

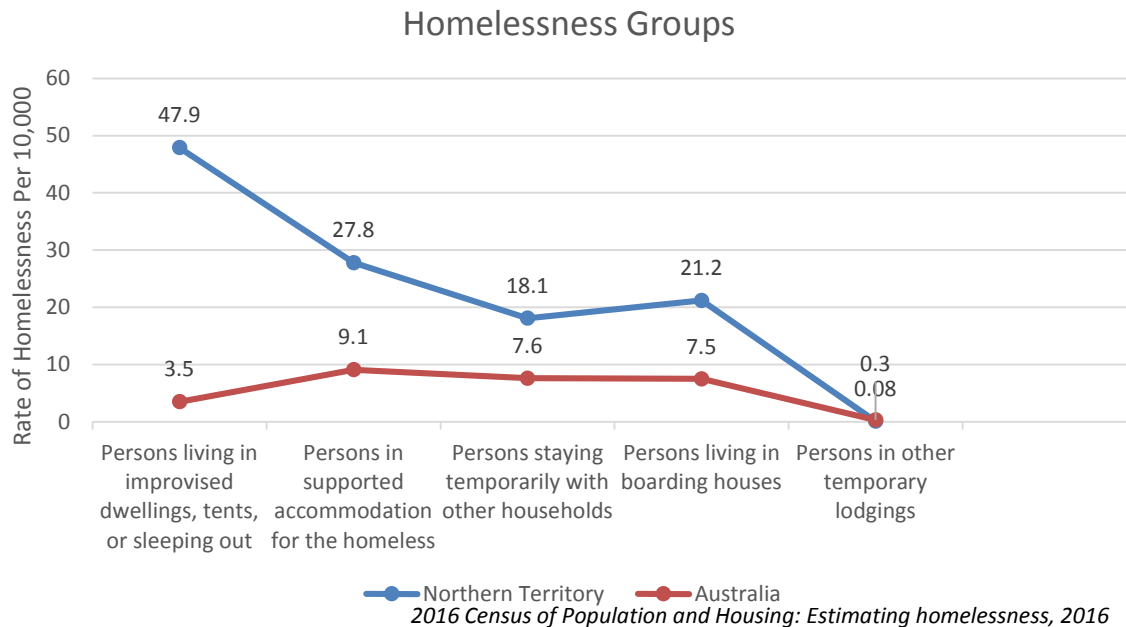
AHURI National Homelessness Conference 2018

Visitors and Rough Sleepers

August 2018

Homelessness – ABS Data

- The NT has 13.6 times the national average of people sleeping rough.



- NT - 483.5 per 10,000 living in severely overcrowded dwellings, national rate of 21.8 per 10,000 people.

Top End Surveys

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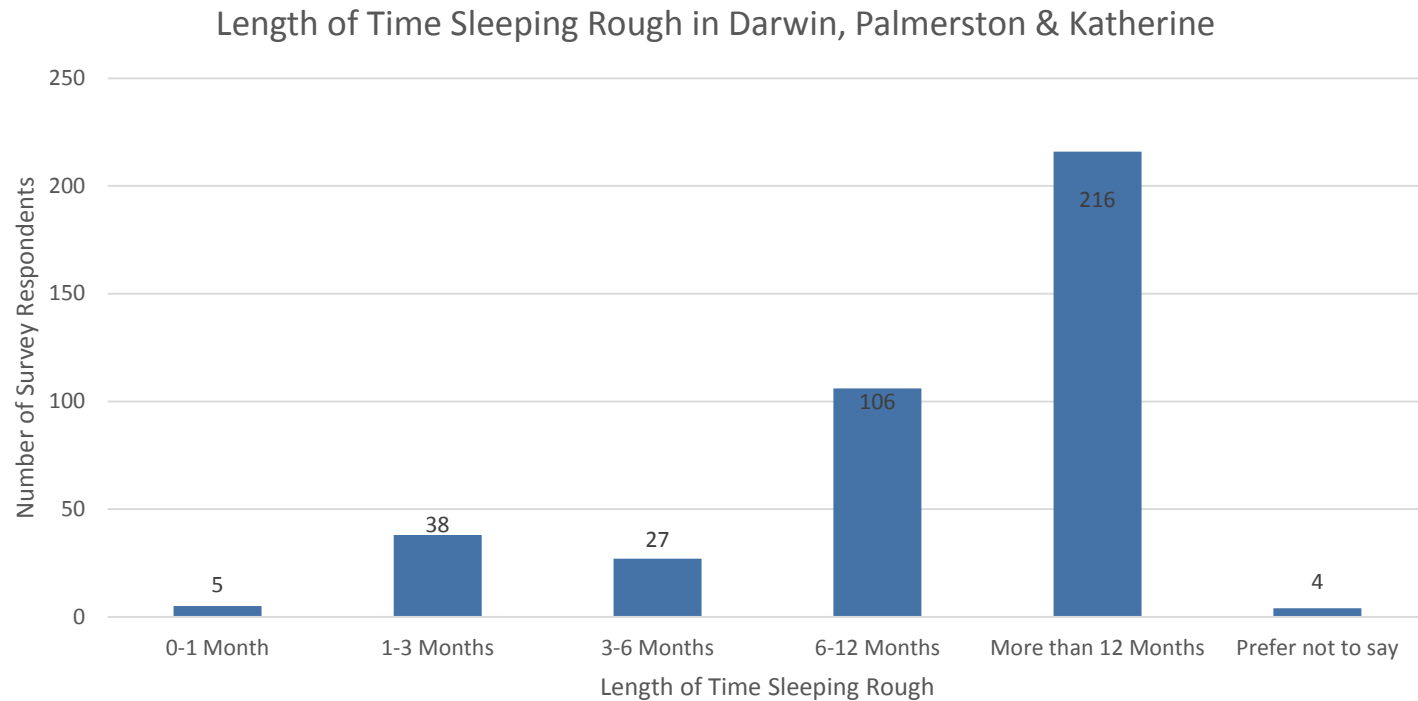
- Several studies have been undertaken over the past 10 years into the experience of rough sleeping in the Top End including:
 - ***2008 Being Undesirable in the Long Grass - National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund***
 - ***2012 Indigenous Women and the role of Transactional Sex in Homelessness***
 - ***2013 Keeping Off the Streets – Flinders University***
 - ***2013 Message in a Bottle – Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation***
 - ***2018 Homelessness & Accommodation Responses to Rough Sleepers – NT Department of Housing and Community Development***
- Surveys engaged rough sleepers through a narrative interview process, used local Aboriginal people and organisations with connections to the community and where possible, engaged rough sleepers in language.

Top End Surveys - findings

- People travel from Top End remote communities to Darwin for a variety of reasons
 - Difficulties in home community
 - Visiting friends and family
 - Boredom/Holiday
 - Access to Medical & other services
- People experience a complex range of issues:
 - High levels of trauma prior to, or while rough sleeping
 - Physical, mental health/drug and alcohol issues
 - Violence and gender inequality
 - Discrimination and high levels of interaction with police
 - Perception/engage in anti social behavior.

Top End Surveys

- The 2018 survey revealed the highest proportion to date of **long term** rough sleeping amongst people surveyed. Posing new policy and program challenges and a shift in thinking from visitors to rough sleepers.



Current/future responses to rough sleeping

Current Responses

- Policy and program responses to date have included a strong focus on returning people to country and meeting immediate needs:
 - Day and Night patrols
 - Return to Country program
 - Assertive Outreach programs
- Aimed at preventing people from becoming long term rough sleepers
- Need for a stronger response focus on longer term programs that improve wellbeing and contribute to housing outcomes.

Future Responses

- The most recent survey asked rough sleepers the type of services that would assist them the most.
- Long term housing was not a key service sought by survey participants.
- Services sought included accommodation but the majority of participants preferred short stay options and self serviced camping grounds.
- Dignity services where rough sleepers could access basic services such as toilets, showers, laundry facilities and support services were considered a necessity by the focus groups.
- Aligned to these requirements a focus on dignity services with an in reach engagement model has been trialed in Katherine with significant success.

The Katherine Doorways Hub

- Dignity services
 - Showers/Toilets and laundry services
 - Lockers/storage
 - Meal Service
 - Support services
 - Financial
 - Parenting
 - Health
 - Aged Care
 - Legal
 - Alcohol & Other Drugs
 - Housing
 - Outcomes
 - Appropriate, stable housing
 - Engagement with services
 - Increased contact with children in care
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Thank You

NT Department of Housing & Community Development
Yvette Park, Director Strategy