

Summary

In 2001-02, 1,286 non-government, community or local government organisations were funded nationally under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) (Chapter 1). This report provides information on the wide range of substantial support services provided by these agencies to people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. An analysis of one-off or casual assistance provided by SAAP agencies on a daily basis is also included.

Additionally, the report presents information about the level of unmet need in SAAP, as agencies can not always meet all of the requests from existing SAAP clients, or any of the requests from potential clients. A major focus of this report is level of unmet demand for accommodation, as the provision of accommodation is one of the core activities of SAAP. Turn-away rates for people requesting SAAP accommodation are included in the report for the first time.

Support provided to clients

- In 2001-02 SAAP agencies provided an estimated 95,600 clients with accommodation and/or support lasting more than 1 hour. These clients received a total of 177,000 occasions of support (Table 2.1).
- In total, clients received at least 1,048,000 distinct services and were provided with more than 137,400 referrals to meet their needs (derived from Table 3.1).
- Accommodation was provided directly to clients in 110,600 support periods, with referrals to SAAP or CAP accommodation being arranged in 8,400 support periods. In addition, assistance to obtain other housing was provided in 61,200 support periods and referrals for such assistance were arranged in 20,100 support periods (derived from Table 3.1).
- Clients supported for 1 day or less were less likely to have their needs met than those supported for longer periods. Thirty-eight per cent of closed support periods were for clients supported for 1 day or less. For these clients, 12% of requested services were neither provided nor referred, compared with 5% for clients supported for more than 1 day (Table 3.2).
- Employment and training assistance was not provided or referred in 96% of requests made by clients supported for 1 day or less, compared with 18% for clients supported for more than 1 day. Assistance with obtaining or maintaining non-SAAP or non-CAP housing was not provided or referred in 37% of requests made by clients supported for less than 1 day compared with 13% for those supported for longer periods.

Unmet requests of clients

- For clients with support periods that finished between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2002, in 93% of the 108,700 support periods where SAAP or CAP accommodation was sought the request was met. A further 3% were referred, leaving 4% of requests (3,800) unmet (Section 3.4).
- Assistance with obtaining short-term accommodation or independent housing was neither provided by the agency nor referred in 3,800 (10%) and 14,800 (33%), respectively, of closed support periods in which it was requested.

Support provided to accompanying children

- A total of 50,800 accompanying children and 68,100 accompanying child support periods were reported for 2001–02 (Table 2.1).
- SAAP or CAP accommodation was provided in 72% of accompanying child support periods, and referrals were made for such accommodation in 5% of cases. Overall, nearly 172,900 distinct services were provided to accompanying children and around 18,200 referrals were made (Table 3.3).
- Eighty-nine per cent of accompanying child support periods were for children that accompanied their mother or female guardian.

One-off assistance

The following points relate to data collected during the Casual Client Collection period, from 21 February to 6 March 2002.

- There was an estimated 32,490 casual contacts made by individuals and groups for one-off assistance. These casual contacts relate to 34,480 individuals (Table 4.1).
- On average, 2,540 individuals received some type of one-off assistance (not associated with more substantial support) from SAAP agencies on any day.
- On average, 1.9 services were provided during a casual client contact, with information and meals generally being the most common forms of one-off assistance.
- The number of casual contacts dropped considerably on weekends compared with weekdays (Table 4.3).

Unmet requests for SAAP accommodation

The following points relate to data collected during the Unmet Demand Collection period, from 22 to 28 August 2001 and from 8 to 14 May 2002.

- Around 8,020 valid unmet requests for accommodation were reported by individuals or groups (Table 5.1). The most common reason for unmet requests was that insufficient accommodation was available – in 84% of valid unmet requests (Table 5.1).
- On any day, there was an average of 573 valid unmet requests for accommodation by individuals and groups (Table 5.2). Around 62% (357) of these requests were for accommodation required within 24 hours. Referrals to other accommodation services were arranged following 138 valid unmet requests (Table 5.4).
- Of the 573 valid unmet requests for accommodation, 198 (35%) were made by individuals or couples with children.
- Information and referrals for accommodation were the most common forms of one-off assistance received by people with unmet requests for SAAP assistance (Table 4.4).

Number of people making unmet requests for SAAP accommodation

On a daily basis, some people made more than one valid unmet request for accommodation during the Unmet Demand Collection period, from 22 to 28 August 2001 and from 8 to 14 May 2002. This section refers to the number of people making those requests.

- On an average daily basis, there was a total of 949 people (567 potential clients and 383 accompanying children) with unmet requests for accommodation (Table 6.1). Of these

people, 344 potential clients and 202 accompanying children had unmet requests for immediate accommodation.

- People who were born in Australia or in other English-speaking countries were more likely to require accommodation within 24 hours (54% and 58%, respectively). People from non-English speaking countries were more likely to require accommodation after 24 hours (63%) (Table 6.3).

Meeting the demand for accommodation: turn-away rates

The following points relate to data collected during the Unmet Demand Collection period, from 22 to 28 August 2001 and 8 to 14 May 2002. Data refer to the number of individual adults or unaccompanied children turned away on an average daily basis rather than requests. Accompanying child data are not included.

- Of the 570 people making requests for immediate SAAP accommodation on an average daily basis, 55% (315) were turned away without being accommodated (Table 7.1).
- Of all people continuing their accommodation or requesting immediate accommodation on a daily basis (7,825), the turn-away rate for those who could not be accommodated by the end of the day was 4% (Table 7.3).
- An average of 247 clients left their SAAP or CAP accommodation and 255 clients started their accommodation each day. An average of 7,255 people continued their accommodation (Table 7.5).
- The number of clients either ending or starting their SAAP or CAP accommodation and the number of people with unmet requests for accommodation were at their lowest on weekends. In contrast, the number of clients continuing their accommodation increased on weekends.

