

# The City of Port Phillip Street Count Report FAQ

## Background

Launch Housing conducted the first Street Count with 95 volunteers within the City of Port Phillip on 7 February to count the number of people sleeping rough.

## What are the key findings?

1. **The overall number of people sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip as at February 2018 indicates a 28% rise in just the last two years.**

In the 2016 ABS Census, 71 people were counted as sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip whereas the 2018 Street Count saw 91 people sleeping rough in the municipality. This suggests a 28% increase in rough sleeping in Port Phillip over the last two years.

*Note: The ABS Census homelessness count takes place over a full week every five years. The first-ever Street Count on 7 February 2018 took place over just one night.*

2. **The people counted as sleeping rough were concentrated in St Kilda.**

Of the 91 people, 63% were located in St Kilda/St Kilda West, indicating the need for a localised response. The remaining 37% were sleeping rough throughout the rest of the municipality (for example, 9% were in Albert Park/Middle Park, 4% in Port Melbourne, etc.)

3. **There was an overrepresentation of Indigenous people sleeping rough.**

As a proportion, there is an over-representation of Indigenous people sleeping rough in the Port Phillip area. Nearly 20% of those counted identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. More than 1/3 of the 54 people who completed a brief survey were Indigenous Australians, including six young people aged under 18 years.

## What needs to be done?

This report highlights the need for community organisations to make a collective impact to get to “functional zero”— assisting existing rough sleepers to permanently resolve their homelessness whilst preventing others from falling into homelessness.

Homelessness is not inevitable, and now that we know the size of the problem we can find an appropriate response.

We call on the whole City of Port Phillip community to build on this joint effort to provide timely housing and support responses for those sleeping rough in the municipality, particularly young people, those with complex health needs and Indigenous Australians sleeping rough. We also need increased investment in the type of housing being rapidly lost in the City of Port Phillip.

## What did you find?

### **There were 91 people counted as sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip.**

- A total of 91 people were counted as sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip.
- 54 of the 91 completed a brief survey
- Of those 54, 34 completed a full VI-SPDAT (VI SPDAT, or Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritisation Decision Assistance Tool). The VI SPDAT is an assessment tool, which helps services identify the most appropriate supports for this most vulnerable group of people.

**The age range skewed young.**

Of the 91 total people counted:

- Most people (49%) were between 25 and 44 years old (average age was 38.6 years)
- The youngest person was 15 years old and the oldest person was 71 years old
- 10% were under 25 years old
- Age was unable to be determined for many of those who did not participate in a survey.

Of the 34 people surveyed using the VI SPDAT (a specialised assessment tool using a Vulnerability Index) there were:

- 82% were between 25 and 63 years old
- 18% were under age 25

**The majority of people were men.**

Of the 91 total people counted:

- 61 (67%) were men
- 18 (20%) were women
- Those remaining include persons who identified as transgender or whose gender could not be recorded (due to being asleep and covered).

Of the 34 people surveyed using the VI SPDAT (a specialised assessment tool using a Vulnerability Index) there were:

- 18% were women
- 82% were men

**Indigenous Australians were overrepresented.**

As a proportion, there is an over-representation of Indigenous people sleeping rough in the Port Phillip area.

- 18 people (19.8%) of those counted, identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.
- Of these 18, 14 completed the VI-SPDAT.
- 33% of the 54 who did the brief survey were Indigenous, including six young people under 18 years old.

**The majority were located in St Kilda, and many lived in cars or squats.**

- 63% were located in the St Kilda/St Kilda West area.
- 9% in Albert Park/Middle Park, 4% in Port Melbourne, 3% in Elwood/Ripponlea, 3% in Balaclava/East St Kilda and 1% in South Melbourne. 17% had no detail available.
- More than half were sleeping on streets or in parks, 13% were in cars, 10% were in squats, 2% in car parks, 2% in train stations, 5% on the beach, 1% in a cemetery and 12% unknown.

**The VI-SPDAT (in-depth survey results) gave insight into contributing factors.**

Among the 34 who completed the VI-SPDAT tool:

- Many had not had stable permanent housing for seven or more months.
- Contributing factors included relationship difficulties, and abuse and/or trauma.
- 21 people had some sort of physical health issue—substance use problems affected 14 people and mental health difficulties affected 11 people.
- 15 people said they avoided getting help when sick or feeling unwell.

**The full report can be found at**

**<https://www.launchhousing.org.au/category/latest-research/>**