

Young homeless people 2001–02

**New South Wales
supplementary report**

**A report from the SAAP
National Data Collection**

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

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Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Board Chair
Dr Sandra Hacker

Director
Dr Richard Madden

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Manager
SAAP National Data Collection Agency
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
GPO Box 570
Canberra ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6244 1206

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Preface

This supplementary report to *Young Homeless People in Australia 2001–02* provides data specifically for New South Wales. Both reports provide information on young people aged 12–24 years who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

A productive and cooperative partnership has continued between the SAAP National Data Collection (managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), SAAP agencies and the SAAP Information Sub-committee. Valuable support and encouragement have been provided by the SAAP Coordination and Development Committee, which is responsible for the national direction of the SAAP program.

This partnership has been built on shared goals and mutual trust. The key has been agencies' willingness to collect and provide data to the National Data Collection Agency, knowing that any personal information provided by clients is protected by the extremely strict confidentiality provisions of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*.

This large and complex project has not only a high level of support but also a high level of accuracy. We are confident that we can further improve the quality of the information provided to help policy makers and the community better understand and provide for the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of being so.

Under the Coordination and Development Committee's direction, a SAAP National Research Program has been established to undertake and fund studies on homeless people, often using data from the National Data Collection. Over time, the availability of time-series SAAP data will greatly increase the usefulness of the data. The publication of this report and the release of the 2001–02 data are another step towards this goal.

Richard Madden
Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

SAAP Coordination and
Development Committee

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Finally, the authors acknowledge the vital role played by data providers. This report draws together a large amount of statistical material and could not have been produced without the efforts and cooperation of SAAP service providers and clients, who provided service and client information.

Abbreviations and symbols

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CAP	Crisis Accommodation Program
DV	Domestic Violence
NDC	National Data Collection
NDCA	National Data Collection Agency
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

Symbols

..	When used in a table, means not applicable
–	When used in a table, means nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Summary

This report provides an overview of SAAP clients aged 12–24 years and the assistance given to them by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) in New South Wales in 2001–02.

One of the main findings of this report is that in a significant proportion of cases, clients aged 12–24 years were supported for short periods at one SAAP agency and then moved on to another agency. Before support, young clients were living in SAAP or other emergency housing in 26% of support periods. After support, young clients were living in this accommodation type in 23% of support periods (Figure 3.5). The most common length of support for clients who moved on to this accommodation type after support was 1–3 days (25%) (Table 3.7).

The following is a summary of other findings in the report.

SAAP use by young people

- Young clients aged 12–24 years accounted for 34% of SAAP clients aged over 12 years and 30% of support periods for clients aged over 12 years (Table 2.1).
- Seventeen year-olds used SAAP services more frequently than others in the 12–24 year age range. They constituted the largest number of clients (1,250) and support periods (2,100). They also had the highest median length of support and median length of accommodation (18 days and 10 days, respectively).
- Young clients aged 12–24 years had longer periods of support and accommodation (medians of 8 days and 7 days, respectively) compared to older clients (4 days and 3 days). On a per client basis, young clients had less support periods (1.8) than older clients (2.1). That is, young clients stayed longer in SAAP but returned less frequently within 2001–02.

Circumstances of young clients before and after support

- In a high proportion of support periods (45%), young clients were either self-referred or heard about the SAAP agency from family members or friends (Table 3.1).
- The proportion of support periods for clients aged 16–24 years who were students before support ranged from 41% for 16–17 year-olds to 8% for 20–24 year-olds. There was little change in these proportions after support (Table 3.2).
- The proportion of young clients in the post-secondary studies or employment training increased in all age groups (except 12–13 year-olds) after support .
- Youth Allowance was the main source of income for the majority of young clients both before and after support. By age group, Youth Allowance was the most commonly cited income category for both 16–17 and 18–19 year-olds before and after support (in over 55% of closed support periods in each case) (Table 3.3).
- The percentage of closed support periods where no income was reported decreased after support for all age groups, with the greatest decrease in clients aged 14–17 years.

- Young clients aged 12–24 years were most commonly living with a parent or parents. The proportion of closed support periods with this living situation dropped across all age groups from 23% before support to 20% after support (Figure 3.4).

Accommodation before and after support, length of SAAP support and support plans

- Before support, young clients aged 12–24 years were most commonly living in SAAP or other emergency housing (26%). After support, the most common accommodation type was living rent-free in a house or flat (23%), or SAAP or other emergency housing (23%) (Figure 3.5).
- For clients who moved on to live in SAAP or other emergency housing after SAAP support, the most common length of support was 1–3 days (in 25% of closed support periods for this accommodation type). This was also the case for those who moved on to live in a car, park, tent, street or squat (32%) (Table 3.7).
- The proportion of support periods where the client moved on to live in a car, park, tent, street or squat generally decreased as length of support increased, particularly after 13 weeks, where the proportion of support periods dropped from 16% for 4–13 weeks to 2% for 13–26 weeks.
- Longer support lengths appear to result in more independent housing outcomes for young clients. For clients renting independently in the private market after SAAP support, the most common length of support was 4–13 weeks (26%). This was also the case for those who rented public or community housing after support (23%).
- The number of closed support periods with accommodation with a support plan in place increased as length of support increased. A support plan was in place for 37% of support periods lasting less than one day, compared to 95% for support periods lasting more than 52 weeks. Overall, in 18% of cases a support plan was considered to be inappropriate. The majority of these cases were for support periods lasting less than 2 weeks (Table 3.8).
- Of support periods with accommodation and a support plan, ‘all’ goals were achieved in 22% of cases. ‘Most’ goals were achieved in 23% of support periods with a support plan, and ‘some’ goals achieved in a further 38% (derived from Table 3.8). As length of support increased, so too did the relative likelihood of ‘all’ or ‘most’ support plan goals being achieved.
- Young clients who were boarding in a private home before SAAP support were more likely to have a support plan than those who had come from other accommodation types (75%). Those who had been renting public or community housing before support were least likely to have a support plan (64%) (Figure 3.10).
- There were similar proportions of support periods with accommodation and a support plan for clients who had been accommodated at another SAAP agency or other form of emergency accommodation (67%) and for clients who had been living in a car, tent, park, street or squat (68%), immediately before a SAAP support period with accommodation.
- The proportion of support periods with accommodation and a support plan varied according to the type of accommodation young clients moved on to after SAAP support, from 70% for support periods where the client moved on to a rooming house, hostel, hotel or caravan, to 83% for those moving on to rent in the private market (Figure 3.11).