

3 Data sources and limitations

The data presented in this paper draw mainly on the aged care data collections on ACCMIS. This data repository contains information gathered through a number of instruments. Among those instruments, the following two are directly relevant to this report:

- the *Aged Care Application and Approval Form* (form 2624). This is a form used for the assessment and approval of a care recipient for either Residential Aged Care, Community Aged Care Packages, or Flexible Care (for example, Extended Aged Care at Home Packages). This form is completed by a delegate of an Aged Care Assessment Team in consultation with the applicant and signed either by the applicant or someone else on behalf of the applicant; and
- the *Provider Claim Form*—a form completed by the service provider for claiming the Community Care subsidy that is payable in respect of the service for a payment period, normally a calendar month.

Other instruments through which information on the service providers are gathered include the *Approved Provider Status Application* and the *Community Care Service Agreement* between the Commonwealth and the service provider.

General population data are from the latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's population databases supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Care recipients' personal details

All care recipients receiving a Community Aged Care Package must have a valid Aged Care Application and Approval form (i.e. the client must have an 'approved' status). This form is normally valid for a period of 12 months from the date of approval. Approval of applications is a responsibility of Aged Care Assessment Teams and their delegates.

The information entered into ACCMIS from the Aged Care Application and Approval form is the major source for the following data items:

- sex;
- date of birth;
- Indigenous status;
- birthplace;
- preferred language;
- pension status;
- usual residence status (prior to admission); and
- living arrangements (prior to admission).

Some client details, such as financial hardship status, are obtained from the Provider Claim Form.

Care recipients' admission and separation details

The *Provider Claim Form* is sent to the approved service provider at the beginning of a payment period. This form has the details of existing recipients under the care of the service provider (the form would be blank for a new service provider). It is the responsibility of the service provider to check this form for accuracy and record new data and changes relating to new admissions, separations and leave for their care recipients.

The payment claim form is the original source for the following data items:

- date of admission;
- date of separation;
- separation reason; and
- length of stay (derived from date of admission and date of separation).

Service providers' details

Details about community aged care service providers are collected through the *Approved Provider Status Application* and the *Community Care Service Agreement* between the Commonwealth and the service provider. These documents are the primary source for the following data items:

- location of outlets (by both State/Territory and geographic area);
- size of outlets (measured in number of Community Aged Care Packages); and
- financial hardship target percentage.

Limitations of the data

The following points should be noted when interpreting the data presented in this paper:

- The data used for this paper were those available in ACCMIS as at 30 October 2000. However, results may be different for the same period if the data used are taken from a date other than 30 October 2000. This is because the ACCMIS is 'refreshed' periodically and some existing data are revised when this happens.
- The general population figure used in the calculation of the service provision ratio was the ABS estimated resident population at 30 June 2000. The service provision ratios presented in this report may be different to those calculated by the Department of Health and Aged Care due to the variation in population figures used.
- Some socio-demographic characteristics of care recipients were recorded at the time of application and, hence, may not reflect the true characteristics of care recipients while receiving care from the program. These characteristics include the care recipients' pension status, usual residence status, and their living arrangements. Care recipients' actual financial hardship status may also be different from the status at the initial assessment by the service providers.
- Due to the non-compulsory nature of self-identified Indigenous status, the number of package recipients who were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin presented in this report may be an underestimation of the true representation of Indigenous Australians within the client base of the program.

- Although the location of service-providing outlets can be used to assume the location of Community Aged Care Package care recipients, it is possible that outlets provide services to care recipients who live outside of the outlets' jurisdictions or geographic areas.
- The lack of information on areas such as type of assistance received by care recipients, their levels of dependency and carer support means that analysis of recipients' care needs was outside the scope of this paper.