

Young, indigenous hit by 14pc homeless rise

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Homelessness in WA has surged, with young people and the indigenous among the most vulnerable, a new report reveals.

State and Federal government initiatives have failed to reduce the number of homeless since 1996, despite the economic boom, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Welfare groups have seized on the report's findings, demanding the Federal Government move faster to meet its goal of halving homelessness by 2020.

The institute's Counting the Homeless report, released today, found the number of homeless in Australia rose to 105,000 in 2006, up from 99,900 five years earlier.

But in WA, the number of homeless jumped 14 per cent to 13,391 — 68 people per 100,000.

Homelessness is worse in remote and regional areas. In the Pilbara, the number of homeless soared 58 per cent to 1012.

In Wyndham-East Kimberley Shire, one in 10 people was classed as homeless.

Youth homelessness is higher in WA than nationally, with 62 per cent of homeless people aged under 35 and a third of them teenagers.

Mission Australia WA director Ross Kyrwood said homelessness was getting worse.

“The high number of young homeless West Australians is particularly concerning when you consider the long-term impacts on these young people's lives,” he said.