



Homelessness counts in Tasmania

Shelter Tas, the peak body for housing and homelessness in Tasmania, is pleased to promote the events around the State as part of Homelessness Week 2016. Homelessness Week is a national event held from August 1-7, which aims to raise awareness of people experiencing homelessness and the issues they face.

“The idea behind this year’s theme, ‘homelessness counts’, is to draw attention to the fact that anyone can experience homelessness in the community. It also relates to this week’s Census and the importance of correctly identifying and including people experiencing homelessness in the count”, Shelter Tas Executive Officer, Pattie Chugg said.

The last Census was held in 2011, and reported 1,579 people experiencing homelessness in Tasmania.

“The Census is so important, because for the first time in 5 years, we will have a reliable and accurate measure of the number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night across the country, and we’ll see if that number has increased or not”, Ms Chugg said.

People often think that homelessness just means sleeping rough, but this makes up only 6% of the homeless population. The Census will include people couch surfing and living in other insecure accommodation.

“Homelessness is far more common than people think and we need to take into account the other 94% of people experiencing homelessness who are in insecure, temporary and often unsafe places. These people are women who’ve slept in their car with their children, young people couch-surfing because they can’t stay at home or families staying in motels who’ve been evicted because they can’t pay their rent”, Ms Chugg said.

Alarmingly, 25% of the homeless population in Tasmania are between 12 and 24 years old, with children under 12 making up nearly 15% of the homeless population

“The aim of Homelessness Week is for the community to work together to raise awareness of homelessness and the information gathered in the Census will help to plan services like housing and healthcare. So both of these upcoming events are significant in different ways”, Ms Chugg said.

To mark Homelessness Week 2016, Minister for Human Services, Jacquie Petrusma will launch the week at Trinity Hill, and organisations will be holding events in Hobart, Devonport and Launceston. You can go to the Shelter Tas website to find out more about events during the week.

Shelter Tas would like to acknowledge our members who work with vulnerable people every day, as well as all Tasmanians who have or who are currently experiencing homelessness.

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