

Homelessness in Australia: Part B

Individual level homelessness and dynamics

*Rosanna Scutella, Gavin Wood,
Guy Johnson and Yi-Ping Tseng*



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



MELBOURNE INSTITUTE
of Applied Economic and Social Research

Motivation

- Census data limited
 - Few individual risk factors
 - Can't examine interaction of area level/individual risk factors
 - Is a static picture: housing and labour markets might effect entries and exits differently and people move across areas
- Need individual-level longitudinal data that includes:
 - Homeless + At-risk/Vulnerable
 - Has spatial variation
- Journeys Home

Research questions

- Are individuals more likely to **experience homelessness** in areas with certain housing or labour market characteristics?
- Are individuals more likely to **enter homelessness** in areas with certain housing or labour market characteristics?
- Are individuals more likely to **exit homelessness** in areas with certain housing or labour market characteristics?

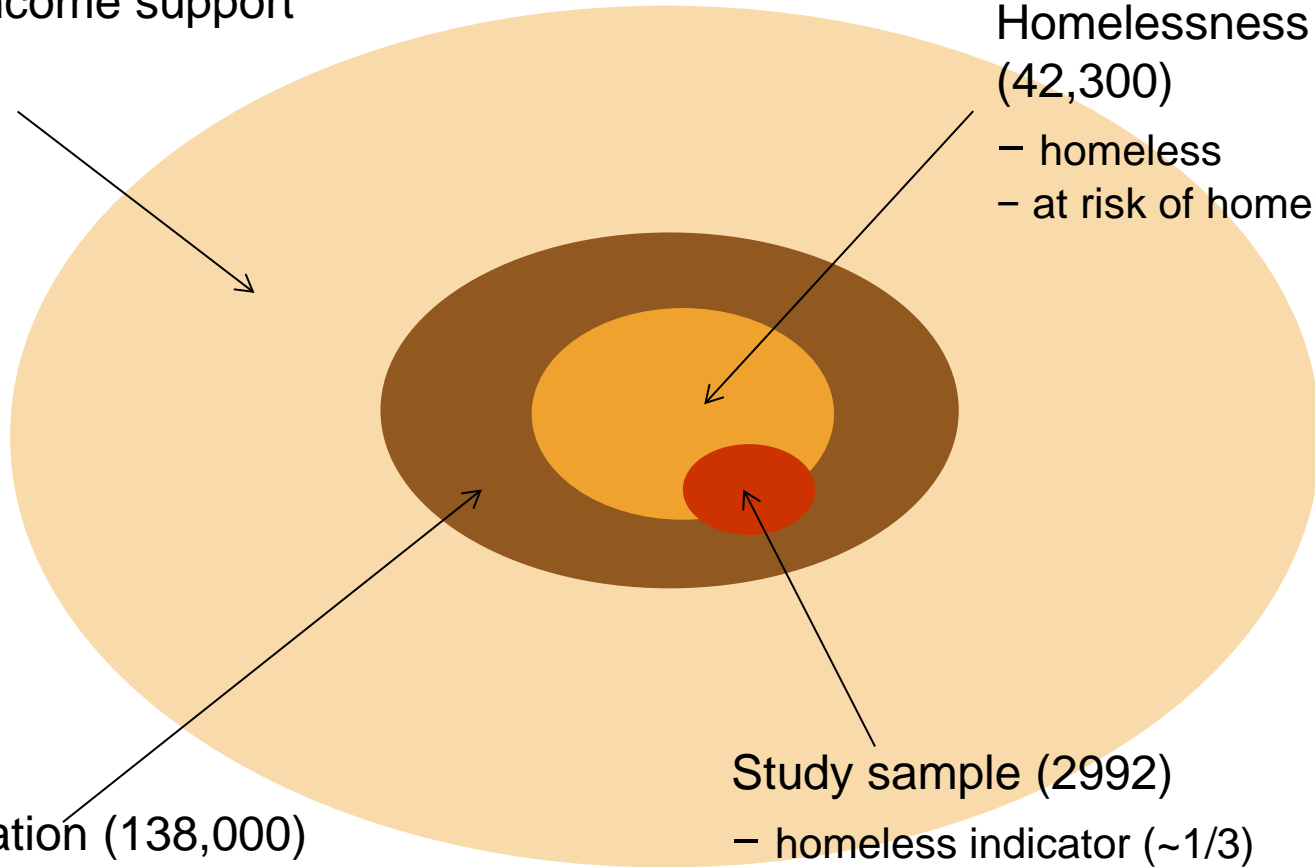
The data: Journeys Home

- 5-wave panel of persons facing housing insecurity
- Population:
 - Centrelink clients ‘homeless’, ‘at-risk’ or ‘vulnerable to homelessness’.
- Sample:
 - stratified by region and clustered: 36 locations
 - 2,992 cases to field
- Follow all 1,682 wave 1 respondents

Sample Structure (not to scale)

Centrelink income support population (4.7m+)

Homelessness flags (42,300)
– homeless
– at risk of homelessness



Target population (138,000)
– includes 'vulnerable to homelessness' group

Study sample (2992)
– homeless indicator (~1/3)
– at risk of homelessness indicator (~1/3)
– vulnerable to homelessness (~1/3)



Profile of Respondents (1)

	JH Wave 1	Australian population
Male	54.7	49.4
Female	45.3	50.6
15-17 years	9.5	4.8
18-20 years	16.5	5.1
21-24 years	12.6	7.3
25-34 years	21.7	17.7
35-44 years	20.0	17.3
45-54 years	14.0	16.7
55-64 years	4.8	14.1
65+ years	0.9	16.9
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	19.7	2.5
Australian born	87.5	73.2
Born overseas (English-speaking)	5.8	26.8
Born overseas (non-English-speaking)	6.7	
Married/defacto	17.3	63.7
Have dependent children	19.8	33.9
N	1,682	



Profile of Respondents (2)

	JH Wave 1	Australian population
<i>Highest education qualification</i>		
Tertiary qualification	27.9	50.2
Completed Yr 12 or equivalent	11.3	20.6
Completed Year 10 or 11 or equivalent	39.5	21.4
Completed Year 9 or below	20.1	7.7
<i>Labour force status</i>		
Employed	20.1	62.6
Unemployed	29.9	3.4
Not in labour force	50.1	34.0
N	1,682	

Profile of Respondents (3)

	JH Wave 1	Australian population ¹
<i>Diagnosed mental health condition</i>		
Bipolar effective disorder	11.0	2.9
Schizophrenia	8.9	n.a.
Depression	53.5	11.6 ²
Post-traumatic stress disorder ³	19.7	12.2
Anxiety disorder ³	41.3	26.3
<i>Smoking, alcohol consumption and illicit drug use</i>		
Smokes daily	67.9	15.1
Consumes alcohol at 'risky' ⁴ levels	57.4	20.1
Used illicit drugs in last 6 months/12 months	39.4	14.7
Injected illicit drugs in last 6 months/12 months	7.3	0.4
N	1,682	

Response Outcomes, W2 to W5

Outcome	Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 4		Wave 5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Completed interview	1529	90.9	1473	87.6	1454	86.4	1421	84.5
Out of scope*	22	1.3	47	2.8	52	3.1	51	3.0
Non-contact	68	4.0	70	4.2	85	5.1	78	4.6
Other non-response**	63	3.7	92	5.5	91	5.4	132	7.8
TOTAL SAMPLE (W1 resp'ts)	1682	100	1682	100	1682	100	1682	100

* Out of scope includes persons who: have died; are overseas; are in prison; or are in some other institution.

** This category includes outcomes classified as: refusal, termination, incapable, and contact made but no interview resulted.

Defining homelessness

- Cultural definition
 - minimum community standard that people expect in contemporary Australian society
- Includes those:
 - sleeping rough or squatting;
 - staying temporarily with others;
 - in emergency or crisis accommodation; or
 - in boarding houses
- Main difference with ABS definition: doesn't include overcrowding

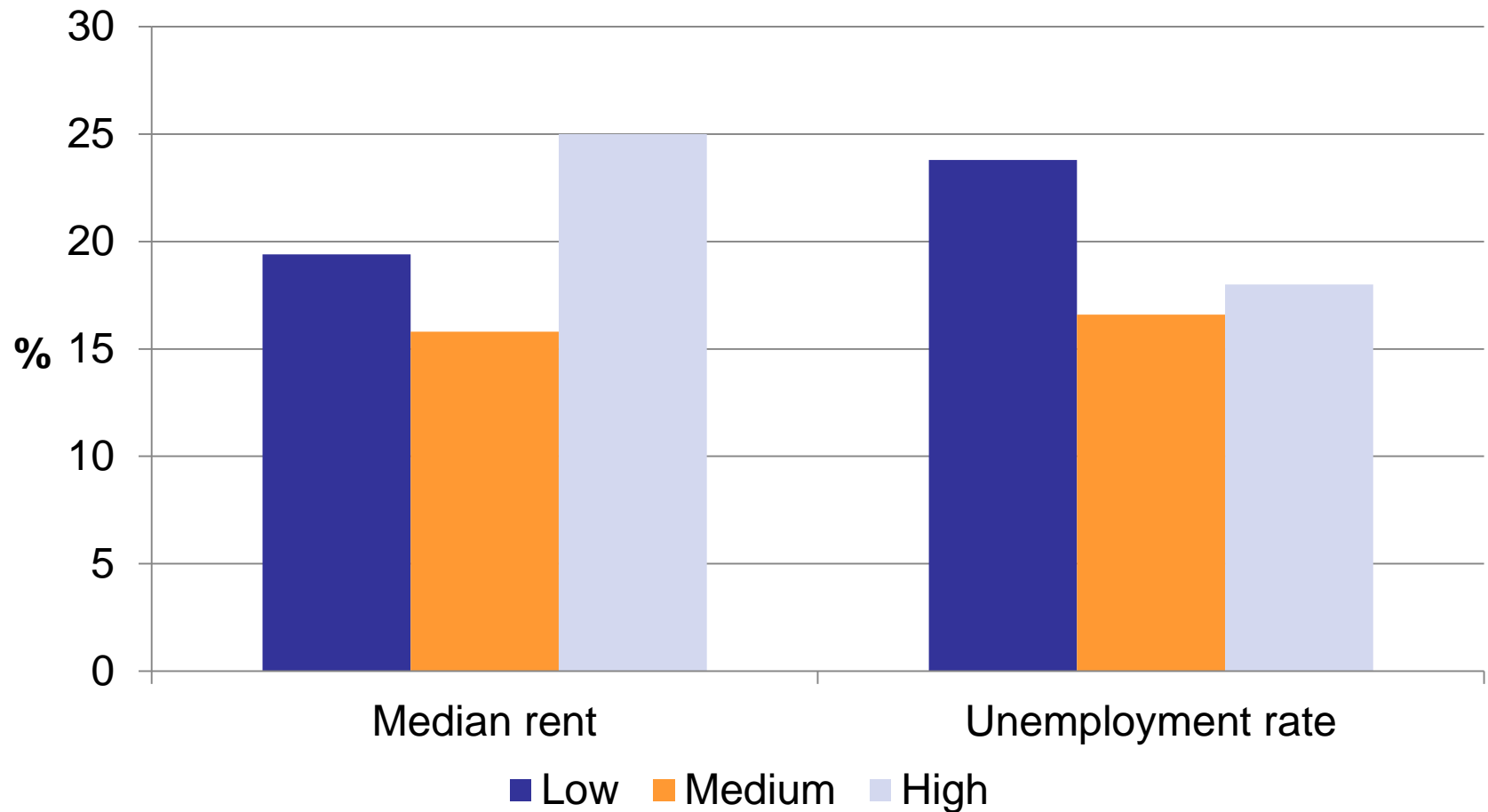
Prevalence of homelessness

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5
Males	33.4	26.9	27.4	27.0	24.1
Females	18.7	17.0	14.9	11.9	12.9
15 to 24 years	18.8	15.6	14.1	12.5	10.0
25 to 44 years	28.1	23.5	22.7	22.3	21.3
45 years plus	43.4	34.9	35.9	30.9	30.4
Indigenous	33.1	28.1	25.2	24.2	25.3
Non-indigenous	25.9	21.5	21.3	19.6	17.9
Total	27.4	22.9	22.2	20.7	19.4

Number of waves homeless

	Total	Males	Females	15 to 24 years	25 to 44 years	45 years plus
0 waves	51.2	46.3	58.1	59.2	49.1	39.2
1 wave	21.8	18.8	26.0	25.4	19.6	19.5
2 waves	10.5	12.6	7.6	8.3	11.7	12.3
3 waves	6.4	7.7	4.7	4.9	7.3	7.4
4 waves	4.1	5.9	1.5	1.5	5.3	6.9
5 waves	6.0	8.8	2.1	0.8	7.0	14.7
Valid N	1,243	656	587	485	501	257

Homelessness rates by housing and labour market characteristics



Homelessness and geographic mobility

	Homeless rate	Entry rate	Exit rate	N
Remained in same area ('stayers')	17.5	7.1	38.4	4,766
Moved across areas ('movers')	28.9	21.6	55.9	730
Total	19.0	8.7	42.0	5,496

Homelessness, 'stayers'

	Homeless rate	Entry rate	Exit rate	N
<i>Housing market</i>				
high rent area	21.6	6.9	30.3	1,270
medium rent area	14.3	6.1	40.8	1,814
low rent area	17.7	8.3	43.6	1,682
<i>Labour market</i>				
high unemployment area	16.9	7.8	43.0	1,773
medium unemployment area	15.3	7.2	45.3	1,455
low unemployment area	20.2	6.1	28.6	1,538
Total didn't move across areas	17.5	7.1	38.4	4,766

Homelessness, 'movers'

	Homeless rate	Entry rate	Exit rate	N
<i>Housing market</i>				
Moved from lower ranked rent area	30.8	22.1	52.4	247
Moved from similarly ranked rent area	28.1	19.3	47.1	196
Moved from higher ranked rent area	27.9	23.1	63.4	287
<i>Labour market</i>				
Moved from lower ranked unemployment area	30.7	20.9	53.1	261
Moved from similarly ranked unemployment area	23.6	16.9	58.5	195
Moved from higher ranked unemployment area	31.0	25.9	57.6	274
<i>Total moved</i>	28.9	21.6	55.9	730

Conclusions

- Housing markets matter for those at-risk
- Complex relationship with local labour markets
- Further research examining whether characteristics (observed and unobserved) of individuals explain patterns
- Interact individual risk factors and structural factors (e.g. housing and labour markets)
 - As those not at-risk won't become homeless
 - As persons with certain risk factors might be more prone to homelessness if facing adverse structural factors