

2 Total demand for SAAP assistance

Although SAAP agencies assist many people on a daily basis, there are still times when an agency cannot provide the support or accommodation requested by people in crisis. This chapter gives an overview of the total demand for SAAP assistance in 2001-02 and the extent to which that demand was met, particularly the demand for accommodation.

2.1 The SAAP National Data Collection

The main source of data about the provision of services by SAAP is the SAAP National Data Collection. This consists of a number of distinct components, each of which can be thought of as a separate collection. There were 5 components in 2001-02: the Client Collection; the Unmet Demand Collection; the Met Demand Collection; the Casual Client Collection; and the Administrative Data Collection. This report is based on analysis of the first 4 of these collections, details of which are provided in Appendix 2. The forms used for collecting the data are shown in Appendix 3.

Figure 2.1 (page 7) shows the relationships between assistance provided by SAAP agencies and the data collected about this assistance. As is apparent, there are overlaps between all 4 collections.

The Client Collection

The Client Collection consists of information about all clients receiving SAAP support lasting more than 1 hour. The information is collected throughout the year and includes basic sociodemographic data, data on services required by and provided to each client, and information about clients' situations before and after receiving SAAP support. Information about accompanying and/or assisted children of SAAP clients is also obtained from the Client Collection.

The main findings from this Collection are published in the national and state and territory SAAP NDC annual reports (see, for example, AIHW 2002c). Both annual and daily estimates of the number of clients can be produced. Daily children's data cannot, however, be estimated (see Section 2.2). Summary information on the distinct types of services provided to clients is provided in Chapter 3 of this report.

The Unmet and Met Demand Collections

The Unmet Demand Collection covers 2 weeks each year. In 2001-02 it was conducted from 22 to 28 August 2001 and from 8 to 14 May 2002. The Collection measures the level of unmet demand for SAAP services by collecting information about requests for accommodation or substantial support that could not be provided by SAAP agencies. It should be noted that the Unmet Demand Collection has undergone significant change since its inception in 1996 (for more details, see AIHW 2002b:4). As a result, comparison between different years is not possible.

An Unmet Demand Collection form is filled out by an agency each time a person or group of people requests substantial assistance and that assistance cannot be provided by the agency during the Collection period. Requests can be for accommodation or substantial support or both. Often in such cases agencies are able to provide one-off assistance, and information is also collected about this. An Unmet Demand Collection form may also be filled out for an existing client of a SAAP agency if that client had an unmet request for ongoing support or accommodation at another SAAP agency.

When examining unmet demand in this report, analysis of unmet requests is restricted to instances where the person or group approached an appropriate agency (that is, they fitted the agency's target group), approached an agency that offers the service requested, and did not refuse an offer of accommodation (when accommodation was requested).

Only unmet requests that meet these criteria are considered valid and included in the analysis. This approach assumes that requests at an inappropriate agency are redirected to an appropriate one. Although this may generally be the case, it is not possible to redirect all inappropriate approaches to appropriate agencies. For example, an appropriate agency may be inaccessible due to distance or occupancy rates. Consequently, the number of valid unmet requests is underestimated to the extent that invalid requests cannot be redirected.

The Met Demand Collection operates over 2 weeks at the same times as the Unmet Demand Collection. The Met Demand Collection was introduced in 2001–02 in order to distinguish those people with unmet requests who eventually found SAAP accommodation by the end of a particular day from number of people who could not be accommodated. This information is essential for calculation of the turn-away rates (see Chapter 7). From 2002–03, the Unmet and Met Demand Collections will be replaced with the Demand for Accommodation Collection.

Various estimation techniques are applied to data from the Unmet and Met Demand Collections to improve the estimates. The methods used to derive the number of valid unmet requests for assistance and the number of people that made these requests are described in Appendix 2.

The Casual Client Collection

The Casual Client Collection covers 2 weeks each year and consists of information about all people receiving SAAP support lasting less than 1 hour – termed 'one-off assistance'. For each casual contact, the types of one-off assistance provided are recorded. In 2001–02 the Collection was conducted during the fortnight of 21 February to 6 March.

The Casual Client Collection collects information on all cases where one-off assistance is provided, regardless of whether the person receiving that assistance requested more substantial support or accommodation. Consequently, one-off help provided to those who sought more substantial assistance is recorded in the Casual Client Collection and via a question on the Unmet Demand Collection form. Note, however, that the reference period for the Casual Client Collection differs from that for the Unmet Demand Collection.

A Casual Client Collection form may be filled out for an existing client if that client also receives one-off assistance from another agency – a soup kitchen, for example.

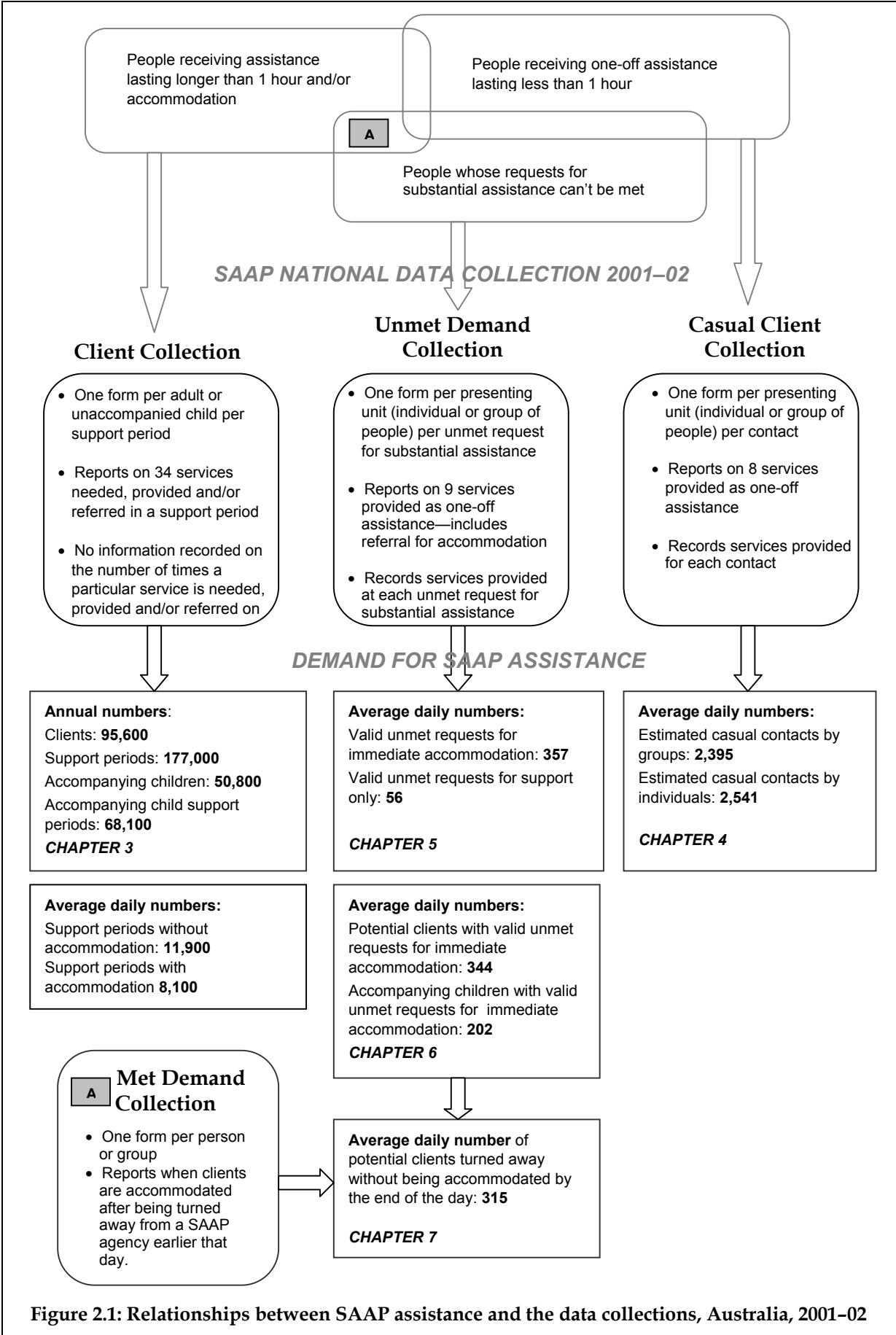


Figure 2.1: Relationships between SAAP assistance and the data collections, Australia, 2001-02

2.2 Total assistance provided

Data from the 2001–02 Client Collection showed that about 95,600 people received 177,000 periods of support. On a daily basis an average of 20,100 support periods were provided by SAAP agencies, with 8,100 (40%) of these being support periods with accommodation (Table 2.1). In the remaining 11,900 support periods clients received other types of substantial support.

In 2001–02, 50,800 accompanying children received 68,100 periods of support. The number of accompanying children and accompanying child support periods is actually higher than these figures. This is because an alpha code, which allows the number of accompanying children to be estimated, is not collected on the form used in high-volume SAAP agencies. When high-volume records are included, the actual number of accompanying child support periods increases to 73,300. A daily average number of children and child support periods cannot be given because support start and end dates for accompanying children are not collected. It cannot be assumed that accompanying children are assisted for the same length of time as their parent(s) or guardian(s).

During the 2 weeks of the Casual Client Collection there were 33,540 casual contacts by individuals or groups. These corresponded to approximately 35,580 contacts by individuals in which one-off assistance was provided. This equates to an estimated daily average of 2,540 contacts by individuals.

According to data from the Client Collection and the Casual Client Collection, it is estimated that on a daily basis there were between 12 and 13 people using SAAP services for every 10,000 people aged 10 years or more in the general population.¹ This is, however, an underestimate because it does not include accompanying children.

2.3 Unmet demand for accommodation

Chapter 5 discusses the number of valid requests from the Unmet Demand Collection and Chapter 6 the number of people making those requests. Table 2.1 summarises the information in those chapters. There was a daily average of 357 valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation relating to 546 people (344 potential clients and 202 accompanying children). These figures are underestimates because only data from agencies that participated in the Client Collection, Unmet Demand Collection and Met Demand Collection were used in order to facilitate comparison of the number of people who were accommodated with the number who could not be accommodated.

Around 315 people (adults or unaccompanied children) with valid unmet requests for immediate SAAP accommodation were unable to be accommodated in SAAP by the end of an average day during the 2-week Unmet Demand Collection period.² Chapter 7 expands on

¹ The population aged 10 years or more as at 30 June 2002 was 17,047,000 (ABS 2003). The lower limit of use per 10,000 is derived as $10,000 \times 20,100 / 17,047,000 = 11.8$. (This figure should in fact be slightly lower because an individual may have multiple support periods on any day. The number of support periods is used as a rough indicator only.) The upper limit of use per 10,000 is derived as $10,000 \times (20,100 + 2,540) / 17,047,000 = 13.3$.

² The design of the collection instruments used to derive this figure do not allow an estimate of the number of accompanying children who could not be accommodated by the end of the day.

this information by providing two different turn-away rates for those attempting to obtain SAAP accommodation.

2.4 Tables

Table 2.1: Total demand for SAAP assistance: summary table, Australia, 2001–02 (number)

	Daily average	Total number
Client Collection (ongoing)		
Clients	..	95,600
Support periods		
With accommodation	8,100	110,600
Without accommodation	11,900	66,300
<i>Total support periods</i>	<i>20,100</i>	<i>177,000</i>
Accompanying children	..	50,800
Accompanying child support periods	..	68,100
Accompanying child support periods (including high-volume records)	..	73,300
Casual Client Collection (21 February – 6 March 2002)		
Casual client contacts by groups	2,395	33,540
Estimated casual contacts by individuals	2,541	35,580
Unmet Demand Collection (22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002)		
Valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation	357	4,990
Unmet requests for support only	56	780
Potential clients with valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation	344	4,820
Potential clients with valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation who did not receive SAAP accommodation by the end of the day	315	4,420
Accompanying children with valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation	202	2,820

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0 (clients and support periods).
2. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0 (accompanying children and accompanying child support periods).
3. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0 (casual client contacts by groups) and 0 (casual client contacts by individuals).
4. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0 (unmet requests, potential clients and accompanying children).
5. Adjustments have been made for missing data from the Met and Unmet Demand Collections (see Appendix 2).
6. Support periods and accompanying child support periods have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.
7. Client and accompanying children figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation and client non-consent.
8. Figures from the Met, Unmet and Causal Client Collections are unweighted.
9. Unmet Demand Collection data and daily average data from the Client Collection includes only data from agencies that participated in all 3 Collections (the Client Collection and the Unmet Demand and Met Demand Collections). The figures thus understate the level of activity in SAAP agencies.

Sources: SAAP Client Collection, Casual Client Collection, Met Demand Collection and Unmet Demand Collection.

