

## 4 Casual clients

This chapter examines one-off assistance given to casual clients in 2001–02, drawing on data from the Casual Client and Unmet Demand Collections. Initially, casual contacts made during the fortnight of the Casual Client Collection are discussed. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of the types of one-off assistance provided. Finally, one-off assistance provided to potential clients is discussed.

### 4.1 The Casual Client Collection

People receiving one-off assistance may be potential clients, clients of another SAAP agency, or people who only want one-off assistance (see Figure 1.1). For example, a person might be accommodated at one SAAP agency, but seek meals from another agency. During the 2 weeks of the Casual Client Collection (21 February to 6 March 2002), there were 32,490 casual contacts by individuals and groups. This corresponded to approximately 34,480 contacts by individuals in which one-off assistance was provided (Table 4.1), and this equates to an estimated daily average of 2,540 contacts by individuals.<sup>4</sup> It is estimated that around 25% of casual client contacts were by people seeking more substantial support.<sup>5</sup>

On average, 1.9 types of one-off assistance were provided during a casual client contact (Table 4.1). However, the average number of types of assistance provided in a contact varied between the presenting groups. The highest average was 2.1, provided during contacts by individuals with children. The lowest average of 1.8 was for people presenting alone.

People presenting alone accounted for 74% of casual client contacts by individuals. Individuals presenting with children accounted for the next largest proportion of casual contacts by individuals (13%). Relatively few casual contacts were for couples either with or without children (5% of casual contacts by individuals for each group).

The most common types of one-off assistance provided to casual contacts were information (55%), meals (40%) and emotional support (22%). However, the level of provision of the 8 types of one off assistance varied between different presenting groups. Information, referrals, and emotional support were provided in larger proportions of casual contacts by groups with children than the other client groups. Information was provided most commonly to individuals and couples presenting with children (in 87% and 88% of their contacts respectively) and least commonly to people on their own (48%).

Similarly, referrals were provided most commonly to individuals and couples presenting with children (36% and 34% respectively) and least commonly to people alone (16%). Emotional support was provided most commonly to individuals with children (40%) and couples with children (30%), and least commonly to people on their own (18%).

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<sup>4</sup> The figures for casual client contacts are likely to be an underestimation because not all in-scope agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection. In February–March 2002, 63% of in-scope SAAP agencies participated in the Casual Client Collection (Table A2.3).

<sup>5</sup> This estimate is derived as  $8,140 (10,760 - 2,620, \text{ from Table 4.4}) / 32,490 (\text{from Table 4.3}) = 0.25$ . It is a very rough approximation because of the different collection periods for the Unmet Demand Collection (numerator) and the Casual Client Collection (denominator) and because of the different participation rates for the two Collections (83% and 63% respectively – Tables A2.2 and A2.3).

On the other hand, laundry and/or shower facilities were most commonly provided to individuals presenting alone (in 15% of casual contacts). Meals were also commonly provided to individuals presenting alone (48%). Both these services were provided less often to people (individuals and couples) presenting with children (9% or under).

### **Agency type**

Agencies can be categorised into 3 main types – general, high-volume and casual client. The majority of agencies (general and high-volume) provide both substantial support and one-off assistance. Casual client agencies (such as referral agencies and soup kitchens) specialise in providing one-off assistance. During the 2001–02 Casual Client Collection period, general and high-volume agencies provided the majority of contacts for one-off assistance: general agencies accounted for 64% of the contacts and high-volume agencies accounted for 25% (Table 4.2); the remaining contacts were provided by casual client agencies (12%).

The 3 types of agencies showed different levels of service provision for each type of one-off assistance. General agencies were more likely to provide referrals (25%), compared with 11% for casual client agencies and 10% for high-volume agencies. Information was provided in 64% of contacts at general agencies and 61% of contacts at casual client agencies, compared with 28% of contacts at high-volume agencies. High-volume agencies were more likely to provide meals, laundry and/or shower facilities and financial or material aid: meals were provided in around 63% of contacts at these agencies (compared with 46% in casual client agencies) and laundry and/or shower facilities were provided in around 23% of contacts (compared with 15% at casual client agencies). Financial or material aid was provided in 33% of contacts at high-volume agencies, compared with 14% at casual client agencies.

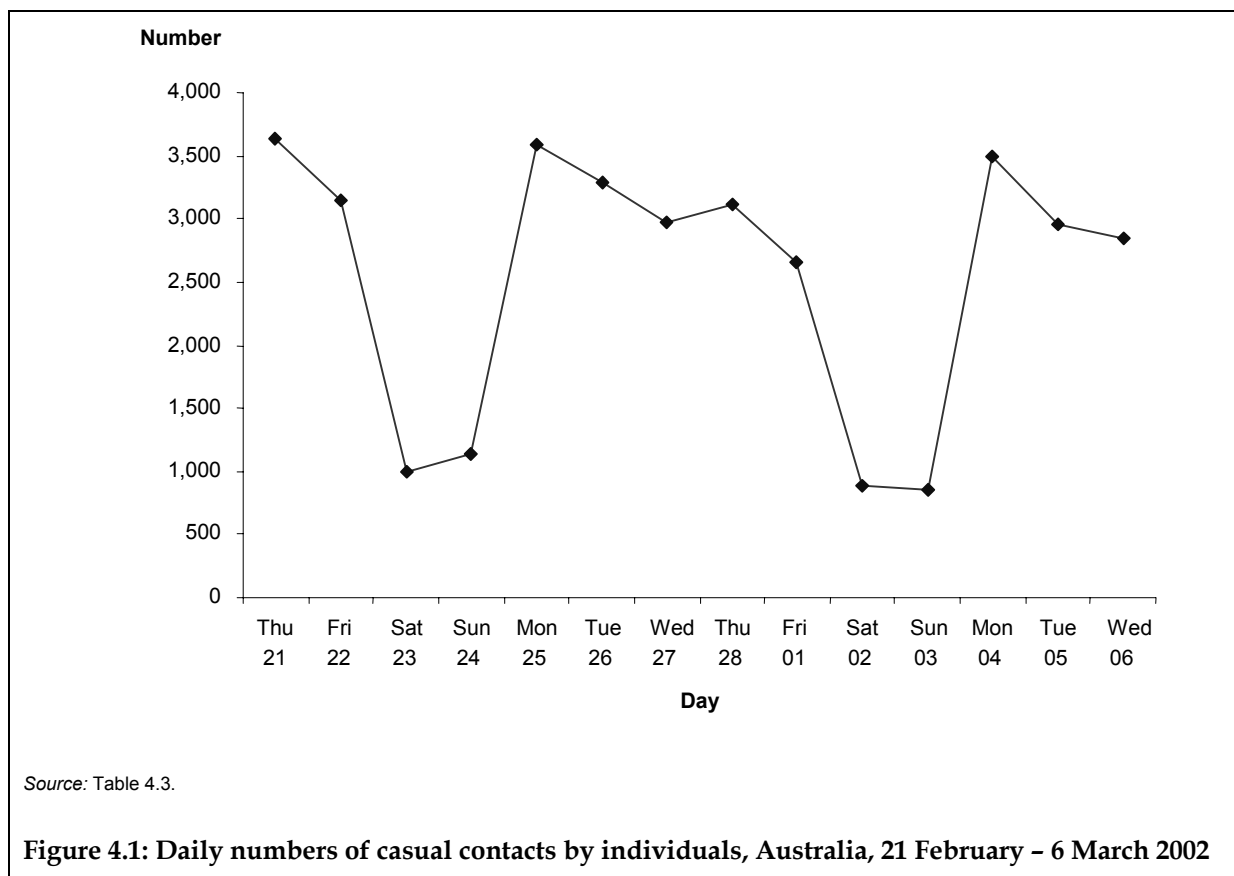
High-volume agencies provided a higher average number of types of one-off assistance per contact than general and casual client agencies. The high-volume agencies provided an average of 2.0 types of one-off assistance per contact, while general agencies provided an average of 1.9 and casual client agencies an average of 1.8.

### **Daily assistance**

Nationally, the numbers of contacts by individuals receiving one-off assistance showed significant variation and, like new accommodations (Chapter 7), were at their lowest on the weekends (Figure 4.1). However, Western Australia and the Northern Territory had some weekdays with lower numbers of casual contacts by individuals than weekends.

On weekdays there were between 2,660 and 3,640 contacts by individuals receiving one-off services across Australia; on weekends the number dropped to between 850 and 1,140. It should be noted that an individual may have more than one instance of one-off assistance on a particular day, either by approaching a number of different agencies or by approaching the same agency a number of times – for example, for meals.

Queensland had the highest proportion (34%) of casual contacts by individuals; it was followed by Victoria (24%) and New South Wales (21%). Not surprisingly, the smaller jurisdictions had much lower proportions of casual contacts by individuals: Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory both had 2% and the Northern Territory had 1% (derived from Table 4.3). The number of casual contacts for the Northern Territory dropped considerably from last year (from 1,490 in 2000–01 to 330 in 2001–02) as a result of decreased participation by one agency in that jurisdiction.



## 4.2 The Unmet Demand Collection

As noted, casual assistance can be provided to potential clients; for example, a potential client whose request for SAAP support and/or accommodation cannot be met may still receive one-off assistance such as information or a meal. Table 4.4 shows the types of one-off assistance provided to potential clients with unmet requests for substantial SAAP assistance during the 2 weeks of the Unmet Demand Collection, from 22 to 28 August 2001 and from 8 to 14 May 2002. There were 10,760 unmet requests for substantial assistance reported during this period (including valid and invalid unmet requests for accommodation and requests for support only). At least one type of one-off assistance was provided following 8,140 (or 76%) of these unmet requests. The remaining unmet requests were not followed by any form of one-off assistance. On average, 1.5 services were provided for each unmet request by a potential client or group.

The most common type of one-off assistance was information, which was provided following 66% of unmet requests for substantial SAAP support. Referrals for accommodation were also commonly arranged – following 38% of unmet requests. It is not known, however, if these referrals were for immediate accommodation or if the referrals were acted upon. Emotional support was provided following 17% of unmet requests. All other types of assistance, such as laundry and/or shower facilities, meals and financial assistance, were each provided following 3% to 6% of unmet requests for more substantial support.

As noted, there were notable differences across presenting groups in terms of the types of one-off assistance received by casual clients. The pattern of one-off assistance provided to

potential client groups (shown by data from the Unmet Demand Collection) did not follow the same trend. In particular, differences between potential client groups were not as substantial overall. However, couples without children had the largest proportion of one-off assistance in 5 out of the 8 distinct categories of one-off assistance.

### **4.3 Summary**

On average 2,540 individuals received some type of one-off assistance from SAAP agencies on any day during the Casual Client Collection. As with the number of new accommodations and unmet requests for accommodation (see Chapter 7), casual assistance dropped considerably on weekends compared with weekdays. Information and meals were the most common forms of one-off assistance provided to casual clients. Information and referrals for accommodation were the most common forms of casual assistance received by people seeking more substantial support. Twenty-four percent of unmet requests for more substantial support were not followed by any form of one-off assistance.

## 4.4 Tables

**Table 4.1: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by presenting group, Australia, 21 February – 6 March 2002 (per cent contacts)**

One-off assistance provided	Person alone	Person with children	Couple without children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Total	
						%	Number
Information	47.5	86.9	76.4	87.7	50.0	54.9	17,840
Referral arranged	16.2	35.8	27.8	34.3	17.7	19.8	6,420
Emotional support	17.9	40.3	19.9	30.3	29.2	21.7	7,040
Meals	47.9	5.6	21.6	8.6	37.0	40.0	12,980
Financial/material aid	18.3	11.1	14.4	14.0	18.7	17.1	5,550
Transport	4.3	4.7	4.9	3.2	6.5	4.3	1,410
Laundry/shower facilities	15.2	1.8	6.2	0.5	15.6	12.7	4,130
Other	17.7	21.3	20.0	18.1	20.5	18.4	5,970
<b>Mean number of types of one-off assistance provided</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Total (% contacts)</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total (number of contacts)</b>	<b>25,520</b>	<b>4,620</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>32,490</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (%)</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Contacts by individuals (number)</b>	<b>25,520</b>	<b>4,620</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>1,010</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>34,480</b>

### Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 1,045 contacts; 1,097 contacts by individuals.
2. In the Casual Client Collection, casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. Although this approach will lead to an understatement of the number of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing.
3. In any casual contact, the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
4. 'Other/unknown' includes those cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other' or where it was not reported at all.
5. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection.

**Table 4.2: SAAP casual contacts: one-off assistance provided, by type of agency, Australia, 21 February – 6 March 2002 (per cent contacts)**

One-off assistance provided	General agencies	High-volume agencies	Casual client agencies	Total	
				%	Number
Information	64.0	28.4	61.0	54.9	17,840
Referral arranged	25.1	9.9	11.2	19.8	6,420
Emotional support	24.2	18.4	14.8	21.7	7,040
Meals	29.8	63.3	46.1	40.0	12,980
Financial/material aid	11.6	33.0	13.7	17.1	5,550
Transport	4.6	3.8	4.4	4.3	1,410
Laundry/shower facilities	8.5	22.7	14.8	12.7	4,130
Other	20.6	16.4	10.2	18.4	5,970
<b>Mean number of types of one-off assistance provided</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>20,720</b>	<b>8,020</b>	<b>3,750</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>32,490</b>

*Notes*

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 1,045.
2. 'General' agencies include a small number of agencies that operate both general and high-volume outlets.
3. In the Casual Client Collection, casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. As a result, the number of contacts understates the number of contacts by individuals.
4. In any casual contact the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
5. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Casual Client Collection.

**Table 4.3: SAAP casual contacts by individuals: daily contacts by state and territory, Australia, 21 February – 6 March 2002 (number)**

<b>Day</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>Qld</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Tas</b>	<b>ACT</b>	<b>NT</b>	<b>Total</b>
Thursday 21 Feb	720	1,100	1,160	280	240	80	50	20	3,640
Friday 22 Feb	590	840	1,110	300	170	60	50	10	3,140
Saturday 23 Feb	220	110	380	190	40	10	10	30	1,000
Sunday 24 Feb	220	70	510	210	70	20	20	30	1,140
Monday 25 Feb	770	920	1,240	290	230	50	50	40	3,590
Tuesday 26 Feb	670	940	1,060	300	190	40	50	40	3,290
Wednesday 27 Feb	620	710	1,020	230	230	70	60	30	2,970
Thursday 28 Feb	650	790	1,020	230	300	60	60	20	3,120
Friday 1 March	600	450	1,010	220	290	20	50	20	2,660
Saturday 2 March	200	100	330	170	70	10	10	10	890
Sunday 3 March	180	80	320	150	80	20	30	10	850
Monday 4 March	780	830	1,300	180	250	50	60	30	3,490
Tuesday 5 March	720	660	1,010	260	210	50	50	20	2,960
Wednesday 6 March	630	820	790	290	190	50	60	20	2,840
<b>Daily average</b>	<b>540.9</b>	<b>601.7</b>	<b>875.1</b>	<b>234.6</b>	<b>182.3</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>2,541.4</b>

*Notes*

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. In the Casual Client Collection, casual contacts are reported for the group receiving assistance. Casual contacts by individuals have been derived from data on 'person(s) receiving assistance' in a contact (see questionnaire in Appendix 3). 'Person alone' and 'person with children' are counted as a contact by one individual, and couples (with or without children) are counted as contacts by two individuals. Presenting units classified as 'other' are also counted as contacts by two individuals. Cases where there is no information on the type of presenting unit are counted as a contact by one individual. Although this approach will lead to an understatement of the number of individuals, this understatement will be less than if contacts of unknown composition were counted as missing.
3. In any casual contact the assisted group was able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
4. Figures are unweighted.

*Source:* SAAP Casual Client Collection.

**Table 4.4: Groups with unmet requests for SAAP support or accommodation: one-off assistance provided, by client group requiring assistance, Australia, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002 (per cent contacts by groups)**

One-off assistance provided	Person alone	Person with children	Couple without children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Total	
						%	Number
Information	62.0	72.2	74.3	77.4	62.3	66.2	7,120
Referral for accommodation	36.1	41.4	43.9	36.1	36.8	37.9	4,080
Referral for non-accommodation	11.5	17.1	15.6	16.1	14.7	13.6	1,460
Emotional support	13.0	24.6	17.1	22.6	18.6	17.1	1,840
Meals	7.3	2.4	7.8	2.9	2.5	5.6	600
Financial /material aid	5.2	6.0	6.2	9.7	3.4	5.6	610
Transport	3.0	3.5	3.9	2.4	2.0	3.1	340
Laundry/shower facilities	3.9	1.2	6.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	320
Other	2.5	2.7	4.4	2.4	2.9	2.6	280
None	27.5	19.8	16.4	16.0	28.9	24.3	2,620
<b>Mean number of types of one-off assistance provided</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Total (number)</b>	<b>6,510</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>10,760</b>

*Notes*

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Numbers exclude accompanying children.
3. Groups seeking assistance were able to receive more than one type of one-off assistance, so percentages do not total 100.
4. 'Other/unknown' includes those cases where the assisted unit was reported as 'other' or where it was not reported at all.
5. Only data from agencies that participated in all 3 collections (the Client Collection, the Unmet Demand Collection and the Met Demand Collection) are included. Consequently, the figures understate the level of activity in SAAP agencies.
6. Figures are unweighted.

*Source:* SAAP Unmet Demand Collection.