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*Better information and statistics
for better health and wellbeing*

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Homeless people in SAAP

**SAAP National Data Collection
annual report
2007–08**

Australia

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Board Chair

Hon. Peter Collins, AM, QC

Director

Penny Allbon

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Manager

SAAP National Data Collection Agency

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: (02) 6244 1206

Email: ndca@aihw.gov.au

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Preface

The 2007–08 annual report on the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) National Data Collection is the thirteenth report in this series. The first report, containing 1996–97 data, was published in December 1997. The reports provide information on assistance given to people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare manages the SAAP National Data Collection Agency, and works closely with SAAP agencies which collect and provide data, and the SAAP Information Subcommittee, to produce these reports. The SAAP Coordination and Development Committee is responsible for the national direction of SAAP and provides valuable support in the reporting process.

This close partnership is reflected in the level of participation in the collection: more than 90% of SAAP funded agencies participated in the 2007–08 collection, with 83% of records meeting valid consent requirements. The personal information of clients is protected by the very strict confidentiality provisions of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987.

From 1 January 2009, the SAAP V Agreement between the Australian Government and the states and territories will be replaced by the National Affordable Housing Agreement, and a new National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The new agreements emphasise the ongoing importance of a sound evidence base for policy development and program management.

Penny Allbon

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

SAAP Coordination and
Development Committee

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Alison Verhoeven and the SAAP Information Subcommittee provided helpful comments on the draft report.

This report draws together a large amount of statistical material and could not have been produced without the efforts and cooperation of SAAP service providers and clients, who provided service and client information, and of the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and state and territory funding departments, which provided administrative data.

Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
DV	domestic violence
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
I & I	Innovation and Investment
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
No.	number
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SLK	statistical linkage key
SMART	SAAP Management and Reporting Tool
Tas	Tasmania
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

Symbols in tables

..	not applicable
–	nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)
n.a.	not available
n.e.s.	not elsewhere specified

Summary

This national report provides an overview of assistance given to clients and their accompanying children by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program during the financial year 2007–08. It is accompanied by state and territory supplements.

Funding

The total funding allocation to SAAP was \$400.4 million, of which \$383.9 million was direct funding to SAAP agencies. In real terms, total funding was 28% greater than in 1996–97 and 1% greater than in 2006–07, while agency funding was 34% greater than in 1996–97 and 1% greater than in 2006–07.

Who was supported?

One in every 104 Australians, or 202,500 people (125,600 clients and 76,900 accompanying children), received substantial SAAP support. Children had a high rate of use with 1 in 64 children overall and 1 in every 39 children aged 0–4 years accompanying a parent or guardian to a SAAP agency.

The majority of clients were female. By age, the largest group of SAAP clients was 15–19 year-olds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and accompanying children were overrepresented when compared with the general population.

Why was support sought?

Interpersonal relationship issues were the most common reason clients gave for seeking assistance and, of these, notably domestic or family violence, and relationship and family breakdown were cited. Other common reasons were accommodation and financial issues.

What support was provided?

Around a third of all support periods included a period of supported accommodation. The median length of support was 10 days. The median length of accommodation was 12 days. Family groups with children generally required longer periods of support and accommodation.

Were support needs met?

Overall, SAAP agencies were able to directly meet the needs of clients and accompanying children in the majority of cases. Basic support services were the most likely to be provided directly. Specialist services were least likely to be provided directly and most likely to be referred on.

Generally, SAAP client circumstances improved following support, particularly for those who required assistance with income, employment and housing, and for those supported for longer periods. Over half of SAAP clients had a case management plan in place before the end of their support. In most cases, at least some of the goals specified in the plan were achieved.

