

5 Demand for accommodation: unmet requests

People who make valid unmet requests (see discussion in Section 5.1) at a SAAP agency are termed 'potential clients'. This chapter focuses on the unmet requests made by potential clients.

Information on unmet demand for services is available for only 2 weeks of the year – from 22 to 28 August 2001 and from 8 to 14 May 2002. Because of seasonal factors and because people can have several unmet requests in a year, the daily and 2-week figures for requests by potential clients cannot be used as a basis for deriving annual figures of unmet requests. Data presented in this chapter may underestimate the number of unmet requests (see Sections 2.2 and A2.2.1).

5.1 Valid and invalid unmet requests

People may be turned away from a SAAP agency for a variety of reasons. These reasons are classified to determine whether a request is valid or invalid. Invalid requests for accommodation include people requesting assistance from an agency with the wrong target group (for example, a married couple approaching a single men's agency); a request made at a non-accommodation agency; or where the offer of accommodation was refused by the requesting person or group. Invalid requests may be followed by a successful request at another agency, especially if a referral has been arranged.

Invalid requests

Table 5.1 shows that 1,960 (20%) of the 9,980 unmet requests for accommodation made during the collection period were invalid requests. In particular, 67% of invalid requests for accommodation were not met because the requesting person or group was in the wrong target group for the agency they approached. This was most likely to be the case for couples without children (77%) and for invalid requests made in Tasmania (75% of invalid requests) (Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

Over one-quarter of invalid requests (28%) were unmet because the person or group refused an offer of accommodation (Table 5.1). The proportion of couples without children who had unmet requests for this reason (14%) was lower than for any other requesting group. The proportion of invalid requests where a person or group refused an offer of accommodation ranged from 20% in Queensland to 47% in South Australia (Table 5.2).

Only 5% of invalid requests for accommodation were refused because a non-accommodation agency was approached (Table 5.1). This was most likely to be the case for couples with children (15%). On a state and territory basis, the proportion was relatively low in all states and territories except Victoria, where 14% of invalid requests for accommodation were refused for this reason (Table 5.2).

Valid requests

Valid unmet requests for accommodation accounted for 80% (8,020) of the total unmet requests for accommodation made during the collection period (Table 5.1). People who presented at SAAP agencies alone or with a group of unrelated individuals accounted for the largest proportion of valid unmet requests for accommodation (4,860 or 61%); they were followed by individuals presenting with children (2,350 or 29%). Couples with and without children accounted for only small numbers of valid unmet requests for accommodation (5% and 3% respectively). On a state and territory basis, Victoria reported the largest number of valid unmet requests for accommodation (2,420, or 30%), while the Northern Territory reported the smallest number (110, or 1%) (Table 5.2).

Overall, the most common reason for valid requests being unmet was insufficient accommodation being available (6,770 or 84%) (Table 5.1). Couples with children and individuals with children had the highest proportions of valid unmet requests due to this reason (91% and 90% respectively). The Northern Territory had the lowest proportion of valid requests for accommodation being unmet because insufficient accommodation was available (67%), while this reason was cited in nearly 94% of valid unmet requests in the Australian Capital Territory (Table 5.2).

Valid unmet requests resulting from the type of accommodation requested not being provided by the agency accounted for 5% of valid unmet requests overall (Table 5.1). On a state and territory basis, however, 14% of valid requests for accommodation in the Northern Territory were unmet due to this reason (Table 5.2).

Unavailability of facilities designed to meet disability, cultural and other special needs not being available accounted for only 2% of valid unmet requests. This reason did not vary greatly in terms of the requesting group, but it was cited in 15% of valid unmet requests for accommodation in the Northern Territory. This was significantly higher than in the other jurisdictions.

Insufficient staff to provide support accounted for only 2% of valid unmet requests for accommodation and did not vary significantly by requesting group or across the states and territories.

5.2 The immediacy of need for accommodation

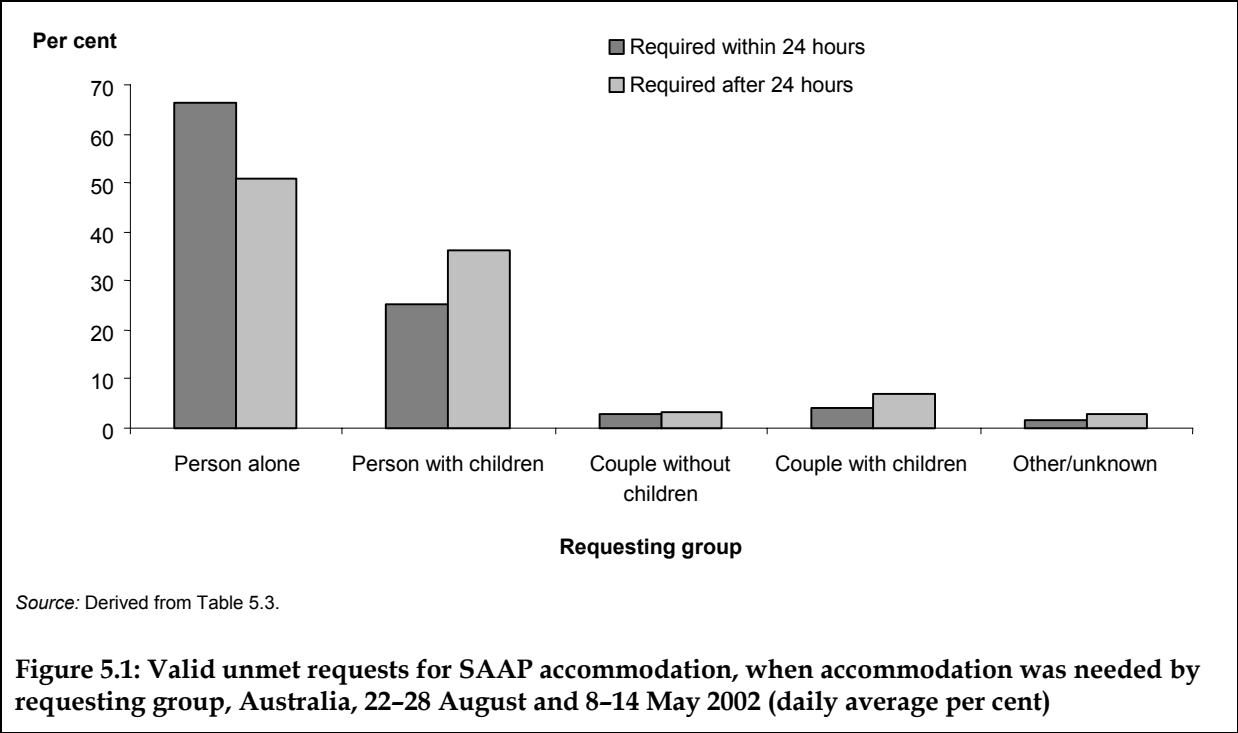
On any day during the Unmet Demand Collection period an average of 573 valid unmet requests for accommodation were made (Table 5.3). Of these requests 198 (35%) were made by individuals or couples with children.

In the context of homelessness, the level of unmet requests for immediate accommodation (that is, accommodation required within 24 hours) is of particular importance: around 62% of all valid unmet requests for accommodation were for immediate accommodation. A significant proportion of the total was for accommodation required after 48 hours (26%). Only about 12% of valid unmet requests were for accommodation required within 24 to 48 hours.

On a daily basis, SAAP agencies made an average of 232 referrals to other accommodation services during the Unmet Demand Collection period (Table 5.4); that is, referrals to other accommodation services were made for about 41% of valid unmet requests for accommodation (derived from Table 5.4). People requesting immediate accommodation were given referrals to other accommodation services in 39% of valid unmet requests for

immediate accommodation. This compares with 43% for people requiring accommodation in more than 24 hours.

People who presented alone or with a group of unrelated individuals made a daily average of 237 valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation, accounting for 66% of valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation (Figure 5.1). This group was referred on to other accommodation in 36% of valid unmet requests they made for immediate accommodation (Table 5.4).



People presenting alone or with a group of unrelated individuals also accounted for the largest proportion of valid unmet requests where accommodation was required after 24 hours (51%). They were referred on to other accommodation in 42% of their valid unmet requests for accommodation required after 24 hours.

Individuals or couples presenting with a child or children accounted for 29% of all valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation, with referrals to other accommodation services being made in around 44% of valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation made by these groups (derived from Table 5.4).

A significant proportion of valid unmet requests for accommodation required after 24 hours were for individuals or couples who presented with a child or children. Of the 216 average daily valid unmet requests where accommodation was required after 24 hours, 93 requests (43%) were made by these two groups (derived from Table 5.3). Referrals to other accommodation were made for these people in about 45% of their valid unmet requests for accommodation required after 24 hours.

While couples who presented without children accounted for around only 3% of valid unmet requests for immediate accommodation and the same for accommodation required after 24 hours, referrals to other accommodation were made in 44% of cases needing immediate accommodation and in 53% of cases needing accommodation after 24 hours (Table 5.4).

Referrals for non-accommodation support services were made in around 12% of valid unmet requests for accommodation, with slightly more referrals being made for people who required accommodation within 24 hours than for those who required it after 24 hours.

5.3 Requests for support only

Apart from unmet requests for accommodation, individuals or groups may have unmet requests for substantial non-accommodation support services only. There were 780 unmet requests for support only reported during the 2 weeks of the 2001–02 Unmet Demand Collection (Table 5.1). The majority of such requests were made by people presenting at a SAAP agency alone or with an unrelated person (51%). On a state and territory basis, Victoria had the highest number of unmet requests for support only, with around 34% of unmet requests for substantial non-accommodation support services being made in this State (Table 5.2).

5.4 Summary

Valid unmet requests for accommodation accounted for 80% (8,020) of the total unmet requests for accommodation made during the collection period. People who presented to SAAP agencies alone or with a group of unrelated individuals made up the largest proportion of such requests (4,860 or 61%). Individuals or couples presenting with child(ren) made 2,770 (35%) valid unmet requests for accommodation. There were 780 unmet requests for support only reported for the 2 weeks of the 2001–02 Unmet Demand Collection.

Overall, the most common reason for unmet valid requests was insufficient accommodation being available (6,770 or 84%). Couples with children and individuals with children had the highest proportions of valid unmet requests due to this reason (91% and 90% respectively).

Of all requests for SAAP accommodation during the Unmet Demand Collection period, 1,960 requests (20%) were invalid. In particular, 67% of invalid requests for accommodation were not met because the requesting person or group was in the wrong target group for the agency they approached.

On any day during the Unmet Demand Collection an average of 573 valid unmet requests for accommodation were made. About 62% of these were for accommodation required within 24 hours. A significant proportion of the total was for accommodation required after 48 hours (26%), while only around 12% of valid unmet requests were for accommodation required within 24 to 48 hours.

On a daily basis, SAAP agencies made an average of 232 referrals to other accommodation services during the Unmet Demand Collection period; that is, referrals to other accommodation services were made in around 41% of valid unmet requests for accommodation.

5.5 Tables

Table 5.1: Unmet requests for SAAP accommodation: main reason why request was not met, by requesting group, Australia, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002 (per cent requests by groups)

Main reason	Person alone	Person with children	Couple without children	Couple with children	Other/ unknown	Total	
						%	Number
Valid requests							
Insufficient accommodation available	81.1	90.0	85.6	90.7	83.8	84.4	6,770
Type of accommodation requested is not provided	5.7	4.0	8.2	5.0	7.1	5.3	420
Insufficient staff to provide support	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.9	3.2	2.4	190
Facilities for disability needs, cultural needs and other special needs not available	3.0	0.8	1.2	0.2	1.9	2.1	170
Other	7.6	3.4	2.1	1.2	3.9	5.8	460
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	60.5	29.3	3.0	5.2	1.9	100.0	..
Total (number)	4,860	2,350	240	420	150	..	8,020
Invalid requests							
Agency inappropriate—wrong target group	68.3	62.4	77.3	65.9	66.7	67.2	1,320
Agency inappropriate—non-accommodation agency	4.3	4.8	9.1	14.6	—	5.1	100.0
Potential client refused offer of accommodation	27.4	32.8	13.6	19.5	33.3	27.7	540
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	63.9	24.6	5.6	4.2	1.7	100.0	..
Total (number)	1,250	480	110	80	30	..	1,960
Total requests for accommodation	6,110	2,830	350	500	190	..	9,980
Unmet requests for support only	51.3	37.1	4.1	5.4	2.2	100.0	780

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adjustments have been made to allow for missing data (see Appendix 2).
3. In a small number of cases requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet because of the age of a male child (applicable to domestic violence agencies only). To ensure confidentiality, these cases are not presented separately but are included in the 'other' valid request category.
4. 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.
5. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Unmet Demand Collection.

Table 5.2: Unmet requests for SAAP accommodation: main reason why request was not met, by state and territory, Australia, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002 (per cent requests by groups)

Main reason	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total	
Valid requests									%	Number
Insufficient accommodation available	80.3	87.7	84.3	79.8	87.8	87.3	93.6	67.3	84.4	6,770
Type of accommodation requested is not provided	5.0	5.8	5.8	3.5	5.1	4.2	2.1	14.0	5.3	420
Insufficient staff to provide support	3.2	2.4	3.2	0.6	—	1.3	0.6	0.9	2.4	190
Facilities for disability needs, cultural needs and other special needs not available	3.1	0.8	2.1	2.3	1.3	5.5	0.9	15.0	2.1	170
Other	8.4	3.3	4.7	13.7	5.9	1.7	2.7	2.8	5.8	460
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	25.0	30.2	22.8	7.7	5.9	2.9	4.1	1.3	100.0	..
Total (number)	2,010	2,420	1,830	620	470	240	330	110	..	8,020
Invalid requests										
Agency inappropriate—wrong target group	70.0	62.8	72.9	66.7	47.1	75.4	62.3	63.0	67.2	1,320
Agency inappropriate—non-accommodation agency	0.8	13.6	7.2	0.5	5.9	—	4.3	1.9	5.1	100.0
Potential client refused accommodation	29.2	23.7	19.9	32.8	47.1	24.6	33.3	35.2	27.7	540
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>..</i>
Total (%)	32.8	19.2	22.1	10.4	6.1	3.1	3.5	2.8	100.0	..
Total (number)	640	380	430	200	120	60	70	50	..	1,960
Total requests for accommodation	2,650	2,800	2,260	820	590	300	400	160	..	9,980
Unmet requests for support only	21.7	33.5	16.9	4.0	12.1	3.3	0.6	7.8	100.0	780

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adjustments have been made for missing data (see Appendix 2).
3. In a small number of cases requests for SAAP accommodation were unmet because of the age of a male child (applicable to domestic violence agencies only). To ensure confidentiality, these cases are not presented separately but are included in the 'other' valid request category.
4. 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.
5. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Unmet Demand Collection.

Table 5.3: Estimated valid unmet requests for SAAP accommodation, by requesting group and when accommodation was needed, Australia, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002 (daily average)

Requesting group	Required within 24 hours	Required in 24–48 hours	Required after 48 hours	Total
Daily average number of requests				
Person alone	236.9	32.3	77.7	346.9
Person with children	89.5	26.6	51.5	167.6
Couple without children	10.1	1.8	5.5	17.4
Couple with children	14.9	5.1	10.0	30.1
Other/unknown	5.2	1.4	4.4	11.0
Total	356.6	67.2	149.1	572.9
Total (%)	62.2	11.7	26.0	100.0

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adjustments have been made for missing data (see Appendix 2).
3. 'Other/unknown' group includes cases where the requesting group was reported as 'other' or where it was not reported at all.
4. People may make more than one request for accommodation in a day. Data in this table are based on all valid unmet requests made by the person/group (see Glossary).
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.

Table 5.4: Estimated valid unmet requests for SAAP accommodation, by selected variables and requesting group, Australia, 22–28 August 2001 and 8–14 May 2002 (daily average)

Valid unmet requests	Person alone	Person with children	Couple without children	Couple with children	Other/unknown	Daily average (number)
Accommodation required within 24 hours						
Total valid unmet requests (number)	236.9	89.5	10.1	14.9	5.2	356.6
Percentage of valid unmet requests						
—due to insufficient accommodation	79.8	89.7	85.8	92.3	76.7	295.8
—referred to other accommodation	36.2	44.9	44.0	36.8	37.0	137.8
—referred to other support services	9.8	12.2	16.3	12.4	11.0	38.1
Accommodation required after 24 hours						
Total valid unmet requests (number)	110.0	78.1	7.3	15.1	5.8	216.3
Percentage of valid unmet requests						
—due to insufficient accommodation	84.0	90.3	85.3	89.2	90.1	187.8
—referred to other accommodation	42.3	45.2	52.9	41.0	42.0	94.4
—referred to other support services	11.9	18.7	14.7	13.7	9.9	31.4

Notes

1. Cases excluded due to missing data: 0.
2. Adjustments have been made for missing data (see Appendix 2).
3. 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.
4. Figures are unweighted.

Source: SAAP Unmet Demand Collection.

