StreetCount 2016

Final Report

September 2016

Acknowledgements

The City of Melbourne would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many people and organisations that made StreetCount 2016 possible. Particular thanks go to the 172 volunteers who helped with this year's StreetCount, a tally which included 76 volunteers from the City of Melbourne and 34 staff from Launch Housing.

Partner agencies are critical to the successful running of StreetCount and the City of Melbourne thanks the following organisations for their support in the StreetCount, the Day Count:

Launch Housing	Anglicare Victoria
Travellers Aid	cohealth
VincentCare	Frontyard
Yarra Community Housing	Salvation Army Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation
The Salvation Army 614	
	Victoria Police

An array of City of Melbourne staff also made valuable contributions to the StreetCount in 2016, including:

Park Rangers	Security services
Communications team	City Research team
Cartographers	Volunteers
City People team	

The Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education and Support Program (PESP) team worked as key advisors to the StreetCount, as well as sharing their stories of rough sleeping with volunteers during training. Their generosity and honesty helped give meaning and purpose to the StreetCount. PESP members also worked to promote the event with homelessness support agencies and participated in the StreetCount itself, which was of great assistance.

The following organisations sponsored the survey respondent thank you packs and provided on-site support during the StreetCount itself. We thank them for their generous contributions:

Infoxchange	Coles Supermarkets
Society of St Vincent de Paul	Carmen's
Public Transport Victoria	GreenCo parking

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Abbreviations and key terms

Term	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Central city	Area of the City of Melbourne bounded by Spring St, Victoria St, Spencer St and the Yarra River (marked as areas M1-M23 on Appendix A)
CHP PESP	Council to Homeless Persons' Peer Education and Support Program: a volunteer program that provides people who have experienced homelessness with the opportunity to improve the service system
Day Count	Count of people using City of Melbourne-based homelessness services who slept rough the previous night (when the main StreetCount occurred)
Hotspot	An area where people sleeping rough are known to sleep, often in groups
Point-in-time Count	A count of people sleeping rough, usually taken over one 24-hour period. The methodology used by StreetCount
Rough sleepers	People sleeping outside, including on the streets, in parks, cars or train stations. For the purposes of StreetCount, people sleeping in squats or makeshift shelters not designed or suitable for human habitation are also counted as rough sleeping
Smartphone	A mobile phone that has the capacity to connect to the internet

Executive summary

The City of Melbourne conducted its first StreetCount in 2008, with the intention of improving our understanding of the homeless population of the City of Melbourne and to assist us in developing new pathways into secure housing.

The StreetCount methodology was developed for the 2008 StreetCount and has subsequently been used in the following six StreetCounts – staged in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2016 – in order to allow for comparative analysis and to ensure consistency across time. In 2012, StreetCount changed from an annual project to a biennial count, supplemented by a qualitative research project on rough sleeping in alternate years.

At this stage, no other local government in Victoria conducts regular counts of people sleeping rough in their municipalities.

Despite some controversy overseas and a few well–noted methodological limitations, point-in-time counts of people sleeping rough are a widely accepted process both in comparable foreign countries and other Australian cities. A review of Australian and international methodologies used for counting rough sleepers showed that Melbourne's StreetCount is consistent with good practice.

StreetCount 2016 aims to continue developing our understanding of rough sleeping in Melbourne, which is difficult to count using more traditional data collection methods. Undertaking a point-in-time count is considered the best available method for counting rough sleeping and can be used as a tool to monitor the impact and effectiveness of current services, initiatives and policies to reduce homelessness.

This report presents the findings of the City of Melbourne's 2016 StreetCount, which was held on the morning of Tuesday 7 June. Note that the Bureau of Meteorology's weather observations for this date were fairly mild, with a minimum temperature of 10.5^{o} Celsius and no rainfall recorded.

Data summary

Below is a summary of the data collected in StreetCount 2016, both through direct observation and verbal survey. The summary shows the percentage of rough sleepers in each category, with the total number recorded in brackets.

A total of 247 rough sleepers were counted across the StreetCount and Day Count. Of those:

- 78% were aged between 26 and 60 (192 people), with 57% of that group aged under 40 (110 people).
- 79% were male (195 people) and 14% were female (35 people) with the remaining 7% recorded as unsure.
- 72% presented as single (176 people).
- 75% were sleeping rough in the central city (186 people).
- 49% were sleeping rough on the street (122 people), 20% were in parks (50 people) and 31% were sleeping in other locations (75 people).

Survey results

A total of 120 rough sleepers responded to the 2016 StreetCount survey across both the StreetCount and Day Count. Of those:

- 51% had stayed in their current location for under one month (61 people) and 16% reported staying in their current location for over one year (19 people).
- 31% had stayed in the one place for the last month (37 people) and 18% had stayed in more than seven places in the last month (21 people).
- Only 6% had been moving around for less than one month (7 people), while 68% had been moving around for more than one year (78 people), including 39 people who reported moving around for more than five years.
- 34% said they would prefer to live in the City of Melbourne (33 people).
- 69% were Australian-born (82 people) and 14% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (17 people).
- 72% planned to use mainly city-based services later in the day (87 people).
- 45% were on the public housing waiting list (51 people).
- 39% said they used a smartphone (45 people).

Comparative summary

Below are a number of key comparisons between 2016 and previous StreetCount data:

- The total number of people counted as rough sleeping across all seven count years was 883.
- There was an increase of 74% in the total StreetCount figures between 2014 and 2016, from 142 to 247 rough sleepers. This included a 115% increase in the number of people observed to be sleeping rough, from 59 to 127 people.
- In 2016, 49% of rough sleepers (122 people) were recorded as sleeping on the streets of Melbourne (as compared to other locations, such as train stations and parks). This represents a substantial increase on the long-term StreetCount average of 30%.

- Based on their Voluntary Identifier Codes, only 12 people counted in StreetCount 2016 had been counted in previous years.

The limitations of the Melbourne StreetCount methodology are similar to those for other Australian and international counts. StreetCount may miss rough sleepers who are transient and move between different locations. Additionally, StreetCount only covers a small proportion of the City of Melbourne municipality (approximately 20%), which includes the central city, North Melbourne, and West Melbourne. It does not include other municipalities where rough sleeping is known to occur, such as the Port Phillip and Yarra local government areas.

Despite the efforts of the City of Melbourne and the homelessness services and charities operating within its borders, StreetCount 2016 shows that the number of people sleeping rough in the municipality has increased substantially over the past two years.

1. Introduction

StreetCount is a biennial City of Melbourne initiative that uses volunteers to perform a point-in-time count of the number of people sleeping rough in the parks and streets of the Melbourne municipal area. The StreetCount methodology was developed for the first count in 2008 and has subsequently been used in the 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2016 StreetCounts, in order to allow for comparative analysis between surveys and to ensure consistency across time. In 2012, StreetCount changed from an annual project to a biennial count, to be supplemented by a qualitative research project on rough sleeping in alternate years.

At this stage, no other local government in Victoria conducts regular counts of people sleeping rough in their municipalities.

The City of Melbourne has undertaken these StreetCounts to provide a measure of rough sleeping in the municipality over time. The original count was developed in line with the strategies for solving homelessness outlined by the US organisation Common Ground, an approach which informed Australian homelessness policy at all levels in 2008. One of the key components of the Common Ground strategy was the idea that homelessness could not be solved until it had been adequately measured (Haggerty, 2005, p. 5).

StreetCount 2016 aims to continue improving our understanding of rough sleeping in Melbourne. While an imperfect measure, undertaking a point-in-time count is considered the best available method for measuring rough sleeping and the data provided can be used to offer insights into the impact of services, initiatives and policies designed to reduce homelessness.

The City of Melbourne's commitment to developing sustainable pathways out of homelessness is articulated in the organisation's *Pathways: Homelessness Strategy 2014–2017*. StreetCount sits under the key strategic theme of:

> **1. Know our City** – research, consult, refresh and share our knowledge of homelessness in Melbourne (City of Melbourne, 2014, p. 13).

The key action from *Pathways* relating to StreetCount is:

> **1.6** – Continue to hold an annual StreetCount research project with a qualitative data collection program every second year to assess needs and continue to build a picture of homelessness in our city (City of Melbourne, 2014, p. 13).

> In *Pathways*, the City of Melbourne also committed to three key aspirational measures for our 2014-17 strategy, two of which relate to the issue of people sleeping rough (City of Melbourne, 2014, p. 17):

> **Housing people**

> Work with our partners to provide long term supportive housing and/or housing first initiatives for 100 people including those sleeping rough.

> **Rough sleepers**

> Demonstrate we have improved service coordination for 100 people (including rough sleepers) experiencing homelessness.

StreetCount is a crucial tool for the City of Melbourne and its partners to use in both meeting these aspirational measures and better understanding the barriers to doing so.

Launch Housing were contracted to organise and deliver the 2016 StreetCount, which included recruiting, training and supporting volunteers, engaging agencies, collecting hotspot intelligence and developing and

distributing promotional material. Launch Housing were supported in this task by City of Melbourne staff from the Social Investment branch.

Resolve Community Consulting was contracted to collate, analyse and report on the data collected in StreetCount 2016. Resolve (together with Black Ink Writing and Consulting) developed the original StreetCount methodology in 2008 – still used by the City of Melbourne today – and prepared this Final Report.

The Final Report sets out the background, methodology and findings of the 2016 StreetCount. The report briefly explains the definitions used by City of Melbourne in its work on homelessness and discusses in greater detail the StreetCount methodology. The report then presents the findings of the 2016 StreetCount, including charts and data analysis.

2.   Definitions of homelessness

Defining what it means to be homeless is a difficult task, but it is critical to have an accepted working definition when attempting to measure the number of people experiencing homelessness. Definitions of homelessness vary considerably from country to country and this can affect the quality of data sourced from similar point-in-time surveys, as well as our consideration of other models of homelessness service provision.

The *Pathways* strategy paper contains a comprehensive discussion of the definitions of homelessness that the City of Melbourne uses to underpin its work in this area. For the sake of reference, the definitions commonly accepted in Australia are those developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2012, which built on the "cultural definition" of homelessness proposed by Melbourne academics Chris Chamberlain and David MacKenzie.

Chamberlain and MacKenzie defined homelessness relative to an accepted Australian norm of adequate housing; namely a small rented flat with the minimum required amenities – bedroom, living room, bathroom, kitchen. The three categories of homelessness (primary, secondary and tertiary) that they developed from this definition have informed data collection and supported better targeting of services since their introduction in 1992. These categories are (Chamberlain and MacKenzie, 1992, p. 291):

- **Primary homelessness:** People without conventional accommodation. Includes people living on the streets, sleeping in derelict buildings or using cars for temporary shelter.
- **Secondary homelessness:** People who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. This category covers people accommodated by homeless services, people residing temporarily with family and friends and those using boarding houses on an occasional basis.
- **Tertiary homelessness:** People who live in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis. This type of accommodation typically does not have self-contained rooms and residents share bathroom and kitchen facilities. Boarding house residents do not have the security provided by a lease.

In 2012, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released a new definition of homelessness (not including homelessness in Indigenous populations). The ABS definition designates homelessness as a lack of one or more of the elements that represent 'home'. These elements may include 'a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety and the ability to control living space' (ABS 2012, p. 7). It goes on:

> When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:
>
> - Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
> - Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
> - Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations

The ABS definition 'is informed by an understanding of homelessness as "home"lessness, not rooflessness' (ABS, 2012, p. 7), and is considered to be broader than the definition proposed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie.

A number of categories called 'Homeless Operational Groups' were developed to help the ABS to measure homelessness in the Census. These new categories are (ABS, 2012, p. 23):

1. Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out
2. Persons living in short-term supported accommodation for the homeless
3. Persons staying temporarily with other households
4. Persons living in boarding houses

5. Persons living temporarily in other temporary lodgings

6. Persons living in severely crowded dwellings

The 2001 and 2006 Censuses were recounted using these new definitions and they were also deployed in 2011. Notably, while more people were counted as being homeless under these categories, the changes have led to undercounts for groups whose experience of homelessness are more hidden, in particular young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

The ABS's first Homeless Operational Group broadly equates with Chamberlain and MacKenzie's concept of primary homelessness, and we have used these as the basis for our definition of rough sleeping. For the purposes of StreetCount 2016, then, a rough sleeper refers to people sleeping in public spaces, such as parks, pavements, doorways and under bridges, as well as in cars, squats and train stations.

3.   StreetCount 2016 methodology

The same methodology has been used for all seven StreetCounts, in order to ensure consistency and comparability of data over time. While minor refinements have been made, these have been done in such a way as to ensure negligible impact on data consistency and comparability. This section provides an overview of the count process used for StreetCount 2016.

The 2016 StreetCount was conducted from 4.30am to 7.30am on the morning of Tuesday 7 June.

3.1   Count methods

This year StreetCount volunteers covered the North/West Melbourne and central city areas, as well as the Fitzroy Gardens. These are areas where local intelligence pointed to regular sightings of rough sleepers. It should be noted that this is less than 20% of the total Melbourne municipal area. The area was divided into 43 individual count sections and detailed street and satellite maps were provided to volunteers (Appendix A).

Two main count methods were used in the 2016 StreetCount – direct observation and a verbal survey. During the StreetCount, rough sleepers who were awake were asked to complete the survey. Those who were asleep were not to be woken up and only observations were recorded for these people.

Nine homelessness services were involved in the Day Count in 2016. Volunteers attended these services later on Tuesday 7 June and administered the survey on-site to people who had slept rough in the City of Melbourne on the previous night.

You can see the survey used for StreetCount 2016 at Appendix B. Only one survey was used in 2016, in a bid to increase consistency between the StreetCount and Day Count, as well as for ease of data entry. This seemed to work well on the whole, although improved training for Day Count volunteers could enhance their completion of the survey forms.

In 2016, there were also some changes made to the survey form. The main change was the addition of Question 17: 'Do you use a smartphone?' This question was included to better understand smartphone usage amongst rough sleepers, with a view to using the technology in new forms of service provision and outreach.

3.2   Hotspots

A critical component of the StreetCount methodology is gathering intelligence from homelessness services on hotspots for rough sleepers. This helps in two ways: by focussing the count on areas of known rough sleeping; and gauging the safety of hotspots for volunteers. Some hotspots were deemed suitable only for very experienced professionals and in 2016 these were covered by staff from the Salvation Army 614.

3.3   StreetCount timing and conditions

The StreetCount has always been held on the first Tuesday in June. A Tuesday morning was originally selected to avoid late night revellers who may pose a safety risk to both volunteers and rough sleepers. The count is held in winter when only those in need are likely to be sleeping rough, rather than, for example, backpackers or campers. This is consistent with international count methodologies. The 4.30am to 7.30am count period allows volunteers to catch people as they are waking up for the day, giving them a better chance to conduct the verbal survey.

The Bureau of Meteorology's weather observations for 7 June were fairly mild, with a minimum temperature of 10.5 degrees Celsius and no rainfall recorded.

3.4   Volunteers

StreetCount is primarily conducted by volunteers. Volunteers were split into teams, operating under the supervision of team leaders, who are usually experienced homelessness workers. Volunteers worked in sub-teams of two or three, typically comprised of a volunteer with experience in the homelessness sector and one or two general volunteers. In 2016, there were a total of 172 volunteers, including the 20 who conducted the Day Count. Volunteer and team leader training was provided and was a pre-requisite for participation in both counts.

3.5   Including people with a lived experience of homelessness

From both a practical and philosophical standpoint, it is important to include people with a lived experience of homelessness in the StreetCount. Members of the Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education Support Program all have a lived experience of homelessness and were crucial to the success of the 2016 StreetCount. They worked as key advisors, as well as sharing their stories of rough sleeping at the volunteer training, which helped give meaning and purpose to the StreetCount. They promoted the event with homelessness support agencies and also participated in the StreetCount itself.

3.6   Limitations to the methodology

The limitations of the Melbourne StreetCount methodology are similar to those for other Australian and international counts.

In summary, the key issues for the Melbourne StreetCount methodology are:

- StreetCount does not count all people who are homeless in the Melbourne municipality, as it does not include people in secondary and tertiary categories of homelessness.
- StreetCount may miss rough sleepers who are transient or move between different locations.
- StreetCount is limited to a small section of the Melbourne municipal area and does not include other municipalities where rough sleeping is known to occur, such as the Cities of Port Phillip and Yarra.
- Rough sleepers may be double counted in the StreetCount and the Day Count (although this is mitigated by the Voluntary Identifier Code).

3.7   How does Melbourne's StreetCount compare with national and international best practice?

Despite some controversy overseas, and a few well-noted methodological limitations, point-in-time counts of people sleeping rough are a widely accepted process both in comparable foreign countries and other Australian cities. There is substantial variation in how street counts are conducted around the world, so it is important to ensure that the methods used suit the location and match the resources available.

The checklist below indicates how Melbourne's StreetCount compares against national and international standards of good practice.

Table 1: Good practice in counting rough sleepers

Good Practice in Counting Rough Sleepers	Does Melbourne's StreetCount measure up?
Winter count (at minimum)	Yes
Night/early morning count	Yes
Inclusion of people using day centres/day count on same day	Yes
Annual/biannual counts	Yes
Use of known location/hotspots	Yes
Use of a survey tool to collect contextual information	Yes
Consistent definition of homelessness and rough sleeping	Yes
Use of estimates when counts cannot be conducted	No
Local government commitment to count	Yes
State government support for count	No
Effective liaison with media to ensure sensitive handling of reporting	Yes
Consistent methodology used over count years to ensure comparability	Yes
Working with neighbouring municipalities to give a more reliable figure over a broader area	No
Supervision, training and safety procedures for volunteers	Yes
Token of thanks for Count survey participants	Yes

# 4.   StreetCount 2016 charts and data analysis

In total, 247 people were recorded during StreetCount 2016 with:

- 127 people observed during the early morning StreetCount but not surveyed (51%);
- 57 people surveyed during the early morning Street Count (23%); and
- 63 people surveyed during the Day Count (26%).

See Appendix C for a detailed comparison of StreetCount data across the years for all the Figures below.

4.1   StreetCount observation data

The age, gender, presenting unit status, location and type of shelter were recorded for all of those who came into contact with both the StreetCount and Day Count – a total of 247 people. This number was significantly higher than in any previous StreetCount; in 2014, only 142 people were reported as sleeping rough. The 2016 observation data is presented in Figure 1 through to Figure 5 below.

Figure 1: Age of Rough Sleepers (n=247)
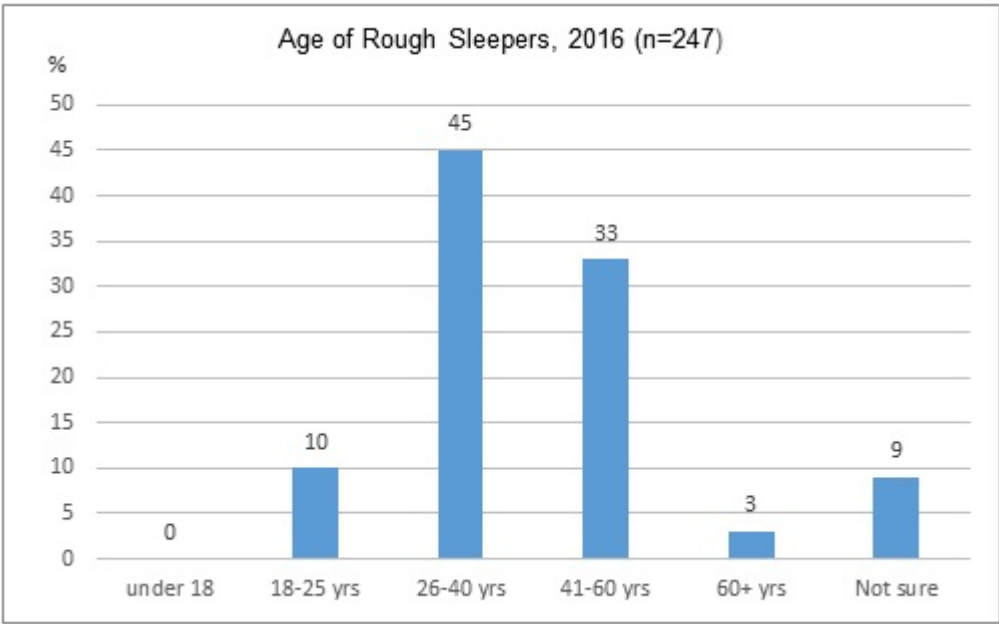
The majority of the people counted sleeping rough in 2016 were aged between 26 and 60 years (78%), including 45% in the 26–40 age bracket. Ten per cent were in the 18–25 group and 4% were aged over 60. There were no people under the age of 18 counted. Nine per cent have had their age recorded as 'unsure' because it was not possible to identify the person's age during observation or this answer was not recorded in the surveys. Where it was not possible to interview the person rough sleeping, an estimate of age was made.

Figure 2: Gender of Rough Sleepers (n=247)
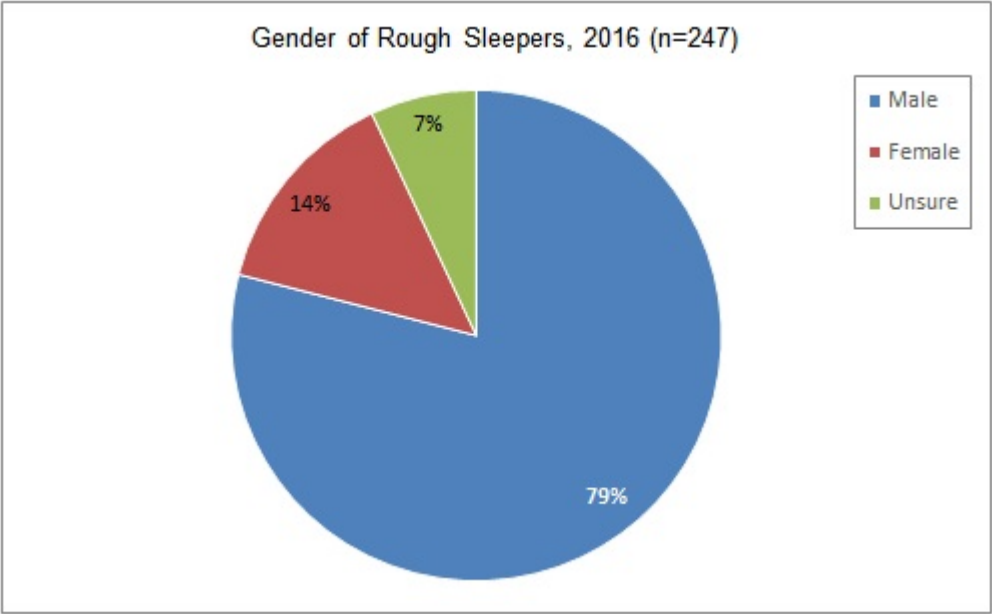
Seventy nine per cent of those counted were male (195 people) and 14% were female (35 people). A further 7% were unable to be identified due to being covered or hidden when observed or the answer was not recorded in the surveys.

Figure 3: Location of Rough Sleepers (n=247)
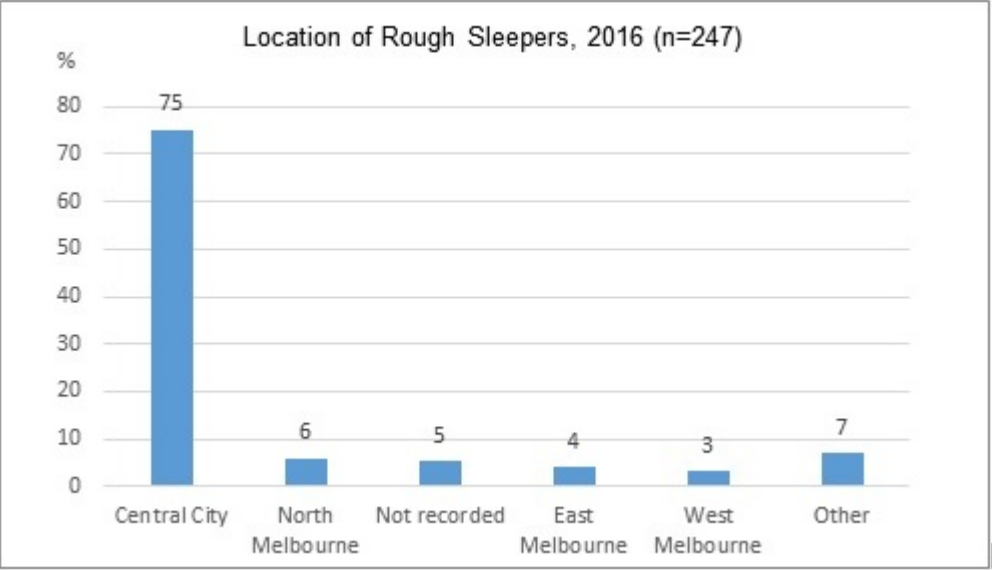
Seventy five per cent of the respondents (185 people) had slept or were sleeping in the central city. The second most populated area was North Melbourne (6%) followed by East Melbourne (4%) and West Melbourne (3%). A further 7% were reported as sleeping in other parts of the Melbourne municipal area, including four people in Flemington and four people in Southbank, while the remainder had slept in Parkville and Carlton. Five per cent of those surveyed reported 'no area' (all in Day Count).

There were 61 people sleeping in only three count areas, including the known hotspots of Enterprize Park, Southern Cross Station and the now vacated City Square protest.

Figure 4: Presenting Unit[1] (n=247)

Presenting Unit, 2016 (n=247)
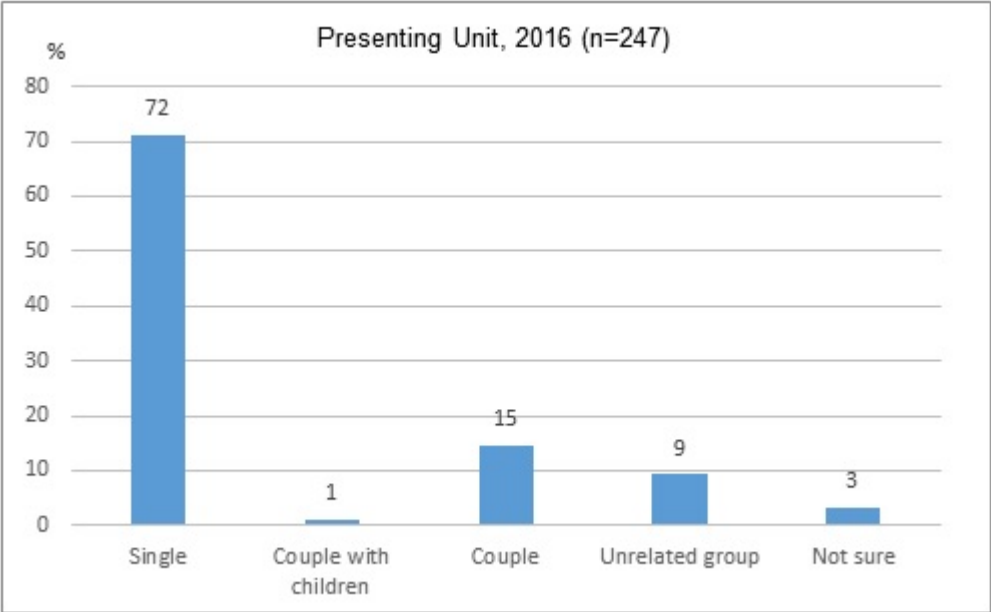
Seventy two per cent of the people counted in StreetCount 2016 presented as single. There were a further 15% who were observed as being a part of a couple and an additional three per cent of people who were observed to be part of a couple with children. Nine per cent of respondents were observed to part of an unrelated group. Note that values of less than 1% are not included in the graph, which includes the one person who was recorded as presenting with a pet.

Figure 5: Type of Shelter (n=247)

Type of Shelter Used by Rough Sleepers, 2016 (n=247)
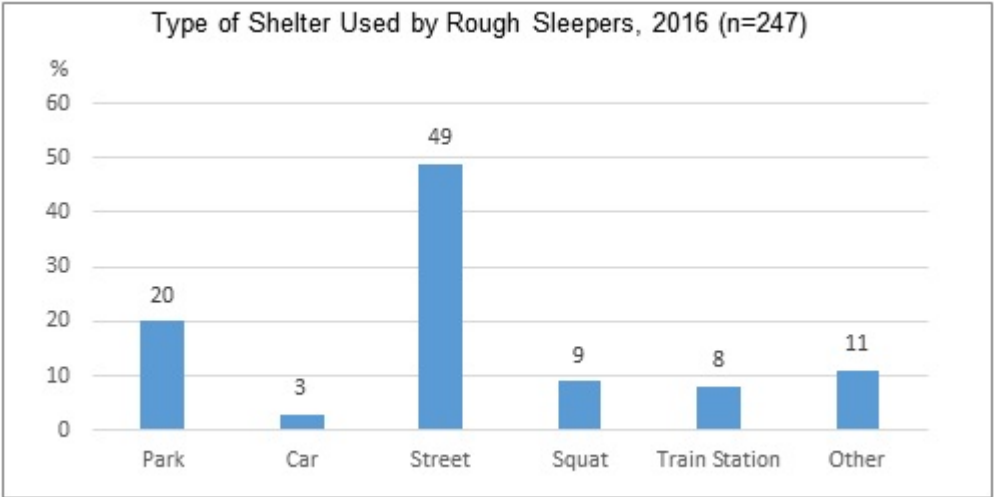
Forty nine per cent (122 people) had slept or were sleeping on the street and 20% of the people counted (50 people) had slept or were sleeping in a park. Nine per cent had slept in squats (21 people), 8% slept in train stations (20 people) and 3% had slept in a car (seven people). The remaining 11% (26 people) reported sleeping or were observed sleeping in a variety of other locations, including under bridges.

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[1] The presenting unit only represents the observed groupings of people recorded. It is not an indication of relationship as no questions were asked to ascertain relationship status.

4.2   StreetCount Survey Data

One hundred and twenty people responded to the survey in both the StreetCount proper and through the Day Count, providing a range of additional information about their experience of rough sleeping in the City of Melbourne. This information includes the length of time they have spent homeless, planned service usage and whether they are on the public housing waiting list. An additional question was added in 2016 regarding the usage of smartphones. This data is presented in Figure 6 to Figure 17.

Figure 6: Length of Time in current Location (n=120)
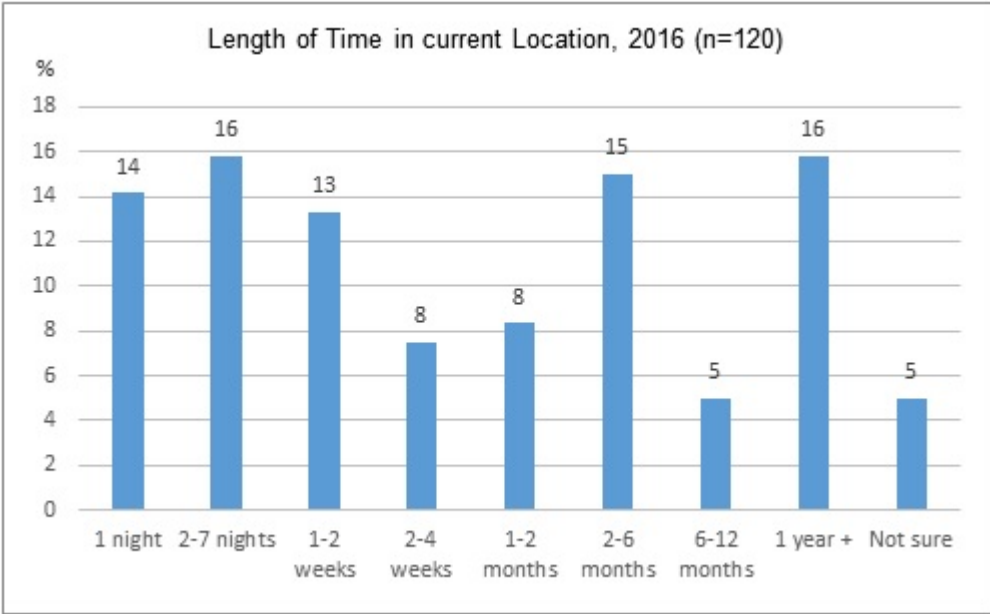
Of those who were surveyed in StreetCount 2016, 51% had been staying in their current location for under one month, including 30% who had been staying in their current location for less than a week. Twenty eight per cent of those surveyed reported staying in their current location between one and 12 months and 16% reported staying in their current location for more than one year. Five per cent of those surveyed did not answer this question or were unsure.

Figure 7: Number of Places stayed in the last Month (n=120)

Number of Places stayed in the last Month, 2016 (n=120)
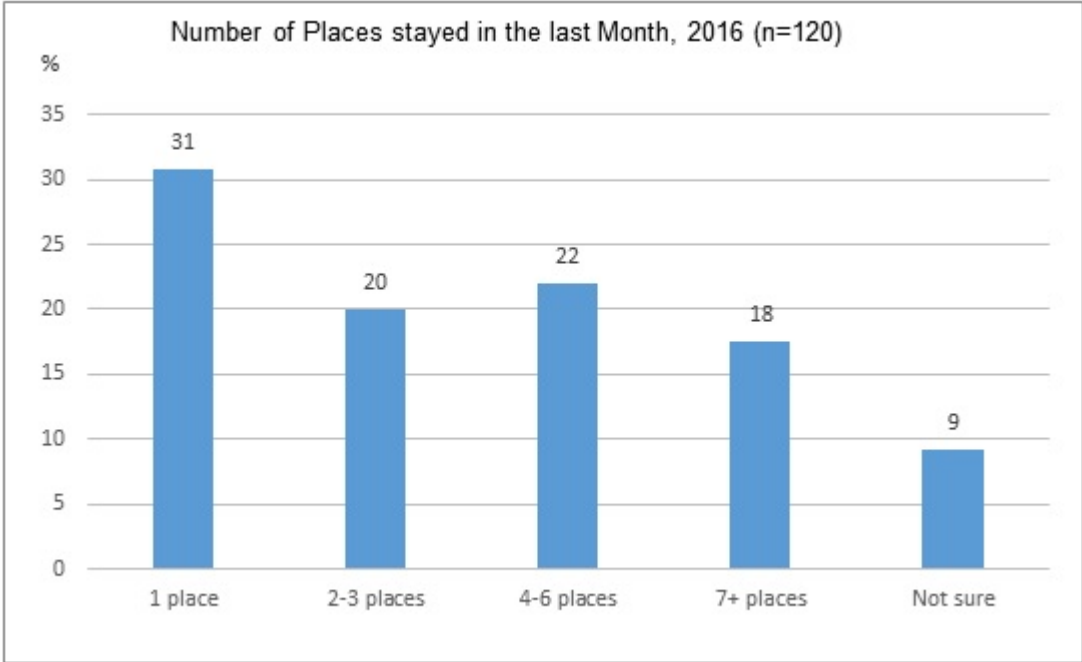
Thirty one per cent of those surveyed had stayed in one place for the last month. 20% had stayed in two to three places in the last month, while 22% had stayed in four to six. Eighteen per cent had stayed in more than seven places in the last month and 9% did not answer the question or were unsure.

Figure 8: Length of Time moving around (n=116)

Length of Time moving around, 2016 (n=116)
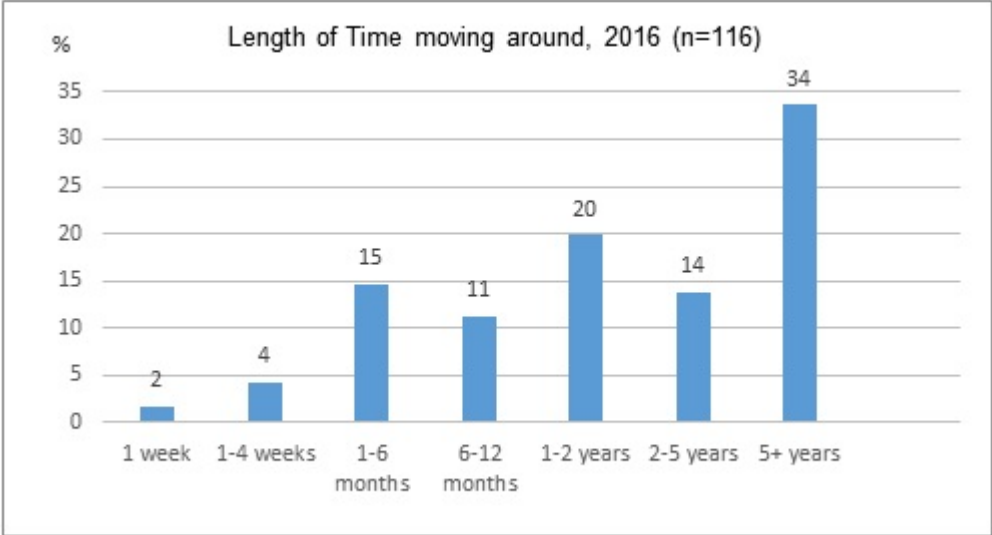
Nearly all of the 2016 survey participants had a long history of transience, with only 6% of those surveyed (seven people) having been homeless for less than a month. Sixty eight per cent (78 people) had been moving around for more than one year, including 34 who reported being transient for more than five years (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Length of Time moving around – five years+ (n=39)

Length of Time moving around, five Years+ (n=39)

- 5-9 years
- 10-20 years
- 20+

38%
26%
36%
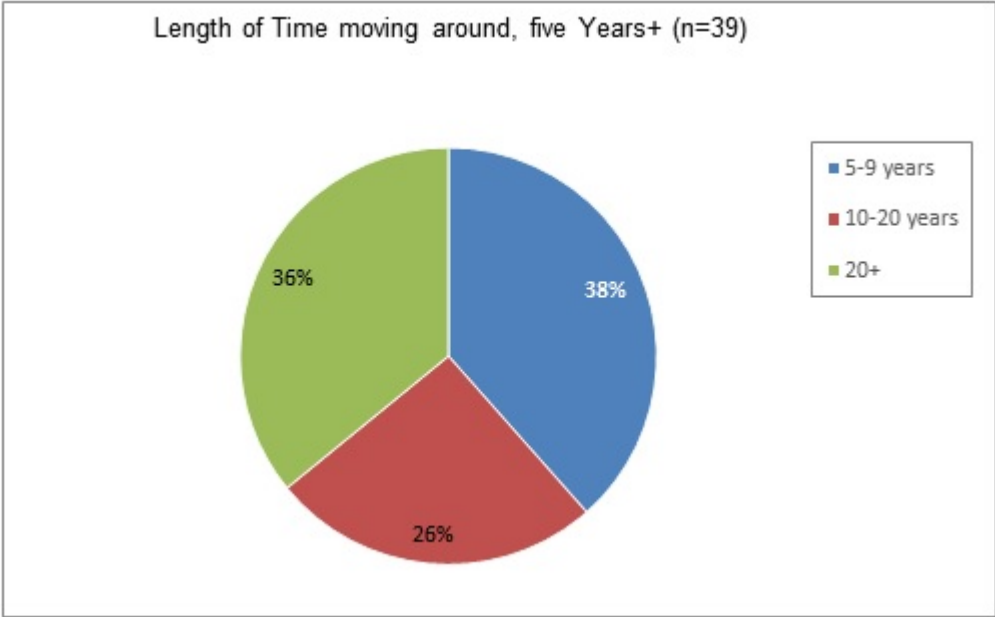
Of the 39 people who reported moving around for more than five years, 38% (15 people) had been moving around for between five and 10 years and 26% (10 people) had been moving around for 10 to 19 years. Thirty six per cent (14 people) reported moving around for 20 years or longer, including two people who said they'd been moving around for 40 years and another three who reported moving around for their 'whole life'.

Figure 10: Preferred Suburb/Town to live in (n=98)

Preferred Suburb or Town to live, 2016 (n=98)

CoM: 34
Not CoM: 40
Not sure: 26
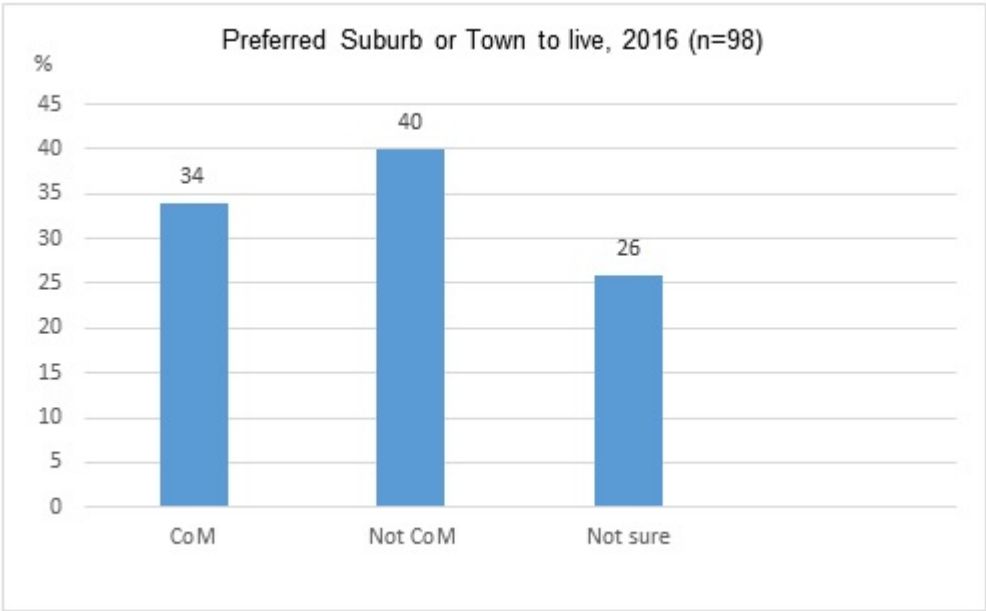
Rough sleepers were asked to nominate where they would like to live if they did have housing. The purpose of the question was to try and gauge the demand for housing from rough sleepers in the City of Melbourne itself.

Thirty four per cent of the rough sleepers surveyed said they would prefer to live in the central city or surrounding suburbs in the City of Melbourne, while 40% would prefer to live outside of the City of Melbourne, including answers such as 'country Victoria' and interstate. An extra 26% were either unsure, not specific or did not answer the question, including 16 people who said they would live anywhere and others who said 'near tram/train', 'cheap', 'share accommodation'.

Figure 11: Planned Service Usage (n=120)

Rough Sleepers' Use of Services, 2016 (n=120)

28%

72%

- Not planning to use a service - Yes planning to use a service
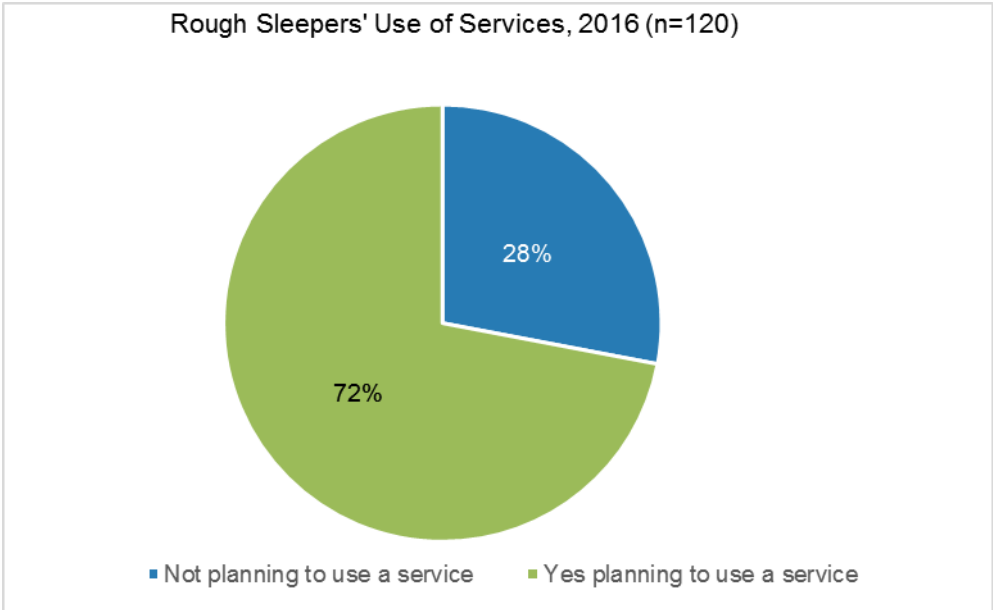
People who responded to the survey were asked whether they would seek assistance or a meal at a homelessness service later that day and 72% (87 people) said that they would.

People nominated a variety of places that they would seek assistance including the Salvation Army, Ozanam Community Centre, Living Room, St Peters, St Marks, Launch Collingwood, Sacred Heart Mission, Frontyard and various food vans. The most frequently mentioned were Salvation Army services (mentioned by 34 survey respondents). Nine people planned to visit Ozanam services later in the day, seven people each planned to go to the Living Room and St Marks and five people planned to go to St Peters.

Figure 12: Country of Birth (n=119)

Country of Birth of Rough Sleepers, 2016 (n=119)

Australia	NZ	Other	UK	India	unsure
69	11	9	5	3	3
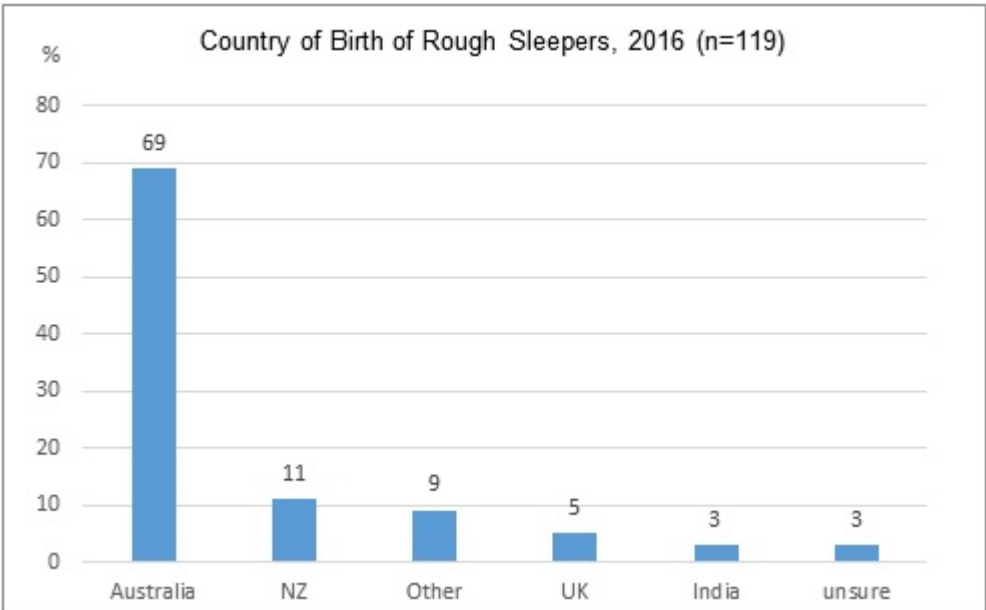
Sixty nine per cent of those surveyed identified Australia as their country of birth, 11% (13) identified as New Zealanders, 5% (six people) were born in the UK and 3% (four people) identified as Indian. A further 9% (11 people) were born in other countries, including Turkey, Vietnam, South Africa, South/Sudan and Thailand.

Figure 13: Identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (n=119)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Status of Rough Sleepers, 2016 (n=119)

14%

86%

■ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

■ Not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
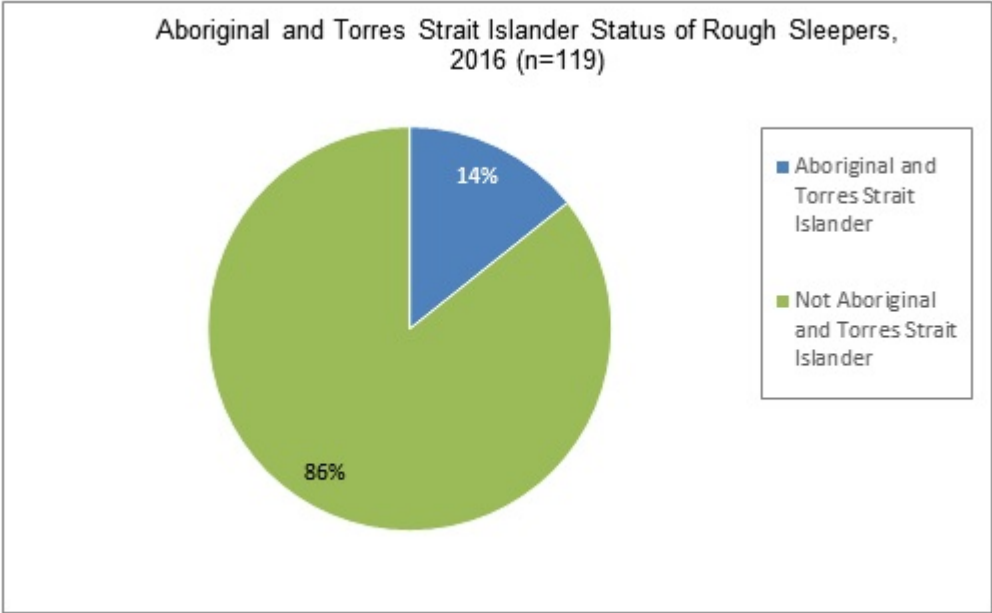
Fourteen per cent (17 people) of the surveyed rough sleepers identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Figure 14: Smartphone Usage (n=116)

Rough Sleepers Smartphone Usage, 2016 (n=116)

■ No Smartphone
■ Yes Smartphone

39%

61%
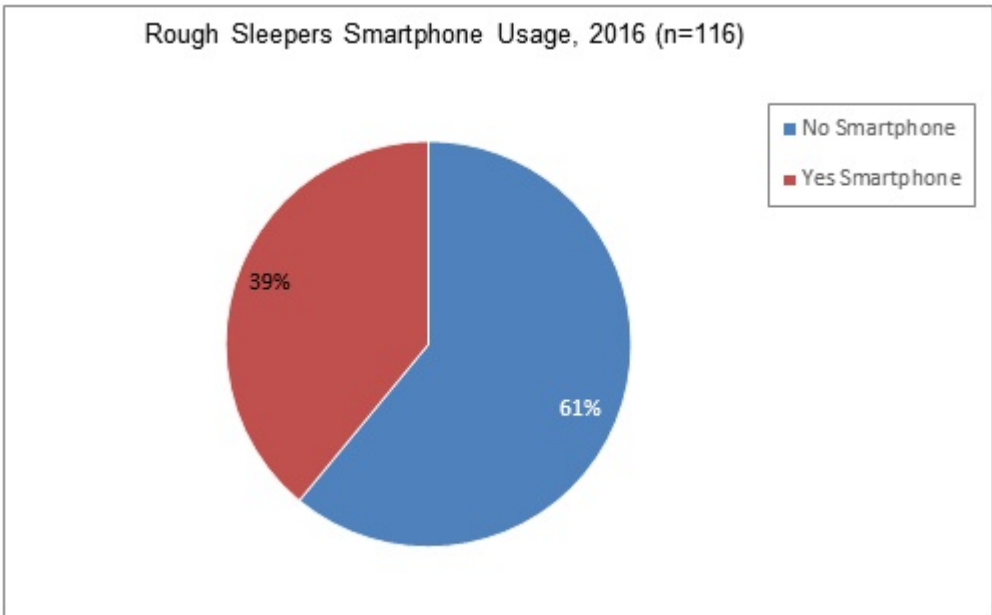
Sixty one per cent (71 people) of those surveyed did not use a smartphone, while the other 39% (45 people) did. However, there were marked disparities in smartphone usage between those surveyed during the StreetCount and the Day Count, which can be seen in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Smartphone Usage Comparison between StreetCount and Day Count
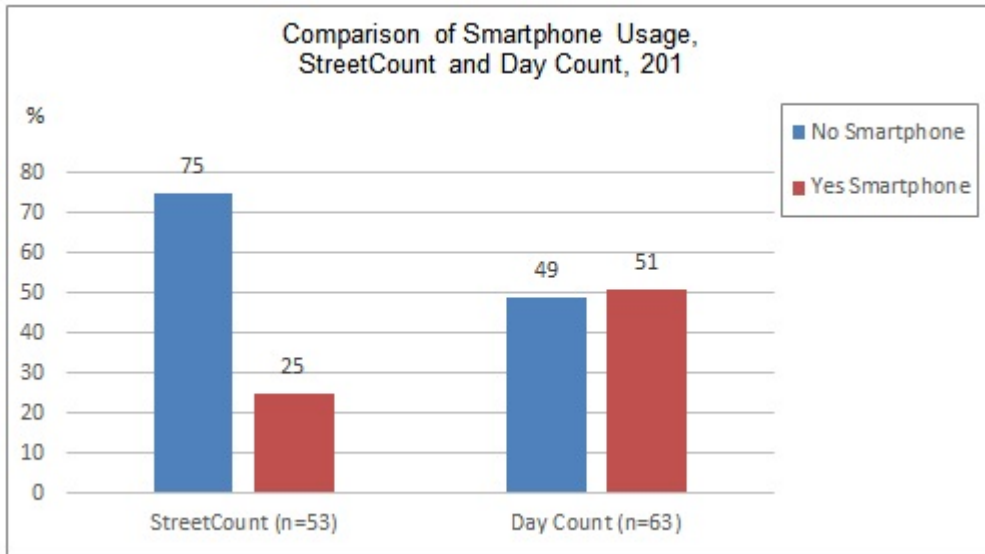
Rough sleepers who responded to the StreetCount survey at a service (Day Count) were twice as likely to use a smartphone (51%) than those responding to the survey on the streets (25%).

Possible explanations could be that people are attending services because they have sourced information about them by using smartphones or they may be using service locations to charge their phones. A more comprehensive explanation would require extra research.

Figure 16: Public Housing (n=114)
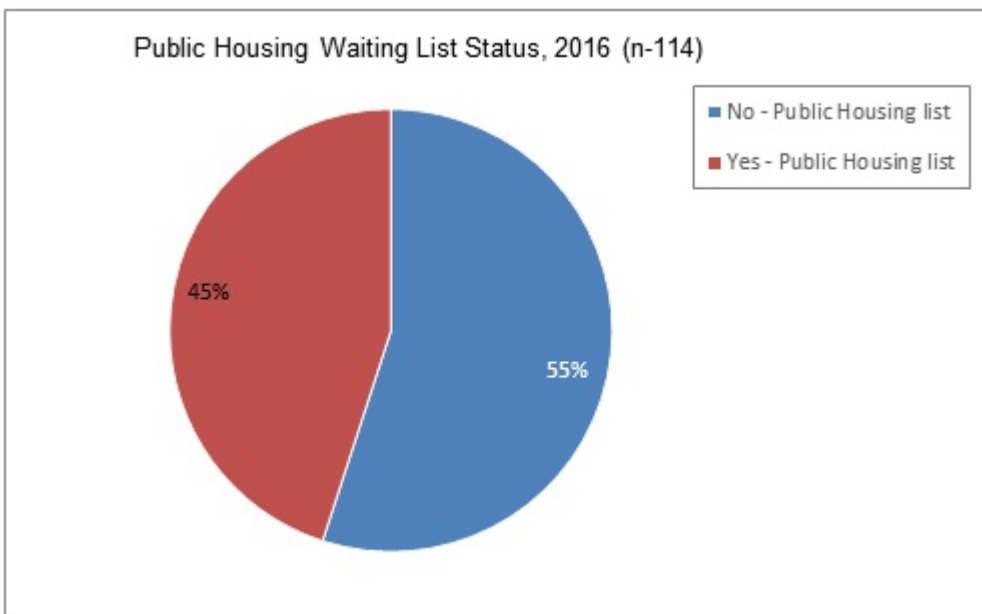
Fifty five per cent of the rough sleepers surveyed (63 people) said they were not on the public housing waiting list, while 45% (51 people) reported that they were on the public housing waiting list and six people did not answer the question. The answers to this question were based on interviewees' stated knowledge and do not reflect official public housing waiting lists.

Figure 17: Length of time on Public Housing Waiting List (n=44)
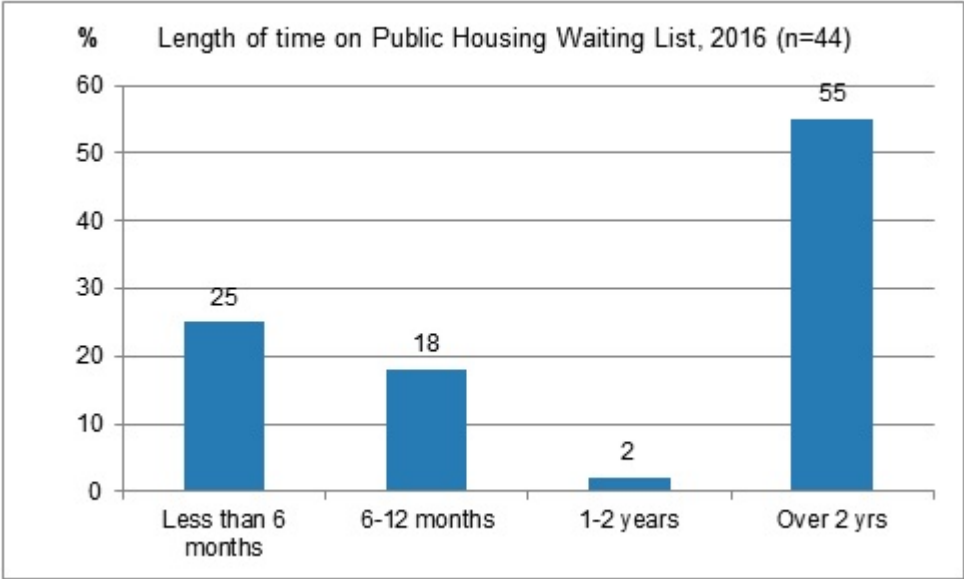
Fifty three per cent of those who reported being on the public housing waiting list (24 people) had been waiting for over two years. Twenty five per cent of those who answered this question said they had been on the public housing waiting list for less than six months, up from 17% in 2014. Again, the answers to this question were based on interviewees' stated knowledge and do not reflect official public housing waiting lists.

4.3   Voluntary Identifier Code

Ninety five per cent of those surveyed allowed their initials and date of birth to be recorded in order to minimise double counting in the StreetCount and Day Count.

Only three of the people counted in 2016 had also been counted in 2014. There were an additional two people whose identifiers did not exactly match but may have been counted before based on the similarity of their identifier codes.

5.   References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012), *A Statistical Definition of Homelessness,* retrieved from http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/B4B1A5BC17CEDBC9CA257A6E00186823/$File/49220_2012.pdf.

Chamberlain, C & MacKenzie, D (1992), 'Understanding contemporary homelessness: issues of definition and meaning', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 27, No 4, pp 274-297.

South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet (2005), *Ending homelessness in South Australia*, retrieved from http://www.sapo.org.au/binary/binary3001/Reducing.pdf.

City of Melbourne (2014), *Pathways: Homelessness Strategy 2014–2017*, retrieved fro https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/homelessness-strategy-2014-17.pdf.

# Appendix A: StreetCount 2016 survey

STREETCOUNT 2016 SURVEY   SURVEYOR'S NAME: _____

Area Code: _____   **SURVEY NUMBER:** _____

Please mark person's location on your map
If completing an observation, only complete questions Boxed and Shaded questions

> **Day Count Question Only**   Service Name...............................
> **In what area of the city did you sleep last night?**...
> ***In area?*** *Continue with survey*   ***Outside area?*** *Thank participant for their time and do not continue*

1. SAFE ☐   UNSAFE ☐

2.
> **DO NOT WAKE ANYONE WHO IS ASLEEP**
> *(circle one of the following)*   **a. AWAKE**   **b. ASLEEP**

   Has someone from StreetCount already spoken to you today?
   If **yes**, <u>do not</u> complete this form.   If **no**, introduce StreetCount and continue.

3. **Do you want to go ahead with the StreetCount questions?** (verbal consent)
   a. ☐ Yes proceed   **b. ☐ No**   **c. ☐ Incapacitated**
   If B or C ask no more questions and fill out questions 4, 9, 15 and 16 by observation only

4.
> **What Type of shelter did you stay in last night** (circle one of the following)
> **PARK   CAR   STREET   SQUAT   TRAIN STATION   OTHER_____**

5. **How long have you been staying here?** _____

6. **How many different places have you stayed in the last month?** _____

7. **How long have you been moving around?** _____

8. **What suburb or town would you prefer to live?** _____

9.
> **What is your age?** _____ **years** *(estimate by observation, if asleep or incapacitated)*

10. **In what country were you born?** _____

11. **Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**   ☐ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

12. **Will you be going to any services for a meal or some other assistance later today?**
    ☐ **No**   ☐ **Yes**   Service name(s): _____

13. **Are you on a public housing waiting list?**   ☐ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

14. **How long have you been on the public housing waiting list?** _____

15.
> **What's your gender? (By observation)**
> ☐ Male   ☐ Female

16.
> **Presenting unit (by observation)**
> ☐   Single person   ☐   Couple
> ☐   Person with child/ren. How many? _____   ☐   Unrelated group ....
> ☐   Couple with child/ren. How many? _____   ☐   Other................................
> ☐   With pet – what sort? _____

17. **Do you use a smart phone?**   ☐ **No**   ☐ **Yes**

18. **We don't want to count anyone twice today. To avoid this, may I write down your initials, month and year of birth? You will not be identified from this.**
    ☐ **No** (survey completed)   ☐ **Yes** – go to Q19

19. **What are your initials and what is your month and year of birth?**

First name initial	Last name initial	MONTH		YEAR		

Survey completed. Thank the participant for their time and provide a Thanks Pack.

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Appendix B: Comparison of StreetCount data 2008–2016

The data presented in this appendix provides a comparison of key StreetCount data over the seven years that the survey has been conducted in Melbourne. StreetCount has retained a consistent methodology and survey format to allow for comparisons across all StreetCounts and to assist in identifying trends over time. The total number of people counted across all years was 883.

Figure B.1: Count Method Comparison 2008–2016

Count Method Comparison 2008-2016 (total numbers)

	observed	surveyed	day count	total counted
2008	57	37	18	112
2009	45	19	11	75
2010	51	27	23	101
2011	39	22	44	105
2012	47	17	37	101
2014	59	39	44	142
2016	127	57	63	247
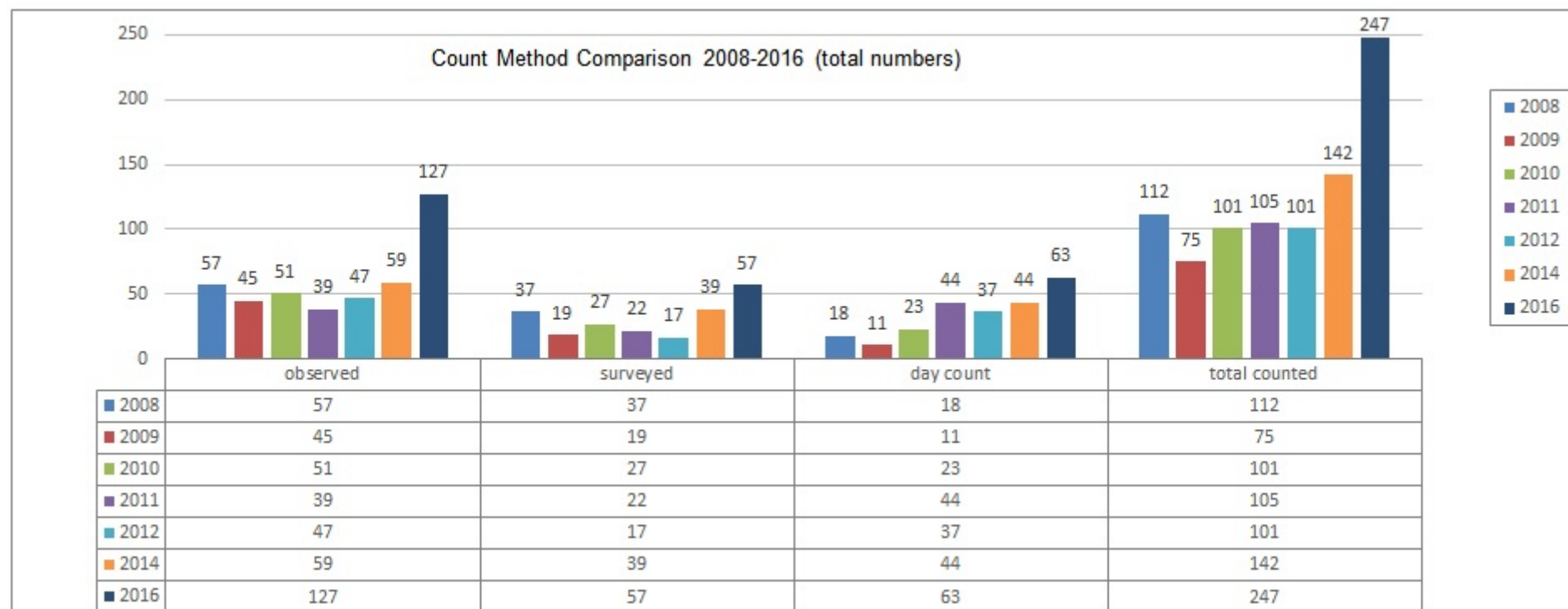
The primary increase in the 2016 figures was in the 'observed' category, with the 126 people observed sleeping rough far surpassing the previous highest figure of 59, recorded in 2014. More positively, the data also shows that steady improvements in the way the Day Count has been conducted has seen a consistent increase in the numbers of people counted using this method.

Table B.1: Overall StreetCount comparison by count methods 2008–2016

Year	Survey	Day Count - surveyed	Total surveyed	Observation	Total counted
2016	57 (23%)	63 (26%)	**120 (49%)**	**127 (51%)**	**247**
2014	39 (27%)	44 (31%)	**83 (58%)**	**59 (42%)**	**142**
2012	17 (17%)	37 (37%)	**54 (53%)**	**47 (47%)**	**101**
2011	22 (21%)	44 (42%)	**66 (63%)**	**39 (37%)**	**105**
2010	27 (27%)	23 (23%)	**45 (50%)**	**51 (50%)**	**101**
2009	19 (25%)	11 (11%)	**30 (40%)**	**45 (60%)**	**75**
2008	37 (33%)	18 (16%)	**55 (49%)**	**57 (51%)**	**112**
Average %	**25%**	**27%**	**52%**	**48%**	**100%**

We can see that the 2016 averages are similar to the overall averages since 2008, although slightly lower for those surveyed and slightly higher for those observed. Notably, a greater percentage of those counted in 2016 were counted through observation (51%) compared to 42% in the 2014 count. The year 2009 had the highest percentage of people counted through observation (60%) while 2011 had the lowest (37%).

Figure B.2: Change in StreetCount by Method between 2014 and 2016
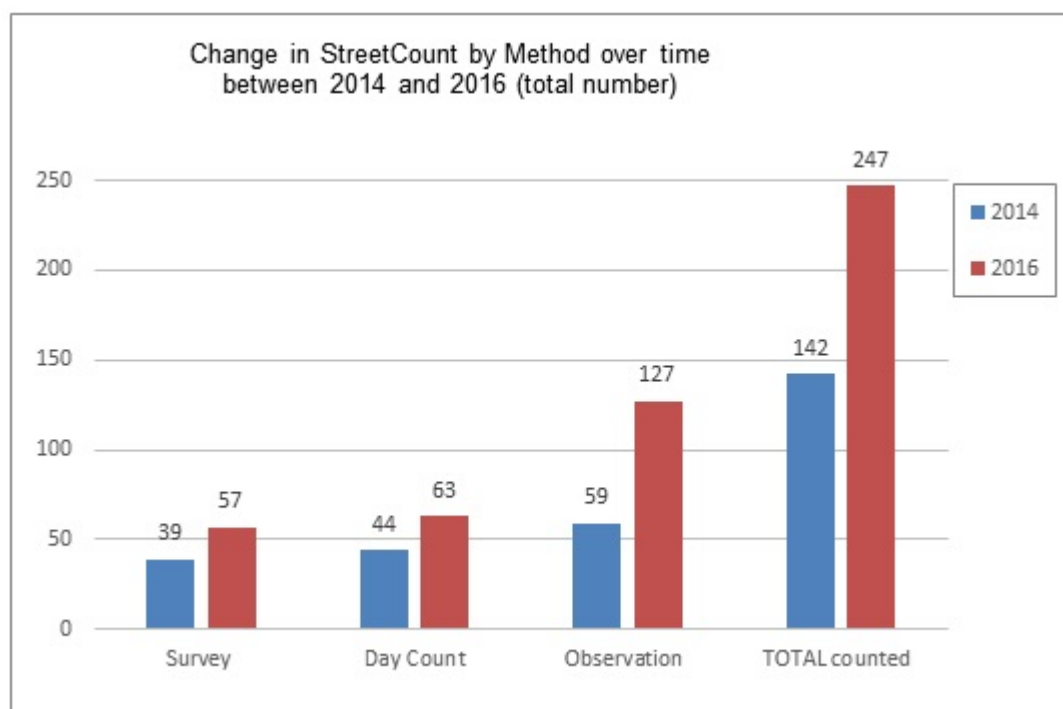
There was an overall increase of 105 people counted in 2016 compared to 2014, representing a 74% increase in the total number of people sleeping rough. An extra 68 people were counted by observation in 2016 compared to 2014 – a 115% increase. There were also substantial increases in those surveyed during the StreetCount (from 39 people in 2014 to 57 people in 2016) and Day Count (from 44 people in 2014 to 63 people in 2016).

Figure B.3: Change in StreetCount by Method between 2008 and 2016

Change in StreetCount by Method over time between 2008 and 2016 (total numbers)
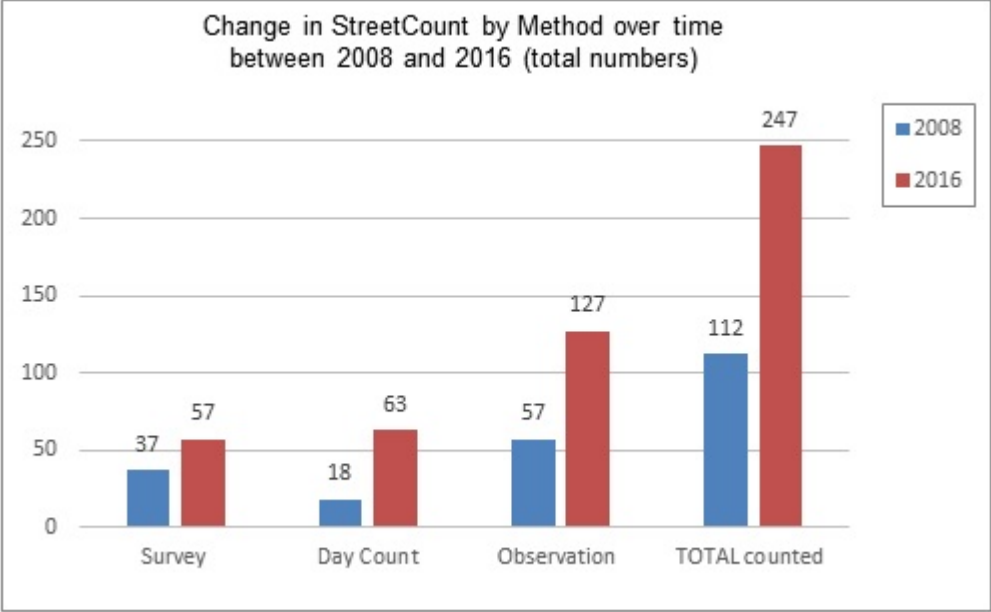
There was an overall increase of 135 people between the first StreetCount in 2008 and the most recent in 2016, representing an increase of 121%. There was an increase of 70 people counted by observation in 2016 compared to 2008 – an increase of 123% – as well as an increase of 54% in those surveyed.

Figure B.4: Age Comparison 2008–2016

Age Comparison, 2008-2016 (%)
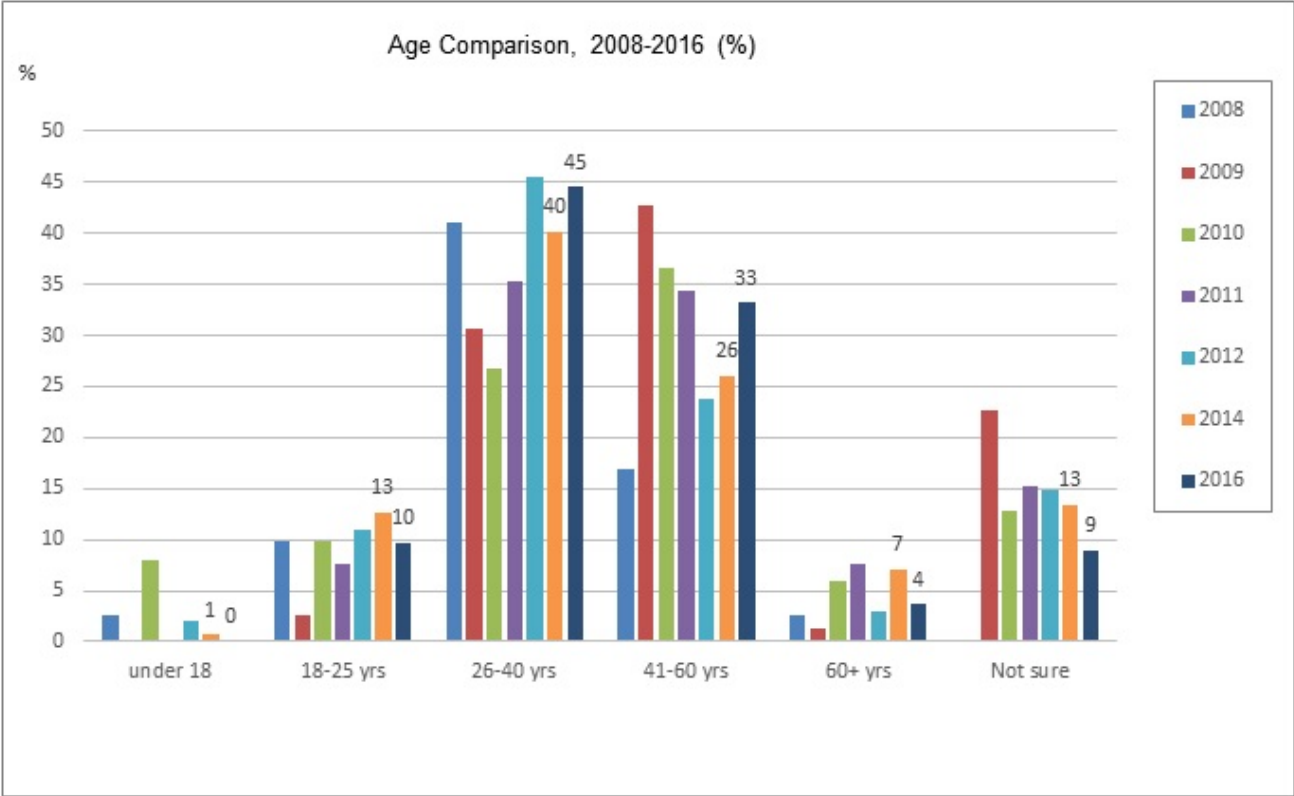
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

The 26 to 40 age bracket and the 41 to 60 age bracket have consistently had the highest percentage of rough sleepers in the StreetCounts. The 18 to 25 age bracket and the 60+ age bracket have remained fairly stable over the years.

Figure B.5: Gender Comparison 2008–2016
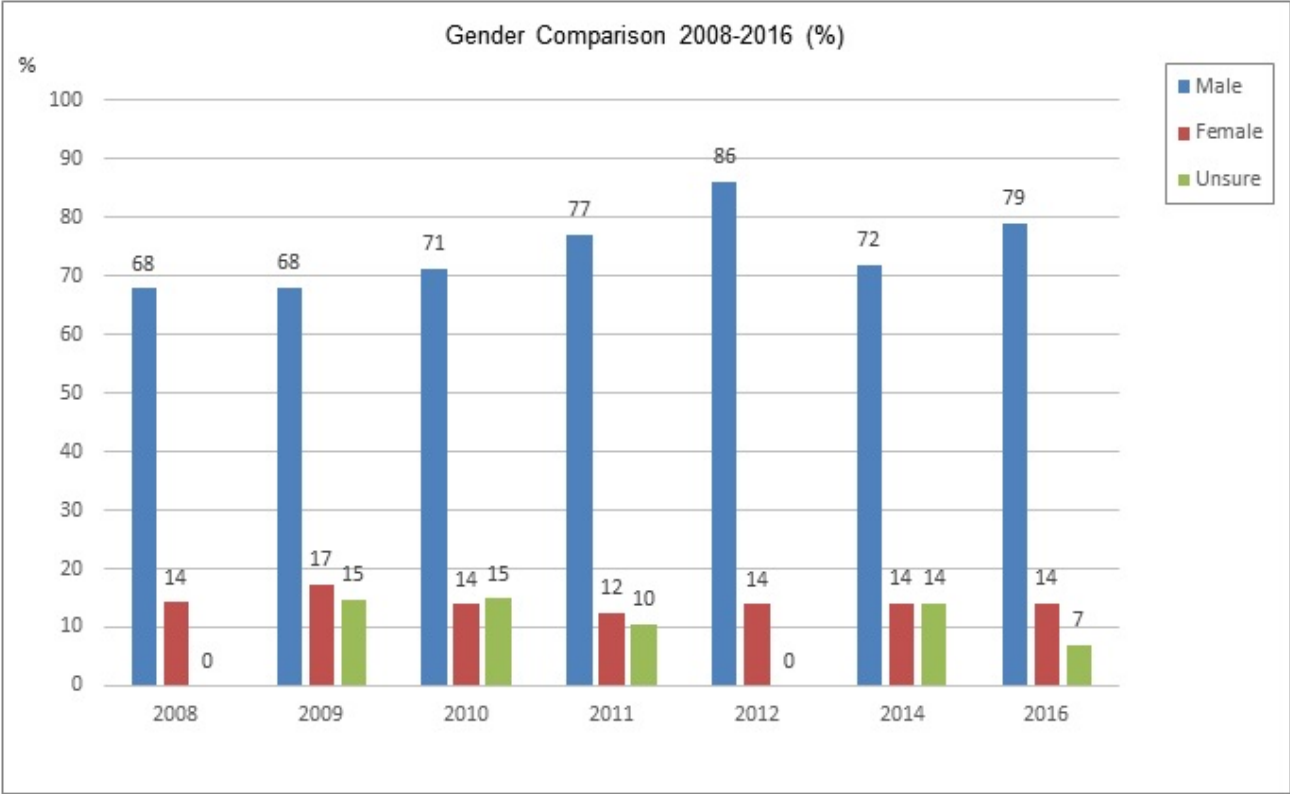
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

The male to female ratio has been consistent over the years of the StreetCount with an average of 74% of those counted in each year reported as male and an average of 14% counted as female.

Figure B.6: Presenting Unit Comparison 2008-2016

Presenting Unit Comparison 2008-16 (%)
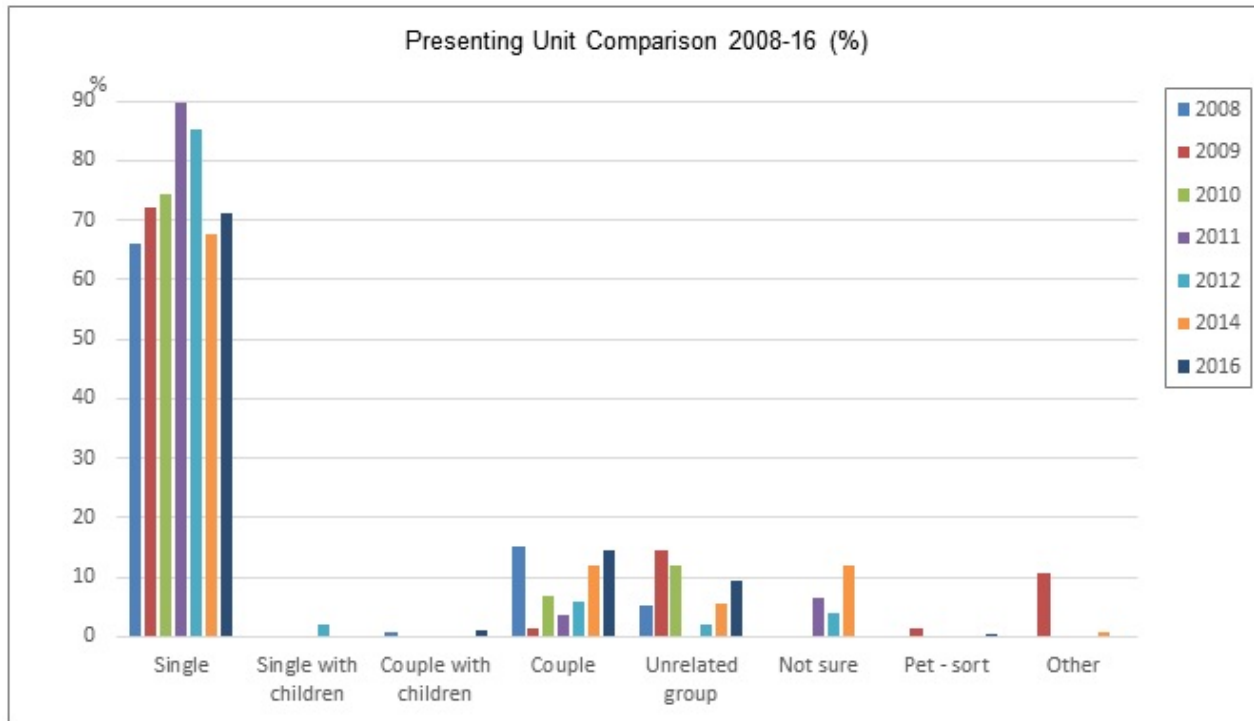
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

There has been a consistent majority of rough sleepers presenting as single, with an average of 75% across all StreetCounts. At 71%, 2016 was slightly lower than the average, which was balanced by a corresponding increase in rough sleepers presenting in couples and unrelated groups. The very small number of people with children is also consistent across counts. Despite some anecdotal evidence regarding rough sleepers and pets, the numbers of people presenting with pets has remained very low.

Figure B.7: Type of shelter comparison 2008–2016

Type of Shelter Comparison 2008-2016 (%)
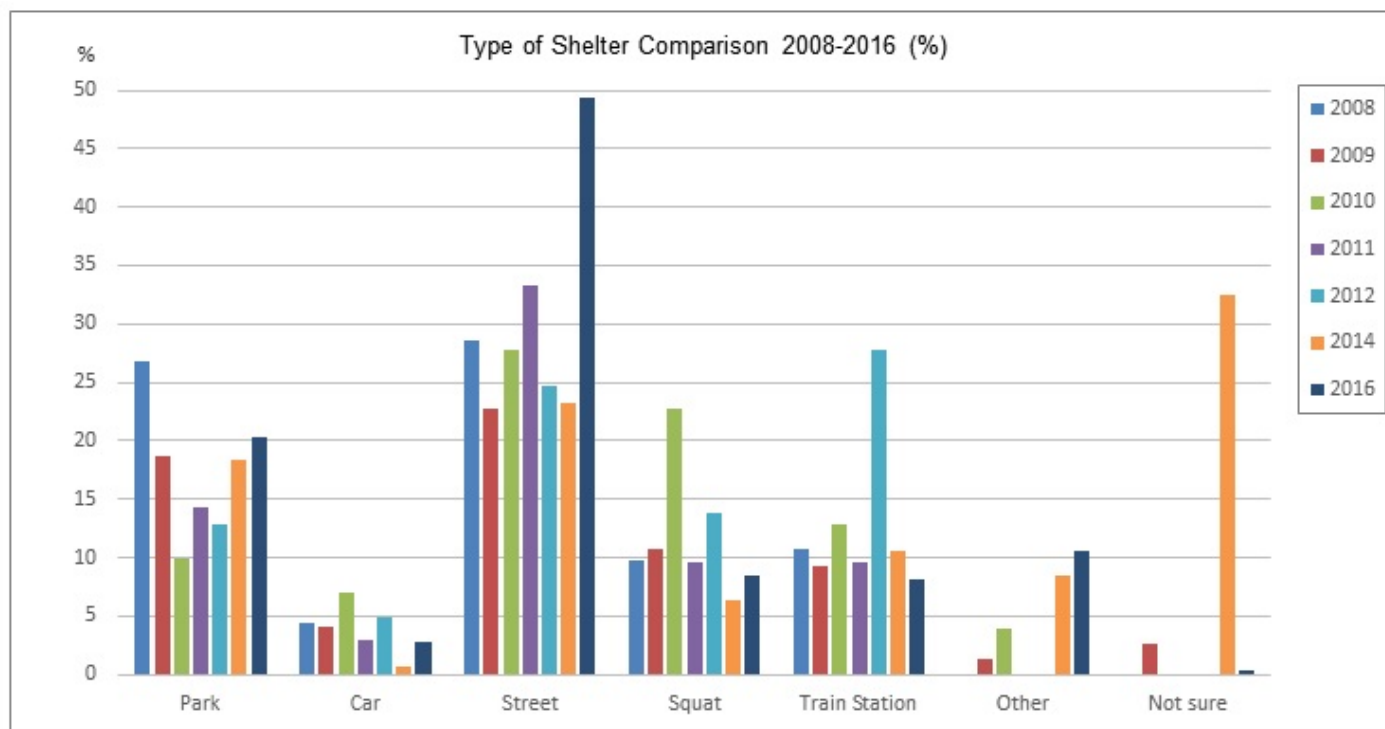
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

At 49%, 2016 had by far the highest percentage of people sleeping on the street and represents a significant increase on the long-term average of 30%. This supports anecdotal evidence of increased homelessness in Melbourne's central city. The percentage of people sleeping in parks increased slightly from 18% in 2014 to 20% in 2016, as did the percentage of people sleeping in squats, which increased from 6% in 2014 to 9% in 2016.

Figure B.8: Length of time in current location comparison 2008–2016

Length of Time in Current Location Comparison 2008-2016 (%)
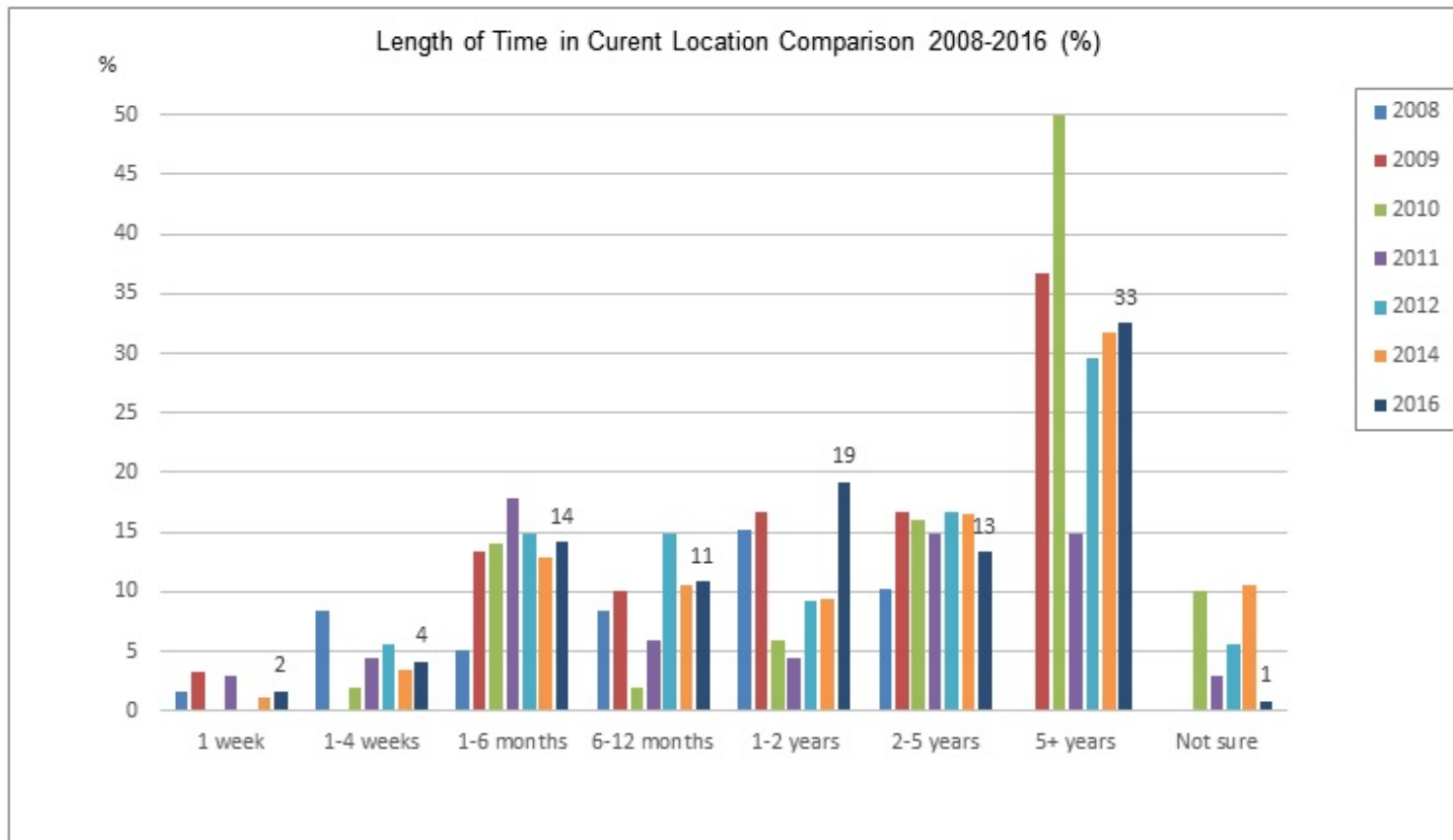
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

There was a decrease in the percentage of rough sleepers staying only one night in their current location in 2016 and an increase in the percentage of rough sleepers staying in their current location for between two days and four weeks.

Figure B.9: Number of places stayed in the last month comparison 2008–2016

Number of Places Stayed in Last Month Comparison 2008-16 (%)

Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

The number of rough sleepers who reported sleeping in one place in the last month remained steady at 31% in both 2014 and 2016. However, there was an increase in 2016 in rough sleepers who slept in seven or more places in the last month – up to 18% – the highest recorded percentage in this category across all count years.

Figure B.10: Length of time moving around comparison 2008–2016
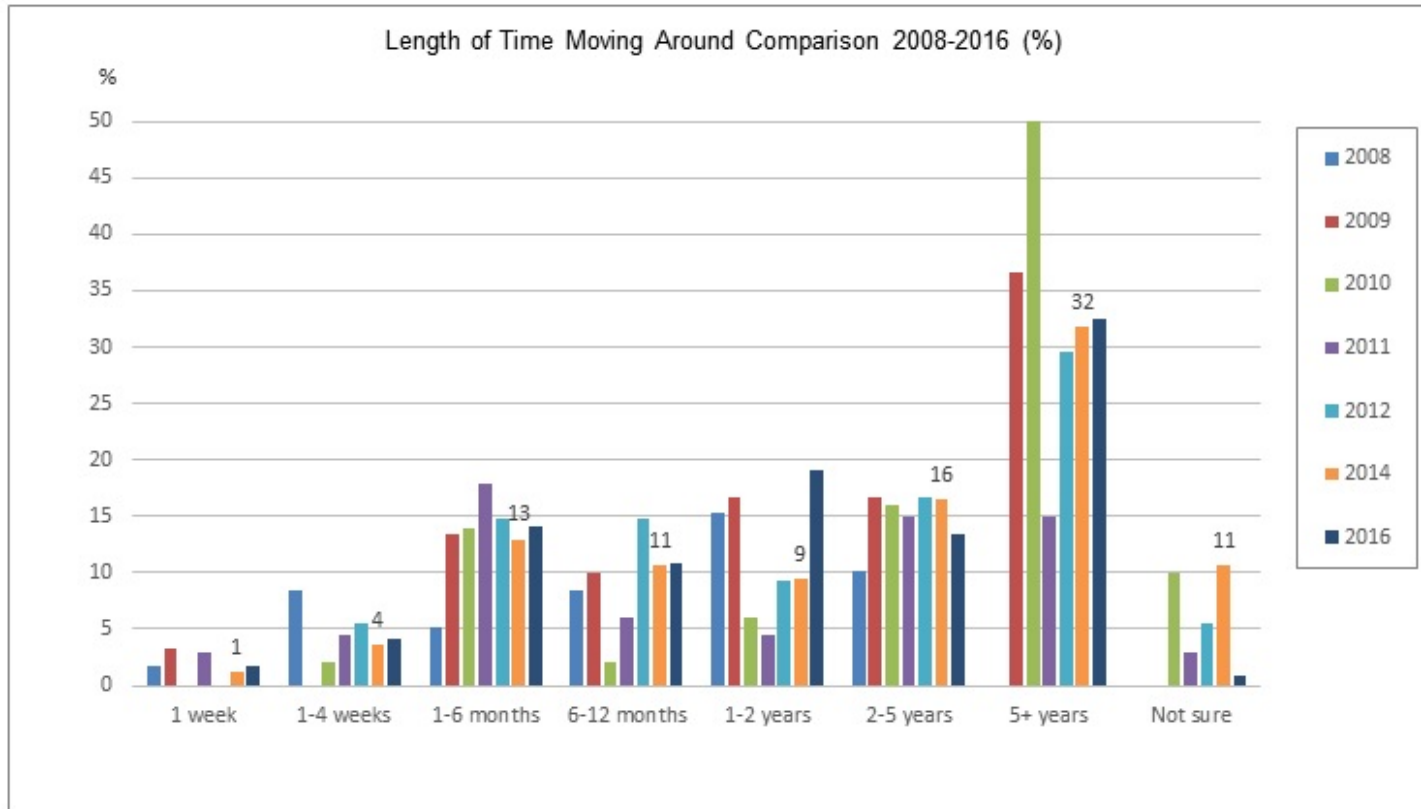
Length of Time Moving Around Comparison 2008-2016 (%)

Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

The number of rough sleepers who have been moving around for five years or more has remained consistently high, with an average of 32% between 2012 and 2016. This has been the highest cohort in every count except for 2008 and 2011, which is of great concern. The percentage of rough sleepers who reported moving around for between one week and four weeks remains low across all counts.

Figure B.11: Identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comparison 2008–2016
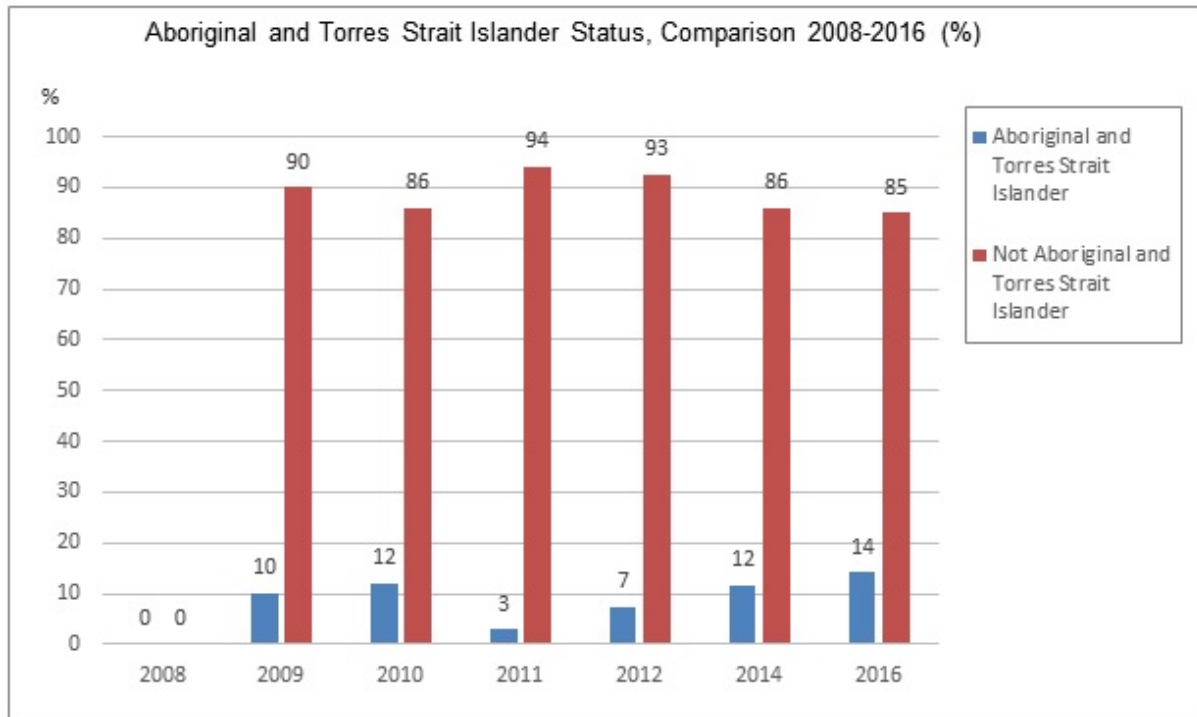
The percentage of rough sleepers identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander averages at 10% across all the counts (no data was collected on this point in 2008). 2016 had the highest rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rough sleeping at 14%.

Figure B.12: Planned service usage comparison 2008-2016
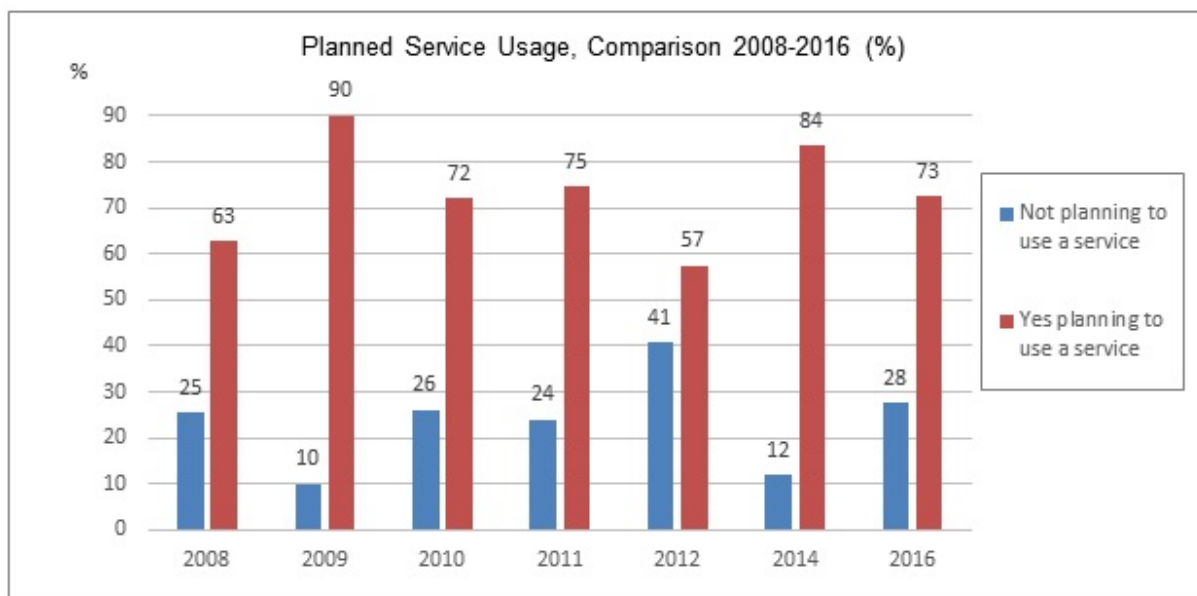
On average, 73% of rough sleepers in all counts planned to use a homelessness service later that day. The percentage for 2016 is consistent with this average, although it was a slight decrease compared to the 84% planning to use services in 2014.

Figure B.13: Public housing waiting list comparison 2008–2016

Public Housing List, Comparison 2008-2016 (%)
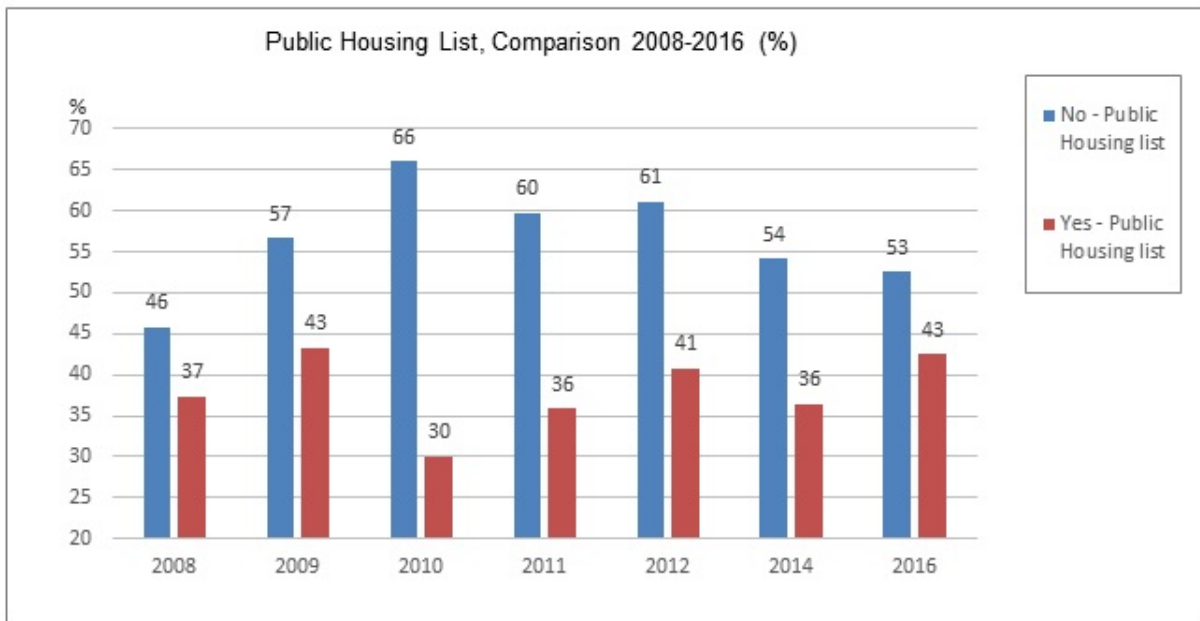
Across all count years, a greater percentage of rough sleepers who were surveyed have reported **not** being on the public housing waiting list. In 2016, 43% reported being on the public housing waiting list, an increase from 36% in 2014, and the highest rate (along with 2009) since StreetCounts began.

Figure B.14: Length of time on public housing waiting list comparison 2008–2016

Length of Time on Public Housing List Comparison 2008-16 (%)
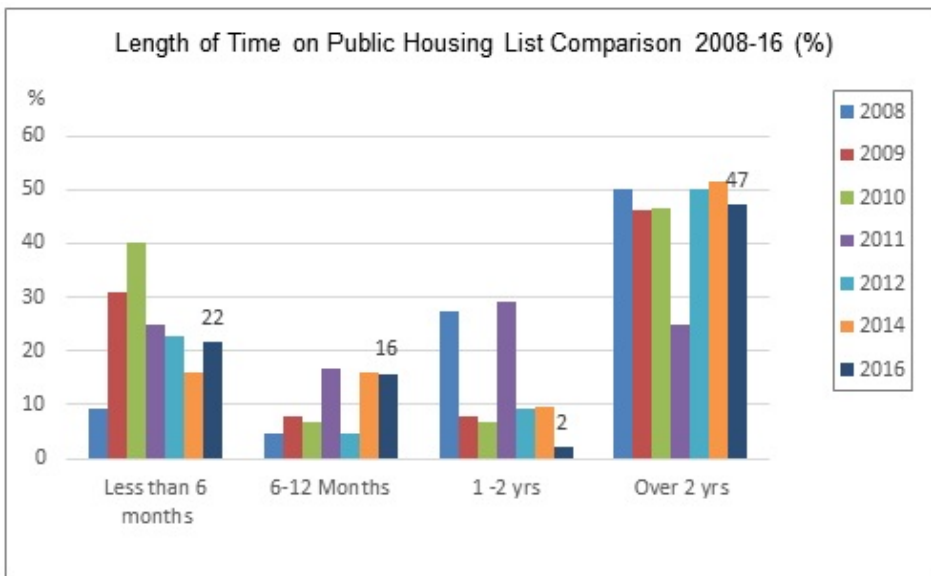
Year	Total counted
2008	112
2009	75
2010	101
2011	105
2012	101
2014	142
2016	247

Of those reporting to be on the public housing list, a consistently high number have been on the list for over two years (average of 45% across all years). Although this reduced slightly from 2014, the 2016 rate remains above the overall average. There was a small increase in 2016 in the percentage of rough sleepers who reported being on the public housing waiting list for less than six months – 22% compared to 16% in 2014.

Figure B.15: Number of rough sleepers with Voluntary Identifier Code counted in both 2016 and other years

Number of Rough Sleepers with Voluntary Identifer Code, Counted in 2016 and other years (n=12)

Year	Count
2009	3
2011	3
2012	3
2014	6
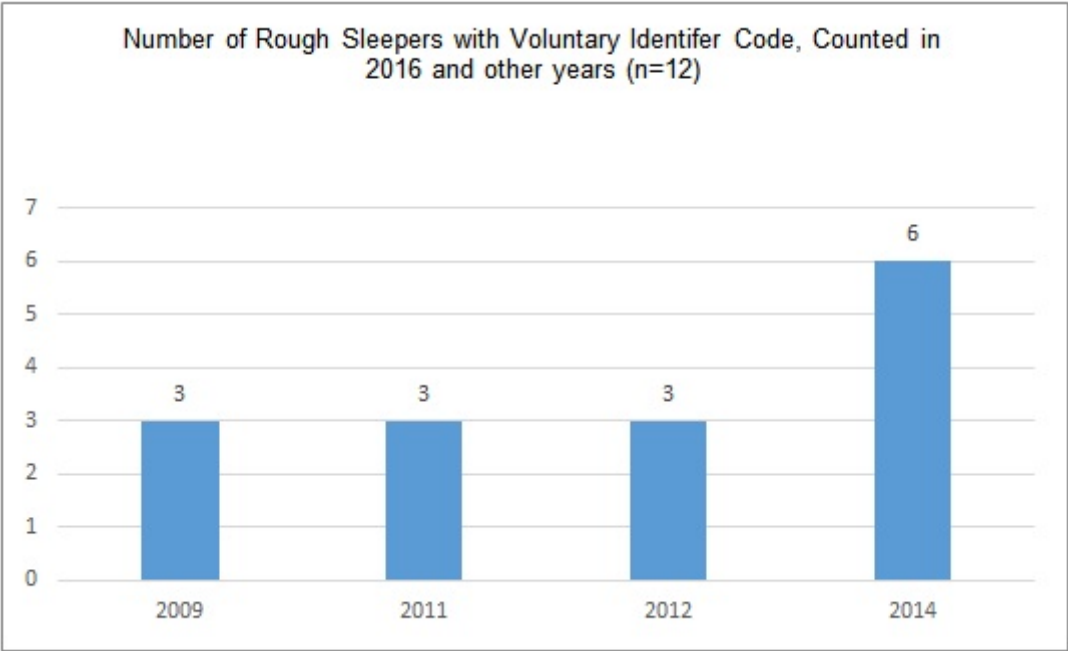
Based on the Voluntary Identifier Code, only 12 people counted in 2016 had also been recorded in other years. This represents 5% of all those surveyed in 2016. Only six of the people counted in 2016 had also been counted in 2014. There were an additional two people whose identifiers did not exactly match, but may have been counted before based on similarities in their identifier codes. One person was counted in four counts – 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2016 – and another person was counted three times – 2011, 2014 and 2016. The remaining four were counted in 2016 and one other StreetCount.

This indicates that the StreetCounts tend to pick up different sets of rough sleepers each time, suggesting a high level of transience. It is surprising that more people do not show up in more than one count, given that 34% of the 2016 survey respondents had been moving around for five years or longer.

Appendix C: Text alternatives for complex images

C.1 Figure1: Age of rough sleepers (n=247)

Age	under 18	18-25 years	26-40 years	41-60 years	60+ years	Not sure
Count	0	24	110	82	9	22
Percentage	0%	10%	45%	33%	4%	9%

C.2 Figure 2: Gender of rough sleepers (n=247)

Male	Female	Unknown
195	35	17
79%	14%	7%

C.3 Figure 3: Location of rough sleepers (n=247)

Location	Park	Car	Street	Squat	Train Station	Other	Not Sure
Count	50	7	122	21	20	26	1
Percentage	20%	3%	49%	9%	8%	11%	0%

C.4 Figure 18: Presenting unit[2] (n=247)

Total	Single	Single with children	Couple with children	Couple	Unrelated group	Not sure	Pet - sort	Other
247	71	0	1	15	9	0	0	0

C.5 Figure 5: Type of shelter (n=247)

Park	Car	Street	Squat	Train Station	Other	Not sure
20	3	49	9	8	11	0

C.6 Figure 6: Length of time in current location (n=120)

1 night	2-7 nights	1-2 weeks	2-4 weeks	1-2 months	2-6 months	6-12 months	1 year +	Not sure
14	16	13	8	8	15	5	16	5

---

[2] The presenting unit only represents the observed groupings of people recorded. It is not an indication of relationship as no questions were asked to ascertain relationship status.

C.7   Figure 7: Number of places stayed in the last month (n=120)

1 place	2-3 places	4-6 places	7+ places	Not sure
31	20	23	18	9

C.8   Figure 8: Length of time moving around (n=116)

1 week	1-4 weeks	1-6 months	6-12 months	1-2 years	2-5 years	5+ years	Not sure
2	4	14	11	19	13	33	1

C.9   Figure 9: Length of time moving around – five years+ (n=39)

5-9 years	10-20 years	20+
15 (38%)	10 (26%)	14 (36%)

C.10   Figure 10: Preferred suburb/town to live in (n=98)

City of Melbourne	Not City of Melbourne	Not sure	Anywhere
34	40	26	16

C.11   Figure 11: Planned service usage (n=120)

Not planning to use a service	Yes planning to use a service
28	73

C.12   Figure 12: Country of birth (n=119)

Country	Number
Australia	69
NZ	11
UK	5
India	3
Other	9
unsure	3

C.13   Figure 13: Identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (n=119)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
14%	86%

C.14   Figure 14: Smartphone usage (n=116)

No Smartphone	Yes Smartphone
71 (61%)	45 (39%)

C.15   Figure 15: Smartphone usage comparison between StreetCount and day count

Count type	No Smartphone	Yes Smartphone
StreetCount (n=53)	75	25
Day Count (n=63)	49	51

C.16   Figure 16: Public housing (n=114)

No - Public Housing list	Yes - Public Housing list
55	45

C.17   Figure 17: Length of time on public housing wait list (n=44)

Less than 6 months	6-12 Months	1 -2 yrs	Over 2 yrs
11 (25%)	8 (18%)	1 (2%)	24 (53%)

C.18   Figure B1: Count Method comparison 2008–2016

Year	Observed	Surveyed	Day count	Total counted
2008	57	37	18	112
2009	45	19	11	75
2010	51	27	23	101
2011	39	22	44	105
2012	47	17	37	101
2014	59	39	44	142
2016	127	57	63	247

C.19   Figure B2: Change in StreetCount by method between 2014 and 2016

Year	Survey	Day Count	Observation	Total counted
2014	39	44	59	142
2016	57	63	127	247

C.20   Figure B3: Change in StreetCount by method between 2008 and 2016

Year	Survey	Day Count	Observation	Total counted
2008	37	18	57	112
2016	57	63	127	247

C.21   Figure B4: Age comparison 2008–2016

Year	under 18	18-25 years	26-40 years	41-60 years	60+ years	Not sure
2008	3	10	41	17	3	0
2009	0	3	31	43	1	23
2010	8	10	27	37	6	13
2011	0	8	35	34	8	15
2012	2	11	46	24	3	15
2014	1	13	40	26	7	13
2016	0	10	45	33	4	9

C.22   Figure B5: Gender comparison 2008–2016

Year	Male	Female	Unsure
2008	68	14	0
2009	68	17	15
2010	71	14	15
2011	77	12	10
2012	86	14	0
2014	72	14	14
2016	79	14	7

C.23   Figure B6: Presenting unit comparison 2008-2016

Year	Single	Single with children	Couple with children	Couple	Unrelated group	Not sure	Pet - sort	Other
2008	66	0	1	15	5	0	0	0
2009	72	0	0	1	15	0	1	11
2010	74	0	0	7	12	0	0	0
2011	90	0	0	4	0	7	0	0
2012	85	2	0	6	2	4	0	0
2014	68	0	0	12	6	12	0	1
2016	71	0	1	15	9	0	0	0

C.24 Figure B7: Type of shelter comparison 2008–2016

Year	Park	Car	Street	Squat	Train Station	Other	Not sure
2008	27	4	29	10	11	0	0
2009	19	4	23	11	9	1	3
2010	10	7	28	23	13	4	0
2011	14	3	33	10	10	0	0
2012	13	5	25	14	28	0	0
2014	18	1	23	6	11	8	32
2016	20	3	49	9	8	11	0

C.25 Figure B8: Length of time in current location comparison 2008–2016

Year	1 night	2-7 nights	1-2 weeks	2-4 weeks	1-2 months	2-6 months	6-12 months	1 year +	Not sure
2008	10	19	15	2	5	17	3	3	0
2009	3	17	3	23	10	17	3	0	0
2010	14	16	12	8	10	10	0	0	12
2011	3	18	6	10	12	18	7	6	0
2012	4	15	7	7	9	19	11	0	0
2014	21	7	9	6	7	19	9	15	4
2016	14	16	13	8	8	15	5	16	5

C.26 Figure B9: Number of places stayed in the last month comparison 2008–2016

Year	1 place	2-3 places	4-6 places	7+ places	Not sure
2008	22	22	24	0	0
2009	37	40	13	0	0
2010	26	30	22	0	12
2011	18	21	16	6	0
2012	19	22	33	0	0
2014	31	14	22	13	13
2016	31	20	23	18	9

C.27   Figure B10: Length of time moving around comparison 2008–2016

Year	1 week	1-4 weeks	1-6 months	6-12 months	1-2 years	2-5 years	5+ years	Not sure
2008	2	8	5	8	15	10	0	0
2009	3	0	13	10	17	17	37	0
2010	0	2	14	2	6	16	50	10
2011	3	4	18	6	4	15	15	3
2012	0	6	15	15	9	17	30	6
2014	1	4	13	11	9	16	32	11
2016	2	4	14	11	19	13	33	1

C.28   Figure B11: Identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander comparison 2008–2016

Year	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
2008	0	0
2009	10	90
2010	12	86
2011	3	94
2012	7	93
2014	12	86
2016	14	85

C.29   Figure B12: Planned service usage comparison 2008-2016

Year	Not planning to use a service	Yes planning to use a service
2008	25	63
2009	10	90
2010	26	72
2011	24	75
2012	41	57
2014	12	84
2016	28	73

C.30   Figure B13: Public housing waiting list comparison 2008–2016

Year	total		No - Public Housing list	Yes - Public Housing list	Less than 6 months	6-12 Months	1 -2 yrs	Over 2 yrs
2008	112		46	37	3	2	10	19
2009	75		57	43	13	3	3	20
2010	101		66	30	12	2	2	14
2011	105		60	36	9	6	10	9
2012	101		61	41	9	2	4	20
2014	142		54	36	6	6	4	19
2016	247	120	53	43	9	7	1	20

C.31   Figure B14: Length of time on public housing waiting list comparison 2008–2016

Year	Less than 6 months	6-12 Months	1 -2 yrs	Over 2 yrs
2008	9	5	27	50
2009	31	8	8	46
2010	40	7	7	47
2011	25	17	29	25
2012	23	5	9	50
2014	16	16	10	52
2016	22	16	2	47

C.32   Figure B15: Number of rough sleepers with Voluntary Identifier Code counted in both 2016 and other years

2009	2011	2012	2014
3	3	3	6