Reducing street homelessness in NSW

Why is this important?

Up to 60 per cent of people street sleeping have complex physical, mental health and disability support needs and the number of people sleeping on the streets has been steadily increasing. In February 2019 the Premier signed an agreement with the Institute of Global Homelessness, along with other partners, to halve street homelessness across NSW by 2025. This Premier's Priority means helping almost 1,300 people street sleeping to achieve secure and stable housing.

How do we measure progress?

The latest Census by the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that in 2016 almost 2,600 people were living on the streets in NSW. The Census sets the overall baseline for the Premier's Priority but data is only available every five years. Statewide street counts will be used to measure annual progress. Data on people assisted by homelessness services will also be used to monitor progress.
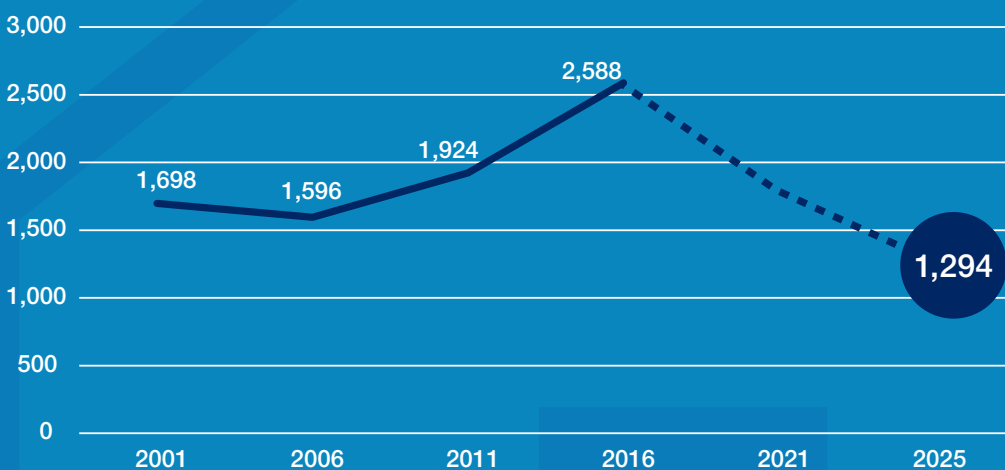
How are we tracking?

The NSW Government has committed more than $1 billion for homelessness services over the next four years, which includes new funding of $61 million over four years to implement the NSW Homelessness Strategy.

The NSW Government has announced $36 million for the new Together Home project to provide housing and wrap around support for hundreds of rough sleepers in NSW. The project will provide access to the services people need to maintain their tenancy and improve their health and wellbeing.

In partnership with the sector, the NSW Government's assertive outreach program has expanded significantly. This has contributed to more than 620 people previously sleeping on the streets in Sydney being housed since 2017. Around 87% of the people assisted have successfully sustained their tenancy.

Number of persons living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out, NSW, 2001-2016 (ABS)

Year	Number
2001	1,698
2006	1,596
2011	1,924
2016	2,588
2025	1,294

50% REDUCTION TARGET

What does the 2020 statewide street count tell us?

The first statewide street count was conducted in early 2020 and identified 1,314 people street sleeping across NSW. A further 135 counts were made where there was evidence of street homelessness but no person was seen, for example makeshift camps, sleeping bags or personal belongings.

Estimating street homelessness through a statewide count is a challenging task and an undercount is very likely. In some Local Government Areas (LGAs), only a very small number of people were counted as street sleepers. In four LGAs, a nil count was returned. It is important to understand the quality of the street count data when interpreting results. A technical paper on the street count data is available at www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/streethomelessness.

The new statewide street count data provides a point in time measure to help understand the scale, depth and persistence of street homelessness. This new data has already informed the expansion of assertive outreach programs to 36 LGAs across NSW. Data from future counts will continue to inform better responses to street homelessness and help to measure progress against the Premier's Priority.

Murrumbidgee, Far West, Western NSW	Counted
Dareton	1
Parkes	1
Hilltops	3
Dubbo	4
Cootamundra	1
Wagga Wagga	1
Orange	0
Narrabri	3
Griffith	4
Broken Hill	3
Albury	2
Bathurst	4
Total:	27

Mid North Coast, New England, Northern NSW	Counted
Port Macquarie	5
Coffs Harbour	51
Kempsey	3
Tweed Heads	77
Byron Shire	174
Clarence Valley	7
Richmond Valley Council	3
Tamworth	6
Taree	2
Lismore	55
Ballina	21
Total:	404

Hunter, Central Coast	Counted
Dungog	7
Upper Hunter	2
Singleton	3
Port Stephens	4
Muswellbrook	0
Maitland	12
Lake Macquarie	33
Newcastle	52
Cessnock	7
Central Coast	58
Total:	178

South Western Sydney	Counted
Canterbury/Bankstown (SWS side)	5
Campbelltown	10
Camden	1
Fairfield	7
Liverpool	7
Total:	30

Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains	Counted
Cumberland	5
Penrith	13
Parramatta	94
Blacktown	11
Total:	123

Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney	Counted
Strathfield	3
North Sydney	4
Bayside	12
Willoughby	3
Sutherland	33
Woollahra	4
Waverley	18
Randwick	6
Northern Beaches	71
Inner West	25
Hornsby	2
Burwood	4
Ryde	2
City of Sydney	334
Canterbury/Bankstown (SSESNS side)	4
Total:	525

Illlawarra Shoalhaven, Southern NSW	Counted
Wollongong	10
Kiama	4
Shellharbour	1
Queanbeyan	1
Bega Shire	5
Eurobodalla Shire	0
Shoalhaven	6
Goulburn	0
Total:	27

NSW TOTAL	1,314

Need help now?

Link2home	**1800 152 152**
Domestic Violence Line	**1800 656 463**
Child Protection Helpline	**132 111**

Link2home is the statewide homelessness information and referral telephone service. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. For information, assessment or referral to homelessness services and support in NSW, call **Link2home**.