



MEDIA RELEASE

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Homelessness accelerates between censuses

At least one in every 100 New Zealanders were homeless at the latest census in 2013, compared with 1 in 120 in 2006, and 1 in 130 in 2001, say University of Otago, Wellington (UOW) researchers.

UOW researcher Dr Kate Amore, from the Health Research Council-funded He Kainga Oranga/Housing and Health Research Programme, measured the ‘severely housing deprived’ population.

“Homelessness is worsening in New Zealand in terms of both numbers and as a proportion of the population. This upward trend accelerated between the 2006 and 2013 censuses, compared with the 2001 and 2006 period,” Dr Amore says.

“If the homeless population were a hundred people, 70 are staying with extended family or friends in severely crowded houses, 20 are in a motel, boarding house or camping ground, and 10 are living on the street, in cars, or in other improvised dwellings. They all urgently need affordable housing.”

“The Government needs to develop a comprehensive housing strategy that recognises the fundamental importance of good quality, low-cost homes. New affordable houses are understandably not being provided by private developers. Housing for all is essential to New Zealander’s health and wellbeing as well as the country’s prosperity. If no government action is taken this crisis is likely to deepen.”

These numbers are based on the official New Zealand definition of homelessness developed by Statistics New Zealand, Housing New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Development.

These numbers do not include those living in emergency accommodation such as night shelters. This group will be the subject of a subsequent report.

More detailed homelessness statistics for 2013 will be published later in June 2016 on the University of Otago website.

The latest study was funded by a Lottery grant and follows an Official Statistics Programme report published in 2013, *Severe housing deprivation: The problem and its measurement*, available from www.statisphere.govt.nz.

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Severe housing deprivation (homelessness) 2001-2013

Table 1 Count and proportion of the census subject population identified as severely housing deprived, not severely housing deprived, and housing deprivation status cannot be determined, 2001-2013⁽¹⁾

Category	2001		2006		2013	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Severely housing deprived	28,649	0.8	33,295	0.8	41,705	1.0
Not severely housing deprived	3,639,845	97.2	3,942,626	97.1	4,109,534	96.6
Housing deprivation status cannot be determined	76,038	2.0	83,953	2.1	103,356	2.4
Total	3,744,534⁽²⁾	100.0	4,059,876	100.0	4,254,594	100.0

Notes:

- (1) According to Statistics NZ confidentiality protocols, figures in this table have been random rounded to base three, then unallocated children in non-private dwellings have been proportionally added to each category (see methodology in Amore et al. (2013)). The resulting figures are not rounded because the latter component represents proportions, rather than counts of individuals.
- (2) The total for census subject population for 2001 was misprinted in Amore et al. (2013).

Data source: Statistics New Zealand

Table 2 Severe housing deprivation by living situation (excluding emergency accommodation) – count, proportion, and prevalence, 2013⁽¹⁾

Living situation		No. people	% of severely housing deprived population	Prevalence per 10,000 people
1	Living <i>without habitable accommodation</i> due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing, such as on the street, in a car, or other improvised dwelling	4,197	10.1	9.9
2	Living in a <i>commercial dwelling</i> (e.g. hotel, motel, boarding house) or <i>marae</i> due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing	7,901	18.9	18.6
3	Living as a <i>temporary resident in a severely crowded, permanent private dwelling</i> due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing	29,610	71.0	69.8
Total		41,705	100.0	98.3

Note:

- (1) According to Statistics NZ confidentiality protocols, figures in this table have been random rounded to base three. However, for Broad living situation 2, the number of people figures have been random rounded to base three, then a proportion of unallocated children in non-private dwellings have been added (see methodology in Amore et al. (2013)). The resulting figures are not rounded because the latter component represents proportions, rather than counts of individuals. This is also reflected in the total.

Data source: Statistics New Zealand

Reference:

Amore K, Viggers H, Baker, MG, & Howden-Chapman, P (2013). *Severe housing deprivation: The problem and its measurement*, Official Statistics Research Series, 6. Available from www.statisphere.govt.nz.

Disclaimer:

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Statistics New Zealand under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the

Statistics Act 1975. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Statistics NZ.