

~~IN CONFIDENCE - DSS INTERNAL WORKING DOCUMENT~~

~~WARNING - These raw data must be kept secure and not disclosed.~~

As these data may include small populations (<5), disclosure could compromise individuals' privacy, contrary to the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988, and could also be an offence under the Crimes Act 1914.

All data descriptions must remain attached to the data at all times.

These data must not be published without the express authority of the Group Manager, Analysis, Evaluation and Data Group, Department of Social Services.

**ADH19-0406: Newstart Allowance Recipients by Partial Capacity to Work and Homelessness Indicator Status - Quarterly Time Series - 30/03/2018 to 27/09/2019.**

|                                     |  | 2018/03 | 2018/06 | 2018/09 | 2018/12 | 2019/03 | 2019/06 | 2019/09 |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Partial Capacity to Work</b>     | <b>Homeless - Ongoing</b>                                      | 4116    | 4231    | 4112    | 4831    | 4627    | 4864    | 5031    |
|                                     | <b>Homeless - Temporary</b>                                    | 3599    | 3718    | 3615    | 4154    | 3948    | 4112    | 4154    |
|                                     | <b>At risk of becoming homeless</b>                            | 2841    | 2858    | 2797    | 3140    | 2945    | 2992    | 3018    |
|                                     | <b>No longer homeless and not at risk of becoming homeless</b> | 12248   | 12403   | 11988   | 13318   | 12566   | 13533   | 13884   |
| <b>Not Partial Capacity to Work</b> | <b>Homeless - Ongoing</b>                                      | 7042    | 6774    | 5841    | 7014    | 6112    | 6068    | 5850    |
|                                     | <b>Homeless - Temporary</b>                                    | 6001    | 5875    | 5072    | 6111    | 5346    | 5260    | 5179    |
|                                     | <b>At risk of becoming homeless</b>                            | 3917    | 3774    | 3276    | 3799    | 3346    | 3328    | 3150    |
|                                     | <b>No longer homeless and not at risk of becoming homeless</b> | 18888   | 18150   | 15773   | 18046   | 15479   | 15697   | 15302   |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>Homeless - Ongoing</b>                                      | 11158   | 11005   | 9953    | 11845   | 10739   | 10932   | 10881   |
|                                     | <b>Homeless - Temporary</b>                                    | 9600    | 9593    | 8687    | 10265   | 9294    | 9372    | 9333    |
|                                     | <b>At risk of becoming homeless</b>                            | 6758    | 6632    | 6073    | 6939    | 6291    | 6320    | 6168    |
|                                     | <b>No longer homeless and not at risk of becoming homeless</b> | 31136   | 30553   | 27761   | 31364   | 28045   | 29230   | 29186   |
|                                     | <b>No Homeless Indicator History</b>                           | 691760  | 669750  | 627044  | 662510  | 631959  | 630931  | 624441  |
|                                     | <b>Total</b>   | 750412  | 727533  | 679518  | 722923  | 686328  | 686785  | 680009  |

**Data Descriptions** - Includes the following recipients:

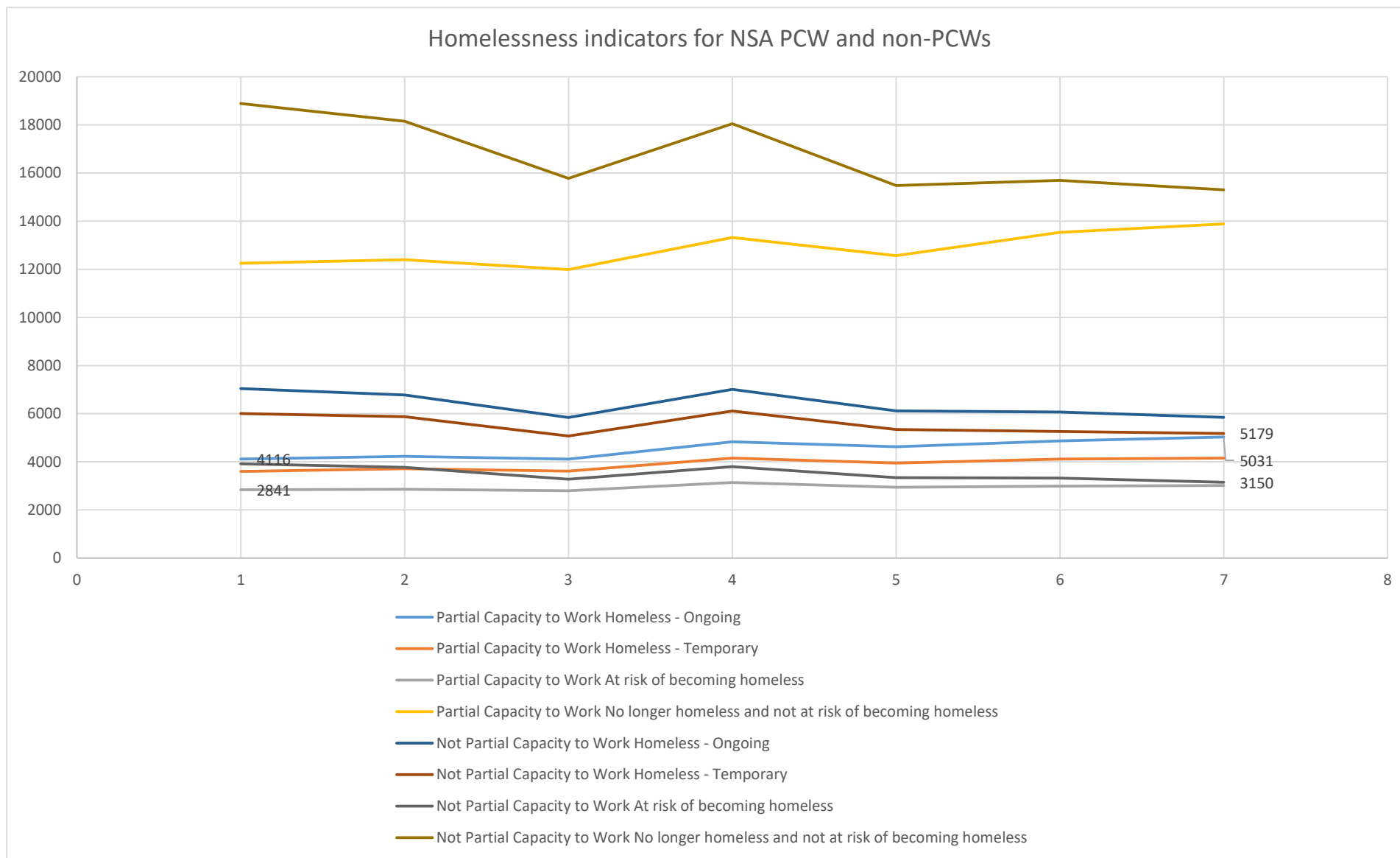
Recipients of Newstart Allowance who are determined to be current (i.e. entitled to be paid) on the Centrelink payment system, and not in receipt of CDEP Participation Supplement or zero rate of payment.

Partial Capacity to Work refers to activity tested recipients with an assessed work capacity of under 30 hours.

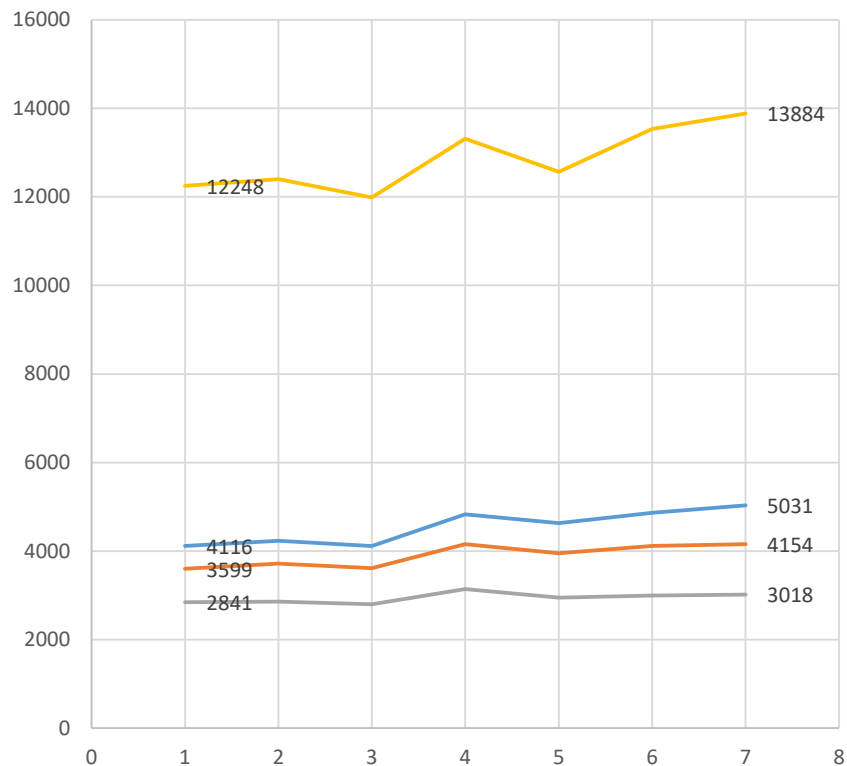
Homelessness indicators recorded in the Centrelink payment system identify recipients who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The indicator is recorded where Human Services officers become aware of a recipient experiencing homelessness or risk of homelessness.

Note: recipients must provide consent for the Homeless Indicator to be coded on their record. These data may therefore represent an undercount.

Source: Department of Human Services administrative data. Report produced on 01/11/2019.

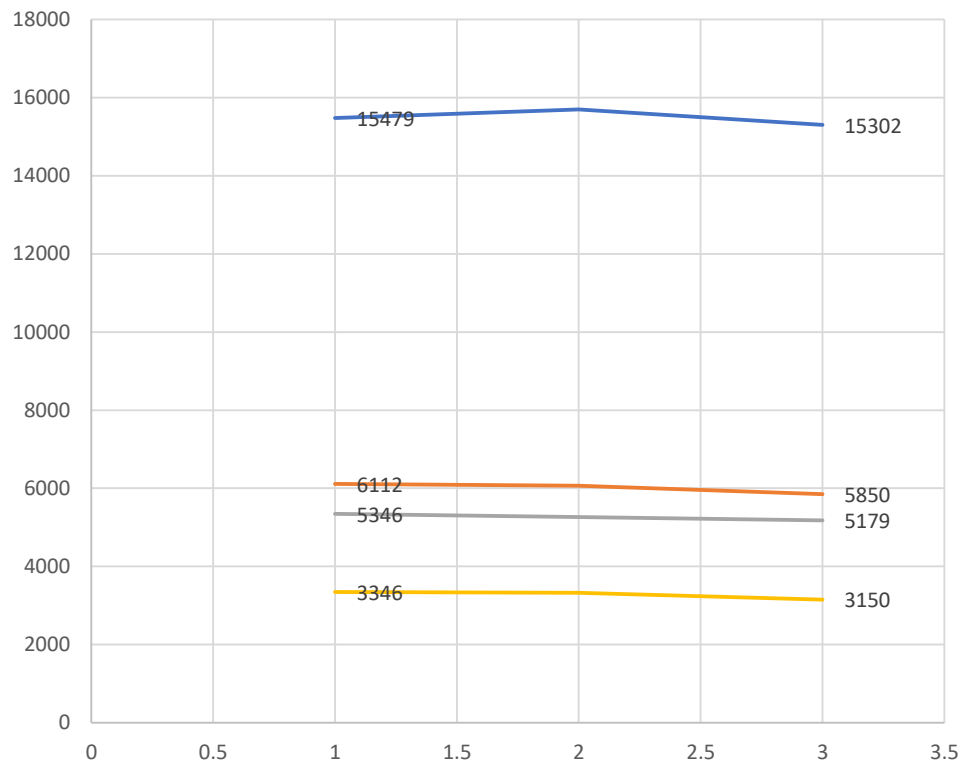


PCW homelessness



- Partial Capacity to Work Homeless - Ongoing
- Partial Capacity to Work Homeless - Temporary
- Partial Capacity to Work At risk of becoming homeless
- Partial Capacity to Work No longer homeless and not at risk of becoming homeless

non-PCWs homelessness



- Not Partial Capacity to Work Homeless - Ongoing 7042 6774 5841 7014
- Not Partial Capacity to Work Homeless - Temporary 6001 5875 5072 6111
- Not Partial Capacity to Work At risk of becoming homeless 3917 3774 3276 3799
- Not Partial Capacity to Work No longer homeless and not at risk of becoming homeless 18888 18150 15773 18046

**Measures in place within the payments system for clients at risk of homelessness, clients impacted by domestic violence and clients with drug/alcohol addiction – KEY MESSAGES**

- People at risk of homelessness or domestic violence may be able to receive additional financial assistance through Crisis Payment, a one off payment equivalent to one week of their income support payment.
- People in these circumstances may also be eligible to receive Emergency Relief payments to assist with the costs of essential items such as food and clothing.
- Vulnerable people claiming support through Centrelink are prioritised so that their claim is assessed as soon as possible. Centrelink Social Workers are also available to provide short-term counselling support and information if needed..
- From 1 January 2018, all job seekers can have drug and alcohol treatment included in their Job Plan if they need to, and this will count towards their activity requirements. Since this measure commenced, 1,274 job seekers in Streams A and B have added this type of activity to their Job Plan.

**Measures in place within the payments system for clients at risk of homelessness, clients impacted by domestic violence and clients with drug/alcohol addiction]– LABOR PLAN**

- N/A

**Measures in place within the payments system for clients at risk of homelessness, clients impacted by domestic violence and clients with drug/alcohol addiction– COALITION PLAN**

- The Government introduced a package of five measures in the 2017-18 Budget that work together to identify job seekers with drug and alcohol abuse issues and support them to access appropriate treatment to address their substance related barriers to work.
- Under the changes to Intent to Claim, claimants in vulnerable circumstances who have a genuine difficulty in providing documents with a claim will be able to lodge the claim and to provide any required documents subsequently, with the claim date being the lodgement date.
- Examples of vulnerable circumstances include, but are not limited to, crisis situations where the claimant is unable to fully complete a claim due to being homeless, affected by a major disaster or family and domestic violence, a recent humanitarian entrant or recently released from prison or psychiatric confinement. Vulnerable circumstances may also relate to people in ongoing situations such as young people who are unable to live at home.
- The approach is to allow Centrelink discretionary power to determine on a case by case basis who is a vulnerable claimant. This approach, rather than a definitive list, would give greater flexibility for officers to determine who is a vulnerable claimant and take appropriate action.
- When a vulnerable claimant, such as a person affected by family and domestic violence, contacts Centrelink to discuss their circumstances, Centrelink is able to change the usual claim process, including for an online claim, to enable a claim to be lodged without the usual documents being provided. This allows the claim process to be finalised as quickly as possible following the initial contact.

**Measures in place within the payments system for clients at risk of homelessness, clients impacted by domestic violence and clients with drug/alcohol addiction – STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

- N/A.

**Measures in place within the payments system for clients at risk of homelessness, clients impacted by domestic violence and clients with drug/alcohol addiction - BACKGROUND**

Crisis Payment is a one-off payment available to income support recipients who are in severe financial hardship. To qualify for a Crisis Payment a person must:

- have left their home and be unable to return because of an extreme circumstance, such as domestic violence (this may include economic abuse, neglect or financial exploitation of a vulnerable person by a Carer or family member etc.) or a natural disaster;
- have remained in their home after being subjected to domestic violence by a family member who has since been removed from the home;
- have been released from prison or psychiatric confinement after being charged with an offence and have served at least 14 days, or
- have entered Australia on a qualifying humanitarian visa.

The Government introduced a package of five measures in the 2017-18 Budget that work together to identify job seekers with drug and alcohol abuse issues and support them to access appropriate treatment to address their substance related barriers to work.

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Last update: 19 July 2018

## SENATE INQUIRY THE ADEQUACY OF NEWSTART AND RELATED PAYMENTS AND ALTERNATIVE MECHANISMS TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF INCOME SUPPORT PAYMENTS IN AUSTRALIA

**TOPIC: LINK BETWEEN NEWSTART AND HOMELESSNESS**

**OUTCOME: 4 Housing**

### *Rate of Newstart contributes to homelessness*

#### Questions and Answers

#### **Q. Does the Government have any evidence on the link between being on Newstart and Homelessness?**

- Homelessness is rarely the result of a single event, action or issue and is often the result of a complex interplay of structural, institutional, relational and personal factors.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) General Social Survey 2014 found 2.5 million Australians aged 15 years and over had experienced homelessness.
- The ABS survey reported the main reason behind the cause of homelessness was due to family, friend or relationship problems (**44 per cent**).
- Journeys Home is a Government funded longitudinal study of individuals exposed to high levels of housing insecurity. It found the risk of homelessness was increased for people previously incarcerated (juvenile detention, adult prison or remand).
- Journeys Home found the prevalence of homelessness is much higher for people with recent experience of:
  - family breakdown
  - current health problems
  - joblessness and reliance on Centrelink payments (risky drinkers and those using illicit substances (cannabis or other substances))
  - incarceration, including juvenile detention
  - physical and sexual violence.
- Journeys Home found there was very little differences in entries and exits to homelessness for people in receipt of common types of income support, especially Newstart and Disability Support Pension.

## BACKGROUND

- The 2010 European Consensus Conference on homelessness outlined four key factors influencing homelessness. These factors are:
  - **Structural:** state of housing and labour markets, and social protections
  - **Institutional:** ability of service systems to meet need (e.g. not receiving adequate/co-ordinated supports), staying in institutions (i.e. impact of living in institutions) and admission/discharge procedures
  - **Relational:** family status, social networks, presence of conflict or abuse in relationships and relational breakdowns
  - **Personal:** an individuals' health, skills, education and addiction/s.
- The ABS 2014 General Social Survey (4.1590) found that 1.4 million Australians aged 15 years of over had been homeless in the previous ten years. These people were asked to advise the reason behind their most recent experience of homelessness. These were family, friend or relationship problems (**44 per cent**), tight housing or rental market (**14 per cent**) and financial problems (**13 per cent**).
- Journeys Home was a longitudinal study (six waves) over two and a half years of individuals exposed to high levels of housing insecurity. This department commissioned the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research to design and implement the survey.
- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Specialist Homelessness Services annual reports shows from 2011-12 to 2017-18, the number of people on **Newstart Allowance** accessing homelessness services increased by **80.9 per cent** (from 29,887 to 54,066).
- Under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, the Australian Government provides **\$1.5 billion annually** to the states and territories and jurisdictions have full budget flexibility, including determining where homelessness service providers are contracted.

## Communication, media and/or stakeholder engagement

- On 2 September 2019, Pro-Bono released an article which linked Newstart adequacy and homelessness, quoting Homelessness Australia. It also called for an increase to Newstart Allowance and Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
- This issue of a link between Newstart and homelessness has not been covered in media releases or other communication products.

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**Specialist Homelessness Service clients aged 15 and over, by main source of income 2011-12 and 2017-18, as reported by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)**

| Main source of income                    | 2011-12        |              | 2017-18        |              | Comparison    |              |
|--|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|  | Number         | Per cent     | Number         | Per cent     | Number        | Per cent     |
| Newstart allowance                       | 29,887         | 23.9         | 54,066         | 29.3         | 24,179        | 80.9%        |
| Parenting payment                        | 27,726         | 22.2         | 33,297         | 18.0         | 5,571         | 20.1%        |
| Disability support pension               | 23,645         | 18.9         | 29,527         | 16.0         | 5,882         | 24.9%        |
| Youth allowance                          | 11,602         | 9.3          | 13,994         | 7.6          | 2,392         | 20.6%        |
| Age pension                              | 2,729          | 2.2          | 5,261          | 2.8          | 2,532         | 92.8%        |
| Austudy/ABSTUDY                          | 777            | 0.6          | 1,009          | 0.5          | 232           | 29.9%        |
| Sickness allowance                       | 330            | 0.3          | 367            | 0.2          | 37            | 11.2%        |
| Carer allowance                          | 509            | 0.4          | 1,302          | 0.7          | 793           | 155.8%       |
| Carer Payment                            | 1,061          | 0.8          | 2,655          | 1.4          | 1,594         | 150.2%       |
| Other government pensions and allowances | 1,611          | 1.3          | 3,179          | 1.7          | 1,568         | 97.3%        |
| Employee income                          | 9,698          | 7.8          | 15,294         | 8.3          | 5,596         | 57.7%        |
| Unincorporated business income           | 134            | 0.1          | 143            | 0.1          | 9             | 6.7%         |
| Other income                             | 1,213          | 1.0          | 1,460          | 0.8          | 247           | 20.4%        |
| Nil income                               | 12,298         | 9.8          | 17,283         | 9.4          | 4,985         | 40.5%        |
| DVA pension or payment                   | 1,738          | 1.5          | 634            | 0.3          | -1,104        | -63.5%       |
| Awaiting Government benefits             | N/A            | N/A          | 5,334          | 2.9          | N/A           | N/A          |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                         | <b>124,958</b> | <b>N/A</b>   | <b>184,805</b> | <b>N/A</b>   | <b>N/A</b>    | <b>N/A</b>   |
| Don't Know                               | 51,802         | ..           | 38,421         | ..           | -13,381       | -25.8%       |
| <b>Overall Total</b>                     | <b>176,760</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>223,226</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>46,466</b> | <b>26.3%</b> |

Data sourced from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report. Table S2.20: All clients aged 15 and over by main source of income. 2011–12, adjusted for non-response and Table CLIENTS.25: Clients aged 15 and over, by main source of income, 2017–18.

Notes:

2011-12 and 2017-18 per cent calculations are based on total clients less 'Don't Know'.

Don't know figure in 2011-12 was originally published as a footnote under Table S2.20.

2011-12 responses 'Disability Pension DVA, Service pension DVA and War Widow(ers)' Pension' were included in DVA pension or payment as per the 2017-18 report.

2017-18 Awaiting Government benefits includes clients currently registered for a government benefit, pension or allowance, but awaiting their first payment.

**Table 6.13 Average rates of entry into, and exit from, homelessness by reliance on income support and type (per cent) as reported by Journeys Home Research Report No. 6 May 2015, The University of Melbourne.**

| Income Support type at t-1                       | Cultural Homelessness |             | Primary Homelessness |             |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
|  | Entry Rate            | Exit Rate   | Entry Rate           | Exit Rate   |
| Not on income support                            | 5.0                   | 50.0        | 0.5                  | 20.2        |
| On income support, but not main source of income | 6.8                   | 55.6        | 2.3                  | 59.0        |
| <i>Income support is main source of income:</i>  |                       |             |                      |             |
| <b>Newstart Allowance</b>                        | <b>13.2</b>           | <b>36.0</b> | <b>2.1</b>           | <b>35.4</b> |
| Youth Allowance                                  | 11.1                  | 63.6        | 0.9                  | 52.4        |
| Disability Support Pension                       | 10.6                  | 31.8        | 1.8                  | 37.3        |
| Parenting Payment                                | 5.0                   | 62.7        | 0.2                  | 100.0       |
| Other benefit                                    | 13.0                  | 41.2        | 2.6                  | 29.6        |
| <b>Sub-total</b>                                 | <b>10.9</b>           | <b>39.7</b> | <b>1.6</b>           | <b>37.8</b> |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>9.8</b>            | <b>41.9</b> | <b>1.5</b>           | <b>39.1</b> |

Note: Figures have been weighted to account for non-random survey response and attrition.

Totals include a small number of cases where either level or type of income support type could not be determined.