as follows:

*"It is known that fifty percent of the men within the boarding house have mental health issues as well as drug and alcohol problems"*

rural men's accommodation service

*"Mental health, drugs and family breakdown are the three common causes for young people to be homeless"*

metropolitan youth accommodation and support service

*"There is never one problem – coexisting problems such as transmitted debt from previous relationships, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse are common."*

metropolitan women's refuge

*"Men that access the service have a variety of problems or issues that are across the board. Sexual abuse is noted as a commonality as is a dysfunctional family of origin. Drugs and alcohol are also seen frequently and are used to bandaid or blot out another painful issue that may have occurred in the past"*

metropolitan single men's boarding accommodation

*"Family breakdown, youth pregnancy and a lack of suitable employment and housing in the area are the main reasons why young people access the service"*

rural youth accommodation and support service

## Solution Starts with a Stable Living Environment

The basis of any real solution to homelessness must be a stable living environment. In addition, many of the support agencies felt that users' need for a stable living environment should be addressed immediately, in conjunction with working through complex personal issues and problems. Agencies also recognised the need to work from a psychological model of human rights to have access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and warmth.

Individuals present at support agencies with an immediate problem, i.e. homelessness, yet they often also have underlying issues or problems that generally are not evident on the surface. It appeared that many of the individuals that access the services that we visited are band-aiding the underlying problems that they have. Common issues that agencies see are mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, dysfunctional families, recent prison release, gambling, sexual, physical, emotional, verbal abuse, isolation, education, law and order conflict, debt, unemployment and unpaid fines.

Agencies aim to provide a safe and secure environment where individuals are able to access support and assistance. It is acknowledged that there is the need within the agency for a sense of community and therefore try to foster this within the agency and support networks. A stable living environment brings security and a sense of belonging, whereby an individual is able to develop and attempt to address personal predicaments.

In a safe environment an individual is going to feel more open to accepting help and support. The agencies see this need and try to address this in their service and support provision. For example, a young man accessing medium to long term housing and support presented with a range of circumstances contributing to homelessness. Once the individual was comfortable within the service and his housing situation was addressed, mental health and family issues could be looked at and worked through with the support of the agency. This provided a safe and secure environment in which he felt comfortable and also where he was able to access appropriate support.

In order to allow individuals to maintain autonomy once they have left the agency, a holistic attempt is made in assisting individuals to develop independent living skills such as cooking, cleaning, budgeting and developing and maintaining social networks. Agencies achieve this by placing a certain amount of responsibility onto the individuals whilst within the agency such as maintaining living areas, paying rent and adhering to agency rules.

*“If there was accessible and affordable housing for the women, they may be better able to deal with their problems once they have a safe and comfortable place to live. Being able to access affordable housing would also provide a better alternative for the women than to return to their husbands in an abusive environment”*

metropolitan women's refuge

*“Housing is an important factor to firstly achieve a basic standard of living, in order to work on more deeper, complex, personal issues”*

metropolitan youth hostel

### Lack of Exit Points and Appropriate Accommodation

It is evident that there is a growing shortage of affordable, safe and secure housing within the metropolitan and rural areas in WA.<sup>24</sup> Rising house prices mean that home purchase is become more and more difficult for households earning below the median, the stock of affordable private rental housing is falling, and the waiting list for Homeswest housing is in excess of three years for some household types. In addition, there are non-financial factors that further restrict access to appropriate housing in all three tenures, such as age, condition, cost, availability and location.

Homeswest provides housing for low income earners. However, the demand greatly exceeds the availability. This can result in individuals or families residing in unsuitable and unstable accommodation whilst waiting for a Homeswest house to become available. Accessing public housing is problematic for individuals under the age of eighteen who cannot provide a guarantor. This poses a problem, as they are also unable to access housing within the private rental market due to lack of income and age discrimination.

Within the metropolitan area, there is a growing lack of affordable private rental housing stock. The private rental housing that does exist is expensive and difficult to obtain for low income earners and young people.

In addition to long term housing options, it is apparent that there is a lack of transitional housing services. An increase in the amount of transitional housing is needed to give individuals options, time and support whilst finding safe and appropriate housing. For example, a woman escaping domestic violence who is not in need of crisis accommodation but needs a safe place to live, could benefit from the services that a transitional housing support service could provide. This would mean that the woman would not have to return to an abusive household just because she has nowhere else to live.

For many public and private tenants, there are limited external support services available to assist with personal issues or problems. It was mentioned that there is a need for external support services in both the metropolitan and rural areas to address areas such as parenting, child development, relationships, household management, counselling and social networking. These areas need to be addressed in order to maintain a sense of self development, assistance and security.

*“In order to cater for low income individuals and families, there needs to be an increase in low cost housing options due to the high costs associated with the private rental market”*

metropolitan women’s refuge

*“For youth, it is difficult to obtain private rental housing, due to a low income and a lack of references. In the rural areas, there is a lack of housing for single people and they are sent to outer areas where there is less support, jobs, and recreation”*

rural community development perspective

<sup>24</sup> See, for instance, M.Wulff, J.Yates & T.Burke, *Low Rent Housing in Australia 1986 to 1996*, 2001, Office of Policy and Planning, *Supply of low cost rental housing in Western Australia*, Housing Strategy WA Occasional Paper, August 2001 and Karel Eringa, *The State of Affordable Housing in WA*, Shelter WA Occasional Paper 2003-2, August 2003

*"I would like to have access to suitable and stable housing, however because I am under eighteen, unemployed and unable to sign a lease I have not had any luck obtaining a private rental"*

young person living in a rural area

*"Due to the increase in demand for housing, our waiting list at the moment stands at approximately one hundred and fifty people and due to a lack of funding and resources, we are unable to meet the expectations"*

rural housing association

*"There needs to be an increase in transitional or mid-term housing with support to aid the women make the move from short term accommodation within the agency to private housing. The services provided could include budgeting and life skills as well as assistance to maintain the house, so that the women do not take a step back and fall back into old patterns"*

metropolitan women's refuge

*"It was brought to our attention that there is the need to provide comprehensive services within the community that look to achieve the basic human rights that all people deserve, as listed by the United Nations (1948)."*

Some responses from people that are seeking housing:

*"The waiting list for housing is too long for young people who are keen to access suitable, stable housing"*

*"It is important to us to have a house. The only problem is that we are unable to get a house that is suitable and in an area that we like and want to live in."*

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps surprisingly, this project has revealed a high degree of consensus between service providers and service users regarding the root causes of the problem and the required solution. Both groups viewed homelessness as a complex problem that requires a multi faceted solution, and both groups identified increased support services and accommodation options as key elements of any solution. In addition, despite some differences in emphasis, these views were held by interviewees in both the Metropolitan and regional areas.

## 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

This report demonstrates that a significant proportion of the states population is denied the basic human right of housing. The major Governmental response to homelessness, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, is currently being redesigned to make it more responsive to the needs of homeless the population.

It is clear from the evidence presented in this report that the capacity of the SAAP program needs to be increased. In addition, its focus on early intervention should be improved along with addressing some serious geographic inequities. However, support by itself cannot resolve homelessness. Significant investment in social housing is also required, so that the people experiencing homelessness can establish themselves in independent housing before crossing the line into chronic homelessness.

Shelter WA's, *Profile* series has demonstrated that homelessness is an ongoing issue in Western Australia. It reveals that single income households are most at risk of homelessness, that is singles and single parents with children, and that Indigenous people are disproportionately represented. Children and young people make about half the homeless population. It is clear that poverty and housing stress are central themes among the homeless.

Interviews undertaken as part of Shelter WA's Homelessness Project, revealed a high degree of consensus between service providers and service users regarding the root causes of the problem and the required solution. Both groups viewed homelessness as a complex problem that requires a multi faceted solution, and both groups identified increased support services and accommodation options as key elements of any solution. In addition, despite some differences in emphasis, these views were shared by interviewees in both metropolitan and regional areas.

With regard to support services, it appears that the problem is one of quantity, with demand exceeding the capacity of existing services. In addition, support services should be restructured in such a way that the multiple problems faced by many homeless people can be dealt with effectively.

With regard to accommodation, again the main problem appears to be one of quantity, as both support services and users report a lack of safe and secure medium and long term housing that is accessible to homeless people. This is partly because of an increasing shortage of affordable accommodation in Western Australia in general,<sup>25</sup> and partly because of a lack of transitional support services assisting homeless people to establish themselves in long term accommodation.

Overall, both the lack of support services and the lack of accommodation options require significant increases in Government funding. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide precise costings, previous work by Shelter WA suggests that there is a shortage of funding in the order of tens of millions of dollars per year for support services, and hundreds of millions of dollars per year to build affordable housing.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> For instance, see Karel Eringa, *The State of Affordable Housing in WA*, Shelter WA Occasional Paper 2003-2, August 2003

<sup>26</sup> See Karel Eringa, *The State of Affordable Housing in WA*, Shelter WA Occasional Paper 2003-2, August 2003

**Recommendations**

1. Increase funding under the CSHA for the provision of social housing: Social housing to be increased to a target of 6% of all housing in WA.
2. Increase the capacity of SAAP by 50% and provide services in areas where the need is located: SAAP to achieve a target of accommodating 12% of the States homeless population.
3. Address Overcrowding in Indigenous households: Implement strategies to address overcrowding in Indigenous and Regional areas.

## Appendix 1: Canadian National Occupancy Standard


While there is no universally accepted measure for overcrowding, this report refers to the Canadian National Occupancy Standard, which is also used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This standard specifies that there should be no more than two persons per bedroom, with the provisos that:

- children between 5 and 18 years of age cannot reasonably be expected to share a bedroom if they are of different sexes, and
- single household members 18 years or over should have a separate bedroom, as should parents or couples.

Application of the standard results in the following bedroom requirements:

|                                             |                     |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| single adult:                               | 0-2 bedrooms        |
| single adult (group):                       | 1 bedroom per adult |
| couple with no children:                    | 2 bedrooms          |
| sole parent or couple with 1 child:         | 2 bedrooms          |
| sole parent or couple with 2 or 3 children: | 3 bedrooms          |
| sole parent or couple with 4+ children:     | 4 bedrooms          |

## Appendix 2: Survey Form and Information

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Agency: _____</p> <p>Type of service provided: _____</p> <p>Suburb/Town: _____</p> <p>Date of Contact: _____</p> |        |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Please complete 1 form only per household requesting accommodation assistance on <b>Tuesday 2nd March 2004</b>.</p> <p>No requests for assistance on the nominated date, please tick this box. <input type="checkbox"/></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                        |        |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>1. Request for accommodation assistance made:</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">in person <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">by phone <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">by third party <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>2. Type of assistance requested:</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">accommodation only <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">accommodation and support <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">support only <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>other (please specify): _____</p> <p><b>NB:</b> If support only required please go to Q 5.</p> <p><b>3. If accommodation requested, how urgently is it required?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">within 24 hrs <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">within 7 days <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">within 14 days <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">more than 14 days <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>4. Type of accommodation required?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">crisis/short-term accommodation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">medium/long-term accommodation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">community housing <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">public housing <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">private rental <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>other (please specify): _____</p> <p><b>5. Household type making request?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Couple with children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Couple no children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Single parent with children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Single person <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Group <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>other (please specify) _____</p> <p><b>6. Age &amp; Sex of household members?</b></p> <p>Please write no. of people requiring assistance in each age group:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Male</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Female</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>under 14 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>15 to 24 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>25 to 34 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>35 to 44 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>45 to 54 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>55 to 64 years</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>65 years and over</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>don't know</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> </tbody> </table> |                                                                                                                                        | Male   | Female | under 14 years | _____ | _____ | 15 to 24 years | _____ | _____ | 25 to 34 years | _____ | _____ | 35 to 44 years | _____ | _____ | 45 to 54 years | _____ | _____ | 55 to 64 years | _____ | _____ | 65 years and over | _____ | _____ | don't know | _____ | _____ | <p><b>7. Where did the household stay last night?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">a car/ tent/park/street/squat <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">emergency accommodation/refuge <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">other supported accommodation <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">own home owned or being purchased <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">rented private/public/community <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">caravan <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">rooming house/hostel <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">hotel/motel <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">institution <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>other (please specify) _____</p> <p><b>8. Who did the household stay with last night?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">alone <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">alone with child(ren) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">with parent(s) guardian <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">with foster family <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">temporarily with friend(s) or relatives <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">with spouse/ partner <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">with spouse partner and child(ren) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">living with other unrelated persons <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>other (please specify) _____</p> <p><b>9. Combined weekly household income?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$0 to 99 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$100 to 199 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$200 to 299 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$300 to 399 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$400 to 499 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$500 to 599 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$600 to 699 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">\$700 plus <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">don't know <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>10. Cultural background</b></p> <p>Please write no. in household identifying as:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Culturally and Linguistically Diverse <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">not ATSI or CALD <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Male                                                                                                                                   | Female |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| under 14 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 15 to 24 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 25 to 34 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 35 to 44 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 45 to 54 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 55 to 64 years                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 65 years and over                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| don't know                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | _____                                                                                                                                  | _____  |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>Please return completed surveys by 16/3/2004</b></p> <p><b>By Facsimile:</b> 9325 8113 or</p> <p><b>Mail:</b> Shelter WA, 33 Moore St, East Perth 6004</p> <p><b>Further Information:</b></p> <p><b>Phone:</b> Shayde or Paul on 9325 6660</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:homeless.project@shelterwa.org.au">homeless.project@shelterwa.org.au</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        |        |        |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                |       |       |                   |       |       |            |       |       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## About the Survey:

**When to complete a Survey form:** Please complete one survey only, for each homeless household requesting accommodation assistance from your agency on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2004.

**How to decide who is Homelessness:** For the purpose of this survey, when deciding who is homeless please use the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of homelessness which includes:

- **Primary homelessness:** people without conventional accommodation;
- **Secondary homelessness:** people who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another; and,
- **Tertiary homelessness:** People who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis.

### The Questions

In order to provide continuity, the questions in this survey are the same as those in the previous homelessness surveys conducted by Shelter WA in June 2001, March 2002, September 2002 and February 2003.

1. This question asks for information about the method used by homeless households to access your agency.
2. This question aims to identify the type of service homeless households are approaching your agency to provide.
3. This question aims to identify the level of urgency of the homeless households request for assistance.
4. This question aims to identify the type of accommodation assistance being requested by the homeless household.
5. This question aims to develop a profile of the types of households that are homeless.
6. This question aims to identify the number and age of people who are homeless.
7. This question aims to identify the type of tenure arrangement (i.e. ownership; rental etc...) the household stayed in last night.
8. This question aims to identify who the household stayed with last night.
9. This question help to build an income profile of homeless households and their ability to afford accommodation.
10. This question aims to build a cultural profile of homeless households.

**Additional Surveys:** If you require additional survey forms please photocopy.

**Further Questions:** Please contact Paul Pendergast at Shelter WA on 08 9325 6660 or e-mail [homeless.project@shelterwa.org.au](mailto:homeless.project@shelterwa.org.au)