

3 Support provided to clients and accompanying children

The diverse nature of client needs is reflected in the considerable range of services SAAP agencies provide to people who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Support may involve the provision of supported accommodation and/or a range of support services generally lasting more than an hour.

During 2001-02 SAAP-funded agencies provided an estimated 95,600 people with accommodation and/or support. Thirty-two per cent of these clients received more than one period of support during the year. The total number of support periods provided was 177,000 (AIHW 2002c:9). Table 3.1 shows that one or more services were either provided or referred in at least 171,800 of these support periods (the remaining 5,200 support periods reported did not contain information relating to service requirements or provision).

Accommodation was provided directly to clients in around 110,600 support periods, and referrals for SAAP or Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) accommodation were arranged in 8,400 support periods. In addition, assistance with obtaining 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).

Of the 171,800 support periods, 77,400 (45%) were for unaccompanied males. Unaccompanied females accounted for 45,000 support periods (26%) and females with children for 33,500 support periods (20%). Four other client groups between them accounted for the remaining 15,900 support periods (around 9%) (Table 3.1). Forty-five per cent of the support periods that finished between 1 July 2001 and 30 June 2002 lasted 1 week or more (AIHW 2002c:32).

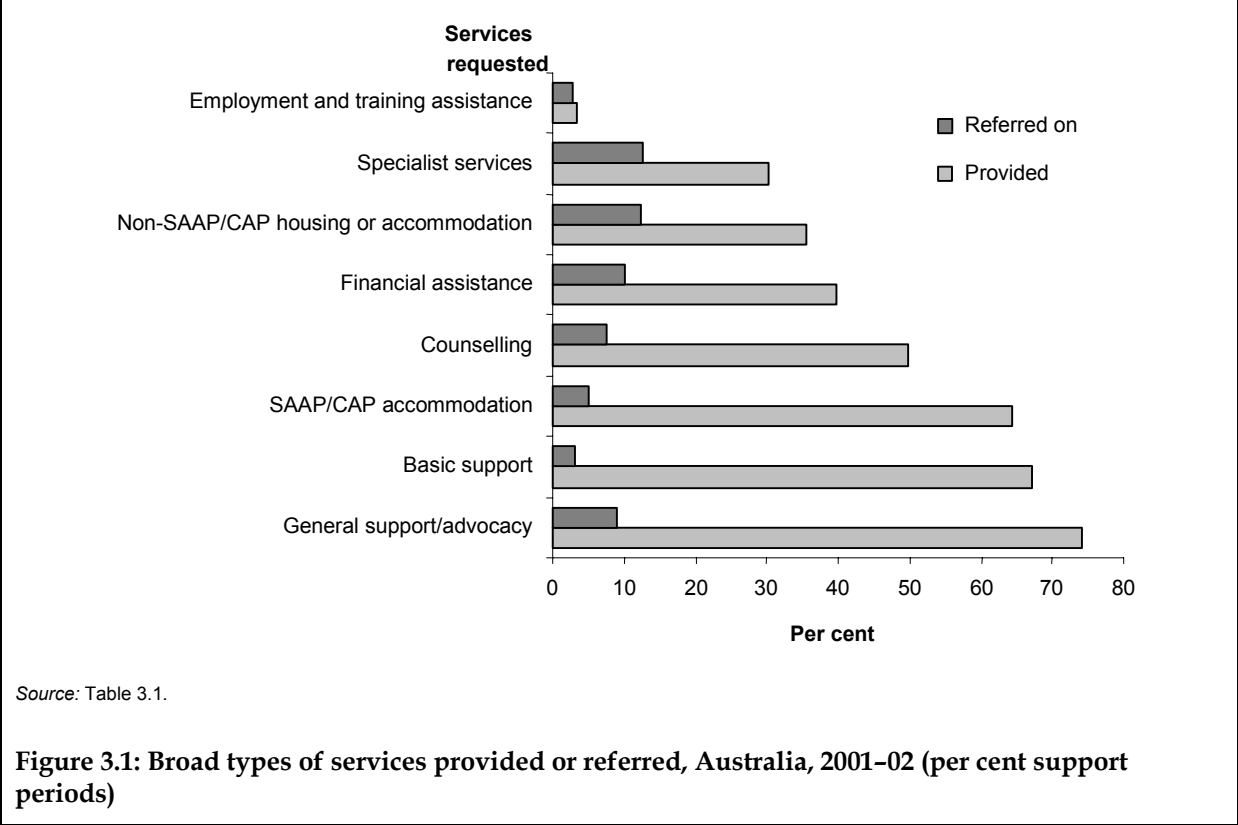
A detailed discussion of the support given to clients and accompanying children is contained in the 2001-02 national annual report (AIHW 2002c). A summary of the services clients and accompanying children received during their support periods follows, along with discussion of whether services requested by clients were provided by SAAP agencies.

3.1 Provision of services

In addition to accommodation, agencies commonly offer a wide range of support services and these are reported under the 34 headings on the Client Collection form (see Appendix 3). In Table 3.1 the services are combined into 8 broad groups, with SAAP and CAP accommodation reported separately from other types of accommodation (see Note 3 to the table).

Among other things, the Client Collection obtains information on assistance that was needed and whether that assistance was provided and/or referred for existing clients. The requested services can be reported only once for a client in a particular support period: the total number of times a particular service is requested, provided or referred is not recorded. For example, a client may receive financial assistance 3 times in a support period, but the Collection shows only that financial assistance was provided, not that it was provided 3 times. The computer-based data-collection tool, SMART, has the potential to overcome this limitation.

Figure 3.1 shows the proportions of support periods in which agencies either provided various types of services or referred clients on during the year. The 3 types of assistance most commonly provided were general support or advocacy (in 74% of support periods), basic support such as meals or washing facilities (67%) and SAAP or CAP accommodation (64%). In addition, assistance with obtaining other housing – either short-term accommodation or longer term independent housing – was provided in 36% of support periods.



The range of services that may be offered by agencies reflects both the differences in service delivery between agencies and variation in clients’ needs. There is greater variation in how frequently the 34 types of support services were provided than the 8 groups in Figure 3.1 suggest. Data on individual services were reported in the 2001-02 national annual report and so are not presented here in detail. That publication shows that the 4 individual support services most often provided throughout the year were SAAP or CAP accommodation (in 64% of support periods), advice or information (64%), meals (53%) and laundry or shower facilities (51%) (AIHW 2002c:35). Emotional support was the fifth most commonly provided service (in 45% of support periods). Twelve services were provided in less than 5% of support periods each.

Clients received on average 6.1 different types of services per support period (Table 3.1). Unaccompanied females tended to receive slightly more types of support than other clients, averaging 6.3 of the 34 different types of service per support period. Overall, about 1,048,000 different services were provided to the 95,600 clients supported by SAAP during 2001-02 (derived from Table 3.1). To understand the actual extent of support, however, it should be noted that many services might have been provided more than once in a support period, while some might have been provided continuously during a client’s support.

Some types of assistance, such as general support or advocacy, were provided consistently to different client groups; for other types of assistance, however, the pattern of provision differs quite markedly (Table 3.1). Males on their own, for example, had the highest use of SAAP or CAP accommodation (provided in 76% of their support periods). Much lower provision of this type of assistance occurred among males with children (42% of their support periods) and couples without children (37%). Similar differences are evident in the use of counselling: females with children had much greater use of counselling (69% of their support periods), in contrast with couples without children (39%) and unaccompanied males (37%).

3.2 Referral of services

Generally, referrals were most frequent for the services with the lowest levels of direct provision by agencies (Figure 3.1). The exception to this was employment services, which were provided and referred in almost the same number of support periods – around 3% in both cases. Among the other types of services, those most commonly referred on to other agencies were specialist services (in 13% of support periods), non-SAAP or non-CAP housing assistance (12%), financial assistance (10%), general support or advocacy (9%) and counselling (8%) (Table 3.1).

Overall, SAAP agencies arranged referrals for SAAP or CAP accommodation in 8,400 support periods (5%) and referrals for other housing assistance in 21,000 support periods (12%) (derived from Table 3.1).

For all services except employment and training assistance, unaccompanied males had the lowest proportion of support periods with referrals. On the other hand, couples with children had the highest proportion of support periods with referrals for 4 out of the 8 broad categories of services – assistance with obtaining non-SAAP or non-CAP accommodation (22%); financial assistance (20%); SAAP or CAP accommodation (9%); and employment and training assistance (5%) (Table 3.1).

On average, agencies referred each client 0.8 times during a support period, resulting in at least 137,400 referrals during the year (derived from Table 3.1). However, all these figures are likely to be underestimates because, as with service provision, a referral may have been arranged for a particular service more than once. It should also be noted that there is no information about client outcomes from referrals. In the context of the NDC, a referral means that an agency (SAAP or non-SAAP) has accepted the client for an appointment or interview, providing a client with a referral does not guarantee that their needs will then be met.

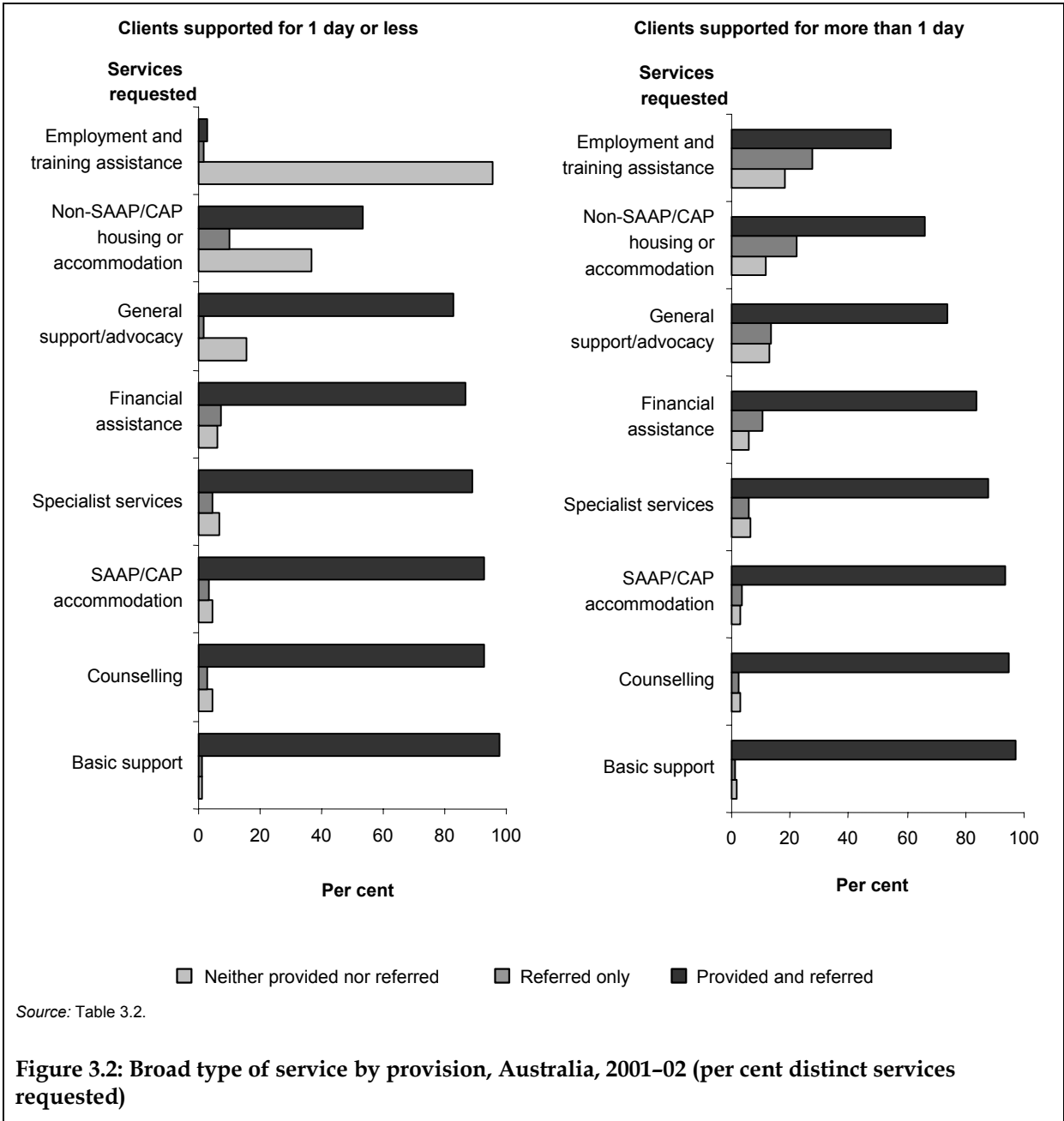
3.3 Expressed requests for services

The ability of SAAP agencies to meet the needs of their clients can be measured only after a client has finished receiving support. For this reason it is necessary to look at closed support periods when examining the provision of requested services. Potential clients who were turned away – that is, who requested but did not receive substantial assistance – are not included in this analysis; they are discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

A client might request many services in a single support period, but in some cases SAAP agencies might not be able to meet all the client's requests directly. In these instances referrals to appropriate organisations might be arranged. For some requested services, however, it might not be possible to either provide the service or refer the client on.

As a means of analysing patterns of length of support and the ability of SAAP agencies to meet client requests for services, Parts A and B of Table 3.2 present data on service provision and referral activity for clients supported for 1 day or less and clients supported for more than 1 day in 2001–02. A large proportion (38% or 60,500) of closed support periods were for clients supported for one day or less (AIHW 2002c:32).

Overall, for all lengths of support, requests were not met in 7% (72,700) of the 978,100 distinct requests for services made in the 153,200 support periods that closed during 2001–02. Figure 3.2 shows the differences in the levels of service provision, referrals and unmet requests for clients supported for one day or less and more than one day.



Clients supported for 1 day or less

Compared with 2000-01, there was a significant increase in the number of requests made by clients who were supported for less than one day – 319,500 requests in 2001-02 and 213,600 in 2000-01. This is a consequence of the improved reporting practices of a very high-volume agency in Queensland.

Over 84% of requests were met directly by SAAP agencies and a further 3% were referred on, resulting in 88% of needs being met at least to some extent (Table 3.2, Part A). The requested services that were most likely to be provided were basic support services (98%), counselling (93%) and SAAP or CAP accommodation (93%). The requested service least likely to be provided was assistance with employment and training (3%). Assistance with obtaining non-SAAP or non-CAP accommodation was the type of requested service most likely to be referred (10%), followed by financial assistance (7%).

Employment and training assistance was most commonly unable to be provided or referred on (for 96% of requests for this broad service type). The very large increase in unmet needs for this service type compared with 2000-01 (35%) is a result of the very high-volume agency in Queensland reporting a high proportion of unmet requests for this service. Assistance with obtaining non-SAAP or non-CAP accommodation could not be provided or referred following 37% of requests. General support and advocacy could not be provided or referred following 16% of requests for such assistance. SAAP or CAP accommodation could not be provided or referred following 4% of requests for this service.

Clients supported for more than 1 day

In 2001-02 clients who were supported for more than 1 day made 658,600 requests for services. For 89% of these requests the services were provided directly by SAAP agencies. In addition to this, agencies were able to refer clients to other organisations in almost 6% of requests. Consequently, 95% of needs were met at least to some extent (Table 3.2, Part B).

The requested services that were most likely to be provided were basic support services (97%), general support and advocacy (95%) and SAAP or CAP accommodation (94%). The requested service least likely to be provided was assistance with employment and training (54%). Requested services that were most commonly referred on were employment and training assistance (27%) and specialist services (22%).

Requested services that were most commonly neither provided nor referred were for employment and training assistance (18%) and assistance with obtaining non-SAAP or non-CAP accommodation (13%). SAAP or CAP accommodation could not be provided or referred following 3% of requests for this service.

Overall, clients supported for more than 1 day were more likely to have their requests for assistance provided or referred than clients supported for 1 day or less. In particular, employment and training assistance could not be provided or referred in 96% of requests by clients supported for 1 day or less, compared with 18% for clients supported for more than 1 day. Other examples are assistance with obtaining or maintaining non-SAAP or non-CAP housing or accommodation (37% compared with 13%) and general support or advocacy (16% compared with 3%). Interestingly, clients supported for more than 1 day had greater difficulty having their needs for specialist services met: 16% of requests for these services were unmet, compared with 7% for clients supported for less than 1 day. For all other broad services types, the proportions of unmet need were similar.

3.4 Demand for accommodation by clients

Provision of accommodation is one of the core activities of SAAP agencies, and this is reflected in the high proportion of clients who receive this type of assistance. Both existing clients and potential clients can have unmet requests for accommodation. Unfortunately, unmet requests for existing clients cannot be considered alongside unmet requests for potential clients because the occasions on which the unmet requests are made by existing clients are not reported. As a result, unmet demand for accommodation by existing clients is discussed here and that by potential clients is discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 of this report.

Only after a client has finished a period of SAAP support can data be collected on needs that were met and unmet. Of the 177,000 support periods reported in 2001–02, 159,300 had finished by 30 June 2002 (AIHW 2002c: 41). Therefore, when examining how the needs of clients specifically requesting help with accommodation were met, the analysis concentrates on these closed support periods.

In around 84% of closed support periods in 2001–02 clients specifically requested assistance with accommodation (AIHW 2002c:41). Because some clients request help with more than one type of accommodation service within any support period, during these closed support periods there were 194,200 requests for specific accommodation services. For 81% of these requests, the relevant accommodation services were provided directly by the SAAP agency in question (AIHW 2002c:43). In addition, agencies were able to refer clients to other services in a further 7% of cases, although the extent to which these referrals met the needs of the clients is not known. However, SAAP agencies could neither provide assistance nor refer clients on for the remaining 12% of requests for assistance with accommodation.

More specifically, 93% of the 108,700 requests for SAAP or CAP accommodation were met and a further 3% were referred on, leaving 4% of requests (3,800) unresolved by SAAP agencies (AIHW 2002c:42). It appeared somewhat more difficult to provide assistance with obtaining short-term accommodation or independent housing: services were neither provided by the agency nor referred for 10% (3,800) of requests for assistance with short-term accommodation and 33% (14,800) of requests for assistance with independent housing.

Chapter 7 of the 2001–02 national annual report (AIHW 2002c) provides a more detailed discussion of the provision of accommodation and other services requested by clients.

3.5 Support provided to accompanying children

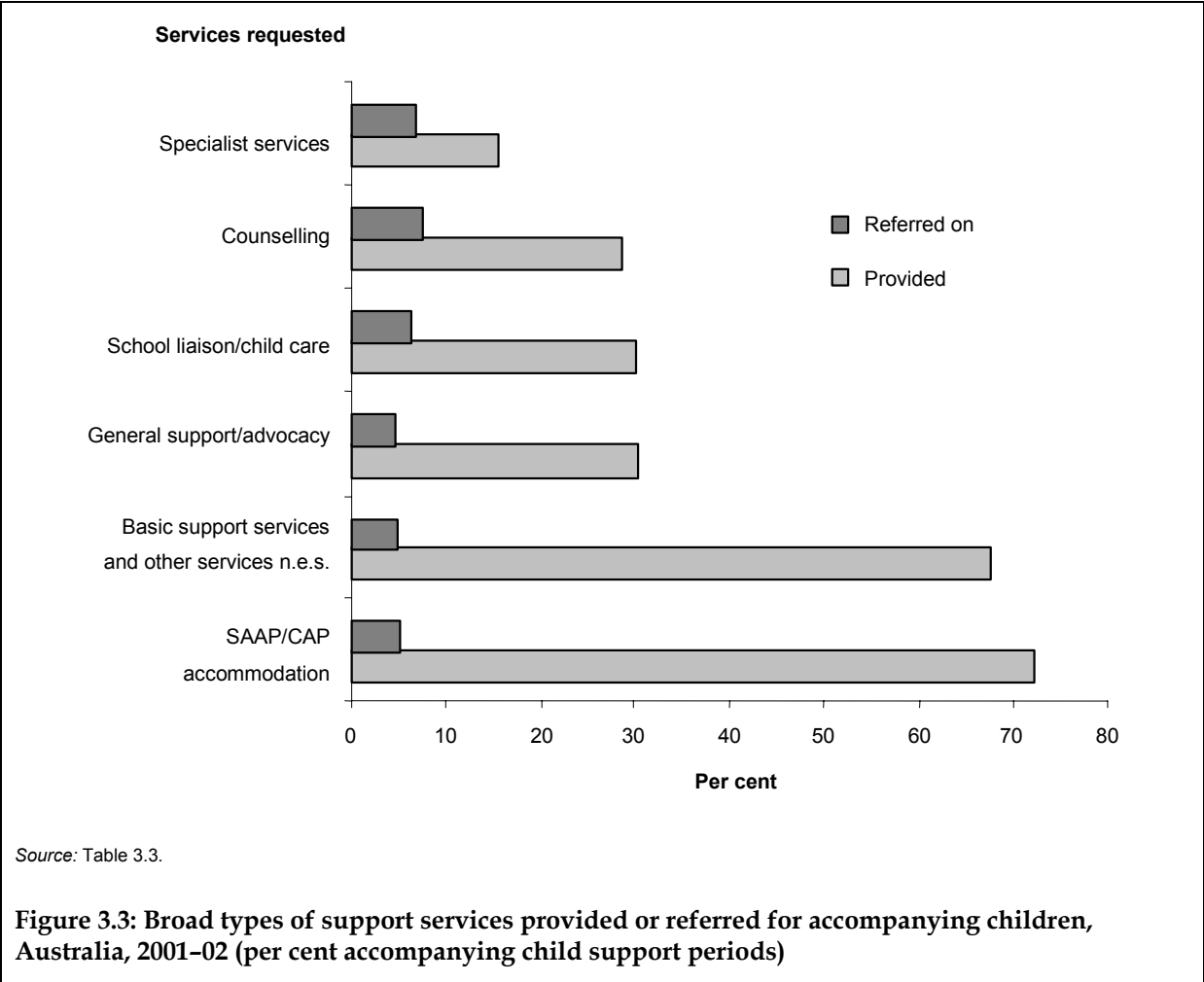
In 2001–02 approximately 50,800 children accompanied their parent or guardian to a SAAP agency or received assistance as a result of their parent or guardian being a client of an agency. These children had approximately 68,100 periods of support (Table 2.1).³ It should be noted that there was a high number (22,600) of accompanying child support periods with no information on service provision.

SAAP or CAP accommodation was the most commonly provided type of service, being provided in 72% of accompanying child support periods. This service was referred in 5% of accompanying child support periods (Table 3.3).

³ The total number of support periods for all accompanying children in 2001–02 was 73,300. The number of children related to all accompanying child support periods cannot be estimated because an alpha code is not used on the high volume form.

Overall, around 172,900 distinct services were provided to accompanying children in 2001–02 (derived from Table 3.3). Basic support services were the most commonly provided non-accommodation service (in 67% of accompanying child support periods). General support or advocacy and assistance with school liaison or child care were each provided in 30% of accompanying child support periods. General support or advocacy was also provided in 30% of accompanying child support periods (Figure 3.3). In contrast, specialist services were provided in only 15%.

Around 18,200 referrals were arranged for accompanying children during 2001–02 (derived from Table 3.3). Not surprisingly, services provided less often were referred on more often. Thus specialist services, which were not provided as often as other services, were referred on in almost 7% (3,000) of accompanying child support periods; this is second only to counselling which was referred in 3,300 accompanying child support periods.



In about 89% of accompanying child support periods, the child(ren) accompanied their mother or a female guardian to a SAAP agency. This group of children received, on average, more types of services per support period (4) than did children accompanying couples, males and other groups of adults. Children accompanying a female client were also more likely to be provided with accommodation than the other groups (in 73% of accompanying child support periods). Children accompanying a male client were least likely to be provided

with accommodation (59%). However, this group accounted for only 2% of the 45,500 accompanying child support periods.

In addition, children accompanying a female client were provided with non-accommodation services in larger proportions than other children accompanying clients in 4 of the 5 non-accommodation support types – basic support services (in 71% of cases), school liaison or child care (31%), counselling (30%) and specialist services (16%). Children accompanying males were more likely to receive general support or advocacy services (34%) than children accompanying female clients (30%).

3.6 Summary

Throughout 2001–02 SAAP agencies provided at least 1,048,000 distinct types of services to 95,600 clients and arranged over 137,400 referrals. As part of this assistance, accommodation was provided directly to clients in around 110,600 support periods, with referrals for SAAP or CAP accommodation being arranged in 8,400. In addition, assistance with obtaining other housing was provided in 61,200 support periods and referrals for such assistance were arranged in 20,100 support periods. Furthermore, nearly 172,900 distinct services were provided to 50,800 accompanying children. Around 18,200 referrals were arranged for these children.

A total of 978,100 requests for services were made during 153,200 closed support periods in 2001–02, with requests not being met in 73,300 (7%) of cases. For clients who were supported for 1 day or less, 319,500 requests for services were made, 12% of these being unmet. Clients supported for more than 1 day had a smaller proportion of unmet needs: requests could not be met for 5% of the 658,600 distinct services requested.

Overall, unmet needs were proportionately higher for clients supported for 1 day or less. In particular, employment and training assistance could not be provided or referred for 96% of requests made by clients supported for 1 day or less, compared with 18% for clients supported for more than 1 day. Other examples are assistance with obtaining or maintaining non-SAAP or non-CAP housing or accommodation (37% compared with 13%) and general support or advocacy (16% compared with 3%).

3.7 Tables

Table 3.1: SAAP support periods: broad types of services provided to clients or referred, by client group, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent support periods)

Broad type of service	Male alone	Female alone	Couple without children	Male with children	Female with children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Total
Service provided								
SAAP/CAP accommodation	75.8	58.3	36.9	42.2	55.1	46.2	53.7	64.4
Assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	34.7	33.6	52.1	45.7	36.4	49.5	28.9	35.6
Employment and training assistance	3.4	4.3	2.9	3.5	2.1	4.3	4.4	3.4
Financial assistance	37.7	39.7	50.5	45.6	41.7	49.1	31.9	39.6
Counselling	36.5	60.5	39.2	41.9	69.3	42.7	45.8	49.7
General support/advocacy	72.2	75.2	72.9	75.9	78.2	75.4	63.2	74.0
Specialist services	31.8	32.5	24.6	13.9	27.1	17.3	25.6	30.1
Basic support and services n.e.s.	78.6	64.3	43.2	38.7	55.5	37.0	55.0	67.2
Mean number of individual support services provided	6.2	6.3	4.9	4.6	6.2	4.8	4.9	6.1
Service referred								
SAAP/CAP accommodation	3.0	5.3	5.9	8.4	7.8	9.0	5.3	4.9
Assistance to obtain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	8.8	11.9	19.3	19.1	17.8	22.1	9.7	12.2
Employment and training assistance	2.6	3.5	3.8	3.1	1.9	4.5	3.2	2.8
Financial assistance	6.0	9.8	14.8	16.6	18.0	19.6	7.8	10.1
Counselling	3.3	9.4	4.9	10.1	14.6	10.6	6.5	7.5
General support/advocacy	4.6	9.3	7.7	12.2	18.0	12.1	7.9	8.9
Specialist services	10.1	15.2	9.1	10.9	16.2	14.0	10.7	12.7
Basic support and services n.e.s.	2.7	3.0	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.6	4.3	3.1
Mean number of individual support services referred	0.5	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.3	1.2	0.7	0.8
Total (%)	45.1	26.2	2.5	1.0	19.5	2.9	2.8	100.0
Total (number)	77,400	45,000	4,300	1,700	33,500	5,000	4,900	171,800

Notes

- Cases excluded due to missing data: 5,180 (cases with no information on service provision).
- 'Other/unknown' includes cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other', where it was not reported at all, or where the gender of the assisted person was unknown (where relevant).
- Clients were able to receive multiple services so percentages do not total 100. The 34 individual service types have been grouped into 8 major classifications as follows:
 - SAAP or CAP accommodation;
 - assistance to obtain/maintain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation—assistance to obtain/maintain short-term accommodation and assistance to obtain/maintain independent housing;
 - employment and training assistance;
 - financial assistance—assistance to obtain/maintain a benefit or pension or other government allowance, financial assistance or material aid, and financial counselling and support;
 - counselling—incest or sexual assault counselling and support, domestic violence counselling and support, family or relationship counselling and support, emotional support and other counselling, and assistance with problem gambling;
 - general support or advocacy—living skills or personal development assistance, assistance with legal issues or court support, advice or information, retrieval, storage or removal of personal belongings, advocacy or liaison on behalf of clients, assistance with immigration issues, and brokerage services;
 - specialist services—psychological services, psychiatric services, pregnancy support, family planning support, drug or alcohol support or intervention, physical disability services, intellectual disability services, culturally appropriate support, interpreter services, and health or medical services; and
 - basic support and services n.e.s.—meals, laundry or shower facilities, recreation, transport, and other support not elsewhere specified.
- 'Mean number of individual support services' is based on the 34 individual service types, including 'other support' (see Note 3).
- Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 3.2: SAAP services requested in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2001-02 (per cent distinct services requested)

Part A: Clients who were supported for 1 day or less

Broad type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
	Neither provided nor referred	Referred	Subtotal	Provided only	Provided and referred	Subtotal			
	% distinct services requested							Number	Number
SAAP/CAP accommodation	4.2	3.4	7.6	90.2	2.3	92.5	100.0	38,900	38,900
Assistance to obtain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	36.6	10.2	46.8	49.6	3.6	53.2	100.0	32,200	21,600
Employment and training assistance	95.5	1.7	97.2	2.3	0.5	2.8	100.0	9,800	9,800
Financial assistance	6.0	7.2	13.2	81.8	5.0	86.8	100.0	21,700	19,900
Counselling	4.5	3.0	7.5	87.8	4.8	92.6	100.0	27,500	21,000
General support/advocacy	15.8	1.5	17.3	79.7	3.0	82.7	100.0	67,400	36,400
Specialist services	6.9	4.3	11.2	86.0	2.7	88.7	100.0	34,500	16,900
Basic support and services n.e.s.	1.3	1.0	2.3	97.2	0.5	97.7	100.0	87,500	36,600
Total (%)	12.3	3.3	15.6	81.9	2.5	84.4	100.0
Total (number)	39,400	10,500	49,900	261,700	7,900	269,600	..	319,500	58,700

Table 3.2 (continued): SAAP services requested in closed support periods: broad type of service by provision, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent distinct services requested)

Part B: Clients supported for more than 1 day

Broad type of service	Not provided			Provided			Total	Distinct services requested	Assoc. closed support periods
	Neither provided nor referred on	Referred on	Subtotal	Provided only	Provided and referred on	Subtotal			
	% distinct services requested							Number	Number
SAAP/CAP accommodation	3.0	3.3	6.3	89.6	4.0	93.6	100.0	68,900	68,900
Assistance to obtain non-SAAP/CAP housing or accommodation	12.8	13.6	26.4	57.4	16.3	73.7	100.0	52,600	42,200
Employment and training assistance	18.2	27.4	45.6	36.2	18.2	54.4	100.0	7,400	7,400
Financial assistance	6.1	10.5	16.6	68.9	14.5	83.4	100.0	57,900	41,100
Counselling	6.2	5.8	12.0	79.3	8.7	88.0	100.0	85,300	51,300
General support/advocacy	3.1	2.3	5.4	88.1	6.5	94.6	100.0	159,500	72,700
Specialist services	11.7	22.1	33.8	46.3	19.8	66.1	100.0	54,900	35,100
Basic support and services n.e.s.	1.7	0.9	2.6	95.9	1.4	97.3	100.0	172,100	65,300
Total (%)	5.1	6.1	11.1	81.0	7.9	88.9	100.0
Total (number)	33,300	40,000	73,300	533,200	52,200	585,400	..	658,600	94,500

Notes

1. Number excluded due to errors and omissions Part A (weighted): 1,529 closed support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
2. Number excluded due to errors and omissions Part B (weighted): 2,021 closed support periods (including cases with no information on service requirements or provision).
3. Number excluded due to errors and omissions (weighted): 1,334 closed support periods (length of support).
4. In groups of service types, a client may require more than one type of service within the group. Percentages for broad groups relate to all needs and not to support periods.
5. Clients were able to receive multiple services in a support period, therefore the total number of associated closed support periods is not equivalent to the sum of each broad service type shown in the associated closed support periods column.
6. Figures have been weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.

Table 3.3: SAAP accompanying child support periods: broad types of support services provided to accompanying children or referred, by groups with children, Australia, 2001–02 (per cent accompanying child support periods)

Broad type of service	Couple with children	Male with children	Female with children	Other with children/unknown	Total
Service provided					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	62.1	58.5	73.2	67.7	72.0
School liaison/child care	18.0	19.2	30.9	27.5	29.7
Counselling	15.5	18.5	29.7	17.6	28.3
General support/advocacy	32.3	33.6	30.0	23.7	30.1
Specialist services	8.6	7.2	16.1	12.2	15.3
Basic support services and other services n.e.s.	40.5	45.6	70.5	51.1	67.4
Mean number of individual support services provided	2.2	2.4	4.0	2.8	3.8
Service referred					
SAAP/CAP accommodation	6.1	6.6	4.9	4.5	5.0
School liaison/child care	6.8	6.4	6.2	4.0	6.2
Counselling	6.1	7.7	7.3	5.9	7.2
General support/advocacy	4.8	5.2	4.2	4.5	4.3
Specialist services	6.1	3.7	6.8	6.5	6.6
Basic support services and other services n.e.s.	7.0	4.9	4.6	5.3	4.8
Mean number of individual support services referred	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total (%)	6.9	2.4	88.9	1.8	100.0
Total (number)	3,100	1,100	40,400	800	45,500

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 22,637 (cases with no information on service provision).
2. Table excludes high-volume records because not all items were included on the high-volume form.
3. Accompanying children were able to receive multiple services, so percentages do not total 100.
4. The 18 individual service types have been grouped into 6 major classifications as follows:
 - SAAP or CAP accommodation;
 - school liaison and child care;
 - counselling—including help with behavioural problems, sexual or physical abuse counselling or support, skills education, and general counselling or support;
 - general support or advocacy—including access arrangements, advice or information, brokerage services and advocacy;
 - specialist services—including culturally sensitive services and health or medical services;
 - basic support and services not elsewhere specified—including meals, showers or hygiene services, recreation, transport and other support not elsewhere specified;
5. 'Mean number of individual support services' is based on the 18 individual service types, including 'other support' (see Note 4).
6. Figures are weighted to adjust for agency non-participation.

Source: SAAP Client Collection.