



20 June 2011

Counting the Homeless Review
Attn: Living Conditions Section
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
living.conditions@abs.gov.au

Dear Mr. Brian Pink,

Re: The *Counting the Homeless* 2006 Methodological Review

We refer to the Review of the Counting the Homeless Methodology currently being undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and are writing to endorse the *Count Us In!* Submission from the Victorian Regional Homelessness Networks.

Women's Health West

Women's Health West (WHW) is a community organisation committed to improving the health, safety and wellbeing of women in Melbourne's diverse western region. The family violence service within WHW works directly with women and their accompanying children affected by family violence through the provision of crisis refuge accommodation, counselling, advocacy, court support, crisis outreach case management, risk assessment and management, and information and referral.

Family violence is a major cause of homelessness and risks to homelessness for single women and women with accompanying children.

Women's Health West key points for consideration

We endorse the key recommendations in the **Count Us In!** submission that:

- The timelines for the review should be extended until the end of 2012 to enable genuine and meaningful input from the sector into the review and so that the development of a new Counting the Homeless Methodology is inclusive of the views of all stakeholders
- The ABS must act upon the commitment given at the consultation meeting in Sydney on 24 May to convene a review reference group that will include sector, policy and research representatives to guide the development of a revised Counting the Homeless Methodology
- That the ABS seek funding from FaCHSIA in order to undertake a national secondary schools survey in recognition of the fact that youth homelessness is 'hidden' and accurate estimates need to be developed from a range of sources other than Census data. We do not believe that a quality survey of a small number of schools is a sufficiently robust methodology for estimating the numbers of young people experiencing homelessness

Women's Health West
317-319 Barkly Street
Footscray VIC 3011
PHONE (03) 9689 9588
EMAIL info@whwest.org.au
FAX (03) 9689 3861
WEB www.whwest.org.au

- The ABS ensure that expert analysis by suitably qualified and appropriate homelessness research academics is a non negotiable element in developing ABS homelessness estimates for the 2011 Census and into the future
- That marginal residents in caravan parks are included in the homelessness estimate under tertiary homelessness
- That Chamberlain and Mackenzie's Cultural Definition of Homelessness is consistently applied to all population groups throughout the analysis process

Conclusion

Women's Health West supports the key points and recommendations of the Victorian Regional Homelessness Networks Submission – Count Us In!

Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter or would like more clarification on any content.

Yours sincerely

Jacky Tucker
Family Violence Services Manager
Ph: 9689 9588
jacky@whwest.org.au
Women's Health West